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RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF ANTI-TRINITARIANISM IN THE PROJECTION OF THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS OF SOCIETY

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Abstract. The article analyzes the ideological and cultural, structural and typological, ideological and doctrinal features of anti-Trinitarianism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th and 17th centuries. The idea has been further developed that it is a religious phenomenon formed on the basis of deep value interactions between Western and Eastern Christianity, which has passed a difficult path of evolution and differs in the features of doctrinal-institutional content. The regularities of the origin, development, and preservation of anti-Trinitarian communities in modern Ukraine are substantiated.

Keywords: Anti-Trinitarianism, Socinianism, free-thinking, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Introduction

The religious situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the 15th century had its own specifics that distinguished it from other Eastern European countries. Therefore, many freethinkers and even religious associations found a favorable ground for the spread of new ideas in their territory. Anti-Trinitarianism became one of the most acceptable forms of theology for some, though not the narrow majority of the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This is due to some of its features. First, anti-Trinitarianism did not build an organizational structure with established dogma and cult; and some of the representatives of this movement even strengthened the idea that religious affiliation was not important. The main thing was that the believers should adhere to evangelical morality. Therefore, among the supporters of anti-Trinitarianism were people who adhered to their views but did not stop their contact with Catholicism, Orthodoxy, or any other denomination. Secondly, for many peoples inhabiting the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian

Commonwealth (or abbreviated to P-L Commonwealth), it became a unifying factor, uniting them with a common faith, feelings, and beliefs.

The Emergence of Anti-Trinitarian Movements in the Territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

Anti-Trinitarianism in the 16th and 17th centuries occupied an important place on the religious map of the P-L Commonwealth by gaining many supporters among local Protestants who sought radical reforms in religious and secular life and further revision of traditional dogmatic norms. This trend developed here from two sources.¹

The first source was the ideas of Western anti-Trinitarianism, proposed by the Spanish scholar and Renaissance thinker Miguel Servetus (1511-1553). He developed a unitary understanding of God, argued for the superiority of the New Testament over the Old, and the need for their critical study. As a result of persecution by the Inquisition, Servetus' students immigrated to Poland, attracting many local Protestants.² In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the main force of this movement was the nobility, who accepted the ideas of the radical current of the Reformation.

The second source was the ideological traditions of local movements in the form of religious free thought, which was the main concept of anti-Trinitarianism. Among them are "*pozhidovlenyh*" [Jewdaizers] and Theodosians. These movements have been developing on the territory of Ukraine since the 15th and 16th centuries and preceded the emergence of future Protestant communities here. The centers of anti-Trinitarian thought were mainly cities where there were conditions for the broad establishment of a humanistic worldview and the emergence of elements of rational understanding of reality. By denying the church hierarchy and the corruption generated by it, certain principles of doctrine, worship, exposing traditional morality, asserting human dignity, and rationalist heresies shook the foundations of Christian orthodoxy, acting as guides of pre-Reformation ideas.

Despite internal doctrinal contradictions, Protestant movements strived for a dialogue. An agreement was reached to unite the Lutherans, Calvinists, and the Czech Brothers to overcome the differences at the Synod of Sandomierz in 1570. The result of the Synod was the

¹М.В. Дмитриев. *Православие и Реформация: реформационные движения в восточнославянских землях Речи Посполитой во второй половине XVI в.* [Orthodoxy and the Reformation: Reformation Movements in the East Slavic Lands of the Commonwealth in the Second Half of the 16th c.]. (Москва: Изд-во Моск. ун-та, 1990), 8.

²В. І. Любашенко. *Історія протестантизму в Україні.* [History of Protestantism in Ukraine]. Вид. 2-е. (Київ: Поліс, 1996), 112.

adoption of the act “Religion of the Polish Christian Churches,” which provided preservation of all three denominations on the basis of common dogmatic principles proclaimed and universally recognized by all members of the union.³ The Sandomierz Agreement did not receive Sejm consideration due to resistance from the Catholic Church, and the text of the union was presented to Sigismund II Augustus only during a private audience in 1570 that was given to Protestant nobles.

The death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572 led to a change in the political situation in the country. The political struggle of the supporters and opponents of the Reformation movement changed its course of development. Under the new conditions, the increasing role of the nobility as the main participant in the upcoming royal elections gave Protestants the opportunity to realize their political intentions. At the Warsaw Convocation Sejm in 1573, supporters of the Reformation demanded the adoption of an act guaranteeing the freedom of religion for the nobility and burghers. Both Catholics and Protestants took part in drafting the text in the bill. The latter were represented by the Sandomierz voivode P. Zborowski, the Sandomierz castellan I. Ossolinski, and the castellan of Gniezno J. Tomycki.

