A stylized, artistic representation of the Ukrainian national flag, featuring a blue top half and a yellow bottom half, with a black outline. The flag is set against a dark, gradient background.

CHRISTINA DIETL, KHRYSTYNA FOSTYAK,
THOMAS SCHULTE-UMBERG, OLHA UHRYN,
NOREEN VAN ELK (EDS.)

WAR IN UKRAINE

THEOLOGICAL, ETHICAL
AND HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

Aschendorff
Verlag

Christina Dietl – Khrystyna Fostyak – Thomas Schulte-Umberg –
Olha Uhryn – Noreen van Elk (Eds.)
War in Ukraine.
Theological, Ethical and Historical Reflections

War in Ukraine

Theological, Ethical and Historical Reflections

Christina Dietl – Khrystyna Fostyak –
Thomas Schulte-Umberg – Olha Uhryn –
Noreen van Elk (Eds.)

 **Aschendorff**
Verlag

Münster
2025



universität
wien

Department of Historical Theology

Cover:

Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG

Text:

© Christina Dietl, Khrystyna Fostyak, Thomas Schulte-Umberg, Olha Uhryn, Noreen van Elk

Publiziert von

Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG

Soester Straße 13

D-48155 Münster

E-Mail: buchverlag@aschendorff-buchverlag.de

www.aschendorff-buchverlag.de

ISBN 978-3-402-25096-9 (Print)

ISBN 978-3-402-25097-6 (E-Book PDF)

DOI <https://doi.org/10.17438/978-3-402-25097-6>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No-Derivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND) which means that the text may be used for non-commercial purposes, provided credit is given to the author. For details go to <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> To create an adaptation, translation, or derivative of the original work and for commercial use, further permission is required.

Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) not original to the Open Access publication and further permission may be required from the rights holder.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	7
Christina Dietl, Khrystyna Fostyak, Thomas Schulte-Umberg, Olha Uhryn and Noreen van Elk (Eds.) DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25100-3	
A Logical Experiment in Politics: Second Scholasticism in Creating Russian Imperialism	13
Volodymyr Shelukhin DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25101-0	
The Tools of Modern Russian Colonization: The Case of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace	30
Elmira Abliialimova-Chyihoz DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25102-7	
Central and Eastern Europe in the Age of the First World War: Revolution, Counter-Revolution, Containment	44
Dmytro Bondarenko DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25103-4	
The Idea of a Federation of Poland and Ukraine in the Light of the Correspondence of the Greek Catholic Priest Prelate Tyt Voinarovsky with the Polish Diplomat Jan Stanisław Łoś	58
Paulina Byzdra-Kusz DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25104-1	
The Gender Aspect of Political Rhetoric and its Origins: The Case of Ukraine	71
Mariana Myrosh DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25105-8	
New Icons of War: Religious Motifs in Ukrainian Digital Popular Art During the Russo-Ukrainian War	89
Alina Mozolevska DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25106-5	

Religion as a Key Front of Russian Aggression Against Ukraine	110
Maksym Vasin	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25107-2	
Muslims in the Struggle for the Ukrainian Cause and Statehood	128
Andrii Zhyvachivskyi	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25108-9	
Certain Aspects of Church-State Dynamics: Legal Naming Issues within Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian War	148
Mechyslav Yanauer	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25109-6	
Patriarch Bartholomew's Position Towards the War Against Ukraine	164
Patrice Hrimle	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25110-2	
The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Russo-Ukrainian War	175
Kateryna Budz	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25111-9	
Europeans Lost in Translation	189
Roman Sigov	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25112-6	
Friends or Foes? Religious Organizations and European Institutions in the Face of Russia's War on Ukraine	200
Iuliia Korniiuchuk	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25113-3	
Punish Russian War Crimes Already Now!	213
Oleksandra Matviichuk	
DOI 10.17438/978-3-402-25118-8	
List of Contributors	216
List of Editors	219

Introduction

*Christina Dietl, Khrystyna Fostyak, Thomas Schulte-Umberg,
Olha Uhryn and Noreen van Elk (Eds.)*

We have to be clear about our common European goal now. It is the same as it was from the beginning. Putin's system must lose in this war against Ukraine. This is Russia's war not only against Ukraine, but against all of us, against your countries as well, against our entire Europe and the European way of life.¹

(Volodymyr Zelenskyi)

For nearly three years now, Russia's full-scale war of aggression has been a central matter of concern in the political, public and academic sphere. The war of aggression has sparked intense debates on ethical, legal and political questions as well as on the war's global consequences and backlashes. In many Western European countries in particular, the war is perceived as a turning point in defense and security policy, which in a way seals the "end of peace in Europe". The talk of "peace in Europe" however fails to recognize that even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, there certainly wasn't a peaceful order in Europe.² Nonetheless, Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has awakened the Western European countries from their slumber and heralded a so-called *Zeitenwende* which resulted in far-reaching changes in Western Europe's defense and security agenda and strategy. Nevertheless, there are sometimes chasms between the words and actions of Western European countries. One example is the discussion about the necessary armament efforts on the one hand and the slow, inadequate implementation up until now on the other.

1 Volodymyr Zelenskyi, Address at the European Council Meeting (21 March 2024). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/nashij-jevropi-potribna-realna-oborona-samodostatnist-vistu-89793> (last access: 27 June 2024).

2 Cf. Ralph Rotte, *Welche Zeitenwende? Zur Kontinuität einer vermeintlich neuen Realität*, in: *Indes* 10/1–2 (2022) 9–16.

Despite a lot of disputes over concrete measures and actions, no one doubts that the current war poses a serious threat to international security. As expressed already in the opening quote from Zelenskyi from May 2024, it is not only the security of Ukraine that is at stake, but indeed the future of a free and democratic Europe. Supporting Ukraine and strengthening its defense capability is therefore a pan-European task and a question of the future viability of the European idea.

In many of the public and political debates since the start of the full-scale war of aggression in February 2022, security and defense policy issues have been central. This state-oriented focus often obscures an equally, if not more important, point of view, namely that of those directly affected by the horrors and evils of this war. In contrast, the academic discussion of the war of aggression reveals a somewhat broader perspective. The war has fuelled research interest in Ukraine, its history, people, culture, churches and religions. The academic discourse has clearly shown that the war of aggression not only touches upon political and political-ethical issues, but also requires an interdisciplinary and comprehensive examination of the multifaceted causes, dynamics and consequences of the war.

This book is the result of a postgraduate symposium organized and conducted by the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna from 13 to 17 February 2023 on the topic “*War in Ukraine. Theological, Ethical and Historical Reflections*”. The idea of organizing the symposium arose as a direct reaction to the beginning of Russia’s full-scale war of aggression in February 2022. On the initiative of Alexandra Palkowitsch and Noreen van Elk, a working group “*KTF4Ukraine*”³ was formed at the aforementioned faculty, which set itself the goal of discussing how the faculty could contribute to the ongoing debates and, more importantly, how it could support early-career Ukrainian scholars who are directly affected by the war. In the course of 2022, these initial considerations gave rise to the idea of organizing a postgraduate symposium for Ukrainian scholars doing research on the topic of the war of aggression from the perspective of various disciplines. The objective of the symposium was to bring together theological research, historical accounts and philosophical-ethical questions against the backdrop of the current situation in Ukraine as well as to reflect on the challenges that go along with the war and its containment.

3 Documentation of the symposium and further information can be found on the website <https://ktf4ukraine.univie.ac.at/> (last access: 27 June 2024).

The symposium took as its starting point the above-mentioned observation that the public political and academic debate on Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine should be diverse and interdisciplinary. As a theological faculty we placed the focus on religious policy, religious studies, theology and theological-historical issues. A central theme of the symposium relates to the challenges that the war poses to the churches and religious institutions in Ukraine and to the questions what role the churches and religious institutions (can) play in the genesis of and fight against the war and what problems arise for religious representatives in reaction to Russia's war of aggression. Behind all these questions stands the firm belief that the inclusion of the perspective of churches and religious institutions is a prerequisite for a profound understanding of the origins of the war of aggression, its dynamics and lines of conflict and the further course of the war. Finally, the positioning of the churches and religious institutions and their willingness to act in the context of the war will play a decisive role in the restoration and maintenance of a lasting just peace in Europe.

To this end, the symposium has taken up the cause of providing a stage for and giving a voice to those who are directly affected by the war and who are rarely given a voice in the discourse. The symposium intended to create a place where the perspective of Ukrainian researchers was given priority in order to offer a safe space for analysis and reflection, the exchange of ideas and knowledge, for getting to know each other and for valuable encounters. The explicit decision not to let "outsiders" speak about Ukraine at the symposium, as is all too often the case, but to give preference to listening to the voice, opinions and contributions of Ukrainians, was a unique feature of the symposium, which was positively perceived and praised by the participants.

On the one hand, the contributions collected in this book reflect the plurality of questions that arise in the context of the current war of aggression against Ukraine. On the other hand, the articles also reveal the complexity of the historical conditions under which the war of aggression came about and the depth of the impact that the war will have on the history, culture, people and politics of Ukraine. A glance at the table of content bears witness to this plurality. The role of the churches and religious institutions, their positioning and their actions are critically examined, and the effects of the war of aggression on the cultural and spiritual heritage of Ukraine are discussed. In addition, the question of dealing with and processing the war through visual art will be addressed. The war narratives will be reflected upon and the role of language and gender

in this context will be examined. Finally, historical and historical-ideological aspects of the war of aggression will be examined and discussed.⁴

The variety of topics in this book is intended to provide some initial insights into the diverse effects of the current war and the importance of an interdisciplinary perspective on it. Especially with its focus on issues at the nexus of religion and politics, the volume seeks to highlight the importance of religion, theology, churches and religious communities in the public sphere and bring them into the debates. Through its interdisciplinary approach, the editors hope to promote interdisciplinary and international exchange on the war of aggression, its origins and its consequences, which will continue to be a matter of concern for a long time to come. Finally, with the symposium and this book the editors hope to contribute to a better understanding of Ukrainian perspectives on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine from the viewpoint of early-career Ukrainian scholars.

Over the past two and a half years, many people have been involved in the realization of the entire project “*KTF4Ukraine*”, the organization of the symposium and the editing of this book.⁵ A special thanks however goes to the organizing team of the symposium as well as the sponsors who supported the symposium and this volume and/or made its realization financially possible: the City of Vienna, Renovabis, Stiftung Zusammenleben, the University of Vienna, the Austrian Research Association (ÖFG), the Research Center Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society (RaT), the Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion, Studienvertretung Doktorat Katholische Theologie and Studienvertretung Katholische Theologie, the Department of Church History and the Department of Theology and History of Eastern Churches at the University of Vienna. Furthermore we want to thank Thomas Németh and Thomas Prügl for their substantial contributions, Alexandra Palkowitsch for her exceptional organizational help and Emily Strickland and Laurysa Toews for proofreading.

Last but not least, we would like to say a heartfelt “Thank you!” to all who have contributed to the symposium as well as the authors of the articles collected in this volume. Their perspectives and voices are of considerable importance in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. If this volume

4 The contributions in this book refer to the state of affairs up to August 2024. Developments that occurred after the editorial deadline could not be considered. Each author presents an original contribution based on their own research and individual academic endeavours.

5 For the organizing team see <https://ktf4ukraine.univie.ac.at/organizing-team/>.

should make one thing clear, it is that war affects us all, leaving its mark not only where it rages, but in the hearts and minds of each and every one. We must not despair in the fight for a lasting, just peace.

Vienna, December 2024, the editors

A Logical Experiment in Politics: Second Scholasticism in Creating Russian Imperialism

Volodymyr Shelukhin

The research paper reveals a possible source of influence from scholastic logic on the creation of the myth of ethnic unity between Ukrainians and Muscovites in the second half of the 17th century. The politicization of this myth occurred in the context of the Ruin period, when the Hetmanate (Cossack state) was in a complex geopolitical situation, and an alliance with Muscovy seemed suitable to some of the clergy's own interests. This case demonstrates the unexpected combination of a genealogical myth, based on the mythologization of specific passages of the Bible, with modern cultural forms, which scholastic logic was for 17th century Ukrainian philosophy.

1. Introduction

Generally, researchers agree that Ukrainian scribes, clerics and intellectuals were an important force in modernizing Moscovia and creating contemporary Russia through educational and cultural activities in the second half of the 17th and 18th centuries¹. The presence of ethnic Ukrainians in the culture of the Russian Empire was so significant that in the mid-18th century there was even an attempt to bureaucratically restrict the appointment of ethnic Ukrainians

1 Cf. Olena Dziuba, Українці в культурному житті Росії (XVIII ст.): причини міграції [Ukrainians in the Cultural Life of Russia (18th Century): Causes of Migration], in: Alexei Miller/ Vladimir Reprintsev/ Boris Floria (eds.), Россия-Украина: история взаимоотношений [Russia-Ukraine: History of Relations], Москва 1997, 115–124; Iaroslav Isaievych, Early Modern Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine: Culture and Cultural Relations, in: Journal of Ukrainian Studies 17 (1992) 17–28; David Saunders, The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750–1850, Edmonton 1985.

to influential positions in the Church². I would like to clarify the mechanism of involvement in these activities and the paradoxical role of Western ideas in creating pseudo-traditional Russian imperial narratives, with a focus on scholasticism and Aristotle's ontology.

As a central point, the traditional Russian imperialist position alleged that Ukrainians and Russians are the same and denied the existence of Ukraine by claiming that Ukrainians are a subgroup of Russians. My article is dedicated to the origins of this concept that are rooted in the ideas introduced by the Kyivan Synopsis³ (1674) which was published in Church Slavonic with the blessing of Inokentii Gizel, Archimandrite of Pechersk Lavra (monastery) in Kyiv and republished with additional content in 1678, 1680/1681. The authorship of the text is disputed; the most reliable candidate is Panteleimon Kokhanovsky⁴, who was a provisor of the Lavra and close confidant of Gizel. I based my research on the interpretative paradigm in sociology with a strong reliance on the interdisciplinary approach (history and cultural studies).

Before becoming the archimandrite, Gizel was a professor of philosophy, theology and logic at Kyiv Mohyla Academy. He continuously attempted to introduce Aristotle's philosophy into Orthodox theology. He was a prominent figure of the second wave of scholasticism in Ukraine as well as among Orthodox clerics – a new stage in the history of scholastic thinking in the 16th and 17th centuries, which began to develop in Ukraine in the 1620s. His lecture series *Opus totius philosophiae*⁵, which he delivered at the Kyiv Academy in 1645–1647, was the most comprehensive philosophy course in Ukraine at that time. It includes an important logical *tractatus* which discusses issues such as categories, differentiation, logical operations etc. These two dimensions of Gizel's work (as editor of a pseudo-historical book and a scholastic philosopher

2 Cf. Myroslav Popovych, Нарис історії культури України [Essay on the History of Ukrainian Culture], Київ 1998, 258–259.

3 The Kyivan Synopsis was compiled and adapted into Ukrainian by Iryna Zhylenko, Синопис Київський. Лаврський альманах [The Synopsis of Kyiv: Lavra Almanac], Київ 2002.

4 Cf. Yurii Mytsyuk, Київський “Синопис” як підручник з історії Русі-України [Kyivan Synopsis as a “Textbook” on the History of Rus-Ukraine], in: Проблеми дидактики історії: збірник наукових праць [Problems of Didactics of History: Scientific Works] 2 (2010) 75–78.

5 The complete text of Gizel's *Opus* remains unpublished. The most important parts of the course relevant to our topic were published in the second volume of his selected works in three volumes by Larysa Dovha and Mykola Symchych, see: Inokentii Gizel, Вибрані твори у трьох томах, Том 2 [Selected Works in Three Volumes, Volume 2], Львів-Київ 2011, 83–102, 167–193.

with attention to logics) can be perceived as a paradox. However, we should not forget that his work was part of a Baroque culture characterized by strange combinations and mannerist paradoxes. Instead, this paradox is vital to understanding this topic.

2. 'Rossia': In Search of the Holy Land and its Protectors

This section describes the essential context needed to understand this period. The term "Rossia" is a Hellenized form of "Rus", a Greek equivalent that in the 17th century referred to the territories under the jurisdiction of the Kyivan Metropolis which were ethnic Ukrainian and Belarusian lands, not Moscovian⁶. At the end of the 16th century, hellenized terminology began to be widely used in Ukraine. It was a reaction to the Latin Counter-Reformation movement within the Catholic Church and an attempt to re-emphasize the Greek origins of Christianity in Ukraine and Belarus. Even protestant authors of the late 16th and 17th centuries, both Calvinist and Unitarian, those who cooperated or counted on cooperation with the Orthodox camp, used Hellenic terms in their book titles ("Apocrisis" by Christopher Filaletusor, "Antapologia" by Eustachius Gizel). It is very likely that the use of the terms "Rossia" and "Rus" in the early 17th century was influenced by that cultural context⁷.

As a result of the Church Union of 1596 – an attempt to unify the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – Ukraine and Belarus (Rossia) lost their noble 'rossian' families, according to the account of Meletii Smotrytsky – philologist, theologian, and writer – in 1610⁸. Since the Medieval Ages, the status of the Church was influenced by the support of the Orthodox aristocracy and monarchs (Grand Princes of Kyiv or later Kings of the Rus as well as regional dukes). For instance, the father of Meletii Smotrytsky was a court poet and educator of the Prince of Ostrog. Smotrytsky's statement was exaggeratory but it was also close to the truth, especially when the House of Ostrog became extinct. An extremely important role in the de-

6 Cf. Serhii Plokyh, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, Cambridge 2006, 266–267.

7 Cf. Serhii Plokyh, *Reconstructive Forgery: The Hadiach Agreement (1658) in the 'History of Rus'*, in: *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 35–36 (2010–2011) 37–49, 37.

8 Cf. Meletii Smotrytsky, *Тренос [Trenos]*, in: *Vasyl Yaremenko/ Valerii Shevchuk (eds.), Слово многоцінне: хрестоматія української літератури, створеної різними мовами в епоху Ренесансу та Бароко XV-XVIII століть, Книга 1 [The Priceless Word: Anthology of Ukrainian Literature Created in Various Languages during the Renaissance and Baroque Era, 15th-18th Centuries, Book 1]*, Київ 2006, 545–554, 552–553.

fense of Orthodox liberties was played by Orthodox brotherhoods. They might be the oldest civil organizations in early modern Ukraine that equally included aristocrats (“schliakhta”) and commoners. Burgesses played a vital role in activities of brotherhoods in cities like Lviv, Kyiv, Lutsk (masters of guilds, merchants, craftsmen and free intellectuals). Some brotherhoods, especially the Lviv Brotherhood, were already very influential in the mid-16th century. Sovereigns, such as Moldavian rulers, sought to establish strong relations with them⁹. After the Church Union of 1596, which was supported by the majority of the Orthodox episcopate (including the Metropolitan of Kyiv) with the exception of the bishops of Lviv and Przemyśl, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine lost most of its episcopate. Under these circumstances, the brotherhoods concentrated significant power in their hands, including the ability to elect priests and suspend them from their duties¹⁰. The Eastern Orthodox patriarchs were inclined to accommodate to the brotherhoods, considering them a more reliable support for the faith than the episcopate, which consisted mainly of nobles and could be tempted by the privileges of the position. Therefore, the Antiochian Patriarch Joachim, during his visit to Lviv in 1586, granted the city’s brotherhood the status of a stavropegeion, which meant direct subordination to the patriarch rather than the local bishop¹¹. In practice, due to the lack of regular contact with the patriarch, this status implied legal and canonical independence.

The situation also improved when the Cossacks, under the leadership of Hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny became deeply involved in Church affairs in the 1620s. The Cossacks were trying to acquire cultural legitimacy to claim the liberties and privileges of the nobility. As a member of the nobility, the hetman extrapolated a typical pattern of supportive actions to a ‘new’ emerging social group – the Cossacks. The term “Cossack” is of Turkic origin and was integrated into the Ukrainian language in the late Middle Ages to describe a much older phenomenon known as “ukhodnytstvo” (escaping)¹².

9 Cf. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Історія України-Руси*, Том VI [History of Ukraine-Rus, Volume VI], Київ 1995, 509.

10 Cf. Popovych, *Нарис*, 176–177.

11 Cf. Hrushevsky, *Історія*, VI, 513–514.

12 Cf. Summary of the presentation of Omeljan Pritsak, *Етимологія та зміст назви “козак”* [Etymology and Content of the Term “Cossack”] by: Vasyl Omelchenko, Четверта конференція українських істориків УВАН: резюме доповідей [The Fourth Conference of Ukrainian Historians of UVAN: Summary of the Presentations], in: *Український історик* [The Ukrainian Historian], 3–4 (7–8) II (1965) 75–78, here: 76–78.

“Ukhodnystvo” was a way of life adopted by various social groups who lived in areas free from legal regulations¹³. This lifestyle involved activities such as hunting, adventure, travelling, and trade. In previous centuries, there were other groups of people in Ukraine who practiced a similar lifestyle but were known by other names. The attempt of aristocrats, and later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, to incorporate the Cossacks into official military service, led to them becoming a socially differentiated and institutionally organized group by the second half of the 16th century. The hetman was an administrative and military leader of the Cossacks and later, after the success of Khmelnytsky’s uprising, the head of the government in the Cossack state (originally called “Zaporozhian Host” and historically “the Hetmanate”).

The Zaporozhian Host wanted to be a supporter and protector of the Church¹⁴. During the passage of Patriarch Theophanes III of Jerusalem through Ukraine in 1620, the hetman provided him with armed protection, allowing for the consecration of new bishops, including Metropolitan Yov Boretsky (formerly a Brotherhood *didaskalos* in Latin and Greek, meaning a teacher)¹⁵. This ensured the continuity of the church hierarchy in Ukraine and Belarus. The Sejm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth legally recognized the existence of the Orthodox Church and its episcopate in 1633, demanding the armed support of the Cossacks in a potential war against the Ottoman empire. In addition, at the hetman’s decree, every Zaporozhian Cossack joined the Kyiv Brotherhood.

Notably, it was Patriarch Theophanes III himself who insisted in his instructions that the Cossacks should not take part in military campaigns against Moscovia, because he perceived Moscovia as a potential ally for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine¹⁶. It is unknown whether he sincerely considered this view

13 Cf. Hrushevsky, *Історія*, VII, 53–55.

14 Even after the restoration of the Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy in Ukraine and Belarus, largely thanks to the Zaporozhian Host, Orthodox bishops were attempting to distance themselves from the Cossacks. This intention could be seen in the protestation through the manifest in defense of the Orthodox Church addressed to the king (1621). See, adapted to modern Ukrainian language: Yov Boretsky: Протестація [Protestation], in: Volodymyr Shynkaruk/ Valeria Nychyk/ Andrey Sukhov (eds.), *Пам’ятки братських шкіл на Україні: Тексти і дослідження* [Memorials of Brotherhood Schools in Ukraine: Texts and Studies], Київ 1988, 313–327, here: 323.

15 Cf. Hrushevsky, *Історія*, VII, 411.

16 Cf. Serhii Savchenko, *Московія очима України-Русі XVI–XVII ст.* [Moscovia through the Eyes of Ukraine-Rus in the 16th-17th Centuries], in: *Україна: культурна спадщина, національна свідомість, державність* [Ukraine: Cultural Heritage, National Consciousness, Statehood] 15 (2006–2007) 282–297, here: 286.

to be true or whether he adopted it opportunistically because he received an instruction during his previous stay in Moscow. However, it coincided with one of the two positions that crystallized among the Orthodox clergy in Ukraine, primarily in the Pechersk Monastery, at the beginning of the 17th century. This alignment focused on external power or solidarity within the community and strengthened itself through internal mobilization and cooperation between estates (primarily the nobility, bourgeoisie, clergy and Cossacks, even though relations between them were not always smooth).

The second strategy did not preclude the preservation of political and legal loyalty to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, provided it recognized the rights and liberties of the Orthodox estates. Pro-Moscow sentiments among the clergy intensified in the early 1620s when it became clear that the canonical restoration of the Orthodox hierarchy would not receive legal approval due to the religious fanaticism of the king. Evidence of these sentiments is the polemical treatise “Palinode, or the Book of Defense” by Metropolitan Zakhariya Kopystensky¹⁷. The first attempt at a union between Orthodoxy and Catholicism in the region in the 15th century failed, primarily due to the imprisonment of a crucial advocate for the movement, Metropolitan Isidore of Kyiv (an ethnic Greek), by the Moscovites¹⁸. For Zakhariya Kopystensky, in the context of the new resistance to the union, this page of the past was inspiring and evoked sympathy for Moscow¹⁹.

Researchers have pointed out the ideological resonances between “Palinode” and the “Synopsis”²⁰. However, we should mention the key difference between the political theology of Kopystensky and the author of the “Synopsis”.

17 Cf. Savchenko, *Московія*, 288–290. “Palinode” was not published during Kopystensky’s time (1620s) and circulated in manuscripts. The text was first published in 1878, see: Zakhariya Kopystensky, *Палинодія [Palinode]*, in: *Памятники полемической литературы въ Западной Руси, Книга I [Monuments of Polemical Literature in Western Rus, Book 1]* (Русская историческая библиотека 4), Санкт-Петербург 1878, 313–1200. I used the old Ukrainian text with modernised orthography according to: Zakhariya Kopystensky, *Палинодія [Palinode]*, in: Oleksa Myshanyuch (ed.), *Українська література XVII ст. [Ukrainian Literature in the 17th Century]*, Київ 1987, 93–107.

18 Cf. Marios Philippides/ Walter K. Hanak, *Cardinal Isidore (c. 1390–1462): A Late Byzantine Scholar, Warlord, and Prelate*, London – New York 2018, 79–113.

19 Cf. Kopystensky, *Палинодія*, 99. See an analysis in: Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Історія української літератури, Том 6 [The History of Ukrainian Literature, Volume 6]*, Київ 1995, 66–105.

20 Cf. Natalia Yakovenko, *Паралельний світ: дослідження з історії уявлень та ідей в Україні XVI-XVII ст. [Parallel World: Studies in the History of Beliefs and Ideas in Ukraine in the 16th-17th Centuries]*, Київ 2002, 296–332.

The first author remained an aristocratic republican, rejecting the Catholic model of papal dominance within the hierarchy in favor of the collective rulership of bishops similar to senators, while the “Synopsis” presented a strict monarchist historiosophy. The first author focused on the Church, the second author focused on a political entity. This difference corresponds to the different political contexts in the 1620s and 1670 to 1680s. The same was true regarding the pro-Moscow sentiment. During the time of “Palinode”, Ukraine, a religiously rebellious country, remained a part of the victorious Polish Crown where the Orthodox Church was legally unrecognized (after the Church Union of 1596). During the time of the “Synopsis”, the Orthodox Church dominated the weak Cossack state that was divided and the treatment by Ottoman infidels was visible. The “Synopsis”, in many ways, developed the historiosophy of “Palinode”, which, in turn, emerged in a particularly dramatic moment when the Orthodox Church was threatened due to its semi-legal status. In other words, in the context of geopolitical uncertainty, the Pechersk clergy returned to the model tested half a century earlier. Just as before, the pro-Moscow sentiment in the 17th century was tactical.

The conservative Orthodox episcopate was skeptical about the inclusion of new secular social groups in church affairs, such as brotherhoods, commoners and Cossacks. The most striking example was the long-term conflict between the Orthodox bishop Gedeon Balaban of Lviv with the powerful Lviv Brotherhood of Dormition of the Holy Virgin. The Balaban family of Galician “schliakhta” had controlled the Lviv episcopal see for many generations as their own possession. They were strongly dissatisfied with the brotherhood’s independence and claims to control the bishops according to the conciliarity principle (“sobornist”) – the collective rule within the Church²¹. An additional factor was the Protestant expansion; it reinforced the anti-egalitarian attitude of the Orthodox Church. The two most powerful Protestant denominations in Ukraine, Calvinist and Unitarian, had Presbyterian constitutions with a strong collective rule. During the early period of the Orthodox resurrection, Orthodox scribes and intellectuals preferred Protestant innovations. Later, especially under the Metropolitan of Kyiv Petro Mohyla, the Orthodox Church introduced its own Orthodox version of the Counter-Reformation and integrated Catholic post-Trent patterns of innovations into the Orthodox community, which was due to the Metropolitan’s high aristocratic status and political loyalty to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

21 Cf. Hrushevsky, *Історія*, VI, 523.

Petro Mohyla, the Metropolitan of Kyiv from 1633 to 1647, was a key figure in the Orthodox revival of the second quarter of 17th century in Ukraine and Belarus. His institutional activities and moral inspiration were crucial in this process. Petro Mohyla, a member of the Moldavian princely dynasty who was known for his elitist attitude toward church renewal, periodically faced negative reactions among the common people²². Weak Orthodox bishops after 1620 were frightened by the prospect of a decreased role in the church. Working models of institutional renewal during the Catholic Counter-Reformation and the challenge created by the development of Protestantism were supplemented with a new political reality after the Ruin period (“Ruina”). The Ruin period is characterized by great political challenges in Ukraine, approximately from 1663 to 1687, such as state fragmentation, a series of revolts and foreign invasions, along with the increasing influence of Moscovia in Ukraine.

An important prerequisite for the Mohylan revival, which did not allow pro-Moscow sympathies to develop into a coherent political program within the religious community, was the reconciliation with the Kyivan Brotherhood. Initially, there was tension between the Archimandrite of the Pechersk Lavra and the Kyivan Brotherhood. The symbol of this reconciliation was the establishment of the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium through the merger of the Lavra’s monastic school with the Brotherhood.

While the Cossack’s political and legal tradition developed a republican and contractual approach to state power, the church largely was oriented by monarchist nostalgia that was rooted in the historiosophy of the heroic past. Monarchist and theocratic historiosophy of Orthodox Kyivan scribes is represented in literature as well. The reign of Grand Prince Volodymyr the Great was seen by Orthodox clerics as the highest point in the development of Christian Rus/ Ukraine. This medieval topos was reinvigorated in the 16th century when the powerful Ukrainian orthodox aristocracy protected the Orthodox Church. We encounter this in the poetry of Herasym Smotrytsky in the 16th century, who was the court poet of the Prince of Ostrog and who was compared to Prince Volodymyr²³ in the preface to the first full Slavonic translation of the Bible (Ostrog Bible, 1581), with whom the princes of Ostrog claimed kinship, as well

22 Cf. Ihor Ševčenko, *Україна між Сходом і Заходом [Ukraine Between East and West]*, Львів 2001, 178.

23 Cf. Herasym Smotrytsky, *Всякого стану православний читачу [For the Orthodox Reader of Every Status]*, in: *Острозька Біблія. Опрацював та приготував до друку єрмн. архимандрит др. Рафаїл (Роман Торконяк) за виданням Біблії 1581 р. [The Ostrog Bible. Edited and Prepared for Publication by Archimandrite Dr. Raphael (Roman Torkoniak) Based on the 1581 Edition of the Bible]*, Львів 2006, 19–21, 20–21.

as the status of defenders of the Orthodox faith. Later, it became entrenched in literature and was also adopted by religious authors. This comparison was part of an effort to create an ideal role model for the Orthodox aristocracy²⁴.

The model produced a widespread literary topos in the 17th and early 18th centuries when rulers of Ukraine were compared to Grand Prince Volodymyr. For example, an anonymous author of mid-17th century poetry glorified Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky because “Rossia”, a clerical term used for Ukraine, “grew” under his reign, like in the times of Volodymyr the Great²⁵. We find the same motive many years later in Theophanes Procopowicz’s speech dedicated to the birthday of the Russian emperor Peter I. The speaker said that the Emperor raised Rossia as Volodymyr did. A few decades earlier, Procopowicz – who was a Ukrainian-born philosopher, theologian and writer who wielded significant political influence in the Tsar’s court during the first third of the 18th century – used this topos in the traditional Ukrainian way in his 1705 historical play “Владимир” to glorify Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who was at the peak of his power at that time. After the fall of Ivan Mazepa, the term “Rossia” was not used for Ukraine but for Moscovia as a whole empire²⁶. After Hetman Mazepa’s defeat, he changed his political orientation and influenced the ideological agenda of the emerging Russian empire, drawing upon traditional cultural and ideological tools from Ukraine that had emerged within the Ukrainian clerical communities. Interestingly, today’s Kremlin propaganda uses the same motive for the glorification of Putin, a person who, according to their views, “raised Russia from its knees”.

24 On the social function of Smotrytsky’s poetry see: Viktoria Kolosova, Функції віршів в українських стародруках кінця XVI – першої половини XVII ст. [Functions of Verses in Ukrainian Early Prints from the Late 16th to the First Half of the 17th Century], in: Українське літературне барокко: збірник наукових праць [Ukrainian Literary Baroque: Collection of Scholarly Works], Київ 1987, 144–155, 147–148.

25 Cf. Чтиридесять тисяч Богдан войська споряжаєт [Bohdan Equips Forty Thousand Troops], in: Viktoria Kolosova/ Volodymyr Krekoten/ Mykola Sulyma (eds.), Українська поезія кінця XVI – середина XVII ст. [Ukrainian Poetry from the Late 16th to Mid-17th Century], Київ 1992, 101–104, 103–104.

26 Cf. Theophanes Procopowicz, Володимир [Volodymyr], in: Vasyl Yaremenko/ Valerii Shevchuk (eds.), Слово многоцінне: хрестоматія української літератури, створеної різними мовами в епоху Ренесансу та Бароко XV–XVIII століть, Книга 4 [The Priceless Word: Anthology of Ukrainian Literature Created in Various Languages During the Renaissance and Baroque Era, 15th-18th Centuries, Book 4], Київ 2006, 36–92, 36; Theophanes Procopowicz, Сочинения [Collected Works], Ленинград 1961, 38–48, 42.

The process of ethnically defining Russia was active during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Russian term “otechestvo” (fatherland) was elaborated by Ukrainian-born intellectuals according to the Cossack model of identity²⁷. The title of ‘autocrat/samoderzhets of Great, Little and White Rus’ used by Moscovian tsars after the 1654 treaty was just a dynastic claim – the same as we find in titles of the Polish kings (Grand Dukes of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia etc.). It did not mean that Lithuanians, Ruthenians and Prussians were the same people. Even in the early 19th century, Russians did not view Ukrainians as the same people. This is evident when we consider travel notes of the time²⁸. Ukrainian intellectuals pushed the process of redefining Moscovia as not just a territory under the sovereign rule, but as people with a particular cultural identity and for that reason they used confessional language, the only clear language at that time in Moscovia. The idea of confessional unity²⁹ was reinforced with the genealogical myth of ethnicities.

3. Synopsis’s Myth: Unexpected Consequence

According to this myth, the Moscovitians were proclaimed as successors of Noah’s grandson Meshech and depicted as the ancestors of all Ruthenian and Slavic peoples. In Ukrainian tradition, the Hebrew name, according to the Ostrog Bible – the first full text of the Scripture in Ukraine –, was transliterated as Mosoch (Мосох). The Normans were defined as a Slavic population as well. This was important because of the monarchist historical views of Kyivan scribes. They believed that the House of Romanovs was a direct descendant of the House of Riuryk (historically, this was not true)³⁰.

From the perspective of its narrative structure, the “Synopsis” appears somewhat archaic compared to other contemporary Ukrainian historical

27 Cf. Frank Sysyn, *The Persistence of the Little Russian Fatherland in the Russian Empire: The Evidence from “The History of the Rus, or of Little Russia” (“Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii”)*, in: Guido Hausmann/ Angela Rustemeyer (eds.), *Imperienvergleich: Beispiele und Ansätze aus osteuropäischer Perspektive. Festschrift für Andreas Kappeler (Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte, Band 75)*, Wiesbaden 2009, 39–49, 41.

28 Cf. Valentyna Shandra/ Olena Arkusha, *Україна в ХІХ столітті: людність та імперії [Ukraine in the 19th Century: Population and Empires]*, Київ 2022, 52.

29 The idea of confessional unity was also a project, not only because of the ecclesiastic independence of Kyiv from Moscow until 1685, but because the Moscovitian Church perceived Ukrainians and Belarusians as heretics rather than brothers in faith (for a long time in the 17th century the Church of Moscow did not recognize baptism in the Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Metropolis due to Moscovitian isolationism).

30 Cf. Zhylenko, *Синопис*, 75–76.

works³¹, which suggests that the text was narratively adapted for Moscovia. Furthermore, it was likely written opportunistically at a time when there was a high probability of Kyiv separating from the rest of the Zaporozhian host's territories and a real risk that it would be occupied by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth³².

The consonance between the words “Moscovitians” and “Mosoch” was used in creating mythological etymology. At the time, Ukrainian society sought legitimacy from the past and searched for the roots of Ukrainian culture by using written laws, historical sources and crown privileges. During the Catholic Counter Reformation at the turn of the 17th centuries, the principle of “Ad fontes” spread in the intense struggle for traditional liberties and the status of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. However, even Russian historians recognize that the genealogical myth represented in the Synopsis was not a creative invention, but rather a tactical step in search of financial support from the tsar, not a consistent ideological agenda. This conception about Mosoch as the progenitor of the Slavs was created in the 16th century by the Lithuanian chronicler Maciej Strykowski³³. His chronicle was popular in the early 17th century and was included in historical discussions initiated by both the original text and Ukrainian translations³⁴. Due to its widespread circulation in 18th century Russia, the role of the Synopsis in creating the myth of the “unified Russia” is well-documented among historians³⁵. Gizel, who was a supporter

31 Cf. Frank Sysyn, *Поняття нації в українській історіографії 1620–1690 рр.* [The Notion of Nation in Ukrainian Historiography 1620–1690], in: *Україна: культурна спадщина, національна свідомість, державність* [Ukraine: Cultural Heritage, National Consciousness, Statehood] 1 (1992) 49–79, here: 65–66, 71–74; Zenon Kohut, *Витоки парадигми єдності: Україна та створення російської національної історії (1620–1860-ті роки)* [Origins of the Unity Paradigm: Ukraine and the Creation of Russian National History, 1620–1860s], in: *Схід-Захід: історико-культурологічний збірник* [East-West: A Historical and Cultural Anthology] 5 (2001) 7–17, here: 14.

32 Cf. Ploky, *Origins*, 260.

33 Cf. Maciej Strykowski, *Літопис польський, литовський, жмудський і всієї Русі* [Polish, Lithuanian, Samogitian, and All Ruthenian Chronicle], Львів 2011 [1846], 76.

34 Cf. Christine Watson, *Tradition and Translation: Maciej Strykowski's Polish Chronicle in Seventeenth-Century Russian Manuscripts*, Uppsala 2012, 55–56.

35 Cf. Zenon Kohut, *Від Яфета до Москви: створення і перетворення біблійного родоводу слов'яну польській, українській та російській історіографії* [From Japheth to Moscow: The Creation and Transformation of the Biblical Genealogy of the Slavs in Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian Historiography], in: *Схід-Захід: історико-культурологічний збірник* [East-West: A Historical and Cultural Collection] 9–10 (2008) 6–22; Alexei Miller, *Украинский вопрос в Российской империи* [The Ukrainian Question in the Russian Empire], Киев 2013, 39–41.

of the Synopsis, like the clergy of the Kyiv Metropolis in general, was not unequivocally pro-Moscow, as seen in the historical evidence³⁶. Perceiving the “Synopsis” as a fundamentally pro-Moscovian text hindered researchers from recognizing its thinly veiled critique of Moscow. In the section “On Ruthenian, or Rossian people ...,” there is a reminiscence from the prophetic book of Ezekiel (chapters 38–39), where Meshech is the title of Gog, the personification of the apocalyptic (“Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal”, Ezek. 38:3) infernal people bringing destruction against which the Son of Man will stand. According to the canonical interpretation, he is understood as Christ. In the 38th chapter, Prince Meshech ascends and arrives at the “unwalled villages,” where he finds those “dwelling without walls” and brings ruin. In the 39th chapter, he is given as food to “the ravenous birds of every sort”. This resembles the paradoxical wit that was a typical characteristic of Baroque literature, in which apocalyptic criticism is hidden under the guise of panegyric.

The evidence confirms the hypothesis that the “Synopsis” reflected the position of the clergy, specifically the Lavra, at a particularly dramatic geopolitical moment with a relatively short-term horizon. Paradoxically, this baroque wit, which combined mythological genealogy with scholastic dialectics, had a far-reaching political influence due to the subsequent widespread circulation.

4. Form and Matter: Between Scholastic Explanation and its Political Implications

What was the role of logics, metaphysics and scholasticism? Ukraine is a country of the victorious Counter-Reformation, its Orthodox version. The Ortho-

36 He, among others, did not swear allegiance to the Ukrainian-Moscovite agreement of 1654. After the entry of Moscovitian ‘streltsy’ (musketeers) into Kyiv, he sent complaints to the tsar about their lawlessness in the city. He publicly refused to raise his glass in honor of the Muscovite voivode Sheremetiev and the pro-Moscow hetman Ivan Briukhovetsky, who supposedly, during his visit to Moscow, promised, contrary to the canonical subordination of the Kyiv Metropolis to Constantinople, to subordinate it to the Moscow Patriarchate and subsequently appoint a Moscovite as the next Metropolitan. Cf. Zhylenko, *Синосис*, 19–20; Olha Krainia, *Вплив мілітаризації суспільства на життя Церкви в Україні (аналіз документів з історії Києво-Печерської лаври 2-ї половини XVII-XVIII ст.)* [The Influence of Militarization of Society on the Life of the Church in Ukraine (Analysis of Documents from the History of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra in the Second Half of the 17th-18th Century)], in: *Церква-наука-суспільство: питання взаємодії. Матеріали XV міжнародної наукової конференції* [Church-Science-Society: An Issue of Interaction. Proceedings of the 15th International Scientific Conference], Київ 2017, 16–25, here: 18.

dox Church in Ukraine faced many challenges to its social status and cultural identity in the 16th and 17th centuries. As a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the Union of Lublin in 1569, Ukraine and its Orthodox population became part of the Catholic polity. Protestantism, especially the most radical branches that were more widespread in Ukraine than in other countries, challenged the prominence of the Orthodox Church and its irrational attitude towards faith. The attempt to solve a deep institutional crisis of the Church through the interdenominational Union of Berestia (Brest) in 1596 provoked additional division between the Greek Catholic (Union) Church and the Orthodox (Disunion) Church³⁷. Despite that, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine accepted the Catholic Counter-Reformation model of cultural and institutional renovation, especially when Petro Mohyla was elected as Metropolitan of Kyiv.

Inokentii Gizel was a part of his circle and attempted to integrate Western philosophy into Orthodox tradition. Importantly, Gizel attempted to create a strict approach to looking at faith and dogma using logical thinking and categorizing. Inokentii Gizel rationalized moral thought of the Orthodox tradition as well (“Миръ съ Богомъ Члвѣку”/“Peace with God for Man”, 1669). Gizel widely used a categorical way of thinking that he borrowed from a Western philosophy of logic and adapted to moral issues. The strict interrelation of morals and politics was important in the Church’s anti-Machiavellianist attitude. Thanks to Max Weber we know that theology is a form of religious rationalization. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that “Peace with God for Man” was written during the “Ruina” (Ruin). It was a strict theological attempt to rationalize morality and to provide systematic moral guidelines³⁸. At the same time, Giovanna Brogi Bercoff analyzed the symbolic dimension of the *tractatus*. “Peace with God for Man” provided an implicit critique of tactical political and military alliances with infidels³⁹. In the case of Gizel, though, we found

37 For example, the main reason of Khmelnytsky’s uprising was often explained by contemporaries in terms of religious persecutions caused by the Union, see: Serhii Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in early Modern Ukraine*, Oxford 2001, 176.

38 Gizel provided a systematic categorization of the sins of various social groups. This approach illustrated very clearly the roots of his moral philosophy in scholastic logics. Chapter 10 in his *tractatus* was dedicated to this matter. Cf. Inokentii Gizel, *Мир з Богом чоловіку* [Peace with God for Man], in: idem, *Вибрані твори у трьох томах, Том 1, Книга 1* [Selected Works in Three Volumes, Volume 1, Book 1], Київ-Львів 2009, 302–331.

39 Cf. Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, “Мир з Богом чоловіку” як система моральної філософії [“Peace with God for Man” as a System of Moral Philosophy], in: Inokentii

interdependence, or 'logic-moral-politics'. Every entity was understood as a unity of form (*εἶδος, forma*) and matter (*ὑλη, materia*) which were inextricably connected. Two components, form and matter, were incomplete (*substantia incompleta*) by itself. Matter and form are something interdependent. Matter is potential existence. Form shapes it. Form transforms matter from potential into real existence. Although form is fundamentally there first, this does not mean that it is pre-existent⁴⁰. Form could not exist without matter as well⁴¹. That ontological conception had to be attractive,⁴² especially for Orthodox clerics, because it was in agreement with Orthodox Christology. Jesus Christ was a human being and God at the same time. He had a human and divine will at the same time. Additionally, the search for a new wave of religious restoration in the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the late 16th and first half of the 17th centuries was motivated by resistance to Socinian Unitarianism that was still widespread in Ukraine before the Bohdan Khmelnytsky Uprising.

The same approach was relevant to Aristotle and his followers. Aristotle's view on the interrelation between matter and form was a key epistemological framework in many areas of his study, including social and political theory⁴³.

Gizel, *Вибрані твори у трьох томах, Том 3* [Selected Works in Three Volumes, Volume 3], Київ-Львів 2011, 103–132, here: 112–114.

- 40 Cf. Olexii Panuch, *Аристотелева "усія": між субстанцією, сутністю і неперекладністю* [Aristotle's "οὐσία" between Substance, Essence, and Untranslatability], in: *Філософська думка* [Philosophical Thought] 5 (2016) 33–49, here: 36.
- 41 Cf. Met. 7, 1032b. I used the Ukrainian translation of Aristotle's "Metaphysics" by Oleksii Panuch and the English translation by Hugh Tredennick that is available online. Cf. Aristotle, *Μεταφυσικα* [Metaphysics], Київ 2022, 447–448; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by Hugh Tredennick. URL: <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0086.tlg025.perseus-engl:7.1032b> [accessed: 24 October 2023].
- 42 This conception was relevant for the Ukrainian academic philosophy until the 18th century. "Form is not emerging by itself, but emerging with matter for creating something complex," wrote Theophanes Procopowicz (my translation – V.S.). Cf. Theophanes Procopowicz, *Логіка. Натурфілософія, або фізика. Етика* [Logic. Natural Philosophy or Physics. Ethics], in: Theophanes Procopowicz, *Філософські твори у трьох томах, Том 2* [Philosophical Works in Three Volumes, Volume 2], Київ 1980, 116–191, 138.
- 43 For example, in his *Politics*, Aristotle defined different political orders and explained the role of citizens under different systems. The order seems to be a form of constitution: monarchy, aristocracy and *politeia* with some variations like democracy or tyranny. These forms shape the context for the lawmaking process and create the exact way in which every order manifests itself. Epistemologically, he viewed the political order within the framework of matter/ form interrelation with political order as 'form' and citizens and laws as 'matter' of the state. This becomes evident when he explains that political order could be implemented only through the citizens' ability to deal with it

Generally, Second Scholasticism was guided by that landmark as an analytical tool. The key idea was that logic provides a general way of looking at every field of reality.

Metaphysics follows this ontology as well. A human being was understood as the unity of soul (form) and body (matter)⁴⁴. If we do not take into account some political challenges of the first third of the 17th century, the Orthodox view on the nature of Christ was the main cultural precondition for why scholastic ontology was successfully implemented in Orthodox theology in Ukraine. The personality of Christ was an intellectual prototype for that kind of thinking, for the idea of the unbreakable link between two essences⁴⁵. Gizel provided a 'physical' interpretation of form and soul as a principle by which we live⁴⁶, move and exist (*principium, quo vivimus, movemur et sumus*). Matter is just a potential existence. When it is shaped by form, it could be totally real and alive. To be more specific, the metaphysical idea was introduced in politics with the same pattern as it was introduced to the problem of soul and body: Kyiv (Church resurrection and culture) was a soul for Moscow (state and power) as a body.

Therefore, we may separate this conceptualization into two dimensions: a metaphysical and a political one. The metaphysical dimension suggests that Moscow was a matter, a potential existence that should be reconsidered ac-

and follow it (cf. Pol. 4, 1289a). Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, translated by H. Rackham, London 1932, 281–283.

- 44 Cf. Roland Pietsch, "Tractatus de Anima" Інокентія Гізеля в контексті антропологічних ідей Аристотеля та його схоластичних інтерпретаторів ["Tractatus de Anima" by Inokentii Gizel in the Context of Aristotle's Anthropological Ideas and His Scholastic Interpreters], in: Gizel, *Вибрані твори* 3, 31–50, here: 33–35, 50.
- 45 It seems this literary topos (in terms of Ernst Robert Curtius) was commonplace for Ukrainian Baroque literature from the early 17th century. "[...] [A] Hetman is glorious not through himself, but due to his military. And the military is glorious through the Hetman [...]" said Kasian Sakovych who was the first to introduce the scholastic way of thinking to Orthodox Ukraine before Gizel in his *tractatus* published in 1620 (my prose translation – V.S.). Cf. Kasian Sakovych, *Вірші на жалосний погреб зацного рицера Петра Конашевича Сагайдачного* [Verses for the Lamentable Funeral of the Distinguished Knight Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny], in: Myshanych (ed.), *Українська література*, 220–238, 222; Ernst Robert Curtius, *Європейська література і латинське Середньовіччя* [European Literature and Latin Middle Ages], translated by Anatolii Onyshko, Львів 2007, 93–123.
- 46 Cf. Yaroslava Stratii, *Інтерпретація проблеми сутності душі та її здатностей у "Трактаті про душу" Інокентія Гізеля* [Interpretation of the Problem of the Essence of the Soul and Its Capabilities in Inokentii Gizel's "Tractatus de Anima"], in: Gizel, *Вибрані твори* 3, 51–81, here: 53, 56–57.

ording to the new historiosophical view. Kyiv was a form. Its traditions and cultural discourses should shape a new complex Rossian/Russian identity. In this dimension, Kyiv was a source like a metaphysical mother. Moscow was a recipient. The political dimension had another hierarchy that was consistent with the actual political context in the third part of the 17th century. Myth-making was a key tool in creating the political dimension, while logical and metaphysical categorizing was a key tool for the metaphysical dimension. Metaphysical speculation in politics paradoxically denied the self-sufficiency of each component. It was *distinctio rationis* (rational distinction)⁴⁷ between Ukraine and Moscovia, which could not be differentiated as form and matter. The idea of non-difference between Ukraine and Moscovia was a result of logical speculation, not an ontological fact.

5. Conclusions

Ukrainian clerics simulated relations between Ukraine and Moscovia according to the scholastic way of thinking. Gizel united the Synopsis and scholastic philosophy. This link is surprising because of the myth-making style of the Synopsis and the strict logical considerations in Gizel's philosophical writings. However, we can reconstruct some common discourse. The political ideogeme of non-difference between Ukraine and Moscovia was a logical categorization *ex natura rei*. Theophanes Procopowicz continued the scholastic line that started in the first half of the 17th century in Ukraine. The way in which historical knowledge was organized, was based on logical procedures of Aristotelian, more specifically scholastic philosophy. Logical and metaphysical categories were used as political. The ideological precondition of the "unified people" myth was created by Kyivan scribes in the 17th century. It was caused by the extrapolation of metaphysical categories and a scholastic approach to political issues under particular historical circumstances: the Protestant challenge, the Catholic Counter-Reformation and the political crisis of the Ruin period. Paradoxically, the ideological construct that is presented as nativist in contemporary Russia, can't be explained without reference to Western thought

47 Gizel was followed by this scholastic distinction between *distinctio rationis* and *distinctio realis* in his logics, Inokentii Gizel, Tractatus tertius "De distinctionibus". Tractatus quartus "De universalibus", in: Gizel, Вибрані твори 2, 53–62. See the explanation in: Mykola Symchych, Проблема проміжних розрізень у філософському курсі Інокентія Гізеля [The Problem of Intermediate Distinctions in the Philosophical Course of Inokentii Gizel], in: Sententiae 2 (2009) 201–216.

and the unintended early modern influence from Ukraine. That conception was an attempt to find a rational solution for political challenges in Ukraine during the Ruin period by harmonizing logic and politics. Paradoxically, that attempt was aggressively consumed by imperialism and its propaganda. The idea of unity was transformed into the idea of denial when confessional unity was replaced by national identity. In fact, the original idea about confessional unity and ethnic ties changed when Russian imperialism started to grow in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The source of the unity myth was rooted in political resentment of part of the clerical elites in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church attempted to create a framework to protect the episcopal supremacy and distanced itself from the mass movements. This intention aligned very well with the monarchical sympathies of the clergy. Scholastic logic was used as a means to help form the myth of ethnic unity⁴⁸.

48 Today's Orthodox Church of Ukraine has experienced a true revolution in legitimacy. A good example is the ongoing calendar reform. The Church hierarchs follow laymen's expectations.

The Tools of Modern Russian Colonization: The Case of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace¹

Elmira Ablyalimova-Chyihoz

This article examines the strategies of cultural eradication employed by Russia in Crimea, focusing on the destructive renovation of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace. The study is based on findings from two projects by the Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies which investigate violations of international humanitarian law in Crimea and other occupied Ukrainian territories. The article highlights three main areas: Russia's violations of Ukraine's cultural property in general, a detailed analysis of these violations in Crimea, and the implications of the targeted renovation of the Khan's Palace. Mrs. Ablyalimova argues that these actions are part of a broader imperialistic agenda aimed at erasing Crimean Tatar cultural heritage and asserts the importance of international attention to prevent the destruction of this unique cultural site.

1. Introduction

This article summarizes the findings of two projects that have been implemented by the non-governmental organization Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies (CISS)² on the protection of Ukraine's cultural property in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and the investigation of the crimes against it. The first project – “Violations of the Rules of International Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflict: Protection of Cultural Property” that was realized with

1 See also: Elmira Ablyalimova-Chyihoz/Denys Yashnyi, Colonization Through Destruction and Distortion: The Case of the Bakhchisaray Khan's Palace, in: *Baltic Rim Economies 2* (2022) 60 f.

2 CISS. URL: <https://ciss.org.ua/en/home.html>. All internet links in this article were last accessed on 5 April 2024.

the financial support from the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF) – was conducted throughout most of 2019.³ It combined the efforts of cultural heritage protection professionals, archaeologists, museum top management and lawyers. The project investigated the principal violations against Ukraine's cultural property in occupied Crimea, the policy lacunas in the field and the possible steps Ukraine can take now to document Russia's violations and hold it accountable based on state and individual criminal responsibility.

The second project – “Spreading Activities and Relaunching the Documentation of Violations: Cultural Heritage of Ukraine in Wartime” – was realized with the financial support from USAID/ENGAGE (Enhance Non-Governmental Actors and Grassroots Engagement) and began in April 2023.⁴ It sustains and strengthens the efforts of the first project and extends its activity to the Ukrainian territories occupied since February 2022: the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

The article focuses on three principal aspects of the projects:

1. overviewing Russia's main violations against Ukraine's cultural property in general
2. analyzing Russia's violations against Ukraine's cultural property in Crimea
3. exploring the destructive renovation of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace, the one-of-a-kind remaining architectural heritage of the Crimean Tatars, Ukraine's indigenous people, as the most striking example of Russia's impe-

-
- 3 Cf. Ukrinform, У Києві презентували дослідження про стан пам'яток в окупованому Криму [A Study of the State of Monuments in Occupied Crimea Was Presented in Kyiv] (10 December 2019). URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-crimea/2835305-u-kievi-prezentuvali-doslidzenna-pro-stan-pamatok-v-okupovanomu-krimu.html>; Пам'ятки археології, які потрапили під будівництво траси Керч – Севастополь [Archaeological monuments that are endangered due to the construction of the Tavrida highway (Sevastopol – Kerch)] (1 December 2019). URL: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/embed?mid=1vBo1tHfZCKDe1Bgx6qdL9DVKf-Xn-_LP&ll=45.14520975696858%2C34.73769979726836&z=9; Elmira Abliialimova/Maksym Levada, Методичні рекомендації з моніторингу культурної спадщини, яка залишилась на території тимчасово окупованого Криму [Guidelines for Monitoring the Cultural Heritage that Remains in the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Crimea], Kyiv 2019, 8–12. URL: https://ciss.org.ua/files/site/page_file//tflice2f3495010cc3e3570041c72815af42.pdf.
 - 4 Cf. Mariia Kabatsii, Росія вчинила 534 злочини проти культурної спадщини України [Russia Has Committed 534 Crimes Against the Cultural Heritage of Ukraine] (28 September 2023). URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2023/09/28/256787>; UNESCO, In the Face of War. UNESCO's Action in Ukraine (CPE-2023/WS/6 Rev. 6), 6. URL: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384454>.

rialistic policy of cultural erasure in Crimea, which should not recede from the attention of the international community.

2. Overview of Russia's Main Violations Against Ukraine's Cultural Property

As of 5 January 2023, Ukraine's Ministry of Culture reported 1,189 destroyed or damaged cultural institutions or objects of cultural heritage.⁵ UNESCO has been assessing the damage to cultural sites in Ukraine since the full-scale invasion. As of 27 March 2024, the organisation has verified damage to 349 sites since 24 February 2022.⁶ The latter include "127 religious sites, 157 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, 31 museums, 19 monuments, 14 libraries, 1 archive"⁷. However, the actual difference between the official data and the real damage is probably large.

Since late 2017, the group of experts of the NGO CISS has been engaged in documenting activities that have helped identify some types of violations of international humanitarian law according to the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999). These are bombardments, damage, destruction, use for military purposes, illegal archaeological excavations, items/artifacts removed during illegal archaeological excavations, illicit removal or export of museum items/collections, alteration/reconstruction/construction works on cultural heritage sites, illegal underwater archaeological explorations, and the misappropriation of cultural property/cultural heritage and cultural institutions.⁸

5 Cf. Yaroslav Pryshchera, *Через війну в Україні пошкоджено 1189 об'єктів культурної інфраструктури – Мінкульт* [As a Result of the War in Ukraine, 1,189 objects of Cultural Infrastructure Were Damaged – Ministry of Culture] (5 January 2023). URL: <https://suspilne.media/353110-cerez-vijnu-v-ukraini-poskodzeno-1189-obektiv-kulturnoi-infrastrukturi-minkult/>; Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, *1,373 Objects of Cultural Infrastructure Have Already been Damaged Because of Russian Aggression in Ukraine* (4 April 2023). URL: <https://mcip.gov.ua/en/news/1-373-objects-of-cultural-infrastructure-have-already-been-damaged-because-of-russian-aggression-in-ukraine/>.

