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RELIGIOUS CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

L. O. Fylypovych*, O. V. Horkusha**

The authors analyze the new reality - the Russian-Ukrainian war and the challenges created in the religious segment of our lives. It has been proven that religion and the church play various roles in times of historical trials for the people. They can both threaten national security and contribute to its strengthening. The examples presented in the article testify to the readiness to resist enemy aggression of those religious communities that are aware of the existential danger of war for the state, for the democratic system, for worldview and religious pluralism. Such organizations are focused on building and preserving our Ukrainian world. But there are people in Ukraine, their communities led by clerics, who still have not freed themselves from the shackles of the "Ruskiy mir" (Russian world), are captive to the old narratives of "the common cradle of three fraternal nations", "holy Rus", "the rescue mission of Russian Orthodoxy".

Ukrainian humanitarianism, in particular academic religious studies, has long and persistently studied the essence of the Kremlin doctrine of "Ruskiy mir" ("Ruskiy mir" an imperial chauvinistic Kremlin doctrine) and paid attention to the categorical otherness of the Ukrainian world as a value-worldview, traditionally formed life world of Ukrainians. Nevertheless, the conclusions of scientists were not always taken into account by those who depend on the adoption of relevant management decisions. Therefore, the article once again actualizes the need for close attention to the religious component of national security. The authors offer specific practical steps that, as recommendations, will contribute to the return of the security of the religious factor where it was lost due to Russian aggression, and to strengthening the atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding between the state and the church where there is a possibility of disturbing the security balance of the religious situation in wartime.

Key words: national security, religious dangers, humanitarianism, principles of academic religious studies, contextuality, Russian-Ukrainian war.

* Liudmyla Fylypovych / Людмила Филипович, Doctor of Sciences (Philosophy), Professor, Leading Research Fellow at the Religious Studies Department (H. S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy, NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine)

lfilip56@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-0886-3965

** Oksana Horkusha / Оксана Горкуша, PhD in Philosophy, Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Religious Studies (H. S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy, NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine)

slovo@svit@ukr.net

ORCID:0000-0002-4751-6616

РЕЛІГІЙНІ ВИКЛИКИ НАЦІОНАЛЬНІЙ БЕЗПЕЦІ В УМОВАХ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Л. О. Филипович, О. В. Горкуша

Автори аналізують нову реальність – російсько-українську війну та виклики, які нею породжені в релігійному сегменті нашого життя. Доведено, що релігія і церква відіграють різноманітні ролі в часи історичних випробувань для народу. Вони можуть як загрозувати національній безпеці, так і сприяти її укріпленню. Наведені в статті приклади свідчать про готовність до відпору ворожій агресії тих релігійних спільнот, які усвідомлюють екзистенційну небезпеку війни для держави, для демократичного устрою, для світоглядного і релігійного плюралізму, які орієнтовані на будівництво і збереження свого Українського світу. Але є в Україні люди, їхні громади на чолі із кліриками, які досі не звільнилися від тенет "руського міра", знаходяться в полоні старих наративів "спільної колоски трьох братніх народів", "святої Русі", "спасительної місії руссакого православ'я".

Українська гуманітаристика, зокрема академічне релігієзнавство давно і наполегливо вивчали суть кремлівської доктрини "руського міра" ("Ruskiy mir" an imperial chauvinistic Kremlin doctrine) та звертали увагу на категоричну інакшість ціннісної настанови Українського світу. Але висновки науковців не завжди бралися до уваги тими, від кого залежить прийняття відповідних управлінських рішень. Тому стаття знову актуалізує необхідність пильної уваги до релігійної складової національної безпеки. Авторі пропонують конкретні практичні кроки, які як рекомендації сприятимуть поверненню безпековості релігійного фактору там, де вона втрачена через російську агресію, і укріпленню атмосфери довіри і взаєморозуміння між державою і церквою там, де існує можливість порушити безпековий баланс релігійної ситуації в часі війни.

Ключові слова: національна безпека, релігійні небезпеки, гуманітаристика, принципи академічного релігієзнавства, контекстуальність, російсько-українська війна.

Formulation of the problem. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine poses an existential danger not only to Ukraine, but also to the entire civilized world. Today, millions of Ukrainians are under the threat of death and the world system, formed on the balance of national interests of most countries of the world, is threatened. And Kremlin dictator Putin continues to threaten humanity with nuclear war if his demands and desire to rule wherever he wants are not met. This bloody war, unleashed by Putin's Russia, was caused in particular by the religious factor. It has been confirmed that religion, in addition to its peace-making potential, is capable of bringing destruction, destroying not only a person's consciousness, but also the very reality in which this person exists.