The approval of the Confederation Act was facilitated by the authors’ combination of the principle of freedom of religion with socio-political issues. Without the recognition of this principle, it was impossible to adopt the document as a whole. The act denied the freedom of religion to peasants, who had to be completely subordinate to their masters, including in religious matters. Guided primarily by the desire to prevent peasant demonstrations, the authors of the text noted the lack of the right of peasants to choose a religion in a separate paragraph.⁴ The act guaranteed the preservation of the interests of the Catholic clergy in Mazovia, where a large number of petty gentries became dependent on church feudal lords.

This decision, at the time when there were constant religious wars in Europe, was a manifestation of religious tolerance and a desire to express one’s views freely without fear of consequences. In the 16th century, during the Reformation in Poland, the anti-Trinitarian doctrine first developed in the bosom of Polish Calvinism. Famous figures of the Reformation, such as Lelius and Faustus Socinus, Bernardo Okino, Francis Stankar, and others, played an important role in its formation. Their active preaching of the ideas found support among local

³*Akta synodów różnowierczych w Polsce = Acta Synodalia ecclesiarum Poloniae reformatarum* [w 4 t.]. [Act of Dissenters' Synods in Poland = Acta Synodalia Polish Reformed Churches]. Oprac. M. Sipayłło; Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1966), T. 2: (1560-1570). 1972, 277.

⁴*Volumina Constitutionum: [w 2 t.]*. [Written Constitutions]. Oprac. S. Grodziski, I. Dwornicka, W. Uruszczak. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996). T. 2, vol. 1: 1550-1585. 2005, 306-307.

Protestants and attracted new supporters to their ranks.⁵ The Calvinist leaders, excited by this development, tried to stop the process of an internal division. To preserve the unity of the movement, they held synods and colloquia between supporters of both sides, but the gap between them widened. At the synod in Krakow in 1562, the anti-Trinitarians announced a final break with the Calvinists and organized their own council, synod, and assembly, which went down in history as the "Small" (as opposed to the "Great Cathedral" of the Calvinists).⁶

Early anti-Trinitarianism was highly heterogeneous, both doctrinal and organizationally, bringing together numerous small groups with different religious and socio-political views, most of which were representatives of the radical Reformation. Their ideas can be traced to Anabaptism. Common to all participants in the Radical Reformation were disappointment in the moral aspects of territorial Protestantism, as articulated by Luther and Zwingli, and forthright disavowal of several of its doctrines and institutions.⁷ The key issue that determines the difference between radicals and other Protestants is the attitude towards the state. Most reformers believed that change should be carried out by state authorities (hence often called the Magisterial Reformation), and only then would it be successful. The Anabaptists opposed this approach because, in their view, reforms should begin with individuals, and the restructuring of the spiritual life by the authorities would not succeed. By demanding baptism only in adulthood—to guarantee voluntariness and conscious membership in the church—the Anabaptists thus advocated the individual's right to religious freedom. One of the most striking features of the doctrine was religious individualism. Common to early anti-Trinitarianism and Anabaptism was the distinction between Christology (the celestial body of Christ) and a correspondingly mystical-physical view of the Lord's Supper. This position was taken by the "anti-Trinitarian" Michael Servetus, the Spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld, and the Anabaptist Dietrich Philips. Also common to all of the left wing was their espousal of the freedom of the will in the striving for sanctification.⁸

At the same time, some anti-Trinitarian views differed sharply from Anabaptism. Anti-Trinitarians were convinced of the existence of free will not only in the Almighty but also in humans—capable of their own strength, a dignified life to overcome original sin, and to be

⁵*Історія релігії в Україні*. [History of Religion in Ukraine]. Під ред. А.М. Колодного, П.Л. Яроцького. (Київ: Знання, 1999), 347.

⁶В. І. Любашенко. "Єретично-раціоналістичні рухи в Україні XV–XVI ст. (до питання генези та еволюції 'пожидовлених')." [Heretical-rationalist Movements in Ukraine of the 15th and 16th c. (to the question of genesis and evolution of the 'pozhydovleny').]. *Український історичний журнал*. (Київ, 1996). № 4, 112.

⁷George H. Williams, Angel M. Mergal. *Spiritual And Anabaptist Writers: Documents Illustrative Of The Radical Reformation*. (London: SCM Press, 1957), 20.