6 Cf. UNESCO, *Damaged Cultural Sites in Ukraine Verified by UNESCO* (2 April 2024). URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/damaged-cultural-sites-ukraine-verified-unesco>.

7 Ibidem.

8 Cf. CISS, *Register of Objects Affected by Russian Aggression*. URL: <https://ciss.org.ua/en/reestr-obektiv-postrajdalih-vid-rosiskoi-agresiii.html>.

UNESCO also reports damage to 3,793 educational institutions across Ukraine and the killings of 14 journalists.⁹ These killings add up to the legacy of persecution of civil society activists in Donbas and occupied Crimea, including representatives of the indigenous people – the Crimean Tatars¹⁰, whose heritage has been under particular threat in the occupied peninsula since the beginning of Russia's aggression in 2014¹¹.

3. Analysis of Russia's Violations Against Ukraine's Cultural Property in Crimea

From the beginning of the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in February – March 2014, human rights champions have been consistently detecting gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including sham trials, persecution, deportation¹², discrimination against the use of the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian languages, violations of the right to education in mother tongue and to study the history of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, restrictions on the development of Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian culture¹³, and more.

Against this background, cultural heritage has proved to be one of the most vulnerable areas. This is manifested on many levels, namely the degree of attention from international governments and non-government agencies (crimes against persons, such as torture, persecution, enforced disappearances, and sham trials, are usually in the spotlight), the easiness and depth of documenta-

9 Cf. UNESCO, *In the Face of War*, 13. See also: Reporters Without Borders, *More than 100 Journalists Victims of Russian Crimes During Two Years of Covering War in Ukraine* (12 February 2024). URL: <https://rsf.org/en/more-100-journalists-victims-russian-crimes-during-two-years-covering-war-ukraine>.

10 Cf. UNESCO, *Follow-up to Decisions and Resolutions Adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference at their Previous Sessions, Part I: Programme Issues, C. Follow-up of the Situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine)* (207 EX/5.I.C) (13 September 2019), 7. URL: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370522>.

11 Cf. Centre for Defense Strategies, *Cultural Heritage as an Element of National Security: the Crimea Lens*, Kyiv 2021. URL: <https://defence.org.ua/en/cultural-heritage-as-an-element-of-national-security-the-crimea-lens>.

12 Cf. U.S. Department of State, *2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ukraine – Crimea*. URL: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ukraine/crimea/>.

13 Cf. Virtual Museum of Russian Aggression, *Events of the Occupation*. URL: <https://rusaggression.gov.ua/en/events.html>.

tion and the priority of legal and political action on such violations in Ukraine and internationally.¹⁴

Despite the aforementioned, the documentation of violations suggests that Russia commits the following violations of international humanitarian law – the law of armed conflict – in relation to Ukraine’s cultural property in Crimea¹⁵:

1. Illegal relocation of cultural property from the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea to the Russian Federation. Experts from the NGO CISS have been able to trace more than 700 museum items from Crimea that were exhibited in Russia from 2014 to 2020¹⁶;
2. Illegal archeological research on the territory of temporarily occupied Crimea. The Russian authorities have unilaterally supported unlawful archaeological excavations in occupied Crimea. In 2014–2020, according to information from the NGO CISS, 410 permits for such activities were issued.¹⁷ Many excavations were conducted with the sole purpose of facilitating the construction of the Tavrida highway connecting the Kerch Bridge with Sevastopol, which is important in military-strategic terms¹⁸;
3. Appropriation of cultural property and cultural institutions by Russia. More than 150,000 items from the Crimean Museum have been included in the State Catalogue of the Museum Fund of the Russian Federation and more than 8,000 monuments of the history and culture of Crimea have been added to the State Register of Objects of the Cultural Heritage of the Russian Federation¹⁹;

14 Cf. Elmira Ablialimova-Chyihoz et al., *Російська агресія проти України: культурна спадщина, неоімперіалізм і міжнародне право* [Russian Aggression Against Ukraine: Cultural Heritage, Neoimperialism and International Law], Kyiv 2023, 5–12. URL: https://ciss.org.ua/files/site/page_file/tfilee105fec62c46a58e1f59c3512c6e1363.pdf.

15 Cf. CISS, Register of Objects Affected by Russian Aggression. Autonomous Republic of Crimea. URL: <http://surl.li/uirtw>.

16 Cf. idem, Register of Objects Affected by Russian Aggression. Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Illicit Removal or Export of Museum Items. URL: <http://surl.li/uirvj>.

17 Cf. idem, Register of Objects Affected by Russian Aggression. Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Illegal Archaeological Excavations. Items/Artifacts Removed During Illegal Archaeological Excavations. Illegal Underwater Archaeological Explorations. URL: <http://surl.li/ujpol>.

18 Cf. Пам’ятки археології.

19 Cf. Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Сведения из Единого государственного реестра объектов культурного наследия (памятников истории и культуры) народов Российской Федерации. Республика Крым [Information from the Unified State Register of Cultural Heritage Objects (Historical and Cultural Mon-

4. Loss of individual elements which violates the authenticity (genuineness) of the item or object (including restructuring, adding superstructures, etc.). The most glaring example of this violation is the so-called restoration of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace.

4. Exploration of the Destructive Renovation of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace

Humanitarian aggression is one of the modern methods of the war that the Russian Federation has been waging against Ukraine. While the goal of the military aggression is the enemy's physical extermination, the aim of the humanitarian aggression is the destruction of its identity²⁰.

To achieve this goal, the occupying authorities:

1. conduct activities against the language, culture and historical memory
2. carry out campaigns to spread propaganda
3. make use of religious differences in order to ignite ethnic conflicts.²¹

Since Russia's occupation of the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014, human rights organizations have also reported about the "Russification"²² of the educational process (kindergartens, schools, universities) in the occupied territory. In combination with the questioning of the Ukrainian identity and history by

uments) of the Peoples of the Russian Federation. Republic of Crimea]. URL: <https://opendata.mkrf.ru/opendata/7705851331-egrkn/>; idem, Государственный каталог Музейного фонда Российской Федерации [State Catalogue of the Museum Fund of the Russian Federation]. URL: <https://opendata.mkrf.ru/opendata/7705851331-museum-exhibits>.

- 20 Cf. Iryna Saienko, Інформаційна та гуманітарна агресія як визначальна сучасна загроза українській державності [Informational and Humanitarian Aggression as a Defining Contemporary Threat to Ukrainian Statehood], in: Перспективи 66 (2015) 103–109. URL: <http://dspace.pdpu.edu.ua/handle/123456789/9846>; Valery Leonov et al., Війни XXI століття: технології "гібридної війни" [Wars of the XXIth Century: Technologies of "Hybrid Warfare"], in: Збірник наукових праць Центру воєнно-стратегічних досліджень 53 (2015) 24–30.
- 21 Cf. Gregory H. Stanton, The Ten Stages of Genocide (2013). URL: <http://www.genocide-watch.com/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html>.
- 22 "Окупанти проводять агресивну політику русифікації та колонізації Криму [...]" (Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, 9 років окупації та спротиву в Криму: 180 громадян України досі перебувають за ґратами [9 Years of Occupation and Resistance in Crimea: 180 Ukrainian Citizens Are Still Imprisoned]) (28 February 2023). URL: <https://www.helsinki.org.ua/articles/9-rokiv-okupatsii-ta-sprotyvu-v-krymu-180-hromadian-ukrainy-dosi-perebuvauiut-za-gratamy>).

Russia²³, this illustrates that the destruction and plunder of cultural heritage in wartime far exceeds casual damage. Indeed, cultural heritage can be a means to pursue and fuel a war.

As President Putin has declared, “Crimea, ancient Korsun, Khersones, Sevastopol – all of them bear an enormous civilizational and sacral meaning for Russia, just as the Temple Mount of Jerusalem does for those who profess Islam and Judaism”²⁴. Such an attitude highlights the crucial role of cultural heritage, history, religion, education and academia as, depending on the context, tools or victims in Russia’s encroachment on Ukraine’s territorial and existential sovereignty. Furthermore, certain neo-imperialist assertions – such as that the people of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are allegedly one nation or that Crimea has allegedly always been Russian – have been inherent in the Kremlin’s policy towards Ukraine throughout the years.²⁵

Geographically, Crimea and Russia are neighbors. Throughout their history, they have neighbored each other as independent entities for a long time. Although the names of these neighbors have changed (from the Grand Duchy of Moscow to the Russian Empire, then the Soviet Union and, finally, the Russian Federation; from the Crimean Ulus of the Golden Horde to the Crimean Khanate (until 1783), from Tavrida province of the Russian Empire to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol of Ukraine), belligerent Russian foreign policy has remained intact and has been aimed at incorporating the neighboring lands into the empire. The official Russian policy towards the Crimean, and later Ukrainian, lands has gone through several stages with different pacing, forms, methods, intensity and effectiveness in the imperial colonial expansion; but the aim of incorporation and the process of pursuing it has constantly been maintained.²⁶

23 Cf. National Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine, *Технологія русифікації Криму: імперські уроки* [Technology of Russification of Crimea: Imperial Lessons] (3 April 2023). URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-crimea/3446656-tehnologija-rusifikacii-krimu-imperski-uroki.html>.

24 Cited in: Carl Schreck, *Crimea Is A ‘Sacred’ Land. But for Whom?* (4 December 2014). URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-crimea-orthodox-vladimir-great-religion-ukraine-russia/26725761.html>.

25 Cf. Duncan Allan et al., *Myths and Misconceptions in the Debate on Russia. How They Affect Western Policy, and What Can be Done* (13 May 2021). URL: <https://www.chat-hamhouse.org/2021/05/myths-and-misconceptions-debate-russia>, especially myths 11 and 12.

26 Cf. Hulnara Abdulaeva, *Кримські татари. Від етногенезу до державності* [Crimean Tatars. From Ethnogenesis to Statehood], Kyiv 2021, 234–262; Serhii Plokh, *Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine*, New York City 2021, 181–247.

In 1783, the Crimean Khanate was annexed by the Russian Empire in violation of a treaty signed just a few years before. The years following this annexation were characterized by progressive restrictions on the Crimean Tatars' rights and freedoms, increasing landlessness contributing to the emigration of the indigenous people, growing tendencies of assimilation and Russification; purposeful division of the Crimean Tatar society, and predatory exploitation of the citizens and material resources of Crimea²⁷.

The policy of the USSR toward the Crimean Tatar people was exactly the same as that of the previous regime, culminating in the 1944 deportation of all Crimean Tatars from Crimea to different parts of the USSR.²⁸ Terror against its own population was the most notable trait of the Soviet Union. Inhumane conditions during the weeks-long transportation, the lack of accommodation facilities and food, the inability of Crimean Tatars to adapt to the new climate conditions and the rapid spread of diseases had an enormous demographic impact during the first years of the Crimean Tatars' exile. 46% of the total number of the deportees died between 1 July 1944 and 1 January 1947 due to starvation and disease. All Crimean Tatars were forced to work in large-scale projects implemented by the Soviet GULAG system.

Then the Soviet regime began relocating people from Ukraine and Russia to Crimea. "Toponymic repressions" were carried out in the peninsula: most towns, villages, mountains and rivers, which had had indigenous Crimean Tatar names, were assigned new Russian names. There were some exceptions, which include Bakhchysarai and a few other towns. The Soviet authorities opened cinemas and shops in mosques, destroyed our monuments, and burned manuscripts and ancient books.²⁹ Nothing remained of the Crimean Tatars in Soviet Crimea, except for the Bakhchysarai Khan Palace and the ruins of some monuments from the period of the Golden Horde.

27 Cf. Hakan Kırımlı, *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars (1905–1916) (Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage 7)*, Leiden et al. 1996, 1–32.

28 Cf. BBC News Ukraine, *Депортація кримських татар у запитаннях і відповідях [Deportation of Crimean Tatars in Questions and Answers]* (18 May 2015). URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/society/2015/05/150514_tatars_deportation_ko; Gulnara Bekirova, *Пів століття опору. Кримські татари від вигнання до повернення (1941–1991 pp.)*. Нарис політичної історії [Half a Century of Resistance: Crimean Tatars from Exile to Return (1941–1991): An Outline of Political History], Kyiv 2017, 89–131.

29 Cf. Oleh Bazhan et al. (ed.), *Крим в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1940–2015) [Crimea in the Conditions of Socio-Political Transformations (1940–2015)]*, Kyiv 2016, 7–79.

Soviet historical records falsified Crimean Tatars' history beyond recognition.³⁰ Although the first steps of mythologizing the history of Crimea began to form at the end of the 18th century, the large-scale falsification of the history of the peninsula, which gave rise to many of the current myths, began after (and because of) the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944. The reason for these falsifications was always the same: the need to justify the capture of new territories. Just before and immediately after the liquidation of the Crimean Khanate and the annexation of its territory by the Russian Empire at the end of 18th century, "such a policy was presented as a triumph of 'civilization' over 'barbarism'". This falsification of the history of the peninsula by the Soviet regime after the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 "justified" that deportation.³¹

The Crimean Tatars, led by the Crimean Tatar National Movement, were not allowed to return to Crimea from exile until the beginning of Perestroika in the mid-1980s. As a result, in the early 1990s, the Crimean Tatars were the third largest ethnic group in their homeland. Now the Russian Federation is continuing its former policy towards the Crimean Tatars, which consists of the obvious colonial and ideological tactics intended to modify the historical and cultural narrative of Crimea and Russify the past, present and future of the peninsula as deeply as possible.

That historical background information explains the occupying authorities' intentions in the case of the so-called restoration works in the Bakhchysarai Khan Palace. As the only surviving object of 300 years of statehood and the representative political and administrative center of the Crimean Tatar state during the 16th-18th centuries³², the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace has great spiritual value for the Crimean Tatars³³, who were historically formed and emerged as the indigenous people in Crimea and in the Northern Black Sea region³⁴.

30 Cf. Serhii Hromenko, *250 Years of Falsehoods: Russian Myths about the History of Crimea*, Kyiv 2019.

31 Idem, #CrimealsOurs. *History of the Russian Myth*, Kyiv 2017, 8, URL: https://shronl.chtyvo.org.ua/Hromenko_Serhii/CrimeaIsOurs_History_of_the-Russian_Myth_anhl.pdf?PHPSESSID=iujuf8etnemr6851d3i61rq2e0.

32 Cf. Aliye Ibraghimova, *Бахчисарайский ханский дворец XVI-XVIII вв.* [Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace 16-18 Cent.], Simferopol' 2013, 97-176. URL: https://ciss.org.ua/site_source/strategy/sites/ibragimova.pdf.

33 Cf. UNESCO, *Tentative Lists. The Historical Surroundings of Crimean Khans' Capital in Bakhchysarai*. Description (24 September 2012). URL: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5774/>.

34 Cf. Abdulaieva, *Кримські татари*, 234-262; Plokhly, *Gates of Europe*, 12-150.

The complex was originally built in the 16th century as the main residence of the monarchs of the Crimean Khanate – the state of the Crimean Tatar people – and served as the political, administrative, religious and cultural center of the Crimean Tatar community. It was here that the first Qurultay (congress) of the Crimean Tatar people was held in 1917³⁵, and it was here that the contemporary delegates of the Qurultay swore an oath of allegiance to their people before the illegal occupation in 2014.³⁶

Russia's destruction of the Khan's Palace in Bakhchysarai has reached tragic proportions, with the monument being stripped of its authenticity and turned into a shoddily renovated "new build".³⁷ The key factors to consider when restoring historic buildings include maintaining the building's original character and structure, and ensuring that the materials and methods used are true to the time period.³⁸

The following two factors play a decisive role here:

- Applying basic scientific principles when carrying out the restoration work; compliance with the correct criteria for choosing the appropriate restoration method, and taking into account the reversibility of the works conducted.
- Use of authentic building materials and technologies, which allow for the preserving of the object's authenticity as much as possible.³⁴

These factors are of utmost importance because authenticity is fundamental in many respects. An ancient building, replaced by a new copy, loses its value as a historical witness of the past, retaining only the value of a visual illustration. It no longer exists as a monument of material culture.³⁹

35 Cf. Andrii Ivanets, *First Kurultai: from the Crimean Tatar Constituent Assembly to the National Parliament (1917–1918)*, Kyiv, 2018, 65–88.

36 Cf. Gulnara Bekirova et al., *Історія Криму та кримськотатарського народу. Навчальний посібник [History of Crimea and the Crimean Tatar people. Textbook]*, Kyiv 2020, 181. URL: https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Bekirova_Hulnara/Istoriia_Krymu_ta_krymskotatarskoho_narodu.pdf.

37 Cf. CISS, *Об'єкти руйнівної реставрації. Бахчисарайський Ханський палац [Objects of Destructive Restoration. Bakhchysarai Khan Palace]*. URL: https://ciss.org.ua/ua/sk_page.html?object_code=69423987d1a204e0bf9198f3e4a1fe51.

38 Cf. UNESCO, *Preserving and Restoring Monuments and Historic Buildings*, Paris 1972, 18–30, 49–62.

39 Cf. ICOMOS, *The NARA Document on Authenticity (1994)*. URL: <https://www.icomos.org/fr/accueil-home/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/386-the-nara-document-on-authenticity-1994>.

The work carried out since 2016 has had nothing in common with restoration and its aforementioned principles. The scale of destruction is truly appalling. All the works that have been carried out since 2016 have been conducted without any thorough and comprehensive archeological surveys and structural inspections that must be done prior to the restoration works and be the rationale for any restorative interferences⁴⁰.

The Great Khan's Mosque, the oldest monument of the complex (dated 1533), was the one which the occupation authorities began to work on which not only caused the outrage of Crimean activists, but also became the subject of relevant reports of UNESCO. The 18th – 19th century roof complex of the mosque was destroyed in Autumn 2016 – Winter 2017. The authentic oak beams of the roofing were dismantled and sawn; they were then replaced with modern building materials, namely composite beams, made using OSB technology with a reinforced concrete belt. According to the information CISS received from locals, 100 % of the artisan old roof tiles were replaced with Spanish factory-made antique-stylized tiles. At the same time, the ancient technology of putting the tiles on clay was completely disregarded and modern mounts were used instead.

The works are carried out using heavy construction equipment, such as jackhammers, which led to vibrations that caused the loss of part of the decoration and damage to the paintings on the walls.

As a rule, work dismantling roofs should not be done during the autumn-winter season when precipitation levels are higher. This was unfortunately not the procedure followed by the Russian agencies working on the complex. Due to the lack of measures taken to protect the buildings from the precipitation, moisture was able to seep in and damage the monuments.

All the aforementioned damages and the additional load on the walls and the base of the buildings have already led to deformations. As a result, in 2018, the stained-glass windows shattered and numerous gaps and cracks appeared on the northern facade of the Mosque and the facade of the Retinue Building. There is also a crack on the tilted East Minaret. In 2018, a steel canopy was installed over the Khan Palace's main building without any necessary research, such as a geological survey.

40 Cf. CISS, Об'єкти руйнівної реставрації. Бахчисарайський Ханський палац. Додаткові файли [Objects of Destructive Restoration. Bakhchysarai Khan Palace. Additional files]. URL: https://ciss.org.ua/en/sk_page.html?object_code=69423987d1a204e0bf9198f3e4a1fe51.

At the beginning of February 2022, the aforesaid actions, and the dismantling of the asphalt and soil that was being carried out in the immediate proximity to the ancient buildings, led to the subsidence and shifting of the soils. As a result, the north-eastern corner of the Retinue Building broke off from the complex wall, which led to deformation and the appearance of wide and deep cracks. To date, the so-called “restoration work” has targeted almost all the structures within the complex.

At present, the Khan Palace is a complex of architectural and historical monuments and archeological objects. As an archeological site, the Khan Palace can cover a larger area than that of the museum, which was founded as a place to display architectural and historical monuments. However, the existence of the archaeological heritage of the complex is not recognized by the occupation authorities. This has led to the carrying out of the construction works without archeological excavation, causing the loss of cultural treasures that are hidden in the soil and thrown away without any care or research⁴¹.

The latest information received this year reveals that the roof of the famous Golden Cabinet of the Khan’s Palace has been dismantled, together with the stained-glass windows.

“The damage caused to the Palace, a religious site as well as a unique repository for Crimean Tatar history and culture, is irreversible. Such damage denudes the site of its value as a site of cultural heritage, and infringes on the ability of the Crimean Tatars, and indeed members of the world community, to enjoy the authenticity of a unique piece of this indigenous people’s cultural heritage of outstanding, unique and universal value. Ukraine’s human rights lawyers and prosecutors have argued that such encroachment by Russia on Crimean Tatar cultural heritage is indicative of the group’s persecution on political grounds, as a crime against humanity.”⁴²

The Bakhchysarai Palace complex was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage Tentative List back in 2003⁴³; however, Ukraine had not yet managed to finish

41 Cf. CISS, Objects of Destructive Restoration. Bakhchysarai Khan Palace. URL: https://ciss.org.ua/en/sk_page.html?object_code=69423987d1a204e0bf9198f3e4a1fe51.

42 Evelien Campfens et al., Protecting Cultural Heritage from Armed Conflicts in Ukraine and Beyond. Study Requested by the CULT Committee, Brussels 2023, 98. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/733120/IPOL_STU\(2023\)733120_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/733120/IPOL_STU(2023)733120_EN.pdf).

43 Cf. UNESCO, Tentative Lists. The Historical Surroundings of Crimean Khans’ Capital in Bakhchysarai. Description (24 September 2012). URL: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5774>.

the follow-up work before Russia's invasion. Russia has probably caused such irreversible damage to the site to end any likelihood of the World Heritage status.

The destruction of monuments is always carried out for an ideological purpose. The Crimean Tatar people, who do not recognize the illegal annexation and do not accept the Russian occupation, simply "do not fit" into Moscow's "Crimea-is-Russia" ideology. The answer to the question whom Crimea belongs to lies in the history of the indigenous people, in their historical memory, the memory of the native people of the peninsula and their right to self-determination in the territory of Crimea. The truthful answer to the question whom Crimea belongs to destroys all the myths that the Russian Federation is actively sowing in the Crimean society. By destroying monuments, the occupiers undermine the foundations of the purposes of cultural inheritance and continuity in the territory.

In addition, the cultural potential of heritage is vital in the identity-building process. It manifests itself in the value of heritage sites that are inseparable from their environment. Only in connection with its environment does the heritage truly survive and allow descendants to remember the cultural meanings embedded in it and realize its values in connection with important historical and cultural events.

The Russian Federation, as the successor of the former USSR and the Russian Empire, has once again resorted to manipulation and outright lies, seeking to justify the occupation with allegedly "historical arguments," most of which are disinformation and propaganda. The policy of Modern Russia in the occupied territory aims to destroy the historical and cultural ties between the peninsula and mainland Ukraine and include Crimea in its ideological paradigm. The Russian Federation uses the Crimea-related cultural and historical heritage to justify the occupation of the territory, creates new historical myths, decontextualizes the cultural heritage of the peninsula and creates a new cultural identification through forced acculturation⁴⁴.

5. Conclusions

Assaults on cultural heritage exhibit a detrimental impact on a nation's health, akin to any physical harm inflicted on its populace. These actions serve to bolster the hegemony of select nations while concurrently distorting the historical importance of others, occasionally resulting in their utter eradication. The

44 Cf. Hromenko, #CrimeaIsOurs, 8.

ongoing conflict in Ukraine serves as an illustrative example of the enduring nature of cultural property violations beyond periods of colonization, and it is often manifested in complex configurations. Despite the delayed manifestation of their repercussions, such assaults possess the potential to pose a profound threat to a nation's continuity, as evidenced prominently by the unfolding events in Crimea.⁴⁵

The destruction of immovable heritage undermines the foundations of the processes of cultural inheritance and cultural continuity of the territory. Erasing and rewriting the history for the sake of a political agenda changes the cultural meanings embodied in historical events and monuments. The heritage of an object is preserved not only when it is physically preserved, but also when the people living in that territory retain the memory of the cultural meanings embedded in it and are aware of its value in connection with their shared history.

Therefore, by devaluing (even by means of rebuilding) the historical significance of the Bakhchysarai Khan's Palace, which is the primary symbol for the entire Crimean Tatar people, the occupying authorities are implementing a long-term plan of action aimed at destroying historical memory, changing the worldview, and assimilating the Crimean Tatars, with the intention to ignore the exclusive rights of the indigenous peoples (in this case, the Crimean Tatar people, who for the most part ignored the so-called "referendum" for self-determination in Crimea).

The tragic fate of cultural heritage in the occupied territories shows that, while protecting cultural monuments and historical places, it is necessary to concentrate not only on combating the destruction of cultural monuments, but also on preventing historical falsifications aimed at colonizing history and creating false narratives. These processes also prove the need to look for new approaches to preserve cultural heritage in the occupied territories.

45 Cf. Kateryna Busol, *Crimea's Occupation Exemplifies the Threat of Attacks on Cultural Heritage* (4 February 2020). URL: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/02/crimeas-occupation-exemplifies-threat-attacks-cultural-heritage>.

Central and Eastern Europe in the Age of the First World War: Revolution, Counter-Revolution, Containment

Dmytro Bondarenko

Before the First World War, Central and Eastern Europe was a defined historical region dominated by the conservative empires: Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. However, Pan-Slavism, as a revolutionary ideology that emerged in the mid-19th century, became an instrument of Russian and Serbian foreign policy aimed at the disintegration of Austria-Hungary. Hence, the Austro-Hungarian military actions against Serbia as a response to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand should be considered an external counter-revolution. Meanwhile, Russia, supporting Serbia, became an advocate of regicide. As such, it violated the principle of monarchical solidarity and provoked the First World War, whereas the German concept of Mitteleuropa emerged as a containment to Pan-Slavism, which, after the end of the First World War, was replaced by a Cordon Sanitaire against Bolshevism as a new challenge to the world order and the new revolutionary ideology.

1. Introduction

The current aggression by Russia against Ukraine has geopolitical, historic and ideological origins in the Russian Pan-Slavic messianic idea. After the collapse of the USSR, Bolshevism as a missionary idea was replaced by Pan-Slavism, which had been the Russian imperialist idea before the Bolshevik revolution.¹

1 Cf. George Urban, A Tale of Two Empires. A Conversation with Otto von Habsburg, in: idem (ed.), End of Empire: The Demise of the Soviet Union, Washington 1993, 133–154, 135; George Urban, What is “Soviet” – What is “Russian”? A Conversation with Adam B. Ulam, in: idem (ed.), End of Empire, 155–177, 160, 165; Gregory Gleason, The “Na-

Hence, Central and Eastern Europe has once again become the target of Russian expansionist interests.

Central and Eastern Europe, a specific historical region² also known as the “*land in between*” Germany and Russia,³ or, more precisely, the territory of the European part of the former Russian Empire and the non-German part of Austria-Hungary,⁴ was the arena of rivalry for the Great Powers. During the 20th century, it was characterized by the outbreak of two world wars, the rise of Bolshevism, the *Cordon Sanitaire*, the Iron Curtain, and more.

Before World War I, Central and Eastern Europe was dominated by conservative empires under dynasties such as the Romanovs (the Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp’s branch), the Hohenzollerns, and the House of Habsburg (Habsburg-Lorraine), and the Vienna system of international relations, which gave rise to the Holy Alliance (*Heilige Allianz*), and the League of the Three Emperors (*Drei-Kaiser-Abkommen* und *Dreikaiserbund*). This system was based on and was able to retain itself due to the solidarity of the dynasties, and was aimed at the preservation of monarchical power. The empires provided stability and order within the region, and as Francis Ludwig Carsten remarked, “their collapse caused instability and disorder, the outbreak of revolutionary movements such as Europe had not seen since the French Revolution, movements that strongly influenced each other and everywhere threatened the old social order.”⁵

However, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, imperial rivalries, particularly between Russia and Austria-Hungary, accompanied by the irredentism of divided nations such as Poles, Serbs, Ukrainians, and Romanians (which was occasionally even encouraged by the rivals), eroded the principles of the

tional Factor” and the Logic of Sovietology, in: Alexander Motyl (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, New York 1992, 1–29, 18.

- 2 Cf. Sir Lewis Namier Bernstein, *Conflicts: Studies in Contemporary History*, London 1942, 1–77; Piotr Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East-Central Europe from Middle Ages to the Present*, London 1992, 1–2; Jenő Szűcs, *Three Historical Regions of Europe*, in: John Kean (ed.), *Civil Society and the State*, New York – London 1988, 291–332; Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East-Central Europe*, San Antonio 2000, 9–13; István Bibó, *The Art of Peacemaking: Political Essays*, New Haven – London 2015, 25–224.
- 3 Alexandru Ghișa, *Romania and Hungary at the Beginning of 20th Century: Establishing Diplomatic Relations (1918–1921)*, Cluj-Napoca 2003, 3.
- 4 Cf. Ludwig von Mises, *Nation, State, and Economy: Contributions to the Politics and History of Our Time*, New York 1919 [1983], 50, 69, 112, 119; Bernstein, *Conflicts*, 2–3, 9.
- 5 Francis Ludwig Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe, 1918–1919*, Berkeley 1972, 11.

Vienna system and resulted in the First World War. Here Francis Ludwig Carsten did not come to an accurate conclusion when he assumed that the conflicts among the empires and “their struggles for influence and supremacy, had brought about their destruction.”⁶ The struggle for influence and supremacy had been persistent before, but this time it was instigated by revolutionary ideologies such as nationalism and Pan-Slavism while socialism emerged in the background. Pan-Slavism undermined the monarchical solidarity of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. This instigated the war and finally resulted in the establishment of Yugoslavia, a new multinational state instead of Austria-Hungary. Consequently, as a result of the First World War, the grand dynasties such as the Romanovs, the Hohenzollerns, and the House of Habsburg fell. The social and national revolutions in the former empires not only led to the triumph of the republican form of government of the new nation states and the new multinational states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, but also to the rise and spread of Bolshevism as a new challenge to the nation state, the parliamentary system, and the international security and world order as a whole.

Thus, before and during World War I, Central Europe experienced the clash between Pan-Slavism and *Mitteleuropa*, but after the war the anti-Bolshevik struggle and the *Cordon Sanitaire*, which included Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Romania. Thus, the Vienna system, created by Count Klemens Lothar von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein and then revised and amended by Prince Otto von Bismarck, Count von Bismarck-Schönhausen and Duke of Lauenburg, was simultaneously replaced by two contradictory systems: the Versailles system by Woodrow Wilson and the Soviet system by Vladimir Lenin.

2. The Revolutionary Origins of the Great War in Central and Eastern Europe

The appearance of Pan-Slavism as a revolutionary ideology was related to the Springtime of Nations, or the European Revolution of 1848. While the Austrian Empire was weakened by the revolution, the Czech historian František Palacký convened the First Slav Congress in Prague in June 1848. The Congress demanded that the Austrian Empire be transformed into a federation of nations.

Nevertheless, by the 1860s, Pan-Slavism had become particularly popular in Russia as an instrument to establish Russian leadership over Austro-Hun-

6 Ibidem.

garian and Ottoman Slavs.⁷ In Geoffrey Hosking's view, the appeal of Pan-Slavism as a messianic idea in Russia was geopolitical and caused by the defeat in the Crimean War; "it seemed desirable for Russia to seek compensation within Europe."⁸ Thus Russian Pan-Slavism played a role in the revolutionary ideology aimed against the Habsburg dynasty and the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary⁹ to unite all Slavs into the Russian-dominated Slavic confederation.¹⁰

After the Berlin Congress of 1878, Pan-Slavism began to influence Russian foreign policy. As a result, the League of the Three Emperors collapsed.¹¹ Even as early as 1876, the Russian Emperor Alexander II had asked the German Chancellor Prince Otto von Bismarck if Russia could count on German neutrality in the event of a possible conflict between Austria and Russia. Otto von Bismarck made it clear that Germany was not indifferent to Austrian policy. As a result of the Russian aggressive position towards Austria-Hungary, on 7 October 1879, the German–Austro-Hungarian Dual Alliance (*Zweibund* in German, or *Kettős Szövetség* in Hungarian) was concluded. Moreover, Russian Pan-Slavism and Russian territorial claims on Dobruja made Romania join the Triple Alliance in 1883.¹² After the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, Pan-Slavism in Russian foreign policy and public opinion reached its peak in 1912–1913, during the so-called "Slav banquets" (the anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke) and the First Balkan War.

On the eve of the First World War, Pan-Slavism became dominant in Russian foreign policy,¹³ especially under the leadership of Sergei Sazonov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who believed that the dissolution of Austria-Hungary was the main task of Russia's foreign policy in Central Europe, as well as the establishment of the Polish, Czecho-Slovak, Hungarian, and Serbo-Croa-

7 Cf. Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London 2012, 78.

8 Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: from the Earliest Times to 2001*, London 2002, 313.

9 Cf. Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800–1914*, Oxford – New York 2003, 240.

10 Cf. Pan-Slavism. URL: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Pan-Slavism> [accessed: 29 January 2024].

11 Cf. Sergei Goriainov, *The End of the Alliance of the Emperors*, in: *The American Historical Review* 23 (1918) 324–349.

12 Cf. Ghişa, *Romania and Hungary*, 7–8.

13 Cf. Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London 2015, 263.

tian kingdoms as new allies of Russia.¹⁴ The Russian Ambassador in Paris and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Izvolsky believed that the future powerful South Slav kingdom would be the counterbalance to Italy, Hungary, and Romania in the region.¹⁵

In January 1915, Sergei Sazonov was so enthusiastic about the disintegration of Austria-Hungary that he even rejected the possibility of a separate peace with it on the condition that Galicia be ceded to Russia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia. He stated, "Austria-Hungary must be dismembered!"¹⁶ Moreover, in July 1915, the Russian Foreign Policy Ministry told the Serbian ambassador that Russia could not promise Serbia any territorial gains in the event of the conclusion of a separate peace between Serbia and Hungary.¹⁷ Finally, in 1916, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a map of the planned disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the emergence of the newly independent states. On this map, the so-called Slavic corridor connecting Czechoslovakia and Serbia-Croatia and separating Hungary from Austria was proposed.¹⁸

In addition, there is evidence that some among Russia's ruling circles were involved in the plot against Austria-Hungary, which resulted in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Vladimir Dedijer and Edith Durham were positive that the Russian general staff and its two representatives in Belgrade, Colonel Viktor Artamonov and his assistant Alexander Verkhovsky, as well as the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Nikolai Hartvig, and even the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, were involved in this scheme.¹⁹ Nikolai Hartvig, "a real ruler of Serbia," met the expectations of Serbian nationalists and en-

14 Cf. Сергей Сазонов, Воспоминания [Sergei Sazonov, Memoirs], Moscow 1991, 338–339.

15 Cf. Архив внешней политики Российской Империи [The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire] (АВПРИ), ф. Секретный архив [The Secret Archive], оп. 467, д. 580/625, л. 11.

16 Maurice Paleologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs*, vol. I, London 1925, 235–236.

17 Cf. АВПРИ, ф. Секретный архив, оп. 467, д. 577/608, л. 31.

18 Cf. АВПРИ, ф. Особый Политический Отдел [Special Political Department], оп. 474, д. 439, л. 47 (map).

19 Cf. Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, New York 1966, 428, 433; Edith Durham, *The Sarajevo Crime*, London 1925, 197–199, 201; Николай Полетика, Сараевское убийство: исследование по истории австро-сербских отношений и Балканской политики России в период 1903–1914 гг. [Nikolai Poletika, *The Sarajevo Murder: A Study on the History of Austrian-Serbian Relations and the Balkan Policy of Russia in the Period of 1903–1914*], Leningrad 1930, 404.

couraged Serbia to stand up against Austria-Hungary.²⁰ The plan to eliminate Archduke Franz Ferdinand was discussed at a meeting of the “*Black Hand*” held in the Serbian General Staff building in the presence of Colonel Victor Artamonov, the Russian military attaché in Belgrade. It was Colonel Victor Artamonov, after consultations in St. Petersburg with Grand Duke Nicholas, who authorised the assassination of the Archduke, assuring Lieutenant-Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic (Apis) that if Austria attacked Serbia, “Russia would not leave” Serbia “without protection.”²¹ The plan to eliminate Archduke Franz Ferdinand was also known to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, as two weeks before the terrorist attack he asked his Romanian counterpart Ionel Brătianu how Romania would behave if Archduke Franz Ferdinand “disappeared” and the war between Russia and Austria-Hungary started.²² On the eve of the terrorist act in Sarajevo, the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Nikolai Hartvig, wrote to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs: “official circles in St. Petersburg expected the news of the Archduke’s assassination.”²³ Lastly, during the meeting at Tsarskoe Selo on 22 July 1914 (before the Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum to Serbia), the Grand Duchesses Anastasia and Milica told the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Maurice Paleologue, that their father, the King of Montenegro, had informed them via telegraph that the war would soon start, “nothing would be left of Austria,” and “Germany will be annihilated.”²⁴

After the Belgrade palace coup of 1903, Serbia became the centre of Pan-Slavism and revolutionary terrorism in the Balkans, threatening Austria-Hungary.²⁵ The Serbian Pan-Slavic project aimed to undermine the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy through revolutionary terror and establish Yugoslavia. The Serbian Pan-Slavists assumed that the predictable collapse of Austria-Hungary would occur as a result of a possible military conflict with Serbia following the assassination of the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. The broadest masses of people from all Slavic regions of the Habsburg Monarchy would rise up to fight against Austria-Hungary. Thus, according to the idealists of the Yugoslav

20 Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, 431; cf. Eugene de Schelking, *The Game of Diplomacy*, London 1918, 192; Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 112.

21 George Thomson, *The Twelve Days*, 24 July to 5 August 1914, New York 1964, 47–48; Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, 398, 432–433; Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 410–412.

22 Cf. Полетика, Сараевское убийство, 406.

23 Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, 432.

24 Paleologue, *An Ambassador’s Memoirs*, vol. I, 22–23; Wilhelm II, *The Kaisers Memoirs*, New York – London 1922, 252; Gareth Russell, *The Emperors: How Europe’s Rulers were Destroyed by the First World War*, Stroud 2014, 75.

25 Cf. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 38–56, 58–59, 82–83.

movement, the expected war should end in total defeat and the dismemberment of the monarchy as a consequence. As a result of its dissolution, according to their predictions, Galicia and the part of Hungary up to the Danube as well as part of Budapest (Pest) would be ceded to Russia, and the other part of Budapest (Buda) to Serbia, together with the entire southern and western part of Hungary and the South Slavic lands of Austria-Hungary; Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia would be united with the Slovak lands of northern Hungary, forming a new independent state; Poland would be united “*under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar;*” and Romania would be incorporated with Transylvania and southern Bukovina.²⁶ So, the Serbian Pan-Slavists expected a revolution in Austria-Hungary, in other words the downfall of the monarchy and dissolution of the empire. As Count Ottokar Czernin remarked, “the Archduke Heir Apparent was the victim of Greater Serbia’s aspirations; but these aspirations, which led to the breaking away of our Southern Slav provinces, would not have been suppressed, but, on the contrary, would have largely increased and asserted themselves, and would have strengthened the centrifugal tendencies of other peoples within the Monarchy.”²⁷

Hence, the Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia (23 July 1914) should be considered a self-defence measure, in accordance with Article 1 of the III Hague Convention of 1907, which provided the opportunity for declaring war after a motivated ultimatum. Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian armed intervention in Serbia after the official rejection of the Ultimatum by the Serbian government was nothing more than a preventive external counter-revolution as it was not only meant to punish the terrorists but also to replace such a revolutionary dynasty as Karadjordjević²⁸ with another European dynasty like that established in Romania and Bulgaria.²⁹

26 АВПРИ, ф. Особый Политический Отдел, оп. 474, д. 278, л. 2 (my own translation); cf. Петр Искендеров, Балканские корни Первой мировой войны [Piotr Iskenderov, The Balkan Roots of the First World War], in: Елена Серапионова (ред.), Первая мировая война и судьбы народов Центральной и Юго-Восточной Европы: Очерки истории [Elena Serapionova (ed), The First World War and the Destiny of the Peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe: the Essays of History], Moscow 2015, 280–297, 287–288.

27 Count Ottokar Czernin, *In the World War*, London – New York – Toronto – Melbourne 1919, 32–33.

28 Cf. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 5. 13–20. The Karadjordjević dynasty was formally invited to rule Serbia after the so-called May Palace Revolution of 1903, committed by radicals, for whom monarchy was nominally indispensable to avoid international intervention.

29 Cf. Саонов, *Воспоминания*, 216; Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I*, New York 2014, 42.

As Gordon Martel has pointed out, Russian Pan-Slavism was a cause of the war.³⁰ Instead of upholding the principle of monarchical solidarity, Russia, as Friedrich von Pourtalès remarked, took a position of “the advocate of regicides.”³¹ The German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg observed in his memoirs that the Russian-backed Serbia encouraged secessionist movements among the Slavs of Austro-Hungary, and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was an attack not only on Austria-Hungary but also on the European order as a whole, as the dissolution of Austria-Hungary “was a necessary part of the realisation of the Russian plans ... But this purely European dispute was only given force enough to cause the World revolution.”³² Moreover, on 17 September 1914, Grand Duke Nicholas, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Imperial Army, issued a proclamation to the nations of Austria-Hungary, encouraging them to overthrow “the Habsburg yoke” and realise their national aspirations³³. In other words he affirmed the realisation of the Pan-Slavist programme, which incited the revolution in Austria-Hungary.

Thus, Pan-Slavism, as a revolutionary utopian idea aimed to undermine the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and instigated the First World War which resulted in the collapse of both the Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary due to the social revolutions sparked by this idea. Revolutionary socialism in conjunction with proletarian internationalism was another utopian and messianic idea which gained traction at the end of the First World War. Furthermore, the leaders of the Bolsheviks, Lenin and Trotsky, began to spread the idea of the World Revolution by means of the so-called “export revolution”, with the final aim at the creation of the “World Soviet Republic” or the “World Communist United States of the Soviet Republic”³⁴ in Central Europe, by first attacking Romania, Finland, and Ukraine in 1918, and then Poland and the Baltic States in 1919.

30 Gordon Martel, *Origins of the First World War*, London – New York 2017, 95.

31 Friedrich von Pourtalès, Telegram to Gottlieb von Jagow (Saint Petersburg on 25 July 1914), in: Imanuel Geiss (ed.), *July 1914: the Outbreak of the First World War. Selected Documents*, New York 1968, 185–186, 186.

32 Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, *Reflections on the World War*, London 1920, 163–164.

33 АВПРИ, ф. Особый Политический Отдел, оп. 474, д. 211 (my own translation); cf. Paleologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 132; Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 182.

34 Pavel Miliukov, *Bolshevism: An International Danger, Its Doctrine and Its Practice through War and Revolution*, London 1920, 8; cf. Павел Миллюков, *Национальный вопрос (Происхождение национальности и национальные вопросы в России [Pavel Milyukov, National Question (The Origins of Nation and National Questions in Russia)]*, Prague 1925, 185–187.

3. Mitteleuropa and the Cordon Sanitaire: Containment vs. Counter-Revolution

The term *Mitteleuropa* appeared on the wave of the Springtime of Nations, also known as the Revolution of 1848, in German kingdoms and the Austrian Empire. Karl Ludwig von Bruck and Lorenz von Stein used the term to refer to the German-Slav region “in-between”, the area between West Europe and Russia. The first political advocate of Mitteleuropa was the Austrian minister-president Prince Felix Ludwig of Schwarzenberg. His desire was to restore the prestige and preeminence of the Austrian Empire among the Great Powers, which was on the verge of dissolution over the course of the Revolution of 1848–1849. If the Monarchy was allowed to disintegrate, its pieces would be picked up by other powers, such as Russia, Italy, and Prussia.³⁵ Contrary to Pan-Slavism, an aggressive expansionist idea directed to dissolve and conquer the territory of Austria-Hungary, the concept of Mitteleuropa was a defence of the status quo in Central Europe, a conservative response to revolutionary nationalism and irredentism, aimed at uniting the Germans and Slavs of Central Europe under German control and hegemony to halt the *Russian Menace*. At the same time, Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg tried to follow the traditional conservative course of Prince Klemens von Metternich, the Vienna system, as Edward Crankshaw pointed out, by “fixing Austria’s position and influence by an intricate network of treaties.” However, times had changed; on the one hand, he “was working under pressure in a revolutionary epoch,”³⁶ and, on the other hand, the Russian threat was increasing. Under these circumstances, Austria-Hungary chose rapprochement with Germany.³⁷ The first step for project Mitteleuropa was the conclusion of the Dual Alliance (also known as *Zweibund* or *Kettős Szövetség*) in 1879. The alliance was designed to defend Austria-Hungary from any potential Russian aggression arising through a rival in the Balkans. In Henry Kissinger’s view, Otto von Bismarck initiated this alliance with Austria-Hungary “to build a barrier to further Russian expansion.”³⁸ At the same time, the alliance was designed as a defensive measure, and its members agreed not to attack or threaten Russia: “The two Governments, for

35 Cf. Edward Crankshaw, *The Fall of the House of Habsburg*, New York 1963, 56.

36 *Ibidem*, 98.

37 Cf. Roland Usher, *Austro-German Relations Since 1866*, in: *The American Historical Review* 23/3 (1918) 577–595, 584.

38 Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York – London – Toronto – Sydney – Tokyo – Singapore 1994, 158.

their part, affirm it to be their common intention that neither of them shall take occasion ... to attack or menace the Russian Empire.”³⁹

In the following year, the Dual Alliance was transformed into the Triple Alliance by the addition of Italy. Just like the Dual Alliance, the Triple Alliance was meant to be purely defensive in nature, triggered by the Russian threat.⁴⁰ Based on this, it can be assumed that the Triple Alliance was intended to fulfil the following three principal tasks:

- keep international relations in Central Europe stable
- protect Central Europe (especially Austria-Hungary) from the Russian threat
- make Germany the dominant power in Central Europe

The Triple Alliance thus marked the beginning of the realisation of the German *Mittleuropa* project. At the same time, *Mittleuropa*, or the Triple Alliance, might have been effective in the case of a war against Russia, or Russia and Serbia together.

The next step was the growth of the Alliance. For instance, Romania joined the Alliance in 1883 due to the fear of Pan-Slavism and the potential threat from Russia, despite its conflicting interests with Austria-Hungary.⁴¹ Thus, by the beginning of the 20th century, *Mittleuropa* had already created a geopolitical coalition, consisting of the core (Germany and Austria-Hungary) and the periphery (Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia before the May coup of 1903). Joseph Partsch described *Mittleuropa* as a multicultural area, with German as its *lingua franca*.⁴²

Before the First World War, Austria-Hungary's foreign policy was aimed at building a rapprochement with Russia, and the revival of the League of the Three Emperors. This plan was conducted by Baron Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal

39 Joint Memorandum Signed by the Austro-Hungarian and the German Plenipotentiaries Outlining the Purposes of the Alliance. Vienna, September 24, 1879, in: Alfred Pribram / Archibald Coolidge (eds.), *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879–1914*, Cambridge – London 1920, 22–25, 25.

40 Cf. Introduction, in: Pribram / Coolidge (eds.), *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary*, 3–17, 3.

41 Cf. Ghişa, *Romania and Hungary*, 7–8; Joseph Partsch, *Mittleuropa: Die Länder und Völker von den Westalpen und dem Balkan bis an den Kanal und das Kurische Haff*, Gotha 1904, 190.

42 Cf. Partsch, *Mittleuropa*, 173.

and Count Leopold Berchtold, the foreign ministers of the Dual Monarchy.⁴³ The main concern for Austro-Hungarian security and integrity was the Balkan problem created in Serbia. As a response to this threat, Baron Alois Aehrenthal made the decision to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁴ Joseph Partsch believed that the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Austria-Hungary would prevent the project of Greater Serbia from being realised.⁴⁵ Subsequently, *Mitteleuropa* developed from the defensive political-geographical concept of Joseph Partsch and Friedrich Naumann into the *Drang nach Osten*, a plan to separate Russia from Central and Eastern Europe by means of a strip of buffer states between Germany and Russia, as a response to the Russian Pan-Slavist aggressive foreign policy course and the subversive activity in Bulgaria and Serbia.⁴⁶ In 1898, Friedrich Ratzel wrote the following: “The German-Russian border is not the border between two states but between two worlds.”⁴⁷

In 1903, John Strachey and William Thomas Arnold published the book *German Ambitions as They Affect Britain and the United States of America*. They emphasised the significance of the Central European Union of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Romania for Germany’s foreign policy and described Russia as “a monstrous danger of the future,” but at the same time a “Colossus with feet of clay.”⁴⁸ According to their prediction, war between Germany and Russia was imminent, and in order to counter the Russian peril in Central Europe, it would be necessary to form a buffer of new states such as Poland, Ruthenia, and Greater Romania.⁴⁹

After the outbreak of the Great War, Germany and Austria-Hungary intended to oust Russia from Eastern Europe as part of their strategy, in order to eliminate its influence in the Balkans and return it to the borders of the

43 Cf. József Galántai, *Austria-Hungary and the War: The October 1913 Crisis – Prelude to July 1914*, Budapest 1980, 9–10; Ottokor Czernin, *In the World War*, New York – London 2020, 51.

44 Cf. Galántai, *Austria-Hungary and the War*, 6–8.

45 Cf. Partsch, *Mitteleuropa*, 188.

46 Cf. Robert Bideleux / Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*, London – New York 1998, 12.

47 Gertjan Dijkink, *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain*, London – New York 1996, 17.

48 John St. Loe Strachey / William Thomas Arnold, *German Ambitions as They Affect Britain and the United States of America*, London 1903, x, 26, 29, 68.

49 Cf. Strachey / Arnold, *German Ambitions*, 71–72.

pre-Petrine Grand Dukedom of Moscow.⁵⁰ In 1915, Paul von Rohrbach wrote that according to the interests of European security, the Russian Empire must be broken up into several territories to reduce the possibility of the “Russian Menace” attacking Central Europe. In this case, Germany should sponsor the independence of Finland, Poland, and Ukraine.⁵¹ He believed that the separation of the western region (the Baltic countries) would reduce “the Russian Menace”, but only the separation of Ukraine would “ensure a stable equilibrium in Eastern Europe.”⁵² On 11 August 1914, the State secretary of the German Foreign office, Gottlieb von Jagow, wrote to the German ambassador in Vienna, Count Heinrich von Tschirschky, on the geopolitical significance of Ukraine: “it is a way to relieve the pressure of the Russian colossus on Europe and to force Russia back as far east as possible ... it is a possibility for Romania to obtain Bessarabia later, which is only feasible if an intermediate state between Romania and Russia appears.”⁵³ In the Note of 20 November 1914, the Austrian government announced that the aim of Austria-Hungary in this war was to liberate the Ukrainian people from Russian domination and establish an independent Kingdom of Ukraine.⁵⁴ In other words, the establishment of an independent Ukraine became a matter of paramount importance as a counterbalance to Pan-Slavism and the Russian expansionism into Central Europe.

However, after the disintegration of Russia during the revolution, Pan-Slavism was replaced by Bolshevism as a new international threat. The British ambassador in Paris, Lord Francis Bertie, wrote in his diary on 4 February 1918: “Bolshevism is a contagious disease which, it is hoped, will spread to Germany and Austria; but the Entente will have to adopt old-fashioned quarantine rules to keep out infection.”⁵⁵

In 1918, Germany was the only power capable of suppressing Bolshevism. Nevertheless, German intervention was limited to Finland, Ukraine, and the

50 Cf. Саонов, Воспоминания, 273; Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, New York 1967, 547.

51 Cf. Henry Meyer, Rohrbach and His Osteuropa, in: *The Russian Review* 2/1 (1942) 60–69, 63–64.

52 АВПРИ, ф. Особый политический отдел, оп. 474, д. 36. л. 40 (my own translation).

53 Борис Греков, Национальный аспект внешней политики Германии в годы Первой мировой войны (Лига нерусских народов России) [Boris Grekov, *The National Aspect of Germany's Foreign Policy during the First World War (The League of Non-Russian Peoples of Russia)*], in: Виктор Мальков (ред.), *Первая мировая война: пролог XX века* [Viktor Malkov (ed.), *The First World War: The Prologue of the 20th Century*], Moscow 1998, 419–431, 423 (my own translation).

54 Cf. АВПРИ, ф. Особый Политический Отдел, оп. 474, д. 36, л. 42–43.

55 Sir Francis Bertie, *The Diary, 1914–1918*, London 1924, 254.

Baltic states, and determined by strategic reasons rather than attempts to restore pre-revolutionary order in Russia, as Berlin sought to create its own sphere of influence.⁵⁶ Even so, Germany managed to create the fence line of the buffer states, which blocked the spread of Bolshevism to Central Europe, and the restoration was successfully conducted within these states, such as the Kingdom of Finland, the United Baltic Grand Duchy, the Ukrainian State, and the Almighty Don Host, which became bases for the Russian counter-revolution and restoration.

The *Entente* intervention had a limited impact and was insufficient and unsuccessful. Hence, the *Entente* decided to create a *Cordon Sanitaire* against Bolshevism. As defined by Norman Saul, the *Cordon Sanitaire* was a set of measures by the French government to prevent communist influence and ensure stability in Europe by providing military and economic aid to newly independent and vulnerable states in Eastern Europe, such as the Baltic states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. The main objectives of the *Cordon Sanitaire* were the following:⁵⁷ the isolation of the USSR, the limitation of communist propaganda and the mitigation of the Soviet military threat.

From Yuri Felshtinsky's point of view, the *Cordon Sanitaire* was not a fundamentally new invention; rather, the *Entente* merely authorised the "fence line," created by Germany through the *Brest-Litovsk* system.⁵⁸ However, this is only partially correct. Firstly, the *Cordon Sanitaire* did not include Ukraine and the Don, these new states were erased from the political map of Europe. Secondly, the *Cordon Sanitaire* was directed not only against Soviet Russia but also against Soviet Hungary,⁵⁹ and thus, it included a broader set of states: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia).

56 Cf. Speech of Friedrich von Payer in Reichstag, in: *Kölnische Zeitung* (8 Mai 1918); Абдулхан Ахтамзян, От Бреста до Киля. Провал антисоветской политики германского империализма в 1918 году [Abdulkhan Akhtamzyan, From Brest to Kiel. The Failure of the Anti-Soviet Politics of German Imperialism in 1918], Moscow 1963, 99.

57 Cf. Norman Saul, *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Foreign Policy*, Lanham 2015, 90.

58 Cf. Юрий Фельштинский, Крушение Мировой революции. Очерк первый. Брестский мир (октябрь 1917 – ноябрь 1918) [Yuri Felshtinsky, The Failure of the World Revolution. Essay One. The Peace of Brest (October 1917 – November 1918)], Moscow 1992, 169.

59 Cf. Arno Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counter-revolution at Versailles, 1918–1919*, New York 1967, 9, 658, 834.

4. Conclusion

By the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the ideology of nationalism had gradually replaced dynastic solidarity. However, the Dual Alliance and the Triple Alliance corresponded with both national and dynastic interests. Instead of preserving dynastic solidarity within the framework of the League of the Three Emperors, Russia chose Pan-Slavism as a determinant ideology for its own foreign policy, which led to the collapse of both the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Empires.

Pan-Slavism as a revolutionary ideology threatened not only the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary, but also the Russian Empire, and provoked countermeasures from other Great Powers. One example is the concept of *Mittleuropa*, which was a response by Germany and Austria-Hungary to Russian Pan-Slavism. *Mittleuropa* was built up by the Triple Alliance as a conservative defense measure, with the goal not only to prevent the spread of Russia into Central Europe but also to save the dynasties and stabilise international relations. Oszkár Jászi argued that *Mittleuropa* aimed to create the Central European multicultural community, and Russian Pan-Slavism was an expansive and “militaristic sentimental policy” that might produce “a constant threat to the peace of Central Europe.”⁶⁰ Despite this, it was the Pan-Slavic idea that created new multiethnic states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia which replaced the multinational and dynastic empires in Central Europe.

The next challenge to the stability of the system of international relations in Europe and the World order as a whole became Bolshevism. The Bolshevik ideocracy (the idea of the World Revolution) aimed at the creation of the World Soviet Republic, replaced Pan-Slavism, and was the resurrection of the empire, but under a new ideology.

The *Cordon Sanitaire* in Central and Eastern Europe against Soviet Republics was incapable of stopping the spread of Bolshevism, but it was a temporary measure taken by the war-ravaged Western Europe.

60 Oszkár Jászi, *A Monarchia jövője. A dualizmus bukása és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* [The Future of the Monarchy. The Fall of Dualism and the Danubian United States], Budapest 1918, 18–19 (my own translation).

The Idea of a Federation of Poland and Ukraine in the Light of the Correspondence of the Greek Catholic Priest Prelate Tyt Voinarovsky with the Polish Diplomat Jan Stanisław Łoś

Paulina Byzdra-Kusz

The article describes the vision of a federation of Poland and Ukraine, which the Ukrainian social and political activist and Greek Catholic priest Tyt Voinarovsky expressed in his correspondence with Jan Stanisław Łoś, a Polish diplomat and publicist in the interwar period. The primary source is the 17-year-long written correspondence which is kept in the State Archives in Lublin (Poland). Tyt Voinarovsky was in favor of creating an independent Ukrainian state, federated with a monarchic Poland. He pointed out that these two countries should unite on mutually beneficial terms so that a strong state would emerge in Europe, capable to defend itself against the power of the Soviet Union. As a clergyman he was also aware of the latter's atheist, communist ideology. He emphasized how much the Russians were interested in sowing discord between the Polish and the Ukrainians. The article also briefly presents the history of Voinarovsky's and Łoś's acquaintance and Łoś's views on Polish-Ukrainian relations in the Second Polish Republic.

1. Introduction

The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has not only resulted in many victims, human tragedies and material damages, but also strong solidarity from Central-Eastern Europe towards the Ukrainian people. The Baltic countries, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, as well as Poland are still taking in millions of refugees, and sending humanitarian, military and material aid

to Ukraine. Such unity stems from a willingness not just to help those in need, but also to repel Russia's aggression.