The annexation of Crimea, the occupation of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the "joining" of the Zaporizhia and Kherson regions to the Russian Federation with the subsequent annexation of part of their territories is

not so much a loss of geographical space as a defeat of humanitarianism and humanitarian policy of the state of Ukraine, which during the years of its independence and could not propose and fix a new, Ukrainian identity among the inhabitants of these regions. It is the anti-Ukrainian orientation of a part of the population, its putinophile and katsapomania that can be explained by the facts of the collaboration of Ukrainian citizens with the occupying pseudo-power, the facts of betrayal of the interests of Ukraine to the agreement of moscowia. It is humanitarianism that is designed to shape the worldview and provide the consciousness of citizens with such a worldview-conscious backbone that provides a stable identity of a responsible citizen of Ukraine and mental resistance to harmful propaganda and ideological influences. Instead, the conscious matrix of Ukrainian residents prone to collaboration with the enemy turned out to be chaotic, unstructured, and distorted. Here contradictory informational and

experiential stereotypes are intricately intertwined. Chaotic noise of various content (with a predominant component of stereotypes and ideas learned on faith) does not provide an opportunity to understand and perceive events and phenomena truthfully.

The purpose of the study is to analyze religious challenges to the country's national security in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Discussion and results. Humanities as a branch of knowledge that combines philosophy, history, cultural studies, religious studies, theology, philology, literary studies, psychology, etc., that is, everything that studies various aspects of human existence, the relationship between the world and man, is currently experiencing a crisis, because it is not able to answer the main question of our days: how in the 21st century, after the great Teachers and Prophets, are the atrocities committed by the aggressor-terrorist, killing small children and helpless elderly people, destroying entire cities, peoples and countries, their centuries-old history and monuments, theatres and museums, libraries and schools, possible? What is happening in the modern world and with this world? What kind of discourse is included in what we are witnessing?

Humanitarians are faced with many unexplained questions that need to be answered honestly: about the true nature of man, about his true essence, not to be lulled into another utopia about conflict-free peaceful coexistence and cooperation of different people, things, cultures, religions, etc. This peacemaking metanarrative did not work. And we still wonder why Russian troops are fighting on the territory of sovereign Ukraine.

Despite the previous achievements of humanitarianism, the vast majority of contemporaries were not ready to live in a situation of daily trauma, feeling its destructive power. Because of frivolity in humanitarian education and enlightenment, citizens have not developed stress resistance. Because empathy was promoted as the leading vital energy, and not a rationalized perception

of reality. Modern humanitarianism is not so much looking for truth or justice, as it is for soothing appeals acceptable to all to live in harmony, in brotherly love and universal peace.

However, the time for this kind of reflection and perception of reality has passed. The situation of the active phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war exacerbated the existing and gave birth to unexpected challenges to humanitarianism, posed new requests to the intellectual community regarding the understanding of the reality of the war. A step-by-step and natural search for adequate answers to society's demands, in particular effective scientific methodologies of humanitarian knowledge or usual management technologies, interrupted by modern war. The war requires reconsidering not only the universality and effectiveness of some methodological principles in new circumstances, but also managerial solutions developed in peacetime.

War should become the dominant context-condition for modern Ukrainian humanitarianism. For all humanitarians, is it the reality that requires not only a quick response to specific events of social, in particular, religious life, but also the correction of those methodological foundations that worked in peacetime, but now turned out to be insufficient for understanding and clarifying the processes that are taking place in the world and in Ukraine. There was an urgent need to deepen and expand the classical methodological approaches formulated at the beginning of the 21st century. It must admit that the fundamental methodological guidelines of Ukrainian academic religious studies, learned not as external formal and unshakable prescriptions, but as worldview guidelines and safeguards against unscrupulous falsification, are the qualitative foundations of adequate humanitarian research. The Department of Religious Studies of the Institute of Philosophy of the NAS now does not have to shyly hide or deny the previously expressed statements, since the scientific assumptions of the researchers turned

out to be adequate to reality, as they were confirmed by the following empirical and historical events.