⁸*Ibid*, 21.

saved through their own efforts. Second, in the doctrine of faith and reason, absolute preference was given to reason. Third, in relation to the Holy Scripture, they insisted on its critical analysis, denying the sacred significance of the Old Testament. Fourth, the ethical component of the concept of faith was enhanced. This made the teachings of the anti-Trinitarians unacceptable not only for classical currents but also for moderate Anabaptism—based on the main Christian doctrines and biblical literalism.

One of the leaders of the radical socio-political views of anti-Trinitarianism was Peter Goneziy (ca.1525/1530-1573), who was by origin from Podlasie. A native of the urban environment, he continued his studies in Italy, Switzerland, and Moravia after graduating from the University of Krakow. After returning to his homeland in 1555, Peter criticized the foundations of the feudal system and many dogmas of the Catholic Church. First of all, he criticized the dogma of the Trinity, believing that the trinity was an invention of the human mind, and therefore it had to be rejected by returning to the Holy Scripture. He actively opposed compulsory military service, thus initiating a long-running controversy which involved theologians of many denominations. But, despite the further strengthening of radical elements in Polish anti-Trinitarianism, the program of the followers of Goneziy was limited only to moral appeals.

Periods of Formation of Anti-Trinitarianism

We distinguish two stages of transformation of anti-Trinitarianism, which are due to the processes of its adaptation to new operating conditions, namely:

The first: Pre-Reformation (the 14th century to the first half of the 16th century), which was a period of the spread of heretical-rationalist movements of Eastern European origin (Hussitism, "*pozhidovlenyh*," Theodosians) and the influence of Western European heresies (Waldenses, Cathars, Castigators).

Second: Reformation (the second half of the 16th century to the first half of the 17th century), which was a period of formation and the development of the anti-Trinitarian current of Socinianism. This was formed under the influence of European Protestant currents (Lutheranism, Calvinism, moderate Hussitism).

These periods reveal the evolution of anti-Trinitarianism in the P-L Commonwealth.

The first period in the history of Polish anti-Trinitarianism was characterized by the actions of the radical part of the movement, which spoke out against the existence of such feudal relations that contradict the Gospel. Its representatives concluded that true believers

have an obligation to earn their living with their own hands and never use the results of someone else's work.

Anti-Trinitarians tried to create an ideal Christian community that would not depend on government officials and bureaucracy. In 1569, they founded the town of Racov where they invited many fellow believers to live together. There, a religious commune was founded based on the principles of common property, religious and national equality, and compulsory general physical labor.⁹ The Racov commune lasted only three years (1569-1572), and it is difficult to tell whether they managed to put their ideas into practice.

However, such utopianism was shared by a small number of Polish anti-Trinitarians. The slogans of social radicalism captivated mainly the most disadvantaged sections of the population: peasants, artisans, and the poor bourgeoisie. Majority of nobles adhered to moderate socio-ethical views and the ideologue of Simon Budny—who left the greatest literary legacy among the anti-Trinitarians. In his works, the author combined the rationalist critique of scholastic theology with certain elements of rationalism in relation to the Holy Scriptures, which manifested itself in a critical attitude to biblical traditions. It is known that S. Budny was the author of the “Catechism,” which, as a genre of religious literature, was very popular during the Reformation, as evidenced by the number of such publications published by representatives of various denominations.¹⁰ The Catechism reflects from the standpoint of Calvinism its idea of the new principles of the Church, faith, prayer, baptism, and so on. The study of S. Budny was characterized by the Reformation critique of the ritual practices of Catholicism and Orthodoxy, including fasting, the existence of the cult of icons, and the need for monastic vows. Stressing the need for direct reading and interpretation of the Scripture and its openness to the public, S. Budny indicated the principles of traditional churches, trying to point out the apocryphal layers in their teachings.¹¹ He emphasized that there was no mention in the Scripture of the introduction of the cult of icons in apostolic times while referring to legendary subjects central to Russian Orthodoxy. As for faith in the saints, S. Budny considered them ordinary people who could not be turned to for help—instead of looking for mediators, one should pray to God. The cult of the Mother of God, which S. Budny considered an ordinary

⁹*Історія релігії в Україні*. [History of Religion in Ukraine]. Під ред. А.М. Колодного, П.Л. Яроцького. (Київ: Знання, 1999), 346.