The present situation seems to mirror that from a century ago, after the First World War, in 1918, when Poland liberated itself from Russian rule (among other things) and regained independence, and Ukraine created the first modern states in its history: the West Ukrainian People's Republic and the Ukrainian People's Republic. However, the Ukrainians were not able to preserve their statehood for long: the eastern part of their lands fell to the Soviet Union, while most of their western lands came under the control of Poland (the Lviv, Ternopil and Stanisławów Voivodships), but also Romania and Czechoslovakia.

Furthermore, before 1914, significant disproportions between the situation of Poles and Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia, especially between the Polish aristocracy and Ukrainian peasants were evident in the Habsburg Empire. The conflict between these two nationalities was very apparent; an obvious example was the murder of the governor of Galicia, Andrzej Count Potocki, by a Ukrainian student in 1908. Ten years later, the source of the conflict lay in the fight to preserve the Western Ukrainian People's Republic. In the years 1918–1920, Poles and Ukrainians fought heavy battles in Lviv and the surrounding area. The final blow to the Ukrainians from Eastern Galicia was when the Entente states granted power over this area to Poland. After that, the Ukrainians in Poland took two different approaches to the new situation, choosing either emigration and fighting the Polish state from the outside, or trying to develop a *modus vivendi*¹. One of the people searching for a way of friendly coexistence of two nations on one territory was a Greek-Catholic clergyman, priest prelate Tyt Voinarovsky (1856–1938). While he may not be very well-known today, in the interwar period he was the grey eminence of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Lviv. He belonged to the inner circle of the Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, dealing mostly with the archdiocese's economic affairs².

Voinarovsky was such an uncommon figure that not many in his circle understood him or were ready to cooperate with him. Apart from the Metropolitan himself, he was also respected by the Polish diplomat and landowner Jan

-
- 1 Cf. Paul Robert Magosci, *A History of Ukraine*, Toronto 1996, 436–457, 481–520, 583–598; Włodzimierz Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens im 20. Jahrhundert* [History of Poland in the 20th century], München 2010, 33–35; Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I*, New York 2014, 148.
 - 2 Cf. Tyt Voinarovs'kyj, *Istorychni postati Halychyny XIX-XX st.* [Historical Figures of Galicia of the 19th and 20th Centuries], ed. by Izydor Soxoc'kyj (Naukove tovarstvo im. Shevchenka biblioteka ukraїnoznavstva ch. 8), Paris – Sydney – Toronto – New York 1961, 11–20.

Stanisław Count Łoś (1890–1974), among a few others. Łoś considered himself a son of Red Ruthenia³, which is why he worked for it for years and had respect for his Ukrainian political partners⁴.

They first met on 20 August 1921, during the negotiations between the Polish government and the government led by Yevhen Petrushevych regarding the still unsolved matter of Eastern Galicia. To make acquaintance with him, Łoś used his distant kinship with the priest prelate through his maternal grandmother, Yulia Voinarovska. A common ancestor, even if only a presumed one, and a passion for the genealogy of old noble families ensured that the two men were on friendly terms from the outset. The result was a 17-year-long correspondence that lasted until the clergyman's death in 1938⁵.

2. Sources and Political Context

The primary sources for this paper are the letters of Father Tyt Voinarovsky to Stanisław Łoś, stored in the State Archive in Lublin (Poland) in one of its most interesting collections: the Łoś Archive. It is a unique testimony to the era, and a source for research into the difficult Polish-Ukrainian relations in Eastern Galicia including the attempts to create a Ukrainian university, the issue of the pacification of Eastern Galicia, and the idea of a Polish-Ukrainian federation as promoted by Father Voinarovsky. The letters also include official matters concerning the Lviv metropolis, conducted by Stanisław Łoś at the request of Metropolitan Sheptytski. According to the articles by the researcher of Father Tyt Voinarovsky, Oresta Shevchenko, some of the letters sent to Łoś are held in the Andrey Sheptytsky National Museum of Lviv. I have tried to access this collection, unfortunately without success, so I have relied on documents from the State Archive in Lublin, the letters published in a collection of writings by Jan Stanisław Łoś “The Ukrainian Question” and the memoirs of Father Voinarovsky published in the USA in 1961⁶.

3 A term used since the Middle Ages, now forgotten. Nowadays the region comprises parts of western Ukraine and adjoining parts of south-eastern Poland.

4 Cf. Stanisław Łoś, *Sprawa ukraińska we wspomnieniach, korespondencji i publicystyce. Wybór pism* [The Ukrainian Case in Memories, Correspondence and Journalism. A Selection of Writings], ed. by Maciej Marszał/Sylvia Wójtowicz, Kraków 2012, 73.

5 Cf. *ibidem*, 45, 174–178.

6 Oresta Shevchenko, *Politychna diyalnist Tyta Vojnarovskoho* [Political Activities of Tyt Voinarovsky], in: *Naukovi zapysky istorychnoho fakultetu Lvivskoho universytetu. Zbirnyk naukovykh prac*, 13–14 (2012–2013), 481–492, 482; *eadem*, *Cerkovna i hro-*

The analysis of the views of both activists resembles the federalist program that was put forward by the Polish authorities. It was established in 1918–1919, and its aim was to build strong nation states in the Baltic-Black Sea Bridge (primarily Ukraine and Lithuania, together with the territory of Belarus), and then to unite them with Poland in a federation. The rights and distinctiveness of these nations would be ensured and respected within this federation. It was called the restitution of the Jagiellonian idea, i. e. the coexistence of many nations in one state, as was possible during the First Polish Republic. Poland, being the keystone of the entire land area between Europe and Eurasia, must have a carefully thought-out eastern policy in the buffer areas between Warsaw and Moscow. Therefore, when Poland regained independence in 1918, Polish politicians from the circles associated with Józef Piłsudski (Tadeusz Hołówko, Leon Wasilewski) saw Poland as part of a system of allied countries that would cover a huge area from Estonia to the Caucasus. This would increase the power of the Polish state and eliminate the threat from Russia⁷.

It was in the federalist spirit that Poland's alliance with the Ukrainian People's Republic (the Piłsudski-Petlura alliance), and the offensive of the Polish Army and the army of the Ukrainian People's Republic on Kiev against the Red Army occupying the city, were conceived during the Polish-Bolshevik War in 1920. The aim of the alliance was to support the creation of an independent Ukraine. At that time, Poland was the only country that provided such assistance. However, the case failed, due to the lack of an appropriate reaction from the Ukrainian people and from international opinion, and due to the withdrawal of the Polish ally from military operations in October 1920. Thus the military power of Soviet Russia prevailed over Ukraine⁸.

mads'ko-politychna diyal'nist' Tyta Vojnarovs'koho [Ecclesiastical and Social-Political Activity of Tyt Voinarovsky], PhD thesis; Łoś, *Sprawa; Vojnarovs'kyj, Postati*, 11–75.

- 7 Cf. Sergiusz Mikulicz, *Prometeizm w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej* [Prometheism in the politics of the Second Polish Republic], Warsaw 1971, 95–96; Janusz Faryś, *Piłsudski i piłsudczycy. Z dziejów koncepcji polityczno-ustrojowej (1918–1939)* [Piłsudski and Piłsudski's Supporters. From the History of the Political and Systemic Concept (1918–1939)], Szczecin 1991, 11–17, 22, 55; Andrzej Chojnowski, *Mniejszości narodowe w polityce rządów polskich w latach 1921–1926* [National Minorities in the Policy of Polish Governments in 1921–1926], in: *Przegląd Historyczny*, 4 (1976), 593–616, 594; Jacek Bartosiak, *Rzeczpospolita między lądem a morzem. O wojnie i pokoju* [The Republic of Poland between Land and Sea. About War and Peace], Warsaw 2018, 604.
- 8 Cf. Lech Wyszczelski, *Kijów 1920* [Kyiv 1920], Warszawa 1999; idem, *Wojna polsko-rosyjska 1919–1920* [Polish-Russian War 1919–1920], Warsaw 2010; Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni sojusznicy Polski w wojnie 1920 roku* [Poland's Eastern Allies in the War of 1920], Toruń 1999; Robert Potocki, *Idea restytucji Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej*

Polish conservatives, which included, among others, Stanisław Łoś, also allowed for granting autonomy to Eastern Galicia. The most far-reaching concept of this alliance was put forward by the publicists of “Bunt Młodych” (a magazine run by Polish neoconservatives). They believed in the possibility of breaking up the Soviet Union and creating a Ukrainian state and federalize with it. The first step, however, would be to improve the circumstances of Ukrainians in the Second Polish Republic: by giving them national autonomy, allowing them access to education and government jobs, the opportunity to enjoy self-governance, and abolishing bilingual education⁹.

The idea of creating a federation was the opposite of the incorporation program pushed by the National Democracy, which believed that the Eastern Borderlands should be annexed to Poland. The idea of a federation collapsed after the defeat of the Kiev expedition and the conclusion of the Peace of Riga in 1921. However, in a short time, a movement similar to federalism emerged: Prometheism, which was later taken over by Marshal Piłsudski’s circle. The movement developing in the 1920s was primarily anti-Soviet, aiming at the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. This was to be achieved by exploiting the sense of separateness of the nations living there and convincing them of the necessity of fighting against Russia. Prometheism had a strong organizational and financial base, as well as excellent staff. For example, its primary means of communication was the “Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin”, for which Stanisław Łoś also wrote¹⁰.

3. Voinarovsky’s and Łoś’ Biographies

Father Tyt Voinarovsky was born on 16 February 1856 in Lackie Szlacheckie near Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) to the family of a Greek Catholic priest. He came from a Cossack family whose ancestors emigrated

(1920–1939) [The Idea of the Restitution of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (1920–1939)], Lublin 1999.

- 9 Cf. Paulina Kusz, Jan Stanisław Łoś wobec kwestii ukraińskiej (1918–1939) [Jan Stanisław Łoś on the Ukrainian Issue (1918–1939)], Lublin 2010; Oksana Yurchuk, Ukrayins’ko-pol’s’ki vzayemny mizhvoyennoho periodu v ocinci Yana Stanislava Losya [Ukrainian-Polish Relations in the Interwar Period in the Assessment of Jan Stanisław Łoś], in: *Istoriografichni doslidzhennya v Ukrayini. Zbirnyk naukovykh prac’* 18 (2008), 204–213.
- 10 Cf. Chojnowski, *Koncepcje*, 22–23; Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist’s Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine*, New Haven 2005, 70–74; Mikulicz, *Prometeizm*, 202–206; Torzecki, *Kwestia*, 166.

from the Hetmanate to Eastern Galicia after the Battle of Poltava. In 1878 he graduated from the seminary and was ordained three years later. During the interwar period, he was a gray eminence in the St. George's Cathedral in Lviv, a Galician social and political activist, economist, and philanthropist. He served as a priest in the villages of Galicia. There he established reading rooms and fought to end illiteracy. Voinarovsky helped the peasants in parceling out the land and selling the crops. At his own expense, he published the newspaper "Our Word", which was aimed at peasants and workers. He supported the youth scout organization "Płast".

His main interest was economics. The clergyman believed that the Ukrainians should become economically independent of the Poles. According to him, this was a necessary condition for them to be able to create their own national state in the future¹¹. For this reason, he was one of the founders of the Land Mortgage Bank and then later became the head of the National Economic Society "Sil'skyj Hospodar". His management skills were appreciated: from 1910, Voinarovsky administered the lands and funds of the metropolis as a member of the Lviv metropolitan chapter. Staying in the entourage of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, he quickly became his trusted assistant and helped him to administer the metropolis. At the beginning of the 20th century, Voinarovsky was one of the leading Ukrainian politicians in Eastern Galicia. He belonged to the Ukrainian National Democratic Party and, on its behalf, was a deputy of the 11th term of the *Reichsrat* (the House of Representatives of the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy in Vienna). At the outbreak of the First World War, he was undergoing treatment in Germany, from where he left for Vienna, and he lived there until 1916. Then he returned to Lviv. He died there on 21 February 1938¹².

In 1918, Poland regained its independence. At the same time, the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) and the Ukrainian People's Republic

11 These views were consistent with the views of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, who from the beginning of his pastoral ministry wanted to take care not only of the spiritual development of Greek Catholics, but also of their professional and economic development. Therefore, he supported the construction of schools more than the construction of churches. Cf. Lilianna Hentosh, *Finansovo-ekonomichna diyal'nist' mytropolity Andrey Sheptyc'koho yak faktor modernizaciyi ukrayins'koho suspil'stva Halychyny* [Financial and Economic Activities of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky as a Factor in the Modernization of the Ukrainian Society of Galicia], in: Andrzej Roman Szeptycki (ed.), *Kościół, naród, państwo. Działalność i dziedzictwo Metropolity Andrzeja Szeptyckiego (1865–1944)*. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji w Krakowie 25–26 listopada 2009 roku, Wrocław – Warsaw 2011, 129.

12 Vojnarov's'kyj, *Postati*, 11–75.

(URL) were established. The lands of these Ukrainians countries were quickly dispersed among their neighbors, including Poland. Father Voinarovsky was in favor of annexing Eastern Galicia to Poland on the condition that the district had to receive autonomy. In the face of the Soviet threat, he wanted a Polish-Ukrainian federation.

Voinarovsky's correspondent, Stanisław Łoś, was a generation younger than him. The count was born on 21 October 1890, in the Galician village Chyshky near Sambor. In 1913, he obtained a doctorate of law at the University of Vienna. Like Voinarovsky, he was a citizen of the Habsburg monarchy, so he was drafted into the Austrian army during the First World War. He worked in the Military Government in Lublin, married there and stayed in this area permanently. After Poland regained independence, Łoś worked in various positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1921, he created a self-government statute for Eastern Galicia, which in September 1922 was the basis for the Act on the Principles of General Provincial Self-Government, specifically the Lviv, Ternopil and Stanisławów Voivodeships. The document was also crucial for the granting of sovereignty over Eastern Galicia to Poland by the Conference of Ambassadors.

However, the arrangements contained in the Act of Principles remained ineffective, which meant that the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia did not receive the promised self-government. Not sharing this and other visions of his superiors, Łoś resigned from the position of head of the Eastern Małopolska department. Then he worked at the Polish legation in London until he retired in 1931. After his retirement, Stanisław Łoś lived on his wife's estate in Niemce near Lublin. During this time, he returned to the Ukrainian question by writing articles for the press, as well as two booklets on Eastern Galicia. After the Second World War, because the Communists took away his family's previous source of income, which was a landed estate, he was employed at the Catholic University of Lublin as a lecturer in ancient history. He had been passionate about the subject since high school, and he enjoyed his teaching and research work. As a lecturer and writer he worked for a quarter of a century until his death on 14 January 1974.¹³

13 Cf. Anna Łoś/Marek Łoś, Łoś Jan Stanisław, in: Tadeusz Epsztein/Sławomir Górczyński/Barbara Konarska (eds.), *Ziemianie polscy XX wieku, Część II* [Polish Landowners of the 20th Century, Part II], Warsaw 2016, 39–42; Paulina Byzdra-Kusz, *Stanisław Łoś (1890–1974). Życie i działalność akademicka w Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim* [Stanisław Łoś (1890–1974). Life and Academic Activity at the Catholic University of Lublin], Lublin 2023.

4. Voinarovsky's and Łoś' Views on a Cooperation Between Poles and Ukrainians

An analysis of the correspondence collected in the State Archive in Lublin confirms Voinarovsky's polonophilia and shows that he was an enthusiast for close cooperation between the Ukrainians from Eastern Galicia and the Polish government, while also rejecting a blind and bloody fight with the authorities. His main argument was: "Fighting with Poland, both in the past and today, can only bring ruin. It is possible that it would also bring ruin to Poland, but that is no consolation to me."¹⁴

Immediately after the First World War, the clergyman took part in many important political events of the time, trying, for example, to reconcile the fighting sides in the Polish-Ukrainian war (1918–1919). For this purpose, he formed a conciliation committee, which managed to meet only three times, as a result of the Poles breaking off the negotiations right after the arrival of their Blue Army in Lviv. Shortly after the first meeting with Stanisław Łoś, on 6 September 1921, at the request of the Polish government, the clergyman tried unsuccessfully to persuade Yevhen Petrushevych, the president of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, to start negotiations with the Poles. The issue concerned the recognition of Polish suzerainty over Eastern Galicia in exchange for wide autonomy of these lands. The prelate maintained that if Ukrainians in Poland had good conditions for development, then soon there would be a real possibility of incorporating the lands under the control of the USSR into the Polish state. He believed that the Second Polish Republic could be a homeland for both nations, pointing to the multicultural and multinational tradition of the First Polish Republic. In his own national camp, he paid for his opinion with accusations of treason. His views, however, showed that he was able to rise above nationality disputes, achieving his own vision of the Ukrainian *raison d'état*¹⁵.

For Father Voinarovsky, as indeed for the majority of the Ukrainian clergy, the greatest threat was the atheistic Soviet Union developing in the east. Around 1930, seeing the growing nightmare of the communist experiment, he lamented the inclusion of part of the Ukrainian lands in it. Thus he wrote: "The longer Ukraine remains united with Bolshevich Russia, the less chance it has to create an independent state." It should be noted that Voinarovsky considered these issues primarily in a religious context, and secondarily in a political con-

14 Łoś, *Sprawa*, 174 (my own translation).

15 Cf. *ibidem*.

text. For him, the Soviet Union was the “kingdom of the devil”, from which Poland was the only effective barrier¹⁶. In 1922, anticipating a new war, Voinarovsky persuaded Józef Piłsudski to allow the ZUNR troops, which had been disbanded by the Poles and had taken refuge in Czechoslovakia, to defend the borders of Eastern Galicia and Volhynia against the Red Army. For political reasons, this idea was doomed to failure. Then, in the early 1930s, the prelate called for a crusade against the Soviet Union, which the Poles and Ukrainians would undertake together¹⁷.

Voinarovsky’s dislike of the Russians was also personal. During the First World War, they indirectly contributed to the death of his only son when they arrested and imprisoned him, causing him to fall ill and die shortly afterwards. The clergyman was also shocked by the brutality of Russian soldiers towards Greek Catholic priests¹⁸. He had no doubt that the Soviet Union would seek to absorb the whole of Ukraine, as without it the USSR would lose its status as an empire. Voinarovsky believed that the Russians sought to set the two nations at odds, as exemplified by the Pacification of Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia (1930)¹⁹. He did not accuse Piłsudski and the Polish government, but blamed the local authorities, the press and the communists. Voinarovsky wrote to Łoś: “There is no doubt, that the pacification, as it was carried out, was carried out against the government’s intentions. This action was carried out by the highest government forces in Eastern Małopolska, following the intentions of the Bolshevik government, although, in my opinion, they are not Bolshevik sympathizers. These factors also made every effort to force the Polish press, even through calumnies, to fuel the hatred of the Polish society towards the Ukrainian nation”²⁰.

Prelate Voinarovsky contrasted the threat from the Soviet Union with the possibility of a Ukrainian federation with Poland. However, his writings do not answer the question of how exactly he saw Poland’s alliance with Ukraine. Instead, he wrote about the need to combine Ukraine’s economic strength with

16 State Archive in Lublin, Łoś’s Archive (80), sign. 587, Tyt Voinarovsky’s letter to Stanisław Łoś, Mikuliczyn, 3 I 1931, 76 (my own translation).

17 Cf. Łoś, *Sprawa*, 174–178.

18 This aspect is very accurately described in: Watson, Ring, 192–193. The Austro-Hungarian army also used violence against Ukrainian peasants and priests: *ibidem*, 153–155.

19 It was a punitive action against the Ukrainian minority in Poland, carried out by police and military of the Second Polish Republic from September until November 1930 in reaction to a wave of sabotage and terrorist attacks perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists.

20 Łoś, *Sprawa*, 177–178; Shevchenko, *Diyalnist*, 485 (my own translation).

military assistance from Poland to resist the Russian threat. He believed that the future of the two nations was inextricably linked. Initially, it would be difficult to talk about an equal arrangement, but over the decades, the cooperation of these two nations could be based on an undeniable partnership. Having the same Western European values and a similar mentality and culture would contribute to the creation of a strong state in Europe, capable of repelling attacks from outside. He treated these matters as inseparable. To quote his words: "The very preservation of Ukraine in the hope of a federation with Poland sustains its separatist stance towards Russia"²¹ and "It has been my dream for years now that the entire Ukrainian nation should stand by Poland, because our future depends on it"²². With quite a bit of delusion, he prophesied: "the Polish-Ukrainian state will indeed reach from sea to sea, it will have the first word in Europe, and Polish industry based on abundant and cheap agricultural production from Ukraine will become unrivalled in the world."²³ He believed that the political party leaders should strive for "great ideas for the future of the Polish and Ukrainian people."²⁴

According to Voinarovsky, the best governmental system for such a federation would be a monarchy. He greatly respected Marshal Piłsudski, who had a positive attitude towards the issue of federation, so he saw him as the founder of a new dynasty. Voinarovsky believed that only a strong central authority could restore proper national relations and dismiss the possibility of Ukraine being conquered by the Soviet Union, which he believed was in the interests of both nations. But he knew this was only a dream. He ended his argument addressed to Stanisław Łoś with the words: "the Ukrainian nation must regret that there is no hope of Poland becoming a monarchy."²⁵

Father Voinarovsky often presented his views to other Polish authorities. As mentioned, he also spoke with Marshal Piłsudski on this matter. In November 1923, half a year after the Entente powers had recognized the Polish possession of Eastern Galicia, the clergyman sent a memorial to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In it, he put forward the thesis that the disputed territory was given to Poland in order to strengthen it, and thus stop the Soviet Union's march to the West. He pointed out that "the Ukrainian national camp is very

21 Łoś, *Sprawa*, 178 (my own translation).

22 State Archive in Lublin, Łoś's Archive, sign. 587, Tyt Voinarovsky's letter to Stanisław Łoś (without date and place), 67 (my own translation).

23 Łoś, *Sprawa*, 173 (my own translation).

24 *Ibidem*, 175 (my own translation).

25 State Archive in Lublin, Łoś's Archive, sign. 587, Tyt Voinarovsky's letter to Stanisław Łoś, Lviv, 6 V 1931, 70–71 (my own translation).

interested in Poland resisting Bolshevism and being a strong power, because our future depends on it.”²⁶ In the memorandum, Voinarovsky advised the Polish government to give the Ukrainians independent power in Eastern Galicia, in order to make them feel positively disposed towards the Republic of Poland. He concluded that Ukraine was a reservoir of recruits and grain for which the Russians would not stop fighting, while the Poles, with a wise policy, could attract the Ukrainians to the vision of the federation. The clergyman waited six months for an answer from the Polish authorities. It did not bring a positive solution. Minister Stanisław Grabski – a leading representative of the National Democratic political camp – was averse to national minorities, including the Ukrainians, and so Voinarovsky’s appeal was doomed to fail from the start²⁷.

Voinarovsky’s concept of federation, which emerges from his letters, unfortunately does not have many details. It is limited to plans for the Poles and Ukrainians to cooperate closely and create a federation in the center of Europe of two rich and strong states, with the strength to oppose Russia. Stanisław Łoś had a completely different idea for the coexistence of these two nations. First, he did not propose the idea of a federation. According to him, a free Ukraine was to be established, but beyond the Zbruch River, while the Ukrainians living in the Second Polish Republic, in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia should be granted far-reaching autonomy. In his numerous articles and brochures on the Ukrainian question, Stanisław Łoś raised issues of education and economy, and proposed political solutions to these issues. He presented a different line than the Polish authorities. Therefore, around 1930, his candidacy for the voivode of Lviv was rejected²⁸.

When it comes to education, Łoś opposed the idea of Utraquist schools (whose teaching system uses two languages for lectures). They were theoretically designed for the good of both Poles and Ukrainians, but only made the situation in the south-east of Poland worse. In their place, the count envisioned separate schools. He also proposed that Ukrainian secondary schools should not educate officials, who could not find employment in the Polish country anyway, but should instead turn to educating specialists in the field of agriculture. According to the publicist, the Ukrainian university was also indispensable, as it would be a humanities school to act as a bridge for Polish-Ukrainian understanding. The support for this bridge were to be Ukrainian teachers, which was an innovative idea. Łoś believed that this was the right group to

26 Łoś, *Sprawa*, 175–178 (my own translation).

27 Cf. *ibidem*.

28 Cf. Łoś, *Sprawa*, 179–186.

convince Ukrainian societies to accept the Polish state. The publicist therefore showed that good solutions in the field of education would translate into good Polish-Ukrainian relations²⁹.

In economic matters, he was against the agricultural reform as planned by the government and the colonization in Volhynia, as he saw that this had brought more harm than good. He was particularly against discrimination of Ukrainians in the division of land. Łoś was also against the policy of the Polish authorities, which sought to break the state of ownership developed by Ukrainian cooperatives³⁰.

As to the political solution, Stanisław Łoś believed that national parallelism should be introduced in Eastern Galicia, so that each nation could act separately. Through this, it would be possible to avoid ethnic conflicts, and the inhabitants of the area could create their own property and develop according to their own capabilities. The publicist believed that the fate of Eastern Galicia should be decided by both Poles and Ukrainians, sitting side by side in the state administration according to the principle of parity. He wanted the Galician Ukrainians to define the so-called Ukrainian *raison d'état*, which would allow them to create an independent Ukrainian state across the Zbruch River relatively quickly. Stanisław Łoś fought for the rights of Ukrainians to have their own school and cooperative. His ideas, although full of common sense and not harmful to the interests of the Republic of Poland, were never considered by the Polish government. This demonstrates the short-sightedness of the Polish authorities towards the problem of tense Polish-Ukrainian relations in the east of the Second Polish Republic³¹.

5. Conclusion

A century ago, a conservative faction of Galician Ukrainians considered, under the perceived threat from Soviet Russia, whether an alliance with the Polish state would be right and desirable. Despite the conflict with the Poles, which lasted for a number of years and reached its peak during the Polish-Ukrainian War, and the political struggle in the international forum over Eastern Galicia, the Second Polish Republic appeared as the lesser evil and a potential partner in the defence of the Ukrainian nation. Voinarovsky was part of a circle of activists who were caught in the stream of political events. However, in view of

29 Cf. Kusz, Jan, 71–90.

30 Cf. *ibidem*, 91–109.

31 Cf. *ibidem*, 111–128.

the unfavourable decisions of the Polish government, his efforts yielded no results. Although he did not represent the views of the majority of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, we should particularly emphasize the role of figures who tried to prevent the conflict between Poles and Ukrainians from escalating. The cleric's views were consistent with the famous words of the Polish politician, then deputy prime minister Ignacy Daszyński, who in 1920 said: "there can be no free Poland without a free Ukraine, nor a free Ukraine without a free Poland".

In today's Central Europe, with the growing ties between Poland and Ukraine, this vision could finally come true. Economic cooperation, free movement of people, goods and services, preferential conditions for companies and mutual understanding between the politicians of these countries could be a kind of new coalition, a new balance of forces.

The Gender Aspect of Political Rhetoric and its Origins: The Case of Ukraine

Mariana Myrosh

This article examines the portrayal of Ukraine within the Russian Empire and contemporary Russian political discourse through a gendered metaphor, namely that of a woman. The hypothesis is that depicting Ukraine as a woman reflects its subordinate position within the imperial hierarchy. Contemporary examples, such as Vladimir Putin's rhetoric depicting Ukraine as a "krasavitsa" [beauty], highlight how this metaphor reinforces Ukraine's subordination. The study traces the historical origins of the term "Little Russia," from ecclesiastical roots to its influence on cultural and political identities in imperial discourse. Classic literary works, including Hryhoriy-Kvitka Osnovyanenko's "Marusya" and Taras Shevchenko's poetry, illustrate shifts in depicting Ukrainian women as symbols of national identity under imperial domination. Ukrainian Soviet-era literature, such as Valerian Pidmohylny's "A Little Drama," reflects the complex interplay between Ukrainian cultural identity and socio-political changes under Soviet rule. Mikhail Lermontov's "A Hero of Our Time" portrays Ukraine as an intriguing yet marginalised figure within colonial hierarchies. The research underscores the persistent metaphor of Ukraine as a feminine entity and highlights how Ukrainians have internalised and perpetuated this portrayal.

1. Introduction

Edward Said, the scholar who popularised one of the most well-known terms in colonial studies, *orientalism*, defined imperialism as the establishment of dominance over or the governing of territory that is remote, inhabited, and already owned by others¹. Said proposed that, next to the intense attention given

1 Cf. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York 1994, 7. All internet links in this article were last accessed on 9 April 2024.

to the issue of the colonial economy, the cultural realm within the framework of imperialism is often overlooked. Moreover, he claimed that culture is one of the main reasons for the longevity of empires. It was not the militaristic or economic superiority that was detrimental to the metropolises' domination, rather, the acceptance of subordination by the colonised, which was fostered by the respective culture². Herbert Schiller, who expanded upon some of Said's ideas, argued that while economic interests have historically played a central role in the politics of colonisation, they were veiled by the guise of cultural imperialism.³

Michel Foucault viewed every piece of culture as a battlefield. He offered a radical position on textual analysis, believing discourse, defined as the act of speaking, utilising words, and sharing words with others, is inherently an act of power. Therefore, within the framework of power dynamics, discourse is not just a performance of language features, e. g. syntax and lexicon, but is a dynamic force operating within the social realm⁴. Accordingly, text, in its widest definition, exerts power not only through the linguistic structures it uses but also through those which are absent. Similarly, Ferdinand de Saussure defined language as a closed system operating by binary oppositions⁵. This article delves into one of these binary oppositions, *male-female*, specifically within the framework of imperial discourse.

According to Gayatri Spivak, imperialistic ideology is highly gendered. Spivak defined imperialism as a continuation of the patriarchy, in which *female* is inherently perceived to be of lesser value than *male* and needs male guidance⁶. The alignment between the patriarchal representation of gender and the imperialist quest for legitimising dominance gave rise to the binary opposition of male-female that extended beyond the confines of gender discourse. The roots of the *female colony* trope can be traced back to the Enlightenment period. Although marked by significant geographical explorations, the Enlightenment period was also marred by violence and conquest, facilitated by major empires. The dynamics between the metropolis and the colony were notably one-sided, presupposing the subjugation of the latter. In the context of a patriarchal world,

2 Cf. *ibidem*, 11.

3 Cf. Herbert Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, New York 1976, 26.

4 Cf. Arnold I. Davidson, Introduction, in: Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*. Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76, New York 2003, xv–xxiii, xx.

5 Cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, New York 2016, 86.

6 Cf. Gayatri C. Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, in: Patrick Williams/Laura Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader*, Harlow et al. 1994, 66–111, 82.

this served as the foundation for metaphorically depicting their relationship as a man-woman partnership, with attributes ascribed to them during the Enlightenment. Typically, a woman was associated with emotionalism and, more broadly, with nature, while a man was linked to culture, rationality, and the distinct notions of humanity and civilisation.⁷ Similar to a woman, the colony was perceived as helpless without the ruling empire, akin to a husband. A woman symbolised chaos, beckoning a man to instill order.⁸ This metaphorical framework continues to influence contemporary geopolitical discourse.

Putin on multiple occasions emphasised that Ukraine left Russia with no choice while succinctly encapsulating the empire's mission.⁹ He repeated over an extensive period that Ukraine's actions appeared so disordered that Russia found itself compelled to impose order through force. Metaphors depicting the relationship between Russia and Ukraine as that of a man/aggressor – female/victim dynamic have gained widespread recognition, with political experts and analysts increasingly adopting the illustration. For instance, in response to Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to the Office of the President of Ukraine from 2020 to 2023, who attributed the invasion primarily to Ukraine's constitutional development toward a Euro-Atlantic orientation, political analyst Vitaly Portnykov offered a compelling rebuttal. Portnykov asserted, "Perhaps she [referring to Ukraine] was dressed inappropriately, perhaps she smiled too much at him [referring to Russia as the maniac], or, conversely, was she too assertive? The truth remains that the aggressor attacked not due to the victim's attire or demeanour but rather out of a desire to inflict harm and destruction."¹⁰

7 Cf. Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge. Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Contributions to the Study of World Literature 99), Westport/CT – London 2000, 11.

8 Cf. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, London 1956, 104.

9 Cf. Olena Roshchina, *Putin Reiterates That Ukraine Never Existed and He Was Forced to Start War* (3 November 2023). URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/11/3/7427096>. See also kremlin.ru, Владимир Путин ответил на вопросы журналистов [Vladimir Putin Answered Questions from Journalists] (22 December 2022). URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70170>.

10 Natalya Dulyaba, Віталій Портников: "Путін не стільки закінчує цю війну, скільки готується до наступної" [Vitaly Portnikov: "Putin Is Not So Much Ending This War as Preparing for the Next One"] (18 March 2022). URL: <https://portal.lviv.ua/news/2022/03/18/vitalij-portnykov-putin-ne-stilky-zakinchuie-tsiu-vijnu-skilky-hotuietsia-do-nastupnoi>. Own translation.

2. Contemporary Example

During a conference held on February 8, 2022, less than 20 days before the official Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin employed a striking metaphor in his discussion with French President Emmanuel Macron. The primary focus of their meeting was the Minsk agreements and the alleged inconsistency of Ukraine to implement them. When a journalist inquired whether Putin believed a diplomatic resolution to the escalating situation was possible, the Russian President responded with the following lines: “In Kyiv, they sometimes say that they will adhere to it [ed. the Minsk agreements], and then they say that it will destroy their country [...], but: Like it or not – bear with it, my *beauty!*”¹¹ The imperative to fulfil [ed. the terms of the agreement] is undeniable.”¹² These remarks by Putin obtained significant attention from many political leaders. Notably, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki – reacting to a question of an interviewer who framed Putin’s statement as something that “Russian speakers interpreted as a rape joke” – emphasised that any reference to rape is deeply concerning and unacceptable to the US government¹³. Also, Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė called Putin’s rhetoric no less than “disgusting”¹⁴. Subsequently, Putin attempted to clarify his position, asserting that it was merely a saying from Russian folklore and “no personal dimension” was intended¹⁵.

- 11 Originally in Russian: “Нравится, не нравится – терпи, моя красавица” (Nravitsa, ne nravitsa – terpi, moia krasavitsa). The closest English notions to the verb “терпеть” (terpet’) are “tolerance” and “endurance”, and according to the scholar Andrey N. Kokhichko these were always an essential concept in domestic Russian folklore. Within the context of the latter, it could be interpreted as an ability to: “persistently and resignedly bear anything (pain, suffering, deprivation, distress, trouble, etc.) without opposing it or complaining” [Andrey N. Kokhichko, Endurance and Patience in Russian Mentality (On the Question of Tolerance), in: Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods 8/11 (2018) 974–981, 976].
- 12 Denys Karlovsky, Путін Зеленському про Мінські угоди: Подобається, не подобається – терпи, моя красуне! [Putin to Zelenskyi on the Minsk Agreements: Like It or Not – Bear With It, My Beauty!] (7 February 2022). URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/02/7/7323164>. Own translation.
- 13 Cf. [whitehouse.gov, Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki](https://www.whitehouse.gov/press-briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/02/09/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-jen-psaki-february-9-2022) (9 February 2022). URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/press-briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/02/09/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-jen-psaki-february-9-2022>.
- 14 Radio Svoboda, Суботнє інтерв’ю. Інґріда Шимоніте, прем’єр-міністерка Литви [Saturday Interview. Ingrid Šimonite, Prime Minister of Lithuania] (12 February 2022), 16:00–16:11. URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/31676754.html>. Own translation.
- 15 Alyona Mazurenko, “Подобається, не подобається”: Путін пояснив свої слова [“Like It or Not”: Putin Explained His Words] (10 February 2022). URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/02/10/7323531>. Own translation.

Aside from political shortsightedness, Putin's statement revealed his perspective of Ukraine's position on Russia. In spite of the subsequent justifications offered by Putin, the prominence of the word "krasavitsa" [beauty] in his expression expressed more about his own imagination rather than the subject under discussion. "Like it or not – bear with it, my beauty" hailed from the lyrics of the Russian band "Krasnaya Plesen" ["Red Mold"]¹⁶. In spite of the confidence with which the phrase was spoken, the speaker misquoted it. Instead of the verb "bear" (russ. терпи, "terpi"), it should have been "sleep" (russ. спи, "spi"). The song revolves around a slumbering beauty who falls victim to the protagonist's actions. While the majority of the Ukrainian media was firmly convinced of the inauthenticity of Peskov's statements, who is Putin's spokesman, regarding the phrase's origin, some Russian media outlets leaned toward the idea of the phrase having roots in folklore. Media sources like *Dozhd* and *Meduza* cited the leader of the band "Krasnaya Plesen," and Russian anthropologist Alexandra Arkhipova, both of whom pointed to the phrase's folkloric origins¹⁷. Considering the 1980s "Krasnaya Plesen" song shared substantial thematic similarities of necrophilic undertones, the various theories about the phrase's origins do not significantly alter the broader perspective on the situation. By comparing the original lyrics of the composition and the conversational context in which the phrase was employed, it becomes apparent that the Russian president envisioned Ukraine as a dormant, beautiful maiden whose passive state could be exploited. Such an interpretation might seem contrived were it not for Putin's aides offering an unusual defence. Perhaps excuses were prompted by the Kremlin's apprehension that the concealed truth from February 2022 might come to light. The discussion could be extended indefinitely, but it is prudent to momentarily set it aside and delve into the heart of the matter. Why did Putin opt for these words, and not other descriptors? Why did he depict Ukraine as a "krasavitsa", a beautiful woman? Answers to these inquiries are located in history.

The research methodology for this article adopts a multidisciplinary approach to investigate the gender aspect of political rhetoric, particularly within the context of Ukraine. It integrates insights from postcolonial studies, literary

16 "Krasnaya Plesen" was established in 1989, and according to their official site, in the depths of the band's humour lies "a hidden subtext ridiculing the shortcomings and vices of society" [Krasnaya Plesen. URL: plesen.net. Own translation].

17 Cf. Meduza.io, "Терпи, моя красавица" Все решили, что Путин слушает "Красную плесень". На самом деле президент цитировал частушки (но все равно матерные) ["Bear With It, My Beauty" Everyone Thought That Putin Listens to "Red Mold". In Fact, the President Quoted Ditties (But Still Obscene Ones)] (9 February 2022) URL: <https://meduza.io/shapito/2022/02/09/terpi-moya-krasavitsa>. Own translation.

analysis, historical perspectives, and contemporary political discourse analysis. Employing a case study approach, the methodology centres on Ukraine to explore the gendered dimensions of political discourse. It delves into historical portrayals of Ukraine depicted as a woman which are found in both Ukrainian and Russian literature, alongside analysing contemporary political rhetoric, notably amid the ongoing war of Russia against Ukraine. The chosen literary works contain the socio-political motives revealed through the prism of the gendered metaphor of Ukraine. These selections were made with focus on contemporary political discourse, ensuring that they hold influence in the present context. By examining literary works from both Ukrainian and Russian perspectives, the study highlights differences and similarities in the portrayal of Ukraine as a woman. This comparative analysis can shed light on how the association between national identity and gender roles is constructed and contested by opposing perspectives on Ukraine within one imperial context.

3. Literary-Historical Perspectives from the Opposite Sides of an Imperial Situation

a) “Little Russia” Perception

The term *Little Russia* originated in the late 13th century within ecclesiastical circles to differentiate between the two metropolitans of Russia: Galicia (referred to as *Minor Russia*) and Suzdal (*Major Russia*). One proposed theory claims that this conceptual distinction does not reflect the metropolitans’ political or economic significance or geographical size, but rather the number of parishioners under each diocese. A widely accepted view in historiography argues that this naming convention might be linked to the Greek tradition of referring to their homeland as *minor* and colonies as *major* (like *Magna Graecia*). However, by the 15th century, both *minor* and *major* fell out of common use when the Russian Church definitively split into distinct western and eastern branches. By the 18th century, the term entered into Muscovite political discourse, referring to the southwestern territories of the empire: the Right Bank, Slobozhanshchyna, Southern Ukraine, and the Left Bank, which was associated with the former Hetmanate. This region was the inheritor of the privileges initially granted by the Tsar to the Zaporozhian army, which later extended to the rest of the population of the area.¹⁸ While under the rule of

18 Cf. Yaroslav Hrytsak, Нариси історії України: формування модерної української нації XIX–XX ст [Essays on the History of Ukraine: The Formation of the Modern Ukrainian Nation of the 19th–20th Centuries], Kyiv 1996, 16.

the Russian Empire, the distinct identity of the Little Russian lands became increasingly apparent. This identity was notably expressed through the cultural activities of the Little Russian elite, leading to repeated efforts by the imperial system to exert control over it.¹⁹ It is crucial to acknowledge that while *Little Russianness* existed as a distinct identity separate from *Great Russianness*, it didn't always oppose it. More than that, around the turn of the 19th century, it started to be perceived as a subcategory of the latter.²⁰

The plot of one of the earliest literary works published in the Ukrainian language revolves around a young, melancholic girl.²¹ In 1832, Hryhoriy-Kvitka Osnovyanenko wrote "Marusya," a novel named after its main heroine, that explored the love between a young man and a girl whose deep affection was interrupted by the tragic demise of the heroine. Notably, "Marusya" does not serve as an embodiment of Ukraine, primarily due to the absence of overt national concerns in the novel. Osnovyanenko's female character, marked by profound emotional depth and a certain degree of one-dimensionality, was predominantly a product of the sentimentalism prevalent in 18th century European literature. Although "Marusya" did not directly correspond to the metaphor of Ukraine as a woman, Dmytro Dontsov, a leading theorist of Ukrainian integral nationalism in the early 20th century, perceived it as such. Dontsov referred to Marusya as a "Little Russian" woman and criticised her for what he perceived as weakness and susceptibility to external influences. He identified elements of Ukraine in Marusya and deemed the traits he ascribed to her unworthy of the "Ukrainian nation", which, in his view, should have been primarily driven by an innate desire to resist external influences.²² Dontsov's ideology centred on the concept of transcending the "bifurcation of the soul," a goal that could only be achieved by renouncing ambivalent emotional sentiments and rejecting rationality.²³ Acknowledging the social connotations associated with emotionality, Dontsov's concept of "fanatic nationalism" was intertwined

19 Cf. Zenon Kohut, The Development of a Little Russian Identity and Ukrainian Nation-building, in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10/3–4 (1986) 559–576, 563 f.

20 Cf. Serhii Plokhyy, *Ukraine & Russia: Representations of the Past*, Toronto et al. 2008, 45, 391. See also in: Hrytsak, *Нариси*, 27.

21 Cf. Nina Butorina, Національні мотиви у творчості Григорія Квітки-Оснoв'яненка [National Motifs in the Work of Hryhoriy Kvitka-Osnovyanenko], in: *Slovo I Chas* 6 (2005) 76–79, 76.

22 Cf. Dmytro Dontsov, *Незримі Скрижалі Кобзаря: Містика Лицiрства Запорозького* [Invisible Tablets of Kobzar: The Mysticism of the Zaporizhzhya Knighthood], Toronto 1961, 150 f. Own translation.

23 Cf. Dmytro Dontsov, *Націоналізм* [Nationalism], London 1966, 313.

with a certain kind of femininity. Nevertheless, despite the seemingly clear-cut nature of the concepts expounded upon in “Nacionalizm,” contemporaries who reached further than the abovementioned work viewed his perspectives as debatable. For instance, Lypynsky, an ideologue of Ukrainian Conservatism, voiced criticism against Dontsov in his “Lysty do Khliborobiv”: “In one month he [ed. Dontsov] writes that Ukrainians ‘have a womanly psychology’ [because they are guided in the first place by feeling instead of logic] (*Pidstavy nashoi polityky*); in another, that they are rationalists, that is, dominated by logic and not feeling (*Nacionalizm*).”²⁴ Dontsov favoured Taras Shevchenko’s portrayal of women, whose resolute ambitions were more conspicuous. Unlike Osnovyanenko, Taras Shevchenko deliberately imposed metaphorical attributes of Ukraine onto his female characters.

Taras Shevchenko, a prominent member of the Guild of Cyril and Methodius²⁵ in the mid-19th century, played a pivotal role in redefining the portrayal of women in literature. The organisation he was a part of created a cultural-political program, demanding social equality and freedom of speech within the Russian empire. According to Mykhailo Hrushevsky, a key figure in the resurgence of Ukrainian national identity²⁶ during the early 20th century, the position of the Guild emerged among everything “thanks to the ideas imported from Western Europe”²⁷. Despite the greater role of some of his co-members in the Guild activity, Shevchenko remains the canonical figure for the Ukrainian national culture to this day. His rise as a national hero is attributed to the distinctly Romantic nature of his work, which places him within the broader European process of “canonization of cultural saints”²⁸.

24 Vyacheslav Lypynsky, *Листи до Хліборобів про Ідею і Організацію Українського Монархізму* [Letters to the Farmers on the Idea and Organisation of Ukrainian Monarchism], Vienna 1926, xxi. Translation taken from: Trevor Erlacher, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Age of Extremes: An Intellectual Biography of Dmytro Dontsov*, Cambridge 2021, 261.

25 In Ukrainian: Кирило-Методіївське братство (*Kyrylo-Mefodiivske bratstvo*). Translated by Mykhailo Hrushevsky (see fn. 26).

26 Or how he was called in an article for “The New York Times” in 1918: “President of Ukrainian Rada” and “Leader in Nationalistic Movement”. See in: Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Ukraine’s Struggle for Self-Government*, in: *The New York Times* (17 February 1918), 68.

27 *Ibidem*.

28 Christian Noack, *The Riddles of the Shevchenko Cult*, in: Marijan Dović/Jón K. Helgason (eds.), *Great Immortality. Studies on European Cultural Sainthood (National Cultivation of Culture 18)*, Leiden – Boston 2019, 75–103, 75 f.

Shevchenko elevated the depth and complexity of his female characters, presenting them in three distinct archetypes: the *solitary mother-woman* (an unsuccessful mother), the *mother-woman* (a successful mother), and the *pure, beautiful girl*. Among his motives for emphasising the image of the pure girl was his opposition to the caricatured and corrupt landlord figure. Maksym Rylsky identified the contrasting depiction of the male landowner and the peasant girl as a poetic tool to underscore social injustice.²⁹ In the context of the mid-19th century, when Ukrainians were predominantly associated with the peasantry, class and national interests were intricately intertwined. The pure girl in Shevchenko's works served as a symbol not only of the peasant class but also of the Ukrainian people. In his poem "Kateryna", he narrated the tragic tale of a young woman who fell in love with a Moscow man and, after his eventual leave, found herself pregnant, embodying the archetype of the solitary mother. Moreover, Shevchenko's 1840 poem "O My Thoughts" exemplified the intricate portrayal of Ukraine as a feminine symbol:

Go then to Ukraine, my children,
To Ukraine, so dear,
Wander on like homeless orphans,
I shall perish here [...]
Bid them welcome, then, my mother,
My Ukraine, and smile
On these, my children, still unwise,
As on thy own true child³⁰

В Україну ідіть, діти!
В нашу Україну,
Попідтинню, сиротами,
А я – тут загину [...]
Привітай же, моя ненько!
Моя Україно!
Моїх діток нерозумних,
Як свою дитину³¹

In "O My Thoughts", Taras Shevchenko boldly bestowed the title of "mother" upon Ukraine, a nurturing figure compelled to care for her "foolish" and wayward Ukrainian children, not through subtle insinuations, but with direct clarity. But where have these children gone astray? The answer lies within the line "I shall perish here." Where was "here"? Given the backdrop of Ukraine's subjugation under the Russian Empire and Shevchenko's own presence in imperial St. Petersburg at the time, these Ukrainian children had wandered off

29 Cf. Volodymyr Kolomiets/Olga Ivanova, *Художня Трансформація Фольклорних Мотивів у Ранній Романтичній Творчості Тараса Шевченка (Шевченкознавчі студії 13)* [Artistic Transformation of Folkloristic Motifs in the Early Romantic Work of Taras Shevchenko (Shevchenko Studies 13)], Kyiv 2011, 68.

30 Taras Shevchenko, *O my Thoughts, my Heartfelt Thoughts*, in: idem, *Song out of Darkness. Selected Poems*, translated by Vera Rich, London 1961, 10.

31 Taras Shevchenko, *Кобзар [The Bard]*, Kyiv 1985, 48 f.

into the vast expanse of the empire's cultural dominion. Shevchenko was an ardent advocate for Ukrainian folk culture and tirelessly endeavoured to propel it into modernity. Much like the European romantics, he embarked on journeys across Ukraine to collect knowledge of its rich folkloric heritage. In his poem "O My Thoughts", he passionately urged for a cultural reconnection with mother Ukraine, all the while acknowledging his own sense of lostness. Shevchenko symbolically entrusted the Ukrainians to their true mother's embrace, recognising his own incapacity to liberate himself from the constraints imposed by the empire's mental framework before their ultimate emancipation.³²

Given that the woman served as the embodiment of nature, she inherently possessed a duality that made her mysterious and inscrutable. To Taras Shevchenko, a woman could embody both the single mother, deprived of her wreath, and the accomplished mother. In his examination of archetypes in Shevchenko's works, Grabovych observed the inherent diversity of feminine figures. He correlated the ambiguity in Shevchenko's portrayal of women with Carl Jung's concepts of *anima* and *shadow*, wherein the former embodies a positive projection of the author's feminine nature, while the latter represents a negative one. According to Grabovich's analysis, the triptych "Dolya", "Slava", and "Muza"³³ exemplifies the articulation of the anima "in a crypto-pejorative way – as a whore, who gives herself to all comers, but remains attractive and lovable nonetheless"³⁴. The feminine conceptually encapsulates aspects of both Eve and Mary, representing the greatest sinner and the greatest righteous figure of the human race. Owing to these inherent contradictions within the female psyche, in his 1883 comedic play "Chasing Two Hares", Mykhailo Starytskyi cleverly personified Ukraine through two female characters: Pronya and Galya. The former character belongs to the affluent Russified Ukrainian bourgeoisie, while the latter is a poor beauty. The comedic genre allowed Starytskyi to underscore the caricature of Pronya, a character he playfully ridiculed alongside the other figures in his work. The visual contrast between Pronya and Galya is also starkly evident. The main male character, in praising Galya, remarks: "My soul is simple; it clings to simplicity! And you, Galya ... are the beauty of all of

32 Cf. Kolomiets/Ivanova, Трансформація, 65.

33 English: "Fate", "Glory", "Muse". Own translation. See in: Taras Shevchenko, Зібрання творів: Поезія 1847–1861 [Collection of Works: Poetry From 1847–1861], vol. 2, Kyiv 2003.

34 George G. Grabowicz, Shevchenko's Archetypes, in: Papers of the Shevchenko Scientific Society in the US, vol. 1, ed. by Oles Fedoruk, New York 2017, 29–92, 72.

Kyiv!”³⁵ On the other hand, no one dares to describe Pronya in any similar way. Starytskyi’s aim was to illustrate the paradoxical nature of Ukraine, a condition that was not inherent but rather a consequence of the Russification imposed by the empire. In other words, the Ukrainian identity possessed an intrinsic femininity that, due to the absence of adequate masculinity enforced by the Russian Empire, became distorted and, to some extent, pathological.

The metaphor of Ukraine personified as a woman has remained a persistent and enduring motif in Ukrainian literature, transforming over time in response to shifting socio-political circumstances, yet never truly fading away. In 1926, in “Diva-Obyda”, the emigré poet Yevhen Malaniuk portrayed Ukraine not as a young woman without a wreath but as a prostitute. The circumstances for women had evolved, and consequently, “Shevchenko’s” image, once stigmatised by conventional society, had become somewhat antiquated. Malaniuk, while romanticising the Ukrainian woman, also harboured a disdain for her perceived weakness and susceptibility. In his poem “Diva-Obyda”, Malaniuk encapsulated the contradictions of his sentiments toward Ukraine, employing the juxtaposition of Saint Mary and sinful Eve as a literary tool. The very title of the poem alluded to a pre-Christian goddess, who, as indicated by the epigraph in the 1954 edition of “Diva-Obyda”, was responsible for the harmonious flow of life. By drawing a connection between the given goddess and Ukraine, Malaniuk marked her decline, a decline which he believed should have come to an end:

Who raped you? Powerless,
Powerless, drunk and mute
Barren flesh, poor body
You gave it to everyone yourself [...]
Get up like you used to!
Armor made of copper
Will replace dirt and rags, –
And again the girlish figure of Obyda
Looks victoriously into the ages.

Хто ґвалтував тебе?
Безсила, Безвладна, п’яна і німа
Неплодну плоть, убоге тіло
Давала кожному сама [...]
Повстань, як древле!
Панцир з міді
Замінить лахи й ганчірки, –
І знов дівоча стать Обиди
Звितяжно гляне у віки.³⁶

35 Cf. Mykhailo Starytsky, *За Двома Зайцями. Твори у шести томах* [Chasing Two Hares. Works in Six Volumes], vol. 2, Dnipro 1989, 392.

36 Yevhen Malaniuk, *Поезії в одному томі* [All the Poetry in One Volume], ed. by Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society in America/Independent Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, New York 1954, 80 f. Own translation on the left side.

Malaniuk was a writer with a specific set of life values. As a combatant for the Ukrainian People's Republic, he was detained in Europe and later moved to North America. Throughout the interwar period, he found inspiration in the nationalist writings of fellow emigrant Dontsov, penning essays wherein he viewed Shevchenko's mythmaking as a tangible political reality. Moreover, a distinctive aspect of his understanding of nationalism was its portrayal as a metaphorical expression or creative force, in contrast to rigid concepts.³⁷

In the context of 1920s Soviet Ukraine, two significant socio-political processes unfolded concurrently, far from Malaniuk: the emergence of women in the public sphere and *Ukrainization*, which involved the deliberate promotion of national culture and the official adoption of the Ukrainian language at the state level. The positive changes in the lives of women, both as individuals and as symbolic representations of Ukraine, became evident during the same time. This transformation was exemplified by Valerian Pidmohyl'ny in his novel "A Little Drama".³⁸ Pidmohyl'ny's work stood out for its ability to transcend immediate circumstances and instead, it mirrored trends in Western thought. Moreover, he is recognised as one of the pioneers of the intellectual-psychological novel movement. Central to his writings is the internal struggle reminiscent of Maupassant's characters – a conflict faced by rational individual striving to overcome his innate instincts and desires.³⁹ This motif portrays a caricature of a socialist reality, wherein attempts to liberate individuals from emotional constraints resulted in denying both men and women the freedom to choose. Specifically, Soviet theorists argued that relationships should be based on mutual feelings, which they believed could only emerge if a woman displayed interest or involvement in cultural pursuits.⁴⁰ In other words, the obligation to be separated from the public sphere was replaced by an obligation to join it.

"A Little Drama" features a central character named Marta, a former peasant who has become an employed, independent woman. Her unfortunate love affair with Yuriy Slavenko, a man who epitomises Soviet socialist ideology, highlights the temporary embrace of Ukrainianism by the Soviet authorities. Slavenko's loss of romantic interest in Marta and his abrupt breaking of their

37 Cf. George G. Grabowicz, Shevchenko in the Critical Essays of Ievhen Malaniuk, in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28/1–4 (2006) 441–459, 456 f.

38 Cf. Valerian Pidmohyl'ny, *Невеличка драма: Роман на Одну Частину* [A Little Drama: One-Part Novel], Kharkiv 2014.

39 Cf. Maxim Tarnawsky, *Between Reason and Irrationality. The Prose of Valerijan Pidmohyl'nyj*, Toronto 1994, 5.

40 Cf. Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936*, Cambridge 1993, 7.

relationship, mirrors the shifting fortunes of Ukrainian identity. The story's climax, marked by the end of their relationship and a deep slumber Marta falls into, symbolises the decline of Ukrainian culture and serves as a metaphor for the onset of mass repressions. In the 1930s, Valerian Pidmohylny along with a whole generation of artists was wiped off the face of the earth.

b) The Perception of the Empire

It is essential to emphasise that the personification of Ukraine as a woman did not originate from within the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood or the Ukrainian literary circles themselves. Instead, it was an external influence, specifically the impact of Romanticism, that gave rise to this metaphor. The mentors in Ukrainian literary organisations were prominent figures in imperial literature, nurtured in an environment of allegiance to the tsar. The metropolitan fascination with the spirituality of the colonies, a distinctive trait of Romanticism, never intended to alter the hierarchy between the conqueror and the subjugated. Even in cases where the metaphors employed by imperial writers seemed to visually suggest the colonies' superiority in certain aspects, upon closer examination they never challenged the imperial structure of subordination. The narratives of the empire were designed to create the illusion of the colonies' subjectivity, demonstrating that they complemented the empire. Through its connection to the colony, the empire legitimised its historical and cultural influence, while the colony gained a mixed sense of belonging to something larger than itself.⁴¹

The foundation for representing Ukraine as a woman was intricately tied to Ukraine's role within the empire or, more precisely, the role imposed upon her. As Simone de Beauvoir eloquently articulated, "He [ed. man] exploits her [ed. Nature], but she defies him; he is born from her and dies within her; she is the source of his existence and the realm he subjugates to his will."⁴² The association between the concepts of *woman* and *land* can be traced back to the emergence of agriculture, which essentially gave birth to the patriarchy. In the 19th century, it was openly acknowledged that Little Russia had become a breadbasket for the region. In his travelogue "Slavny bubny za gorami ili

41 Cf. Vadym Adadurov/Volodymyr Sklokin, Імперські ідентичності в українській історії XVIII-першої половини XIX ст. [Imperial Identities in Ukrainian History (The Eighteenth and the First Half of the Nineteenth Century)]; translation by the publisher, Lviv 2020, 8.