Nevertheless, the methodological foundations of humanitarianism, in particular academic religious studies, should not be absolutized as unshakable tablets, immovable boundaries or a rigid, unchanging framework. Humanitarian science, and at the same time religious studies, undergo momentary transformations, because the world where a modern person lives and is self-aware takes on the appearance of a rapidly changing context, in which new worldview challenges and social problems emerge every time. Therefore, not rejecting or refuting, but deepening the methodological attitudes of the founder of modern Ukrainian religious studies professor A. Kolodny, academic religious scholars are aware of the need to review already established methodological principles in the new circumstances – the Russian-Ukrainian war. Since life itself expresses new requirements for humanitarian science, we assume the possibility of actualizing, if necessary, new scientific principles and approaches. In the end, in the hierarchy of scientific, in particular, religious principles, the principle of contextuality is especially demanded by the situation of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Tragic changes in the context of the life of Ukrainians lead to a sharpening of the perception of linguistic, cultural, informational, religious issues and necessarily correct expert neutrality, objectivity, non-involvement. In our opinion, the war situation frees researchers and experts from impartial, out-of-contextual analysis of relations between different denominations and churches. The war puts everything in its place, because the existential space of millions of Ukrainians depends on the adequate positioning and activity of all its representatives - statesmen, religious leaders, scientists, youth, students, and now the military. In this global confrontation between good and evil, civilization and anti-civilization, humanitarians have a special mission - to

be a sincere arbiter and a true exponent of reality. Can she be out of politics? Impartial, neutral, "pure science"?

The discussion about the inclusion/exclusion of science in the social or ideological context is old and has its own characteristics for each historical period. In times of totalitarianism, neutrality is the dreamiest and ideal position of science, which seeks to protect itself from total control. However, totalitarianism, which instrumentalizes everything, subordinates science to itself, at most - humanitarianism, which is entrusted with the function of serving the leading ideology, camouflaged by apparent neutrality and declarative non-involvement. Therefore, after the liberation of Ukraine from the USSR and Ukrainian science from the role of only a tool serving the dominant ideology, there came a period of establishment in Ukrainian humanitarianism of actual, not apparent, objectivity and non-involvement. However, on the other hand, there are no valid safeguards against the reservation of the interests of a certain ideology, disguised as neutrality and objectivity. Moreover, often the emphasized neutrality of the researcher turns out to be only a cover for his lobbying of a certain hidden interest. In addition, the demonstrative abstraction from reality, apparent "non-involvement" and putting the position of the researcher above the life context in a situation where a crime against humanity is committed, often leads to harmful relativism and the equalization "for the sake of objectivity" of the argumentation of the assessment of the situation of the criminal and the one against whom a crime is committed. Therefore, in the new conditions, such a position is harmful.

Conscious Ukrainian scientists are responsible for the veracity of assessments of reality, including and religious. However, the assessments of academic religious scholars, despite their adequacy and relevance, have much less influence on the worldview of citizens, and therefore on the essential context and real situation, than the subject of our research - confessional institutional forms of

religion. And this is a complicated matter. After all, religion in its institutional form is the factor that largely shapes the worldview of believers. Therefore, it depends on the confessional creed which identity is decisive for the consciousness of the believer, which criteria are used to support evaluative judgments regarding events and persons. Religious teachings provide individual consciousness. Also, religious instruction and ritual can establish a certain model of behaviour and a way of responding to certain events, in certain circumstances.

The situation of the aggressive war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine produces several vectors of behaviour of religious institutions based on their confessional or church identities. They depend to a great extent on whether this or that denomination is positioned with the Ukrainian world or, instead, is an aggressor affiliated with the center in the country, and therefore indirectly promotes stereotypes, narratives and beliefs aligned with the interests of its governing center through religious preaching. If the management center of a religious institution is located in the RF, where it is in fact only a propaganda tool of the political power, then the function of propaganda of the "Russian world" will be delegated to the branch. In the same way, stereotypes, messages and narratives formulated in the kremlin will be broadcast by the branch into the minds of Ukrainian citizens under the guise of a religious sermon.

A vivid example of such a threatening influence on the national security of Ukraine is an institution that calls itself "UOC", but is actually a branch of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is a fact that it is the representatives of this organization who are most inclined to collaborate with the enemy. To date, the Security Service of Ukraine has already uncovered several dozen cases of cooperation between UOC priests and Russian invaders. It is significant that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has no claims against the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church for the annexation of its dioceses in the

territories of Ukraine occupied by the Russians. At the same time, this institution accuses the state of persecuting the faithful of the UOC for their faith, which is manifested in the "taking away of churches", forced change of jurisdiction, lawsuits against clergy.