¹⁰J. Kamieniecki. *Szymon Budny – zapomniana postać polskiej reformacji*. [Simon Budny – a Forgotten Figure of the Polish Reformation]. (Wrocław, 2002), 24.

¹¹С. Будный. *Катехизис то ест наука стародавняя христьянская от светого письма для простых людей языка русского в пытаниях и отказех собрана*. [Catechism, That is, Ancient Christian Science from Light Writing for Ordinary People of the Russian Language in Torture and Refusal is Collected]. (Несвиж: Тип. М. Кавечинського, 1562), 11–13.

person, was criticized; and the worship of saints was interpreted as a humiliation of God, which diminishes His glory and gives it to the creature.¹²

Socio-political works, in particular “On Secular Power,” also occupied an important place in S. Budny’s legacy. At the heart of the social and political ideas about secular power and family relations was the approach of guardianship and care. He believed that government officials should be obeyed as God himself, and parents should provide their children with both spiritual and material wealth and teach them crafts. The relationship between the government and the family was considered by him in the patronage-clientele perspective, where every citizen, prince, and voivode must obey the most important rules: the father must raise the children; the owners should take care of training subordinates; and the guilty must be punished. The rulers must take care of the development of the church and schools, punish the “idolaters,” keep the peace, the property of the poor, and make the courts.¹³

As a radical in religious matters, he was perhaps the only one who tried to interpret the Bible from the standpoint of rationalism. S. Budny, like his followers, argued that holding public office, obeying the law, and the serfdom of peasants did not contradict the spirit of the Gospel.

In the following years, there was an evolution of the anti-Trinitarian doctrine, which was the result of strengthening the position of the moderate wing and was later joined by wealthy burghers and intellectuals. Due to their influence, socio-political issues gradually lost their radical direction and moved to the religious and ethical plane. This could not go unnoticed by the Catholic Church and Protestant communities, which were frightened by the popularity of the ideas among the population. To finalize the ideological and organizational formation, the anti-Trinitarians tried to create an elaborated system of their doctrine.

They proposed a new theological model, the basis of which was the argumentation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Interpretation of the doctrine was carried out gradually: first in the form of Tritheism, then Ditheism, and then Unitarianism. The Tritheists regarded the Trinity as three separate persons and maintained the monotheistic character of Christianity, arguing that God the Father was superior to the other persons of the Trinity. The Ditheists limited the number of divine persons to two: God the Father and God the Son. The Son descended from

¹²S. Budny. O przedniejszych wiary chrystyjanskiej artykulech (1576). [On the Foremost Christian Faith Articles (1576)]. *Literatura arianska w Polsce XVI wieku. Antologia*. Opracowali i przypisami opatrzyli L. Szczucki, J. Tazbir. (Warszawa, 1959), 331

¹³С. Будный. *Катехизис то ест наука стародавняя христьянская от светого письма для простых людей языка русского в пытаниях и отказех собрана*. [Catechism, That is, Ancient Christian Science from Light Writing for Ordinary People of the Russian Language in Torture and Refusal is Collected] (Несвиж: Тип. М. Кавечинського, 1562), 60–67.

the Father but did not have all the attributes of God. The Holy Spirit was considered a person, but he was a denied divinity. According to the Unitarians, the Father can be considered the only God. Christ remained a man exalted to divine dignity only after death and resurrection by God the Father. The followers of the unitary doctrine were Peter Stratorius, Simon Budny, and Jan Nemoevsky, who considered Christ a man and at the same time a mediator between God and the people.¹⁴

Thus, from the 1570s to the 1580s in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, there was a merger of "eastern" and "western" streams of the Reformation movement.¹⁵ And although at this stage anti-Trinitarianism was still in the stage of ideological and organizational formation, it marked a turning point in the evolution of an East Slavic religious free thought—the final connection of heretical currents (coming from the bosom of Orthodoxy) with anti-Trinitarianism.

The Emergence of Socinianism

The second period of development of anti-Trinitarianism in the Polish Commonwealth was connected with the doctrinal-institutional formation of Socinianism, which became the highest stage in the evolution of the humanist-reformation movement in the Polish Commonwealth. The main ideologue of the current was Fausto Socinius¹⁶ (1539–1604)—an Italian emigrant who arrived in Krakow in 1579 and became an important figure there. Peter Stratorius, Jan Krell, Erasmus Otwinowski, Martin Ruar, John Schlichting, and others became Socinus' associates. Such representatives of the Ukrainian nobility, as Yuriy and Stefan Nemyrychi, Yuriy and Martin Chaplychi, Evstahiy Kysil, etc., were fascinated by his ideas.