42 De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 163.

putishestvie moe koe-kuda v 1810 godu”⁴³, Prince Ivan Dolgoruky not only presented the facts but – inspired by the romantic spirit and political acumen of Catherine II and Grigory Potemkin – expressed the notion that the value of “Nature”, referring to the land of Ukraine, is not just within itself, but also in the hands of “its wise Master”. The concept of a woman’s virginity carried significance only when she surrendered it to a man who could use it in the correct manner. This comparison exemplified the imperial inclination to rationalise colonisation by feminising the colony and portraying it as a docile, untouched woman, thereby exploiting the land.⁴⁴

Another common aspect of the feminisation of colonised lands was the portrayal of the male population as weak, insufficiently masculine, or even non-existent. Mikhail Lermontov, a Russian writer of the early 19th century, was known for what Said termed *orientalisation* in the Northern Caucasus and the Asian parts of the empire. Furthermore, a central theme in his work was not only the demonstration of moral dominance of the imperial titular ethnic group over all others but also the recreation of their relationships in the form of heteronormative bonds. Examples of this can be found in characters like Tamara from “Demon”, Clara from “Litvinka” [“The Lithuanian Woman”] and an unnamed nymph from the cognominal chapter “Taman” of the novel “A Hero of Our Time”.⁴⁵ The story of the latter revolves around Grigory Pechorin, an officer in the imperial army, who finds himself in the town of Taman, historically part of the Kuban region populated by the Kuban Cossacks during Lermontov’s time. Similar to the Zaporizhian Cossacks, the Kuban Cossacks were a thorn in the side of imperial authority, which continually attempted to subdue the region. At the beginning of the 19th century, the use of the title *Zaporozhian* in the Kuban region was prohibited.

The events in “Taman” unfold against the backdrop of the beauty of the Sea of Azov and the political marginalisation of the territory. Upon arriving in Taman, Officer Pechorin discovers a house where a mysterious and uniquely attractive Ukrainian girl lives. Suspecting her involvement in smuggling, the protagonist sails with her on a boat. Due to her awareness of his distrust, the girl attempts to drown him by making use of her allure. Obviously surprised,

43 Cf. Ivan Dolgoruky, *Славны бубны за горами, или Путешествие мое кое-куда 1810 года* [Glorious Drums beyond the Hills, or My Travels to Various Places in 1810], Moscow 1870.

44 Cf. Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine. Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times*, Montreal et al. 2001, 80 f. See the similar example in: Dolgoruky, *Славны бубны*, 57.

45 Cf. *ibidem*, 46, 56.

Pechorin manages to regain control of the situation by throwing her overboard. In the end, the girl reaches the shore and, together with her beloved Tatar man, leaves Taman forever. Lermontov describes the girl as “far from beautiful”, yet he emphasises her intriguing mystique several times. Notably, he refers to her as a “devil”⁴⁶, underscoring her cunning nature in contrast to her seemingly meek demeanour. Her natural allure confers the nymph an air of mystery as the ultimate determinant in resolving the situation is Pechorin’s physical advantage. On the one hand, in the “Taman” chapter, Lermontov paid due respect to the Kuban Cossacks, which he limited to affirming their desirability to the empire. On the other hand, the text could also be interpreted as anti-colonial⁴⁷, as in the end of the story, Pechorin regrets intruding into the lives of the people. Interpretations of this episode in “A Hero of Our Time” vary significantly due to the challenge of clearly identifying characters based solely on the information provided by Lermontov. The interplay between the concepts of *self* and *other* in the novel’s ethnographic depiction, combined with the ambiguity surrounding imperial boundaries – both literal and symbolic – challenges the traditional perception of the Russian empire as a cohesive and clearly delineated entity.⁴⁸ However, despite all of the counterarguments, the text reinforced the universal, imperialistic idea that, despite any resistance, a colony will never be able to prevail over the metropolis. Recent scholarship explores these themes, with some researchers emphasising the novel’s subtle critique of imperialism and its complex portrayal of ethnic and cultural identities⁴⁹. Others argue that Lermontov’s work ultimately upholds imperial ideologies by presenting the colony as subordinate⁵⁰. This reinforces the broader understanding that variations in imperialist expressions do not negate their inherent imperialistic nature.

The trope of the colony as a *dangerous beauty* was confined to neither Lermontov’s works nor to the era in which he wrote. In his insightful examination of gender dynamics in the context of colonisation, Frantz Fanon shed light on the complex issue of representing women’s involvement in the broader struggle against colonial and imperial oppression. He keenly observed that the colonial narrative did not limit women to passive victimhood but also portrayed them

46 Mikhail Lermontov, *Герой нашего времени* [A Hero of Our Time], Moscow 1951, 76.

47 Cf. Shkandrij, *Russia*, 53 f.

48 Cf. Valeria Sobol, *The Uncanny Frontier of Russian Identity: Travel, Ethnography, and Empire in Lermontov’s “Taman”*, in: *The Russian Review* 70 (2011) 65–79, 79.

49 Cf. Stephen M. Norris, “The East Is a Delicate Matter”: Russian Culture and Eurasianism, in: *The Russian Review* 74 (2015) 187–190, 187.

50 Cf. Shkandrij, *Russia*, 273.

as supporters of the revolution, filled with the spirit of rebellion and engaged in the struggle. These women, according to Fanon, were not independent actors in the traditional sense; their actions were driven not by conscious choice but by an instinctual determination. They covertly concealed firearms, explosives, and rifles beneath their clothing, infiltrated hostile environments, and carried out subversive and terrorist acts to undermine the oppressive colonial regime. However, even as these women bravely resisted the colonisers, they remained shrouded in an aura of allure, mystery, and menace from the perspective of the imperial power⁵¹. In an article published a day before the start of the full-scale invasion, Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak quoted the memoirs of a Bolshevik officer from 1919 that perfectly illustrate Fanon's concept: "It [Ukraine] reminded me of a peaceful cherry orchard, peasant grace, silence and sleep among peaceful houses, girls behind wicker baskets [...] All this was a masquerade – no more [...] A saw and a hand grenade were hidden under the skirt of a Ukrainian beautiful girl."⁵²

4. Conclusion

Imperialism's antipode nationalism is a complex ideology that encompasses a spectrum of principles, embodying both masculine and feminine qualities. The endeavour to associate nationality solely with the feminine aspect signifies more than a mere linguistic or symbolic choice; it carries significant implications for both how a nation is portrayed and perceived. Such a characterisation can be viewed as an act of both underestimation and compromise. By emphasising the feminine aspect, there may be a subtle inclination to downplay or compromise the classically masculine characteristics that are often associated with nationalism, such as rationality, civility, strength etc.

Throughout the history of the literature of the past two centuries, the representation of Ukraine has predominantly been feminised. Furthermore, the perception of Ukraine as a woman was not solely imposed from the outside but also emerged from within. To varying degrees, Ukrainian writers from the 19th to the early 20th century felt their own powerlessness in the face of Ukraine's

51 Cf. Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, New York 1965, 4. See also: Vadym Vasylenko, *Вихід із тіні, або "Імперський чоловік" – "колоніальна жінка"* [Out of the Shadows, or "Imperial Man" – "Colonial Woman"], in: *Slovo I Chas* 4 (2017) 41–53, 46. Own translation.

52 Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Ленін, Путін та Україна* [Lenin, Putin and Ukraine] (23 February 2022). URL: <https://nv.ua/ukr/opinion/rosiya-ukrajina-lenin-u-chomu-pomilivsya-putin-gricak-novini-ukrajini-50204426.html>. Own translation.

secondary position in the imperial hierarchy. The depiction of Ukraine as a woman was influenced by changes in cultural and social eras. During the Romantic period, Ukraine was represented as a peasant who had either failed, not yet fulfilled, or accomplished her motherhood. Her identity reflected the intersection of class and national interests experienced by the Ukrainians of that time. The female Ukraine had little influence on the circumstances she found herself in, and thus, most of her choices were not voluntary. The early 20th century allowed women to gain agency, and, as a result, the literary portrayal of Ukraine's role gained significance. Additionally, the events of the short-lived "Ukrainization" of the 1920s showed Ukrainians how cultural freedom could feel like, but this changed with the terror of the 1930s.

On the other side of the imperial situation, the feminine representation of Ukraine was also present, but in a much more simplified form. The Russian external perspective could not perceive the complexities and inner self-doubt inherent to Ukraine. In a way akin to a man desiring a woman, the Russian Empire viewed Little Russia as an attractive yet simultaneously enigmatic woman of dual nature, who conceals her cunningness only because, lacking sufficient strength, she is afraid to confront her opponent directly. To Russia, Ukraine embodied an object of desire, always requiring caution and vigilance when dealing with her. She commands respect, but not of herself, but only in the presence of a Master over her.

Putin's contemporary political rhetoric, notably his statement "Bear with it, my beauty," illustrates the Russian political elite's unpreparedness for Ukrainian resistance. Subsequent events made it evident that the military operation was built around the same assumption. In March 2022, as Russian forces continued their attempts to advance on Kyiv, the locals in the town of Irpin discovered heaps of Russian military parade uniforms adorned with medals in a burning warehouse⁵³. Hoping for a swift victory, Putin prepared his troops for a triumphant march into Kyiv. Unexpectedly, the beauty turned out to be not sleeping. Perhaps Ukraine was never a beauty or not even a woman at all? In any case, the right to answer this question belongs solely to Ukraine. On the same day that Putin referred to Ukraine as a beauty, Zelensky responded by saying, "There are certainly things you won't argue with the president of the

53 Cf. *Ukrainska Pravda*, ЗСУ: Росіяни взяли з собою в Україну парадну військову форму [Armed Forces: The Russians Brought Their Military Uniforms with Them to Ukraine] (7 March 2022) URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/03/7/7329017>. Own translation.

Russian Federation about. Ukraine is indeed a beauty.”⁵⁴ This was before the full-scale war began, and the question of how the perspective of both sides has changed shall remain open.

54 Cf. hromadske, “Це вже перебір” – Зеленський відповів Путіну на заяву “терпи, моя красуне” [“This Is Too Much” – Zelensky Responded to Putin’s Statement “Bear with It, My Beauty”] (8 February 2022). URL: <https://hromadske.radio/news/2022/02/08/tse-vzhe-perebir-zelens-kyy-vidpoviv-putinu-na-zaiavu-terpy-moia-krasune>. Own translation.

New Icons of War: Religious Motifs in Ukrainian Digital Popular Art During the Russo-Ukrainian War

Alina Mozolevska

The essay explores the role of religious motifs in Ukrainian digital popular art on Instagram during the Russo-Ukrainian War. Through the multimodal analysis of artworks by Ukrainian artists, the study examines how religious imagery is used to convey the emotional and symbolical dimensions of the war. The religious motifs represent a powerful source of artistic imagery and serve to express themes of loss, resistance and resilience amid the chaos of war. The research highlights how these visual narratives not only document the collective trauma and resistance but also reinforce national solidarity and foster a shared visual language that makes the wartime experiences of Ukrainians more accessible to national and international audiences.

1. Introduction

Visual art plays a crucial role in how we make sense of the world, not only by helping us organize and understand the reality, but often serving as a vehicle for new ideas or as a driving force for political or social change. Its power is seen in the ability to capture important historical moments, reveal political meanings, and express ideologies. Additionally, visual popular art possesses its own agency in generating new meanings and evoking emotional responses. It provides shared codes for certain communities, changing the way we see the world through artistic practices.¹ Moreover, in times of crisis, visual popular culture is instrumental to provide a universal symbolic language to build, reinforce or counter collective identities. It also frames the vision of the conflict

1 Cf. William A. Callahan, *Sensible Politics: Visualizing International Relations*, New York 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190071738.001.0001>.

by constructing the images of the self and the other. This symbolic language, which is able to transcend cultural barriers, also makes it possible to share and feel the pain of the victims of war and to envision the horrors and the suffering of the wartime. The development of digital technologies has accelerated the propagation of different kinds of content coming from the epicenters of the conflict, reaching millions of people far away from where the violence and aggression are taking place. This new space for the exchange, sharing and propagation of visual artifacts is blurring the borders between the witness and the observer and creates a new dynamic of interaction between the participants of war and the consumers of this content.

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has resulted in numerous creative and emotional responses within Ukrainian society that have been widely shared on official outlets and social media. Visual art has become a powerful tool for national and international mobilization and the construction of war narratives, helping Ukrainians share their stories and emotions, and provide a visual representation of their new lived reality. The tragic events caused by the Russian aggression, and the significant challenges for millions of Ukrainians, not only mobilized the government and civilian population to resist the aggressor, but also boosted the creativity and expressiveness of Ukrainian cultural elites, triggering deep transformations of existing cultural, epistemic, and value paradigms as well as shifts in the perception of the self and the other.² The visuality of the Russo-Ukrainian war immediately became the center of media and academic debate. While the media extensively analyzed the role of visuals from the frontline, such as photo evidence and meme culture in the construction of resistance and resilience of Ukrainians,³ academia rightly focused on the study of the development of a new mythology and the epistemology of war art.⁴ Scholars also examined the interconnection of the official discourses about

2 Cf. Maryna Protas and Natalia Bulavina, *Ukrainian Art in the Time of the War: An Art Episteme Shift*, in: *American Journal of Art and Design* 7(4) (2022) 116–123.

3 Cf. Sarah Kreps, Paul Lushenko and Keith Carter, *Lessons from the Meme War in Ukraine*, in: *Brookings* (10 February 2023). URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/lessons-from-the-meme-war-in-ukraine/>.

All internet links in this article were last accessed on: 18 October 2023.

4 Cf. Tetiana Botvyn, Maryna Aleksandrova, Liudmyla Krymets, Rufina Dobrovolska and Olga Rudenko, *Philosophical Comprehension of the Formation and Development of Ukrainian Culture in the Context of Military Realities: The Geopolitical Aspect*, in: *Amazonia Investiga* 11(58) (2022) 84–92. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.58.10.9>; Oksana Smorzhevskaya, *The Mythology of War: Artistic Images and Meanings*, in: *Almanac of Ukrainian Studies* 30 (2022) 108–114; Iryna Vityuk, *Міфопоетичний символізм російсько-української війни у медіапросторі: містично-міфологічні наративи*

the war and mass culture⁵ as well as the issues of weaponization of culture during war⁶. These academic explorations highlight the multifaceted roles of visual art in times of conflict, providing deeper insights into how popular culture influences and reflects societal resilience and narratives during wartime. Indeed, the current Russo-Ukrainian War encompasses multiple aspects of interaction between culture, politics and warfare. The attempts of the Russian army to destroy not only Ukrainian cities, but also the Ukrainian cultural and historical heritage and language, has transformed the physical assault into a true culture war,⁷ an existential fight for the Ukrainian nation.

Along with culture, religion has been found to be highly responsive in evolving historical and geopolitical contexts. Religious practices and beliefs are deeply intertwined with the emergence, development, and peace-building processes of conflicts⁸. In some cases, turning to religion can serve as an instinctual response to insecurity and uncertainty during times of war and crisis, helping individuals find meaning in the changing reality and face the challenges brought on by conflict. Religious institutions and communities can also provide immediate support in critical situations, assisting in evacuation efforts

[Mythopoetic Symbolism of the Russian-Ukrainian War in the Media Space: Mystical and Mythological Narratives], in: *Bulletin of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University. Philosophical Sciences* 91 (2022) 116–135.

- 5 Cf. Serhy Yekelchuk, Naming the War: Russian Aggression in Ukrainian Official Discourse and Mass Culture, in: *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 64 (2–3) (2022) 232–246, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00085006.2022.2106688>.
- 6 Cf. Tatiana Zhurzhenko, Fighting Empire, Weaponising Culture: The Conflict with Russia and the Restrictions on Russian Mass Culture in Post-Maidan Ukraine, in: *Europe-Asia Studies* 73(8) (2021) 1441–1466, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2021.1944990>.
- 7 Cf. Jason Farago, The War in Ukraine Is the True Culture War, in: *The New York Times* (15 July 2022). URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/15/arts/design/ukraine-war-culture-art-history.html>; Amber French and Olga Sagaidak, This War is a War of Cultures: The Art World, A Leader in Ukraine's Nonviolent Anti-Occupation Struggle (29 June 2022). URL: https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/blog_post/this-war-is-a-war-of-cultures-the-art-world-a-leader-in-ukraines-nonviolent-anti-occupation-struggle/; Kristina Stoeckl and Dmitry Uzlaner, *The Moralists International. Russia in the Global Culture Wars* (Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought), New York 2022; Mark R. H. Koscieljew, Endangered Cultural Heritage in the Russia-Ukraine War: Comparing and Critiquing Interventions by International Cultural Heritage Organizations, in: *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 29(11) (2023) 1158–1177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2023.2243457>.
- 8 Cf. Jude Fernando, Framings of Religion, Conflict and Peace: Christianity, Conflict and the Pursuit of Just Peace in Asia, in: *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 4(2) (2021) 177–191. <https://doi.org/10.1163/25424246-04020002>.

or providing humanitarian aid.⁹ In some cases, conflicts can also cause a high level of politicization and securitization of religious actors within society, making religion a source of conflict itself, or using it as a tool for justifying military aggression, manipulation and propaganda.¹⁰ These complexities of the relations between religion and conflict have already become a focus of academic studies in the context of the investigation of the role of religion in the Russo-Ukrainian War.¹¹ For example, Tetiana Kalenychenko in her paper “Meeting the Other: Peacebuilding and Religious Actors in a Time of War” analyses the impact of Russian aggression on religious actors in Ukraine. Her analysis uncovers their role in encouraging civic identity, responsibility, and forming new narratives, but also in creating some tensions within the society.¹² In another article, Tatiana Vagramenko studied the role of religious communities in saving lives during wartime, as well as protecting churches and religious heritage.¹³ However, little has been done to investigate the impact of religious symbolism on the popular culture during wartime. Thus, it is important to explore deeper and understand the interaction between culture and religion during times of conflict. Which religious symbols and references are most effective in wartime visual culture? What narratives are constructed through the use of religious imagery? This paper aims to analyze how Ukrainian visual popular culture instrumentalizes religious symbolism to reveal the interconnection between the construction of war narratives and the utilization of religious references. Specifically, the study focuses on the analysis of Instagram visual art created during the first three months of the full-scale invasion (between February 24, 2022 and June 1, 2022) to tackle the power of religious symbolism in visual popular culture.

9 Cf. Danyil Karakai and Valentyn Hatsko, No Atheists in Wartime? (4 October 2023). URL: <https://voxukraine.org/en/no-atheists-in-wartime>.

10 Cf. Institute for the Study of War, Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment (April 9, 2023). URL: <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-9-2023>.

11 Cf. Tetiana Kalenychenko, Meeting the Other: Peacebuilding and Religious Actors in a Time of War, in: Catherine Wanner (ed.), *Dispossession. Anthropological Perspectives on Russia's War Against Ukraine (Anthropology of Now)*, New York 2024, 225–241; Tatiana Vagramenko, Grassroots Ukrainian Protestantism in the Context of the Russian Invasion, in: Wanner (ed.), *Dispossession*, 121–139.

12 Cf. Kalenychenko, Meeting the Other.

13 Cf. Vagramenko, Grassroots Ukrainian Protestantism.

2. Popular Culture, Religion and Collective Identity

In recent decades, the issue of the interplay between visual popular culture, media, and conflicts became extensively studied in media studies and the humanities.¹⁴ The increasing ubiquity of visuals in the digital landscape of social media has sparked scholars to rethink the role of the visual in the socio-political life of communities. They engage critically with the visual culture and elaborate new approaches to analyzing the ways visual artifacts are being produced, circulated, and further interact with different spheres of life of societies.¹⁵ To date, the existing literature has explored the role of popular culture in conflict mediation,¹⁶ and conflict resolution or peace building processes,¹⁷ focusing mostly on its ability to impact the non-material dimension of conflicts and to shape a collective sense of identity within the affected communities. The potential of visuals to encompass multiple levels of meaning, to become a repository and site for collective identity construction, represents one of the most studied aspects of contemporary participatory culture.¹⁸ Following Eisenstadt's

-
- 14 Cf. Olga Boichak, *Digital War: Mediatized Conflicts in Sociological Perspective*, in: Deana A. Rohlinger and Sarah Sobieraj (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Media Sociology*, New York 2022, 511–527. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxford-hb/9780197510636.013.31>; Cahir O'Doherty, *Assemblages of Conflict Termination: Popular Culture, Global Politics and the End of Wars*, in: *International Relations* 37(4) (2023) 567–588. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178211052813>; Galia Press-Barnathan, *Thinking About the Role of Popular Culture in International Conflicts*, in: *International Studies Review* 19 (2) (2017) 166–184. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw030>; Jennifer L. Schulz, *Mediation and Popular Culture* (Routledge Research in Media Law), London – New York 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429059551>; Gadi Wolfsfeld, *The Role of the Media in Violent Conflicts in the Digital Age: Israeli and Palestinian Leaders' Perceptions*, in: *Media, War & Conflict* 11(1) (2018) 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635217727312>.
- 15 Cf. Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, 3rd edition, Los Angeles et al. 2012; Limor Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture* (The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series), Cambridge/MA – London 2014.
- 16 Cf. Mark Davidheiser, *Conflict Mediation and Culture: Lessons from the Gambia*, in: *Peace and Conflict Studies* 13(1) (2006) 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2006.1067>.
- 17 Cf. Press-Barnathan, *Thinking*.
- 18 Cf. Julia R. DeCook, *Memes and Symbolic Violence: #proudboys and the Use of Memes for Propaganda and the Construction of Collective Identity*, in: *Learning, Media and Technology* 43(4) (2018) 485–504; Noam Gal, Limor Shifman and Zohar Kampf, “It Gets Better”: Internet Memes and the Construction of Collective Identity, in: *New Media and Society* 18(8) (2016) 1698–1714. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814568784>; Giulia Giorgi, *Methodological Directions for the Study of Memes*, in: *Handbook of Re-*

and Giessen's definition, collective identity can be understood as a process of constant construction of in-group and out-group boundaries through social, cultural, or other performative practices.¹⁹ The core of this process consists of the production of a sense of belonging through the creation of symbolic codes which distinguish between the self and the other.²⁰ This ongoing dynamic of exclusion and inclusion enables the recurring production and validation of norms, values, traditions, and beliefs through discourse, defining the social, cultural, religious and political positioning of a community within a wider socio-political context.²¹ Similar to other forms of cultural construction around difference and sameness, visual popular art is considered a powerful identity building device.²² It promotes identification, evokes emotions, and creates a shared voice for members of networked communities.²³ In times of conflict, the popular culture that is consumed by most of the population on a daily basis can have a unique mobilizing power, and the potential to influence societal interpretations of the conflicts, solidifying self-identity and shaping the visions of the actors involved in conflict.²⁴ In some cases, popular culture is also able to facilitate the exclusion of the other by sharpening group boundaries, contributing to the sense of we-ness and building the differentiation between self and other.²⁵

Collective identity and common visions of the past, present, and future of a certain group are often constructed and reaffirmed through narrative structures that are propagated through culture. As Bruner in his work "The Narrative Construction of Reality" noted, "we organize our experiences and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories,

search on Advanced Research Methodologies for a Digital Society (Advances in Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer, and Management), Hershey/PA 2022, 627–663. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8473-6.ch036>.

- 19 Cf. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giesen, The Construction of Collective Identity, in: *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie* 36(1) (1995) 72–102.
- 20 Cf. Eisenstadt and Giessen, The Construction, 76.
- 21 Cf. Gal, Shifman and Kampf, It Gets Better, 1699.
- 22 Cf. DeCook, Memes.
- 23 Cf. Mette Mortensen and Christina Neumayer, The Playful Politics of Memes, in: *Information, Communication & Society* 24(16) (2021) 2367–2377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1979622>, here: 2369.
- 24 Cf. Press-Barnathan, Thinking, 167.
- 25 Cf. Noam Gal, Ironic Humor on Social Media as Participatory Boundary Work, in: *New Media and Society* 21(3) (2019) 729–749. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818805719>.

excuses, myths ...”²⁶ Conflicts often serve as a key element in the creation of the self-identity and self-narrative of a nation, providing established images of the enemies and building the sense of ontological (in)security.²⁷ At the same time, it is worth noting that one of the dangers of communicating these shared visions of the self and other consists in the possibility to “lock in images of self and other in a very simplistic, black-and-white fashion” and normalize the conflict as a part of self-narrative and state identity.²⁸

In highly mediatised societies, the popular culture helps to construct, support or counter the narrative of collective construction of the self and other. Media brings to the forefront the stories of extraordinary events, peoples, and symbols, giving meaning to the crisis and making sense of the social reality. At the same time, religion can provide already existing shared background of the stories and widely accepted and established narratives. But religion and popular culture are not only connected via the construction of shared cultural codes for society, but the dynamic of their relationships is deeper and more diverse. As Bruce David Forbes noted, in the contemporary world religion appears not only in churches or temples, but also finds its multifaceted reflections in different domains of social, cultural and political life. Indeed, many popular cultural productions are inspired by religious stories, symbols or practices.²⁹ Best-selling popular culture artifacts contain religious references and/or convey grand religious narratives and myths. While analyzing the interplay between religion and popular culture, Forbes defined four major ways they relate to each other: the religious manifestation in popular culture, the cultural manifestation in religion, popular culture practices as religion, and the dialogue between religion and popular culture.³⁰ The present paper is focused on the first dimension of the interaction between popular culture and religion, more precisely on how religious characters, motifs, tropes, allegories and symbols are used as an expressive means in Ukrainian visual artwork from within the wartime. It is worth to note, that previous research has already done an in-depth analysis on how religiosity is being used in the contemporary popular culture. For example, scholars have analyzed how religious visual references

26 Cf. Jerome Bruner, *The Narrative Construction of Reality*, in: *Critical Inquiry* 18(1) (1991) 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448619>, here: 4.

27 Cf. Press-Barnathan, *Thinking*, 173.

28 Cf. *ibidem*, 174.

29 Cf. Bruce David Forbes, *Introduction: Finding Religion in Unexpected Places*, in: *idem* and Jeffrey H. Mahan (eds.), *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, 3rd edition, Oakland 2017, 1–24, here: 1.

30 Cf. Forbes, *Introduction*, 11.

are used in contemporary films and series³¹ or investigated how popular music exchanges with the religious imagery.³² Some of the works were also focused on the instrumentalization of particular religious symbols and explored, for example, the visualization of Christ or Virgin Mary in the popular culture.³³ Thus, academic interest demonstrates that popular culture is in extensive interaction with religion.

3. Artistic Responses to the Russo-Ukrainian War

From the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukrainian cultural elites immediately responded to the war through different methods, extending beyond artistic practices. Faced with the scale of Russian aggression and the resulting material and immaterial damage to the vast majority of the Ukrainian population, Ukrainian intellectuals and artists mobilized their efforts and responded to the immediate threat of physical and cultural destruction of the nation. The artists were giving interviews to international media, posting about the war on social media, organizing offline and online public events, and creating war-related compositions, including music, literary, visual and performative pieces, to raise awareness of Russia's war against Ukraine. During the first several months of the war, many individual and collective artistic initiatives were launched to describe and document the experiences of Ukrainians, to reflect on their lived reality that had changed as a result of the war and to make the Ukrainian cause more visible. For example, the platform Ukraine War Art Collection, an online library of artistic projects initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, lists about 400 projects that were launched or implemented in Ukraine after February 2022.³⁴ This platform showcases a diverse range of artistic responses, including visual art, performative art projects, literature, music, theater, film projects, design, architecture, or other solidarity

31 Cf. Mariola Marczak, Screening Religiosity in Contemporary Polish Films. The Role of Religious Motifs in Visual Communication, in: *Journal of Religion and Film* 22(3) (2018) Article 10. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol22/iss3/10>; Todd V. Lewis and K. Arianna Molloy, Religious Rhetoric and Satire: Investigating the Comic and Burlesque Frames Within *The Big Bang Theory*, in: *Journal of Media and Religion* 14(2) (2015) 88–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348423.2015.1051457>.

32 Cf. Lavinia Pflugfelder, Heavy Metal Bricolage: Religious Imagery and “Religionized” Visual Language in Music Videos, in: *Journal for Religion, Film and Media. Religion and Popular Music* 6(2) (2020) 65–85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/19529>.

33 Cf. Anton Karl Kozlovic, The Cinematic Christ-Figure, in: *The Furrow* 55(1) (2004) 26–30.

34 Cf. Ukraine War Art Collection. URL: <https://war-art.uccs.org.ua/>.

projects. The visualization of the Russo-Ukrainian War represents one of the most powerful tools for shaping the social reality of the war, bringing together the nation and strengthening the collective sense of identity. This widespread visual popular culture on social media, reflecting the intensity of the first several months of the war and processing the traumatizing experiences of millions of Ukrainians, provided a fertile soil for the creation and propagation of the new wartime symbols. Some of the symbols were inspired by real events, while others expressed relevant values and beliefs.³⁵ These shared symbols of the war were utilized to convey a range of emotions triggered by the aggression, such as hope, anger, fear, and hate. Moreover, they encompassed significant concepts that hold relevance in the wartime context, such as national unity, mutual support, solidarity, resilience, and resistance.

Religious imagery immediately became part of the wartime Ukrainian symbolism and was instrumentalized to visually support the construction of visual narratives and symbols of the war. Some of the most popular and successful examples of the use of religious references in Ukrainian popular culture can be illustrated by the wide popularity of the Saint Javelin meme³⁶ (Fig. 1), a saint armed with an anti-tank missile launcher. It was originally the artwork *Kalashnikov Madonna* by Chris Shaw,³⁷ which was modified by Ukrainian internet users and became one of the first symbols of Ukraine's fierce resistance to the enemy. The St. Javelin image was largely used in media and crowd-funding campaigns at the beginning of the invasion³⁸ and later highly disseminated via different marketing products. Another famous example of religious imagery inspired by the events of the Russo-Ukrainian War, is the artwork *Madonna of Kyiv* by Marina Solomenikova (Fig. 2). It is based on the photo taken by journalist András Földes in the Kyiv metro, which depicts a mother nursing her infant during the air alarm in the capital under attack. This has become a truly iconic symbol of the conflict, representing the resiliency and hope of the Ukrainian people while also conveying the severity of the humanitarian crisis and insecurity of the early months of the invasion. The photo and artwork were

35 Cf. Veronika Lutska, *Ukrainian Hopes and Struggles in 6 Symbols of the War* (11 October 2022). URL: <https://war.ukraine.ua/articles/snake-island-cotton-and-more-6-symbols-of-the-war/>.

36 Cf. Saint Javelin Meme. URL: <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/st-javelin-saint-javelin>.

37 Cf. Chris Shaw, *Madonna Kalashnikov 2022 – Ten Years of an Icon* (12 March 2022). URL: <https://chrishawstudio.com/2022/03/madonna-kalashnikov-2022-ten-years-of-an-icon/>.

38 The internet community “Saint Javelin”, for example, collected more than 2 million dollars for Ukrainian war efforts: <https://twitter.com/saintjavelin>.



Figure 1. Saint Javelin meme.
Source: <https://x.com/saintjavelin>



Figure 2. Madonna of Kyiv, illustration by Marina Solomenikova (@marinoss_art), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CauqET-t8-2/>

widely shared on the Internet and later inspired the creation of an icon now displayed in a Catholic church in Mugnano di Napoli (Italy).

These examples illustrate the relevance and importance of religious images for Ukrainian war-time popular culture, but they are not unique. To examine in detail the ways in which the appropriation of religious symbols and references are used in Ukrainian visual art, this paper analyzes the mediatization of the visuality of the war on Instagram, one of the most popular platforms worldwide, which has more than 13 million users among Ukrainians (2023).³⁹ Together with other social media platforms, Instagram was actively used as a site for the distribution and sharing of war-related visual content.⁴⁰ Forty-five accounts of Ukrainian digital artists were selected for this analysis and a database of more than 950 images was collected (February 24 – May 30, 2022). The artists' profiles were selected according to their popularity on Instagram

39 Cf. Number of Instagram Users in Ukraine from September 2018 to August 2023 (1 September 2023). URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1024763/instagram-users-ukraine/>.

40 Cf. Megan Specia, 'Like a Weapon': Ukrainians Use Social Media to Stir Resistance, The New York Times (25 March 2022). URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/25/world/europe/ukraine-war-social-media.html>.

(number of followers) and their presence on other digital platforms and in Ukrainian media in general (e. g. Ukraine War Art collection⁴¹ and Ukraïner's project "Ukrainian artists against war"⁴²). At the second stage of the analysis, 78 images containing religious symbols were identified which constitutes 8 % of the general amount of the collected data. The selected images were analyzed using O'Halloran's Multimodal Discourse Analysis method⁴³ combined with elements of Rose's approach to Visual Analysis.⁴⁴ This allowed us to investigate the interrelation between the image and the reality of war and to reveal the intertextual and intericonical potential of the visual imagery of these cultural artifacts. The analysis revealed not only the direct meaning of the artworks, but also analyzed the larger symbolic, cultural, and religious narratives and meaning that served to frame the Russo-Ukrainian War in a larger civilizational context.

4. Religion and Visual Narratives in Ukrainian Visual Popular Art

Although the images which use religious symbols and references consist of only 8 % of the analyzed data, the religious imagery is very prominent in Ukrainian digital art. Christian symbolism serves as the primary source of inspiration for Ukrainian digital artists, who combine elements of traditional iconography with popular culture and shocking images of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Many of the artworks contain an explicitly political message based on the Christian notions of good and evil, focusing on the depiction of the violence of the war through the lens of Christian morality and calling for national mobilization and cooperation. This analysis has demonstrated that religious symbols are used by the artists to construct key visual narratives of the war, including the visualization of both the self and the other. Religious motifs can be expressed on a compositional or visual level: some of the artworks use the composition of icons to convey the meaning of their artworks, while others explicitly use

41 For more on the Ukraine War Art Collection cf. Polina Gorlach, В Україні запустили медіатеку мистецтва, створеного під час війни [In Ukraine, a Media Library of Art Created During the War Was Launched]. URL: <https://suspilne.media/culture/264957-v-ukraini-zapustili-mediateku-mistectva-stvorenogo-pid-cas-vijni>.

42 Cf. Ukrainian Artists against War. URL: <https://ukraïner.net/illustrators-about-war/>.

43 Cf. Kay L. O'Halloran, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, in: Ken Hyland and Brian Paltridge (eds.), *Continuum Companion to Discourse Analysis*, London – New York 2011, 120–137.

44 Cf. Rose, *Visual Methodologies*.

religious motifs and visual expressiveness to frame the war narratives. In the context of discussing the religious symbolism of both narratives, the construction of the self and the other, it is worth noting that different symbolic references were used to shape both national identity and the image of the enemy. In the context of the construction of the self, images of the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, Saint Nicolas, and other sacred figures are reproduced most frequently, while in the visualization of the other, the artists focus on negative references and symbols of suffering and death, such as the crucified Christ, the Devil, and Satan. The collective self is thus tied to traditionally positive religious symbols, which can express purity, protection, courage, and/or bravery. The other, the enemy, is predominately tied to religious imagery traditionally connected with suffering or aggression, which helps communicate or intensify the negative features of the other. As well, the representation of the other is connected to certain spatial religious associations. For example, places such as hell, a traditional symbol of evil and despair, is repeatedly associated with the artistic visualizations of Russian soldiers. As the embodiment of the collective enemy forces, the soldiers in these artworks are subjected to punishment and suffering for the crimes committed in Ukraine.

The degree of incorporation of religious imagery into the artist's work varies; some artists imitate traditional Ukrainian iconography in their work, while other artists use religious references in cartoons or collages more freely, and do not connect them to the traditional style or coloristic traits of icons. It is worth noting that art that imitates traditional iconographic styles is not prominent among the practices of digital artists on Instagram. The second style of the artwork is more frequent, as it allows the artists to combine elements of religious imagery with other traditional Ukrainian symbols, or with new symbols and personalities, such as the heroes and villains of the wartime. The most common religious reference used in Ukrainian wartime art posted on social media are the visualizations of the image of the Virgin Mary. This image has been repeatedly transformed to speak to the evolving reality of the war and is used to express a variety of symbolic meanings, including innocence, motherhood, suffering or hope. One of the most poignant symbols of the Virgin Mary can be found in the works of Ukrainian artist Olenka Zahorodnyk (Fig. 3). She combined the ruined landscapes of the war-torn country with the religious imagery of the traditional icon to emphasize the devastation the violence has wreaked on the nation. By assembling the saintly image from elements of the destructed houses, military anti-tanks fortifications and parts of missiles, the artist depicts the destructive consequences of the war and the suffering of the ordinary Ukrainians. Zahorodnyk creates a sense of anonymity and universal-



Figure 3. Artwork of Olenka Zahorodnyk (@alekon_zahorodnyk), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/alekon_zahorodnyk/

ity by portraying the iconic images without faces. It becomes a representation of the collective pain, loss, and grief experienced by the entire nation. In many other illustrations, Ukrainian artists also utilize the image of the Virgin Mary to tell the story of loss and express the collective feelings of mourning and suffering during wartime. For this purpose, the image of the Madonna with the Child has been artistically reinterpreted to bring it closer to the context of the Ukrainian war. By visually expressing the concept of lost motherhood, artists depict one of the most powerful symbols of suffering experienced by Ukrainians. This representation not only captures the individual loss of every mother mourning her child, but also encompasses the collective trauma of the nation as a whole. The artworks of Oleksii Revika and Lyuda Samus exemplify this artistic approach (Fig. 4 and 5). As can be seen, the artists were able to skillfully capture the deep emotions associated with the themes of loss and collective suffering by using imagery related to the composition of the Madonna with the Child.

Despite the traumatic experiences faced by millions of Ukrainians during the war, there are also instances of positive reappropriations of the Virgin Mary in Ukrainian war-time art. In many illustrations, the image of the Virgin Mary with the child serves to express the joy of motherhood and illustrate the efforts



Figure 4. Artwork of Oleksii Revika (@oleksii_revika), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/Ccr_eS0tazh/



Figure 5⁴⁵. Artwork of Lyuda Samus (@ya.samus), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CbaBgJptfUh/?img_index=1

of Ukrainian mothers to protect their children from the horrors of war. For example, the artwork of Liza Mykhailus depicts a Ukrainian mother holding her child on the background of falling Russian missiles (Fig. 6). It does not only highlight the striking contrast between the innocence of childhood and the brutal realities of war, but also conveys a message of hope for a better future for Ukrainian children. Often, such artworks are inspired by the real stories that emerged during the wartime, symbolizing the resilience of Ukrainian women. One such illustration, by Anta Frirean, portrays a Ukrainian woman who bravely covered her child during the missile attack in order to save the baby's life (Fig. 7). This story, which gained attention in Ukrainian news outlets, inspired the artist to create an artistic representation that combines the mother's actions with religious imagery. Another example is the work of Sophia Suli called *Ukrainian Madonna*⁴⁶. The illustration was inspired by the artist's neighbor, a young woman who was hiding with her child in the basement during an air attack on the capital. These everyday examples of the heroism, bravery,

⁴⁵ Translation of the captions: "We cannot forgive our perpetrators forever and ever!"

⁴⁶ The artwork is available at <https://www.instagram.com/p/CauKrdCNQVx/>.



Figure 6. Artwork of Liza Mykhailus(@yablonska.mykhailus), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbCcNKONere/>



Figure 7. Artwork of Anta Friean (@anta_arf), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CbU4CwBMWxO/?img_index=1

and caring of motherhood during wartime, combined with religious imagery, express a powerful message of the strength and resilience of Ukrainian women during such turbulent times, ready to protect their children.

Examples of the weaponization of traditional iconic images can also be found. Here again the image of the Virgin Mary, as a symbol of the protective mother, plays a central role in the visualization of the self. However, in these illustrations the image serves to express the nation's power and resistance in the face of the prevailing enemy. The image of the saint is directly associated with Ukraine, which is signaled by the use of national symbols such as vyshynanka, sunflowers, and the colours yellow and blue. Compositionally, the images are reminiscent of traditional icons, in which the figure of a saint is placed in the center of the image and the head is surrounded by a halo. Through the choice of colours (such as red and black as colours of violence and bloodshed) and the depiction of arms and military elements such as military uniforms, ammunitions or equipment, a strong connection with the wartime reality is visually constructed (Fig. 8 and 9).

In addition to the image of the Virgin Mary, another significant religious motif in the representation of the self in Ukrainian wartime art is the use of



Figure 8. Artwork of Stanislav Lunin (@stanislavlunin), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CaxUVaTtt00/?img_index=1



Figure 9. Artwork of Tetiana Kopytova (@kopytova_tetiana_horse_art), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CctJB-tNvjI/>

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CctJB-tNvjI/>

angels. These celestial creatures are incorporated into the Ukrainian visual art as a symbol of purity and innocence and serve as a poignant depiction of the loss and suffering experienced by Ukrainians. The depictions of angels are often associated with the civilian population, predominantly children or women, who were killed during the Russo-Ukrainian War. The power of these images lies in the representation of the innocence of these victims and their harmlessness at the same time. The angels of the victims are predominately depicted as flying into the sky, attempting to reach heaven, which also underlines the purity of their person (Fig. 10 and 11).

In less frequent cases, the religious imagery is used to construct the everyday reality of the war. This type of images does not heavily rely on the religious symbolism, but mostly uses easily recognizable figures and places situated in the everyday situations for a humorous or surprising effect. Such are, for example, the illustrations of Aza Nizi Maza and Oleksandr Grekhov (Fig. 12 and 13). They place religious characters into the wartime routine of Ukrainians, illustrating how their everyday activities are constantly interrupted by the air alarms caused by Russian missile attacks. This approach blends sacred and secular elements, highlighting the absurdity and brutality of war.



Figure 10. Artwork of Yaroslava Yatsuba (@bright_arts), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CinmIqEtESa/>



Figure 11. Artwork of Tetiana Kopytova (@kopytova_tetiana_horse_art), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CgRd405Nelq/>

Religious symbols are not only used to express loss and suffering, but also to construct the image of the enemy, albeit to a lesser extent. In this case, the main focus is on the abuse of religion and church infrastructure by the Kremlin authorities in mobilizing its population and justifying the war. The image of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow occupies a central position in the representation of the other. In these depictions, the image of Patriarch Kirill is combined with the symbols of Satan, such as the tail and horns, and the symbols of Russia's "special military operation" such as the letter Z. These symbols are further accompanied by depictions of the weapons used by the Russian army. Together, these symbols and imagery construct a powerful visual of the enemy as absolute evil, revealing all the destructive aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian War in portraying the other. The symbols used also highlight the role of the Russian church in inciting the attack against Ukraine. Combined with depictions of the weaponry, the illustrations tend to show that religion represents one more instrument of the warfare and propaganda machine of the Russian Federation (Fig. 14–15).

The collective image of the Russian army is also associated with the symbolic representation of the evil forces. Several artistic conceptualizations of the other can be found here. On the one hand, Russian soldiers are portrayed as ag-



Figure 12. Artwork of Aza Nizi Maza⁴⁷ (@aza_nizi_maza), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CbUtYy_tBvK/



Figure 13. Artwork of Oleksandr Grekhov⁴⁸ (@unicornandwine), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CciaAcFt3MO/>

gressors, as those who attack sacred figures and places. In Fig. 16, the image of the Virgin Mary is placed central in the image and is associated with Ukraine, while the Russian soldiers are depicted as dark figures (evil forces) who attack the innocent saint. The Russian army is easily identifiable by the symbol Z on their uniforms. The red color of the painting intensifies the imagery of aggression and violence expressed in the artwork. By illustrating the conflict between sacred innocence and the evil forces, the artist brings to light the injustice of the war and illustrates the cruelty of the Russian invasion in this unprovoked war. The unforgiveness of the crimes of the Russian army is expressed through the motif of hell and the inevitableness of their punishment by divine forces as it is depicted by the artwork in Fig. 17.

Interestingly enough, the Virgin Mary was also utilized to construct the image of the other. The artist Oleksandr Shatokhin used the compositional elements of the icon and the image of the Madonna with the Child to unveil the nature of the cruelty incited by the Russian aggression⁴⁹. By combining the

47 Translation of the captions: on the left: “Let’s hide Jesus, there is another air alert”; on the right: “And then we will hit the fighter jets”.

48 Translation of the captions: on the top: “The air alert is over”; on the left, in red: “bomb shelter”.

49 The artwork is available at https://www.instagram.com/p/Caw_5i0L7nB/.



Figure 14. Artwork of Bogdana Davydiuk (@bogdana_davydiuk_), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: https://www.instagram.com/bogdana_davydiuk/

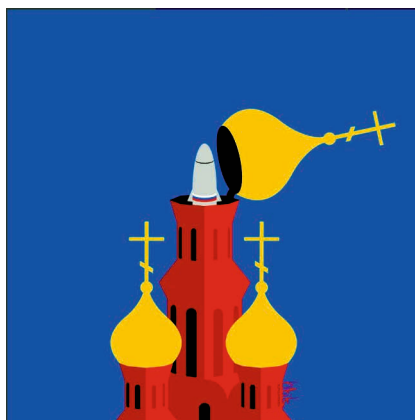


Figure 15. Artwork of Oleg White (@olkwhite), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca_7KZAAtCC2/



Figure 16. Artwork of Yaroslava Yatsuba⁵⁰ (@bright_arts), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbViyvvt4nS/>

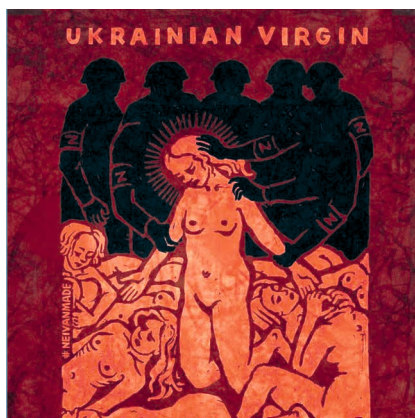


Figure 17. Artwork of Mykhailo Skop (@neivanmade), reproduced with the permission of the author. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CcdugzstHJN/>

50 Translation of the captions: on the top: “They are so stupid”; on the left: “Where are they from?”; below on the right: “From Chornobaivka again”.



Figure 18. Artwork of Oleksii Revika (@oleksii_revika), reproduced with the permission of the author.

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/ChJleLntTc0/>

Virgin Mary with the symbols of death, the Russian tricolor and the image of a dead baby killed by the Russian army, the artist illustrates the madness and senselessness of the Russian aggression. Another example of such imagery is the artwork of Oleksii Revika (Fig. 18), which combines Russian imperial symbols such as the Georgian ribbon with the colors of violence and military equipment to visualize the enemy. Such illustrations serve a poignant reflection of the reality of the Russo-Ukrainian War and help to share the sorrow and grief of Ukrainians.

5. Conclusion

This analysis of religious imagery used in Ukrainian visual popular art during the first three months of the invasion has shown the importance of religious symbolism for artistic production in times of war. The religious imagery helps to bridge the reality of the war and the symbolic visions of the self and the other, which is crucial for processing trauma, self-affirmation and construction of collective identity. Visual art serves as a universal language to share the stories of loss, resilience, and resistance, but also to construct the image of the

self and the other by channeling common visualisations of good and evil. The religious imagery of digital art created in response to the Russo-Ukrainian War is predominantly inspired by Christian symbolism. The artworks incorporate some elements of traditional Ukrainian iconography and usually combine the religious references with cultural and historical aspects of the war to deepen the significance and the meaning of the art. The central image of the creative artworks is the Virgin Mary, which acts as a symbolic expression of loss, motherhood, strength and resistance. Both the representation of the self and the other are expressed through the image of the Virgin Mary, which again reflects the symbolic complexity of this figure. Other popular visual symbols are the images of Jesus, angels, and Satan. These religious symbols are often combined with elements of the war such as weapons or symbols of war and other symbolic expressions of Russia and Ukraine, intensifying the semiotic meaning of the pieces. Thus, Ukrainian wartime digital art actively uses religious symbolism to construct the universal notions of good and evil and to express and share collective emotions and identities.

Religion as a Key Front of Russian Aggression Against Ukraine

Maksym Vasin

The Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has been going on for more than ten years, actively includes the religious front. Fully controlled by the Kremlin, Russian religious centers and their leaders have de facto been transformed into political or governmental structures. They are involved in spreading Kremlin propaganda that fuels hatred of the Ukrainian nation and incites Russian citizens to continue this unjust war. Many Russian religious leaders can be considered accomplices in numerous war crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine. In response, the Ukrainian parliament passed law No. 3894-IX. The law seeks to ban the activities of Russian religious centers in Ukraine because they have become part of Putin's dictatorial regime. This paper elaborates on the religious dimension of the Russian invasion of Ukraine from different perspectives. The author analyses the recent events in Ukraine and Russia by examining the changes in religious life in the historical and political contexts of both countries.

1. Introduction

In February 2014, Russia began its military aggression against Ukraine, with the justification of an alleged need to protect the Russian-speaking residents and Orthodox believers of the Donbas, the eastern regions of Ukraine, as well as the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea.¹ Russian authorities have been spreading propaganda for many years about the threat posed by nationalists (so-called

1 Cf. Kathy Lally/Will Englund, Putin Says He Reserves Right to Protect Russians in Ukraine (4 March 2014). URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-reserves-the-right-to-use-force-in-ukraine/2014/03/04/92d4ca70-a389-11e3-a5fa-55f0c77bf39c_story.html. All internet links in this article were last accessed on 5 April 2024.

“Banderites”) from the western regions of Ukraine, who allegedly want to seize Orthodox churches and ban the use of the Russian language. By imposing these false narratives not only in Ukraine and Russia, but also internationally, Russia aimed to (1) intimidate residents of the eastern regions of Ukraine bordering Russia to fuel alleged separatist sentiment, (2) divide Ukrainian society from within to facilitate the future military invasion and occupation of Ukraine, (3) prepare Russian society for war against Ukraine using hate speech towards Ukrainians as a nation, and (4) prepare the international community for Russian intervention and the seizure of all, or at least part, of Ukraine.

The Kremlin decided to switch to a hard power policy toward Ukraine after the escape of Viktor Yanukovich, a pro-Russian former Ukrainian president, as a result of the massive Ukrainian protests in 2013 to 2014, called the Revolution of Dignity, against forced cooperation with Russia and in favor of European integration. Russian President Vladimir Putin has never given up his dream of restoring an authoritarian Russian empire similar to the Soviet Union and based on the ideology of the “*Russkiy Mir*” (Russian World). The subjugation of Ukraine and the subsequent Russian infiltration of the Ukrainian government is a crucial step for Putin’s imperial ambitions. For this reason, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, seeking to occupy the capital city quickly (and, eventually, most of Ukraine), overthrow the government of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and install a Russian leadership in Kyiv.²

The failure of the Kremlin’s initial plan to capture Kyiv in three days thanks to the uncompromising resistance of the Ukrainians impelled Russia toward a strategy of protracted war. This strategy is rooted in the use of terror against the civilian population of Ukraine, especially in the newly controlled territories seized by the Russian military during the full-scale invasion.³ The religious factor plays a significant role in the Russian military strategy, because the Kremlin uses religion on multiple dimensions to increase the success of its war against Ukraine.

This paper aims to explore the different dimensions in which Russia uses religion to achieve its geopolitical and military goals. Using specific examples

2 Cf. Paul Kirby, *Has Putin’s War Failed and What Does Russia Want from Ukraine?* (23 February 2023). URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>.

3 Cf. Hanna Arhirova/Vasilisa Stepanenko/Lori Hinnant, *Thousands of Ukraine Civilians are Being Held in Russian Prisons. Russia Plans to Build Many More* (12 July 2023). URL: <https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-prisons-civilians-torture-de-tainees-88b4abf2efb383272eed9378be13c72>.

of Russian religious policy, this paper proposes several conclusions and recommendations for the international community's response to Russian aggression against Ukraine.

2. Using Religion to Justify Russian Aggression Against Ukraine

Until 2014, Russia's soft power policy toward Ukraine relied on a narrative of "brotherly nations," and the promotion of Russia's political agenda and vision of history, culture, religion, cinema, and pop music. In addition to distorting the history of Kyivan Rus in favor of Moscow, Russian propagandists spread chauvinistic ideas of the "Russkiy Mir" concept, the boundaries of which extend far beyond the borders of the Russian Federation to where the Russian-speaking population remains.⁴ This ideology, in addition to Russia's geopolitical dominance in the post-Soviet era, includes the alleged canonical claims of the Russian Orthodox Church to the territory of Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. Moscow made great efforts to prevent the emergence of a united national autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine and fostered a society of intolerance against other Orthodox jurisdictions in Ukraine that are independent from the Moscow Patriarchate.⁵

The victory of the Revolution of Dignity in February 2014 meant the failure of the Kremlin's strategy of gradual Russification of Ukraine with the assistance of former President Viktor Yanukovych and other pro-Russian politicians and political parties in the Ukrainian parliament and government. The Russian leadership took advantage of the transit of power in Ukraine to annex the Crimean Peninsula and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions through military intervention. At the same time, Russia justified its aggression against Ukraine to the international community with the alleged *coup d'état* in Kyiv and the victory of radical nationalists, fascists, terrorists, etc.⁶ Russian propaganda has frightened both Russian society and the international community with a "neo-Nazi" regime in Kyiv and the oppression of the Russian-speaking

4 Cf. Alexander Meienberger, The Concept of the "Russkiy Mir": History of the Concept and Ukraine, in: *Euxeinos* 13, 35 (2023) 15–29, 20–21.

5 Cf. USIP, Russia's War on Ukraine Roils the Orthodox Church (11 December 2018). URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/12/russias-war-ukraine-roils-orthodox-church>.

6 Cf. Luke Harding, Kiev's Protesters: Ukraine Uprising Was No Neo-Nazi Power-Grab (13 March 2014). URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/13/ukraine-uprising-fascist-coup-grassroots-movement>.

population and Orthodox churches of the Moscow Patriarchate in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine.⁷

Under the totalitarian control of the Kremlin, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) has gradually engaged in more aggressive efforts to justify the Russian invasion and utilizes the religious factor to weaken Ukraine's resistance. For example, in August 2014, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, wrote an open letter to His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I, the Primate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in which he called the war in the eastern regions of Ukraine "a religious war." He accused representatives of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and Protestant leaders of preaching hatred against the Orthodox Church, calling for the seizure of Orthodox shrines, and the eradication of Orthodoxy, starting with the mass protests in Kyiv in 2013 against the Yanukovich regime. He also accused Uniates and schismatics (Ukrainian Greek Catholics and Protestants) of direct aggression against the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church canonically connected to the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) during the fighting in the eastern regions of Ukraine.⁸

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow addressed letters to the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) about the alleged violations of the rights of the UOC-MP clergy and faithful. He reported damage to some UOC-MP churches and the deaths of several UOC-MP clergy, calling them victims of the "armed internal Ukrainian conflict."⁹ At the same time, the Patriarch of Moscow did not mention that the priests and churches of the UOC-MP suffered from the shelling

7 E. g. Viktor Saulkin, *Остановит ли Россия карателей? Фашисты бомбят города Новороссии* [Will Russia Stop the Punishers? Fascists Bomb Cities in Novorossiya] (11 June 2014). URL: https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/stati/ostanovit_li_rossiya_karateley_fashisty_bombyat_goroda_novorossii_601/.

8 Cf. mospat.ru, Святейший Патриарх Кирилл призвал Предстоятелей Поместных Церквей возвысить голос в защиту православных христиан востока Украины [His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Called on the Primates of the Local Churches to Raise Their Voices in Defense of Orthodox Christians in Eastern Ukraine]. URL: mospat.ru/news/51174/.

9 ROC, Предстоятель Русской Православной Церкви обратился в ООН, Совет Европы и ОБСЕ с письмом о фактах притеснения Украинской Православной Церкви в условиях вооруженного конфликта на юго-востоке Украины [The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Addressed the UN, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE with a Letter About the Facts of Oppression of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Conditions of the Armed Conflict in the South-East of Ukraine] (19 August 2014). URL: patriarchia.ru/db/text/3706179.html. Own translation.

of residential areas and civilian infrastructure, which the Russian military and Russian-backed separatists intentionally executed since 2014.¹⁰ Later, on February 17, 2015, at a meeting of the ROC Supreme Church Council, he called the Russian intervention in the eastern regions of Ukraine a “civil war,” continuing to promote the Russian propaganda narrative of the alleged separatist roots of the military conflict and trying to hide the Kremlin’s involvement in the fighting in the Donbas region.¹¹ In May 2022, the European Commission proposed adding Patriarch Kirill to the list of individuals under sanctions as a supporter of the Putin regime. The European Union External Action Service described him as “one of the most prominent supporters of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.”¹²

The Kremlin and the ROC made joint efforts to prevent the unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy into one church and the proclamation of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). Eventually, after a unification council was held in Kyiv on December 15, 2018, and the OCU received the Tomos (Decree) of Autocephaly from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on January 6, 2019, “the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church proclaimed the impossibility of continuing in Eucharistic communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate.”¹³ This ROC decision also suggested a deterioration of relations within Ukrainian Orthodoxy, because the UOC-MP, with its ties to the Moscow Patriarchate, also had to follow this ban and avoid communication and attempts to reach an understanding with the OCU. As an example, the leadership of the UOC-MP immediately dismissed Metropolitan Anthony (Fialko) of Khmelnytsky and Starokostiantyniv as soon as he condemned the

10 Cf. Matthew Mpoke Bigg, *Russia Adopts ‘Scorched Earth’ Tactics in Bakhmut, a Ukrainian Commander Says* (10 April 2023). URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/world/europe/russia-bakhmut-scorched-earth-ukraine.html>.

11 ROC, Святейший Патриарх Кирилл: “Сегодня нет более важного вопроса, чем мир на Украинской земле” [His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: “Today There is No More Important Issue Than Peace on the Ukrainian Land”] (17 February 2015). URL: patriarchia.ru/db/text/3996574.html. Own translation.

12 O’beara Fearghas, *Russia’s War on Ukraine: The Kremlin’s Use of Religion as a Foreign Policy Instrument* (19 May 2022). URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_ATA\(2022\)729430](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_ATA(2022)729430).

13 ROC, Священный Синод Русской Православной Церкви признал невозможным дальнейшее пребывание в евхаристическом общении с Константинопольским Патриархатом [The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Proclaimed the Impossibility of Continuing in Eucharistic Communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate] (15 October 2018). URL: patriarchia.ru/db/text/5283737.html. Own translation.

incident of beating a Ukrainian defender in the UOC-MP church in Khmelnytsky and expressed his readiness to join the OCU.¹⁴

Subsequently, the UOC-MP hierarchs, as well as Russian propaganda in general, persistently tried to discredit the OCU and its Tomos of Autocephaly, frightening the UOC-MP faithful and priests with statements about the “non-canonicity” of the OCU, its non-recognition by world Orthodoxy, its dependence on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, etc. It was beneficial for the Kremlin to maintain tensions in Ukrainian Orthodoxy. Russian propaganda attempted to convince the Western world that the voluntary transfers of a number of UOC-MP parishes to the canonical subordination of the pro-Ukrainian OCU were “raider attacks” and religious persecution by the Ukrainian government.