The Church refuses to name the true cause of the war, claiming that the Ukrainians themselves are to blame for the destroyed religious buildings destroyed by Russian shells, for the entire war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine, whom God allegedly punishes for the sins of schism and unbelief. The state's attempt to protect its security through the adoption of a law on making it impossible for institutions affiliated with decision-making centers in the aggressor state to function in Ukraine is under particular attack. Freedom of religion is mentioned, which is impiously violated.

In a strange way, the institution that supposedly calls Ukrainians to Christian humility and non-resistance to evil (when it concerns external aggression), at the same time incites the residents of Ukraine to disobey the Ukrainian authorities, mistrust the Ukrainian state, reject the Ukrainian reality, hostility to the Ukrainian civil society and other Ukrainian church institutions. Two years of constant shelling with rockets and bombs did not convince the hierarchy of the UOC (MP) that it is worth changing the rhetoric and stop accusing the Ukrainian authorities and the public of being in unison with the kremlin. This is evidenced by the cases initiated against the hierarchs of this institution for inciting religious enmity and justifying the actions of the aggressor, in particular regarding Metropolitans Arseniy Sviatohirskiy, Feodosius Cherkasskiy and Luka of Zaporizhia and Melitopol and others. Some clergymen of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, such as Metropolitan Ionafan of Tulchynsk, after being convicted of proven anti-Ukrainian activities, are asking to be exchanged for prisoners of war.

In previous collective monographs, scientists speculated about the causes of social rifts, about the inconsistency of

religious/church identity with civil and state demands [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6]. Currently, the disappointment of Ukrainian society in such a position of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is only deepening, as evidenced by the latest data published by KMIS [7] regarding the attitude towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (MP). The results of the survey conducted on April 20-25, 2024 confirmed the overwhelming despair and wariness of Ukrainian citizens towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (MP), which at the official level not only did not condemn the kremlin patriarch Kirill's support and the declaration by the Russian Orthodox Church of the RF's war of aggression against Ukraine as "sacred", but it continues to remain a hostile outpost in the outlook dimension of the Ukrainian world. And despite the fact that for more than two years in a row, all of Ukraine, together with the religious institutions present in the Ukrainian world, have been subject to destruction and destruction by Russian weapons, the Ukrainian government and community are still the biggest enemy of the so-called UOC (MP), and the biggest problem is the unfulfilled and the genocide of Ukrainians planned for the future, and the "persecution of the single canonical Orthodox Church". It is absolutely natural that, according to the results of the survey, 83% of Ukrainians believe that the state should intervene to one degree or another in the activities of the UOC (MP) (in December 2022, 78% of them were, in May 2023 – 85%). In particular, 63% believe that this Church should be completely banned in Ukraine (54% in December 2022, 66% in May 2023). Another 20% are now in favour of a somewhat "softer" approach, which does not involve a complete ban, but involves the establishment of state control and supervision (in December 2022 – 24%, in May 2023 – 19%) [7].

But many risks and dangers associated with the preaching of "Russian peace" or apathy instead of Christian preaching or inspiration for the consolidation of the people of Ukraine against the Russian invaders, by an institution subordinate to the governing center in the RF, could be

avoided. Or, at least, it would be possible to mitigate the damage caused to the state and national security of Ukraine by the presence of open collaborators and agents of the kremlin in this institution, so that the relevant authorities would listen to the analysis produced by Ukrainian academic religious scholars. After all, we have been warning for decades about the destructive worldview consequences of the religious education activities of institutions subordinate to the kremlin centers. Therefore, it is not surprising that some frivolous parishioners of the UOC MP openly retell the kremlin narratives about the non-subjectivity of Ukraine, the thousand-year Orthodoxy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the "one Russian people", etc., arguing their anti-Ukrainian beliefs with their true Orthodoxy. In the church they visited, they were instilled with the identity of a resident of the "Russian world", and the "father", whom they trusted and whose words they took in an emotionally moved (favourable for deep suggestion and uncritical assimilation of the received information) state on faith, taught that they are carriers of some unique mission of preserving the "true Orthodox faith", and are in a hostile environment – the Ukrainian community and the Ukrainian state.

At the same time, we see that the vast majority of Ukrainian citizens are ready to defend their Motherland. And among such worthy Ukrainians there are representatives of various churches. At most, of course, those who are Ukrainian by origin, historical path and cultural consensus (OCU, UGCC). Believers of other faiths, including those subordinate to global leadership centers, such as the RCC, were also ready to resist the aggressor. In the same way, Ukrainian Protestants, being free to choose a pacifist or an active defense model of Ukraine, act situationally, relying on their own conscience, decide: to leave, volunteer or defend the Ukrainian world as the home of free citizens with weapons in their hands. Because where the "Russian world" occupies the Ukrainian world, individual freedom is denied by the repressive apparatus of the "state".

Muslims, Jews, Krishnaes, and Buddhists face the same test of conscience. Everyone who has a Ukrainian civic identity is free to defend Ukraine, because every creed contains a narrative that justifies this right to protect one's family and home from an aggressor. And most of the Ukrainian religious institutions are immediately subjected to oppression and repression during the occupation by Russian troops. Therefore, these religious communities clearly express their readiness to resist enemy aggression, because they are aware of the existential danger of war for the Ukrainian state, for the democratic system, for worldview and religious pluralism, which are oriented towards the construction and preservation of their Ukrainian world.

Instead, those institutions that are subordinate to the governing center in the aggressor state promote anti-Ukrainian hostile narratives among their followers. That is why there are still people in Ukraine, their communities led by clerics, who have not freed themselves from the shackles of the "Russian world", are captive to the old narratives of "the common cradle of three fraternal nations", "holy Rus'", "the rescue mission of Russian Orthodoxy".

Based on the specific circumstances - the Russian-Ukrainian war, which directly affects the formulation of mega and mini tasks of humanitarian science in Ukraine, and understanding that there are both internal and external challenges, Ukrainian scientists have already written about the strategic steps that scientists should take in new circumstances [8]. The task of preserving humanitarianism, including and religious studies, as sciences and as educational disciplines, returning them to Ukrainian universities. And not because of selfish or corporate interests of religious scholars, but because it is extremely important for Ukraine to have a scientific interpretation of religious processes, changes in the level and quality of religiosity of Ukrainian society, understanding of general trends and patterns of religious transformations. There is a demand for unconscious

knowledge and professional interpretation of religious processes in society. It is necessary to help the society to formulate a request and to formulate the answers correctly.

At the same time, humanitarianism should achieve a new quality of scientific research, which is possible if all participants in the process accept the principles of academic integrity. Much has been said and written about this, but the academic community is still affected by the virus of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, bribery, etc.

Humanitarian studies, in particular religious' studies, will be able to adequately respond to security challenges, if it turns into a practical and effective science that can be used to answer specific requests of society, to clarify complex and contradictory situations. Fundamental basic knowledge should not lie as dead capital, be an archive, they should become important sources of information and work for modernity. Thanks to the poly-methodological nature of religious studies, we can and must affirm the ideas of pluralization of religious life, the plurality of worldviews of people, direct the informational potential of science for the tolerance of interfaith relations and mutual understanding between believers of different religions, affirm religious peace not as an alternative to religious war, but as the only possible existential reality. The practicality of science is manifested in the popularization of scientific knowledge in various forms and methods.

Domestic humanities should feel confident on the world scientific platform, where it is not enough to be physically represented at an international conference or in a research project. It is necessary to substantially enrich world humanitarianism, including and religious studies. That is, the presence must be conceptual, ideological. This requires hard and rhythmic, constant and long-term work. In addition, science is personalized, which is why it is so important to implement powerful, genuine, friendly cooperation between Ukrainian scientists and foreign colleagues, between scientists and representatives of various spheres of life

(civil servants, journalists, educators, artists, etc.), within the Ukrainian community.

The methodological requirements for modern humanitarian research, in particular for the analysis of religious processes, require an urgent review and improvement. In the conditions of war, when the issues of the existence of the Ukrainian nation are being resolved, Ukrainian science cannot be. For themselves, academic scientists determined that in the hierarchy of methodological approaches, and there are many of them, a special place is now occupied by the principle of contextuality [9], which involves taking into account the event context itself – Russia's military aggression against Ukraine; features, depth and intensity of their (research) contextual inclusion/exclusion. Out-of-contextuality is an extremely dangerous methodological approach, which now, during the Russian-Ukrainian war, threatens the objectivity, truthfulness, and justice of scientific knowledge.

Conclusions. Ukraine needs professional dialogues of leading Ukrainian religious scholars, philosophers, theologians - scientists and teachers, with subsequent discussion and publication of the arguments and proposals expressed. The methodological approaches used in academic religious studies in pre-war times have not lost their functional significance even now, during the Russian-Ukrainian war. But now the conceptual and methodological problems of religious research, analysis and forecasting in the conditions deformed by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine need to be strengthened by the principle of contextualization, correlation, correction, reconciliation of formulated assumptions with reality, weighing the appropriateness of using certain methods and definitions, critical rethinking of the chosen methodological apparatus.

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