The most complete Socinian theology was reflected in the "Racovian Catechism" (1605). According to their symbols of faith, the Bible carries the divine truth available to everyone. So, they denied the sacraments because they were beyond reason. The unity, eternity, omnipotence, justice, and wisdom of God must come to the believer when he/she understood

¹⁴В.М. Нічик, В.Д. Литвинов, Я.М. Стратій. *Гуманістичні і реформаційні ідеї на Україні (XVI - початок XVII ст.)*. [Humanistic and Reformation Ideas in Ukraine (16th–early 17th c.)]. (Київ: Наукова думка, 1990), 84.

¹⁵М.В. Дмитриев. *Православие и Реформация: реформационные движения в восточнославянских землях Речи Посполитой во второй половине XVI в.* [Orthodoxy and the Reformation: Reformation Movements in the East Slavic Lands of the Commonwealth in the Second Half of the 16th c.]. (Москва: Изд-во Моск. ун-та, 1990), 13.

¹⁶Fausto Sozzini (1539-1604), an Italian theologian and founder of the Socinianism. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, its Latin form, Socinus, is currently used. Other sources use a similar term. In Ukraine and Poland, the name is used as Faus DSocin. Here the more prevalent name as Fausto Socinius is used.

them with his/her mind. Immeasurability, infinity, and omnipotence were seen as unattainable for the realm of human understanding, and therefore all this was irrelevant to salvation. Primary justice meant that Adam was free from sin, and not because he was endowed with special gifts (as a result, Socinus came to a complete denial of the original sin). Because faith was based on faith in God, the Socinians rejected the Catholic doctrine of justification.

The Socinians declared temporary reconciliation with the state, although they did not renounce the principled condemnation of inequality. From a rationalist standpoint, the Socinians criticized the traditional dogma and advocated freedom of conscience as a condition for the moral improvement of humans. Among the activists of the left wing of the Socinians, the preaching of moral and ethical principles did not lead as it did in the right-wing currents of the Reformation for the reconciliation with social injustice, which they sharply criticized. The humanistic view was also popular among them: a person's value was determined not by his/her fidelity to religious dogmas, but by whether he/she adhered to ethical norms in his/her life.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the Socinianism current already had a strong position in the Ukrainian lands, mainly in Volhynia. In fact, this territory became one of the main centers of this movement for the P-L Commonwealth. Among the Ukrainian patrons were magnates Mykola Olesnytsky and Jan Kishka, and the nobles from the families of Ivanytsky, Kandyb, Senyut, Hoysky, Rohozhynsky, Pronsky, and others. The spreading of Socinianism in Ukraine happened also in Kyiv lands, where the main allies of the current were the magnate family Nemyrych, the huntsman of Kyiv voivodeship Stefan Voynarovsky, Chernihiv sub-district Petro Peresitsky, the Kyiv castellan Roman Hoysky, and others.

This process was also active in Transylvania, where anti-Trinitarianism in the second half of the 16th century spread to Transcarpathia. Here the number of Unitarians was second only to that of the Calvinists. One of the first to actively preach Unitarian ideas was Francis Stankar, whose activities were extended to the largest communities in Bardiev, Erlau, Koloshvar, Maros-Vasargeli, Mukachevo, and Seben (the number of which was constantly increasing). Later, local anti-Trinitarian communities were headed by the former rector of the Catholic Collegium, Francis (Ferenc) David, under whose influence Prince Janusz II of Zapolya and many of the local nobility joined the community. Unitarianism was most successful in the 1570s, when at the *Sejm* Janusz II supported it and demanded the status of the fourth state religion.¹⁷

¹⁷В. Любашенко. *Історія протестантизму в Україні*. [History of Protestantism in Ukraine]. Вид. 2-е. (Київ: Поліс, 1996), 95.

In Transcarpathia, side by side with the Italian anti-Trinitarians, preached figures of the left wing of the Polish Brothers, emigrants “from Galicia, Lithuanian-Rus regions, where the extreme anti-Trinitarians merged with students of Moscow freethinkers.”¹⁸ Doctrinal misunderstandings in the Unitarian environment of Transcarpathia led to a loss of support from the local population and the transition to Calvinist communities.