On the eve of the full-scale invasion, on February 21, 2022, announcing his recognition of the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People’s Republic” and “Luhansk People’s Republic,” President Putin spoke of the need to protect the interests of the ROC in Ukraine, warning that the Ukrainian authorities “cynically turned the tragedy of the church split into an instrument of state policy.”¹⁵ This is a typical example of Russian propaganda, which usually falsely accuses the Ukrainian government of doing what the Kremlin is actually doing.

Following the example of the Russian president, Patriarch Kirill called the war “metaphysical” on March 6, 2022, speaking of the fight for holiness and against the propaganda of sin.¹⁶ Patriarch Kirill implied support for Putin’s position of the moral degradation of the West through the spread of gender ideology and the legalization of same-sex partnerships, against which Russia is fighting.¹⁷ Since then, the Patriarch of Moscow’s public speeches have often included elements of military rhetoric that align with the Kremlin’s official

14 Cf. Dmytro Huliychuk, *Побиття військового у храмі: Онуфрій звільнив хмельницького митрополита УПЦ МП, який захотів перейти до ПЦУ* [Beating a Soldier in a Church: Onufriy Dismisses Khmelnytsky Metropolitan of UOC-MP Who Wanted to Join OCU] (3 April 2023). URL: <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/pobittya-viyskovo-go-u-hrami-onufriy-zvilniv-hmelnickogo-mitropolita-upc-mp-yakih-zahotiv-pereyti-do-pcu-2299984.html>.

15 Ksenia Luchenko, *Russia’s Attempt to Weaponize Orthodox Christianity in Ukraine* (16 January 2023). URL: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/01/14/russias-attempt-to-weaponize-orthodox-christianity-in-the-war-in-ukraine-a79928>.

16 *РОС, Патриаршая проповедь в Неделю сыропустную после Литургии в Храме Христа Спасителя* [Patriarchal Sermon on Holy Week After the Liturgy in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior] (6 March 2022). URL: patriarchia.ru/db/text/5906442.html Own translation.

17 Cf. Vladimir Putin, *Presidential Address to Federal Assembly* (21 February 2023). URL: en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70565.

position. For example, on March 13, 2022, he presented the sacred icon to the commander of the Russian National Guard, who said that the icon would inspire the Russian military to new successes in the so-called “special military operation” in Ukraine.¹⁸ Moreover, on September 25, 2022, Patriarch Kirill made a presumably heretical statement during his Sunday sermon and encouraged Russian soldiers to continue the war against Ukraine, claiming that their death in the line of military duty is a “sacrifice that washes away all sins.”¹⁹

Similarly, other Russian religious leaders have been involved in publicly justifying and supporting aggression against Ukraine. On March 29, 2022, the State Duma of the Russian Federation held a roundtable meeting with religious leaders, during which Salah Mezhiyev, the Supreme Mufti of the Chechen Republic (which is a subject of the Russian Federation), said:

“All the muftis of Russia should say one thing. There [in Ukraine], Nazis, fascists, Satanists, and LGBT communities ... have gathered under American and European flags. ... This is a fight against the globalization of Satanism. This is a war between good and evil. This is the Jihad. Muslims who fall in this battle will be shahid. ... We feel hatred towards these shaitans²⁰ [in Ukraine]. There should be only one attitude toward them – they need to be beheaded.”²¹

Bishop Sergey Ryakhovsky, head of the Russian United Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith, attended this state event and proposed adopting the final

18 Cf. M24.ru, Глава Росгвардии принял из рук патриарха Кирилла Августовскую икону Божией Матери [The Head of the Russian Federal Guard Received the August Icon of the Mother of God from the Hands of Patriarch Kirill] (13 March 2022). URL: <https://www.m24.ru/amp/videos/obshchestvo/13032022/440022>.

19 SOTA, Патриарх Кирилл на традиционной воскресной проповеди заявил, что смерть на войне с Украиной “смывает все грехи” и фактически сравнил мобилизованных с Иисусом Христом [Patriarch Kirill Said at His Traditional Sunday Sermon That Death in the War with Ukraine “Washes Away All Sins” and Actually Compared the Mobilized to Jesus Christ] (25 September 2022), 00:32–01:14. URL: t.me/sotaproject/46913. Own translation.

20 A “shaitan” (or “shaytan”) is an evil spirit in Islam, inciting humans and jinn to sin by whispering in their hearts. Shaitans are imagined to be ugly and grotesque creatures created from hellfire. Taken from Islamic literary sources, the term “shaitan” may be translated as “demons,” “satans,” or “devils.”

21 Duma.gov.ru, Круглый стол на тему: “Мировые традиционные религии против идеологии нацизма и фашизма в XXI веке” [Roundtable on the Theme: “World Traditional Religions Against the Ideology of Nazism and Fascism in the XXI Century”] (29 March 2022), 1:54.50–1:57.16. URL: <http://duma.gov.ru/multimedia/video/events/71233/>. Own translation.

resolution of the roundtable participants in support of the so-called “military special operation in Ukraine.”²² He has repeatedly expressed support for the Russian president’s policy and personally participated in the Kremlin’s celebrations dedicated to the annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea²³ and the occupied territories of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions of Ukraine.²⁴ At the same time, the website of the association of churches he headed regurgitated Kremlin propaganda, with many publications of Putin’s statements, greeting letters, and interviews.²⁵

Moreover, Sergey Ryakhovsky introduced the tradition of singing the Russian national anthem before the start of events of the Pentecostal Union of Churches, which he leads, encouraging participants of religious events to sing the words: “Russia is our sacred state, ... Glory, the country! We are proud of you!” These lyrics are combined with the music of the anthem of the Soviet Union, which for decades executed Evangelical believers as enemies of the state.²⁶ Despite the ongoing Russian aggression and the statement of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations recognizing the genocide of Ukrainians committed by the Russian military since the beginning of the full-scale invasion,²⁷ Russian Pentecostals continued to glorify the state of Russia before the start of their solemn worship services in 2022 and 2023.²⁸

22 Ibidem.

23 Cf. Sevastopol Life, Речь Путина о воссоединении Крыма с Россией [Putin’s Speech on Crimea’s Reunification with Russia] (18 March 2014). URL: youtu.be/2VbV-27EGt4.

24 Cf. Kremlin.ru, Подписание договоров о принятии ДНР, ЛНР, Запорожской и Херсонской областей в состав России [Signing of Treaties on Accession of Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and Zaporozhye and Kherson Regions to Russia] (30 September 2022). URL: kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69465.

25 Cf. Cef.ru, Владимир Путин: “Мы все живём в мире, который основан на библейских ценностях” [Vladimir Putin: “We All Live in a World That Is Based on Biblical Values”] (28 June 2019). URL: <https://www.cef.ru/infoblock/media-digest/newsitem/article/1510736>.

26 For more see: Oksana Beznosova, The Ukrainian Evangelicals under Pressure from the NKVD, 1928–1939, in: Andrej Kotljarchuk/Olle Sundström (eds.), *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin’s Soviet Union. New Dimensions of Research*, Huddinge 2017, 175–198.

27 Cf. UCCRO, Appeal to the World Council of Churches on Russian Terroristic Attacks on Ukrainian Civilians (20 October 2022). URL: <https://vrciro.ua/en/statements/appeal-to-world-council-of-churches-on-russian-terrorist-attacks>.

28 Cf. AMJ Blog, Собор РОСХВЕ 2022 [The Council of ROSKHVE 2022] (18 October 2022). URL: youtu.be/0OQme9HlhFA.

3. Exploitation of the Split in Ukrainian Orthodoxy by the Kremlin to Discredit the Government of Ukraine

In 2014, when Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and invaded the eastern regions of Ukraine, the UOC-MP did not support the anti-terrorist operation of the Ukrainian government aimed at liberating the Donetsk and Luhansk regions from Russian military presence. The church leadership took a position “above the conflict,” stating that it does not support any side of the armed conflict. The UOC-MP Primate, Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), echoed the words of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, saying that “this war is a civil war” because “a brother is on one side, another brother is on the other side,” and it is necessary to “forgive each other and stop killing each other.”²⁹ However, he did not condemn the Russian military invasion of Crimea and the subsequent occupation of the Ukrainian peninsula. Nor did the UOC-MP Primate mention the growing Russian military presence in the Donbas region of Ukraine, which has fueled alleged separatist sentiments and allowed for a protracted war on these territories.

The UOC-MP leadership has failed to openly and unequivocally condemn the Russian aggression and the atrocities of the Russian military in Ukraine, to refute Russian propaganda about the alleged threats to religious freedom and the Russian language in Ukraine, or stand with the suffering people of Ukraine and support their liberation struggle. For example, on May 8, 2015, the UOC-MP Primate, Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), and other bishops of this Church refused to stand up during a ceremony honoring the fallen Ukrainian soldiers who were posthumously awarded the title “Hero of Ukraine for courageous defense of the Motherland from Russian aggression” at the Ukrainian parliament.³⁰ Later, they explained their gesture as a call for an end to the war, implying the Ukrainian army was not defending its people but fighting against them. There have also been cases of individual clergymen of the UOC-MP refusing to hold memorial services for fallen Ukrainian soldiers,³¹ whom

29 Union of Orthodox Journalists, *Православная церковь в современной Украине* [Orthodox Church in Modern Ukraine], Kyiv 2016, 7–8. Own translation.

30 Cf. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, УПЦ (МП): митрополит не встав під час вшанування Героїв України, бо “проти війни” [UOC (MP): Metropolitan Did Not Stand up During Honoring of Heroes of Ukraine Because He Is “Against War”] (9 May 2015). URL: radiosvoboda.org/a/news/27005934.html.

31 Cf. Ukrinform, Звернення учасників АТО щодо діяльності церков Московського Патріархату [Appeal of ATO Participants Regarding the Activities of the Churches of the Moscow Patriarchate] (22 January 2018). URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/ru->

Russian propaganda did not recognize as defenders of their land, but instead called “punishers”.

The position of the UOC-MP hierarchs and priests is entirely consistent with the narratives of Russian propaganda, which try to weaken the resistance of the Ukrainian people by promoting the fallacy of a “fratricidal civil war” which would allegedly end if the Ukrainian army ceased to kill its own civilians. However, the UOC-MP leadership ignored the Russian military intervention and did not make similar calls to the Russian army to vacate Ukrainian land and cease shelling civilians in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. With the help of such statements by Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) and other UOC-MP bishops and clergy, the Kremlin misled the faithful of the UOC-MP, encouraging them to believe President Putin’s words of the alleged absence of Russian troops in the eastern regions of Ukraine and the alleged free will of Russian-speaking residents of this area to join Russia. In reality, the situation was the opposite. Putin himself later admitted to this, confirming that Russian soldiers “stood behind Crimea’s self-defence forces”³² and invaded the eastern regions of Ukraine.³³ It is also evident that without direct Russian intervention, small separatist groups in eastern Ukraine could not have had the heavy military equipment and sophisticated air defense systems that were used to shoot down the passenger plane flight MH17 near Donetsk on July 17, 2014, killing 298 people. The District Court of The Hague declared in its ruling that the evidence it had examined in the case of the downing of flight MH17 clearly shows that the Kremlin had “overall control” of the forces of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic in 2014.³⁴ However, the UOC-MP leadership continued to remain “above the armed conflict,” refusing to condemn Russia’s direct aggression against Ukraine and break the ties with the ROC.

bric-presshall/2383398-zvernenna-ucasnikiv-ato-sodo-dialnosti-cerkov-moskovskogo-patriarhatu.html.

- 32 Reuters.com, Putin Admits Russian Forces Were Deployed to Crimea (17 April 2014). URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/russia-putin-crimea-idUSL6N0N921H20140417/>.
- 33 Cf. Shaun Walker, Putin Admits Russian Military Presence in Ukraine for First Time (17 December 2015). URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/17/vladimir-putin-admits-russian-military-presence-ukraine>.
- 34 Marieke de Hoon, Dutch Court, in Life Sentences: Russia Had “Overall Control” of Forces in Eastern Ukraine Downing of Flight MH17 (19 December 2022). URL: justsecurity.org/84456/.

Law #3894-IX, which the Ukrainian government submitted to the parliament as draft law #8371 in January 2023,³⁵ received a significant response by the U.S. and European media. The law, adopted on 20 August 2024, seeks to prevent the spread of Russian propaganda through the use of Russian religious centers, which are a part of the military-political complex of Russia, attempting to destroy Ukraine as an independent state and eliminate Ukrainian sovereignty. As Metropolitan Yevstratiy (Zorya), a member of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organization delegation to the U.S., explains: “This is why the draft law proposed to the parliament of Ukraine is a way to protect our citizens from abuses of religious freedom, as Russia uses the churches and religious communities it controls as proxy war instruments.”³⁶

Despite the widespread dissemination of distorted information about the ban of the UOC-MP, the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations stressed that “not a single church is banned in Ukraine, unlike the Russian-occupied territories.”³⁷ The adopted law introduces a multi-stage legal procedure that is a pathway to the prohibition of activities of religious organizations that fail to adhere to the government directives to sever ties with religious centers in Russia, an aggressor state. It does not imply an immediate ban on the UOC-MP’s activities, which is not even directly mentioned. Instead, the law allows this church and other religious associations in Ukraine to liberate themselves from the influence of the Russian intelligence services and stop being mouthpieces for Russian propaganda. The UOC-MP has nine months to demonstrate its independence from Moscow and preserve the legal entity status for its metropolis, eparchies, and parishes. After that grace period, the law will come into force fully, empowering the Ukrainian government to conduct examinations of the ties of religious organizations to Russian religious centers and issue directives. Moreover, the fate of each of them will be considered separately by the court. Even if the court bans some UOC-MP parishes, their members can continue to practice their faith freely and hold worship services without the status of a legal entity. Unlike Russia, Ukrainian legislation allows

35 Cf. Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Проект Закону про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо діяльності в Україні релігійних організацій [Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on the Activities of Religious Organizations in Ukraine]. No. 8371 of 19.01.2023. URL: itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/41219.

36 UCCRO, Not a Single Church Is Banned in Ukraine, Unlike the Russian-Occupied Territories – UCCRO Delegation Stated (1 November 2023). URL: vrciro.ua/en/news/2023-uccro-visit-to-washington.

37 Ibidem.

unregistered religious communities to operate and retains a broad scope of religious freedom for their members regardless of denomination.

Although religious freedom, according to international law, includes the right of religious organizations to determine their organizational structure and choose canonical subordination,³⁸ the law should not be viewed purely theoretically. The context must be taken into account to accurately assess the scope and necessity of the Ukrainian government's interference in internal religious affairs. Russia systematically and purposefully uses religion as an instrument of global expansion and armed invasion to destroy Ukraine as a state and nation.³⁹ Therefore, Russian religious centers, primarily those of the ROC, cannot be considered as religious structures but as political or government structures. At the same time, the Constitution of Ukraine requires that "the church and religious organizations in Ukraine are separated from the state."⁴⁰ The Ukrainian government's interference to limit the activities of the ROC in Ukraine can be perceived as "necessary in a democratic society" and as corresponding to a "pressing social need,"⁴¹ given the transformation of the Russian religious centers into a structural part of Putin's dictatorial regime.

At the same time, the UOC-MP leadership allows the Church to be used in the Kremlin's geopolitical games. Apart from the declaration that references to the connection with the ROC be removed from the statutory documents of the UOC-MP in May 2022, neither Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky) nor other UOC-MP hierarchs have demonstrated practical steps to break their obedience to Moscow.⁴² For example, the UOC-MP leadership did not condemn or resist the seizure of the Simferopol and Crimean eparchy and the Berdiansk eparchy, which were arbitrarily seized by the ROC and "transferred to the direct canonical and administrative subordination of the Patriarch of Moscow" after the occupation of these Ukrainian territories by Russian troops.⁴³ The UOC-MP

38 Cf. European Court of Human Rights, Case of Svyato-Mykhaylivska Parafiya v. Ukraine, Article 112. URL: hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-81067.

39 Cf. Peter Mandaville, How Putin Turned Religion's 'Sharp Power' Against Ukraine (9 February 2022). URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/02/how-putin-turned-religions-sharp-power-against-ukraine>.

40 Constitution of Ukraine 1996 (rev. 2019), Article 35. URL: constitutionproject.org/constitution/Ukraine_2019.

41 Cf. European Court of Human Rights, Case, Article 112.

42 Cf. Oleksandr Sagan, Development Trends of Religious Institutions in Ukraine Under the Conditions of Martial Law State, in: Social and Human Sciences. Polish-Ukrainian Scientific Journal 34 (2022). URL: nsg-2023.blogspot.com/2023/02/20230108.html.

43 Pavlo Smytsnyuk, The War in Ukraine as a Challenge for Religious Communities: Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Prospects for Peacemaking, in: *Studia Universitatis Babeş-*

representatives do not speak about this raider attack at international United Nations and OSCE events. Instead, together with Russian propagandists, they continue to criticize the Ukrainian government for the voluntary transfer of their parishes to the autocephalous OCU.

As another example, the UOC-MP leadership does not publicly condemn and punish its bishops and priests who committed high treason, were involved in collaboration with Russian troops or the occupation authorities, openly justified Russian aggression, etc., even when their guilt was proven in court.⁴⁴ Instead, the ROC and UOC-MP media resources present proven abuses and outright violations of the law by some of the UOC-MP hierarchs and priests as persecution of the Church by the Ukrainian authorities.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, due to this ambiguous position of the UOC-MP leadership and most bishops, Russian propaganda managed to create a negative background image of Ukraine in Western media, especially in the United States. It concealed from the public numerous Russian war crimes against Ukrainian priests and faith-based communities in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.⁴⁶

4. Deliberate Destruction of Ukraine's Spiritual and Cultural Heritage

At a time when both sides of the Atlantic are debating whether it is possible and necessary for the Ukrainian government to intervene in the religious sphere for reasons of national security, Russia continues to systematically destroy Ukraine's religious infrastructure and spiritual and cultural heritage. Russia's full-scale invasion is accompanied by targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure with missiles and attack drones, as well as heavy artillery fire during the ground

Bolyai. *Theologia Catholica Latina* 67 (1) (2023) 26–70, 38–39.

44 Cf. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, СБУ повідомляє про затримання ще одного священника УПЦ (МП) на Сумщині [SBU Reports Detention of Another UOC (MP) Priest in Sumy Region] (3 March 2023). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-sbu-zatrymannia-svyashchennyk-sumshchyna/32297903.html>.

45 Cf. Petro Kralyuk, “Чорні дні” Московського патріархату. На що вказують події у Хмельницькому і арешт митрополита Павла? [The “Black Days” of the Moscow Patriarchate. What Do the Events in Khmelnytsky and the Arrest of Metropolitan Pavlo Indicate?] (3 April 2023). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/aresht-pavla-podi-ki-khmelnytskyi-kryza-moskovskoho-patriarkhatu/32346936.html>.

46 Cf. Maksym Vasin, *The Impact of the Russian Invasion on Faith-Based Communities in Ukraine*. Report by the Institute for Religious Freedom, Kyiv 2024, 24–25. URL: <https://irf.in.ua/files/publications/2024.03-IRF-Ukraine-report-ENG-web.pdf>.

offensive. In addition, some places of worship have been looted by the Russian military, closed, or converted by the occupation authorities into administrative buildings. There are numerous cases of the seizure of places of worship by the Russian military, which has used them as military bases or as cover for their firing positions. This tactic of the Russian army resulted in an increase of destruction of religious sites in Ukraine.⁴⁷

According to the Kyiv-based Institute for Religious Freedom, “during the 21 months of the full-scale invasion, Russian troops have wholly destroyed or damaged at least 630 religious facilities in Ukraine.”⁴⁸ However, this number continues to grow every month. In 2023, the scale of destruction of religious buildings in the southern regions of Ukraine increased significantly compared to 2022. Many churches were flooded as a result of the June 6 blasting of the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam by Russian troops, which is a war crime and potentially an act of ecocide.⁴⁹ In addition, Russia continues to fire missiles and attack drones at civilian infrastructure in all regions of Ukraine, affecting religious sites even in the remote western regions of the country.

Orthodox churches suffered the most damage from Russian aggression – at least 246 are affected. Most of these are UOC-MP churches – at least 187. 59 OCU churches were destroyed. Protestant churches were also destroyed on a large scale, at least 206 in total. Among them, Pentecostal (94), Baptist (60), and Seventh-day Adventist Church (27) prayer houses suffered the most. The Halls of the Kingdom of Jehovah’s Witnesses were also severely damaged: a total of 110 religious buildings, of which 12 were completely destroyed, 20 heavily damaged, and 78 slightly damaged. Furthermore, 32 Halls of the Kingdom were seized by the Russian military or occupation authorities.⁵⁰

The data demonstrates that the Russian leadership is not concerned with religious freedom in Ukraine. President Putin’s statements about his intention to protect Russian-speaking Orthodox believers were revealed as trick, because the UOC-MP churches suffered the most from the Russian invasion. Dmytro Koval highlights that the destruction of religious buildings in Ukraine by the Russian military is a potential fulfillment of the international law criterion for

47 Cf. Maksym Vasin et al., *Russian Attacks on Religious Freedom in Ukraine: Research, Analytics, Recommendations*. Report by Institute for Religious Freedom, Kyiv 2022, 8, 33. URL: <https://irf.in.ua/files/publications/2022.09-IRF-Ukraine-report-ENG.pdf>.

48 Vasin, *Impact*, 6.

49 Cf. Dan Sabbagh/Julian Borger, *Thousands Flee Homes as Collapse of Dam Is Blamed on Russian Forces* (6 June 2023). URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/06/ukraine-accuses-russia-of-blowing-up-nova-kakhovka-dam-near-kherson>.

50 Cf. Vasin, *Impact*, 3.

the crime of genocide against the Ukrainian people: “Such attacks themselves are not autonomous manifestations of the crime of genocide, but they may indicate the existence of special genocidal intent.”⁵¹

5. Implementation of Russian Repressive Policy in the Occupied Territories of Ukraine

In addition, the Russian occupation of certain territories of the Ukrainian southern and eastern regions is accompanied by the brutal persecution of Ukrainian local religious leaders and all faith-based communities of religious minorities. Moreover, even the UOC-MP priests are subjected to arbitrary arrests and torture if they maintain their Ukrainian identity and refuse to be directly subordinate to the ROC.⁵²

According to the Institute for Religious Freedom report, Russian attacks on religious freedom in Ukraine have become crueler since February 24, 2022:

“If previously priests on the occupied territories only received death threats, now religious leaders are tortured and killed – again, but on a scale far worse than in 2014. If previously Russian occupational authorities expelled Ukrainian believers from their churches and prayer houses, now Russia is destroying the spiritual heritage of Ukraine with missile attacks, shelling, and looting of religious buildings without justification by military necessity.”⁵³

The Kremlin uses religion as a tool to weaken the resistance of the population in the temporarily controlled territories of Ukraine. Russian intelligence services force local religious leaders to cooperate to strengthen the influence of occupation authorities, identify and persecute pro-Ukrainian activists, and prevent dissent and opposition to the Russian authorities.

According to the 2023 Mission Eurasia report, the xenophobic “*Russkiy Mir*” (Russian World) ideology has been forced on the occupied territories with extreme brutality:

51 Vasin et al., *Attacks*, 24.

52 Cf. Mykhailo Brytsyn/Maksym Vasin, *Faith Under Fire: Navigating Religious Freedom Amidst the War in Ukraine*. Report by Religious Freedom Initiative of Mission Eurasia, Franklin/TN 2023, 16.

53 Vasin et al., *Attacks*, 4.

“Occupation administrations uprooted displays of Ukrainian identity with deep hatred, and fought any forms of opposition, striving to subjugate or stop the activities of religious minorities. It came to the physical extermination of priests, pastors, imams, and other religious figures, whom Russian soldiers arbitrarily arrested, kidnapped, and subjected to the most painful of tortures.”⁵⁴

This Russian violence was officially justified by manufactured allegations of supposed “extremist” or “illegal missionary” activities. Fabrication of criminal cases on these grounds against religious minorities is widespread in Russia after the adoption of legislative changes under the Yarovaya law.⁵⁵ Those priests, pastors, imams, or rabbis who could not be intimidated and induced to comply with Russian occupational administrations were forcefully deported from the Ukrainian territories temporarily controlled by Russia or imprisoned and tortured.⁵⁶

6. Conclusions

Despite President Putin’s accusations of moral degradation and disregard for family values against the West, the narrative of Russian propaganda should be viewed with a critical eye. In reality, the Kremlin and ROC leadership are far from Christian moral virtues, as evidenced by the widespread corruption, numerous war crimes in Ukraine, terror against civilians, and *de facto* genocide of the Ukrainian people. Similarly, the words of Vladimir Putin, Russian diplomats, and other propagandists regarding the alleged lack of religious freedom in Ukraine should not be trusted because, in reality, it is Russia that destroys churches and houses of worship in Ukraine, imprisons people and detains them in inhumane conditions and subjects Ukrainian priests, pastors, and imams to brutal torture, forcing them to justify Russian war crimes and cooperate with the occupation administration. On the contrary, “during the 30 years of independence, the Ukrainian state did not persecute anyone for

54 Brytsyn/Vasin, Faith, 25.

55 The Yarovaya law (in Russian: Закон Яровой), also Yarovaya package or Yarovaya-Ozerov package is a set of two Russian federal bills, #374-FZ and #375-FZ, passed in 2016. The bills amend previous counter-terrorism laws and separate laws that regulate additional counter-terror and public safety measures. The public names the law after the last name of one of its creators – MP Irina Yarovaya.

56 Cf. Brytsyn/Vasin, Faith, 22.

their faith, did not ban any religion without reason.”⁵⁷ Even during wartime, when noticeable changes in the religious infrastructure occur, the Ukrainian government strives to ensure the right to the free practice of all religions.

The reason for Russia’s aggression against Ukraine is not the Kremlin’s desire to protect traditional family values or the religious freedom of Ukrainians. In reality, propaganda depicting the oppression of Russian-speaking residents and Orthodox believers, as well as criticism of the moral decline of the West and fear of NATO expansion, is an attempt to obscure the true intentions of the Russian leadership. First, Vladimir Putin and his clan-based system of governance seek to maintain unlimited authoritarian power inside the Russian Federation and the ability to embezzle and further gain profit through corrupt schemes. Putin successfully achieved this goal by intimidating Russian citizens with an external enemy and repressing dissidents and internal opposition, just as the Soviet Union did. Secondly, the Russian president aspires to revive the Russian empire, implementing the “*Russkiy Mir*” ideology and global dominance because he claims the collapse of the Soviet Union was “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.”⁵⁸ The Ukrainian people have resisted the geopolitical dream of Vladimir Putin by choosing the path of democracy, the rule of law, and European integration. Therefore, with the broad support of Russian society, Putin is prepared to wage a war that will eradicate the sovereignty of the Ukrainian nation state and the national identity of the Ukrainian people. This objective displays signs of genocide.

Religion is a key tool for achieving Russia’s geopolitical goals⁵⁹ and a critical front on which the Kremlin has been waging an active, systematic, bloody, and cynical battle for decades. Russian diplomats and other propagandists have constantly tried to turn the Western world, especially Ukraine’s allies, against the Ukrainian government, accusing Ukraine of targeted persecution of the UOC-MP. At the same time, the UOC-MP leadership allows Moscow to use this Church and the trust of Ukraine’s Orthodox believers in its geopolitical battle, taking an uncertain position on Russian aggression and provoking discontent in Ukrainian society, primarily by inciting conflict in their parishes. It is beneficial for the Kremlin to widen the split in Ukrainian Orthodoxy in

57 Liudmyla Fylypovych, *The Realities of Current Orthodox Life in Ukraine During the Russian-Ukrainian War*, in: *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Theologia Catholica Latina* 67 (1) (2023) 7–25, 10.

58 NBC News, *Putin: Soviet Collapse a ‘Genuine Tragedy’* (25 April 2005). URL: [nbcnews.com/id/wbna7632057](https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna7632057).

59 Cf. Fearghas, *Russia’s War*.

order to use local provocations to discredit Ukraine's leadership and reduce military support from its allies.

Focusing on this issue helps the Russian leadership to divert the attention of the international community from the real threats to religious freedom in Ukraine, which are caused by the Russian military intervention. Russian authorities do not only completely control religious activity in Russia and force Russian religious leaders to justify the aggressive war, but also extend their repressive policy to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The Russian occupation administrations are forcing religious leaders to cooperate and cut ties with the religious centers in Kyiv in favor of subordination to Russian religious centers that are already under the control of Russian intelligence services. Moreover, Moscow loudly criticizes the Ukrainian government's democratic attempts to protect faith-based communities from the influence of Kremlin-controlled Russian religious centers, as provided by the recently adopted law #3894-IX. As a result of the law, the Kremlin can lose its last channel of influence on Ukrainian society, which is the UOC-MP, due to the *de facto* pro-Russian position of its Primate and most bishops.

The Russian leadership utilizes religion as a tool of warfare. By identifying, describing, and assessing the historic and political contexts in which this Russian strategy of warfare operates, this paper has revealed the reality of Russian propagandist rhetoric and the obscurement and distortion of the actual situation in Ukraine.

Muslims in the Struggle for the Ukrainian Cause and Statehood

Andrii Zhyvachivskiy

The present article intends to show the continuity of joint military campaigns between Muslims, foremost Crimean Tatars, Ottomans, and Ukrainian armies and represents an uncommon approach to understanding this specific topic. From the 11th century onwards, dukes from Kyiv and other Rus' leaders recruited various Turkic peoples. Together with the Polovtsi, the Kyivan Rus resisted the Mongol invasion in the Kalka battle. This and many other cases mentioned in the article indicate that the cooperation of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, Christians and Muslims on the territory of modern Ukraine is a lasting tradition rather than a sporadic coincidence. Therefore, the presence of Chechen and Crimean Tatar battalions in the Ukrainian army at the time of the Russian aggression since 2014 and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 is a continuation of the thousand-year-old tradition of involving the Turkic and Muslim inhabitants in the struggle for the Ukrainian cause and state. Islam has had a valuable influence on Ukrainian identity, which was formed mainly by Orthodox and Catholic Christian traditions. This study intends to close a gap in the existing literature and needs to be followed up by a more in-depth investigation.

1. Introduction

In the Russian war against Ukraine since 2014 and the large-scale invasion since February 24, 2022, the Crimean Tatars, Ukrainian Muslims, were among the first victims of Russian aggression. One such victim was Reshat Ametov¹, who was tortured and killed by Russians. Ukrainians retain stereotypes of Crimean

1 Cf. Carl Schreck/Olena Removska, Snatched in Plain Sight: No Justice in Crimean Tatar's Slaying Five Years after Russian Annexation (19 March 2019). URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/snatched-in-plain-sight-no-justice-in-crimean-tatar-s-slaying-five>

Tatars and Turks as enemies. The memory of the sea raids of the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans into Ukrainian territories are kept alive in Ukrainian folk songs called *dumy*.² The portrayal of Crimean Tatars as bloodthirsty man-hunters is also a product of Soviet propaganda which followed the deportation of the Crimean Tatar population from Crimea in 1944. Nevertheless, if we go *ad fontes*, we see evidence not only of raids and wars between Ukrainians and Muslims, especially Crimean Tatars and Ottomans, but also of cooperation and friendship from the very early ages to the present time.

There is a historical tradition of joint warfare between Ukrainian Christians and Muslims. Starting from the 11th century, the dukes (kniazi) of Rus' enlisted various Turkic peoples, such as Pechenegs, Torks, Berendei, and Kovui, Chorni Klobuky (meaning "black hats"), Polovtsi (Kumans). Even though at that time the predominant religion of the Turkic peoples was animism, a significant portion were Muslims. Their internecine wars often attracted nomadic troops to their side. Together with the Polovtsi, the Rus' resisted the Mongol invasion at Battle of the Kalka River in 1223.

In the 14th to 15th centuries, after the rapid advances and conquests of the Ottomans on the Balkan Peninsula and in other Balkan territories, the appearance of the Crimean Khanate in Crimea and the invasion of the Hungarian Kingdom in the North near Mohacs, the Ukrainians found themselves sharing a border with Muslim countries – some scholars called it the "Great Frontier".³ For centuries thereafter, Ukrainians lived in close contact with two Muslim states: the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate.⁴ Even though

[years-after-russian-annexation/29821534.html](https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/10.1093/ajph/94.10.1788). All internet links in this article were last accessed on 5 April 2024.

- 2 *Dumy* – lyrical folk songs sung by Cossack bards (*kobzari*) about historical events and heroic deeds of the Cossacks.
- 3 Cf. William H. McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500–1800*, Chicago – London 1964, 47–64; Viktor Brekhunenko, *Козаки на степовому кордоні Європи* [The Cossacks at Europe's Steppe Frontier], Kyiv 2011; idem, *Українські козаки та мусульманські сусіди: транскордонна міграція та взаємодія (XVI – I-а пол. XVII ст.)* [Ukrainian Cossacks and Muslim Neighbors: Cross-Border Migration and Interaction (16th – 1st half of the 17th centuries)], in: Volodimir Melnik et al. (eds.), *Türkiye ve Ukrayna İlişkileri: Dünü ve Bugünü*, Istanbul 2015, 227–239.
- 4 Cf. Mihnea Berindei/Gilles Veinstein, *La présence ottomane au sud de la Crimée et en Mer d'Azov dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle*, in: *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 20/3–4 (1979) 399–465; Oleksandr Halenko, *Економічне життя в Османському Надчорномор'ї: між царством ісламу та краєм війни* [Economic Life in the Ottoman Black Sea Basin between the Kingdom of Islam and the Country of War], in: Volodymyr Lytvyn (ed.), *Економічна історія України* [Economic His-

the Cossack period is better known for the Ukrainian confrontation with the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire, there are many examples of military campaigns by Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there were many Tatars in the Grand Duke's service⁵ where the historical evidence suggests they met and had the opportunity to cooperate with Ukrainians.

2. Cooperation with Crimean Tatars and Ottomans during the Cossack Period

Evidence of military cooperation between Crimean Tatars and Cossacks can be dated back to 1521 when Khan Mehmed I Giray fought alongside Ostafiy Dashkevych⁶ in his military campaign against Muscovy.⁷ A few years later, Dashkevych also supported Islam I Giray⁸ in his struggle for the Crimean throne against the Ottoman protégé Saadet I Giray.⁹ In the 1550s, the famous founder of Zaporozhian Sich, Dmytro Bayda-Vyshnevetskyi, spent several years in the service of the Ottoman Sultan.¹⁰

tory of Ukraine], vol. 1, Kyiv 2011, 471–481, 474; idem, Студії над повідомленнями Хроніки Наїми з історії України [Studies on the Reports of Naima's Chronicle on the History of Ukraine], in: Mustafa Nayima, Гюсейнові города у витягу історій із Заходу та Сходу (Повідомлення про Україну) [Hussein's Cities in the Excerpt of Stories from the West and the East (Report on Ukraine)], Kyiv 2016, 194–263.

- 5 Cf. Borys Cherkas, Україна в політичних відносинах Великого князівства Литовського з Кримським ханатом (1515–1540) [Ukraine in the Political Relations of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Crimean Khanate (1515–1540)], Kyiv 2006, 43–58.
- 6 Ostafiy Dashkevych (Dashkovych) – Cossack chief, starosta (mayor) of Cherkasy in the 16th century.
- 7 Cf. Cherkas, Україна в політичних відносинах, 136–139, footnote 560; Taras Chukhlib, Як черкаський староста Остафій Дашкович проти Московії воював? [How did the Starosta of Cherkasy Ostafiy Dashkevych Fight against Moscow?], in: Valeriy Smoliy (ed.), Перелом: Війна Росії проти України: у часових пластах і просторах минувшини [The Turning Point: Russia's War Against Ukraine: in the Time Layers and Spaces of the Past], vol. 3, Kyiv 2023, 69–71.
- 8 Islam I Giray – Crimean khan in 1532.
- 9 Saadet I Giray – Crimean khan in 1524–32. See: Borys Cherkas, Політична криза в Кримському ханстві і боротьба Іслам-Гірея за владу в 10–30-х роках XVI ст. [The Political Crisis in the Crimean Khanate and the Struggle of Islam-Girey for Power in the 10–30s of the 16th Century], in: Україна в Центрально-Східній Європі [Ukraine in Central-Eastern Europe], Kyiv 2000, 97–118, 107–109.
- 10 Cf. Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, Un condottiere lithuanien du XVIe siècle, le prince Dimitrij Višnevckij et l'origine de la *sec'* zaporogue d'après les archives ottomanes, in:

In 1596, because of the intrigues of Grand Vizier Chigalzade Sinan Pasha and because the Khan Gazi II Giray did not join the Sultan in his campaign against Hungary, the Sultan issued a decree on the resignation of Gazi II Giray and the election of the new khan Feth Giray.¹¹ However the resigned Khan did not want to relinquish his position. Having learnt from the mistake of Mehmed II Giray who had lost the struggle for the throne, the Khan sought external support, in particular from Zaporozhian Cossacks and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Khan Gazi Giray sent the Cossacks “a letter through his servant in which he asked us to join him in the campaign against the Turks and promised us soldiers”.¹² This was the first attempt of a Tatar-Cossack union. Eventually, Chigalzade was removed from his post, and Gazi II Giray as able to keep his position on the throne.

In 1623, Mehmed III Giray was appointed as the Crimean khan, and Shahin Giray became the new kalga.¹³ However, the Khan's refusal to participate in the campaign against the Persian front resulted in the Sultan issuing a decree deposing Mehmed III Giray. Consequently, in 1624, Djanibek Giray became the new khan. However, the brothers decided not to obey the decree and fight for their throne. Cossacks helped the brothers. According to Hrushevs'kyi, the Cossacks were shipwrecked and cast ashore in Crimea, where they were taken captive. Shahin Giray asked them to join him in his war against the Turks.¹⁴ However, Brekhunenko thinks that the Cossacks' actions were coordinated and, at the invitation of the Kalga, they went to Kefe where the future of the

Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique 10 (1969) 258–279, 266–267.

- 11 Cf. Carl M. Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism during the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus*, New York – London 1972, 150.
- 12 Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (AGAD). – Extranea IX Polen. – №59 – vol. 89. This document was published in: Viktor Brehunenko/Mirosław Nagielski (eds.), *Дванадцять листів гетьманів Війська Запорозького XVI – 1-ї пол. XVII ст. з польських рукописних зібрань* [Twelve Letters of the Hetmans of the Zaporozhian Army of the 16th – first half of the 17th Centuries from Polish Manuscript Collections], in: National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, *Український Археографічний Щорічник* [Ukrainian Archaeographic Yearbook], issue 8–9, vol. 11/12, Kyiv – New York 2004, 425–452, 440–441. Own translation; cf. Oleksa Hayvoronskyi, *Повелители двух материков* [The Rulers of Two Continents], in 2 vols., vol. 1, Kyiv – Bakhchysaray 2007, 334.
- 13 *Kalga* – a position reserved solely for members of the Giray dynasty. The kalga served as the first co-regent of the Crimean Khanate. He was responsible for administering the right wing of the Khanate and acted as the military commander of the right wing of the Tatar army.
- 14 Cf. Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Історія України-Руси* [History of Ukraine Rus'], vol. 7, Kyiv 1995, 513.

Crimean throne was decided.¹⁵ Despite the presence of the Sultan's fleet which was hosted by Grand Admiral Redjep Pasha in Kefe, the Cossacks undertook two significant marine campaigns against Istanbul, burning down some areas in the capital. As a result, the Kapudan Pasha was forced to return to the capital with his fleet, leaving Crimea.¹⁶ After the battle, Shahin Giray wrote to the Polish king: "God bless those 300 Cossacks who came to help us and joined us ..."¹⁷ Mehmed Giray and Shahin Giray were successful in their attack and destroyed the Ottoman camp, forcing Djanibek Giray and Redjep Pasha to flee by ship to Varna, and the Kalga together with his army entered Kefe.¹⁸ The inhabitants of Kefe supported the Tatar victory, as can be seen from a description of the event from one of the local Armenian priests: "Thanks to the omnipotent God – the King of Kings, that He had mercy and strengthened the forces of the kalga Shahin Giray Sultan and the khan Mehmed Giray, whose reign in the Solhat region and the city of Kefe brought prosperity and peace, love and reconciliation."¹⁹ According to Russian envoys, the victory can be partially attributed to the Cossack participation in the battle.²⁰ After this victory, the Sultan ordered the decree appointing Mehmed Giray as khan, and Kefe returned back to Ottoman authority.

Despite this victory, the brothers' political position was insecure, therefore in the summer/autumn of 1624, Shahin Giray conducted negotiations with the Cossacks.²¹ Subsequently, on December 24, 1624 the first Cossack-Crimean agreement was signed, which ratified a mutual assistance scheme as a provision to any threats to the defense of either party.²² "If an adversary appears to the hetman, the Cossack captains, the Cossack chieftains and to the whole Cossack army, I, Shahin Giray, shall help them together with all beys and mirzas imme-

15 Cf. Brekhunenko, *Козаки на степовому*, 428.

16 Cf. Hrushevsky, *Історія України-Руси*, vol. 7, 513–515.

17 Seweryn Gołębiowski, *Szahn Giraj i Kozacy*, in: *Biblioteka Warszawska* 2 (1852) 1–27, 19. Own translation.

18 Cf. Aleksey Novoselski, *Борьба Московского государства с татарами в 1й пол. XVII в.* [Struggle of the Moscow State with the Tatars in the Early 17th Century], Moscow – Leningrad 1948, 112–113.

19 Edmund Schütz, *Eine Armenische Chronik von Kaffa aus der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 29/2 (1975) 133–186, 144–145. Own translation.

20 Cf. Novoselski, *Борьба*, 113.

21 Cf. Brekhunenko, *Козаки на степовому*, 429.

22 Cf. *ibidem*, 432.

diately after I am notified about it. In case an adversary appears to me they shall help me after being notified, as set forth by the oath letters.”²³

In 1628, during a time when Istanbul underwent a purge of rebellious vassals, a local war broke out between the Khan and the Kalga on one side and the Chief of the Budjak Horde Kantemir on the other. The conflict was a result of the brothers’ refusal to participate in the Persian war and Djanibek’s promise that after his return the Tatars would immediately go to Iran.²⁴ Meanwhile, Kantemir, who led the Budjak Horde, besieged Bakhchisaray where Mehmed and Shahin Girays, along with their supporters, had locked themselves in the city, as most of the mirzas and beys had left their khan and sought for Djanibek’s comeback. The brothers found themselves in a deadlock, but Zaporozhians came to their rescue and defeated the army of Kantemir near the river Alma near Bakhchisaray. Hetman Petro Doroshenko died in that battle.²⁵ Consequently, Kantemir fled with the surviving soldiers to Kefe. When Shahin Giray received the news that the beylerbey (governor-general) of Kefe, Mehmed Pasha, had allowed Kantemir into Kefe, he was surprised and enraged, given his good relations with the governor.²⁶

The brothers went together with the Cossacks to Kefe. There was a battle near Kefe in which Kantemir was once again completely defeated and many Budjak mirzas were taken into captivity, including Kantemir’s son who was killed near the walls of Kefe in front of his father.²⁷ Kefe was besieged for nearly three to four weeks²⁸ but the city wasn’t taken solely because Mehmed didn’t want to conquer it. The historical evidence suggests that he thought that after conquering the city he wouldn’t have the chance to rehabilitate before Porta. Finally, the Ottoman navy appeared, headed by the Ottoman Grand Admiral

23 Yuriy Mytsyk, *Кілька документів до історії козацько-татарського союзу 1625 року та православної церкви в Україні* [A Few Documents on the History of the Cossack-Tatar Union in 1625 and the History of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine], in: *Рукописна та книжкова спадщина України* 4 (1998), 143–144. Own translation; cf. Hrushevsky, *Історія України-Руси*, vol. 7, 517.

24 Cf. Bogdan Baranowski, *Polska a Tatarszczyzna w latach 1624–1629*, Łódź 1948, 77; Novoselski, *Борьба*, 119.

25 Cf. *Ukraine sprawy: przyczynek do dziejów polskich, tatarskich i tureckich XVII wieku*, ed. by Stanisław Przyłęcki, Lviv 1842, 8; *Науворонські, Повелители*, vol. 2, 120–122.

26 Cf. Emiddio Dortelli D’Ascoli, *Описание Чернаго моря и Татаріи 1634* [Description of the Black Sea and Tataria 1634], ed. by Alexandre Berthier-Delagard, in: *Записки Одесскаго общества истории и древностей* 24 (1902) 89–180, 110.

27 Cf. *Ukraine sprawy*, 8.

28 Cf. Baranowski, *Polska a Tatarszczyzna*, 83.

and the new Khan.²⁹ On June 30th, most of the leaders of the Crimean army deserted the brothers' camp and went to Kefe to worship the new khan, Djani-bek Giray. The brothers had almost no army left, only the Cossacks remained. Khan Mehmed Giray fled and the Kalga, along with the Cossacks, was able to escape from Crimea and go to Zaporozhian Sich. The disobedience of the Girays was suppressed by the Ottomans and the Khans' fate was decided in Kefe once again. As a consequence of the support of Warsaw and the help of the Cossacks, the brothers attempted to claim the throne in June 1629, but they were defeated. Mehmed III Giray was killed by the Cossacks and Shahin Giray fled to Iran.³⁰ The most protracted conflict between the Crimean Girays and the Ottoman Porte ended cataclysmically for the Crimean Girays, but it laid a foundation for further cooperation between the Zaporozhian Cossacks, from which the Cossacks admittedly benefited more than the Crimeans.

In 1635, after the dismissal of Khan Djanibek Giray, the son of Gazi II Giray – Inayet Giray – became the new khan. Two of his brothers, Hüsam and Saadet Girays, were appointed kalga and nureddin³¹ respectively. Istanbul mistakenly presumed greater loyalty from and controllability of the new khan. On the contrary, he openly refused to campaign against Iran and started to strengthen his power.³² It must be admitted that Inayet Giray's refusal to taking part in the campaign against Iran was a consequence of the refusal of the leaders of the Crimean clans who feared Kantemir's assault against Crimea. The Crimean nobility was not satisfied because their Crimean warriors did not receive any reward for their military service. To the surprise of the Khan, the Beylerbey of Kefe, Ibrahim Pasha, refused to give away the agreed share of the income of the Kefe province intended to finance the Crimean khans. The Khan decided to free himself from Ottoman dependence.³³ In 1636–1637, his policy was similar to the policy of Mehmed and Shahin Girays. The khanate

29 Cf. Orders (hüküm) no. 101 [119], 102 [120], 103 [121], 104 [122] 105 [123], see: 83 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (1036–1037/ 1626–1628). Özet-Traskrispsiyon-İndeks, Ankara 2001, 69–74.

30 Cf. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania. International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Century)*, Leiden 2011, 139.

31 *Nureddin* – the second co-regent of the khan after the kalga, the administrator of the left, the so-called western part of the khanate and the commander of the left, less numerous wing of his troops.

32 Cf. Vasilij Smugnov, *Крымское ханство под верховенством Оттманской Порты до начала XVIII века [The Crimean Khanate under Supremacy of the Ottoman Porte until the Beginning of the XVIIIth Century]*, St. Petersburg 1887, 510–514.

33 Cf. Hayvoronskyi, *Повелители*, vol. 2, 202; Alexandre Bennigsen et al. (eds.), *Le Khanat de Crimée dans les Archives du Musée du Palais de Topkapı*, Paris 1978, 147.

had threats from the south, the Ottoman Kefe, and from the north, the Budjak Horde, headed by Kantemir. For that reason, guided by his personal experience and that of his father, the Khan sought the help of his allies.

In 1636, messengers were sent to the Zaporozhian Cossacks and Warsaw.³⁴ The Khan decided to act quickly. At first, he wanted to capture Kefe and, later, beat Kantemir. Kefe was conquered by a quick attack without a battle. The local citizens handed over the governor of Kefe Bychakchy İbrahim Pasha, Kadi Hamit Efendi and other leaders of Kefe to the Khan. Later they were killed by the Kalga. Inayet left his own governor in Kefe.³⁵ Inayet Giray attempted to negotiate with Kantemir but his request was refused. So, he received assistance from the Zaporozhian Cossacks and went to Budjak.³⁶ His raid was successful; Kantemir fled to Istanbul and the victory of Inayet was complete. Other leaders of the Budjak Horde were submissive to the khan, who then ordered them to move to Crimea. The Khan quickly returned to Crimea, so the Budjak Tatars were convoyed by the kalga and the nurreddin. However, on their way to the Crimean Peninsula, the Budjak mirzas betrayed them and killed Hüssam and Saadet Girays. So, the presumed successful campaign for the Khan reversed into a failure because of the arrogance of Inayet Giray and the Kalga.³⁷ After his brothers' death Inayet Giray did not have any power or a way to resist his new position. After the new Khan Bahadyr Giray arrived in Kefe, Inayet went to Istanbul where he was killed by Sultan Murad IV.³⁸

The most powerful and famous alliance between Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi and Khan Islam III Giray was concluded in 1648. Until recently, only the treason of Islam III was considered when describing the balance of power in Eastern Europe. The role of the Crimean Khanate and its desire to prevent an imbalance of power is now also understood as a significant factor in the geo-political status of Eastern Europe at the time. Furthermore, without the support of the Tatar cavalry, it is unlikely the Cossacks would have been successful against the Polish forces. Crimean involvement was decisive in the formation of the Cossack state. Together with the Crimean Tatars, the Cossacks fought and won several battles. Even after the well know treason in Berestechko, the two sides continued to be allies until 1654, when Khmelnytskyi betrayed

34 Cf. Brekhunenko, *Козаки на степовому*, 443.

35 Cf. Novoselskyi, *Борьба*, 247–248; Smirnov, *Крымское ханство*, 513; Hayvoronskyi, *Повелители*, vol. 2, 204–205; Schütz, *Eine armenische Chronik*, 155.

36 Cf. Brekhunenko, *Козаки на степовому*, 443; Hayvoronskyi, *Повелители*, vol. 2, 248.

37 Cf. Novoselski, *Борьба*, 248–249; Hayvoronskyi, *Повелители*, vol. 2, 213.

38 Cf. Смутнов, *Крымское ханство*, 520; Hayvoronskyi, *Повелители*, vol. 2, 16.

the Crimean Khanate and became an ally of Muscovy. At the beginning of his uprising, Khmelnytskyi attempted to make an agreement with Ottoman Porte.³⁹

The next case of cooperation between Cossacks and Tatars occurred during the hetmanship of Ivan Vyhovskyi in 1658, when, together with his ally Mehmed IV Giray, he defeated the Muscovian army near Konotop.⁴⁰ The first protectorate for Ukraine by the Ottoman Empire was established during the rule of Hetman Petro Doroshenko (1669–1676).⁴¹ Later, the son of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Yuriy Khmelnytskyi, ruled a part of Ukraine under the Ottoman protectorate as “Duke of Rus-Ukraine”⁴² and the quasi-state of “Khans’ka Ukrayina” (ukr. Ханська Україна) under the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire, and then of the Crimean Khanate which existed for several decades.⁴³

A further example of collaboration between Ukrainian Muslims and their neighbors, the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate, occurred after the decisive Battle of Poltava (1709) during the Great Northern War. The defeat of the Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Mazepa and his ally King Charles XII of Sweden forced the rulers into exile in the Ottoman Empire. One of the oldest constitutions in the world – The Constitution of Pylyp Orlyk – was written in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁴

After this, Khmelnytskyi first sought to acquire the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire. And later, after the defeat near Poltava, Ivan Mazepa lived out

39 Cf. Omelyan Pritsak, *Союз Хмельницького з Туреччиною 1648 року* [Khmelnytsky’s Alliance with Turkey in 1648], in: *Записки НТШ* 156 (1948) 143–164; for German translation see: idem, *Das erste Türkisch-Ukrainische Bündnis (1648)*, in: *Oriens* 6 (1953) 266–298; idem, *Ще раз про союз Богдана Хмельницького з Туреччиною*, in: *Український Археографічний Щорічник (нова едиція)* 2 (1993) 177–192; Serhii Plokhly, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, New York 2015, 101–103.

40 Cf. Plokhly, *The Gates of Europe*, 111–112; Nayima, *Гюсейнові городи*, 178–184.

41 Cf. Oleksandr Sereda, *Османсько-українська дипломатія в документах XVII–XVIII ст.* [Ottoman-Ukrainian Diplomacy in Documents of the 17th–18th Centuries], Kyiv – Istanbul, 39–44; Plokhly, *The Gates of Europe*, 116–117.

42 Cf. Taras Chukhlib, *Козаки і монархи. Міжнародні відносини ранньомодерної Української держави 1648–1721 рр.* [The Cossacks and the Monarchs. Foreign Relations of Early Modern Ukrainian State 1648–1721], Kyiv 2009, 256–269.

43 Ibidem, 383–393. Own translation.

44 Cf. Пилип Орлик: життя, політика, тексти: матеріали Міжнар. наук. конф. “Ad fontes” до 300-річчя Бендерської Конституції 1710 р. [Pylyp Orlyk: Life, Politics, Texts: Materials of the International Scientific Conference “Ad fontes” Dedicated to the 300th Anniversary of the Bender Constitution of 1710], ed. by Natalia Yakovenko, Kyiv 2010.

his last days on the territory of the Ottomans.⁴⁵ Pylyp Orlyk led two campaigns against Muscovy in 1711 and 1713 with a Crimean army, but both campaigns were unsuccessful. Until his death in 1742, Hetman Orlyk spent the last years of his life in exile in the territory of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶ A last case of Ottoman-Cossack cooperation is the existence of the Zadunayska Sich (Transdanubian Sich) under Ottoman rule for almost half a century.⁴⁷

To conclude, there are many examples of cooperation and joint campaigns between the Cossacks, the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans. We may confidently surmise a long and strong tradition of cooperation between Ukrainians and their Muslim neighbors.⁴⁸ As a consequence of the occupation of almost all Ukrainian land by the Russian Empire and the Russian distortion of information through the production and distribution of propaganda, Ukrainians expressed negative stereotypes about Crimean Tatars and Turks, which erased the truth. Additionally, because Turkey was a member of the NATO when the Crimean Tatars were deported in 1944, Soviet historians were pressured and incentivized by the Soviet regime to portray the Russians positively and the Turks and Crimean Tatars negatively in their writing. This is why, in general, Ukrainian society knows little about the participation of Muslims in the war for Ukrainian independence, and this often causes surprise. Over the past 10 years, since the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2014, questions, such as “Why did the Crimean Tatars not fight for Ukraine?” and “Do the Crimean Tatars support Ukraine?” often appear in public spaces and forums. But they are fighting! Many Crimean Tatars have relatives in occupied Crimea, so they

45 Cf. Oleksander Ohloblyn, *Гетьман Іван Мазепа та його доба* [Hetman Ivan Mazepa and His Era], ed. by Liubomyr Vynar, New York 2001, chapter 10.

46 There are few documents about financial maintenance of Hetman Orlyk by Ottoman government. For more see Sereda, *Османсько-українська дипломатія*, 102–162.

47 Cf. Olena Bachynska, *Задунайська Січ* [Danubian Sich], in: Valeriy Smoliy (ed.) *Енциклопедія історії України* [Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine], Kyiv 2005, vol. 3, 195–196, 195; eadem, *Дунайське козацьке військо. 1828–1868 pp.* [The Danube Cossack Army. 1828–1868], Odesa 1998; eadem, *Османські фортеці Буджак на межі XVIII–XIX ст.: залоги й їхній склад* [Ottoman Fortresses of Budzhak at the Turn of the 18th and 19th Centuries: Outposts and Their Structure], Odesa 2013; Taras Chukhlib, *Забуті козаки. Історія козацтва після зруйнування Запорізької Січі: 1775–1905* [The Forgotten Cossacks. The History of the Cossacks after the Destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich: 1775–1905], Kyiv 2015.

48 Cf. Andrii Zhyvachivskyi, *Крим в останній чверті XV – 1-й пол. XVII сторіччя: татарсько-османські протиріччя й козаки* [Crimea in the Last Quarter of the 15th to the First Half of the 17th Centuries: Tatar-Ottoman Contradictions and the Cossacks], in: *Український Альманах* 2016, 191–199.

remain quiet about their participation in the war against Russia for the security of their families. A long tradition of cooperation was destroyed by Russian aggression and the lack of the statehood of the Cossack polities (Hetmanshchyna, Zaporizhian Sich) and the Crimean Khanate. So, both Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians became subjects of the Russian Empire, where it was difficult to develop but also to protect their own national identities, because Russian subjects were mandated to be loyal to God, the Sovereign and the Fatherland, which later changed to Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality.⁴⁹

3. Muslim Soldiers in Ukrainian Military Units in the 20th Century

The wars and atrocities of the 20th century offered an opportunity for many nations to create or rebuild their states. Among those nations were Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, Azerbaijanis and other nations. Some Muslims fought alongside the Ukrainian army against the Bolsheviks. In February 1918, a Muslim battalion aided the Ukrainian People's Army (UNR) and played an active role in the liberation of Kamianets-Podilskyi from the Bolsheviks. The conflict began on February 28, 1918 when the Ukrainian People's Republic troops began to approach Kamianets-Podilskyi. In the morning, the conspirators arrested the battalion commander and seized a warehouse of weapons and uniforms. Mullah Sadykov gathered the fighters and informed them about the dissolution of the "soldier's council". He called on the soldiers to fight for Ukraine, assuring them that this was the only way they would be able to get home. Two Tatar companies stormed the two bridges across the Smotrych River leading to the city center. The Bolsheviks fiercely resisted. In the end, under the cover of machine gun fire, the Muslims captured the crossings. Muslims who fought in the Ukrainian Army were called "Askery."⁵⁰

During World War II many Tatars, Azerbaijanis and Uzbeks were fighting in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (ukr. Українська Повстанська Армія).⁵¹

49 Cf. Serhii Plokyh, *The Russo-Ukrainian War. The Return of History*, New York 2023, 10.

50 *Asker* – from the Turkish or Crimean Tatar language means soldier, warrior. For more see Maksym Omelchenko, *Мусульмани в боях за незалежність України: сьогодні та сто років тому* [Muslims in the Fight for Ukraine's Independence: Today and a Hundred Years Ago] (31 May 2022). URL: <https://novynarnia.com/2022/05/31/musulmany-v-boyah-za-nezalezhnist-ukrayiny-sogodni-ta-sto-rokiv-tomu/>.

51 Cf. Oleh Stetsyshyn, *Бандерівський Інтернаціонал. Грузини, росіяни, євреї* [Bandervivskyi International: Georgians, Russians, Jews], Lviv 2015, 66–76, 105–128.

4. Crimean Tatars as Indigenous People of Independent Ukraine and Their Struggle for the Ukrainian Statehood

Ukraine became an independent country in 1991. Around 77 % of the population were ethnically Ukrainian and the remaining 23 % were from other nations. As a result of their deportation in 1944, only 0,5 % of the population consisted of Crimean Tatars who had returned to their motherland Crimea starting in 1989.⁵² Ukraine had not paid attention to the problems of the Crimean Tatars and minimally supported them. Personal relationships between dissidents and prisoners of the Soviet regime of Viacheslav Chornovil and Mustafa Dzhemilev enabled the Crimean Tatar community to have representatives in the Ukrainian parliament. Mustafa Dzhemilev is one of the few Crimean Tatar citizens of Ukraine who has been a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada continuously since 1998. Refat Chubarov was the deputy of the Verkhovna Rada from 1998 to 2007 and from 2015 to 2019. In general, Crimean Tatars and their representative body did not impact Ukrainian policy or Ukrainian governments. In addition to the presidential neglect of the concerns of the Crimean Tatars, they were perceived as a threat to Crimean stability.⁵³ Unfortunately, Ukrainian central authorities saw the Crimean Peninsula solely as a summer destination and pretended not to see Russian propaganda and Russian influence on the internal life there. As we already know from the events of 10 years ago, the consequences of this irresponsibility were detrimental for the Ukrainian state and the Crimean Peninsula in particular. The Russo-Ukrainian war began with the occupation of Crimea by Russian troops in 2014.⁵⁴

The first group that demonstrated against Russian aggression were a thousand Crimean Tatars on February 26, 2014. In 2020, February 26 was declared

52 Cf. Andrii Zhyvachivskiy, Кримські татари: повернення з небуття. До сімдесятиріччя депортації народу [Crimean Tatars: Return from Oblivion: On the 70th Anniversary of the Deportation of a Nation], in: Український Альманах 2014, 125–134.

53 Cf. Petro Kraliuk/Svitlana Fylypchuk, Українсько-кримськотатарські відносини у XX ст.: генеза і сучасний стан [Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar Relations in the 20th Century: Genesis and Current State], in: European Philosophical and Historical Discourse 4/3 (2018) 51–60, 58.

54 Cf. Gergana Dimova/Andreas Umland, Introduction. Perspectives on Russia's Annexation of Crimea: Empirical and Theoretical Explorations, in: Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society 8/1 (2022) 1–12.

a Day of Resistance to Occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol.⁵⁵

As previously mentioned, the first victim of the Russo-Ukrainian war was the Crimean Tatar Reshat Ametov. On March 3, 2014 at 7:30 a. m., Reshat Ametov left his home. His relatives did not know his intentions; they were only aware that he took a passport with him and a card to receive money for the birth of a child and assumed, among other things, that he was going to the military commissary. His wife called him at noon after he had failed to contact the family for a concerning length of time, but his mobile phone was turned off. It later became known that he participated in a peaceful protest against the occupation of Crimea by Russian troops on Lenin Square in Simferopol. He stayed for an hour and a half in front of the Council of Ministers of Crimea building, which was captured by Russian special forces a few days earlier. He answered the questions of journalists who approached him, but his protest was predominantly silent. On March 15, Ametov was found dead in the village of Zemlyanychne, Bilogirsk district, 60 kilometers from Simferopol. There were numerous signs of torture on the man's body: his head was tied with tape, his eyes were gouged out and handcuffs lay next to him. The cause of death was a stab wound to the eye area.⁵⁶ On March 2, 2018, President Poroshenko awarded the Golden Star of the hero of Ukraine to the brother of the deceased.⁵⁷

The Crimean Tatars did not support the occupation of Crimea by Russia and did not participate in an illegitimate referendum on March 16, 2014.⁵⁸ Since 2014, hundreds of Crimean Tatars in Crimea were arrested and put in jail for their loyalty to Ukraine. The majority of these political prisoners are still in jail.

55 Cf. Президент України запроваджує 26 лютого День спротиву окупації Криму та Севастополя [The President of Ukraine Proclaims the Day of Resistance to the Occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol on February 26] (26 February 2020). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/prezident-ukrayini-zaprovadzhuye-26-lyutogo-den-sprotivu-oku-59957>.

56 Cf. Mariya Tokmak, Перша жертва окупації і воєнний злочин Путіна [The First Victim of Occupation and Putin's War Crime] (2 September 2019). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/reshat-ametov-rozsliduvannya/30137885.html>.

57 Cf. President of Ukraine Granted the Golden Star of Hero of Ukraine for Reshat Ametov to his Brother (2 March 2018). URL: <https://ppu.gov.ua/en/press-center/president-of-ukraine-granted-the-golden-star-of-hero-of-ukraine-reshat-ametov-to-his-brother/>.

58 Cf. Golos Ameriki, МЗС Британії назвало 5 причин, чому "референдум" в Криму був незаконним [The British Foreign Ministry Gave 5 Reasons why the "Referendum" in Crimea Was Illegal] (20 March 2018). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/29110589.html>.

Some prisoners were released thanks to the international community and, in particular, the mediation of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.⁵⁹ As of 2023, more than 200 Crimean Tatars are in Russian prisons.⁶⁰ Among them was the First Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis (highest executive-representative body) of the Crimean Tatar People, Nariman Dzelyal.⁶¹

5. Crimean Tatars as Representatives in Ukrainian Authorities

It is surprising that Ukrainians, who have fought for centuries to liberate themselves from under the rule of other nations, did not recognize a group of people with similar aspirations. The Declaration of Independence of Ukraine was legally ratified in 1991 but, due to the Russian invasion of Crimea and Donbas, its acknowledgment required a great change for the country. It was only in the face of the momentous and tragic events of the Russian occupation of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and Crimea that Ukrainians solidified their national identity and formed a resolute commitment to defending their hard-won independence. This decision extended to protecting the rights of all Ukrainian citizens, irrespective of their religious or ethnic background. As the titular nation of the country, the Ukrainians felt responsible for all citizens of Ukraine and, in particular, the indigenous which are, besides the Crimean Tatars, the Karaims (Karaites) and the Krymchaks. Decisions which Crimean Tatars had been waiting for two decades were made in a short time in 2014, most likely as a response to Russian aggression, but only later the recognition

59 Cf. RFE/RL's *Crimea.Realities*, Crimean Tatars Leaders 'Freed', Fly to Turkey (25 October 2017). URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-crimea-tatar-leaders-chiygoz-umerov-released/28815211.html>.

60 Cf. RFE/RL's *Crimea.Realities*, More Crimean Tatars Handed Lengthy Prison Terms in Russia (11 January 2023). URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-crimean-tatars-hizbut-tahrir/32218700.html>; У Криму за період окупації переслідувань з політичних міркувань зазнала 301 особа – правозахисники [In Crimea, 301 Human Rights Defenders Have Been Persecuted for Political Reasons During the Occupation] (3 November 2023). URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-crimea/3782169-u-krimu-za-period-okupacii-peresliduvan-z-politichnih-mirkuvan-zaznala-301-osoba-pravozahisniki.html>.

61 For more on Nariman Dzelyal see <https://qtm.org/en/leaders/dzhelyalov-nariman/>. He was released on 28 June 2024 after three years of captivity. Cf. The President Met with Nariman Dzhelyal, Released from Russian Captivity (29 June 2024). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-zustrivsyia-zi-zvlnenim-iz-rosijskogo-polu-nu-narim-91889>.

of Crimean Tatars, Karaims (Karaites) and Krymchaks as indigenous people of Ukraine was understood as necessary. For the first time, on March 20, 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine called for a decree “About the Statement of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Guaranteeing the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People as Part of the Ukrainian State”⁶². In addition to recognizing the Crimean Tatars as an indigenous people of Ukraine, the Ukrainian parliament recognized the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people as the authorized representative of the indigenous people for relations with the central government of Ukraine.⁶³ Only after 23 years of Ukrainian independence, the Mejlis entered the legal field of the state. On November 12, 2015, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a resolution recognizing the genocide of the Crimean Tatar people in 1944 and established an official day of remembrance for the victims of the genocide on May 18th.⁶⁴ And, finally, after only 30 years of Ukrainian Independence, in July 2021 the Ukrainian parliament adopted a historic law regarding the indigenous peoples of Ukraine.⁶⁵ According to this law, Crimean Tatars, Karaites and Krymchaks are defined as the indigenous people of Ukraine.⁶⁶ The recognition of indigenous people in Ukraine was twenty years late and represents a necessary perceptual shift and desire of the Ukrainian state to return occupied territory.

Another significant event was the creation of an international diplomatic tool for the reoccupation of Crimea called the “Crimea Platform”.⁶⁷ Since 2014, representatives of the Crimean Tatars have been part of Ukrainian delegations at the UN, NATO, the Council of Europe, the PACE, the OSCE, the EU Parliament, etc. Crimean Tatars occupy a special place in the Ukrainian-Turkish cooperation and no meetings between the presidents, prime ministers and

62 Постанова Верховної Ради України “Про Заяву Верховної Радий України щодо гарантії прав кримськотатарського народу у складі української держави” [Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On the Statement of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Guaranteeing the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People as Part of the Ukrainian State”] (20 March 2014). URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210624205243/https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1140-18#Text>. Own translation.

63 Cf. *ibidem*.

64 Cf. Постанова Верховної Ради України “Про визнання геноциду кримськотатарського народу” [Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On the Recognition of the Genocide of the Crimean Tatar People”] (12 November 2015). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/792-19#Text>.

65 Cf. Закон України “Про корінні народи України” [The Law of Ukraine “On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine”] (1 July 2021). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1616-20#Text>.

66 Cf. *ibidem*.

67 Crimea Platform. URL: <https://crimea-platform.org/en/about/>.

foreign ministers of Ukraine and Turkey took place without Mustafa Dzhemilev, Refat Chubarov or other representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people. Unfortunately, there are still some problems which have not yet been resolved. In 2017, a working group called The Constitutional Commission was created to develop proposals for improving the Constitution of Ukraine for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Representatives of the Crimean Tatars wanted to revise the 10th Article of the Ukrainian Constitution to create cultural and territorial autonomy. Similarly, the Mejlis prepared the “Law on the Status of the Crimean Tatar People.” Neither of these proposals have been adopted yet.⁶⁸

For the last nine years, many Crimean Tatars have held various high-ranking government positions. Currently, Crimean Tatars hold the following positions: Tamila Tasheva occupies the position of the representative of The Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea,⁶⁹ Emine Dzheparova is the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine,⁷⁰ Edem Adamanov is a Deputy General Manager at the State Enterprise “Medical Procurement of Ukraine”,⁷¹ Alim Aliev is a Deputy Director of the Ukrainian Institute.⁷² And for the first time since Ukraine became independent, Crimean Tatar and Muslim Rustem Umerov occupies the role of a minister. Rustem Umerov became Minister of Defense of Ukraine during the full-scale attack on Ukraine by the Russian Federation.⁷³ Arsen Zhumadilov, who has held several different positions of authority in Ukraine, became a General Director of the State Rear Operator of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine on October

68 Cf. Dilyaver Osmanov, Кримські татари й Україна: робота над помилками [Crimean Tatars and Ukraine: Working on Mistakes] (13 August 2014). URL: <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/JI00235A?an=2>; Проект No 1205: Закон України “Про статус кримськотатарського народу в Україні” [The Law on the Status of Crimean Tatar People in Ukraine] (29 August 2019). URL: http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=66511; Проект No 4433: Закон України “Про статус кримськотатарського народу” [The Law on the Status of Crimean Tatar People] (13 March 2014). URL: <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/JG3F500A>.

69 Cf. Представництво Президента в Автономній Республіці Крим [The Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea]. URL: <https://ppu.gov.ua/>.

70 For more on Emine Dzheparova see <https://www.chesno.org/politician/158106>.

71 For more on Edem Adamanov see <https://medzakupivli.com/en/biohrafii-2/391-adamanov-edem-bekirovych-eng>.

72 For more on Alim Aliev see <https://ui.org.ua/en/team-2/>.

73 For more on Rustem Umerov see <https://www.mil.gov.ua/ministry/kerivnicztvo/kerivnicztvo-ministerstva-oboroni-ukraini/umerov-rustem-enverovich.html>.

30, 2023.⁷⁴ Mustafa Dzhemilev, unofficially known as “a leader of the Crimean Tatar nation”, is a deputy of the Ukrainian parliament and enjoys an excellent reputation as the most powerful Crimean Tatar politician in Ukraine and in the world.

6. Muslim Military Units in the Ukrainian Army

Since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the representatives of Muslim nations, who have wanted to support Ukraine and join the fight, started to create special military units. Unlike the unilateral annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the armed conflict that erupted in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine between pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian army witnessed the emergence of volunteer military formations. These formations included several notable regiments and battalions, such as the Dnipro-1 Regiment, the Kharkiv Police Battalion, the Sich Battalion, the Donbas Battalion, and the Azov Battalion, the Pravyi Sector Battalion and others.⁷⁵ In the same year two volunteer battalions of Chechen Muslims emerged: the Chechen peacekeeping Djokhar Dudaev Battalion and the Sheikh Mansur Battalion.⁷⁶ They are still fighting in the war. The combatants are all volunteers and most of them are veterans of the Russian-Chechen wars in the 1990s.

a) Dzhokhar Dudayev Chechen Peacekeeping Battalion

The Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion, named after the first president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, became the first Chechen battalion to fight on the

74 Cf. Міністр оборони підписав наказ про призначення досвідченого менеджера Арсена Жумаділова Гендиректором Державного оператора тилу [Minister of Defense Signs Order to Appoint Experienced Manager Arsen Zhumadilov as Director General of the State Logistics Operator] (1 November 2023). URL: <https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2023/11/01/ministr-oboroni-pidpisav-nakaz-pro-priznachennya-dosvidchenogo-menedzhera-arsena-zhumadilova-gendirektorom-derzhavnogo-operatora-tilu/>; see also Софія Серєда, Керівник Держоперагора тилу Жумаділов: “Якщо Міноборони і далі самостійно виконуватиме держзакупівлі, ми прийдемо до тих самих скандалів і проблем” [Head of the State Logistics Operator Zhumadilov: “If the Ministry of Defense Continues to Carry out Public Procurement on Its Own, We Will Come to the Same Scandals and Problems”] (2 November 2023). URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2023/11/2/7426797/>.

75 Cf. Kateryna Hladka et al. (eds.), *Добробати* [Ukrainian Volunteer Battalions], Charkiv 2017.

76 Cf. Sheikh Mansur Battalion’s Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/216095100558237/>.

Ukrainian side against the Russians in 2014.⁷⁷ The majority of this unit consists of Chechens, but also Ukrainians, Russians, Ingush, Azerbaijanis, Tatars and representatives of other nations belong to it. The first commander of the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion was Isa Munayev, who died for the freedom and independence of Ukraine.⁷⁸ The second commander of the battalion became Adam Osmayev.⁷⁹ Soldiers of the battalion were fighting in the battles of Ill-oivaysk, Debaltseve and, in 2022, in the battles for Kyiv, Kharkiv, Iziium and Bakhmut.

b) Sheikh Mansur Chechen Peacekeeping Battalion

The battalion was created in October 2014 in Denmark. It was founded by the organization “Free Caucasus”. This battalion became the second battalion, after the battalion named after Dzhokhar Dudayev, to receive the approval and support of the Ukrainian authorities. The battalion is named in honour of Sheikh Mansur who was a Chechen military commander and religious leader and who fought against the expansion of the Russian Empire in the 18th century.⁸⁰

The President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Akhmed Zakayev, once mentioned that five Chechen battalions fight for Ukraine.⁸¹ There is limited information about the other three Chechen battalions: the Imam Shamil

77 Cf. На Донбасі воює батальйон імені Джохара Дудаєва [Dzhokhar Dudayev's Battalion is Fighting in Donbas] (25 October 2014). URL: https://24tv.ua/odesa/na_don_basi_voyuye_batalyon_imeni_dzhohara_dudayeva_n501074.

78 Cf. Yuriy Butusov, Isa Мунаев – герой Ічкерії, який загинув за свободу та незалежність України [Isa Munayev – a Hero of Ichkeria Who Died for the Freedom and Independence of Ukraine] (2 February 2020). URL: <https://glavcom.ua/columns/yuriybutusov/isa-munajev-geroy-ichkeriji-yakiy-zaginnuv-za-svobodu-ta-nezalezhnist-ukrajini-656844.html>.

79 Cf. Новим командиром “дудаєвців” в АТО став “вбивця” Путіна [Putin's “Assassin” Becomes New Commander of Dudayev's Forces in ATO] (2 February 2015). URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20171229112220/https://espreso.tv/news/2015/02/03/novym_komandyrom_quotdudayevcivquot_v_ato_stav_quotvbyvcya_putinaquot.

80 Cf. Чеченский батальон имени Шейха Мансура [Sheikh Mansur's Chechen Battalion] (5 May 2017). URL: [https://web.archive.org/web/20160529001404/http://gre4ka.info/suspilstvo/14085-vilnyi-kavkaz-stvoryv-batalion-dobrovoltsev-imeni-shejkha-mansura](https://web.archive.org/web/20170505051948/http://golosichkerii.com/index.php/v-mire/503-batalon-shejkha-mansura-nabiraet-dobrovoltsev;).

81 Cf. Закаев: в Україні відновлюються збройні сили Чеченської Республіки Ічкерія [Zakayev: the Armed Forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria are Being Restored

Battalion, the Hamzat Helayev Battalion and the Separate Special Purpose Battalion of the Ministry of Defense of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. There was an attempt to create a Crimean Tatar battalion “Krym”⁸² in 2014 and the “Noman Çelebicihan Battalion” in 2016.⁸³ The special unit “Crimea”, which operates as a part of the Defense Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (HUR MO) was created in 2022.⁸⁴

c) Ukrainian Military Volunteer Battalion “Turan”

In November 2022, a volunteer battalion of Turkic-speaking ethnic groups from the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation “Turan” was formed, consisting of Azerbaijanis, Kyrgyz and even Chinese Uighurs.⁸⁵ The battalion is headed by a refugee from Kyrgyzstan named Almaz Kudabek.⁸⁶

in Ukraine] (24 October 2022). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-zakaev-zbroyni-syly-ichkeria/32097677.html>.

- 82 Cf. Мустафа Джемилев обговорив із Порошенком створення кримськотатарського батальйону [Mustafa Dzhemilev Discussed the Creation of the Crimean Tatar Battalion with Poroshenko] (13 November 2014). URL: <https://ua.krymr.com/a/26689551.html>.
- 83 Cf. Татари вже наполовину сформували свій батальйон, який звільнятиме Крим [The Tatars have Already Half-Formed Their Battalion, which Will Liberate the Crimea] (18 January 2016). URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/2016113011216/http://www.depo.ua/ukr/politics/tatari-vzhe-napolovinu-sformuvali-sviy-batalyon-yakiy-zvilnyatime-18012016140700>; З'явилися фото батальйону імені Номана Челебеджіхана [Pictures of the Battalion Named after Noman Chelebejikhana Appeared] (5 February 2016). URL: <https://islam.in.ua/ua/novyny-u-krajini/zyavylsya-foto-batalyonu-imeni-nomana-chelebidzhihana>.
- 84 Cf. Склад українського підрозділу “Крим” у лавах ГУР постійно зростає [The Composition of the Ukrainian Unit “Crimea” in the Ranks of the HUR MO is Constantly Growing] (28 December 2022). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-krym-spetspidrozdil-rozvidka/32196127.html>.
- 85 Cf. Oleksiy Tarasov, “Росія можна не боятися, їх треба бити”. Інтерв'ю з ватажком першого батальйону тюркомовних народів, які борються проти Путіна та Кадирова [“You Don't Have to be Afraid of Russians, You Have to Beat Them.” Interview with the Leader of the First Battalion of Turkic-Speaking Peoples Fighting against Putin and Kadyrov] (5 December 2022). URL: <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/batalyon-tyurkomovnih-narodiv-turan-proti-putina-ta-kadirova-almaz-kudabek-novini-ukrajini-50288581.html>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CkDZGCzjhU>.
- 86 Cf. Кто он гражданин Кыргызстана, который создал в Украине тюркский батальон “Туран” [Who is the Citizen of Kyrgyzstan who Created the “Turan” Turk Battalion in Ukraine?] (22 November 2022). URL: <https://www.asiaplustj.info/ru/>

There are around two to three thousand Muslims in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with five imam-chaplains to give religious and spiritual support to the Muslim warriors of the Ukrainian Army.⁸⁷

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the cooperation of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, Turks, Christians and Muslims on the lands of modern Ukraine is a permanent tradition, rather than a series of sporadic incidents. At the time of the Russian aggression in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022, the presence of different Muslim military units on the Ukrainian side and Crimean Tatar battalions and units in the Ukrainian army is a continuation of a thousand-year-old Ukrainian tradition of fighting alongside Turkic and Muslim nations in the struggle for the Ukrainian cause and the Ukrainian state.

Since 2014, Ukrainian Muslim indigenous people, the Crimean Tatars, play an active role in the Ukrainian political realm. Some of them hold important positions in the Ukrainian government and promote the implementation of European and NATO standards into the Ukrainian state system.

The Ukrainian identity was formed to a great extent on Orthodoxy and Catholicism, whereby the contribution of Islamic culture considerably enriched it. This issue requires further research.

[news/world/20221122/kto-on-grazhdanin-kirgizstana-kotorii-sozdal-v-ukraine-tyurkskii-batalon-turan](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/world/20221122/kto-on-grazhdanin-kirgizstana-kotorii-sozdal-v-ukraine-tyurkskii-batalon-turan).

87 Cf. Taras Levchenko, *З духовного лідера у військовій: чому муфтії мусульман України Саїд Ісмагілов пішов на фронт?* [From a Spiritual Leader to the Military: Why Did the Mufti of Muslims of Ukraine Said Ismagilov Go to the Front?] (31 August 2022). URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/said-ismahilov-muftiy-na-viyni/32012479.html>.

Certain Aspects of Church-State Dynamics: Legal Naming Issues within Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian War

Mechyslav Yanauer

In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the relationship between church and state in Ukraine has gained heightened significance. Ukraine's efforts to establish a policy that respects religious freedom have been challenged by the invasion, with President Putin leveraging church-state dynamics to support his actions. This article investigates the legal and administrative complexities surrounding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its ties to the Moscow Patriarchate. It highlights the necessity for Ukraine to adhere to European democratic and human rights standards while addressing the critical issue of national security, emphasizing the need for a thoughtful and lawful resolution to these ongoing challenges.

1. Introduction

Church-state relations have been an integral part of social systems for many centuries. Since gaining independence, Ukraine has been faced with the need to develop a quality policy model on religious expression. Relations between state authorities and religious organizations have always been a sensitive issue, and considering Ukraine's current situation, these issues are even more delicate and relevant in the context of the full-scale Russian invasion. Building a partnership model of church-state relations to ensure the rights and freedoms of citizens has been and remains an urgent task for the Ukrainian state, a task that cannot be ignored even in times of war. Moreover, the invasion has spurred Ukraine to integrate more closely with European democratic governance sys-

tems, highlighting the importance of European human rights standards within the church-state dynamic.

Religious policy has become a risk factor in the field of national security for Ukraine. In his speech at the end of February 2022,¹ the President of the Russian Federation justified the expansion of the full-scale invasion of Ukrainian territory by appealing not only to the alleged military threat from Ukraine, but also to many other propaganda clichés, including the sphere of church-state relations. Vladimir Putin claimed the existence of “laws that violate the rights of believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate”,² thereby emphasizing the issue of administrative and legal interactions between the Ukrainian state and the Orthodox Church, particularly focusing on the alleged violation of religious rights that occurred at the time of the invasion.

When analyzing the complex dynamics of church-state relations in Ukraine, it is essential to focus on the role of Ukrainian Orthodoxy as a key target of Putin. The specific vulnerabilities of Orthodoxy in Ukraine during times of conflict, especially under the pressure of Russia’s hybrid warfare, are manifold, including: historical entanglements with Russian Orthodoxy, which have been politically exploited to heighten tensions; legal and territorial disputes that have been exacerbated by the war, affecting properties and communities; and the broader societal impact, where religious identity becomes a tool of influence and division, contributing to a wider range of internal discord and external manipulation.

2. The Fragmentation of Ukrainian Orthodoxy and Legal Foundations for Religious Institutions

The beginning of the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian state dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when major Orthodox Church structures were established. In 1989, a revival of the autocephaly movement was initiated, culminating in the establishment of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). The Russian Orthodox Church reorganized its structures in Ukraine, transforming the Ukrainian Exarchate

1 Cf. Обращение президента России к нации о признании независимости ДНР и ЛНР. [Address of the President of Russia to the Nation on Recognizing the Independence of the DPR and LPR]. February 21, 2022. URL: kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/67828.

All internet links in this article were last accessed on: 4 April 2024.

2 Ibidem [my translation – M. Y.].

into the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with an autonomous status, but leaving it under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). The dissatisfaction of some Ukrainian clergy, in particular Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko), with the lack of full autocephaly led to the unification of these hierarchs with the UAOC and the subsequent formation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) in 1992. However, not all members of the UAOC supported this unification, which subsequently led to the reproclamation of the UAOC. Such disunity in the Orthodox community of Ukraine became a source of tension. At that time, three main Orthodox Church structures were distinguished: UOC-KP, UAOC and UOC-MP. With the support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Unification Council held in Kyiv on December 15, 2018 attempted to overcome this disunity. Despite a significant step towards unity, the Council failed to overcome the division in the Orthodox community of Ukraine, which resulted in the finalization of two main Orthodox structures, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), whose hierarchy was formed by the UOC-KP, UAOC and two Metropolitans of the UOC-MP,³ and the UOC-MP itself, which generally maintained its position.

A debate is currently ongoing as to the proper naming and canonical affiliation of the UOC-MP, especially given the legislative regulation of religious organizations in Ukraine. The UOC, after the full-scale invasion, declared its “complete autonomy and independence” during the Council of May 27, 2022, which was held in Feofaniia, Kyiv.⁴ Many religious scholars, such as Cyril Hovorun⁵ and Andrey Kuraev,⁶ have noted that the separation from the Moscow Patriarchate is incomplete. In his testimony before the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom on March 15, 2024, Dmytro Vovk described the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as being “historically and ecclesi-

3 Cf. Об’єднавчий собор Української церкви: як все відбувалося. [Unification Council of the Ukrainian Church: How It All Happened]. December 16, 2018. URL: bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46583417.

4 Cf. Постанова Собору Української Православної Церкви від 27 травня 2022 року. [Resolution of the Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of May 27, 2022]. May 27, 2022. URL: news.church.ua/2022/05/27/postanova-soboru-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-vid-27-travnja-2022-roku/.

5 Cf. Архимандрит Кирилл Говорун: УПЦ МП остається частиною РПЦ. [Archimandrite Kirill Govorun: The UOC-MP Remains Part of the ROC]. February 1, 2024. URL: glavcom.ua/ru/news/arkhimandrit-kirill-hovorun-upts-mp-ostaetsja-chastju-rpts-983706.html.

6 Cf. Признак автокефалии – анафема со стороны матери-церкви. [The Sign of Autocephaly is the Anathema from the Mother Church]. May 29, 2022. URL: diak-kuraev.livejournal.com/3763434.html.

astically affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate.⁷ The viewpoint is corroborated by some Feofaniia Council participants who critiqued the portrayal of the Council's resolutions as a full severance.⁸ The same conclusion was reached by a special government commission, which emphasized the current status of the UOC as "part of the Russian Orthodox Church."⁹ The UOC actively disputes this assessment of its status, however, the majority of experts have no doubts that the UOC is still connected to the Russian Church. The significance of this in the context of Ukrainian legislation will be discussed further.

It is clear that the disunity of Ukrainian Orthodoxy leads to increased tensions in the Orthodox religious environment and deals damage to Ukrainian society. The fragmentation mirrors the broader condition of the evolution of the Ukrainian state, characterized by the transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic society. At the same time, these tensions are exacerbated by the current political and economic situation in the country. The present-day conflict reflects the need for a correct approach to the regulation of religious processes in Ukraine, based on internationally recognized legal standards. At the initial stage of the formation of church-state relations in modern Ukraine, the fundamental task was to introduce national legislation on the freedom of thought and the operations of religious organizations. The Law of Ukraine № 987-XII "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in Ukraine"¹⁰ is the foundational law for the regulation of the freedom of conscience and the operation of religious organizations. Adopted during the period of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, a few months before Ukraine's independence in August 1991, and amended in subsequent years, Law № 987-XII guaranteed the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion for

7 Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Implications for Religious Freedom. March 15, 2023. URL: uscirf.gov/events/hearings/russias-invasion-ukraine-implications-religious-freedom.

8 Cf. УПЦ: Чи є майбутнє без діалогу? [UOC: Is there a Future without Dialog?]. November 2, 2023. URL: lb.ua/blog/seraphim_pankratov/582390_upts_chi_ie_maybutnie_bez_dialogu.html.

9 Висновок релігієзнавчої експертизи Статуту про управління Української Православної Церкви на наявність церковно-канонічного зв'язку з Московським патріархатом. [The Conclusion of the Religious Expert Examination of the Charter on the Governance of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on the Existence of Ecclesiastical and Canonical Ties with the Moscow Patriarchate]. January 27, 2023. URL: dcss.gov.ua/vysnovok-relihiieznavchoi-ekspertyzy-statutu-pro-upravlinnia-ukrainskoi-pravoslavnoi-tserkvy.

10 Закон України № 987-XII "Про свободу совісті та релігійні організації". [The Law of Ukraine № 987-XII "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations"]. April 23, 1991. URL: zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/987-12?lang=en#Text.

all citizens of Ukraine and the right of religious organizations to operate independently. The law defined both the duties of the state in relation to religious organizations and the duties of religious organizations towards the state and society. The document proclaimed the separation of the church from the state, and schools from the church. This principle was later enshrined in part 3 of Article 35 of the Constitution of Ukraine stating that “the Church and religious organisations in Ukraine shall be separated from the State, and the school shall be separated from the Church. No religion shall be recognised by the State as mandatory.”¹¹

The provision that allowed religious communities to acquire state registration, thereby granting them the potential to obtain the status of a legal entity, is noteworthy. According to Article 7, which has remained unchanged since its inception and is still relevant today, “religious organisations in Ukraine shall include religious communities, offices and centres, monasteries, religious brotherhoods, missionary societies (missions), religious educational institutions, and associations consisting of the mentioned religious organisations. Religious associations shall be represented by their centres (directorates).”¹² This established a regulatory framework wherein the Church itself is not a legal entity, but its structural units, such as dioceses, synodal departments, or local religious communities, can achieve such status. Following these new possibilities, various operational aspects of religious organizations, including property, land use, and labor relations, were subject to updating the legislative regulation. Additionally, certain legislative measures repealed sections of Ukraine’s Criminal and Civil Codes, remnants of the Soviet era, that imposed restrictions on the rights of religious organizations and their adherents.

Similarly, the government began to indirectly support the spiritual and charitable activities of religious organizations by instituting a favorable tax regime for them and reducing utility costs. One of the earliest acts to embody this support was Presidential Decree № 405/95 from May 31, 1995, “On Providing Benefits to Religious Organizations.”¹³ It can be inferred that in the initial years of Ukraine’s independent state formation, there was an adoption of practices tailored to the needs of religious organizations, aimed at alleviating economic

11 Конституція України. [Constitution of Ukraine]. June 28, 1996. URL: zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80?lang=en.

12 Закон України № 987-ХІІ.

13 Указ Президента України “Про надання пільг релігійним організаціям” [Decree of the President of Ukraine “On Granting Benefits to Religious Organizations”]. May 31, 1995. URL: zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/322/94#Text.

pressure on them and facilitating the expansion of their material base. This approach was grounded in the desire to mitigate the impact of the previous Soviet regime's antagonism towards the church and, to some extent, to compensate religious communities for material losses incurred from the compulsory nationalization of church property, the long-standing prohibition on having the status of a legal entity, and accumulating assets for their institutional development.

While at the time of their enactment, such provisions could be considered progressive, especially in light of the destructive Soviet religious legislation and the necessity of developing a new legal concept – as articulated by Viktor Yelensky, where “borrowing anything from Stalinist legislation, which remained virtually unchanged since 1929, seemed utterly absurd”¹⁴ –, the need for refining certain aspects of Law № 987-XII is evident today.

For example, Alina Radchenko highlights that even “the very name of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations’ seems not entirely correct”¹⁵ since, beyond formalized entities, believers may form informal but stable associations. The law facilitates this through the establishment of religious communities. Thus, the legislation itself allows for the coexistence of religious organizations alongside other congregations of believers, such as religious communities, introducing the potential for legal ambiguity. Furthermore, Radchenko critically assesses the inability of the Church itself to obtain legal entity status because “this necessitates the registration of separate religious organizations based on individual believer communities, the development of complex legal schemes for managing such entities, formalizing canonical connections between local communities and their centers, and bearing the risks associated with such a complex and fragile structure.”¹⁶ Maxim Vasin similarly evaluates the law, stating that “the state registration of religious organizations as legal entities remains a complex and lengthy process, during which officials from the registering authority often request documents not required by law, interfere with the content of the charter, and prompt applicants

14 Viktor Yelensky, Релігійна свобода: українська реальність і світовий досвід [Religious Freedom: Ukrainian Reality and International Experience], in: Релігійна свобода і права людини: Правничі аспекти. У 2 т. [Religious Freedom and Human Rights: Legal Aspects. In 2 Volumes], Vol. 2, Lviv 2001, 7–22, 10–11 [my translation – M. Y.].

15 Alina Radchenko, Правовий статус релігійних об'єднань як інституту громадянського суспільства [Legal Status of Religious Associations as an Institution of Civil Society], PhD diss. (National Academy of Legal Studies of Ukraine), Charkiv 2015, 153 [my translation – M. Y.].

16 Ibidem, 154 [my translation – M. Y.].

to adjust the types of activities or specific provisions of the charter regarding the management of the religious organization.¹⁷ Therefore, it can be concluded that Law № 987-XII, as it currently stands, necessitates revisions that should, foremost, focus on simplifying the registration process by removing redundant steps and requirements.

Also, the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in Ukraine” underscores the paramountcy of the fundamental human right to freedom of religion, positing that this right takes precedence over the institutional rights of the Church. This delineation introduces three core principles governing the interactions between the church and the state. Firstly, it establishes that no church is entitled to a privileged status, mandating the state to maintain a stance of neutrality and equality among all religious institutions. Secondly, it is within the state’s jurisdiction to address and resolve legal, property, and miscellaneous issues, thereby ensuring that religious organizations possess the necessary conditions to execute their operational roles effectively. Thirdly, the state bears a responsibility to intervene in instances where the practice of religious activities infringes upon human rights, thereby safeguarding the rights of individuals within religious contexts.

National legislation on freedom of thought considers relevant international documents. Thus, in November 1995, Ukraine acceded to the European Convention on Human Rights. The main provisions concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to religious freedom, mentioned in the Convention, were enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine. Law № 987-XII also contains another important provision, Article 32, which indicates the legislator’s desire to bring Ukraine into the system of the European legal field: “If an international treaty to which Ukraine is a party establishes other rules than those contained in the legislation on freedom of conscience and religious organizations, the rules of the international treaty shall apply.”¹⁸

3. The UOC-MP Controversy in Ukrainian Religious Policy

The formation of state authorities in the context of church-state relations began in the 1990s. At various times, the respective functions were assigned to the

17 Maksym Vasin, *Конституційно-правові засади взаємодії держави і релігійних організацій в Україні* [Constitutional and Legal Principles of Interaction between the State and Religious Organizations in Ukraine], PhD diss. (National Aviation University), Kyiv 2021, 58 [my translation – M. Y.].

18 Закон України № 987-XII.

Council on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine; the Ministry of Ethnicity, Migration and Cults; the State Committee on Religious Affairs; the State Department on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine; and the State Committee on Ethnicity and Religions of Ukraine. Subsequently, these functions were assigned to the Department for Religions and Ethnicity of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine. Specialized divisions were created within the Department to deal with various areas of religious activity: religious studies and analytical work; monitoring the operations and registration of religious organizations; aiding operations for religious organizations, etc. Currently, the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience¹⁹ has such powers, with the exception that it also has a central executive authority with direct subordination to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.²⁰ The nature of church-state relations largely depends on the activities of the relevant state authorities and the scientific community is actively discussing the issue of reforming the system of public administration in the area of religious activities. For example, changes were proposed to replace the model of a separate state authority as a Soviet tradition with the institution of the Ombudsman for Freedom of Conscience.²¹

After the revolutionary events of late 2013 to early 2014 and the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Ukrainian legislator was faced with the need to limit Russian influence in all possible areas, and the governance of religious organizations was no exception. For example, Maksym Vasin points out that the Ukrainian state had to counteract Russia's use of religion as a strategic tool to expand its global influence and Russia's utilization of the UOC-MP "to hold Ukraine in its conception of the Russian World and to justify its interference in

19 Cf. Державна служба України з етнополітики та свободи совісті. [State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience]. URL: www.dess.gov.ua.

20 Cf. Постанова Кабінету Міністрів України від 6 грудня 2022 року № 1355 "Деякі питання діяльності Державної служби з етнополітики та свободи совісті". [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of December 6, 2022, № 1355 "Some Issues of the State Service for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience"]. December 6, 2022. URL: www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/deiaki-pytannia-diialnosti-derzhavnoi-sluzhby-z-etnopolityky-ta-svobody-sovisti-1355-061222.

21 Cf. Oleksandr Sagan, Державно-церковні відносини в Україні на сучасному етапі: об'єктивна необхідність змін моделей [Church-State Relations in Ukraine at the Present Stage: The Objective Need to Change Models], in: Релігійна свобода: Релігійне життя України і світу за умов свободи релігії і віросповідань [Religious Freedom: Religious Life in Ukraine and the World in the Context of Freedom of Religion and Belief] 20 (2017) 39–44.

the internal affairs of Ukraine.”²² The attitude of the top leadership of the UOC-MP only strengthened this thesis. For example, Metropolitan Onufriy, the leader of the UOC-MP, often referred to the Russian-Ukrainian war before the full-scale invasion as “fratricidal” and “civil”²³ and defined the armed separatists fighting against Ukraine as “militias”²⁴. An episode involving representatives of the UOC-MP at a solemn meeting on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on May 8, 2015 is a vivid illustration of such controversial statements. When the President of Ukraine announced the awarding of the title “Hero of Ukraine” to 21 Ukrainian soldiers who had participated in the fighting in eastern Ukraine (10 of them posthumously), all of the visitors in the hall stood up, except for representatives of the UOC-MP. Metropolitan Onufriy later commented on his action as a “protest against the war.”²⁵

Eventually, in December 2018, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted law № 2662-VIII, “On amendments to the Law of Ukraine ‘On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in Ukraine.’”²⁶ The amendments confirmed the existing procedure of registration of religious organizations and simplified the procedure for religious organizations to change their subordination after an appropriate vote of community members. At the same time, the possibility of the creation of a new community by those members who did not

22 Maksym Vasin, *New Religious Legislation in Ukraine as a Response to Russian Aggression*, in: Tania Pagotto/Joshua M. Roose/G. P. Marcar (eds.), *Security, Religion, and the Rule of Law*, London 2024, 108–134, 112.

23 Митрополит Онуфрій про війну на Сході. [Metropolitan Onufriy on the War in the East]. July 14, 2015. URL: youtube.com/watch?v=RiDKHZqQB44 [my translation – M. Y.].

24 Митрополит Онуфрій: Війна на Донбасі – результат зіткнення протиріч Заходу та Сходу. [Metropolitan Onufriy: The War in Donbas Is the Result of the Clash of Contradictions between the West and the East]. August 6, 2014. URL: risu.ua/viyna-na-donbasi-rezultat-zitkennnya-protirich-zahodu-ta-shodu-mitropolit-onufriy_n70092.

25 Очільник УПЦ МП Онуфрій пояснив, чому не встав на вшанування Героїв України. [Head of the UOC-MP Onufriy Explains Why He Did not Stand up to Honor the Heroes of Ukraine]. May 9, 2015. URL: unian.ua/politics/1076336-ochilnik-upts-mp-onufriy-poyasniv-chomu-ne-vstav-na-vshanuvannya-gerojiv-ukrajini.html [my translation – M. Y.].

26 Закон України № 2662-VIII. Про внесення зміни до статті 12 Закону України “Про свободу совісті та релігійні організації” щодо назви релігійних організацій (об’єднань), які входять до ... [The Law of Ukraine № 2662-VIII. On Amendments to Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” Regarding the Names of Religious Organizations (Associations) That Are Members of ...]. December 20, 2018. URL: zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/en/2662-19?lang=en#Text.

agree with the vote was specifically allowed, with the subsequent possibility of sharing religious buildings based on a mutual agreement. According to the amendments, it was also required that a religious organization, whose governing center is located in a country recognized as an aggressor, should indicate in its name the full statutory name of its religious center.

The appropriateness of this particular provision of the law remains a subject of ongoing debate. For instance, Dmytro Vovk believes that “the state’s response to national-security concerns limiting the right to self-name could hardly be considered proportionate.”²⁷ Indeed, it cannot be discounted that the adoption of a strategy to label religious groups with affiliations to Russia as threats and to point out its interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine, could alienate these communities and inadvertently amplify the spread of Russian propaganda, portraying them as persecuted and thus allowing Russia to position itself as their protector. Vladimir Putin, when he spoke about the violation of the rights of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate,²⁸ was referring to these very provisions of the law. Thus, legal mandates requiring religious organizations to rename themselves, aimed at combating propaganda, might instead exacerbate divisions and bolster the impact of propaganda.

Maksym Vasin offers a less critical view, specifically noting that the primary goal of these legal provisions is to resolve an “obvious conflict of names, when two different Orthodox churches with different worldviews and different attitudes to the Russian aggression operate under almost the same name,”²⁹ though he acknowledges the practical difficulties that may arise during the implementation of these legal provisions.

Oleksandr Sagan supports this thesis, emphasizing that “it is equally important that Law 2662 facilitates the provision of objective information to believers about the religious organization they attend. Indeed, at almost all gatherings of religious community members, the first question discussed is: ‘Is this community part of the Moscow Patriarchate?’ Clergy of the UOC-MP actively and vocally deny this. Sometimes they even manage to deceive believers. In other words, people are deliberately misled.”³⁰

27 Dmytro Vovk, *The Names of Religious Groups and Security-Related Concerns*. October 3, 2019. URL: talkabout.iclrs.org/2019/10/03/the-names-of-religious-groups-and-security-related-concerns/.

28 Cf. *Обращение*.

29 Vasin, *New Religious Legislation*, 112.

30 Oleksandr Sagan, “Заборона” УПЦ МП (РПЦВУ): потрібні санкції проти України чи результат? [The “Ban” of the UOC-MP (ROC in Ukraine): Are Sanctions against

Thus, the expert community generally agrees on the problem of the need for an accurate definition of the UOC-MP's status, although the approach outlined in the amendments does not receive universal endorsement.

In addition, some provisions indicating the affiliation of a religious organization with a foreign governing center may be subject to critical evaluation. Article 12 of the Law № 987-XII delineates three principal characteristics: the acknowledgment of subordination of a Ukrainian organization to a directing center outside Ukraine within its charter, the acknowledgment within a foreign religious center's charter of its authority over an organization in Ukraine, and the specification in a foreign center's charter that an individual from the Ukrainian organization is a member of its governing body. If a religious organization in Ukraine has at least one of these characteristics, it must, according to the law, make amendments to its name. While the logic behind the first characteristic is clear, the rationale for characteristics two and three is less evident. For example, the official documents of the Russian Federation that claim occupied territories of Ukraine as its own do not question Ukraine's sovereignty over these territories within the Ukrainian legal field; thus, references to documents adopted in the aggressor country should not be considered substantial evidence. Although these points ecclesologically confirm Andrey Kurayev's thesis that the true indicator of church independence should be the anathema from the mother church³¹, they also make Ukrainian religious communities hostages of the church authorities of the aggressor country, since, even in case of the attainment of undeniable independence by a religious community, the mere non-recognition of this by the church authorities of the aggressor country would be enough to question this independence.

According to the religious expertise conducted by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and published at the end of January 2019, five religious organizations, including the UOC-MP, were subject to the new legislative initiatives.³² The Ukrainian Orthodox Church couldn't keep the old name of the legal entity; its name had to contain an indication of a connection with the Moscow Patriarchate, for example, Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine or Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. The UOC-MP almost immediately interpreted these changes as an act of oppression and soon the representatives

Ukraine Needed or the Result?]. December 8, 2022. URL: risu.ua/zaborona-upc-mp-rp-cvu-potribni-sankciyi-proti-ukrayini-chi-rezultat-_n134655 [my translation – M. Y.].

31 Cf. Kurayev, *Признак*.

32 Cf. Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, *Перелік релігійних організацій, яким потрібно внести зміни до статуту*. [List of Religious Organizations That Need to Amend Their Charters]. January 26, 2019. URL: zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/n0001734-19#Text.

of the Russian Federation adopted this view³³ and voiced a narrative of “the oppression of the only canonical Orthodox Church” in Ukraine, although in Russia this denomination was commonly called by the names that were just fit for the new legislation, e. g. Russian Church in Ukraine, Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, etc. After the publication of the expertise, a petition was registered by 49 MPs to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine (CCU) to consider the compliance of the new articles of the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in Ukraine” with the constitution.³⁴

In March 2019, the UOC-MP filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court of Kyiv City demanding that the decision of the religious expertise must be recognized as illegal. On April 22, 2019, a decision was made to “secure the claim,” by which the court prohibited any actions against registered religious centers of the UOC-MP (a total of 265 legal entities: dioceses, monasteries, structural units, etc.), which were involved in the case as third parties. According to the court, the implementation of the disputed act could have led to unjustified state interference in the operations of a religious organization as a legal entity.³⁵ It is worth noting that the very existence of the relevant constitutional petition and the court decision itself indicates a democratic approach to solving this problem and the rule of law in Ukraine, which does not comply with Putin’s narrative of “oppression” by the authorities. Although the processing of the constitutional petition does not invalidate the law, the authorities have not taken any coercive procedural actions against any registered UOC-MP communities, despite the court’s decision to prohibit any changes regarding renaming only in relation to religious centers.

-
- 33 Cf. В РПЦ сравнили возможное переименование УПЦ с действиями фашистов. [The Russian Orthodox Church Compared the Possible Renaming of the UOC to the Actions of Fascists]. September 29, 2018. URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20241212235855/https://ria.ru/20180929/1529630295.html>.
- 34 Cf. Конституційне подання № 04-03/6-48 від 18 січня 2019 року щодо відповідності Конституції України (конституційності) Закону України “Про внесення зміни до статті 12 Закону України ‘Про свободу совісті та релігійні організації’ щодо назви ...” від 20 грудня 2018 № 2662-VIII [Constitutional Petition № 04-03/6-48 of January 18, 2019 on the Compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine (Constitutionality) of the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations’ Regarding the Name ...” of December 20, 2018 № 2662-VIII]. January 18, 2019. URL: ccu.gov.ua/sites/default/files/3_374.pdf.
- 35 Cf. Administrative Court of the City of Kyiv, Ухвала суду № 81332759 від 22.04.2019. Справа № 640/4748/19. [Court Decree № 81332759, April 22, 2019. Case № 640/4748/19]. April 22, 2019. URL: youcontrol.com.ua/en/catalog/court-document/81332759/.

4. Legal Solutions for the UOC-MP Naming Dilemma

The Russian invasion of February 2022 forced Ukrainian society to reevaluate its stance on various critical issues, including church-state relations. In early March 2022 the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in Ukraine” was amended to include a provision allowing the termination of a religious organization through a court decision if its leaders were found to be collaborating with an aggressor state.³⁶ It is worth noting that as of now (April 2024), no court decision has been made on the forced liquidation of any religious organization, although there have been precedents of convicting leaders of religious organizations for collaborationism with the Russian Federation.³⁷ It is important to highlight that the decision to liquidate a religious organization due to the collaborationist actions of individual members should be made with careful consideration, as the OSCE recommendations on freedom of conscience state: “Any wrongdoings on the part of individuals should, therefore, be addressed through criminal, administrative or civil proceedings against that person, rather than directed at the religious or belief community as a whole.”³⁸

In late December 2022, the CCU published a statement on the constitutionality of the articles of the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in Ukraine” adopted in 2018.³⁹ The court stated that, in accordance with Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of

36 Cf. Закон України № 2107-IX. Про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо забезпечення відповідальності осіб, які здійснювали колабораційну діяльність. [The Law of Ukraine № 2107-IX. On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Ensuring the Accountability of Persons Engaged in Collaboration Activities]. March 3, 2022. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2107-20#Text>.

37 Cf. Novomoskovsk City District Court of Dnipropetrovska Oblast, Вирок суду № 1-кп/183/1277/22 від 5 грудня 2022 року. Справа № 201/6055/22. [Court Verdict № 1-кп/183/1277/22 of December 5, 2022. Case № 201/6055/22]. December 5, 2022. URL: reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/107665674.

38 OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Freedom of Religion or Belief and Security: Policy Guidance. Warsaw 2019, 33. URL: www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/2/429389.pdf.

39 Cf. Рішення Конституційного Суду України від 27 грудня 2022 року № 4-р у справі № 1 13/2019(374/19) за конституційним поданням 49 народних депутатів України щодо відповідності Конституції України (конституційності) Закону України “Про внесення зміни до статті 12 Закону України ‘Про свободу совісті та релігійні організації’ щодо назви ...” [Decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine of December 27, 2022, № 4-r in Case № 1-13/2019 (374/19) on the Constitutional Petition of 49 MPs of Ukraine on the Compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine (Constitutionality) of the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Article 12 of the Law of

1966, the manifestation of religion should not justify propaganda for war or advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred, which constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. According to the court, the legislator, by regulating the procedure for registration and accounting operations of religious organizations subordinate to religious centers located outside Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as one which committed military aggression against Ukraine, has the right to require such religious organizations to clarify their name and to use their full name in their official documents.

The court noted that the adoption of this conclusion was also due to the recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights from December 2022 (Ilyin and Others v. Ukraine),⁴⁰ which concluded that the state may require a religious organization seeking registration to use a name that cannot mislead the public, so it may be justified to restrict the ability of a religious organization to freely choose its registered name. Later, the newly organized Kyiv District Administrative Court issued a decree that, considering the Constitutional Court's verdict, nullified the previous decree of the Administrative Court of Kyiv City from April 22, 2019. This prior decree had prohibited registrars from making any amendments or conducting registration procedures concerning the religious organizations of the UOC-MP.

Russia's full-scale invasion and the work of intelligence services⁴¹ has had a profound impact on how Ukrainian society perceives both the activities of the UOC-MP and the need for government intervention in regulating these activities.⁴² Unfortunately, the government's proposed bill,⁴³ which passed on first reading on October 19, 2023, is not a complete solution to the problems

Ukraine 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations' Regarding the Name of ..."]. December 27, 2022. URL: zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/va04p710-22#Text.

40 Cf. European Court of Human Rights, Case of Ilyin and Others v. Ukraine. № 74852/14. November 17, 2022. URL: hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng/?i=001-220890.

41 Cf. З початку повномасштабної війни СБУ викрила понад 60 кліриків УПЦ (МП)... [SSU Has Exposed over 60 UOC-MP Clerics since the Start of the Full-Scale War ...]. October 4, 2023. URL: ssu.gov.ua/novyny/z-pochatku-povnomashtabnoi-viiny-sbu-vykryla-ponad-60-klirykiv-upts-mp-yaki-pratsiuvaly-na-rf-prodavaly-zbroiu-i-dytiachu-pornohrafiu.

42 Cf. Якою має бути політика влади щодо Української православної церкви (Московського патріархату): результати телефонного опитування, проведеного 4–27 грудня 2022 року. [What Should Be the Government's Policy Towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate): Results of a Telephone Survey Conducted on December 4–27, 2022]. December 29, 2022. URL: kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1165&page=1.

43 Cf. Проект Закону про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо діяльності в Україні релігійних організацій № 8371. [Draft Law on Amendments to Certain

within Ukrainian Orthodoxy. For example, this law has been criticized both by lawyers inside of the parliament (see scientific and expert opinion)⁴⁴ and by religious experts, as well.⁴⁵ The implementation of this legal provision could pose substantial operational difficulties and potentially threaten religious freedom in Ukraine. Moreover, the effectiveness of such actions remains questionable since the 11,000 congregations of the UOC-MP are unlikely to disappear merely because they lose their legal entity status. Consequently, there is an increasing consensus among experts that a more effective approach for the Ukrainian state would involve the legal prosecution of individual UOC-MP clerics found guilty of criminal activities. The legislative efforts by Ukrainian MPs are primarily symbolic political gestures and tools of moral persuasion, designed to boost the political rating of their authors, rather than to provide solutions to the issues at hand.

Considering that contentious legal proposal, the stipulation mandating the UOC-MP to adopt a name indicative of its affiliation, as opposed to the compulsory dissolution of the entire organization, emerges as both a fair and strategically prudent measure for the state. Firstly, the implementation of this decision involves less risk regarding freedom of conscience. Secondly, it could effectively counter Russian disinformation, considering the likelihood that many of Ukraine's faithful would prefer not to be directly associated with the Russian Church. Third, the implementation of this decision may serve as a catalyst for processes within the UOC-MP aimed at formalizing the complete independence, both formal and non-formal, of this structure from the Russian Church. As of today, there is no court decision that would block this initiative.

5. Conclusion

The issue of the UOC-MP's activities in Ukraine cannot be resolved by authoritarian methods reminiscent of the Soviet era because the collective community cannot be held legally responsible for the ideological beliefs or actions of indi-

Laws of Ukraine on the Activities of Religious Organizations in Ukraine № 8371]. January 19, 2023. URL: itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/41219.

44 Cf. Висновок на проект Закону України “Про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо діяльності в Україні релігійних організацій”. [Conclusion on the Draft Law “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on the Activities of Religious Organizations in Ukraine”]. January 19, 2023. URL: itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/pubFile/1658255.

45 Cf. Dmytro Vovk, Ukraine: Latest Draft Law Targets Ukrainian Orthodox Church for Russian Links. March 6, 2024. URL: forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2896.

vidual leaders or members. Any unlawful bans may trigger opposition from the parishioners and clergy who perceive themselves as unjustly aggrieved, given that the majority of them remain law-abiding citizens of Ukraine. For example, certain events taking place within the UOC-MP itself clearly indicate support for the relevant processes aimed at purging this institution of pro-Russian sentiments. In January 2023, a video-appeal was published by some priests and believers to the leadership of the UOC-MP demanding that their relations with Moscow should be clearly defined and their status determined in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation.⁴⁶

Thus, the President of the Russian Federation's claim that at the beginning of the full-scale invasion Ukrainian legislation allegedly restricted religious freedom is misleading. The Ukrainian government is indeed trying to normalize the activities of the UOC-MP for the sake of national security, but a more decisive approach to dealing with this issue has already emerged in the context of the full-scale invasion and is still under debate. The amendments to the law, adopted before the full-scale invasion, requiring religious organizations to declare their connection to a religious center, have been recognized as constitutional on the basis of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights (*Ilyin and Others v. Ukraine – 74852/14*). It is important to emphasize the contradiction in Russia's claims of harassment of the UOC-MP before the invasion: Demanding that the UOC-MP disclose its links to the Moscow Patriarchate was seen as persecution, while representatives of the Russian Church always pointed out that the UOC-MP is indeed the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

After the full-scale invasion the issue became even more urgent for Ukraine. The work of law enforcement agencies showed the need to combat the potential danger posed by pro-Russian sentiments within the UOC-MP. And for Ukraine, this situation is an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to democratic development. The problem must be solved exclusively within the framework of the rule of law and in accordance with internationally recognized standards, without any autocratic decisions. Ultimately, this is what will demonstrate the difference between Russia and Ukraine, since our country, Ukraine, is fighting for democratic standards and freedoms.

46 Cf. Звернення Духовенства та вірян УПЦ до Священного Синоду та Єпископату УПЦ. [Appeal of the Clergy and Faithful of the UOC to the Holy Synod and Bishops of the UOC]. January 12, 2023. URL: lb.ua/society/2023/01/12/542382_viryani_i_duhovenstvo_upts_mp_prosyat.html.

Patriarch Bartholomew's Position Towards the War Against Ukraine

Patrice Hrimle

This article highlights the statements of the Greek-speaking Orthodox Churches up to the beginning of 2023, especially those of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, which are related to the war against Ukraine. As a religious leader, the patriarch drew attention to this war and thereby contributed to the public discourse on this matter. His anti-war appeals to stop the military annihilation of Ukraine and the genocide of its people stand out among other public figures. In addition, the author outlines some efforts of the Ecumenical Patriarch in interchurch relations, particularly concerning the Russian Orthodox Church. The text takes a closer look at Bartholomew's reflections on the nature of war, its origins, consequences and possible solutions. Furthermore, the author focuses on the reaction of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the siege of Mariupol, i. e., to the consequences of the Russian air force's bombing of the city, especially the casualties of the civilian population as well as damages inflicted on the historical and cultural heritage of ethnic Greeks.