The geography of the spread of the movement, whose influence was constantly increasing, underwent significant changes. At an early stage, the current had its communities in the Podlasie, Kholm, and Halych regions. In the late 16th to the first third of the 17th century, Unitarianism in the Polish Commonwealth spread to its largest influence: it numbered from 150 to 200 communities with 100-150 members each. But as early as the 1640s and 1650s, the center of anti-Trinitarianism, due to mass persecution of its supporters in Lesser Poland and Galicia, was transferred to Volyn and Kyiv. It was there that branched cells were formed under the leadership of the local Polish and Ukrainian nobility.

The centers of the Volyn region were made of communities in Kysylyn and Berizka. Their patrons were influential Ukrainian families, such as Chaplyn-Shpanovsky, Goysky, Rogozhynsky, Kandyby, Kishky, Ivanytsky, Senyuty, Olesnytsky, Pronsky, Gurevichy-Voyutynsky and church figures and scholars such as Yu. Durosh, A. Vyshovaty, M. Tverdokhlib, J. Hrynevych-Trembetsky, L. Stegman, and J. and K. Stoinski. The following Ukrainian literary figures came from the Volyn branch: Yu. and L. Rupnyovsky, the teachers; I. Demyanovich, the philosopher; Z. Morshyn, the poet; E. Kysil, the teacher, philologist, and polemicist. The activity of the unitary movement in Volyn was expressively evidenced by the data on the number of synods held there in the first half of the 17th century (more than 30) and the number of delegates present, which sometimes reached 3,000.

From the second third of the 17th century in the Kyiv region, the largest Socinian communities operated in Bilken, Horoshky, Zhytomyr, Zubrynka, Kostrov, Nemyrivtsi, Norynsk, Ovruch, Pryborsk, Rashkov, Sobieschyna, Starokostiantyniv, Surazh, Ushomyr, Khotyn, Charkiv, Chernyakhiv, Shershnya, and Lenkivtsi. According to O. Levitsky, "there were so many followers of the sect among the local nobility at that time that they sometimes filled the local provincial diets and formed the predominant party here."¹⁹ The main allies of Socinianism were Nemyrychi, Hoysky, Voynarovsky, Bogutsky, Rutkovych, Stodolsky, Zakrevsky, Malinovsky, Yavorsky, and others. The well-known public and cultural figures

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹О. Левицкий. Социнианство в Польше и Юго-Западной Руси в XVI–XVII вв. [Socinianism in Poland and South-Western Russia in the 16th–17th c.]. *Киевская старина*, 1882. Кн.6, 406.

came from the Kyiv branch: S. Pshypkovsky, S. Lyubenetsky, I. Voltaire, A. Rupnyovsky, H. Rudnytsky, Y. and S. Nemyrychi, S. Pistorius, and A. Morzhkovsky.

The military events of the 1640s and 1650s, which engulfed the Polish Commonwealth, had a catastrophic effect on Socinianism. In the southeast, Poland was forced to constantly restrain the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. In the east there were clashes with the Muscovy for Smolensk, and in the north it had to cede Inland (former lands of the Livonian Order) in favor of the Swedes. In 1648, the national liberation war of the Ukrainian people broke out under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648–1657, which sharply weakened Poland's military capabilities. Most Socinians belonging to the nobility pledged to take part in military battles. The worldviews of most of them forced them to side with the Swedish King and his allies. The reaction of the Polish government at the Warsaw Sejm in 1658 was immediate. The parliament decided to expel the Socinians from the Commonwealth, who were given a two-year term to settle property matters. Most of the current's followers emigrated to Germany, France, England, and the Netherlands. Those who remained in their homeland converted to Catholicism or Orthodoxy so as not to be persecuted by the authorities. In the early 1660s, there were only a few Socinian communities remaining in Ukraine.

The Doctrine of Socinianism

Anti-Trinitarianism at the stage of formation and development of Socinianism was characterized by a tendency to overcome irrationalism, and rationality in this interpretation became dominant. The methodology that became the basis of anti-Trinitarian doctrine consisted in the following principles: first, to consider incomprehensible passages of the Bible with the help of more intelligible passages; second, to interpret the meaning of individual words and phrases in context, taking into account the time and place of writing biblical texts; and third, the explanation of the Holy Scriptures should not contradict common sense.²⁰ Such principles greatly simplified the religious practices and formulated a rationalist doctrine.

The denial of the dogmas of the Lutheran Church was an important direction of Socinianism. Socinianism, in many ways, was based on scholars of nominalism, the late Middle Ages, and the Renaissance humanism—which emphasized that the dogmas or content of the Holy Scripture must be sound in terms of common sense. Hence those norms of the doctrine

²⁰“Протестантизм в Україні.” [Protestantism in Ukraine]. *Історія релігії в Україні: у 10-ти т.* За ред. П. Яроцького, Т.5. (Київ: Світ Знань. 2002), 74.

which the mind could not comprehend in interpretation of the Holy Scripture were rejected. The main criterion was the rational availability of the text and moral benefit.

The similarity between the Socinian and Rationalist teachings was revealed in relation to the Holy Scripture. The Socinians believed that the divine truth was available to everyone. The differences that arose were the result of individual human actions that had misinterpreted God's Word. According to Fausto Socinius, one must use one's own mind to realize the truth in the Bible. A number of authors saw philosophical rationalism and deism there. "The Socin system simply distances God from man, makes their relationship purely intellectual;" "it is a pure rationalism based on the Gospel."²¹ It is worth agreeing with such conclusions, because if in the New Testament Fausto Socinius, imitating Servetus, still reveals his spiritualization, then the Old Testament plays for him only historical significance. Therefore, part of the biblical material, all the sacraments and the idea of God-Thinker Socinians attributed to the realm of a human imagination.²²

The rational study of the Bible is explained by the need to take into account the right of every person to seek the way of salvation, which he/she is able to determine with his/her mind. Defining religion as a means of salvation, Socinus attributed to it everything that concerned the knowledge of the divine. Thus, the use of one's own mind to study the Scriptures was recognized as the highest good. Therefore, Socinus allowed everyone to preach in the church. This was based on the belief that "a person has two forces that regulate his actions—the higher mind, which corresponds to moral norms, and the lower, which determines his pride and greed."²³

The meticulous analysis of the Socinians to interpret the possibilities of faith and reason in recognizing divine truth was due primarily to the denial of the Catholic philosophy of Thomism. According to the Catholic teaching, the authenticity of the Revelation was interpreted by the Church. Instead, Socinus was convinced that only the Bible articulated faith, and that reason helped in the knowledge of Christian reality. Criticizing the Reformed doctrine of the faith, the Socinians insisted on a literal interpretation of the basics of the Holy Scripture. Contrary to the Lutheran doctrine of the view of faith as a divine offering, Socinus refuted it, believing it to be the result of consistent actions of reason. He was convinced that the value of

²¹Ч. Бэрд. *Реформация XVI века в ее отношении к новому мышлению и знанию*. [The Reformation of the 16th Century in Its Relationship to New Thinking and Knowledge]. (Санкт-Петербург: Типография Гершуна, 1897), 270.

²²Е. Будрин. *Антитринитарии шестнадцатого века. Выпуск 2. Фауст Социн*. [Anti-Trinitarians of the Sixteenth Century. Issue 2. Faust Socin]. (Казань: типо-лит. Импер. ун-та, 1886), 122–130.

²³К. Sochaniewicz. *Materiały Sarnickie i zbór w Mokrem Lipiu. Reformacja w Polsce*. [Materials of the Sarnicki Family and the Church in Mokre Lipie. Reformation in Poland]. (Warszawa, 1924). T.2, 218.

a person lay in his/her morality, and morality depended on the actions of the person.²⁴ Thus, the center of gravity in the process of cognition was transferred to the ethical plane.

In philosophical terms, Socinianism tended to deism. In the teachings of Socinians, God was seen as the originator of nature and humans, but God did not interfere in the existing reality. God's activities on earth were continued by the proteges God had chosen. Each of them carried out a mission through God to save humanity. For example, Moses informed people about their ability to atone for sins. Christ foretold the spiritual perfection of humankind, of which He became a victim of those who did not believe in the truth of His words. For humans, God had raised the ability to distinguish between good and evil, enabling the control of will and reason. Therefore, God for the Socinians was a moral model, an active desire to imitate the inner need. Such a life likened the human to God and made him/her eternal.²⁵ Thus, Socinianism redefined the development of ethics as a science, its self-worth in the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

An important role in the doctrine of the Socinians was played by the refutation of the Christian dogma of the Trinity about the one essence of the three coeternal and consubstantial persons of God. God, according to F. Socinus was only God the Father, the Holy Spirit—God's power. Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the Trinity, but not the other two personae of God who do not have a body. He, although born of the Spirit by the Virgin Mary, was by nature an ordinary person who lived at the beginning of our era.²⁶ Despite protesting the divine nature of Christ, the Socinians interpreted His coming as a source of moral example in the development of humankind. Rejecting the idea of hopeless human sinfulness, they asserted the freedom of moral perfection. Thus, the critical-rationalist position of the Socinians refuted the Lutheran doctrine of the sinful human nature.

The Socinians preached freedom of conscience, equality of all believers, and branding any manifestations of intolerance. Civil service was not denied being the subject of the commandments of Christ. However, they emphasized that the functions of the state as an organization of secular power were so different from the goals of the church and, moreover, were in constant conflict with them, that true Christians could not simultaneously serve in the civil service and preach the word of God. These ideals became the conceptual basis of the republican-democratic views of famous representatives of the Ukrainian nobility and magnates, who in the future would try to implement them. As consistent humanists, the

²⁴Ibid., 67.

²⁵Е. Будрин. *Антитринитарии шестнадцатого века. Выпуск 2. Фауст Социн*. [Anti-Trinitarians of the Sixteenth Century. Issue 2. Faust Socin]. (Казань: типо-лит. Импер. ун-та. 1886), 36.

²⁶О. Левицкий. "Социнианство в Польше и Юго-Западной Руси в XVI – XVII вв." [Socialism in Poland and South-Western Russia in the 16th–17th c.]. *Киевская старина*. 1882. Кн.6, 44.

Socinians preached the renunciation of execution, condemned religious persecution, war as a means of solving political problems, acting as a kind of successor to moderate Hussitism and the forerunners of pacifism.²⁷ The Socinians limited their cultic practice to reading sermons and collectively discussing the Bible. The Lord's Supper was considered only a rite in memory of Christ's death, noting that "the teaching of Christ is spiritual and aims at the inner rebirth of man... Therefore, it has nothing to do with external rites."²⁸ They denied the significance of the sacrament of baptism, to which only adults were admitted. Thus, despite its complexity, philosophical depth, and certain abstractness, the Socinian teaching was a logical religious-ethical program.

Despite the persecution, the Socinian doctrine did not disappear but expanded its boundaries and preserved the foundations of the doctrine. In its pure form, the doctrinal system of Socinianism continues to exist as one of the religious denominations of Transylvania, whose members are called Unitarians.²⁹ They still retain a number of ecclesiastical features including calling their higher clergy bishops. The Socinian principles also served as an ideological basis for the formation of new philosophical and religious systems of the doctrine. The Socinian doctrine became the basis for the development of the dogmatics of the Mennonite religious movements, and through them the Ukrainian evangelical movements. In recent times, theologians have modernized triadology by changing the philosophical and methodological foundations of scientific research, actualizing the problem of the real historicity of Jesus Christ, providing attractiveness through updating the terminological apparatus, and interpreting mythological stories in an accessible language.³⁰ Along with this, they are trying to reconsider the traditional understanding of theology, which should become creative, constantly dealing with the problems of human beings and the problems of our socio-political life.

Conclusions

Anti-Trinitarianism is a religious phenomenon that combines the pre-Reformation anti-church tradition, which has its origins in early Judeo-Christian and Christian-heretical

²⁷В. І. Любащенко. *Історія протестантизму в Україні*. [History of Protestantism in Ukraine]. Вид. 2-е. (Київ: Поліс, 1996), 122.

²⁸К. Sochaniewicz. *Materiały Sarniccy i zbór w Mokrem Lipiu. Reformacja w Polsce*. [Materials of the Sarnicki Family and the Church in Mokre Lipie. Reformation in Poland]. (Warszawa, 1924). Т.2, 286–287.

²⁹О. Левицкий. "Социнианство в Польше и Юго-Западной Руси в XVI–XVII вв." [Socialism in Poland and South-Western Russia in the 16th–17th c.]. *Киевская старина*. 1882. Кн.6, 429.

³⁰О. Л. Соколовський, А. А. Герасимчук. "Христологічні ідеї у вченнях католицьких теологів." [Christological ideas in the teachings of Catholic theologians]. *Українська полоністика*. (Житомир: Видавництво Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка, 2020). Вип. 17, 65–66.

teachings, and the mystical and rationalist movements of the late Middle Ages and the Socinian doctrine, which returned this tradition to the bosom of Christianity. In contrast to Catholicism and Orthodoxy, anti-Trinitarianism became an expression of the spiritual and religious slogans put forward by the Reformation in the context of actualizing the socio-ethical ideal of apostolic Christianity. Despite attempts at dogmatic codification and structural formalization, new ideological-dogmatic and cult-structural modifications are being formed in anti-Trinitarianism. Doctrinal-institutional characteristics of anti-Trinitarianism in Ukraine reproduce the principles of related currents in other European countries.

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