1. Defining the Problem

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in 2022 raised serious concerns about attempts to destroy Ukrainian statehood as well as the impending danger of expanding the military conflict in Europe and unleashing another world war not only among political actors, but also religious leaders. The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was one of the first religious authorities to condemn this act of aggression.¹ Neither did he remain silent about the

1 Cf. The Ecumenical Patriarch Condemns the Unprovoked Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Expresses His solidarity to the Suffering Ukrainian People. (24 February 2022) URL: <https://ec-patr.org/the-ecumenical-patriarch-condemns-the-unprovoked-russian-in->

annexation of Crimea and the Russian-sponsored separatist war in Eastern Ukraine (Donbas). In the Easter Epistle on 20 April 2014, he spoke of the war in Donbas: “In our times, the drums of death and darkness are beating desperately. Unfortunately, extinction and suppression of the weak by the strong dominates the secular pyramid of today’s reality. We are often stunned by cruelty, by lack of compassion and by views of the powers that are holding the wheel of the world. Those powers think it is really they who make the world go around”.²

In his numerous public appeals on the war against Ukraine, Patriarch Bartholomew has shared his thoughts on the nature of the war. On 13 February 2022, on the eve of the Russian full-scale invasion, he made an appeal to all parties involved to prevent the military conflict in order to avoid the risk of another world war.³ Even though the history of mankind demonstrated that, despite the terrible experience of past wars and despite further industrial development, society still seeks military resolution to some conflicts. The interaction between different cultures may lead to disagreement on some matters, which often appear to be simply markers of different values, but the use of military force makes it worse. The processes of globalization and current geopolitical contexts have made the modern world very dense, i. e. it is hard to keep conflicts local; rather, they affect the globe. Bartholomew also underlined that any aggression using weapons is a violation of international law and the UNO Charter that banned the use of military force in international relations: “Weapons are not a solution. On the contrary, it brings nothing but war, violence,

[vasion-of-ukraine-and-expresses-his-solidarity-to-the-suffering-ukrainian-people/](#); Βαρθολομαίος για πόλεμο στην Ουκρανία: Τα όπλα σκορπούν τον θάνατο και ασφαλώς δεν κάνουν διακρίσεις [Bartholomew on the War in Ukraine: Weapons Spread Death and Certainly Do not Make Differences] (20 March 2022). URL: <https://www.ethnos.gr/ekklisia/article/200174/bartholomaiosgiapolemsthnoykraniataoplaskorpyntonthanatokaiasfalosdenkanoyndiakriseis>; The Holy See, “Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Turkey: Ecumenical Blessing and Singing of the Common Declaration” (30 November 2014). URL: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141130_turchia-firma-dichiarazione.html. All internet links in this article were last accessed on 5 April 2024.

- 2 Πατριαρχική Απόδειξις ἐπὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πάσχα 2014 [Patriarchal Testimony on Holy Easter 2014]. URL: <https://www.saint.gr/19/texts.aspx>. Own translation.
- 3 Cf. Πατριάρχης Βαρθολομαίος. Ἐκκληση για εἰρήνη στην Ουκρανία, να αποφευχθεῖ ο κίνδυνος του Γ΄ Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου [Patriarch Bartholomew: Call for Peace in Ukraine to Avoid the Risk of World War III] (13 February 2022). URL: <https://www.bankingnews.gr/diethni/articles/610834/vartholomaios-ekklisi-gia-eirini-stin-oukrania-na-apofexthei-o-kindynos-tou-g-pagkosmiou-poleμου>.

mourning and death.”⁴ It is important to seek peace through dialogue, which would create the conditions for resolving problems and help eliminate critical situations. The role of religion in peacekeeping and the need for cooperation should not be disregarded.

In May 2022, Bartholomew pointed out that Moscow claiming jurisdiction over the Orthodox Church in Ukraine helps justifying the war.⁵ Although the discourse on the canonical procedure for granting autocephaly is not addressed in this paper, the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (EP) is of interest. It is based on the fact that the See of Constantinople is historically the mother Church for Ukrainian Christianity, since the Metropolis of Kyiv was founded in the context of the baptism of the Kyivan Rus.⁶ Therefore the attention to the historical and spiritual development of this land, as well as the interest in rehabilitating the canonical status of two major jurisdictions, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, now united as the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), are understandable.

Besides, the position of the EP on granting autocephaly is based not only on historical practice, but also on “οικονομία” (a concept of a more flexible application or interpretation of canons) and the political independence of Ukraine as a state.⁷ Since 1991, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, operated with a status of “a self-governing

4 Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης: Προσευχόμαστε για τη διατήρηση της ειρήνης στην Ουκρανία [Ecumenical Patriarch: We Pray for the Preservation of Peace in Ukraine] (13 February 2022). URL: <https://www.capital.gr/epikairota/3614573/oikoumenikos-patriarxis-proseuxomaste-gia-ti-diatirisi-tis-eirinis-stin-oukrania>. Own translation.

5 Cf. The Ecumenical Patriarch Condemns the Unprovoked Russian Invasion; Bartholomew: What is Happening in Ukraine Is a Disgrace That Will Stigmatize for Ever Those Who Caused It (1 May 2022). URL: <https://orthodoxtimes.com/bartholomew-what-is-happening-in-ukraine-is-a-disgrace-that-will-stigmatize-for-ever-those-who-caused-it/>.

6 Cf. Natalia Yakovenko, *Ναρις ιστορίας μεσαιωνικής και πρώιμης σύγχρονης Ουκρανίας* [An Outline of the History of Medieval and Early Modern Ukraine], Kyiv 2006, 45.

7 Cf. Grigorios D. Papathomas, ‘Η υιοθέτηση τής Αυτοκεφαλίας στη Δύση και την Ανατολή [The Adoption of Autocephaly in the West and the East], in: *Θεολογία* 90/1 (2019) 235–276, here: 235. See also: Stavros Mutafis, *Ἡ Ἐκκλησιαστική Οικονομία κατὰ τοὺς Ἱεροὺς Κανόνες* [The Ecclesiastical Economy According to the Holy Canons] Athens 2016, 16: “And the second way, which concerns the economy, we see in the transition by which the Christ-conforming multitude can be governed in the course of the Church’s progress towards the perfection of life in Christ”. Own translation.

Church with the rights of broad autonomy”⁸. Achieving Ukrainian political independence led to the EP granting the OCU autocephaly in 2019.

Since 2018, the Russian Federation has used a variety of methods and manipulations to exert pressure on the Church of Greece and the See of Constantinople, which were engaged in resolving the problem of canonical jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. On 15 October 2018, after the Holy Synod in Minsk, the Moscow Patriarchate broke off Eucharistic communion with Constantinople.⁹ On 29 October 2018, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Gre Andrey Maslov described the decision to grant autocephaly to the OCU as one that would cause “dangerous consequences” for Ukraine.¹⁰ In light of the events of 2022, it is clear that this statement should have been seen as a warning.

On 5 January 2019, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew granted the OCU the Tomos, the decree of ecclesial independence.¹¹ The OCU obtained the right to decide on issues concerning the daily life of the church in accordance with Ukrainian traditions, customs, and language within the borders of its state. This decision was recognized by the Church of Greece, the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the Church of Cyprus.¹² At the same time, the Tomos restricted the possibility of the ROC to control this area, and so the announcement that the Moscow Patriarchate would not recognize it, did not come as a surprise.

8 The Rule of the Russian Orthodox Church. Chapter 10.1.: “... самоуправляемая Церковь с правами широкой автономии”. URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5082273.html>. Own translation.

9 Cf. Andrew Roth/Harriet Sherwood, Russian Orthodox Church Cuts Ties with Constantinople (15 October 2018). URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/15/russian-orthodox-church-cuts-ties-with-constantinople>.

10 Cf. Συνάντηση Υφυπουργού Εξωτερικών, Μ. Μπόλαρη, με τον Πρόεδρο της Ρωσικής Ομοσπονδίας στην Ελλάδα [Meeting of Deputy Foreign Minister Bolaris with the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Greece] (30 October 2018). URL: <https://www.mfa.gr/epikairota/eidiseis-anakoinoseis/sunantese-uphupourgou-exoterikon-mpolare-me-ton-presbu-tes-rosikes-omospondias-sten-ellada-athena-30102018.html>.

11 Cf. Τόμος Αυτοκεφαλίας. Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos for the Bestowal of the Ecclesiastical Status of Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (6 January 2019). URL: <https://ec-patr.org/patriarchal-and-synodal-tomos-for-the-bestowal-of-the-ecclesiastical-status-of-autocephaly-to-the-orthodox-church-in-ukraine/>.

12 For more see: Christos Karakolis, The Stance of Orthodox Greek-Speaking Churches Regarding the War Against Ukraine: a Critical Perspective with Reference to Romans 13:1–7 and John’s Revelation, in: *Наукові записки УКУ: Богослов’я* 9 (2022) 75–93, here: 77–83.

2. Bartholomew on Relations with the Moscow Patriarchate

Now let us focus on the position of Patriarch Bartholomew regarding the relations between the two patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow till February 2023. The involvement of the See of Constantinople in resolving the issue of the ecclesial independence of the OCU has caused an adverse reaction from the Russian state and the ROC, which consider Ukraine to be part of the latter's canonical territory. However, Bartholomew did not recognize the ROC's decision to terminate eucharistic relations. On 29 July 2021, in his address on the 1,033rd anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus', the Patriarch refuted Russian accusations and supported the canonical independence of the OCU "... with prudence and responsibility to manage the issues of everyday ecclesiastical life with their traditions, manners, customs, language, within the borders of the state of Ukraine."¹³ He also stressed that the See of Constantinople feels a spiritual responsibility and "immutable duty" to the independent Ukrainian Church, even though it can be "sacrificial and exhausting."¹⁴ In his speech on Ukraine's Independence Day in 2022, he spoke about the historical ties between the Mother Church of Constantinople and the Church of Ukraine, and expressed concern about the political, sociological and ecological consequences of the war.¹⁵

In an interview with the Greek TV channel ERT1 and the journalist Giorgos Kouvaras, Bartholomew appealed to the Russian Patriarch Cyril to condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine and to oppose the state ideology.¹⁶ Cyril's blessing the war was seen by Bartholomew as hypocritical, the Russian hier-

13 Вітання Вселенського Патріарха Варфоломія з 1033-ю річницею Хрещення Русь-України [Address of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the 1033rd Anniversary of the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine] (29 July 2021). URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/vitannya-vselenського-patriarha-varfolomiya-z-1033-yu-richnytseyu-hreshhennya-rusy-ukrayiny/>. Own translation.

14 Ibid.

15 Cf. Bartholomew, Greeting for Ukrainian Independence Day (24 August 2022). URL: <https://istanbul.mfa.gov.ua/en/news/greeting-his-all-holiness-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-ukrainian-independence-day-24-august-2022>.

16 Cf. Βαρθολομαίος: Έπρεπε να παραιτηθεί ο Κύριλλος για την επίθεση στην Ουκρανία και ας πήγαινε και φυλακή [Bartholomew: Cyril Should Have Resigned for the Attack on Ukraine and Should Have Gone to Prison] (24 May 2022). URL: <https://www.prothema.gr/greece/article/1246927/vartholomaios-eprepe-paraitithei-o-kurillos-kai-as-pigaine-kai-fulaki/>. See also: Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης για Ουκρανία: Ο πόλεμος δεν λύνει τα προβλήματα, προσθέτει νέα [Ecumenical Patriarch on Ukraine: War Does Not Solve Problems, but Adds New] (8 April 2022). URL: <https://www.kathimerini>.

arch should have considered resigning instead. The interview also discussed controversies between the Churches of Constantinople and Moscow over the canonical subordination of the OCU.

Today both churches exist as competing parallel jurisdictions. The question of affiliation of the UOC to the Moscow Patriarchate as well as the lack of recognition of the OCU by the majority of the autocephalous churches still raises questions.

3. Voices of the Other Greek-Speaking Hierarchs

The escalation of Russian military aggression in Ukraine in February 2022 incited a strong response in the Greek Orthodox world. The Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Greece and Alexandria demonstrated deep compassion for and engagement with the events in Ukraine, with concerns for the safety of the Ukrainian people and the challenges faced by the OCU. As Christos Karakolis critically noted, although the statement of the Patriarch of Jerusalem calls for prayers for peace and wisdom for the parties involved, it replaces the word “war” with the term “crisis”.¹⁷ The above-mentioned hierarchs condemned war as a method of conflict resolution, because its nature contradicts Christian values, especially the intrinsic value of Christian love. According to Anastasios, Archbishop of Albania, “the aggressive war is the most tragic and cruelest insult and negation of love”.¹⁸ The Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, Ieronymos II said: “We feel pain reaching a heart-breaking acme, reflecting the scale of the problem which is very tormenting for our conscience”.¹⁹ On 20 March 2022, the Holy Synod of Greece issued an encyclical letter on the war against Ukraine directly blaming Russia for it, speaking of “the violent inva-

[gr/world/561800734/oikoymenikos-patriarchis-gia-oykrania-o-polemos-den-lynei-ta-provlimata-prosthetei-nea/](https://www.ertnews.gr/world/561800734/oikoymenikos-patriarchis-gia-oykrania-o-polemos-den-lynei-ta-provlimata-prosthetei-nea/).

17 Cf. Christos Karakolis, *The Stance*, 78. For the appeal of the Patriarch of Jerusalem see: *Statement on Situation in Ukraine by His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III* (27 February 2022). URL: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/blog/2022/02/27/statement-on-situation-in-ukraine-by-his-beatitude-patriarch-of-jerusalem-theophilos-iii/>.

18 Nastos Bratsos, *Τα Αναστάσιμα μηνύματα των Προκαθημένων της Ορθοδοξίας για το Πάσχα*. [The Easter Messages of the Orthodox Prelates for Easter] (23 April 2022). URL: <https://www.ertnews.gr/eidiseis/ellada/ta-anastasima-minymata-ton-prokathimenon-tis-orthodoxias-gia-to-pascha-video/>. Own translation.

19 *Ibidem*.

sion of Russian troops and the war in Ukraine”.²⁰ However, the Greek bishops have also tried to remain diplomatic, since the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches have shared the same faith and traditions for centuries. Theodoros, Patriarch of Alexandria, emphasised in his Easter message: “With sorrow in our hearts we can see people of one belief killing one another in Ukraine. My thoughts are with them”.²¹ The eschatological nature of Christianity in those Easter messages is evident in the hope that the war will end, and that life will rise again from the ruins. These statements reflect the understanding of the war against Ukraine as tragic and absurd, since it is experienced from both sides by Orthodox Christians, who share the same faith and should have common values. In the meantime, the Moscow Patriarchate is no longer in communion with the bishops (including the first hierarchs) of the churches of Alexandria, Greece and Cyprus, which recognize the OCU, and the Patriarch of Alexandria has conversely given up communion with Moscow.

Much clearer than the other Greek-speaking Orthodox church leaders, Bartholomew has repeatedly identified the military conflict in Ukraine as “cruel and unfair war of Russia against Ukraine” or “unjustifiable military aggression”. He has described the Russian Federation as the invader, who attacks innocent people.²²

4. Humanitarian Catastrophe in Mariupol and Bartholomew

Patriarch Bartholomew frequently addressed the ethical and theological understanding of human life. A comprehensive description of the EP’s position on this matter was elaborated over a period of three years by a Special Commission of the EP led by archdeacon John Chryssavgis. As a result of the commission’s efforts in 2020 the collective work “For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church” was released with the approval of the Holy and Sacred Synod.²³ This document contains specific directions and gen-

20 Official Website of the Church of Greece, *Περί τοῦ πολέμου στὴν Οὐκράνια* (17 March 2022). URL: <https://ecclesiagreece.gr/ecclesiajoomla/index.php/el/iera-synodos/enkykliai/peri-tou-polemou-sten-oukrania>.

21 Ibid.

22 Bartholomew, Greeting for Ukrainian Independence Day: “The virtuous Ukrainian people did not attack anyone, but were forced to defend their land and homes.”

23 Ecumenical Patriarchate, *For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church*, ed. by David B. Hart/John Chryssavgis, Brooklyn 2020. For more see: Piercamillo Falivene, Churches Before the Russian-Ukrainian War, in: *JoMaCC* 2/2 (2023) 249–293, here: 258.

eral guidelines for the EP regarding social challenges and responsibility. Since the EP pays much attention to human dignity and basic rights, it should be said that the Patriarch also expressed his concerns about the sufferings of the Ukrainians due to the war many times.²⁴

Ever since the beginning of the war, the civilian population has been under assault from Russian troops using weapons forbidden by international law. Among the numerous atrocities caused by Russian forces in Ukraine, one of the worst chapters of the invasion was the siege of the industrial port city Mariupol between February and May 2022. Those events caused a considerable resonance in the world. The Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations could not stand idly by and issued a statement on the need for humanitarian corridors to Mariupol from the Azovstal plant for civilians and wounded defenders in April 2022.²⁵

The initial count of casualties among the civilian population living in the city and the adjacent villages revealed a figure of around 87,000, however this figure is not final.²⁶ In February 2024, Human Rights Watch in cooperation with the Ukrainian NGO “Truth Hounds” and SITU Research published the report “Our City Was Gone: Russia’s Devastation of Mariupol, Ukraine” with a multimedia feature analyzing the killing of civilians, unlawful attacks and the destruction of the infrastructure.²⁷ The use of satellite footage and geographical information systems as well as statistical methods made it possible to confirm the large number of victims by comparing the landscape of cemeteries and spontaneous collective burials. Before the Russian invasion and occupation

-
- 24 Cf. Bartholomew, Message to the Ukrainian People on the Occasion of Christmas 2022 (25 December 2022). URL: https://ec-patr.org/message-by-his-all-holiness-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-to-the-ukrainian-people-on-the-occasion-of-christmas-2022/?fbclid=IwY2xjawFORpxleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHT30Gwlgv14HNvbETYoWA33nsjqRsJo_4KIGVoVTJHouW2yz02LBpLXpDw_aem_xVk9oN7HNcgMfhjv-zVBlQ; idem, Η Πρώτη του έτους στο Φανάρι [The First of the Year in the Phanar] (2 January 2023). URL: https://panorthodoxynod.blogspot.com/2023/01/blog-post_2.html?fbclid=IwAR2x76ZuZPYL_DOTrg3dbJgkwpYEDO_D918rj-iECTtP7InHbl9XP_k0e8.
- 25 Cf. UCCRO Statement on the Necessity of Humanitarian Corridors for Mariupol (16 April 2022). URL: <https://vrciro.ua/en/statements/uccro-statement-on-humanitarian-corridors-for-mariupol>.
- 26 Cf. Natalya Buchalova/Olena Davlikanova/Svitlana Timičenko, Парламент України під час війни: аналітичний звіт [The Parliament of Ukraine During the War: An Analytical Report], Kyiv 2023, 125.
- 27 Cf. Human Rights Watch/SITU Research/Truth Hounds, *Our City Was Gone: Russia’s Devastation of Mariupol, Ukraine*, New York 2024.

of the city, about 425.000 people lived in Mariupol and the surrounding area. Taking into account the number of victims, it can be assumed that more than 30 % of the population was killed. Among the people, who suffered due to the bombing operations on Mariupol, were the Greeks of the Azov area, whom I will discuss here more closely.

Artillery shelling and air strikes by Russian troops have led to the destruction of the historical part of Mariupol, founded in 1780 by the Pontic Greeks, Urums, and Rumeis as a result of their resettlement to the Azov region. Initially it was a separate Greek administrative district in which no people of other nationalities lived.²⁸ For centuries, the ethnic Greeks of the Azov area, who were grouped around Mariupol, preserved their language, their way of life, culture and religion. Before the military invasion, the historic part of the city had retained its traditional layout of houses and streets, characteristic of both Greek urban settlements and Byzantine Constantinople. Greek historical relics, such as the throne of Metropolitan Ignatius, the first Greek metropolitan in Mariupol, and the Greek Gospel, preserved in the Mariupol Museum, were lost in a fire during the bombing.²⁹ As a result of the Russian invasion, the Greek population of Mariupol and the Azov region was subjected to physical extinction, emigration and deportation. Besides that, the Russian authorities are pursuing a policy of assimilation and dissolution of the Azov Greeks within the so-called “Russian nation” by suppressing their historical memory. The Greek language and the ancient dialects of the Urums and the Rumeis, which have been cherished here for centuries, are being replaced by the Russian language in schools.

Human casualties within the Greek community in the conflict zone caused discontent in Athens. The Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias emphasized in his interview on 17 April 2022 that the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian aid to the Greek Diaspora in Ukraine is a top priority for Greece.³⁰ He even visited Mariupol before the beginning of the full-scale war on 31 January 2022 and spoke about security issues. Concerning Urums and

28 Cf. Vlassis Agzidis, *Μια άγνωστη ελληνική δύναμη μακριά από την Ελλάδα: Οι Έλληνες της Ουκρανίας* [An Unknown Greek Force Far from Greece: The Greeks of Ukraine] (16 March 2022). URL: <https://www.cnn.gr/focus/story/305117/mia-agnosti-elliniki-dynami-makria-apo-tin-ellada-oi-ellines-tis-oykranias>.

29 Cf. *ibid.*

30 Cf. MFA, Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias' Interview with 'Kathimerini tis Kyriakis' Newspaper and Journalist Vasilis Nedos. (17 April 2022). URL: <https://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/statements-speeches/minister-of-foreign-affairs-nikos-dendias-interview-with-kathimerini-tis-kyriakis-newspaper-and-journalist-vasilis-nedos-17042022.html>.

Rumeis, who were exposed to suffering, exile and killings, Greece appealed to the International Criminal Court to investigate these war crimes, which are referred to as ethnocide in international law.³¹

The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew addressed the humanitarian tragedy in Mariupol in his Easter Sermon of 2022: “Let’s beg the Risen Redeemer this Easter to be the initiator to open humanitarian corridors, safe passages to truly safe areas, for the thousands trapped in Mariupol, the civilians, among them the wounded, the elderly, women and many children. The same applies to all other regions of Ukraine, where an indescribable human tragedy is unfolding.”³² He called for a halt to the physical assault on the civilian population, and to immediately end the fratricidal war by the Russian Federation’s airforce. He also held a conversation with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, who informed him about the Russian blockade of Mariupol and the villages Sartana and Volnovakha inhabited by the Greek population.³³ In 2023, families of Mariupol defenders met with Patriarch Bartholomew. During the audience he blessed the Ukrainian delegation and expressed his hope for the quick return of all prisoners and deportees, including children, whom Russia had illegally taken from Ukraine.³⁴

31 Cf. Panagiota Manoly, Greece’s Response to Russia’s War in Ukraine, in: Anja Mihr/Chiara Pierobon (eds.), *Polarization, Shifting Borders and Liquid Governance. Studies on Transformation and Development in the OSCE Region*, Cham 2024, 349–366, here: 356.

32 Τα πασχαλινά μηνύματα του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχη και των Αρχιεπισκόπων Ελλάδος και Κύπρου. [The Easter Messages of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishops of Greece and Cyprus] (24 April 2022). URL: <https://gr.euronews.com/2022/04/24/ta-pasxalina-minymata-tou-oikoumenikou-patriarxi-kai-toy-arxiepiskopou>. Own translation.

33 Cf. Β. Ζελένσκι: Ευχαριστώ τον Οικουμενικό Πατριάρχη για τις ευχές του για νίκη. [V. Zelensky: Thanks to the Ecumenical Patriarch for His Wishes for Victory – Video] (29 July 2022). URL: <https://www.dogma.gr/kosmos/zelenski-efcharisto-ton-oikoumeniko-patriarchi-gia-tis-efches-tou-gia-niki-vinteo/150499/>.

34 RISU, Родичі полонених Маріупольського гарнізону зустрілися з Патріархом Варфоломієм [Relatives of Mariupol Garrison Prisoners Meet with Patriarch Bartholomew] (11 August 2023). URL: https://risu.ua/rodichi-poloneni-h-mariupolskogo-garnizonu-zustrilisy-a-z-patriarhom-varfolomiyem_n141636.

5. Conclusions

To summarize, Bartholomew's statements on the war against Ukraine reflect the pastoral responsibility of the See of Constantinople and his concern for the future of the Ukrainian people and the OCU. He condemned the Russian aggressive activities, which contradict the Christian commandments of beneficence and brought nothing but violence, mourning, destruction and death. The Ecumenical Patriarch has not hesitated to unmask Russian Patriarch Cyril's use of religious rhetoric as a means of justifying the war, and has called this hypocritical. He has pointed out repeatedly that it is the duty of religious leaders to condemn militaristic policies, not to support or bless them. He also holds the opinion that the controversy of the canonical subordination of the OCU should neither contribute to the justification of the Russo-Ukrainian war nor become a reason for a schism between Constantinople and Moscow.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Russo-Ukrainian War¹

Kateryna Budz

This article looks at official statements of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) during the first one and a half years of the full-scale invasion. By referring to the daily video messages of the head of the UGCC, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, and the documents of the Synod of Bishops, the author analyses the hierarchy's views on the Russo-Ukrainian war and the church's initiatives during wartime. Moreover, the article argues that the head of the UGCC assumes the role of a mediator between the Vatican and Ukrainians. Finally, it offers to view the Major Archbishop's attitude to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) in the light of the UGCC's experience of underground existence in the Soviet Union. Overall, both the public statements of the Greek Catholic hierarchy and the church initiatives show that the UGCC transcends denominational boundaries and reaches out to the whole of Ukrainian society.

1 This article results from a research project conducted in the framework of the Petro Jacyk Non-Resident Fellows Program at the University of Toronto. Earlier versions of the paper were presented at the Postgraduate Symposium "War in Ukraine. Theological, Ethical and Historical Reflections" (Vienna, February 2023), and at the Petro Jacyk Non-Resident Fellows seminar (online, March 2023). I am grateful to the participants of both events for their useful questions and comments. The revised article extends chronologically up to October 2023. I am grateful to the Petro Jacyk Program for the study of Ukraine for supporting this research project. I also express my gratitude to the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh for providing me sanctuary during the war, as well as to the Ecclesiastical History Society, the British Academy, and the Council for At-Risk Academics for supporting my research stay in the United Kingdom. Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to a peer reviewer whose feedback helped me to improve this paper.

1. Introduction

Since the start of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), which is a Byzantine-rite Church in union with Rome, has been addressing the challenges of the war on both theoretical and practical levels. On the very first day of the full-scale invasion, the head of the UGCC, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, declared defending one's land, people and state a "natural right and sacred duty."² Between 25 February 2022 and 24 February 2023, the Church leader appealed to the public with daily video-messages on YouTube, switching after a year to weekly addresses.³ These videos were published by different media outlets, including the Ukrainian Catholic Crisis Media Center, the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, and Zhyve TV. In a short video, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav would usually summarize the events of the previous day and then touch upon some important question, be they of theological or socio-political significance. Many of these addresses were provided with English subtitles, or a transcript. Due to translations of the video-messages into English and other languages, the recordings reached a much broader audience than the Ukrainian Greek Catholics in Ukraine.

This article focuses on the official responses of the UGCC to the Russo-Ukrainian war since 24 February 2022, as expressed by the head of the Church and the Synod of Bishops. First, the study analyses how the Greek Catholic Church views the current war and fulfils her role during the wartime. Second, the article looks at how the UGCC, as a part of the Catholic Church, responds to the Vatican's initiatives. Third, it examines the position of the head of the UGCC in the recent debates on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC).

2. The Response of Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk to the Full-Scale Invasion

In the context of the current Russo-Ukrainian war, the head of the UGCC paid particular attention to the theological aspects of just war.⁴ Thus, in his

2 Appeal of His Beatitude Sviatoslav on Outbreak of War (24 February 2022). URL: https://archives.ugcc.ua/en/articles/appeal_of_his_beatitude_sviatoslav_on_outbreak_of_war_95772.html. All internet links in this article were last accessed on 5 June 2024.

3 As of April 2024, the weekly addresses still appear on the YouTube channel of Zhyve TV.

4 For an overview of just war and just peace approaches in the Catholic teaching, see: Pavlo Smytsnyuk, *The Holy See Confronts the War in Ukraine: Between Just War The-*

video-message on 22 August 2022, the Major Archbishop emphasized that, according to the teaching of the Church, “any aggressive war is inherently immoral,” but, once the war started, “the leaders of states, particularly those that have been attacked, have the right and duty to defend their country.”⁵ In particular, a military response is justified if, first, the damage caused is “long-lasting, severe, and indisputable,” second, the alternative ways to stop the war “have proved impossible or unsuccessful”, third, victory is possible, and, finally, the use of arms would not lead to worse consequences than those to be averted.⁶ Since even a just war can pose moral challenges, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav warned against the possible abuse of power in the army. In particular, the Church leader emphasized that violations of human rights and international humanitarian law cannot be justified, even if they result from “orders of management.”⁷

As follows from Major Archbishop Sviatoslav’s video-messages, he usually uses the term “war” to describe the full-scale invasion and is clear about Russia as its instigator. The head of the UGCC frequently defines this war as unjust and sacrilegious, highlighting its aggressive character. He, for example, spoke of the “patriotic war against the Russian aggressor,”⁸ the “murderous Russian aggression against our people,”⁹ the “great, unjust, senseless, and sacrilegious war,”¹⁰ as well as the “unequal, bloody battle with the Russian aggressor.”¹¹ In some cases, more emotional designations, as, for example, “this madness”¹² or “this bloodshed,”¹³ were used. In the video-message from 18 October 2022,

ory and Nonviolence, in: *ET Studies – Journal of the European Society for Catholic Theology* 14.1 (2023) 3–24. For different approaches in the just war tradition, from Cicero to John Paul II, see: Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven/ William A. Barbieri (eds.), *From Just War to Modern Peace Ethics*, Berlin – Boston 2012.

5 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav. August 22nd, 180 Day of the War (22 August 2022). URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JAcJ4sxFko>. Since the addresses quoted in this article can be found on YouTube, usually by typing “Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav”, in the following references only a date of the video-message will be provided. Moreover, the transcripts of the video-messages are now available in print: His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, *Україна стоїть! Україна бореться! Україна молиться!* [Ukraine is standing! Ukraine is fighting! Ukraine prays!], Kyiv 2024.

6 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (22 August 2022).

7 Ibidem.

8 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (1 April 2022).

9 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (2 April 2022).

10 Video-message of his Beatitude Sviatoslav (5 August 2022).

11 Video-message of his Beatitude Sviatoslav (17 August 2022).

12 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (8 March 2022).

13 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (14 March 2022).

Major Archbishop Sviatoslav compared the Russo-Ukrainian war to the battle of David against Goliath, defining it as an “unequal but indomitable battle.”¹⁴

On the one hand, the Church leader portrays Ukraine as an “innocent victim,” while presenting Russia as a threat to the global order. Thus, on 28 March 2022, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav appealed to the world leaders, among others, with the following words: “Make your choice. Stand on the side of the innocent victims of unjust aggression of someone who planned to dictate their new rules not only for Ukraine but also for the whole world and threatens to begin a third World War.”¹⁵ On the other hand, by portraying Ukraine as a defender of the whole world, the head of the UGCC emphasizes the country’s agency, as in his appeal on 26 May 2022: “Today, we must do everything we can to ensure that Russia’s war crimes do not spread throughout the world. And today Ukraine is at the forefront of this struggle. We are stopping this evil.”¹⁶

The above reference to “evil” reveals a more general tendency to depict the current war not only as a geopolitical conflict, but also as a spiritual struggle. Thus, in his appeal on 14 March 2022, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav encouraged “everyone to pray and fast in order to cast out the evil spirit of war in Ukraine.”¹⁷ In turn, on 1 April 2022, the Church leader explicitly defined this war as a “spiritual struggle with the devil and his servants.”¹⁸ For this reason, the UGCC places a significant emphasis on prayer, fasting, and works of mercy.

It should be noted that many war-related initiatives (for example, relevant litanies in the liturgy, continuous fasting in the eparchies, or singing “Prayer for Ukraine” (*Bozhe Velykyi Iedynyi*) after the liturgy) were introduced after the war started in 2014. However, the war-related initiatives have amplified since 24 February 2022. To illustrate this, the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC designated 2 April 2022 as the all-Church day of prayer for the victims of war.¹⁹ In addition, the Greek Catholic bishops declared the first anniversary of the full-scale invasion, i. e. 24 February 2023, a day of fasting, prayer, and works of mercy.²⁰

14 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (18 October 2022).

15 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (28 March 2022).

16 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (26 May 2022).

17 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (14 March 2022).

18 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (1 April 2022).

19 Cf. Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (2 April 2022).

20 Cf. The UGCC Declared a Solemn Day of Fasting, Prayer, and Almsgiving (24 February 2023). URL: <https://ugcc.ua/en/data/the-ugcc-declared-a-solemn-day-of-fasting-prayer-and-alms-giving-220/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CLet%20this%20day%20be%20an,but%20also%20works%20of%20mercy.>

The official discourse of the UGCC since the start of the full-scale invasion has also focused on the risks of hatred and dehumanization. In his appeal from 24 February 2022, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav described Ukrainians as a “peaceful nation that loves children of all nations with Christian love.”²¹ In turn, in his video-message on 1 March 2022, the Church leader emphasized: “We see that it is not hatred but love that wins. Love creates heroes, and hatred creates criminals.”²² In a similar vein, the post-synodal epistle of the Greek Catholic bishops entitled “Overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21) (15 July 2022) warned against hatred: “Love creates heroes, and hatred creates criminals. The cruelty of war dehumanises, so we, as a defending nation and the Church, which unites people in the family of Christ, must make every effort to preserve our dignity and humanity, and in no way stoop to the inhumanity and atrocities of the aggressor.”²³

Already at the beginning of the war, on the Sunday of Forgiveness, which precedes Lent in the Eastern Churches, the head of the UGCC reminded the viewers about the need to forgive: “It is difficult to speak of forgiveness in the midst of war. It is difficult to speak of forgiveness when looking into the eyes of an enemy who has no moral framework and is killing the peaceful population. But forgiveness is the secret to victory.”²⁴

At the same time, the anti-Russian sentiment, sparked by the war, helped to resolve some of the long-standing issues in the church. For example, the debates about the transfer to the new calendar went on within Greek Catholic circles for more than a century. Thus, in 1916, Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn even introduced the Gregorian calendar in the Stanyslaviv Eparchy.²⁵ However, in 1917, upon his return to Galicia from the Russian exile, Metropolitan Shep-

21 Appeal of His Beatitude Sviatoslav on Outbreak of War.

22 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (1 March 2022).

23 This is my translation (K. B.), see in the original: “Перемагай зло добром!” (Рим. 12, 21). Послання Синоду Єпископів УГКЦ 2022 року [“Overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). Pastoral Letter of the 2022 Synod of Bishops of the UGCC”] (15 July 2022). URL: <https://docs.ugcc.ua/1591/>.

24 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (6 March 2022).

25 Cf. the protocol of the March 1916 meeting of the General Ukrainian Council (*Zahal'na Ukrains'ka Rada*, ZUR). As follows from the protocol, ZUR strongly opposed the bishop's innovation. Cf. Центральний державний архів вищих органів влади та управління України (ЦДАВО України) [Central State Archive of the Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine (TsDAVO of Ukraine)], f. 3807, op. 2, spr. 3, ark. 214.

tytsky reverted this change.²⁶ Following the Soviet ban on the UGCC during the post-war period, the calendar reform was not a priority in the underground, but the debates in the diaspora continued. As highlighted by Andrew Sorokowski, the Gregorian calendar was adopted by most Ukrainian parishes in the USA back in the 1960s.²⁷

Despite the longevity of the problem, the Church leadership seemed to prefer accommodating different approaches rather than introducing a new calendar. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, however, the impetus to switch to the new calendar came from below. According to Major Archbishop Sviatoslav, the surveys in the Greek Catholic parishes have demonstrated that over 90 % of people supported the calendar reform.²⁸ Thus, on 1–2 February 2023, the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC in Ukraine voted for the introduction of the new liturgical calendar with the beginning of the new church year on 1 September 2023.²⁹ The change in the dates affects only Christmas and other fixed feasts, while the Paschal Cycle remains unchanged.³⁰

Similarly, a popular wish to abandon the Julian calendar in connection to the ongoing war was felt by the leadership of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU).³¹ Thus, on 18 October 2022, the Holy Synod of the OCU allowed certain church communities that wished to celebrate Christmas on 25 December 2022 to do so.³² Then, on 2 February 2023, the Holy Synod allowed 103 parishes of the OCU to switch to the “new Julian” calendar.³³ Finally, on 24 May 2023,

26 Cf. Andrew D. Sorokowski, *The Greek Catholic Parish Clergy in Galicia, 1900–1939*. Ph. D. thesis at the University of London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1991, 212–214.

27 Cf. УГКЦ міжвоєнного періоду [UGCC of the Interwar Period] (10 January 2016). URL: <https://zbruc.eu/node/46036>. This publication summarizes the discussion points of the seminar on the Greek Catholic Church during the inter-war period, which was held on 27 October 2015 at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.

28 Cf. Historical Decision: the UGCC in Ukraine Switches to a New Calendar (6 February 2023). URL: <https://ugcc.ua/en/data/historical-decision-the-ugcc-in-ukraine-switches-to-a-new-calendar-232/>.

29 Cf. Декрет проголошення переходу УГКЦ на новий стиль для нерухомих свят [Decree Proclaiming the Transition of the UGCC to a New Style for Fixed Feasts] (9 February 2023). URL: <https://docs.ugcc.ua/1639/>.

30 Cf. *ibidem*.

31 Cf. Про врегулювання календарного питання в Православній Церкві України [On the Resolution of the Calendar Issue in the Orthodox Church of Ukraine] (24 May 2023). URL: <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/202245/>.

32 Cf. *ibidem*.

33 Cf. *ibidem*.

the Bishops' Council of the OCU announced the transfer to the new calendar, starting with 1 September 2023.³⁴

Thus, two Ukrainian Churches of Kyiv tradition, the UGCC and the OCU, switched to the new calendar in September 2023. In both cases, the liturgical reform appeared to be democratic, as it corresponded with the wishes of believers.

3. The War, the UGCC, and the Vatican

The Roman Pontiff has paid significant attention to the Russo-Ukrainian war in his speeches and actions.³⁵ Pope Francis declared Ash Wednesday on 2 March 2022 a day of prayer and fasting.³⁶ On 25 March 2022, the Pontiff consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Moreover, since the start of the full-scale invasion, the Vatican has played a pivotal role in the release of prisoners of war.³⁷ Despite being a proponent of the just peace rather than the just war approach, Pope Francis recognizes Ukraine's right to protect itself.³⁸

Yet some of the Pope's statements and initiatives stirred the public opinion in Ukraine. The first serious outcry of public dismay happened before Easter 2022, soon after the de-occupation of Bucha, when news spread that two female friends, a Ukrainian and a Russian, were to carry a cross during the Way of the Cross on Good Friday in Rome's Colosseum. The critique was voiced by

34 Cf. *ibidem*.

35 According to an estimate by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops, Pope Francis voiced solidarity with the people of Ukraine at least 227 times. Cf. Nicole Winfield, *Ukraine's Catholic Bishops Tell Pope that His Praise for Russia's Imperial Past 'Pained' Ukrainians* (6 September 2023). URL: <https://apnews.com/article/pope-russia-ukraine-war-9d67a223d69e070041a5fa0c1a5f6a82>.

36 Cf. *Pope Announces 2 March as Day of Prayer and Fasting for Ukraine* (23 February 2022). URL: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-02/pope-announces-2-march-as-day-of-prayer-and-fasting-for-ukraine.html>. As the publication date suggests, the Pope's intention preceded the start of the full-scale invasion, so the initial idea was to fast in order to avert the war.

37 Cf. Mykola Pidvezianyi/Mykhailo Hlukhovs'kyi/Stanislaw Hruzdiev, *На чиєму боці Ватикан? Велике інтерв'ю з предстоятелем УГКЦ Святославом [Whose Side is the Vatican On? A Long Interview with the Head of the UGCC Sviatoslav]* (23 June 2023). URL: <https://glavcom.ua/longreads/na-chijemu-botsi-vatikan-velike-intervju-z-predstojatelem-uhkts-svjatoslavom-936149.html?fbclid=IwAR2ocs6Wdx-DQVVyP4JotPF4UVIBvElVxurh28WfLlo-MvEf9KBQI9KU8HA>.

38 Cf. Thomas M. Németh, *Pope Francis and Russia's War Against Ukraine*, in: *Studia UBB Theol. Cath. Lat.*, LXVIII, 1 (2023) 92–109, here: 97; Smytsnyuk, *The Holy See Confronts the War in Ukraine*, 7, 17.

Ukraine's Ambassador to the Holy See, Andrii Yurash, and some well-known public opinion leaders, who generally agreed that the perpetrator and the victim could not go side by side, at least not before the former repented of their crimes.³⁹ Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk's reaction was also negative. Thus, the head of the UGCC called this initiative "untimely" and "ambiguous," while describing the text of the meditation as "incoherent and even offensive."⁴⁰ Eventually, even though the Vatican proceeded with the initial plan, the text of the meditation was replaced by a call to keep silence while both women were holding a cross.⁴¹

As Major Archbishop Sviatoslav explained in his interview to *Novoie Vremia* on 21 April 2022, the Vatican wishes to stay neutral in order to enable a dialogue between Ukrainians and Russians in the future.⁴² According to the head of the UGCC, the idea of reconciliation is Christian at its core and should not be dismissed; however, justice should come first.⁴³

Another milestone was 24 August 2022, when, during the general audience, the Pope referred to the death of 29-year old Darya Dugina, a daughter of the Russian ideologist Alexandr Dugin, in a car accident near Moscow with the following words: "The innocent pay for war, the innocent!"⁴⁴ Given the Dugins'

39 Cf. Myroslav Liskovych, Хресна хода в Римі: спочатку покаяння, прощення і лише тоді – примирення [The Cross Procession in Rome: First Repentance, Forgiveness and Only Then Reconciliation] (13 April 2022). URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubricato/3456669-hresna-hoda-v-rimi-spocatku-pokaanna-prosenna-i-lise-todi-primirena.html>. This publication quotes Ukrainian opinion makers, including philosophers and historians, on the inadmissibility of equating a perpetrator and a victim.

40 Philip Pulella, Text at Pope's Good Friday Service Scrapped After Ukrainian Protest (16 April 2022). URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/text-popes-good-friday-service-scrapped-after-ukrainian-protest-2022-04-15/>.

41 Cf. Vatican Adapts Good Friday Way of The Cross After Outcry in Ukraine (16 April 2022). URL: <https://ewtn.co.uk/article-vatican-adapts-good-friday-way-of-the-cross-after-outcry-in-ukraine/>.

42 Cf. Natalia Rop, "Ми не можемо робити жести примирення". Глава УГКЦ – про поведінку Ватикану, священника-героя зі Славутича та три зони роботи церкви на війні ["We Cannot Make Gestures of Reconciliation." Head of the UGCC Speaks about the Vatican's Behaviour, a Heroic Priest from Slavutych and Three Areas of the Church's Work in War] (21 April 2022). URL: <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/politics/glava-ugkc-pro-rosiyanku-y-ukrajinku-u-vatikani-ta-svyashchenika-geroya-zi-slavuticha-novini-ukrajini-50235527.html>.

43 Cf. *ibidem*.

44 Pope Prays for War Victims as Ukraine Conflict Marks Six Months (24 August 2022). URL: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-08/pope-prays-for-war-victims-as-ukraine-conflict-marks-six-months.html>.

support of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Pontiff's statement evoked a negative reaction in Ukraine, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.⁴⁵ In his letter to the Pope, Denys Koliada mentioned that the Pontiff's statement on Dugina came as a heavy blow to Ukrainians, especially given its timing, namely Ukraine's Independence Day. The Pope answered Koliada that the Italian newspaper he had seen before referred to Darya Dugina as "the innocent victim of war" and that he was unaware of Dugina being a propagandist herself.⁴⁶ About a week later, on 30 August 2022, in response to the above critique, the Vatican issued a communiqué emphasizing that the Pope had consistently condemned the Russian invasion as "morally unjust, unacceptable, barbaric, senseless, repugnant and sacrilegious."⁴⁷

The next milestone was 6 November 2022, when, in the interview to the Bahrain News Agency on his flight from Bahrain, Pope Francis mentioned his appreciation of Russian humanism: "I prefer to think of it this way because I have high esteem for the Russian people, for Russian humanism. Just think of Dostoevsky, who to this day inspires us, inspires Christians to think of Christianity."⁴⁸

During his meeting with the Pope on 7 November 2022, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics informed Pope Francis that many Ukrainians resented his statement on Dostoevsky. Major Archbishop Sviatoslav also asked the Pontiff to write a letter to the Ukrainians. On 24 November 2022, Pope Francis issued the requested letter, which, among other things, described Ukrainians as "a noble people of martyrs."⁴⁹

45 Cf. У зв'язку з висловлюваннями Папи Франциска до МЗС України був запрошений Апостольський Нунцій в Україні [In Connection with the Statements of Pope Francis, the Apostolic Nuncio in Ukraine Was Invited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine] (25 August 2022). URL: <https://mfa.gov.ua/news/u-zvyazku-z-vislovlyuvannyami-papi-franciska-do-mzs-ukrayini-buv-zaproshenij-apostolskij-nuncij-v-ukrayini>.

46 Cf. Yuriy Panchenko, Таємна допомога Папи Римського. Що не помітила Україна за скандальними заявами понтифіка [The Pope's Secret Help. What Ukraine Failed to Notice Behind the Pontiff's Scandalous Statements] (25 November 2022). URL: <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2022/11/25/7151320/>.

47 Holy See Communiqué (30 August 2022). URL: <https://press.vatican.va/content/sala stampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2022/08/30/220830a.html>.

48 Pope Francis: 'Three World Wars in One Century: Be Pacifists!' (6 November 2022). URL: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-11/pope-flight-three-wars-century-pacifist-interview-bahrain.html>.

49 Cf. Pope Francis, Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the People of Ukraine Nine Months After the Outbreak of the War (24 November 2022). URL: <https://www.vatican>.

When asked in an interview to *Glavkom* in June 2023⁵⁰ about the prospect of Greek Catholics leaving the Church as a result of the Pope's statements, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav underlined the ecclesiastic nature of the UGCC's relation to Rome: "We are Catholics not because Francis is the Pope; we are Catholics not because the Pope speaks rightly or wrongly on international issues. We are Catholics because we believe that the Apostle Peter in the College of Apostles and the successors of the Apostle Peter have some special role in the Church."⁵¹ Yet the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics acknowledged that "the Pope does not fully understand the pain of Ukraine, and Ukraine does not understand the Pope."⁵²

About two months later, this lack of common ground became apparent again. Thus, during a teleconference on 25 August 2023, Pope Francis addressed the Catholic youth in Saint Petersburg as "heirs of great Russia: the great Russia of saints and rulers, the great Russia of Peter I and Catherine II – that empire, great, enlightened, of great culture and great humanity."⁵³ In response to the Pontiff's statement, on 28 August 2023, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav noted "a danger that these words could be taken as supporting the very nationalism and imperialism that has caused the war in Ukraine today."⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the head of the UGCC expressed readiness to "await a clarification of this situation from the Holy See."⁵⁵ The clarification that followed warned against the misinterpretation of the Pope's words. In particular, in the press release from 28 August 2023, the Apostolic Nunciature in Ukraine stated that "Pope Francis has never endorsed imperialistic notions," pointing to the Pontiff's anti-impe-

[va/content/francesco/en/letters/2022/documents/20221124-lettera-popolo-ucraino.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2022/documents/20221124-lettera-popolo-ucraino.html).

50 Cf. Pidvezianyі, На чиему боці Ватикан?

51 This is my translation (K. B.), see in the original: Pidvezianyі, На чиему боці Ватикан?

52 This is my translation (K. B.), see in the original: Ibidem.

53 Jonathan Luxmoore, 'Confusion and Pain' over Pope's 'Imperialist' Message to Russian Youth (31 August 2023). URL: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/1-sepember/news/world/confusion-and-pain-over-pope-s-imperialist-message-to-russian-youth#:~:text=In%20his%20address%2C%20Pope%20Francis,of%20the%20seeds%20of%20reconciliation%E2%80%9D>.

54 Head of the UGCC Responds to Controversy Over Pope Francis' Comments During the Meeting with Catholic Youth in Russia (28 August 2023). URL: <https://ugcc.ua/en/data/head-of-the-ugcc-responds-to-controversy-over-pope-francis-comments-during-the-meeting-with-catholic-youth-in-russia-578/>.

55 Ibidem.

rial and anti-colonial stance.⁵⁶ In turn, on 29 August 2023, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni stated that Pope Francis did not mean to promote imperialism.⁵⁷

Thus, the head of the UGCC clearly articulated his position on those occasions when the Pontiff's words or initiatives evoked negative responses in Ukraine. While speculations about the Greek Catholics leaving the Catholic Church *en masse* because of the Pope's public statements did not materialise, the UGCC faces the challenge of having to navigate two important cornerstones of her identity, being Ukrainian and being Catholic. On the one hand, as Major Archbishop Sviatoslav argued in his address on 8 March 2022, "the Church is and will be with her people."⁵⁸ On the other hand, the UGCC's martyrdom in the 20th century followed, among other things, from the refusal of the Greek Catholic hierarchy and many priests to repudiate the Pope. Thus, the role of the UGCC as a mediator between the Ukrainians and the Pope is particularly important.

4. The Head of the UGCC on the UOC

As noted by Thomas Németh, virtually all religious denominations in Ukraine unequivocally condemned the Russian full-scale invasion.⁵⁹ More complicated is the situation with the Moscow-affiliated UOC, which arguably remains the largest church in Ukraine in terms of the number of parishes. Even though this Church formally severed its ties with the Moscow Patriarchate in May 2022, neither the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) nor other Orthodox Churches consider the UOC autonomous.⁶⁰ Moreover some of the UOC priests collaborated with the Russian occupation forces. Thus, the Ukrainian authorities and a significant segment of the Ukrainian population view the UOC as a threat to national security. On 29 March 2023, the Ukrainian state terminated the UOC's

56 Press Release from the Apostolic Nunciature in Ukraine (28 August 2023). URL: <https://nunciaturekyiv.org/2023/08/28/press-release-from-the-apostolic-nunciature-in-ukraine/>.

57 Cf. Philip Pulella, Pope Did not Aim to Glorify Imperialism in Remarks on Russian Tsars – Vatican (29 August 2023). URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/pope-had-no-intention-glorify-russian-imperialism-vatican-2023-08-29/>.

58 Video-message of His Beatitude Sviatoslav (8 March 2022).

59 Cf. Thomas M. Németh, Der Krieg gegen die Ukraine und die Kirchen. Anfragen an die Theologie, *Limina* 6.1 (2023) 234–255, here: 237.

60 Cf. *ibidem*.

lease agreement in regard to Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra.⁶¹ In turn, on 19 October 2023, the Ukrainian parliament voted for the ban of religious organizations associated with the Russian Federation, with 267 votes supporting the draft law No. 8371 in the first reading.⁶²

In his interview to *Ukrainska pravda* (January 2023), Major Archbishop Sviatoslav recognized the right of the Ukrainian state to prosecute individuals who present a threat to its security, regardless of their religious affiliation. At that time, however, the head of the UGCC did not support the idea of banning the UOC.⁶³ The Major Archbishop's position can be better understood in the light of the UGCC's recent history. In the same interview, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav mentioned "historically difficult" relations between the UGCC and the ROC, referring to the former's merger with the latter at the L'viv pseudo-council (1946).⁶⁴ Then, in the aftermath of the Second World War, during which the Soviet Union annexed Western Ukraine, the Soviet regime liquidated the UGCC through its allegedly voluntary "reunion" with Russian Orthodoxy. In this context, support of the UOC's prohibition by the head of the UGCC may have appeared as originating from a historically grounded resentment of the Greek Catholics towards the Moscow Patriarchate. Yet Major Archbishop Sviatoslav's main argument evolves around the eventual futility of state bans on ecclesiastic institutions, with the UGCC being a bright example: "We survived the underground. Moreover, the very fact that we were a martyred church that did not become a church collaborating with the Soviet authorities saved our moral authority. It is important to understand that the prohibition of a church does not mean the cessation of her existence."⁶⁵ Also, the head of the UGCC

61 Cf. Alya Shandra, *Passions in the Lavra: Why the Ukrainian State Broke Its Patience with the Moscow-Aligned Orthodox Church* (2 April 2023). URL: <https://euromaidanpress.com/2023/04/02/passions-in-the-kyiv-pechersk-lavra-why-the-ukrainian-state-broke-its-patience-for-the-moscow-patriarchate-aligned-orthodox-church/>.

62 Cf. Проект Закону про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо діяльності в Україні релігійних організацій [Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on the Activities of Religious Organisations in Ukraine] (19 January 2023). URL: <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billInfo/Bills/Card/41219>.

63 Cf. Roman Kravets'/Nazariy Mazyliuk, *Чи гріх бажати смерті Путіну? Інтерв'ю з главою УГКЦ Святославом Шевчуком* [Is it a Sin to Wish Putin Death? Interview with the Head of the UGCC Sviatoslav Shevchuk] (19 January 2023). URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2023/01/19/7385485/>.

64 Cf. *ibidem*.

65 This is my translation (K. B.), see in the original: *Ibidem*.

voiced his concern that the ban of the UOC would “give this church the palm of martyrdom.”⁶⁶

The memory of the contemporary UGCC builds upon the martyrdom of those Greek Catholics who fell victim to the communist regime, both during WWII and the underground period. During the post-war period, many Greek Catholic hierarchs and priests served sentences for “treason against the Motherland,” to use the wording of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR. In other words, the Soviet regime used political charges to arrest the opponents of “reunion” and to ban the entire religious institution.

While the majority of the Greek Catholic priests and, consequently, their parishes, “reunited” with the ROC back in 1945–1946, this process was rather formal. Despite the attempts of both the state and the Orthodox hierarchy to eradicate the “remnants of Uniatism” in church liturgy and interior, the adherence to the Greek Catholic tradition in the “reunited” parishes persisted for decades. Moreover, as demonstrated by Natalia Shlikhta, the incorporation of the UGCC into the Moscow Patriarchate led to an unintended result, namely the Ukrainization of the Ukrainian Exarchate of the ROC.⁶⁷

Overall, despite the best efforts of the Soviet regime to annihilate the UGCC, the latter not only survived several decades of communist rule but also re-emerged from the underground, moved its seat to Kyiv (2005) and became one of the most numerous and influential Churches in post-Soviet Ukraine. The UGCC’s experience under the Soviets thus provides at least three important points to consider. First, banning the UOC based on political charges against some clergy may invoke undesired parallels with the post-war abolition of the UGCC. Second, a liquidation of the Church by the state may lead to the opposite result, rendering the aura of martyrdom to the UOC. Third, the transfer of the UOC priests to the OCU, if forced, would hardly change genuine religious and political views of either clergy or parishioners of the Church affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate.

However, in April 2023, the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations issued a statement which deemed it inadmissible for any organization with a direction centre in the Russian Federation, including religious

66 This is my translation (K. B.), see in the original: *Ibidem*.

67 Cf. Natalia Shlikhta, *Церква тих, хто вижив. Радянська Україна, середина 1940-х – початок 1970-х рр.* [The Church of Those Who Survived. Soviet Ukraine, Mid-1940s–Early 1970s], Kharkiv 2011.

ones, to operate in the territory of Ukraine.⁶⁸ Since the UGCC has a membership in the Council, it thus expressed solidarity with other Council members, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, in condemning Russia's instrumentalization of religion.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that since the start of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, the UGCC has unequivocally sided with Ukraine in the Russo-Ukrainian war. The official discourse of the UGCC describes the current hostilities as Russia's war on Ukraine, or, more abstractly, as a struggle of evil and good. The Greek Catholic hierarchs call for prayer, fasting, and works of mercy as an effective means to overcome evil. While Ukraine's struggle is recognized as a just war, the believers are warned against hatred and the dehumanising effects of war.

Whereas some of the Pope's statements caused the dismay of many Ukrainians, the head of the UGCC played the role of a mediator between the Pope and the Ukrainians, explaining the intricacies of the Vatican diplomacy to fellow Ukrainians and conveying the latter's discontent to the Pope. In particular, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav's visit to Rome in November 2022 resulted in Pope Francis' letter of support to the Ukrainian people. As for the debates over the expediency of the UOC's ban in Ukraine, the head of the UGCC warned against the unintended consequences that the Church's liquidation could bring about.

Overall, the UGCC's distinctly Ukrainian character and its experience of martyrdom under communism allow the Church leadership to communicate from a position of moral authority, not only to Greek Catholics but also to Ukrainians at large.

68 Cf. The Council of Churches Condemns Russia's Abuse of Religious Sentiments in Its Aggressive and Unjust War Against Ukraine (12 April 2023). URL: <https://vrciro.org.ua/en/events/rada-tserkov-zasudzhue-zlovzhivannya-rosiyskoyu-federatsieyu-religijnimi-pochuttyami-v-agresivniy-i-nespravedliviy-viyini-proti-ukraini>.

Europeans Lost in Translation

Roman Sigov

This paper examines the prevalent misunderstandings in Europe regarding the developments in Ukraine, emphasizing the substantial influence of Russian narratives. It explores the linguistic manipulation by Russian propaganda, the enduring colonial legacies shaping European attitudes, the challenges in reconciling Russia's authoritarian regime with European democratic ideals through memory politics, and the instrumental role of migration as a geopolitical tool and its role in the current situation. The paper highlights the significance of these factors in shaping European perceptions and responses to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Additionally, it underscores the necessity of understanding the historical and socio-cultural contexts underpinning these narratives. This analysis aims to enhance awareness and inform more effective policy making to address the ongoing war.

1. Introduction

The present paper highlights the issue of misconstrued comprehension among Europeans regarding the developments in Ukraine across multiple dimensions. The resulting repercussions are conspicuously evident and regrettably transparent, though they may not be readily recognised as direct outcomes of the factors described herein. This text does not pretend to quantify the problem, but rather to assume the existence of the problem and attempt to outline different components of it.

The leitmotiv and primary research inquiry of this study revolves around the factors influencing the presence and impact of Russian narratives in Europe. Accordingly, this chapter proposes a non-exclusive list of aspects that warrant consideration in exploring this subject. This primarily includes the linguistic dimension and the role of Russian propaganda therein. While this factor can be characterised as external, the second one is, rather, internal and addresses

the colonial component of European politics and other social spheres. This encompasses Europe's colonial history – in particular, its continental form – which informs contemporary dynamics and perceptions of colonialism itself. Additionally, the politics of memory in Europe and beyond must be mentioned as a third factor. The phenomenon of migration is the fourth consideration.

As a person who has migrated several times during the last few years under several different circumstances, I feel the need to look closer at migration on the global scale as an instrument that shapes European discourse about the Russian war against Ukraine. Indeed, the hypotheses expressed in this chapter are strongly influenced by studying and working in such countries as Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Ireland, and by collaborating with international media to cover the Russian war against Ukraine and other kinds of formal and informal interaction with Europeans and Russians.

Regarding the terminology, one of the key concepts of this chapter – the Europeans – is also one of the most challenging to define¹. It will deliberately not be restricted to one precise definition and yet it will be understood less from a geographical and more from a socio-cultural point of view.

2. Discursive Dimension

In order to comprehensively analyse the perception of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, it is valuable to attempt to illuminate its semiological dimension and, in doing so, to emphasise the historical and socio-cultural context that underlies it. It is evident that language plays a pivotal role in the depiction of reality, a notion that gained prominence with the advent of the linguistic turn² in the 20th century. This paradigm shift underscores the significance of perceiving and comprehending the words and the text they collectively construct. In this regard, the Russian disinformation campaigns accompanying the military aggression cannot remain without scholarly attention³. There has

1 Cf. Anna Triandafyllidou/Ruby Gropas, *What is Europe?*, New York 2022, 3. [DOI: 10.4324/9781003278375]. All internet links in this article were last accessed on 19 April 2024.

2 Cf. Richard Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn. Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago – London 1967.

3 Cf. Eveline Mărășoiu, *Considerations on the Role of Information (-Psychological) Operations in Russian Military Thinking*, in: *Bulletin of "Carol I" National Defence University* 12/1 (2023) 7–18; Christopher Paul/Miriam Matthews, *The Russian "Firehose of Falsehood" Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It* (11 July 2016). [DOI: 10.7249/PE198]; Volodymyr Yermolenko (ed.), *Re-Vision of*

been academic research on the methods of propaganda and, more broadly, on the postmodern, post-truth society that provides the framework for the psychological and information operations⁴.

The latter have also been an object of studies by the government structures in the US⁵ and in the EU⁶. They have been deceived by a perverted Russian vocabulary since the Russian invasion in 2014, which is used in the hybrid warfare of the Russian war machine. Notable examples of this language strategy include the usage of terms such as “special military operation” instead of “war,” as well as the misleading usage of the terms “peace,” “freedom,” “escalation risks,” “necessity of a ceasefire,” “negotiations,” “compromise” and so forth. The list could be continued much longer and also contains constructions such as the “Ukraine crisis,” “Ukraine conflict” or “Ukraine war” instead of the “Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.” The linguistic features are shaping the discourse away from the unjust nature of this war and create the illusion that Russia is either not involved in the war crimes or participates in the war on equal terms with Ukraine. The resulting narratives can be framed as a part of the confrontation between the different forces, which in terms of dichotomies can be formulated as East and West, North and South, democracy and autocracy, EU, USA and Russia or USSR. Overlooking these cleavages can allow the falacious messages produced in Russia to be perceived as if they were coming from inside the European milieu.

At the same time, there is a risk of overestimating the “clash of civilisations”⁷ and of putting debatable borders between them. This is why it is problematic to perceive the Russian Orthodox Church as the main representative of the Ortho-

History. Russian Historical Propaganda and Ukraine, Kyiv 2019; Dominique Geissler et al., Russian Propaganda on Social Media during the 2022 Invasion of Ukraine, in: EPJ Data Science 12 (2023). [DOI: 10.1140/epjds/s13688-023-00414-5]; Todd C. Helmus et al., Russian Social Media Influence. Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe, Santa Monica 2018. [DOI: 10.7249/RR2237].

- 4 Peter Pomerantsev, *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible. The Surreal Heart of the New Russia*, New York 2014.
- 5 U. S. Department of State, GEC Special report: Pillars of Russia’s Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem (August 2020). URL: <https://www.state.gov/russias-pillars-of-disinformation-and-propaganda-report>.
- 6 EUvsDisinfo, *The Kremlin’s travelling roadshow*, 2023. URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/the-kremlins-travelling-roadshow>; Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (European Commission), Digital Services Act. Application of the Risk Management Framework to Russian Disinformation Campaigns, Luxembourg 2023. URL: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/764631>.
- 7 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 72/3 (1993) 22–49, 22. [DOI: 10.2307/20045621].

dox world, while in reality its phyletist actions⁸ put in doubt its very belonging to the Orthodox Church. This should be considered along with its patriarch being an agent of the secret services of his country for decades. According to the archives at the disposal of the Swiss federal police, Russian Patriarch Kirill worked as a KGB agent in Geneva when he was a representative at the World Council of Churches⁹. This leads to the conclusion that the WCC is possibly used by the Russian Orthodox Church as a platform to promote the interests of the Russian State.

3. Colonial Component

Although the Russian war against Ukraine entered a new phase on the 24th of February 2022 and is characterised by an unprecedented scale of military confrontation and terrorism against civil society, it remains an escalation of the war that started in 2014. The prevailing understanding posits that the present war necessitates analysis through the lens of continental colonialism¹⁰. An exhaustive historical examination would surpass the scope of this article, yet it is salient to acknowledge that the origins of Russian military aggression against Ukraine go back to the 17th century. It is characterized by a persistent evolution of various forms of subjugation, for example, the genocidal famine (Holodomor) in the 1930s¹¹. So, it is vitally important to see the path dependency of the contemporary Russian attitude towards Ukraine. It consistently follows the idea of Russian superiority, centrality and claim to a domineering role in the region with the status-quo expressed by the idea of “russky mir” (Russian world)¹². This situation has been often tolerated by the global community, including Europe. Partially, it might be explained by the need for further efforts to rethink continental colonialism in Europe.

8 Cf. Cyril Hovorun, *Ethnophyletism, Phyletism, and the Pan-orthodox Council*, in: *The Wheel* 12 (2018) 62–67, 65.

9 Cf. Sylvain Besson/Bernhard Odehnal, *Putins Patriarch war Spion in der Schweiz*, in: *SonntagsZeitung* (5 February 2023). URL: <https://epaper.sonntagszeitung.ch/article/10000/10000/2023-02-05/1/130050758>.

10 Cf. Dittmar Schorkowitz, *The Shifting Forms of Continental Colonialism. An Introduction*, in: Dittmar Schorkowitz/John R. Chávez/Ingo W. Schröder (eds.), *Shifting Forms of Continental Colonialism. Unfinished Struggles and Tensions*, Singapore 2019, 23–68.

11 Cf. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York 2022.

12 Cyril Hovorun, *Interpreting the “Russian World”*, in: Andrii Krawchuk/Thomas Bremer (eds.), *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, New York 2016, 163–171, 163. [DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-34144-6_8].

By adopting a view of path dependency, these tendencies are the result of a historical path undergone by Europe, including the development of European thought. The issue of colonialism has not been entirely resolved, neither at the global level of Europe's international relations, nor at the intra-European level. Colonialism can be expressed not only by a dominance over certain territories but also by accepting such attitudes from other colonial forces. In terms of paradigmatic limits, this attitude is also expressed in overestimating the role of great powers and underestimating the agency of smaller ones in foreign relations. In other words, in certain situations, the gap between the stronger and weaker international players is perceived as bigger than it is. This is one of the main reasons for the international surprise of the defensive success of the Ukrainian army in early 2022 and also for the slow readiness to deliver heavy weapons. This is a result of the logic of *realpolitik* which places Ukraine in a "a geographic corridor (...) between Russia and the EU/NATO"¹³ and denies its agency as an independent actor.

Ukraine is one of the largest countries in Europe. After the fall of the Soviet Union, it owned more than 1,000 nuclear warheads and it arguably has one of the strongest armies on the continent¹⁴ (at least in terms of ground forces). It could be argued that the EU's limited interest in Ukraine is due to the level of economic development of the former. Indeed, it is hard to overestimate the importance of the economic element in European politics since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. However, it is also worth mentioning that the characteristics of Russian economic development are not equivalent to its political significance in Europe. Russian natural resources played an increasingly important role for the Europeans since 1991, however 1) they are not irreplaceable, as the current developments show, and 2) there is still a tendency to keep the Russian status quo (similarly to how it was with the USSR just before its collapse).

Hard power is not the only important factor, although it significantly contributes to the status of a country and, therefore, to its relations with other actors. Unlike hard power (e. g. traditional military force), soft power¹⁵ (e. g. cultural diplomacy) is more fragile to how it is perceived. Although the Russian military aggression cannot be stopped other than by equal or superior military power and

13 Nicholas R. Smith/Grant Dawson, Mearsheimer, Realism, and the Ukraine War, in: *Analyse & Kritik* 44/2, (2022) 175–200, 180. [DOI: 10.1515/auk-2022-2023].

14 Global Firepower, 2024 Military Strength Ranking. URL: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>.

15 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power, in: *Foreign Policy* 80 (1990) 153–171, 153. [DOI: 10.2307/1148580].

inaction causes damage, Russian soft power can be countered by eliminating the colonial constituent from foreign policy.

4. Politics of the Past

Hopes for a transformation of Russia into a democratic state through a sudden and remarkable shift are characterizable by a degree of naivety¹⁶. Instead of improving national memory of the crimes of its predecessors, the current Russian regime is actively blaming the Ukrainians of being fascist and Nazis. Russian propaganda depicting Ukrainians as collaborators with the Nazis has been spread ever since the end of the Second World War and reached its culmination in 2022 when “denazification” was declared an official justification for Russian aggression. This justification does not correlate with reality, which is why it disappeared from Russian propagandistic media almost as quickly as the presumption of capturing Kyiv in three days.

Another Russian strategy of feigning blame on Ukraine is to play on the existing international acknowledgement of Nazi crimes while denying the crimes of Russian communism. As a result, even in Europe, the position that Germany’s crimes were far more terrible than the crimes of the USSR and Russia put together is popularised. Therefore, a potential conclusion in regard to the future relations of Russia with Ukraine is the following: if Germany has been forgiven by the Allies, it will not be difficult to forgive Russia in the same way. However, such a simplified understanding is misleading, reductionist and dangerous for a number of reasons: 1) the lack of democracy in Russia¹⁷, 2) the imperial nature of the war¹⁸ following centuries of unilateral oppression, 3) the absence of knowledge and solutions to the problem, as Russia’s defeat is not yet expected in the near future at the time of writing this text, 4) even if the defeat would be close, there are currently no mechanisms or tools to address this problem, and it would be a mistake to use the same tools for dealing with memory as the Germans, because it is a different context. The difference is, first of all, that the Russians do not have a clear ideology, and if they do have one, it operates in a different way than Nazism. At the moment, we are only at the beginning of understanding this phenomenon. Attempts to conceptualise

16 Cf. Miłosz Jeromin Cordes, *Why Russia Needs Decolonisation for its Future Democratisation*, in: *New Eastern Europe* 54/6 (2022) 41–47, 46.

17 Cf. Michael McFaul, *Russia’s Road to Autocracy*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 32/4 (2021) 11–26, 11.

18 Cf. Jeffrey Mankoff, *The War in Ukraine and Eurasia’s New Imperial Moment*, in: *The Washington Quarterly* 45/2 (2022) 127–147, 127. [DOI:10.1080/0163660X.2022.2090761].

this phenomenon in terms of nationalism are arduous, because nationalism requires a certain national identity. So far, it seems that the imperial Russian identity demands a need for domination over its neighbours¹⁹. Effective work on memory, which would enable Russians to reconcile with their victims, should involve awareness of colonial thinking, its rejection and acknowledging the responsibility for one's actions. However, if a principal aspect of Russian identity is abandoned (it is worth remembering the multi-ethnic nature of the Russian Federation-Empire), the very existence of a Russian nation will be contended. If it ceases to exist, this creates a major obstacle, because to reconcile two subjects, it is necessary to have at least two subjects. So, regardless of the approach used to pursue the prospect of reconciliation, it becomes clear that the path is fraught with pitfalls, some of them insurmountable.

5. The Factor of Migration

There is a need to describe and conceptualise the perception of Russian and Ukrainian societies by the people of Europe. One phenomenon which has an explanatory value for the current state of affairs is migration. Migration policy has long been a means for empires to establish control over their territory, including forceful deportations. This approach to migration policy within the empire promotes ethnic mixing and amalgamation of the population within a specific territory and, therefore, facilitates control over it²⁰.

Migration is also one of the most important instruments of foreign policy in modern times. This has been especially evident in Europe in the last decade, when Russia and other countries used migration to exert geopolitical influence, particularly on Europe, as was the case, for example, with the migration crisis in Europe²¹. Accordingly, Russian strategy seeks to incite conflict in a certain part of the world, which creates a flow of migrants that leads to logistical, infrastructural, political and other challenges. In addition, it contributes to radicalisation in the political sentiments of a population, thus creating social and political divisions.

It is possible to further explore Russia's strategic intent in utilising its belligerent actions against Ukraine as a means to generate a migration influx of

19 Cf. Taras Kuzio, *Imperial Nationalism as the Driver Behind Russia's Invasion of Ukraine*, in: *Nations and Nationalism* 29/1 (2023) 30–38, 30.

20 Cf. Terry Martin, *The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing*, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 70/4 (1998) 813–861, 813. [DOI: 10.1086/235168].

21 Cf. Jeanne Park, *Europe's Migration Crisis* (23 September 2015). URL: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/europes-migration-crisis>.

Ukrainian nationals into Europe as a lever of influence. At the same time, less attention is paid to migration from the core of the empire (rather than the periphery) to the outside. In this case, we are talking about Russian migrants to Europe and to the general West. When discussing the framework of the strategic plan, a distinction should also be made between the extent to which this policy is consciously and purposefully implemented or unconsciously, inertially and reactively. Positing that the 2022 migration patterns of Ukrainians and Russians abroad represent the primary objectives of either the Russian or Ukrainian parties would be a dubious argument. In this context, Ukrainians are largely involuntary participants, serving as hostages of the situation, and their ability to shape migration policies is somewhat constrained. Conversely, Russia possesses significantly greater agency, including the capacity to bring an end to the conflict, thereby potentially altering or reversing the trajectory of migration flows.

It is important to consider the points of departure and arrival of migrants, as well as their social status. A hypothesis can be proposed that the wealthiest and most socially and culturally cultivated Russians from central Russia would be inclined to leave for wealthier countries. It is in this context that the issue of soft power is of paramount importance, because it is these people who are able to influence social and political consciousness most effectively. It is arguable that by fleeing from Putin's regime, these Russian migrants are expected to take a position in agreement with the principal stance of Ukraine and its allies. However, being members of the (former) elite of the contemporary Russian empire, they are also expected to return or maintain their status quo. This partially explains their lack of advocacy for military help to Ukraine and their advocacy for lifting the economic sanctions, as well as the other potential threats to Russia as a whole.

It is pertinent to discuss the presence of conditions that, if not actively promoting emigration, at least do not pose significant hindrances to the departure of the Russian cultural elite abroad. Such circumstances are not incidental but are the product of deliberate actions. It is not the first time this situation has occurred. For example, at least behind the façade, the state system of the USSR changed drastically and, in theory, the cultural and political foundations also changed, compelling the cultural elite ideologically opposed to those foundations to flee the country. The subject under consideration pertains to the migratory waves out of the USSR, including the renowned *philosophical steamers*²². Presently, we find ourselves in a position to observe not quite the same

22 Cf. Lesley Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War. The Voyage of the Philosophy Steamer and the Exile of the Intelligentsia*, New York 2007, 1.

phenomenon, but one that has similar features. It should be noted that migration can play a role in soft power politics. It is about the apparent paradox that people who do not represent Russian society do represent it. This is because people who are not representative of the population of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, first of all, claim (actively or passively) to be *de facto* representative of them, or at least give the impression of being representative of their home population to the host countries.

A crucial aspect to consider is that the concept of “soft power” is relatively new in academic and public discourse. This is because the understanding of not just the presence of soft power in foreign policy (this was true even before the 1990s) but the full significance, and even dominance (at least as it seemed), of soft power in international relations came only in the late 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Before that, the study of internal migration policy was more practiced while external migration policy was given less attention. The perspective adopted to approach the external migration policies can be called the *studies of migration policy squared* or *migration meta-policy*, so that a third country is included in the analysis. An example for the latter is found in several studies that examine how Russia uses a third country (e. g. Syria) to place migratory pressure on European countries²³. As a consequence, less attention is paid to Russia’s internal migration policy.

There is reason to believe that the Russian migration of the past still has a significant impact on the perception of Russia and Ukraine abroad (in addition to the massive work of the state propaganda machine). This is because the Russian migrants were fleeing a declaratively anti-imperial revolution, the Bolsheviks. Consequently, these migrants had reason to retain a conditional nostalgia for the empire. That is why the descendants of Russian migrants, who associated themselves with the Russian heritage and cultivated russophilia abroad, protested against the Soviet Union. Evidently, rather potent anti-Soviet sentiments existed. However, it might be assumed that some of these people perceived the collapse of the Soviet Union to a certain extent as the return of Russia. From a linguistic perspective, it is apparent that this progression can be chronologically situated in the sequence of Russia-USSR-Russia (although *de jure* today’s Russia is not called an empire, as it once was, but “democratic federal law-bound State with a republican form of government”²⁴). Accordingly, for some people both inside and outside of Russia, the return of the Russian

23 Cf. Angela Stent, *Putin’s Power Play in Syria. How to Respond to Russia’s Intervention*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 95/1 (2016) 106–113, 106.

24 Constitution of the Russian Federation, First Section, Ch. 1, Art. 1.

Empire was seen as a positive development that had been awaited since the Bolshevik Revolution.

A paradox is revealed; following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, two diametrically opposed trends are discernible. On the one side, there is a marked and radical disassociation of the USSR from Russia, forming a stark contrast as the former vanishes and the latter reemerges. On the other side, there is a perception that Russia is the same entity as the USSR. For instance, this accounts for the seemingly purely legal field of succession in the UN, the UN Security Council in particular²⁵, the consequence of which is the critical paralysation of the Security Council²⁶. There is no resolution, neither by the General Assembly nor by the Security Council, that determines that Russia took over the seat of the USSR in the UN. In other words, from one day to the next, the representatives of the USSR in the UN became representatives of Russia without any normative document or act. This blatant transfer of power is a consequence of the consciousness in which Russia and the Soviet Union are one and the same, which, in turn, is a continuation of the European and American unwillingness to see the USSR disappear from the political map of the world²⁷.

This phenomenon can be attributed, in part, to the inherently colonial character of the Soviet Union itself, sharing its origins with the tendency to overlook Russian policies in what is referred to as its sphere of influence, often denoted as the “Russian world”, lacking well-defined borders. This is a manifestation of the acquiescence to Russian colonialism that was also at the heart of the Soviet Union. A better understanding of it can contribute to the explanation of the mythologised image of Russia which exists in Europe. Contrary to the Russian experience, Ukrainian culture has been mostly either not known, or considered to be a part of the USSR and Russian culture or seen as marginal.

6. Conclusions

It is crucial to understand the vast differences between the European languages and the Russian language and the distinction between European cultures and the Russian culture in order to ensure that any message is communicated

25 Cf. Yehuda Z. Blum, *Russia Takes Over the Soviet Union's Seat at the United Nations*, in: *European Journal of International Law* 3 (1992) 354–361, 354.

26 Cf. Alun Jones, ‘Waging Word Wars’: The ‘Emotionscape’ of the United Nations Security Council and the Russian War in Ukraine, in: *Political Geography* 108 (2024) 103032. [DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2023.103032].

27 Cf. Serhii Plokhyy, *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine*, New York 2015, 318.

accurately and understood properly. The Ukrainian experience is pivotal in this decoding process as it presupposes an exposure to both European and Russian-Soviet *modi vivendi* and *operandi*. It is even more pertinent to take the Ukrainian perspective into consideration as it has suffered and has been artificially muted throughout the centuries, either via laws prohibiting the use of the Ukrainian language or by restricting the freedom of speech. When searching for the correct translation in any context where the interpretations are contested, it is indispensable to involve the victim of aggression to this process and provide them with the respective room for expression. Given the multicultural and multi-ethnic Ukrainian society, it is an optimal modality to create an environment of mutual understanding. In search of the most correct interpretation between the cultures, the decoding of the meanings of words and phrases, as well as learning the socio-cultural languages, is required. This dynamic operates bidirectionally; it necessitates the deciphering of the Russian language to comprehend Russian speech practices, while also necessitating a nuanced approach to formulate and transmit the messages effectively.

In conclusion, the present study has provided an exploration of the narratives surrounding the current war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine. Four factors have been examined to develop a greater understanding of the reasons facilitating the dominance of some of these narratives and the acceptance of others. Firstly, the study underscores the pervasive influence of linguistic manipulation, particularly by Russian propaganda efforts, which shapes European perceptions of the conflict. Secondly, this study highlights the enduring colonial legacies that inform European attitudes and policies towards Ukraine and Russia. Thirdly, this study examines the challenges of reconciling Russia's authoritarian regime with European democratic ideals through an examination of memory politics. Lastly, this study investigates the instrumental role of migration as a geopolitical tool in shaping European responses to the crisis is revealed.

It is hoped that the ideas outlined here will serve to stimulate further research on this topic of critical importance. By delving deeper into these dimensions and exploring their interplay, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of European engagement with the Ukrainian crisis and inform more effective policymaking responses. Such research endeavors are essential for navigating the complexities of the ongoing conflict and advancing efforts towards a peaceful resolution.

Friends or Foes? Religious Organizations and European Institutions in the Face of Russia's War on Ukraine

Iuliia Korniiuchuk

The paper explores the challenges posed by Russia's war against Ukraine to the relations between European institutions and religious organizations. In recent decades, with the resurgence of religion in the public sphere, European institutions have become a platform for dialogue with religious entities, including Orthodox churches, on various non-religious issues. Russia's war in Ukraine has strained this cooperation. While the EU unequivocally condemned the invasion and supported Ukraine, many Orthodox Churches struggled to clearly name and condemn the aggression or, like the Moscow Patriarchate, openly supported the war. This article investigates the EU institutions' responses to the involvement of the Moscow Patriarchate in the war and the challenges these responses pose.

1. Introduction

From the outset in 2014, the Russo-Ukrainian war remained largely localized as a regional conflict until February 2022, when it escalated to global significance with a full-scale invasion. The reverberations of this conflict were felt across the globe, impacting a myriad of unexpected actors. Among these, the active participation of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) stands out as a noteworthy development, though not entirely unforeseen. Despite the fact that prior to the full-scale invasion nearly every third parish of the ROC was located in Ukraine¹, the Church vociferously and unequivocally endorsed the aggres-

1 The Moscow Patriarchate had approximately 39,000 parishes, 12,500 of which were in Ukraine. Cf. Patriarchia.ru, 'The Internal Life and External Activities of the Russian Orthodox Church from 2009 to 2019 [In Russian]' (29 January 2019). URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5359105.html> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

sive military campaign against Ukraine. This endorsement was not confined to public prayers by the Russian Patriarch for the “swift victory” of the aggressor state², or to statements of absolution for the deceased occupiers³. It extended to practical measures, such as the wide-scale collection of “aid” for the Russian occupying forces in Ukraine⁴, and the participation in the unlawful transfer of Ukrainian children to Russian territory⁵ – acts now under scrutiny by the International Criminal Court as potential war crimes and a manifestation of genocide against Ukrainians.

This article attempts to outline the impact of the ROC’s active involvement in the war against Ukraine, on the perception of this church within the European Union (EU), and on its further interaction with EU institutions. In this conflict, the EU unequivocally denounced the aggression and identified Russia as the aggressor, while the ROC, by contrast, lent its support to Russia’s actions, which it had previously laid an ideological groundwork for. This dynamic is further complicated by the fact that at the start of the conflict, the ROC was conspicuously visible and active within open forums for religious organizations in the EU, particularly among Orthodox Churches⁶. This is noteworthy

-
- 2 Cf. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Patriarch Kirill Bestows National Guard of Russia with an Icon That Will “Accelerate Victory” in Ukraine [In Russian] (13 March 2022). URL: <http://www.ng.ru/news/734198.html> [accessed: 28 October 2023].
 - 3 Cf. AP NEWS, Moscow Patriarch: Russian War Dead Have Their Sins Forgiven (27 September 2022). URL: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-religion-moscow-0d2382ff296b7e253cd30c6bbadeed1d> [accessed: 28 October 2023].
 - 4 Cf. TASS, Patriarch Kirill Urged the ROC to Mobilize the Faithful to Collect Aid for the Participants of the SWO [Special Military Operation] [In Russian] (20 January 2023). URL: <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/16851337> [accessed: 28 October 2023].
 - 5 Cf. Yanina Kornienko, *Deport Thy Neighbor: How the Russian Orthodox Church Together with the Security Forces Forcibly Relocate Ukrainians to Russia* (28 April 2022). URL: <https://www.slidstvo.info/english-stories/deport-thy-neighbor-how-the-russian-orthodox-church-together-with-the-security-forces-forcibly-relocate-ukrainians-to-russia/> [accessed: 28 October 2023].
 - 6 The study of religion in the EU is most often represented by research on church-state relations in the member states. Among the works focusing specifically on the interaction of religious organizations with EU institutions, the contributions of François Foret (e.g., *Religion and Politics in the European Union: The Secular Canopy*, New York 2015) and Lucian Leustean (e.g., *The Ecumenical Movement and the Making of the European Community*, Oxford 2014; *Representing Religion in the European Union: Does God Matter?*, Routledge 2013) are particularly noteworthy. On the role and politics of the Orthodox churches in the EU, see e.g.: Lucian Leustean, *The Politics of Orthodox Churches in the European Union*, in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 18/2–3 (2018) 146–157 [DOI: 10.1080/1474225X.2018.1504598]; Effie Fokas, *Eastern Orthodoxy and Europe*, in: Grace Davie/Lucian Leustean (eds.), *The Oxford*

considering the anti-Western rhetoric espoused by the Russian government and the ROC itself.

This article draws from various sources, including missives sent by the Russian Patriarch to EU institutions addressing diverse facets of the conflict, and excerpts of these missives that are publicly available. It also encompasses accessible databases and documents from pivotal EU institutions, such as the European Parliament and the European Commission. These resources include relevant resolutions, appeals by civil society organizations and parliamentary inquiries on the religious situation in Ukraine starting from the beginning of the Russian invasion, and other areas of intersection between the war and religion.

This article is structured in three parts. The initial section delves into the representation of religious entities within European institutions, with a specific emphasis on Orthodox churches. The subsequent section delineates the nuances of the ROC's portrayal of the Russo-Ukrainian war in its interactions with European institutions, as well as the response of the European Parliament and European Commission to the church's active endorsement of Russian aggression. Finally, the last segment analyses the challenges that religious organizations now face when collaborating with EU institutions due to the war.

2. Religion and the Representation of Orthodox Churches in EU Institutions

The EU's policy towards religion and its collaboration with religious organizations is a dynamic and multifaceted issue. On the one hand, the principle of non-interference by EU institutions in religious matters is deeply ingrained in public discourse. This stance, often characterized as "the godlessness of the West" in Russian political rhetoric, firmly asserts that religious issues are the exclusive domain of individual member states. Any deviation from this status quo triggers a significant wave of criticism, exemplified by the debate surrounding the mere mention of Christian heritage in the draft European Constitution.

Handbook of Religion and Europe, Oxford 2021, 480–496; Effie Fokas, 'Eastern' Orthodoxy and 'Western' Secularization in Contemporary Europe (with Special Reference to the Case of Greece), in: *Religion, State and Society* 40/3–4 (2012) 395–414 [DOI: 10.1080/09637494.2012.754269]; Sorin Selaru, Representing the Orthodox Churches to the European Union, in: *Ortodoksia* 54 (2015) 54–80. URL: <https://journal.fi/ortodoksia/article/view/129926/78573> [accessed: 27 March 2024].

On the other hand, the EU has undergone a notable shift in its approach towards religious organizations and religion. While the ideals of religious unity played a substantial role in the formation of a cohesive European community⁷, the imperative for systematic collaboration with religious organizations emerged with the Draft Constitution for Europe in 2004. This principle was then echoed, almost verbatim, in the Lisbon Treaty (2007), which amended the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty, a pivotal provision pertaining to religious matters, outlines three key principles: firstly, it underscores the importance of respecting national traditions regarding state-church relations within EU member states. Secondly, it acknowledges the equal standing of religious and non-religious organizations at the EU level. Thirdly, it mandates that the EU engages in an “open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches and other organizations”⁸ that represent civil society. Religious organizations operate within EU institutions exclusively in this capacity of, and on behalf of, civil society. In adopting this stance towards religious organizations, the EU neither pioneered nor deviated from established norms. Numerous international organizations, from the UN to the Council of Europe, regard the voice of religious organizations as an integral part of the broader civil society.

As of October 2023, The Transparency Register documents the registration of 12,412 non-governmental organizations representing the interests of EU citizens in European institutions. Among these, 47 are organizations advocating for churches and religious entities⁹. The majority of these are associations and networks that unite relevant religious organizations across various EU nations. Notable examples include the inter-Christian Conference of European Churches, the Catholic Commission of the Episcopates of the European Union (COMECE), and the European Jewish Congress.

7 Cf. Lucian Leustean, *The Ecumenical Movement and the Making of the European Community*, Oxford 2014.

8 European Union, Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community. Signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007 (Notice No. 2007/C 306/01), in: *Official Journal of the European Union* 50 (2007) 1–230. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:TOC> [accessed: 28 October 2023], Art. 17.

9 European Union, Transparency Register Annual Report 2023. URL: https://transparency-register.europa.eu/index_en [accessed: 28 October 2023].

The representation of Orthodox churches primarily occurs through the Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union¹⁰. Established in 2010, this committee brings together representatives from four EU countries with Orthodox majorities – Greece, Cyprus, Romania, and Bulgaria, along with representatives from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church. While the latter two are headquartered outside the EU, they maintain a significant number of parishes within the EU, justifying their participation on this basis¹¹. In addition to the committee, several Orthodox churches have established separate representations within Brussels institutions since the early 1990s¹². However, these do not possess the same official status as the organizations listed in the Transparency Register. Notably, the only Orthodox church with individual representation in this system is the Romanian Orthodox Church (Representation of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions).

Despite the professed willingness to collaborate with all religious organizations and the asserted commitment to treating them equally, such collaboration varies for different Orthodox churches and their adherents. This discrepancy primarily arises from the complex interrelations between the churches themselves, impacting the nature of their engagement with European institutions.

10 As of the time of writing this paper, the organization had been delisted from the register, notwithstanding its longstanding presence therein.

11 The issue of spiritual care for the diaspora and the establishment of parishes beyond recognized church territories has emerged as a major point of contention in Orthodox church relations. In the early twentieth century, the Patriarch of Constantinople succeeded in rationalizing Constantinople's exclusive authority over diaspora communities, a right vehemently contested by Moscow. With the onset of Russia's aggressive invasion of Ukraine, certain Western European Orthodox parishes announced their transition from the Russian Orthodox Church to the jurisdiction of Constantinople. For more on the problem of the diaspora in Orthodoxy, see: Berit Thorbjørnsrud, "The Problem of the Orthodox Diaspora": The Orthodox Church between Nationalism, Transnationalism, and Universality, in: *Numen* 62/5–6 (2015) 568–595 [DOI: 10.1163/15685276-12341394]. On the parish transfers, see, e.g.: Pjotr Sauer, Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam Announces Split with Moscow, in: *The Guardian* (13 March 2022). URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/13/russian-orthodox-church-in-amsterdam-announces-split-with-moscow> [accessed: 27 March 2024].

12 For more on that see: Lucian Leustean, Representing Religion in the European Union. A Typology of Actors, in: *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 12/3 (2011) 295–315 [DOI: 10.1080/21567689.2011.596415].

In accordance with Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty¹³, the European Parliament hosts annual high-level meetings with religious leaders in order to maintain a dialogue with religious organizations. Over nearly a decade since Russia's war, only two of these meetings have addressed this issue, and both occurred only after the full-scale invasion (December 2022, January 2023; "The impact of the war in Ukraine on the European way of life"¹⁴). Despite the multi-million wave of Ukrainians seeking temporary protection in the EU, the one predominantly authorized to speak on their behalf at such gatherings is still the ROC – the church that provided the ideological basis for this war and actively supports it.

At present, the only interconfessional organization within this register, which now also represents Ukrainian Orthodox entities outside the Moscow Patriarchate, is the Conference of European Churches, of which the Orthodox Church of Ukraine became a member only in September 2023.

3. Support for the War by the Russian Orthodox Church and its Reflection in Interaction with Key EU Institutions

Since the initial wave of Russian aggression (2014–2022), the Russian Orthodox Church has predominantly directed its efforts towards a group of political leaders, ranging from EU and UN bodies to the heads of state of the G7, the Normandy Four, and even the Pope. In these missives, the Patriarch frames the conflict initiated by Russia as an internal Ukrainian civil strife. It is noteworthy that the conflict is often depicted in religious terms – as a struggle of "uniates" and "schismatics" (terms employed by the Patriarch to refer to the adherents of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and other than UOC[MP] Ukrainian Orthodox churches) against "canonical Orthodoxy", with the latter denoting the Moscow Patriarchate itself¹⁵. The significance of these letters lies not only in

13 Cf. European Parliament, *The European Parliament's Implementation of Article 17 TFEU [Treaty on the Functioning of the EU]* (n. d.). URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/religious-and-non-confessional-dialogue/home/en-article17-the-ep-implementation.pdf> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

14 European Commission, *JUST – Dialogue with Churches, Religious Associations or Communities and Philosophical and Non-Confessional Organisations* (27 January 2023). URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/50189/en> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

15 Cf. Russian Orthodox Church, *His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Addresses the U.N., the European Council, and the OSCE Concerning Facts of Persecution Against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Besieged Southeast Ukraine* (18 August 2014). URL: <http://orthochristian.com/73060.html> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

their content and linguistic choices, but also in their timing, which frequently coincides with pivotal events on the front lines or in Ukrainian political affairs. For instance, the cited letter was published less than a week prior to Ukraine's Independence Day, during the Battle of Ilovaisk – one of the most tragic moments of the war for Ukrainians before the full-scale invasion.

Another form of this contentious information dissemination involved an endeavor to artificially amplify its own voice. In 2017, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC[MP]) established an autonomous representative office for European international organizations, aligning itself closely with Russian pro-government narratives. This role was also undertaken by certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A relevant instance is the appeal from the Belgian Foundation for the Protection of Civil and Political Rights (*Fondation pour la protection des droits civils et politiques*) to the European Parliament, addressing the purported suppression of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine. The organization emphatically underscored its Belgian origin and impartiality, beseeching the EP to address the oppression faced by the faithful of this church, as documented on its official website (see case materials:¹⁶). Simultaneously, the person representing the aforementioned Belgian NGO and signing the appeal turned out to be one of the speakers of the UOC[MP] and was later honored with an award by the church.

In a broader context, the aforementioned documents, along with numerous other appeals by the Moscow Patriarchate pertaining to the war during that period, exhibit several shared characteristics. Firstly, they conspicuously sidestep the overt act of external military aggression, commonly employing euphemisms like “these events”, “conflict”, “current situation”, and “civil conflict”, while refraining from acknowledging Russia's role. Secondly, they extend a distinct perspective on the content and scope of this phase of the war. The church's appeals exclusively allude to suspected violations of the rights of their own church beyond the confines of the war zone. In contrast to the majority of both Ukrainian and international religious and secular organizations, the Moscow Patriarchate consistently refrained from acknowledging gross human rights transgressions and the persecution of other religious entities on the oc-

16 Fondation pour la protection des droits civils et politiques, Request for Action in Relation to the Alleged Unlawful Seizures of Religious Institutions Belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) in 2014 and 2015 (7 June 2016). URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/courrier_officiel/arri/vee/2016/EP-PE_LTA\(2016\)006426_FULL_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/courrier_officiel/arri/vee/2016/EP-PE_LTA(2016)006426_FULL_EN.pdf) [accessed: 28 October 2023].

cupied territories, even when the declared purpose of such violations was to propagate “Russian Orthodoxy” as the “prevalent and paramount faith”¹⁷. This rhetoric diverged markedly from the official proclamations of European institutions, which acknowledged the acts of aggression and delineated a wide range of infractions supported by various sources of information¹⁸.

Arguably, the first document that most distinctly underscored the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian information warfare was the European Parliament’s resolution on EU Strategic Communication to Counter Anti-EU Propaganda by Third Parties (2016)¹⁹. In the initial draft, the Orthodox Church was explicitly identified as one of the primary instruments for disseminating Russian disinformation, alongside entities such as “think tanks and special foundations (e. g., Russkiy Mir), special authorities (Rossotrudnichestvo), multilingual TV stations (e. g., RT), pseudo news agencies and multimedia services (e. g., Sputnik)” (Art. 8)²⁰.

The resolution elicited a wave of censure and indignation, primarily from the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches. Ultimately, in the final version of the document, the direct reference to the Orthodox Church was substituted with the broader term “cross-border social and religious groups” (Art. 8)²¹.

17 Own translation, in the original Russian version: “первенствующая и господствующая вера”. This is the language used in the self-proclaimed “Constitution” enacted by the occupying authorities of Donetsk. It was initially derived from the legislation of the Russian Empire. This document prominently endorsed the cause of Russian Orthodoxy. Subsequently, various versions of the document, even those purported to be the original, underwent revisions. The original text is cited from: Alexandr Soldatov, Not Blessed News: Why the Russian Orthodox Church does not Want to Recognize Its Ideological Followers in Donetsk Militiamen [In Russian], in: *Novaya gazeta* 122 (29 October 2014). URL: <https://novyagazeta.ru/articles/2014/10/29/61736-ne-blagaya-vest> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

18 While responses to the patriarch’s letters or other church appeals remain undisclosed to the public, a comparable contradiction emerges in the replies to parliamentary petitions from individual members of the European Parliament who put forth inquiries aligning with the patriarch’s stance. For instance, see: VP/HR – Attacks by Ukrainian Authorities on the Orthodox Church [P8_QE(2014)010367] (8 December 2014/18 February 2015). URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/questions/reponses_qe/2014/010367/P8_RE\(2014\)010367_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/questions/reponses_qe/2014/010367/P8_RE(2014)010367_EN.pdf) [accessed: 28 October 2023].

19 European Parliament, EU Strategic Communication to Counteract Anti-EU Propaganda by Third Parties [P8_TA(2016)0441 (2016/2030(INI))] (23 November 2016). URL: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0441_EN.pdf [accessed: 28 October 2023].

20 Ibidem.

21 Ibidem.

Notable is the disagreement among Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in assessing the required amendments, which is evident in the annals of the document's history. Among the more than two dozen proposed amendments to this specific section, several suggestions not so much concerned the removal of the reference to the Orthodox Church (although there were some instances), but rather the implication that it referred specifically to the Russian Orthodox Church as well as the account of the specific methods and tools used by the ROC to conduct these harmful activities²².

One of the pragmatic outcomes of this resolution was the establishment of the EU Strategic Communication Task Force, which was given the oversight to debunk any disinformation disseminated through the media. To date, the EUvsDisinfo project has scrutinized over 16,000 prevalent disinformation narratives, approximately 200 of which relate to Orthodoxy, mostly within the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war²³.

Finally, with the eruption of the full-scale invasion and the implementation of various EU sanctions packages against Russia (as of October 2023, the 12th iteration is under deliberation), the issue of the response to the active involvement of the Church arises. Despite the recommendation of the European Commission and the backing of certain member states, the EU was unable to arrive at an unanimous consensus regarding the inclusion of the Russian patriarch on its sanctions list. Subsequently, in its official journals, the Holy Synod, until this point reticent on the subject of sanctions against religious figures (with the exception of Ukrainian sanctions), extended special gratitude to Viktor Orbán for averting the imposition of sanctions against the patriarch²⁴.

The absence of unanimity among member states did not hinder specific states from imposing autonomous sanctions against the head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Consequently, in addition to Ukraine, the patriarch found himself listed in the sanctions lists of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia,

22 Cf. Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, Amendments (1 – 358). Draft Report [PE582.060v02-00]. EU Strategic Communication to Counteract Propaganda Against It by Third Parties (2016/2030(INI)). URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/commissions/afet/projet_avis/2016/583932/amendements/AFET_AM\(2016\)583932_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/commissions/afet/projet_avis/2016/583932/amendements/AFET_AM(2016)583932_EN.pdf) [accessed: 28 October 2023].

23 European External Action Service (EEAS), EUvsDisinfo. URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/disinformation-cases/> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

24 Cf. Russian Orthodox Church, Journals of the Holy Synod dated June 7, 2022 [In Russian] (7 June 2022). URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5934527.html> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

and the Czech Republic. Certain constraints, such as prohibitions on entry or television appearances, were imposed by the Baltic states²⁵.

Presently, the EU sanctions list mentions only two individuals whose ties to the ROC are directly stated in the document: the head of the church's Spas TV channel (annex 1, no. 1388) and an individual purportedly responsible for the ROC's links to the sanctioned nationalist motorcycle club Nightwolves MC (annex 1, no. 1206)²⁶. Additionally, at the end of 2023, two structures affiliated with the ROC were also sanctioned: the church TV channel Spas (annex, no. 328) and the church's private military company, "PMC Andreevsky Krest" (annex, no. 309), whose founder is explicitly identified as the ROC in the document²⁷.

4. Challenges for the Future

Despite the fact that the Russo-Ukrainian war is far from being a religious one, religion has both influenced it and undergone significant shifts as a result. In the first instance, it was the religious and political teaching of the "Russian world" that strengthened the ideological basis for the outbreak of the war. The phantom pains of church and state proved to be incredibly close and probably seemed worth taking serious risks to resolve them, despite the fact that both

-
- 25 E.g., see: UK Sanctions List Publication (27 March 2024). URL: <https://docs.fcdo.gov.uk/docs/UK-Sanctions-List.html> [accessed: 27 March 2024] (Patriarch Kirill is listed under number 1467) or LATVIA: State TV Bans Orthodox Worship Services from Broadcast (7 September 2023). URL: <https://hrwf.eu/75604-2/> [accessed: 27 March 2024]. For more on the presence of clerics on sanctions lists related to Russia's war against Ukraine and the challenges associated with the imposition of such sanctions, see: Iuliia Korniiichuk, "This Did Not Happen Even During the Cold War": Religion and International Sanctions in the Russo-Ukrainian War, in: *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations*. URL: <https://internationalrelations-publishing.org/articles/4-3> [preprint; accessed: 23 May 2024].
- 26 Cf. European Union, Council Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 of 17 March 2014 Concerning Restrictive Measures in Respect of Actions Undermining or Threatening the Territorial Integrity, Sovereignty and Independence of Ukraine (15 September 2023). URL: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/269/2023-04-26/eng> [accessed: 28 October 2023].
- 27 Cf. European Union, Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2023/2875 of 18 December 2023 Implementing Regulation (EU) No 269/2014 Concerning Restrictive Measures in Respect of Actions Undermining or Threatening the Territorial Integrity, Sovereignty and Independence of Ukraine (18 December 2023). URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202302875 [accessed: 23 May 2024].

state and church at the time of the war had an outstanding influence in the international arena, which has been purposefully formed and maintained for the church for at least eight decades²⁸. This is what allowed the Russian Orthodox Church to have an exceptional position not only on interdenominational platforms, such as the World Council of Churches or the Conference of European Churches²⁹, but also on secular ones. Platforms within European institutions will not be an exception, as evidenced by such examples as the ROC's participation in the EU's Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches, despite the church's strong anti-Western stance domestically.

In the case of the reverse impact of war on religion, perhaps the biggest one was the autocephaly of the Orthodox community in Ukraine, which seemed absolutely unrealistic before the war began in 2014. The discourse surrounding Ukrainian autocephaly in the backdrop of the war, and the necessity to counteract the imperial narrative of the ROC, spurred discussions in various other countries. These discussions ranged from progress in the Macedonian religious issue to calls for the independence of Orthodox communities in the Baltic states³⁰.

This resurgence of the intricate interplay between religion and politics, as well as religion and security, coincided with a shift in the discourse surrounding EU enlargement, which also appeared to be at an impasse until 24 February 2022. If the 2004 enlargement of the EU has often been dubbed the “great enlargement”, the next one is likely to be referred to as the “Orthodox”. Presently, six out of the nine EU candidate countries boast strong Orthodox majorities – North Macedonia (59 %), Montenegro (74 %), Serbia (86 %), Ukraine (77 %), Moldova (95 %), and Georgia (87 %)³¹. In Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Orthodox Christians constitute significant minorities, with a population of about 20 % and 30 % respectively. Turkey, while not home to a substantial

28 For more on the topic, see e.g.: William C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945–1970*. London 1973; Alicja Curanović, *The Religious Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy: Keeping God on Our Side*. London – New York 2012.

29 The Russian Orthodox Church suspended its membership in this organization in the 2000s due to the denial of full membership to its subordinate autonomy.

30 Cf. Aleksandra Kuczyńska-Zonik, *The Orthodox Churches of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Baltic States' Attitude Towards the Russian Invasion of Ukraine*, in: *IES Commentaries* 711 (19 October 2022). URL: <https://ies.lublin.pl/en/comments/the-orthodox-churches-of-the-moscow-patriarchate-in-the-baltic-states-attitude-towards-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/> [accessed: 28 October 2023].

31 Pew Research Center, *Orthodox Christianity in the 21st Century* (8 November 2017). URL: <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/12/06135709/Orthodoxy-II-FULL-REPORT-12-5.pdf> [accessed: 28 October 2023], 23.

Orthodox community, is home to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which holds a respected position as the first among equals in the Orthodox world.

In this context, Orthodox churches and inter-Orthodox disputes will become increasingly visible in the EU, and many more voices will begin to speak on behalf of the Orthodox Church on a much wider range of topics. This trend has already been demonstrated by the cases of appeals to the issue of identity, in particular religious identity, in discussions on the opening of EU membership negotiations. Currently, the most acute and striking example is the case of North Macedonia, where in addition to the issues of the name of the state, language and minority rights, some local Orthodox churches (in particular, the Bulgarian Church) have drawn the attention of their governments to the historical genesis of their church³². This makes practical conversations between Orthodox churches, including through non-religious platforms, even more important.

5. Conclusions

Russian aggression against Ukraine has become a test for both the international secular and religious community. During the last decade or two, the EU has consistently built relations with religious organizations, seeing the latter as representatives of civil society and potential partners in the promotion of democratic values. At the same time, the perception of the current war and the reaction to it have shown how different the interests and priorities of both parties can be.

In the last decade Russia has largely succeeded in weaponizing a number of tools and platforms that were developed as instruments for dialogue with civil

32 The Macedonian Orthodox Church or Archdiocese of Ohrid is the subject of a dispute between several Orthodox churches, namely the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Churches of Bulgaria and Serbia (some concerns has the Church of Greece). The question of the origin of the church (which one is the “mother church”) is important for the formalization of autocephaly and the recognition of this autocephaly by other local churches. The status of the mother church informally adds weight and prestige to the church. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church uses Bulgaria’s status as an EU member state (which has voting rights and can block progress towards membership) to advance its position in this dispute. For more on the topic, see e.g.: Gjoko Gjorgjevski et al., *Macedonian Orthodox Church-Archbishopric of Ohrid and Its Arduous Road to Autocephaly*, in: *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 42/6 (2022) 1–13 [DOI: 10.55221/2693-2148.2367]; Robert Hudson/Ivan Dodovski (eds.) *Macedonia’s Long Transition: From Independence to the Prespa Agreement and Beyond*, Cham 2023.

society. The active endorsement and support of Russia's war against Ukraine by the Russian Orthodox Church vividly exemplifies this phenomenon. It underscores the crucial role played by civil society, including religious institutions, as well as non-religious entities, in advocating for human rights as well as combating hate speech and disinformation. Despite some notable strides, such as efforts to combat disinformation or initiatives to impose sanctions on religious figures implicated in the conflict, the war has also exposed the limited capacity of both religious and non-religious institutions in effecting significant change in this regard.

Furthermore, the war has brought to the fore a series of challenges within the Orthodox community, which are poised to have broader political ramifications. Simultaneous shifts in the reevaluation of relationships within local Orthodox communities in specific nations and the potential accession of several Orthodox-majority countries to the EU indicate that the imperative of formulating a more comprehensive *modus operandi* will only grow in significance.

Punish Russian War Crimes Already Now!

Oleksandra Matviichuk

The legal process of coming to terms with the atrocities in Ukraine must not be postponed. An international tribunal with a hybrid justice mechanism could be a way out of impunity.

The Russian war of aggression is taking a heavy toll on the Ukrainian population. Kyiv and many other Ukrainian cities have been and continue to be shelled incessantly by Russian missiles. Many families have had to flee to save their lives – sometimes only to find that despite fleeing, there is no safe hiding place from Russian missiles and war crimes inside Ukraine.

The war began in February 2014: Ukraine seized the opportunity for a rapid democratic transformation after the collapse of its authoritarian regime in the Revolution of Dignity, also known as the Euromaidan. To stop this democratic process, Russia launched a war of aggression and occupied Crimea and parts of Luhansk and Donetsk.

The current conflict is thus not just a war between two states, but a war between two systems: Authoritarianism and democracy. On the one side is Russian President Vladimir Putin, who repeatedly tries to convince the world that democracy, the rule of law, human rights and freedom are not real values because they cannot guarantee people protection in war. He is opposed by the Ukrainians. They refuse to accept Putin's reasoning and answer him with their fight for justice and the rule of law.

During this bloody war, Ukraine desperately longs for peace, but peace cannot be achieved by forcing the attacked country to cease all hostilities and abandon their defenses. Such an approach would lead not to peace but to occupation. The terror and violence to which people in occupied territories are subjected show this only too well.

The Russian government there deliberately kills committed community members such as mayors, members of parliament, human rights activists, journalists, police officers, artists, or those engaged in volunteer work. Cruelly tortured, dead civilians were found on streets, in gardens and torture chambers. For anyone who has not experienced it themselves, the reality of life under occupation is unimaginable.

Despite these atrocities, Ukrainians continue to fight for their freedom and refuse to become a Russian colony. They are fighting for their freedom to be Ukrainians, to keep their Ukrainian identity, and for the chance to build a country where democracy and the rule of law prevail.

In the face of these adversities, Ukraine has turned to the international community for support in its struggle for democracy and freedom. The country needs modern weapons to defend itself against Russian aggression, as the United Nations has failed to end the atrocities in the occupied territories.

The international community must recognize the suffering of civilians and support the struggle for basic human rights. There is an urgent need to change the way the world deals with human rights violations and war crimes committed by Russian forces and to establish an international tribunal.

In the past, legal processing of the crimes of authoritarian regimes, such as in the case of the Nuremberg Trials, began only after their fall. Today, however, justice must be possible regardless of the power of a regime. Legal proceedings must be initiated without delay. This is not only about punishing the perpetrators, but also about preventing future atrocities. The fear of being held accountable can have a chilling effect on the brutality of human rights violations.

On the road to justice, then, two prejudices must be overcome: First, it must no longer be assumed that such efforts can occur only after the war has ended. International crimes are being committed now; legal proceedings must accordingly be initiated without delay. Second, it must be firmly rejected that only certain categories of people or certain types of crimes are prosecuted. This idea turns people into numbers and denies them their human dignity. Justice must be served to all victims, regardless of their social status or the extent of the cruelty inflicted on them.

One possible approach to escaping impunity is to establish a hybrid justice mechanism. National judges and prosecutors could work together with international judges to effectively investigate and prosecute war crimes. The fight for justice should not be limited to the crime of aggression. In addition to the crime of aggression, there are other international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Ukraine's legal system is already overloaded with the number of open criminal proceedings. And the International

Criminal Court will limit its investigation to a few selected cases. These crimes should not remain only in our archives or in the reports of international organizations. Therefore, we need to bring the international element to the level of national investigation and justice. We need to create a hybrid mechanism where national investigators investigate together with international investigators, and national judges administer justice together with international judges. The support of foreign experts is needed to properly investigate and prosecute tens of thousands of international crimes in accordance with justice standards, in particular Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Russia has instrumentalized the suffering of Ukrainian civilians to win the war. To counter this, an effective justice response is needed. Justice for all victims of war crimes is a moral imperative and a way to prevent future atrocities. By overcoming the aforementioned prejudices and establishing a hybrid justice mechanism, we can restore people's names and human dignity.

List of Contributors

Elmira Ablyalimova-Chyihoz comes from Crimea (Ukraine) and holds a master's degree in public administration from the National Academy of Public Administration in Kyiv and a master's degree in cultural studies from Tavrida National University. She is currently affiliated with the Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies as a project manager and cultural studies expert. Her main research areas include Russian colonialization of the Crimean Tatars, identity issues, and cultural heritage through the lens of identity.

Dmytro Bondarenko was born in Odessa (Ukraine). After studies in Odessa, Saint Petersburg and Moscow, he completed an MA in history at the European University in Saint Petersburg and a PhD in the same field at the University of Szeged (Hungary). Currently he is a researcher at the Department of Modern Transnational and Intellectual History of the Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. His research interests include World War I, the disintegration of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, the formation of newly independent nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe 1917–1920, and the counter-revolution and anti-Bolshevik wars there.

Kateryna Budz (born in Ukraine) received her BA and MA in history from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. In 2016, she defended her doctoral thesis entitled *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Galicia (1946–1968): Strategies of Survival and Resistance in the Underground*. Currently, Dr. Budz is a Researchers at Risk fellow at the School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom). Apart from the history of the underground Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Soviet Union, her research interests include the Greek Catholic Church during the Second World War.

Paulina Byzdra-Kusz was born in Ustrzyki Dolne (Poland). She completed her MA in history in 2009, her MA in Slavic philology in 2011 and her PhD in history in 2018. Currently, she is employed at the Center for Research on the History of the Catholic University of Lublin of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Her research interests include Polish-Ukrainian relations in the 20th century, Polish landed gentry in the 20th century, and the history of the Catholic University of Lublin. E-mail: pkusz@kul.pl

Patrice Hrimle comes from the Donetsk region of Ukraine and obtained her master's degree in Greek philology at the Mariupol State University. Currently, she is completing her postgraduate studies at Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics. Her research interests are the concept of *Καθαρεύουσα* and the theology of the Christological encyclicals of Patriarch Bartholomew as well as the contributions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to the modern environmental discourse.

Iuliia Korniiuchuk received her PhD in religious studies from the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in Kyiv (Ukraine). She is currently a visiting lecturer at the University of Warsaw (Poland). Her research and teaching interests include the role of religion in domestic and foreign affairs, Eastern Orthodoxy, and religion and European integration.

Oleksandra Matviychuk received her law degree from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Her many years of experience in human rights activism have turned her into an influential figure in the field. She heads the Centre for Civil Liberties, the first Ukrainian organisation to win the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2023, she was named one of the 25 most influential women in the world by the Financial Times. She speaks on global platforms with the initiative “Tribunal for Putin”, which documents the crimes of Russians and the Russian army after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Alina Mozolevska is an associate professor at the Faculty of Philology at Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University in Mykolaiv (Ukraine). In 2015, she received a PhD in linguistics with a major in romance languages from Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv. Her research interests include media studies, discourse analysis, and border studies. She has also published about borders and identity in literary and political discourses.

Mariana Myrosh’s interest lies in the fields of Eastern European studies, literary studies, and translation studies. Originally from Ukraine, she earned both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in history at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. Currently, she is pursuing a second master’s degree in cultural studies at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, where she works on a dissertation entitled *Conceptualization of ‘Death’ and ‘Suffering’ as a Reflection of the Socio-Political Change in Ukrainian Literature of the 1920s and 1930s*.

Volodymyr Shelukhin was born in Sumy (Ukraine). He is a teaching fellow at the Faculty of Sociology at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and a visiting professor at the Kyiv-Mohyla Business School. His current research interests cover the history of sociology and social thought, and the interdependence between culture and social knowledge.

Roman Sigov is a Ukrainian sociologist born in Kyiv. He graduated with a degree in sociology from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and completed a certificate in Advanced Studies in Ecumenical Studies at the Bossey Institute and the University of Geneva. He also holds a master’s degree in European studies from the Catholic University of Louvain and a master’s degree in international relations from Sciences Po Strasbourg. Currently, he is pursuing an advanced master’s degree in European diplomacy and international relations at the College of Europe. His research mainly focuses on the interstate relations within the European Union that shape the union’s external policy towards Ukraine.

Maksym Vasin from Ukraine completed a certificate in advanced studies in religion and the rule of law at the University of Oxford, and holds a doctorate. He is the director for International Advocacy and Research at the Institute for Religious Freedom (Ukraine) and a senior researcher at the LYN Community (United States). His main research areas are religious freedom and the rule of law, multi-faith dialogue and church-state cooperation, peace-building potential of religion, and the impact of Russian aggression on faith-based communities.

Mechyslav Yanauer is a PhD student at the Drahomanov Ukrainian State University in Kyiv. In the moment, he is a member of the research group Unity of Ukrainian Orthodoxy as a National Security Factor. His main research areas are church-state relations (particularly in the context of Ukraine), legal studies (focusing on the legal issues and

administrative complexities surrounding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate), national security (analyzing how religious policies and church-state relations impact national security, particularly in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war), and Eastern European studies (with a focus on Ukraine and its geopolitical challenges).

Andrii Zhyvachivskyi was born in Golyn in the Ivano Frankivsk region (Ukraine) and graduated from the Faculty of History at the Vasyl Stefanyk Precapathian National University in Ivano Frankivsk. Currently, he is a PhD candidate at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (Poland), and a teacher of history in the Ukrainian Heritage School in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA). His research areas include: the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate in the modern period, borderlands, and the Middle East. See more information here: <https://ihpan.edu.pl/en/employees/cooperator/andrii-zhyvachivskyi-2>

List of Editors

Christina Dietl, University assistant (predoctoral) at the Chair of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna.

Khrystyna Fostyak, PhD, Research Manager at the Institution of Research Services and Career Development of the University of Vienna.

Thomas Schulte-Umberg, PhD, Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Historical Theology – Church History, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna.

Olha Uhryn, PhD, Research Fellow at the Institute for Historical Theology, Department of Theology and History of Eastern Churches of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna.

Noreen van Elk, PhD, University assistant (postdoctoral) at the Institute for Systematic Theology and Ethics, Department of Social Ethics, of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna.