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Religion and Politics in Ukraine after the Maidan Protests

Guest Editor
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Maidan activists sleeping on the floor of St. Michael's Cathedral, Kyiv, Ukraine, 19 January 2014.
Photo by Tetiana Kalenychenko. © Religious Information Service of Ukraine

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The Political Valence of Dignity and the Maidan Protests

The Maidan Square had long been the heart of Kyiv but on November 21, 2013 a process was set in motion whereby this place became an ideal, encapsulated in the concept of dignity. Dignity has come to symbolize the aspirations of Ukrainians for change because it was on the Maidan that they congregated to assert this very powerful social fact during the protests of 2013-14. The euphoria experienced during the early phase of the Maidan protests was a manifestation of social bonds that connected diverse individuals to each other in common purpose. The concept of dignity became a primary orienting symbol that forged feelings of unity, solidarity and resolve during those winter months. These feelings of engagement in a common, righteous pursuit were one of the key dynamics that combined to recast these protests as a “Revolution of Dignity,” as this event is known in Ukraine. Remarkably, a decade earlier Aleksander Kwasniewski, the President of Poland, who mediated the roundtable talks in Kyiv during the Orange Revolution in 2004-05, also referred to that earlier protest as “a revolution of dignity.” He understood the goal of those protests to be a “triumph of civic dignity and political morality over ideological monism, bureaucratic cynicism and police dictatorship.”¹ Why might the concept of dignity have come to symbolize the goal of the Maidan protesters?

Ukrainians were not the only ones to make political recourse to the concept of dignity. During the Arab Spring, which began earlier in 2010, dignity was also evoked during mass uprisings that demanded economic

equity, the rule of law, and regime change.² Aging dictatorships in the Middle East, bereft of ideas on how to reform society, led to endemic corruption, unemployment, and low standards of living. In Tunisia the slogan of the protesters was “Dignity, Bread and Freedom!” The catalyst to the protests there was Mohamed Bouazizi’s decision to set himself on fire after local authorities confiscated his wares and blocked him from selling fruit in the central square of Sidi Bouzid, the city where he lived and worked. Most Tunisians understood Bouazizi’s humiliation and desperation in a way all too familiar to Ukrainians. In both countries, a person who fails to pay a bribe to the authorities can be punished by even a minor official’s ability to unleash a barrage of bureaucratic violations and infractions that are inevitably more costly, time-consuming and humiliating than senselessly handing over hard-earned money as a bribe.

The sense of exasperation, of being at wit’s end, with the capriciousness of the self-serving nature of state power was evident in Egypt too, and also served to spark unrest. A popular uprising there called ever more forcefully for new political leadership. Nawara Najem, a journalist who followed the protests in Cairo on Tahrir Square, said, “Why did the people not fear death? No one knows. It was not only religion, because some of those who died were not believers. It was not only poverty, because many of those who faced death were from the comfortable classes. It was not only despair, as the millions who came out into the streets were full of hope for change. Perhaps the answer is human dignity.

1 Peter Voitsekhovskiy 2012 “*In the Footsteps of 1989: Ukraine’s Orange Revolution as a Carnival of Anti-Politics*” in Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed. *The End and the Beginning*. Budapest: Central European University Press. Pp. 550-551.

2 Hawkins, Simon. 2014. “Teargas, Flags and the Harlem Shake: Images of and for Revolution in Tunisia and the Dialectics of the Local in the Global” In Pnina Werbner, Martin Webb, Kathryn Spellman-Poots, eds., *The Political Aesthetics of Global Protest: The Arab Spring and Beyond*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

No force, no matter how tyrannous, is able to deprive human beings of this.”³

Indeed, uprisings over time, but especially in the last decade, have illustrated the consequences of robbing individuals of their dignity. The demands for dignity empowered individuals in multiple countries to protest by offering a vision of how to create a more just society through individual agency. Such demands also appealed to people from a wide spectrum of political and religious persuasions and motivated them to act in unison. The quest for dignity in Ukraine was meant to spur political change and to steer the direction of that change by shifting the consciousness of Ukrainians from acquiescence to vigilance in terms of how to relate to state power.

Much like the eight uprisings that were part of the Arab Spring, the Maidan achieved initial success by forcing a change in government leadership only to see the hope for change dissolve as old established practices of crony capitalism and corruption stubbornly persisted. Still, it is important to ask why dignity emerged as such a compelling rallying cry during these protests and why at this time? Given the ensuing widespread disappointment with the Maidan and the Arab Spring, was this an effective orienting concept for reform?

The articles in this issue detail the sources of discontent in Ukraine and how protesters during and after the Maidan responded to them. They pay particular attention to the role of religion, religious thinking and attitudes toward clerical and governmental leadership in an effort to better understand the victories and defeats that the protesters experienced during the “winter that changed us,” as these

3 Najem, Nawara “Egyptian dignity in the face of death.” *The Guardian*, 19 February 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/feb/19/tipping-point-arab-revolution>. Accessed 7 December 2017.

momentous protests are known. By way of introduction to the series of articles that follows, I offer an analysis of the concept of dignity, its political valence, and how it melded with religion. I argue that it was the political history of the concept of dignity and its religious underpinnings that allowed it to motivate and morally empower the protesters and their demands for immediate political reform.

DIGNITY AS A PRIMARY ORIENTING SYMBOL FOR POLITICAL CHANGE

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant argued that the human capacity for moral action is made possible by dignity (*würde*) and this is what gives humans their intrinsic worth.⁴ By virtue of the fact that all individuals possess dignity, no one should be treated as a means to an end but rather as an end in and of themselves. Treating individuals with dignity means treating them as equal, autonomous individuals able to choose their destiny. Efforts to assert human dignity implicitly critique honor as a measure of virtue. Kant sharply criticized the feudal governing practices of hierarchical, inherited ranking and deference to aristocratic authority, both of which he claimed were grounded in notions of inherited honor.

Whereas honor-based understandings of virtue involve safeguarding one’s own honor by following certain prescriptions for action or reaction, dignity, in contrast, mandates certain modes of interaction *with* others. This makes dignity an achieved, non-inherited status, albeit a fragile

4 Immanuel Kant, 1981 [1795] *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.

one.⁵ A growing consensus for a preference *to use* dignity over honor to achieve or restore justice is reflected in the condemnation of honor killings, which are justified by a subjective interpretation of an obligation to maintain one's own chivalric honor using violence. Honor-based codes of interaction are closely associated with the criminal underworld and oligarchic rule. Fallen President Viktor Yanukovich and his ruling elite, for example, were frequently referred to as "The Family" to signal accusations of the mafia-like means they used to attain and maintain political and economic power. The corrupting potential of honor-based forms of virtue were held in sharp contrast to the legal mechanisms of regulating relationships and maintaining order in Europe through the implementation of universal rights and responsibilities that appeal to human dignity.

The roots of such legal traditions run deep. Beginning most notably in the 19th century, a series of political and legal reforms were undertaken to reimagine the moral order to assure human dignity by beginning the process of universalizing and equalizing rights and entitlements of citizens within a particular state.⁶ Although dignity was rarely defined, a moralized conception of dignity was used to underwrite laws, legislation, and public policy based on a respect for and desire to protect human dignity. State policy initiatives, reinforced by religious pronouncements, aimed to cultivate an awareness of universal human dignity with the goal of internalizing

moral sensibilities that would foster a sense of moral duty responsive to supporting and defending the dignity of others.

For example, the justification for the abolition of slavery was that it constituted an affront to the dignity of the slave and slaveholder. The capacity to feel the dignity of others informed the 1919 founding of the International Labor Organization dedicated to creating dignified working conditions and advancing socio-economic justice. Several states in the early twentieth century included in the preamble of their constitutions the state's responsibility to ensure the dignity of their citizens, Mexico (1917), Weimar Germany and Finland (1919), Portugal (1933) Ireland (1937), and Cuba (1940).

World War II provided another formidable catalyst as the ravages of war, and in particular the Holocaust, prompted a reconsideration of the means and modes of intervention to ensure human dignity. With influence from socialist thinking and Catholicism, the concept of dignity was incorporated into human rights proclamations and national constitutions. Three defeated Axis nations, Japan (1946), Italy (1948), and West Germany (1949), incorporated a mention of dignity in their new postwar constitutions. The German constitution was the most notable, beginning with "Human dignity is inviolable. To respect and protect it is the duty of all state power." [Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar. Sie zu achten und zu schützen ist Verpflichtung aller staatlichen Gewalt]⁷ The German constitution had particular import as it served as a model in 1989 for Eastern European countries and post-apartheid South Africa as these countries drafted new constitutions.

5 Charles Taylor 1994 *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 27.

6 Charles Taylor 1994 *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 38 and Yechiel Michael Barilan 2012 *Human Dignity, Human Rights, and Responsibility: The New Language of Global Bioethics and Biolaw*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 82-83.

7 <https://www.grundrechtenschutz.de/gg/menschenwuerde-2-255>. Accessed 7 December 2017.

Political mechanisms to protect the universality of human rights culminated in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Soviet representatives to the UN Council objected to the use of multinational organizations to guarantee human rights because they would supersede the rights of individual states and therefore infringe on the sovereignty of individual states. They countered that human dignity could only be assured by a just social and economic order, which had to be realized on the individual state level and offered a proposal that allowed individual states to implement their own measures to protect human dignity. This set the stage for debates between “sovereignist versus dignitarian politics,” each of which trades on different modes of reasoning to determine who is the ultimate arbiter of whether individual states uphold the dignity of their citizens.*

The assertion of a universal recognition of human dignity and a global mandate to protect it became the first universal ideology with broad acceptance by individual state sovereignties and by transnational governing structures. The key architects of international law to promote human rights and to criminalize genocide were Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) and Hersch Lauterpacht (1897-1960). Both men were born in parts of Galicia that are now in Ukraine. This mandate has since been used to inspire a variety of political interventions, from global public health programs to correctives to the excesses of global capitalism, to the legitimation or condemnation of military force.** More recently, a variety of conventions to protect the rights of the vulnerable are all justified with references to dignity: the Rights of Children (1989), the Rights of Migrant Workers (1990),

Protection against Forced Disappearance (2007) and the Rights of Disabled Persons (2007).

In short, the concept of dignity has become central to human rights issues. Appeals to upholding dignity made Ukrainian leaders answerable to multinational organizations responsible for protecting human rights. The goals of the Maidan articulated in terms of dignity became part of this standoff among international organizations, state authorities and the moral pronouncements of religious institutions. There was widespread recognition that the EU, as an outside institution, was needed to ensure dignitarian policies precisely because the “sovereign” Ukrainian state was incapable of doing so. Thus, much like after World War II, the impetus in Ukraine in 2013-14 was to harness the power of the EU and other multinational organizations to ensure the protection of individual rights, human dignity and the rule of law.

The concepts of dignity and human rights have the potential to serve the twin goals of national liberation and national self-determination because they embody a set of relationships involving governance as it *should* be affecting citizens. At this moment, this vision emerged as the primary alternative to the one offered by nationalist groups. Groups, such as the political party Svoboda, suggested that a nationalized path to reform could purportedly yield the same liberation and enhancement of well-being. A “national” revolution obviously runs the risk of rigorously managing difference by fortifying borders, cultural as well as political, amid a xenophobic atmosphere that celebrates the virtues of the nation, not the individual. Dignity, on the other hand, became an orienting concept that began to scope out an alternative path to fortifying the nation and

another avenue by which to achieve a truly independent state for Ukrainians. Josiah Ober (2012) succinctly defines dignity as freedom from humiliation and infantilization. “Nonhumiliation,” as he calls it, translates into a sense of dignity based on equal respect for all as moral beings. “Noninfantilization” involves recognition of each person’s choice-making capabilities. He goes on to claim that the three core values of democracy are liberty, equality, and dignity, with dignity informing the other two values.⁸ Such political goals that invited democratic reform in an effort to shed humiliation and infantilization clearly resonated with Ukrainians on the Maidan.

THE POLITICAL THEOLOGY OF DIGNITY

In addition, a moral justification for an appeal to human dignity often traded on references to a higher power, however conceived. The Roman Catholic Church, in particular, has long espoused the belief that the human individual was created in the image of God. The Catholic social teaching that developed at the end of the 19th century increasingly relied on “human dignity” in its doctrinal pronouncements. Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891),⁹ Pope John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963), and in a key document of the Second Vatican Council *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) were especially influential pronouncements that evoked human dignity. This has inspired the Church over time to weigh in on debates over the relationship of dignity to moral law as well as on other debates it deemed of moral significance, such as reproductive rights, end of life issues, and questions relating to bioethics. Catholic theology claims dignity to be an absolute value and independent of any

8 Josiah Ober “Democracy’s Dignity” *American Political Science Review* 106(4): 827-846.

specific feature of human life.

Pope Paul VI’s address to the United Nations on October 4, 1965, *Dignitatis Humanae*, stressed the overlapping interests and responsibilities of the Roman Catholic Church and the United Nations concerning human dignity, one for the souls of the faithful and the other for member states. In addition to encouraging political modes of intervention to achieve dignity, the Catholic Church asserted the ethical and moral obligation of believers to actively do the same. Most importantly, the Church reframed the legal commitment to the freedom of religious conscience as a matter of human dignity, thereby giving religious institutions a powerful voice in debates over human dignity.¹⁰ The 2008 *Dignitas Personae*, which addresses the Church’s position on a variety of bioethical questions, opens with, “The dignity of a person must be recognized in every human being from conception to natural death.”⁹

These initiatives contributed to the Soviet state’s antipathy to Catholicism and its wariness of the power of the Vatican. In 1946 Stalin outlawed the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC) over fears of Vatican meddling in the fate of Catholic believers in the newly annexed territories to Soviet Ukraine.¹⁰ The UGCC, with its five million believers, was the largest confession to have been persecuted throughout the entire Cold War period. Caught between empires as a hybrid confession with a Byzantine rite that recognizes papal authority, the UGCC, unlike other Orthodox Christian churches, never had

9 http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_en.html. Accessed 7 December 2017.

10 Bohdan Bociurkiw 1996 *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State, 1939-1950*. Edmondton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press and Serhii Plokhii 2010 *Yalta: The Price of Peace*. New York: Viking Press.

a collaborative, cooperative relationship with state authorities. Much like the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, it was a critic and foe of the Soviet state, whose ruling authorities confined the Church to a clandestine, underground existence. The deep roots of dignity as a guiding principle for political reform in Catholic theology had significant influence in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church among its clergy and believers, many of whom were among the most active and committed participants in the Maidan protests.

The Orthodox Church has also made significant pronouncements regarding human dignity based on the principle of *Lik Bozhii* (*Imago Dei*), or the belief that man was created in the image of God. Orthodox theology draws on the idea that the Church is a salvific institution, whose mission is to restore a fallen world, suggesting that the Church and society are engaged in common endeavors. Moreover, the 2008 *Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights*, concludes by stressing "the acknowledgement of personal dignity implies the assertion of personal responsibility."¹¹ In this document, the Orthodox idea of dignity, as rooted in moral purity and virtue and intimately connected to personal responsibility for individual actions, is spelled out in no uncertain terms, "Clearly, the idea of responsibility is integral to the very notion of dignity. Therefore, In the Eastern Christian tradition, the notion of 'dignity' has first of all a moral meaning, while the ideas of what is dignified and what is not dignified are bound up with the moral or amoral actions of a person and the inner state of his soul... God-given dignity is confirmed by a moral principle present in every person and discerned in the voice of conscience."

11 <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/dignity-freedom-rights/i/>. Accessed 7 December 2017.

Most significant of all are other pronouncements that implore that, "citizens of the heavenly homeland, should not forget about their earthly homeland."¹² Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that vital forms of material, logistical and emotional support were provided by Orthodox leaders over the course of the "winter on fire" as well. For example, the momentous decision by the monks of Mykhailovskii Monastery, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate, to provide safe haven for protesters after they were attacked by police during the night of 30 November 2013, and later to allow the monastery to become a hospital for wounded and shelter for protesters, firmly situated the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate and some clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate on the side of the *narod* in its pursuit of dignity against the state.

In essence, then, the use of dignity, with its grounding in moral reasoning, involved religious institutions, their clergy and believers, every bit as much as it did political leaders and citizens eager for meaningful reform. Once again in this part of the world, religion and politics fused for mutual effect. The essential difference is that this time the alliance was forged among the people, far from all of whom were believers, and religious institutions against the state as opposed to a collaborative relationship between state and clerical authorities as has been the historic pattern. The history of theological and legal debate concerning dignity paved the way for an alternative vision for uniting the people of Ukraine into the Ukrainian people. Throughout much of Ukrainian history, a nationalist vision, predicated on a particular

12 <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/social-concepts/>. Accessed 7 December 2017.

language, shared religious convictions, and perceptions of a common historical experience, were held out as the most promising recipe for national solidarity, a secure independent state, and political stability. Indeed, this was the initial message of the Svoboda political party and certain groups, such as UNSO, on the Maidan. However, once the goals of the protests shifted to a proclaimed pursuit of human dignity, it became clearer that shared values could become shared interests. This could lead to solidarity and even a form of unity that was capable of delivering tangible political reform. Indeed, under the banner of dignity, the protesters were successful in forcing the ouster of former President Viktor Yanukovich and ensuring a peaceful transfer of power to a new ruling regime.

To mark this accomplishment, dignity plays a central role in the myriad ways in which the Maidan is now commemorated as a “Revolution of Dignity” in monument, museum and memory. Such commemorative efforts are situated within broader efforts to reflect the cultural formations and religious idioms that are shaping new political subjectivities. The concept of dignity, with its history entangled in theology and transnational religious organizations as well as global organizations and international law provides a means by which to reorient individuals to modes of power and to reaffirm

the responsibilities and obligations people and now the various ways in which it is in power have to their citizens. The Maidan commemorated has consistently underlined the commitment of Ukrainians to advancing an agenda of living and dying with dignity and the ability to mount a united front in protest if this agenda is not respected. This is certainly the most impressive, and hopefully the most formidable and longest lasting, legacy of the Maidan.

*At the time, the American Anthropological Association agreed with the Soviet position. The AAA reasoned that by putting limits on “cultural practices” such laws were effectively limiting tolerance. The AAA essentially supported a position of Boasian cultural relativism to the extreme, thereby denying the possibility to make political judgments. The AAA retracted such pronouncements in 1999, which are increasingly seen as an embarrassing moment of misjudgment.

** A direct outgrowth of the UN Declaration of Human Rights is the supranational European Court of Human Rights, which was established in 1959, to guarantee the protection of a range of civil and political rights should individual sovereign states fail to do so. This court makes the commitment to protect human dignity a central element in the political and legal policies that now govern the 47 signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights.

*** Each of the following documents can be found at www.vatican.va. Accessed 7 December 2017.

**** A commitment to dignity subsequently underwrote a range of initiatives from the teachings of Liberation Theology to moral pronouncements on the sanctity of human life, which led to the condemnation of abortion, euthanasia and other practices.

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Mass Media, Religion, and Politics in Ukraine: The Story of the “Bloody Pastor”

by Michael Cherenkov

Abstract

Oleksandr Turchynov has become one of the symbols of post-Maidan Ukraine. He is known in the media as the “bloody pastor.” Two phenomena of present-day Ukraine are combined here: first, the religious diversity which allows members of religious minorities to hold political power (the “pastor” became an acting president), and second, strong religious patriotism that is common even among those who were until recently called “sectarians” (it was the “pastor” who gave an order to start the anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country). The “bloody pastor” may well fit into the post-secular scenario of the social crisis as a compelling example of the possible role of a religiously-motivated leader and a possible outline of religious-political restructuring. Both Ukrainian and Russian media see him as a spokesman for Protestantism, westernization, globalization, and modernization. They see in him a serious challenge to both the traditionalist forms of religiosity and traditional approaches to post-Soviet politics. In this sense, the image of the “bloody pastor” is the key to understanding several phenomena related to Russo-Ukrainian relations: the Russian-Ukrainian political-military conflict; the social and religious diversity of the two countries; the local versions of post-secularism; and to defining Ukrainian Protestantism as a distinct social category.

Key words: Ukraine, Russia, Maidan revolution, Protestant Church, pastor, religion, media, society.

Religion in Ukraine is becoming predominantly public, both by its nature and in terms of its public perception. The two Ukrainian Maidans (2004 and 2013-2014) had a truly revolutionary impact on the relationship between religion and society. Religion was one of the main factors shaping events and at the same time religion itself was transformed by them. While previously Ukrainian religious scholars used western publications to study post-secularism, in recent years they have accumulated sufficient material of their own, the analysis of which provides interesting insights into the nature of Ukrainian religiosity in relation to socio-political processes. The media has played a key role in transforming attitudes towards religion and its political influence.

It is noteworthy that Cardinal Lubomyr Husar of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, Patriarch Filaret of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate, and

Baptist “Pastor” Oleksandr Turchynov have emerged in the post-Maidan period as both religious and political leaders. Each one personifies public religiosity as being shaped by a particular confessional context. Turchynov held the highest government post of the three and is widely – and inaccurately – believed to be a member of the Baptist clergy thanks to the way he has been portrayed in the media. Because of his visibility, notoriety and the pivotal role he played in the “Revolution of Dignity,” the creation of Turchynov’s image deserves careful attention.

Oleksandr Turchynov is a well-known Ukrainian politician, who followed an interesting path from Komsomol activist to president, from atheist propagandist to Baptist lay preacher. He entered politics in the opposition as the first deputy chairman of the Batkivshchyna (“Fatherland”) political party and right-hand man of party leader Yulia Tymoshenko. Turchynov also served as acting

Prime Minister in 2010 and Chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament in 2014. He currently serves as Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine.

Turchynov clearly blends his religious and political views. He is very active in promoting a place for religion in governance and in promoting the idea that politicians should be believers. This is what makes Turchynov's political career significant. His confident self-identification with the Baptist Church brings him a fair share of problems. However, at the same time it creates popularity, and makes him stand out from other politicians. Turchynov's faith is not only part of his political image, but something much more – the foundation of his identity.

In the USSR and in the post-Soviet sphere Baptists were seen as a type of sect, dangerous to both the dominant Orthodox faith and to government order. What made them dangerous was their otherness, nothing else. What set Soviet and post-Soviet Baptists apart was their pious spirituality and their aloofness from politics. Not even Soviet propaganda would have called a Baptist pastor "bloody." The phrase "bloody pastor" is an example of how propaganda creates enemies by combining the incompatible and how freely and carelessly it treats facts. It is no less interesting how the media turned him into a propaganda machine for a sect – first as a "pastor" and then as a "bloody pastor" – when in reality he was just an average believer participating in his faith community as a lay preacher.

Oleksandr Turchynov has involuntarily become the image of Ukrainian Protestantism in its public mode. The mass media, both Ukrainian and Russian, is largely responsible for this. Whereas Turchynov remains a reticent and rather closed politician and preacher, his

media image has taken on a life of its own—a very active virtual life.

It is worth recalling that it was the Ukrainian media that started calling Turchynov a "pastor," when he was really a lay preacher, and it was they who created the mysterious, yet respectable image of him as a Baptist politician. But it was the Russian media who made him a "bloody" pastor. For the Ukrainian media a "pastor" is somewhat exotic, an unusual yet wholly acceptable religious and political phenomenon, whereas for the Russians the Baptist faith is definitely an evil product of sectarianism and a threat to Orthodoxy and the "Russian world." As analysts noted in 2014, "If you type Turchynov's name in a Google search, 'Pastor Turchynov' will appear; if you type it in Yandex, then the search suggestions will be 'Turchynov the Baptist' and 'Turchynov the sectarian.'"¹ In other words, Turchynov has become emblematic of the Russian media's portrayal of threatening figures emerging in Ukraine.

It is worth to note the difference between Turchynov's portrait in Russian and Ukrainian media. A summary of both interpretations could point to the following points: the Ukrainian media sees the combination of patriotism and the Baptist faith as interesting (you could even say exotic) and promising, while the Russian media sees it as impermissible and dangerous.

The journalists of Focus magazine specifically point this out: "Turchynov is a Baptist. Being a Protestant in an Orthodox country is like being a Jew—there is no discrimination as such, but it is not the thing for politicians. It's ridiculous to accuse

¹ Aleksandr Turchinov: V ozhidanii Apokalipsisa. 15.11.14 <http://www.dsnews.ua/politics/aleksandr-turchinov-v-oshchushchenii-apokalipsisa-15112014141000>

Turchynov of opportunism as if the former Komsomol functionary changed allegiance for personal gain. There is not much logic in this accusation. If this were his motivation, it would make more sense for him to switch to Orthodoxy.”² The attitude toward Turchynov is tied to more fundamental issues – how religious and political diversity are viewed as well as diverse relationships between the religious and the political spheres. While this pluralism is flourishing in Ukraine, in Russia it is drowned out by heavy media involvement.

The media’s image of Turchynov reflects a wider framework of societal and media perceptions of religion in the post-Soviet political sphere. The history of the “bloody pastor” reveals not only the religiosity of Ukrainians and Russians but also the evolution of political-religious relationships. I intend to show that the hidden settings of social conscience on both sides were at work in the discussions of the “bloody pastor,” and examine the changes in political-religious relationships that the evolution of this image demonstrated. In other words, if we agree that the “bloody pastor” became a symbol for the media on both sides of the conflict, we need to try to answer the question, “How can a political leader be turned into a religious preacher?” In other words, how was the media effective in using religion to create a (frightening) cultural icon and internet meme out of a politician who openly used his faith to pursue his country’s interests? How did religion become a political tool for Turchynov and for the media? Why was it so easy to demonize someone for being a Baptist? What does the media have to say about that?

The evolution of his media image is

² Fionik D., Samsonova IU. Kak Aleksandr Turchinov ispolnil prezidentskie obiazannosti. Zhurnal Fokus. 21.06.14 <https://focus.ua/country/308310/>

grounded in a real biography. Oleksandr Turchynov went from being a Komsomol member to a preacher, then from a modest preacher to a “pastor” and then from a political party’s behind-the-scenes leader (for the *Batkivshchyna* party) to acting president of Ukraine; and finally, from Yulia Tymoshenko’s assistant to an independent leader on a national level. Although Turchynov’s rise to power is rather remarkable, it came about thanks to two pivotal events, which coincide with the two Ukrainian Maidans.

THE FIRST COMING: A BAPTIST REVEALS HIMSELF

Oleksandr Turchynov first attracted media attention during the Orange Revolution in 2004. After the success of the revolution, he was appointed head of the Security Service of Ukraine. He was already referred to as a sectarian back then, but was not yet “bloody.” Ukrainian media were persistent in their interest in his Baptist worldview and its possible influence on politics. He was stigmatized as a sectarian, but was not considered dangerous. Russian and pro-Russian media considered him not just interesting but dangerous. “Anti-Orange” websites called him a “Chekist Baptist,” a secret representative of the “Orange sect” yearning for world domination. “Not only have the Baptists brought the USA under their control, but they also have a strong position in Europe. For example, in the UK there is the Baptist Keston Institute, dedicated ‘to the study of religion in the former communist bloc,’ although in reality the organization lobbies for Baptist interests under the guise of fighting for the rights of believers. It is setting up, so to speak, a ‘new world order,’ which

will, of course, be a Baptist one.”³

“Anti-Orange” journalists expressed concern that the head of the Security Service was a major threat to the very security of Ukraine. “I wonder in what capacity Baptist pastor O. Turchynov—a carrier of state secrets—talked to his foreign equivalents. Who can guarantee one hundred percent that Oleksandr Valentynovych did not give away Ukrainian secrets to foreign spies who often disguise themselves as preachers?”⁴ Meanwhile, the authors of the article about the insidious Chekist Baptist elaborated on this terrible image using contradictory elements. “When Turchynov preaches from the pulpit, his legs shake with emotion (by the way, he does not hesitate to kneel in prayer in front of others).”⁵ Thus, the media crafted an image of someone who was simultaneously ‘a God-fearing fanatic,’ ‘a humble sectarian,’ and ‘a holy Chekist.’

In an interview for the newspaper *Ukrayinska Pravda*, Turchynov emphasized his modest role in the church, “I am not a pastor. It’s a nickname that has stuck to me. I do preach in the church, but being a pastor is a more serious responsibility.”⁶

Turchynov’s sermons were monitored, not only by Ukrainian evangelicals (as he was a new religious phenomenon for the stigmatized and marginalized (post) Soviet Protestant community), but also by journalists (as he was a new political phenomenon). The newspaper *Gazeta Po-Ukrainsky* described his approachable image: “the right hand of Yulia Tymoshenko preached ... in jeans, a

shirt and tie, and a sports jacket. He started quietly, but suddenly he raises his voice: ‘Brothers and sisters, the winds are subject to Him. The elements are subject to Him. He fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and some fish. These days, just as it was then, people also demand miracles and free food.’ He reminds them that Jesus came not to fill stomachs but to save souls. Everyone longs for the understandable, nobody wants to go to the cross.”⁷

As a preacher, Turchynov fits in well with the local Baptist homiletic tradition. His preaching style can be called humble, yet emotional. Sermons are built around simple ideas, with an emphasis on practical application to personal life. As a preacher, he does not attract attention to himself through his clothing or rhetoric. However, he is not afraid to speak openly about his faith. He does not hide his worries, and does not adapt his speech to the audience. This all makes him not only a church preacher, but also a media figure, a true media missionary.

Turchynov was not intimidated when he was called a sectarian not only in print or online, but also on live television. He gladly invited others to listen to his sermons. The newspaper *Livyi Bereg* recounted one of these episodes: “Responding to the presenter’s question about the importance of religion in his life Turchynov said, ‘I am a preacher. I preach in a Baptist church.’ ‘May I come listen to you preach?’ asked the presenter. ‘Absolutely. Michurin Street. Do come; we will be glad to see you there. Everyone is welcome,’ Turchynov responded. Then the presenter asked whether Turchynov feared that belonging to the Protestant Church would

3 Chekist-baptist Aleksandr Turchinov 19.09.05 <http://anti-orange.com.ua/article/resident/68/27569>

4 Chekist-baptist Aleksandr Turchinov 19.09.05 <http://anti-orange.com.ua/article/resident/68/27569>

5 Chekist-baptist Aleksandr Turchinov 19.09.05 <http://anti-orange.com.ua/article/resident/68/27569>

6 Oleksandr Turchinov: Proti Poroshenka u SBU dav svidchennia odin iz deputativ „Nashoi Ukraini“ 01.11.05 <http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2005/11/1/3015079/>

7 Baptist Turchinov propovedoval na Verbnoe voskresen’e. 29.04.2008 http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/politics-newspaper/_baptist-turchinov-propovedoval-na-verbnoe-voskresene/224497

work against the Batkyvshchyna party since the majority of Ukrainian citizens are either Orthodox or Greek-Catholics. "I didn't join the Baptist church for political benefit. And the fact is that during the Soviet era, Protestants were very harshly persecuted. But the world is changing. And Ukraine is a multi-religious country," Turchynov said. "I have the utmost respect for all believers regardless of their denomination. The main thing is for people to believe because faith makes us human. Without faith a person turns into a beast that rapes, kills, and believes that everyone should work for him. And by the way, one of the main hardships this regime imposes on Ukraine is the destruction of the moral code."⁸

Thus, Turchynov helped to increase religious tolerance in Ukraine, and normalize perceptions of the Baptist faith and Protestants in general. He became the first Baptist preacher to attract sustained media attention. Journalists kept track of his every word. Each public sermon was followed by a media response. It is perhaps the only example of open mission work in the public political sphere. But from a political perspective, a simple preacher was of little interest so they were determined to make Turchynov a "pastor." It both gave him authority and at the same time discredited him. And he became a "pastor," at least in the media and in the public's perception of him, which was shaped by the media.

THE SECOND COMING: THE PASSIVIST BECOMES AN ACTIVIST

Turchynov's second coming coincided with the "Revolution of Dignity" (2013-2014) and the subsequent war. He was one of the

most prominent and daring leaders of the Maidan Revolution, and then served as acting president during the most difficult days of Ukrainian statehood since its independence in 1991.

Evaluating Turchynov's role in those events, journalists link the nature of his politics with his religious beliefs. For them, "Oleksandr Turchynov's political intuition is intertwined with Christian eschatology,"⁹ because he took action when other politicians were at a loss and was guided not only by common sense or political expediency, but also by his faith and morals. Hence evaluations of him are mixed: "It is very easy to assess Turchynov's role in Euromaidan since it is positive. He has proven himself as a negotiator and as a tribune of the people. He was slightly wounded. During the most critical moments of the Maidan, he was on the stage or somewhere nearby. But as acting president, the verdict on his leadership is divided. Turchynov retained power legitimately (and perhaps insured Ukrainian statehood itself), but he lost the Crimea."¹⁰

Despite the fact that he gave an order launching the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), he is accused of indecisiveness. Despite the fact that he did not allow bloodshed in Crimea, he is called "bloody." This suggests, at the very least, that he is far from in favor of conformism and opportunism, and from making choices for the sake of pleasing others.

A recently disclosed transcript of a meeting of the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) of Ukraine held on February 28, 2014 revealed that Turchynov was the only person who advocated declaring a state of emergency. Yulia Tymoshenko commented

⁸ Turchinov priglasil na svoiu tserkovnuiu propoved'. 16.03.12 http://lb.ua/news/2012/03/16/141483_turchinov.html

⁹ Fionik D., Samsonova IU. Kak Aleksandr Turchinov ispolnil prezidentskie obiazannosti. Zhurnal Fokus. 21.06.14 // <https://focus.ua/country/308310/>
¹⁰ Ibid.

that such a decision would cause panic among the civilian population, to which he replied, “There will be more panic when Russian tanks are on Khreshchatyk. We must do everything possible to prepare to defend ourselves, even if we don’t receive any military aid from the West and must do so on our own. We have to act. Therefore, I am putting to vote the NSDC resolution to declare a state of emergency. Who is in favor? ... Very well. Only Turchynov. The resolution doesn’t pass.”¹¹

In June 2014 Turchynov handed over the presidency to Petro Poroshenko but he remained Speaker of Parliament. At this time he was the one who became known as “bloody,” not the newly elected president. The “pastor” ceased to be the acting president, but remained “the leader of the Kyiv junta,” according to Russian media. In reality, “pastor” is an easier target for criticism than businessman president.

By the summer of 2014 the “bloody pastor” had become an internet meme. According to internet headlines, the “Bloody Pastor...” “Gives Harsh Feedback to the Kremlin,” “Compares Putin to Hitler,” “Personally Inspects the Lines of Defense,” “Inspects the ATO Zone,” “Announces an Attack on Mariupol” and “Threatens Terrorists with an Assault Rifle” although he “Has Nothing to Do with the Collapse of the Ruble.” The name “Bloody Pastor” was even given to a heavily armored National Guard car and a brand of beer.¹² (The beer is a joke: “Turchynov registered a brand of beer called ‘bloody pastor.’ It’s now being advertised on Russian TV for free”). The jokes reflect the growing

demand for everything “pastor” related. The newspaper 2,000 devoted a liberal amount of space to describing in great detail the café “Karatel” (The Chastener) that opened in the burned out building of the House of Trade Unions and offers visitors a signature cocktail called “Bloody Pastor.”¹³ Thus, ‘bloody pastor’ became a brand, and marketing image that would sell products. “Bloody Pastor” is also an online game in which Turchynov attacks the “vatniki” with a knife and breaks into Putin’s office. The game was devised by Kyiv programmers.

Meanwhile, the “pastor” has accomplished quite a bit; among other things, he has written three novels: *Illusion of Fear*, *The Last Supper* and *The Advent*. Journalists point out that, “Turchynov’s personal traits can easily be found in the heroes of his book who are occupied with saving the planet: the pastor of a Protestant church and his mentor”¹⁴. Turchynov does not hide his apocalyptic views and mysticism in his novels. For example, he reports that “while writing of *The Advent*... ‘I received so many signs that the storyline had to change’¹⁵. Most of all, the author is on the guard against the Antichrist system of total control, globalism, computer networks, the invasion of gay culture, etc. That alone means he can hardly be called a pro-Western politician. Nonetheless, it was his independence, reticence, and calm confidence, which are grounded in his religious beliefs that made him invaluable during critical moments in Ukrainian history.

After the parliamentary elections

11 Ctenograma zasidannia Radi natsional’noi bezpeki i oboroni Ukraini vid 28 liutogo 2014 roku. 23.02.16 // <http://www.turchynov.com/news/details/ctenograma-zasidannya-rnbo-ukrayini-vid-28022014>

12 Pivo krovavyi pastor. 31 ianvaria 2015 <http://censor.net.ua/jokes/64638>

13 Lenin v stepiakh Ukrainy. A v Karatele — krovavyi pastor i tsinichnyi bandera. *Gazeta* 2000. 7 aprelia 2016 http://www.2000.ua/specproekty_ru/politpogoda/lenin-v-stepjah-ukrainya8-1_1460034091.htm

14 Aleksandr Turchinov: V ozhidanii Apokalipsisa. 15.11.14 <http://www.dsnews.ua/politics/aleksandr-turchinov-v-oshchushchenii-apokalipsisa-15112014141000>
15 Ibid.

of 2014 the hashtag #StayPastor appeared and immediately became popular (it was combined with phrases such as, “Come, pastor, and bring order,” “We beg you on our knees,” “We can’t survive without your sermons,” “It’s the first time the internet community has become parishioners,” “What other speaker would literally force MPs to vote?”)¹⁶. Internet users used these tactics to ask authorities to keep Turchynov as Speaker in the new convocation of the Verkhovna Rada.

The internet welcomed Turchynov’s return as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine with the hashtag #BloodyPastorReturned. The day after his appointment on December 17, 2014, Turchynov was in a good mood and when asked whether he knew about his nickname “bloody pastor,” he smiled reservedly. RIA Novosti interpreted the episode as an acknowledgement of the name.¹⁷

At the same time, Komsomolskaya Pravda in Ukraine noted that Turchynov treated his nickname very lightly but took his faith seriously. Despite the ominous nickname, the “bloody pastor” has a very successful branding and large social network following. Komsomolskaya Pravda added that it was the Russian media that called him “bloody” for his uncompromising stance and harsh statements against Russia. The “pastor” came about because he preached in the Baptist church.¹⁸ After having been recognized by the

newspapers, the “pastor” became known on TV. “The ‘bloody pastor’ has conquered the internet,” said ICTV¹⁹.

Turchynov did not become the “bloody pastor” merely on the internet. On February 4, 2015 at a PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) session, Deputy Yulia Lyovochkina accused the Ukrainian government of adopting the policies of the party of war, which is how the NSDC Secretary received his nickname.²⁰ Russian-controlled English-language media spread the incident immediately.

The website Novorossia.Vision dedicated a collection of materials to the “bloody pastor.” They claimed that Turchynov was involved with Scientology and even Satanism, as well as, obviously, behind-the-scenes manipulators, the “Western designers of the Ukrainian ‘revolution,’” whose goal is to “physically reduce the population of Ukraine and turn the rest into heartless and merciless murderers or their silent accomplices.”²¹

Zvezda Broadcasting Company eagerly reported how the “bloody pastor” Turchynov inspires Ukrainian siloviki and how this has given rise to a new epic “about a bloody pastor and the knights of Azov.”²² And here the Orthodox Russia information agency worriedly stated that the “insane ‘bloody pastor’ Turchynov referred to the Kuban as Ukrainian territory and is preparing to

16 V sotsial'nykh setiakh pol'zovateli aktivno pryzyvaiut vlast' ostavit' spikera Verkhovnoi Rady Aleksandra Turchinova na zaniamaemoi dolzhnosti v novom sozyve Verkhovnoi Rady. 05 noiabria 2014 <http://nbnews.com.ua/ru/news/135939/>

17 Turchynov znaet o svoem prozvyshche „Krovavyy pastor“. RIA Novosti Ukraina. 17 dekabria 2014 <http://rian.com.ua/video/20141217/360968348.html>

18 Turchynov prokomentiroval svoe neofitsial'noe prozvyshche „krovavyy pastor“. 17 dekabria 2014 <http://kp.ua/politics/482852-turchynov-prokomentiroval-svoe-neofitsialnoe-prozvyshche-krovavyy-pastor>

19 Krovavyy pastor pokoril internet. 17 dekabria 2014 <http://fakty.ictv.ua/ru/index/read-news/id/1537106>

20 Ukrainian deputy from the Opposition bloc calls Turchynov „the bloody pastor“ at PACE. 4.02.2015 <http://www.fort-russ.com/2015/02/ukrainian-deputy-from-opposition-bloc.html>

21 Burya Irina. Bloody Pastor. Novorossia Vision 2015 <http://novorossia.vision/en/bloody-pastor/>

22 Krovavyy pastor Turchynov voodushevliet ukrainskikh silovikov. Teleradiokompaniia „Zvezda“. 3 marta 2015 http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201503030452-pcxt.htm

advance on Moscow.”²³

The Ukrainian news channel 24 reported that the pastor has not forgotten his foreign brothers in faith, stating, “Oleksandr Turchynov, the ‘bloody pastor,’ meets with foreign chaplains.”²⁴ “‘Pastor’ Turchynov preached a sermon to NATO chaplains,” states Depo.ua. “Turchynov, who is a pastor himself, talked about the importance of faith in times of war: ‘The only ray of light in war is a deep and genuine faith that gives you strength, cleanses your soul, and heals it. Those who have seen the horrors of war usually become peacemakers.’”²⁵ The “pastor” also frequently speaks at Protestant church conferences.

Russia is especially concerned with these ties and the “pastor’s” spiritual influence: “Journalists and priests are complaining about the expansion of overseas sects. They have managed to pull off a political coup in a neighboring country with the help of these sectarian leaders.”²⁶ Many Russian Protestants concur with this “Orthodox” concern. There is a selection of texts on the Ruskii Baptist website about how the “bloody pastor” Turchynov discredits Ukrainian Baptists: “This odious figure, Oleksandr Turchynov, is first and foremost a Komsomol member and a Ukrainian Chekist, and only then a Baptist. The media and the people have called him the ‘bloody pastor’... He is a monster with a barbaric facial expression who fanatically

23 Bezumnyi „krovavyi pastor” Turchinov nazval Kuban’ ukrainkoi i sobral’sia na Moskvu. Agenstvo analitičeskoi informatsii „Rus’ pravoslavnaia”. 05 marta 2015 <http://rusprav.tv/bezumnyj-krovavyj-pastor-turchinov-nazval-kuban-ukrainskoj-i-sobral’sya-na-moskvu-20808/>

24 Krovavyi Pastor Aleksandr Turchinov vstretitsia s inostrannymi kapellanami. Kanal 24. 27 oktiabria 2015 http://24tv.ua/ru/krovavyj_pastor_aleksandr_turchinov_vstretitsja_s_inostrannymi_kapellanami_n624723

25 Pastor Turchinov vlashtuvav propovid\` pered kapellanami NATO. 28.10.15 <http://www.depo.ua/ukr/life/pastor-turchinov-uzhe-propovidue-pered-kapellanami-nato-28102015102500>

26 Pastory dlia Maidana. 24.05.15 // <http://anti-orange.com.ua/article/sekta/65/16028>

loves the military and dishes out orders to kill right and left... No doubt, Turchynov represents politicized extremist sectarianism. As soon as Turchynov handed power over to Petro Poroshenko... he went to his ‘church’ right away and preached a sermon. The day Turchynov was soliloquizing about spirituality, his soldiers killed a five-year-old girl in Slavyansk.”²⁷

As if Ukraine were not enough, News of Novorossia warned that “the ‘bloody pastor’ Turchynov is urging Turkey to join in the fight for the Crimea” and also exposed him as a “longtime agent of pro-American sects.”²⁸ A “people’s correspondent” clearly sees how the “bloody pastor Turchynov is once again demonstrating his bloodthirsty nature” while “demanding lethal weapons from the West to drown the Donbas in blood. It was on Turchynov’s orders that artillery and missiles destroyed residential areas of Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, Yenakiyev, Horlivka, Luhansk and Donetsk. It was on Turchynov’s orders that old men, women and children were killed. The dozens of people who were burned alive in the Odessa House of Trade Unions and Mariupol police headquarters are on his conscience.”²⁹

Despite the hysteria on the internet, it looks like the “pastor” feels he is in the right place heading the NSDC and will not exchange his position for a quieter job in the Cabinet of Ministers. As his political colleagues state, “he personally said that he doesn’t want to be the

27 Erofeev K. Krovavyi pastor Turchinov diskreditiruet ukrainkii baptizm. 22 iunija 2015 <http://rusbaptist.livejournal.com/138713.html>

28 Krovavyi pastor Turchinov pryzivaet Turtsiu vmeste povoevat\` za Krym. Novosti Novorossii. 20 fevralia 2016 <http://novorossia-novosti.com/novorossia/307351-krovavyy-pastor-turchinov-pryzivaet-t.html>

29 Krovavyi Pastor Turchinov snova demonstriruet krovozhadnu^iu sushchnost\`. Narodnyi korrespondent. 20 fevralia 2016 <http://nk.org.ua/politika/krovavyy-pastor-turchinov-snova-demonstriruet-krovojadnuyusushchnost-43433>

prime minister because he knows that he is in the right place.”³⁰

The “pastor” takes on himself the thankless role of calling a spade a spade, “to the delight of social network users.” Some bloggers exclaim, “Thanks again, pastor!” and “The bloody pastor is leading us on a crusade.”³¹

The Russian media frequently repeat his phrases in the form of news. For example, under the heading, “The ‘Bloody Pastor’ Called the Russian Prime Minister Inadequate” we find “pastoral” statements quoted openly: “I would like to remind these inadequate Kremlin dreamers that Ukrainians had a state with Kyiv as capital long before the Golden Horde settled in Moscow. Ukraine will continue to exist even after the rancor, aggression, and internal contradictions that are always part of a totalitarian regime tear apart the remains of the Soviet empire that bears the name of Russia.”³²

In 2016 the “pastor” has become seriously interested in missiles. This is reflected in such eloquent headlines as, “The ‘Bloody Pastor’ Invited NATO to Shoot Down Putin’s Bold Planes,”³³ or, “The Pastor Approves! Ukraine has Successfully Tested its New Missile.”³⁴

30 Krovavyy pastor ne promeniayet SNBO na Kabmin. 5 aprelia 2016 <http://www.depo.ua/rus/politics/krovavyy-pastor-ne-prominyae-rnbo-na-kabmin---burbak-05042016155400>

31 V Rossii br[^]iaknuli, Turchinov otvetil. So[^]tset vzorvalo: Pastor — ty nash gero[^]i! 06 aprel[^]ia 2016 // <http://newsoboz.org/politika/v-rossii-bryaknuli-turchinov-otvetil-sotsset-vzorvalo-pastor-06042016194400>

32 Krovavyy pastor zaiavil o neadekvatnosti prem[^]era Rossii. 6 aprelia 2016 // <http://inosmi.ru/politic/20160406/236014524.html>

33 Krovavyy pastor prizval NATO sbivat[^] derzkie samolety Putina. Ukrainski[^]i obshchestvenno-politicheskii portal UKROP. 15 aprelia 2016 <http://xn--j1aidcn.org/krovavyy-i-pastor-prizval-nato-sbivat>

34 Pastor odobriayet!: Ukraina uspeshno ispytala novuiu raketu. 26.08.14 <http://www.unian.net/war/1488389-pastor-odobryayet-ukraina-uspeshno-ispytala-novuyu-raketu-foto.html>

From the mysterious “Baptist preacher” to “Come back, pastor!”; “Thank you, pastor;” and “The pastor approves” – such has been Turchynov’s path in the Ukrainian media sphere. To those within the borders of the “Russian world” Turchynov remains an insidious sectarian in politics, covered in blood that he will never be able to fully wash off. This not only makes him “bad,” it makes him terrible, i.e. powerful, strong, and dangerous. Not only do people hate the “pastor,” they also fear him. For many Russians, to fear means to respect.

THE CONFESSION OF A NON-PASTOR

Despite Turchynov’s occasional attempts to at least somehow adjust his media image to bring it closer to reality as he understands it, the distance between the virtual and the real only increases. Indeed, in the context of stereotypical images of the “pastor,” few journalists are interested in what the “real” Turchynov thinks of himself and how he wants to present himself to society. Only in rare cases when the opportunity arises for Turchynov to talk on a confessional level, is he willing to share what he believes to be true without getting into debates.

His most frank interview about his life journey was published in 2001 in a Protestant magazine, *Faith and Life*, which is relatively unknown to secular audiences. He acknowledges that he had been an “ambitious social climber” since Komsomol times and was very surprised when educated and promising people left the Komsomol to join the Baptists. His story about his first contact with the Baptists has mystical aspects: “I decided to sneak into this ‘den’ to see it for myself and understand why young people leave ‘us’ to join ‘them.’ I took public transportation,

incognito, with a tough friend. We asked a neatly dressed woman at a bus stop for directions to the outskirts of the city where all the Baptists were banished during Soviet times. She responded, 'Praise God! I've been waiting here for you for quite a while. You're going to the house of prayer, aren't you?' Seeing our bewilderment she explained, 'I had a dream last night that two lost souls would come up to me and I would show them the way to salvation...'”³⁵ This testimony demonstrates not only Turchynov's mystic bent, but also his confidence that he was chosen to fulfill a big role.

In the 1990s he was baptized on profession of faith. “When I was baptized that second time by full immersion, I recognized the profound meaning of what was happening and knew that it was the best decision of my life.”³⁶ In doing so, he joined the Baptist community. What was it that drew him there? “Talking to the Baptists I became convinced that their faith wasn't excessive or superficial. I had known the senior pastor, Vladimir Yakovlevich Kunets, for a few years. I saw in him a simple, approachable person who wasn't showing off. He didn't come to God when it became generally accepted but at a time when it was dangerous and people had to sacrifice a great deal, if not everything, for their faith.”³⁷

Imitating his spiritual mentor, Turchynov learned to live and serve everywhere “as if for God.” “Until recently my social status meant a great deal to me. Today I see the vanity of it all clearly, and I am happy that I am free from it. Something else has replaced it: you have to honestly do (as unto the Lord) whatever you have been entrusted with... I would be

lying if I said that working in politics while following the laws of God's love is as easy as, say, operating a machine in a factory. But I am happy that the Lord – and He alone – kept me from falling into the abyss of getting pleasure from power and satisfaction from stopping at nothing to reach a goal.”³⁸

He points to another temptation, which is to use Christian churches for political purposes, when he says, “The authorities seek support from any major social player, one of which - and this is no secret - is evangelical Christians.”³⁹ According Turchynov, not only the authorities are guilty of this, but also the churches themselves that seek support and political influence.

What Turchynov is suggesting is not a division between religion and politics or church and state. On the contrary, he advocates for their integration, but suggests a hierarchy of authority and values in which God takes first place over state authorities and secular laws: “We don't have to curry favor with the authorities; they aren't worthy of it. The church is above politics or any authorities and it must demand from the authorities that they act in accordance with Scripture. Of course, that doesn't mean giving them directions. The solution to the dilemma between 'Christians and the authorities' or 'Christians and politics' is that even in this particular sphere of human activity believers should behave in a way that is pleasing to God.”⁴⁰

The principles that Turchynov described in 2001 are evident in his life, in both of his appearances in major politics. He worked in a party organization, in the parliament, in the Ukrainian security service, in the government, in the NSDC, and as acting president. And no

35 Strana podnimetsia s kolen, esli stanet na koleni pered Bogom. in „Vera i zhizn“, 1/2001, p. 20.

36 Strana podnimetsia s kolen, esli stanet na koleni pered Bogom. in „Vera i zhizn“, 1/2001, p. 21.

37 Ibid.

38 Strana podnimetsia s kolen, esli stanet na koleni pered Bogom. in „Vera i zhizn“, 1/2001, p. 21.

39 Ibid., 22.

40 Ibid., 23.

matter where he worked, it was clear that what really mattered to him was not his position but his calling. His life is a perfect expression of the "Protestant ethic."

In his book *Testimony*, he writes that while his faith cost him the respect of society, it has helped him from within by giving him the integrity and strength to fight the temptations of being in power. Describing his "ministry" in the state security unit, he said: "No sooner had the ink dried on the decree of my appointment than my opponents started screaming that this Baptist would destroy the secret service... They tried to use my religion as compromising material. For me compromising material is evidence that a person doesn't believe in God and therefore nothing restrains them."⁴¹

Turchynov sees power as a temptation and only the one who can overcome it will discover its positive possibilities. "Only the person who has a spiritual core is able to resist the unseen temptations of power."⁴² That is why "God's servant who is chosen to be in power should understand whose task he is fulfilling, whom he is serving, and who has put him in his high position. No force can withstand you if you do God's will."⁴³ So personal religious conviction qualifies a political leader and makes him more trustworthy.

Power must be connected to faith, otherwise power turns into illusion and deceives the one who "possesses" it. As Turchynov confesses, "Any position and any rank is simply an illusion of power. Any war that is won, any triumph over enemies, and any defeat of opponents is just an illusion of victory. There is only one true power and that is the power over personal flaws and fears.

41 Turchinov O. *Svidotstvo*. Kyiv: Nadiia, 2007, p. 130.

42 Ibid., p. 131.

43 Turchinov O. *Svidotstvo*. – K.: Nadiia, 2007, p. 132.

There is one true victory and that is the victory over sin. And only true faith can give us true power and true victory."⁴⁴

Faith, in turn, should be linked to truth and so should freedom. "A person who doesn't understand what freedom is cannot defend it. Freedom is the daughter of truth. And truth is God."⁴⁵ Therefore the truths of faith are the foundation of his political activities. He states that he starts and ends each day with prayer. On Sunday mornings he prepares a sermon and studies the Bible.⁴⁶

His "Protestant" schedule does not ever allow for virtual reality. Turchynov regards the media as the Antichrist's system of the propaganda of sin,⁴⁷ part of a system of unlimited control over society, "the one and undivided world order," "the human-machine syndicate," and "the ruthless e-government machine."⁴⁸ The main threat for him is not so much the "sovok," or the neo-Soviet empire, as it is the world government that will place a mark on people's hands and foreheads. He writes about this in each of his books. "Then there will be the real danger of losing the free will given by God; all forms of religion as attempts to know God will be dangerous to the system and therefore forbidden."⁴⁹ Again, in this regard Turchynov does not fit the stereotypical image of a pro-Western agent of globalism and Protestantism.

Turchynov's book *Testimonies*, which is narrated in the first person, drastically alters the image of him that has been created. He sees himself as God's servant in politics yet does not cling to his position in "the system."

44 Turchinov O. *Svidotstvo*. – K.: Nadiia, 2007, p. 132.

45 Ibid., p.116.

46 Strana podnimetsia s kolen, esli stanet na koleni pored Bogom. in „Vera i zhizn“, 1/2001,- p. 23.

47 Ibid., p.264.

48 Ibid., p. 262.

49 Ibid., p. 268.

Likewise, he does not aspire to a special place in the church and is happy to preach an occasional Sunday sermon. His model of faith, in which everything is “simple” and “nothing excessive,” which always has room for “sacrifice” and “service,” in which there must be “limitations” in order to “please God,” correlates with Protestant archetypes and clearly does not correspond to the stereotype of the “bloody pastor.”

“Stay, Bloody Pastor”: Lessons from History

The “bloody pastor” is a noteworthy media phenomenon during a post-secular period of reconstruction of society and its relationship with religion. It is a media object, developed partially from the biography of the “real” Oleksandr Turchynov and partially from public expectations and political provocations. In the post-Soviet world where, according to Peter Pomerantsev, “Nothing is true and everything is possible,” the image of the “bloody pastor” cannot be called entirely fake. At the same time it cannot be called real.

In spite of all of its contradictions, this image remains in demand. The hashtag #PastorStay (#ПасторЗалишайся) represents an endorsement of a sectarian in politics. The media image of Turchynov expresses societal demand for leaders who are people of faith, which gives them motivation and a foundation, and where people are prepared to serve and not manipulate, where they work to please God rather than man.

Ukrainians are not overly surprised by the rise and power of Turchynov in the political arena since he is an example of the growing religious diversity that permeates the political sphere. However, the same meme (even without the “bloody”) is an indicator for Russians of something “foreign,” because if

a person who just recently was a Komsomol member suddenly converts to any religion but Orthodoxy, he or she has undoubtedly been bought by the Americans (or at least is vulnerable to charges that they have been bought by the Americans). There is a line dividing the Baptists from the Orthodox, much like there is a line dividing the West from “us.” Although a Baptist found himself in the presidential palace in Ukraine, this is difficult to imagine in Russia, because in Russia the rule is simple and strict: to be Russian is to be Orthodox.

The story of the “bloody pastor” is not so much one of religion and politics, so much as their images, which are created through propaganda; and the differences which are visible between Russian and Ukrainian society and their relationship to propaganda. The pro-Kremlin media does not see propaganda as a professional and socio-political problem; they are not so much inclined to reject it as to justify it as “alternative facts.” One way or another, if facts are presented as uniquely alternative, it reveals the propaganda character of informational politics. Ukrainian media do not idealize Turchynov, but leave space for various images and interpretations. Pluralism is on the side of reality, schematics on the side of propaganda.

Behind the image of the “pastor” there is a complex backdrop of tangled relationships between religion and politics, in particular the devaluation of politics because few people remember the party affiliation and political views of the “pastor.” Most interest is shown in his religious identity, which, in turn, explains his political identity. But the influences work both ways. Most Protestants approve of Turchynov because he is “one of us,” i.e., they trust him without understanding politics and despite their traditional suspicion

of the state and state officials. Thus, electoral politics are divided more and more according to denominations and that is also a distinct phenomenon of post-secular times. The “pastor” himself does not want everyone to like him and does not rush to be identified with a specific party or crowd, or as ‘the voice of the people’. As he stated at a prayer meeting with Protestant leaders (Irpen, January 15, 2016), “I made a very important decision to never think about what others will say or think of me. I just do my job and don’t want everyone to like me.”

“To be liked” by some political audience implies “to belong to” them. The “pastor” wishes to remain free and extends that freedom to others—the freedom to think anything you want about him without any obligations. Therefore, when Russian Baptists ask their Ukrainian friends, “Why didn’t you excommunicate Turchynov for starting a war?” They reply that he acted as a politician and that he was free to do what he did. That is why the Baptists of the occupied Donbas, when interrogated by separatists about their relationship with the “pastor” reply, “He is not one of us; he is on his own.” The long and the short of it is that Turchynov is not locked behind church walls and is not limited to them; yet he occupies a special public space between religion and politics that is still difficult to define.

Thus, Turchynov as a media object has gone through a complex evolution. He started as a humble preacher, that is, an insider in politics and part of a stigmatized religious minority community, and then became the “pastor,” that is, a public religious and political figure. He embodies the obvious fact that religion cannot remain a private matter in

a time of post-secular transformations; from time to time it emerges from the shadows and becomes public. Even if politicians refrain from drawing attention to their religion, the mass media brings it to light and makes it an object of discussion first (especially when it is a minority faith), and then an influencing factor. Thus, under the influence of the media, public space is widened in such a way that religion and politics can sort out their relationship in the open, inviting the public to participate.

In Ukraine, 2017 is a year of celebrating the Reformation. And few will see it as a coincidence that the politician and preacher Turchynov is one of the initiators and keynote speakers of the large-scale R500 project celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The project’s motto, “From Personal Reformation to National Reformation” fully reflects the “pastor’s” views. And the personal and media story fully fit into the paradigm of the Reformation. Here the two Maidans find their spiritual justification and continuation. Here political calling and Christian faith find their reconciliation and application. The pastor and politician in one person are not only a new symbol of Ukrainian Protestantism, but a real challenge to the post-Soviet church and post-Soviet society.

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Public Religion During the Maidan Protests in Ukraine

by Tetiana Kalenychenko

Abstract

A sense of public religion emerged in Ukraine during the Maidan protests at the end of 2013-2014 as religious leaders, groups and organizations played a key role in the protests and in mediating between the authorities and opposition. However, using religion as a cultural resource to shape social processes presents both opportunities and serious challenges for religious organizations. In this paper I analyze different religious manifestations during the Maidan and the consequences the protests have had for religious institutions. I focus on the different dimensions of the religious components of social change as it unfolds.

Key words: Maidan, Ukraine, religion, sociology of religion, religion and conflict, revolution.

Protests broke out in November 2013 in the heart of the capital of Ukraine when students demonstrated against ex-president V. Yanukovich's refusal to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. The protests ended in February 2014 with the shooting of activists and the formation of a new government. During that time, religion was a highly visible and influential factor. There were public prayers on the main stage of the protests led by clergy, who were involved in multiple activities.¹ This tense situation created challenges for secular and religious institutions alike. Now faced with a "post-revolutionary" society and the transformational processes underway, churches are addressing the pressure to change² in order to answer to the needs of believers.

A sense of public religion emerged in Ukraine during the Maidan protests at the end of 2013-2014 as religious leaders, groups and organizations played a key role in the protests and in mediating between the authorities and opposition. However, using religion as a cultural resource to shape social processes presents both opportunities and serious challenges for religious organizations. In this paper I analyze

1 Viktor Yelens'kyy: Maydan zminyuye Tserkvy, RISU: <http://www.religion.in.ua/main/interview/24423-viktor-yelenskij-majdan-zminyuye-cerkvi.html>

2 Ibid.

different religious manifestations during the Maidan and the consequences the protests have had for religious institutions using in-depth interviews, context analysis of official documents, and personal observations.³

Public religion in the global age

It is easier to see the division of secular and religious domains in the European context than in Ukraine because of social circumstances and practices. This European trend contrasts with other parts of the world where religion is increasingly present in the public sphere⁴. Which path is Ukraine following? Is there a shift to a European model or are we witnessing the transformation of public religion? And if we use the term "public religion", how exactly we can understand it and use it to build an analytical framework?

According to Ingolf Dalferth, modern societies are experiencing a different concept of publicity and media representation of religion.

3 L. Fylypovych, O. Gorkusha, Narodzhena na Maidani – Gromadynska Cerkva, RISU http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/studios/studies_of_religions/56419/.

V. Babych, personal blog: <http://vasyl-babych.livejournal.com/189931.html>.

4 Grace Davie, Europe: The exception that proves the Rule?/ The Desecularization of the world: resurgent religion and world politics, ed. By Peter Berger/ Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 65.

⁵ The role of religion in public life is growing.
⁶ It has a significant impact on public debates and asserts its role in politics, even in secular European countries.⁷ The concept of ambient faith was developed by Matthew Engelke to describe the public presence of religion.⁸ An “ambience” of religion determines the context of its publicity, removing the separation of public and private spheres under conditions of a transition of religion from institutional to post-institutional forms.⁹ José Casanova argues that the term “public religion” does not necessarily entail a significant systemic impact on society, other than defining new boundaries between public and private spheres of society and in terms of stimulating public debate.¹⁰

According to this logic, religion can find a place in non-religious subsystems. In the framework of my research, I refer to a key proposal by Peter Beyer that the globalization of society creates a new foundation for the public influence of religion¹¹. Thus, religion can be the source of collective duty and legitimize collective actions in the name of concrete norms in two ways: **institutionally** by creating special societal systems and subsystems of communication and **socio-culturally** when religion acts as a cultural resource for other subsystems in society. The first way, institutionally, not only requires a strong position of religion, but also the consolidation of religious leaders, a well-organized strategy,

⁵ Jens Kohrsen. How religious is the new public sphere? A critical stance on the debate about public religion and post-secularity. in *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 55, No3, 2012. p. 275

⁶ Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*. The Cromwell Press Ltd, 1994, p. 104

⁷ J. Kohrsen, p. 277.

⁸ Matthew Engelke. Angels in Swindon: Public religion and ambient faith in England. in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 39, No1, p. 155.

⁹ M. Engelke, p. 166.

¹⁰ J. Casanova. Po toy bik sekulyaryzatsiyi: relihiyna ta sekulyarna dynamika nashoyi hlobal'noyi doby. – per. z anhl. O. Panycha. Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2017, p. 21-22

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

and readiness for the renewed role of religion as an independent player in a global arena. I agree with P. Beyer that public religion and its influence can be more productive when it acts as a cultural resource for social and political structures. It does not deny the current homogenous religious landscape. However, the process of crossing other spheres of social structure creates new ways for the religious element to have an effect.

If we analyze the public manifestation of religion in the case of the Ukrainian protests on the Maidan, we can observe some broader tendencies. N. Luhmann proposes to look at religious subsystems in public spheres in two ways: **function** (direct religious function to search for meaning, sacrality, and understandings of who we are etc.) and **performance** (when religion is applied to other systems)¹². By using these markers of functions and performances, we can see how public religion manifested itself, and how its direct function changed. Before I use this model to analyze the Ukrainian situation, I consider the wider religious context and its specific characteristics, which created particular conditions for public religion as well.

DE-SECULARIZATION IN THE UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

The 72 years of communism included forced secularization during the Soviet period and resulted in a resurgence of new religious movements in the early 1990s¹³. After the general period of re-distribution of property and positions, religious communities stabilized.

¹² Niklas Luhmann, *The Differentiation of Society*. – Tr. Stephen Holmes and Charles Larmore. New York: Columbia University, 1982, p. 238-242.

¹³ V. Yelens'kyy, Relihiya i «Perebudova». in *Lyudyna i svit*, 2000 №11-12, p. 11-21

Ukraine was always a multi-religious country with a large number of Christian communities (35,709 religious organizations at the beginning of 2016¹⁴). In such a multi-religious context, the Ukrainian government officially upheld the separation of religion from the state. However, the politization of religion remained. The processes, which are occurring in the religious sphere of Ukraine, can be viewed as **desecularization** and, according to Peter Berger, as the revival of religion and its social influence¹⁵. Berger claims that this process is an answer to the uncertainty of modern reality. Vyacheslav Karpov, in contrast, sees the process of desecularization not as secularization in reverse, but as a multiform social transformation in which the role of religion is growing¹⁶.

There are three main components of desecularization: rapprochement among previously secularized institutions and religious norms; revival of religious practices and beliefs; and the presence of religion in the public sphere¹⁷. All three took place after the Maidan events of 2014. First, there was a rapprochement among previously secularized institutions and religious norms that led to the implementation of several new laws, which paved the way for the creation of new religious educational institutions, an official prison chaplaincy, and the recognition of theological diplomas. The clergy were involved in the process of creating new laws through the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (on the basis of the

Constitution). Second, there was a revival of religious practices and beliefs, which began in the 1990s and led to the growth of religious organizations. Lastly, religion reentered the public sphere with the public activity of clergy on the Maidan. Even after the end of the protests, clergy were included in civil society to a far greater extent.

Besides the chosen model of analysis regarding the function and performance of the religious element, I also introduce two ways of dealing with the problem of religion in the global world according to Beyer¹⁸. The first way – conservative – is a typical pattern of behavior for religious actors, where the emphasis is on the private sphere and helping people heal their soul. This goes together with Luhmann's understanding of function: when religion remains in the boundaries of its first, spiritual function of searching for answers. The second way – liberal – uses the model of religious performance by Luhmann so that religion is involved in the process of dealing with non-religious problems; the decisions, which will be made with the involvement of religious organizations will not be religious themselves. According to Beyer, the liberal way, or the way of performance, allows religion to break out of its own ghetto walls and to come back to the public scene¹⁹. He is also sure that the work social justice is optional by the unity of traditional way – its function or conservative strategy – with performance or the liberal way, which can create new forms of social cooperation and new ways for the realization of the religious element as the cultural resource for other subsystems.

Peter Beyer argues that there are **five types of religious public influence**: collective

14 Larysa Vladychenko. Relihiyna merezha Ukrayiny: Analiz dynamiky stanom na pochatok 2016 roku, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/analytic/63066/

15 Vyacheslav Karpov, Kontseptual'nye osnovy teoryi desekulyaryzatsyy // Religion, State, Society // #2(30) 2012, p. 118.

16 Ibid., 121.

17 Ibid., 123.

18 Peter Beyer, Religion and Globalization. The Cromwell Press Ltd., 1994, p. 53-89.

19 Ibid., p. 90.

duty; the legitimization of collective action; collective mobilization; generation of values; and sacralization of new developments.

PERIODIZATION: FROM EUROMAIDAN TO THE HEAVENLY HUNDRED

Changes in the motivation and dynamics of protest and religious involvement determine the periodization of the Maidan. We can identify four stages of protest: EuroMaidan (until the night of 30 November 2013), peaceful Maidan (30 November 2013 – 19 January 2014), radical Maidan (19 January 2014 – 22 February 2014) and the end of Maidan (until the end of March 2014). The EuroMaidan is characterized by the participation of students and elite, but without the active participation of clergy, although some were present as observers during the phase of the “dancing” protest. The only active clerical participants were from the Protestant community. The dean of the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary and pastor of the church “Holy Trinity” Denis Kondiuk remembers:

I was very skeptical about the Maidan in its November form. I dislike contradiction, but here we were proposed a dilemma: are you supporting the EU or are you supporting the Customs Union (in cooperation with Russia?)... I was disappointed that the Christians supported Eastern integration because of their fear of “homodictature” and because they are influenced by political manipulations.²⁰

Igor Kaluzhniy from the Protestant New Life Church, who became an active Maidan activist and soldier in the ATO zone in the next phase of the conflict, described the EuroMaidan period as “no one thought about

the Maidan. The main slogan was – we are for Europe”²¹.

Facing critical challenges to human rights, support for the Maidan split Protestant communities, and prompted theological rethinking of the protest and the dogma of the “power of God”. This resulted in theological discussions and round tables on such themes as “Church in a time of war”²² and “Theology of Maidan”²³.

According to Denis Brylov²⁴, it is important to understand where the religious factor was relevant and where religious organizations acted out of their own social-political positions.

Before the 30th of November the religious component can be artificially involved as protest motivation. Of course, there were manipulations of the religion question in the case of the revolution, and it was used by both sides of the conflict, by both, supporters and enemies of the Maidan. Some pro-Russian activists in the Orthodox Church stressed the problems of the European choice, concentrating on “Sodomites of Europe» (without seeing the same problems in the Russian Orthodox Church), issues of juvenile justice and the overall anti-Christian lifestyle of modern Europe.

In contrast, others, especially the head of UGCC Patriarch Svyatoslav (Shevchuk) and the head of the UOC KP Patriarch Filaret (Denysenko), totally supported the European choice of Ukrainian society. Clerical supporters

21 O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, p. 14

22 Cerkva v umovakh viyny: khrystyians'ki vidpovidi na aktual'ni pytannya. Chastyna 1, RISU: <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/exclusive/reportage/57729/>

23 V UKU vidbulas' konferentsiya pro bohoslav'ya Maydanu, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/community/conferences/65483/

24 Ekspert: “Tserkvy postaly pered vyborom: yty za Maydanom, chy namahatysya vesty yoho za soboyu”, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/comments/54758

20 O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, Tserkva na Maydani. – K: Knyhonosha, 2015. p. 21.

of European integration spoke about a civilizational choice and were motivated by fear of Russia taking over Ukraine, or even losing its independence. In other words, they were making a socio-political choice, not a religious one, and as religious leaders they were more likely to act as citizens of Ukraine and not as representatives of some religious institution or tradition.

The Euromaidan ended rapidly with the arrival of the Berkut special forces at 4 a.m. on 30 November to forcibly disperse students. The religious component of the protests came to bear the night the monks gave the protesters the possibility to hide in St. Michael's Monastery and closed their gates to the Berkut. The violent intervention provoked mobilization and changed the main motives of the protest from European integration to a desire to defend rights and stand against violence. The dean of the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary and pastor of the church "Holy Trinity" Denis Kondyuk remembers this moment²⁵:

Exactly at that moment (after the attack on the students – auth.) I decided to be on the Maidan; not because of violations of human rights, which we had all the time - we were used to them -, but because of the use of force against peaceful citizens.

Thereafter, representatives from multiple religious organizations were on the square, including the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate, Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, Roman Catholic Church, Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims, Spiritual Administration

²⁵ O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, Tserkva na Maydani. Kyiv: Knyhonosha, 2015, p. 46

of Ukrainian Muslims "Ummah", numerous Protestant churches and councils, as well as Buddhists and Neopagans. While they all were present on the Maidan, they acted differently with different levels of activity and involvement in the protest movement.

From the 30 November to 3 December 2013, numerous religious organizations in Ukraine and around the world issued statements. One of the first reactions was from senior bishops of the Council of Independent Evangelical Churches of Ukraine, including Leonid Padun, and first Vice-President of Church of Christian-Evangelicals Mykola Sunyuk²⁶. On 2 December 2013, a statement from bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada was published and on 5 December Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew issued a statement about "the complicated situation in Ukraine". There was also prayer support from the Bishop's Conference in Poland on 6 December 2013.

The radical Maidan phase started on 19 December 2013 with the first open confrontation between the Berkut and protesters. The crowd included representatives of right-wing movements and football radicals, who threw bricks, Molotov cocktails, and other weapons in the direction of security forces. During this radical stage of the protests, when there were the first victims, the religious component became most clear to society. People turned to priests for advice and explanations as to why this was happening, and the clergy prayed for the defenders of the Maidan and the members of the Ukrainian People's Self-Defense. However, secular protesters did not always agree with the active clergy involvement. A young woman, 27, who was an active protester and daughter of a priest who was killed, says: Religion became obvious to me on the Maidan

²⁶ O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, p. 35.

when protesters started to use force and when the events unfolded on Hrushevskoho Street. People needed religion to defend their moral views. It played a protective function in this situation. Our people in the majority consider themselves religious. Together with priests, people felt more secure, morally and physically - if the priest stands before you as a protective barrier, then you will not be shot. According to a young male activist, who was an atheist and worked as a translator, the churches tried to reconcile the different parties to the conflict and mediate talks between the government and the opposition. They also confirmed by their presence that the actions of the Maidan are well-intentioned.

The religious factor was important. Perhaps it was not decisive, but it was important for the spiritual support of people, for the moral side. People understood that they are right in what they are doing. Due to the priests, they knew that what they were doing was good. There was no religious motivation at the forefront of the Maidan, and I think it was good that there was not. There was no agitation for a military solution of the situation. There were attempts to pacify both sides. Therefore, I believe that the church plays an important and significant role.

At the end of the Maidan there were three days of memorial services for the dead protesters, who would be named the "Heavenly Hundred". More than 100 people were killed. All the funerals of the victims were carried out over a period of three days by various clergy, who never left the Maidan. Politically, the departure of Ex-President Victor Yanukovich to Russia on the night of February 22, 2014 marked the end of the revolution. This changed the dynamics of power. The Maidan lasted until spring, when

the square became a new gathering place. The core activists of the Maidan formed the first volunteer group of chaplains from religious leaders.

PUBLIC INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

What role did the religion play in the Maidan events? The markers of religious involvement were not only active clergy and believers, but official documents and statements by religious leaders and other unofficial actions. What was unique was the manifestation in two dimensions: **hierarchical (official)** presence of religion on Maidan – when clergy were involved in protest actions – and **local (inclusive)** – low-level involvement of clergy with believers. The official (hierarchical) presence was manifested in clerical performances on the Maidan stage, clerical participation in Sunday's viche²⁷, leading prayer from the stage, conducting sermons, and memorial services for the dead. The highest level of religious hierarchies from different denominations represented their religious organizations and engaged in talks with the authorities through the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO). However, perhaps the most significant contribution clergy made was simply their continued presence on the Maidan.

All public manifestations of religion in this process remain important in spite of the danger. Some priests, including those from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, were forced to act informally

²⁷ Viche is an old tradition of mass communication from the Kyiv Rus period when people came together on the main square in town to make decisions. That word was used during the Maidan period because of Sunday's large-scale talks on the main square which actually were the place to make decisions.

because of possible persecution from both the church leadership and security forces who worked for the government. They came in lay clothing without any religious signs to indicate who they were. Protesters were intimidated and threatened with arrest by text messages, social media, and during informal talks. Because of the politicized religious environment, some bishops and senior members of the clergy suffered at different levels for their open support of the revolution, especially at the beginning when it was not clear whether it would be successful or not. This indicates that religion can be public, but not always on an official level or even on a visible level. The co-organizer of the prayer tent, Oles' Dmytrenko, emphasized the initiatives in the creation of religious communities on Maidan:

*Further Protestant services on the Maidan were initiated not by bishops, not by the heads of organizations, but by active youth from different Kyiv churches. The lack of an actual reaction, concrete position, and elementary love of our country on the part of key leaders sincerely made me angry. We were waiting and waiting for our bishops to make their statements. They stayed silent. Popular spiritual leaders disappeared in one moment.*²⁸

MORAL CODES AND THE WAYS OF RELIGIOUS MANIFESTATION

Public religion as a **source of collective duty** emerged when the clergy tried to change or establish the moral rules of life on the Maidan. Lesya Kotvytska, an active believer and medical activist on the Maidan, recalled those discussions by spiritual leaders:

28 O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, Tserkva na Maydani. – K: Knyhonosha, 2015. – p. 54.

*The level of morality on the Maidan in February shocked me. I heard discussions among priests, who talked about how to ban alcohol and abuse people in a most effective way. I will explain: they did not allow newcomers to swear. That was another form of influence on people by the church.*²⁹

The creation of moral codes, according to Beyer, is common practice for global religions, which unite religious communication and social problems³⁰. Such moral codes, which are a privileged form of social regulation, inform the law and social norms of society. In the context of the protest, such moral codes played the role of a symbolic compass, which pointed the way to which decisions are right and should be accepted. One of the main markers of such moral codes was discovered in official statements by religious organizations³¹ and AUCCRO³² with an appeal to the government to stop the violence³³.

The moral judgement of actions and decisions is another way in which religion impacts **the legitimization of collective action** as a direct statement about what is right, because it reaffirms values (which are generated with religious involvement, but not religious in and of themselves). Despite official statements and public support for activists from different religious organizations, the legitimization of collective

29 O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, p. 256.

30 Peter Beyer, Religion and Globalization. The Cromwell Press Ltd., 1994, p. 83.

31 Glava UGCC nahadav pro «vsyu povnotu vidpovidal'nosti za te, shcho vidbuvayet'sya v krayini, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/state/national_religious_question/55369/

32 Zayava VRTsiRO z pryvodu eskalatsiyi nasyt'stva u Kyjevi: <http://vrciro.org.ua/ua/statements/370-statement-about-escalation-of-violence-in-kyiv>

33 Patriarkh Filaret zaklykav pryprynyty nasylyya I poperedyv Yanukovycha pro nayvyschu miru yoho vidpovidal'nosti, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/state/national_religious_question/55370/

action was additionally manifested through the renewal of the traditional spiritual function (conservative way of acting).

That function meant long-term conversations with protesters from both sides as well as help for those who experienced trauma, which was frequently connected with spiritual services and even evangelization. The main place for such activity were prayer tents, which were interreligious and everyone could ask for help³⁴. Moreover, the clergy took on the responsibility to discuss the reasons and the goals of the protest for Maidan activists and for representatives from the opposing side (Anti-Maidan, internal forces). At the moment of the protest not only believers asked the clergy for help, some of them were just looking for moral support, as volunteers from the prayer tent state:

People on Maidan were traumatized...Volunteers with jackets "Pray for Ukraine" helped them to cope, they were special. Their mobility helped the mission as well; most activists from the Right Sector and Self-Defense did not have enough time to stand near the stage and listen to the priests³⁵.

The involvement of public religion on Maidan was wider and included all the volunteer functions – from the preparation of tea and sandwiches to the building of barricades. Protesters, many of them non-religious, said that it was a chance to see the clergy not in a traditional way, but as part of the population. Such inclusive activity might be one of the key factors in raising the level of trust in the Church among the population (at the level of 57%, according to the data by

Razumkov Center³⁶).

Clergy from AUCCRO and the Spiritual Council of Maidan took responsibility for negotiations between Maidan and government representatives as a means of mobilization for action. Religious leaders encouraged people to start to establish a dialogue, and not to “betray” the Maidan and to continue to peacefully protest. Then Bishop Stanislav Shyrokoradyuk of the Roman-Catholic Church asked for permission from the people on the stage for the opposition to speak with the government, because it was prohibited before.

Religious activists and clergy created an opportunity to form a collective identity³⁷ as being a part of “revolutionary” society, an imagined community associated with the change from passive to active social action. After the end of the Maidan it was shared by official authorities and by unofficial, influential sources through the mass media, clergy, volunteers and others. There were frequently asked existential questions, addressed to clergy such as “who are we?” and “why we are here?”. But a collective identity was also formed by cultural actors (poets, singers, journalists, artists etc.), opinion leaders (who shared their views on social media) and political and business elites.

The activity by spiritual actors, who were trying to understand events theologically, became part of the **creation of values** for the new public space. There were not only discussions about new values and frameworks for understanding civil society, but also public declarations of religious actors as the

34 Molytva na Maydani, CREDO: <http://www.credo-ua.org/2013/12/106879>

35 O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, p.57.

36 Relihiya, Tserkva, suspil'stvo i derzhava: dva roky pislya Maydanu, - informatsiyni materialy Tsentru Razumkova vid 26.05.2016

37 A. Melucci. The process of collective identity// Social Movements and Culture/ Minneapolis, 1995, p. 26.

generators of values. According to the clergy and believers, the protest was understood as a war between good and evil, which is why religion bore new values for society.³⁸ Such rhetoric is closely connected with another type of influence – **sacralization of the new turn of history** – which became a “revolution”.

The book “*Stones of Maidan*” by priest Mykhailo Dymyd³⁹, who actively took part in the protest and gave sermons in Lviv and on Kyiv stages, could be regarded as an example of sacralization of the Maidan events. The Maidan barricades for him are the “body of Christ”, a springboard for the battle between good and evil for Maidan activists.” The spiritual essence of the Maidan and the changes that came after it is the resurrection and baptism of people. The author focuses on personal responsibility and for each course of events, refers to the concept of “internal Maidan”, which secular leaders began to consider later.

Protesters from Western Ukraine, who were used to the public presence of priests in their everyday lives, especially appealed to clergy. Father Ivan Galio from Sambirsko-Drohobych eparchy remembers:

They asked me, Father, pray for me. I read “Our Father”, gave them cross to kiss, anointed them, and asked their names and tried to support them morally. I urged them that I would be praying for them to not lose their good mood, as spiritual support gives people physical strength as well. That was the mission for priests on the Maidan⁴⁰.

Different interpretations of religious

influence on the Maidan aim not only for theological explanations, but also a response from society to the need for the sacralization of the new developments in modern history. The Heavenly Hundred and the “Revolution of Dignity” became part of the rhetoric about the new renewal of the Ukrainian nation. This discourse is also shaped by public religion. According to Immanuel Wallerstein⁴¹, there is a need for transcendence and teleological globalization in order to unite society and establish common goals. In the modern world, if a society is not living in crisis, it is harder to discover the “good” forces without having a concrete “evil”. An appellation to Christian theology includes Satan as the marker of God’s presence and salvation, and the transcendental element plays a role in guaranteeing moral norms. Another way of returning religion to the public sphere is through the demonstration of what is good and what you have to achieve⁴².

The manifestation of the religious element on the Maidan was observed in its “ideal type” which people saw in mass media and in memories as a “common feeling of spirituality, rightness” post-institutional and ambient. Charles Taylor emphasizes that social connections through the spiritual practices are still strong, despite individual or privatized understandings of religion⁴³. Thus, people are still looking for a special occasion to live together with the feeling that there is something bigger than they are. Activists spoke of such feelings after the protest as well as a special bond and desire for something bigger. That feeling is also described by Victor

38 U Toronto obhovoryly dukhovni tsinnosti Maydanu, UCU: <http://ucu.edu.ua/news/17987/>

39 Kalenychenko T.A, Kontent-analiz knyhy «Kaminnya Maydanu», Naukovyy chasopys NPU im. Drahomanova №34 (47)

40 O. Hordyeyev, T. Mukhomorova, p. 218.

41 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979.

42 P. Beyer, p. 85.

43 Charles Taylor, *The Secular Age*// The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 2007, p. 516

Yelenskyi:

If we put aside the sacramental aspect of the problem, then prayers and worship on Maidan entail the creation of a special spiritual space, which not only unites that insight, but also legitimizes the mature and complete community of people on Maidan⁴⁴

Therefore, all the five types of public religious involvement took place on the Maidan, sacralizing social changes. Religious organizations and leaders were looking for a new place for themselves. But even this desire could not be fully realized for several reasons. If we look at the situation after the end of the protest, we can see concrete examples of this.

THE RESULTS OF THE “REVOLUTION”: ECUMENISM OR PARTICULARISM?

The unusual context of the Maidan, spiritual and emotional elation, created a space for changes for religious organizations. Experts, journalists and clergy frequently remembered that precisely during the protest they were united, had mutual goals and were moving to reach them and did not see the differences among themselves. Nevertheless, future outcomes after the end of the Maidan have shown that such feelings were short-lived. During the public prayer on the stage you could see the activists in the crowd, who put on headphones in a demonstrative manner, but did not protest against the priests openly. Additionally, not all the religious organizations supported Maidan. That is why the spiritual meaning of the protest became a point of division for some partner institutions or among ministers on a personal level.

44 Viktor Yelens'kyi: Solidarnist' tserkov pered nastupom vlady – krytychno vazhlyva skladova yikhn'oyi spravzhn'oyi nezalezhnosti», RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/interview/55166/

Coming back to the two approaches to the public manifestation of religion – conservative and liberal –, the conservative approach to fulfilling religious functions can be seen as concentrated in spiritual services, as well as in answers on the existential questions of believers or ordinary people. By contrast, the liberal approach, which develops together with society and social movements, foresees religion on the public stage. Typically, in such instances religious organizations have to choose between two approaches: **particularism**, which means realizing their own interests as institutions (which can frequently result in the politicization of religion) or choosing the approach of **ecumenism**, which means to give answers to profound questions from society together with other religious groups⁴⁵. When religious leaders forget the needs of their own spiritual group and are united, it is easier for them to cooperate in a globalized social context. The ecumenical approach is based on religion as a cultural resource for other subsystems, when groups are not closed on their own. In this case, the mutual movement is active without one form of institutionalization. Peter Berger understands ecumenism as the way to find brothers in dealing with a concrete problem and to rationalize one's own struggle in a globalized world⁴⁶. This automatically results in more success, in contrast to a situation, when someone grabs the biggest piece of the pie.

Social processes of seeking new authorities under conditions of reinforced dissatisfaction with the social and economic needs of society may generate new religious movements and provoke

45 P.Beyer, p. 97.

46 Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy. Elements of sociological theory of religion*// Doubleday, 1990, p. 141

ecumenism⁴⁷. The **ecumenical movement**, which religious leaders would call an example of “real unity on Maidan”, reached a new stage of development during the revolution. However, its expression even on the level of religious groups will not nourish new movements, but create balance in informal networks of horizontal cooperation between religious leaders and activists due to issues of trust during critical situations. Shared values and a willingness to take risks generated these informal networks. However, ecumenical expressions began to decrease after the revolution and were limited to several statements and aspirations of leaders of churches. A new level of conflict also came about. Interinstitutional conflicts were generated by the weakening of the central government, resulting in a loss of common purpose⁴⁸ and a sense of emergence of a much more profound conflict in the country. This is a typical transition, as defined by Pareto, when “the old law died and the new one is not yet born”. In this situation society falls back on the old familiar system. The same process affected religious networks in Ukraine, when they were faced with the challenge of publicity and involvement in society. During their search for a new place and “open ecumenism”, they returned to older patterns of behavior in some cases after the “revolutionary” events.

The tendencies to theologize politics and politicize theology are especially visible in the globalized world, where there are political-religious group⁴⁹. Religious and political leaders see the direct benefits of this strategy – they receive mutual legitimization and access

to goods, maintaining the old model of official religion and sacralized power. This, however, has led to the loss of authority for some religious organizations and undermined the trust, which was earned during the protests.

The **politicization** of religious communities has especially aggravated the relationships between the UOC MP and UOC KP, UGCC and Orthodox communities, as well as different Muslim and Protestant communities, while strengthening the dichotomy of “friend or foe” and redistributing the influence of religious organizations. It has also **strengthened horizontal networks** of cooperation between people of different religions. These aspects are noted in an analysis of the decline of ecumenism by theologian and sociologist Cyril Hovorun:

Hostility and discord as a comfort zone for churches were created during the period of independence and have not gone away. Now the churches are returning to these zones - to their fundamental identities. But this return does not coincide with the aspirations of society, since the social demand for church unity is growing. I think that Ukrainian society is still very religious and will not become secular in the near future. But the churches are not the points of unity for it. I do not want to talk about specific examples or about all the churches in a single definition and emphasize particular roles, but there is a definite general trend. However, there are of course churches whose contribution to the unity of the Ukrainian society is constructive and positive.⁵⁰

CHANGES AFTER CRISIS

Protestant theologian and professor Cherenkov

⁵⁰ Vorozhnecha ta rozbrat zalyshayut'sya zonamy komfortu dlya ukrayins'kykh tserkov – o. Kyrilo Hovorun, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/interview/62242/

⁴⁷ Vilfredo Pareto. Transformatsyya demokratyy (sbornyk)/ Terrytoryya budushcheho, M.: 2011, p. 28

⁴⁸ V. Pareto, p. 30

⁴⁹ Roland Robertson, Joann Chirico, Humanity, Globalization and Worldwide Religious Resurgence: A theoretical exploration, Sociological Analysis, 46, 1985, p. 238.

sees similar tendencies and oppositions within the religious environment. According to him, Ukrainian religious organizations define themselves in terms of opposition to other organizations, and the Maidan showed the fallacy of such a strategy. He writes:

*But I worry that these “home” activities will be fruitless. Gone are the days when identity was produced by a church in a closed mode. Now it is being formed in an open environment of ecumenism... But we still partially live in a nineteenth-century paradigm. We adhere to the ideas of a unified local church or a nation state, which are based on immediate and permanent dependence on ethnicity, language, and religion*⁵¹.

The Maidan exposed the problem as a **crisis of religious affiliation** and the churches' inability to meet social needs. An earlier Ukrainian researcher A. Bureyko wrote⁵² that the crisis of religious identity provoked an acute phase of transition to a new stage of development, which not only created the conditions of external aggression, armed conflict, but also social institutions, which are deeply connected with the spiritual factor.

An appeal to nonviolence on the Maidan resulted in the recovery of the churches' moral authority, allowing their influence to affect civil orientations in the process of social transformation. Later, the increase in competition and conflicts between religious structures and their ambiguous positions led to a certain loss of prestige and leverage. Although the level of trust in religious institutions is still one of the highest among all

social institutions, their public influence and ability to intervene socially is partial.

This has led to the rapid rise of **social services and volunteering**, the rapid development of the **military chaplaincy** and an enhancement of medical and prison chaplaincy through horizontal networks of cooperation. These are some of the successful examples of cooperation between public religious and social movements. Their chances of success increase when they move from an institutionalized form into spontaneous volunteering. Other social initiatives, which are realized together with religious groups and non-governmental institutions, such as lobbying for palliative aid and dealing with HIV/AIDS or work with international charitable religious foundations, such as Caritas, ADRA or Mission “Pope for Ukraine”, have also been successful. If we analyze those initiatives as new social movements, we see that they can propose constructive solutions to social problems, which Ukrainian society is facing, especially during this transitional period. J. Beckford believes such social movements will be especially powerful, if they use religion as a cultural resource and if religious groups embrace a liberal way of responding to the challenges of a globalized world.

CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of public religion was manifest during the Maidan events, whereby the religious component acted as a cultural resource for Ukrainian society in the process of transforming identity thanks to the leveling of differences among the main religious groups. However, the experience of living in “sacral unity” was short-termed. There was a loss of unity and increase in competition in the

51 Mykhaylo Cherenkov: Pid chas Maydanu relihiya bula myrotvortsem, a pid chas viyny stala mobilizatorom, RISU: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/interview/61746/

52 Shul'ts É.É. Teoryya sotsyal'nykh dvyzheny: problemy teoryy y praktyky/ Nyzhnyy Novhorod, 2014, p. 56.

religious sphere after the “revolution”, while religion was also politicized in a conservative way. This reversed the effects of the chosen liberal way of involvement characterized by ecumenical cooperation, where religion served as a cultural resource for non-religious systems of society.

According to Beyer, social movements with religious components will create wider opportunities for building bridges and covering the gap between function and performance (conservative and liberal strategies)⁵³. This way of thinking also has some risks for public religion, because religious actors can promote their values, which might run contrary to social norms, instead of adding to them. Such a situation can create conflicts. Society can be ready to allow religious influences in some frameworks, which creates an uncomfortable situation for religious actors because they have to balance their influence on social issues and their allegiance to their beliefs. Davie agrees that frequently a public role of religion is possible and even desirable for citizens⁵⁴. The main barrier in establishing this is the lack of direct contact between churches and the people.

The result of the social-political conflict in Ukraine was new social movements, some of which used religion as a cultural resource. Their success depended on cooperation with non-religious actors and organizations, as well as with other religious movements. The other important aspect is cooperation with governmental institutions, which guarantees the stability of their work and legitimizes it.

While the Ukrainian government has attempted to maintain a balance by trying to keep partnerships with a multi-religious community, the religious groups frequently

turn away from the liberal way of cooperation and integration into social structures. They choose instead competition and attempt to widen their own spheres of influence. This has resulted in a risk of new conflicts in the religious sphere and in conflicts between religious and secular groups. To mitigate such risks, society needs a balanced strategy to deal with the manifestations of public religion, which respond to the needs of Ukrainian society, and yet will not crosscut the creation of new moral codes in the sphere of law and government.

The case of the return of the religious component to the public sphere in Ukrainian protests is demonstrative of a resource for the development new social structures. The key conclusion here is the need for a balanced strategy, which will unite the liberal practice of public religion through ecumenism, while not denying each religious community's traditional spiritual function. Still, such cooperation between secular and religious domains requires a systematic approach as well as a response to strong demands from society. Religious activists are not yet ready to respond to all these public demands and to fill the gaps, because they too need to change.

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⁵³ P.Beyer, p. 108.

⁵⁴ Davie, p. 83

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Religious Rhetoric, Secular State? The Public References to Religion by Ukraine's Top Politicians (1992–2016)

by Alla Marchenko

Abstract

This article explores the dynamic and static aspects of the public agenda of Ukraine's top politicians with respect to their attachment to religion and religiosity. The author analyzes official greetings conveyed by the President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament between 1992 and 2016. The key questions of this research refer to the possible shifts in Ukraine's public agenda toward "political de-secularization" and the imposed role of the Orthodox Christian vision of the religious sphere in Ukraine. Applying content and critical-discourse analysis, the author examines the patterns of interactions of public politics and religion: from sporadic declarations to the "recycling of tradition" and embedding religious concepts in political life.

Key words: political de-secularization, Ukraine, political greetings, religion in politics.

INTRODUCTION¹

After the collapse of communism, Soviet traditions endured in independent Ukraine such as top politicians extending New Year's Eve greetings to the people. At the same time, the new state needed to establish new customs and holidays ("invent" traditions, in the words of Eric Hobsbawm). A glance at the list of Ukrainian state holidays in 2016 reveals both religious and secular holidays. According to a sociological poll conducted in Ukraine in February 2016, the most popular holidays in Ukraine are Easter, Christmas, New Year's, and International Women's Day. This is much different from the situation in 2012, when Ukrainians called New Year's Day their favorite holiday².

1 Acknowledgements: I express my sincere gratitude to the reviewers and commentators of the previous versions of this paper at the workshop „Public Religion, Ambient Faith. Religion and Politics in the Black Sea Region“ held in Kyiv on 29 September – 1 October, 2016 and at the Final ASCN conference „Bringing the Strands Together: New Prospects for the Social Sciences“ held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 18-19 November, 2016.

2 The survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology "Attitude of the Ukrainians toward national holidays". Press release by Tetiana Piaskovska - <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=619&page=1>.

Sample consisted of 2020 respondents who live in all regions of Ukraine (including Kyiv) and in Crimea, and were surveyed through face-to-face interviews. The

Over the years Independence Day has also gained in popularity and is now regarded as an important holiday by 20 percent of Ukrainians.

According to a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in May 2016³, 80 percent of respondents confirmed they were Christians. According to official statistics in 2011, the majority of the parishes in Ukraine (70%) belonged to the Orthodox Church, 13% to the Greek-Catholic Church, 10% to Evangelical Baptism, 6% to the Pentecostal Church, while the remaining 10% of Christian organizations are dispersed among various entities, e.g. the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholics, etc. It is worth noting that these trends remain more or less stable in the post-Soviet period. The vast majority of all Christians declare

stochastic sample is representative for the population of Ukraine aged 18 and above, except those territories that are not controlled by Ukraine.

3 Kyiv International Institute of Sociology's Survey "Religious Self-Identification and Prayer in Ukraine". Analytical Report by Olena Bogdan. - <http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=638&page=1>. The sample consisted of 2014 respondents from all administrative regions; its description is the same as in the previous footnote.

their affiliation with the Orthodox Church either of Moscow or Kyiv Patriarchates, whose parishes by far outnumber those of other Christian denominations.

In fact, Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches in Ukraine use the same religious vocabulary, symbolism, and calendars, which makes a general Christian discourse geared towards the nation's majority possible. There are far more tensions inside Ukrainian Orthodoxy, which is divided between the Moscow and Kyiv Patriarchates. The latter is treated as "Pro-Ukrainian", and the former - as "Pro-Russian" according to the location of Patriarchs and their ideological position towards political processes in Ukraine ("Euromaidan" protests, annexation of Crimea, ongoing military conflict in Donbas), so that the general number of Orthodox Christians under the Kyiv Patriarchate in Ukraine has increased from 34% of the general population in 2010 to 49% in 2016⁴, and the number of those under the Moscow Patriarchate decreased somewhat, from 18% in 2010 to 12% in 2016. One should also mention the relatively small Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist communities (less than 1% for each community) in Ukraine. The total number of religious organizations in Ukraine stands at around 35'000.

As Serhii Yekelchuk writes, the paradox between the wish of the Orange Revolution reformers to develop cross-national sensitivity and adopt the language of moderate nationalists reflected a major trend in recent Ukraine's history⁵. This trend emerged during the Euromaidan protests, when the demonstrators' goals of further integration

with the European Union⁶ were pursued by traditional means, including religious services attended by members of various religious denominations. The significant human losses that have occurred since the beginning of 2014, when a hundred people, the so-called "Heavenly Hundred," were shot by police during the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv and as a result of the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, where at least 10,000 people have been killed according to the numerous reports of the United Nations⁷, could foster appeals to God and religion as reference points in the situation of danger and ambiguity. In other words, these deaths have sparked a popular turn toward God and religion.

The policy of "de-communization" that was introduced after the Euromaidan protests by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory and which was aimed, among other things, at removing Soviet symbols from the landscape and toponymy of Ukraine⁸, inevitably touched on the question of holidays. International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, and Victory Day, marked on May 9, became the target of both criticism and defense in many groups on official and informal levels⁹. Such debates not only signal the special political importance of any national holiday, but also emphasize the "recycling of tradition" in terms of rethinking "what people do with ways of thinking and acting that no longer quite work,

4 Kyiv International Institute of Sociology's Survey "Religious Self-Identification and Prayer in Ukraine". Analytical Report by Olena Bogdan. - <http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=638&page=1>
5 Yekelchuk, S. *Ukraine. Birth of a Modern Nation*. Oxford, 2007.

6 The objective of the public protests was to call for the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).

7 Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine (16 November 2016 to 15 February 2017) http://www.un.org.ua/images/stories/17th_HRMMU_Report_ENG.pdf

8 The full text the law is available at the website of the Institute of National Memory - <http://www.memory.gov.ua/laws/law-ukraine-condemnation-communist-and-national-socialist-nazi-regimes-and-prohibition-propagan>

9 Covered by all major Ukrainian media sources.

and with the remains of an infrastructure that is no longer maintained"¹⁰.

It is impossible to ignore Bryan Turner's definitions of "political secularization" and "social secularization." The former refers to the state regulation of religious life and signifies a subordinate relationship between these two entities, while the latter has to do with personal religious choice¹¹. The opposite process, de-secularization, is a form of counter-secularization¹², whereby "social de-secularization" can be followed by political de-secularization, and vice versa. A national monitoring poll conducted in March 2016¹³ showed that a majority of Ukrainians consider themselves "believers" and that percentile actually depends on the region of Ukraine - from 93% in western Ukraine to 56% in eastern Ukraine. The number of those attending religious services has actually increased - from 49% in 2000 to 58% in 2016. As Yelensky argues, "a notable feature of the new cultural climate in Ukraine is that religion has met with strong social approval and has become a sort of legitimising behavior, the mark of a respectable citizen"¹⁴. Such

10 Luerhrmann, S. 'Recycling Cultural Construction: Desecularization in Post-Soviet Mari El.' *Religion, State and Society* 33, no. 1, pp. 37..

11 Turner, B. 'Religion in a Post-secular Society.' In *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, edited by B. S. Turner Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, Mass., 2010.1. 'Religious Speech: The Ineffable Nature of Religious Communication in the Information Age.' *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, nos. 7-8: 219-35.

12 Karpov, V. 'Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework.' *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 2, 2010, pp. 232-70.

13 Religion and Church in Ukrainian Society. Sociological Research. - http://old.razumkov.org.ua/upload/Religiya_200516_A4.compressed.pdf The sample consisted of 2018 respondents who live in all regions of Ukraine (including Kyiv) and in Crimea and were surveyed through face-to-face interviews. The stochastic sample is representative for the population of Ukraine aged 18 and above, except those territories that are not controlled by Ukraine.

14 Yelensky, V. Religiosity in Ukraine according to Sociological Surveys // *Religion, State and Society*, 2010.

tendencies illustrate the process of "social de-secularization" in contemporary Ukraine.

The concept of a "post-secular society"¹⁵ in the case of Ukraine may be debated¹⁶, as the relationship between religion and public politics is far more complicated. The most important religious holidays (above all those associated with the Orthodox Christian tradition) have been marked by public, on-camera appearances of Ukraine's top politicians. Given that religious and secular holidays of state importance (for example Independence Day) feature speeches and official greetings conveyed by politicians to the people of Ukraine, the televised and much-reported Euromaidan protests opened up new opportunities for rethinking state-religion connections¹⁷.

This article focuses on the extent and characteristics of the place of religion and religiosity in political greetings expressed on secular occasions. Can we observe any shifts in this agenda toward or away from the religious sphere during the years of Ukraine's independence? Can the process of secular-religious interaction in public speeches be characterized as "political de-secularization," during which the Euromaidan became a turning point? What are the consequences of this for contemporary Ukraine, taking into account its trend toward "social de-secularization"? Some scholars have compared Ukraine's religious situation to the American denominational model with its plurality, rather than European countries

- Volume 38 (10), pp. 213-227.

15 Habermas, J. 'Notes on Post-Secular Society.' *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25, no. 4, pp. 17-29.

16 Beckford, J.A. Public Religions and the Postsecular: Critical Reflections // *Journal of Scientific Study of Religion*, 2012. - № 51 (1), pp. 1-19.

17 Wanner, C. 'Orthodoxy and the Future of Secularism after the Maidan in Ukraine.' *Euxeinos*, no. 17 (2015), pp 8-13.

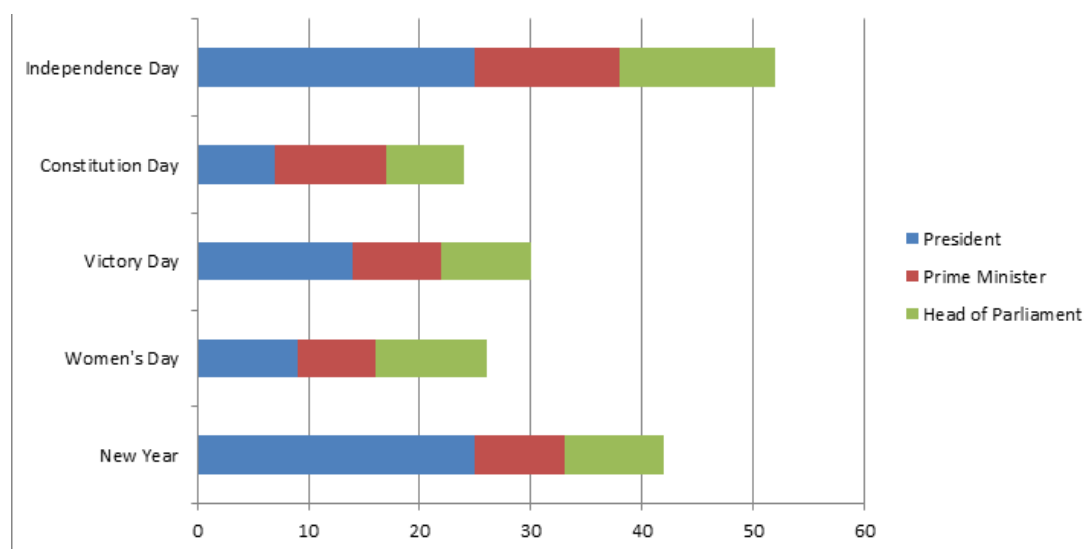


Figure 1. Distribution of the greetings among the holidays and political positions.

with their adherence to a particular church¹⁸. Thus, this article will attempt to determine whether the public speeches of Ukraine's top politicians emphasize the Orthodox Christian vision of the religious sphere or, on the contrary, whether they mark the sphere of religion as heterogeneous in nature, as one that "accommodate[s] the difference"¹⁹.

METHODOLOGY

For this research five secular holidays were selected: New Year's Day (January 1), International Women's Day (March 8), Constitution Day (June 28), Independence Day (August 24) and Victory Day (May 9). Trends associated with greetings conveyed on religious holidays, such as Easter and

Christmas (as well as religious holidays celebrated by non-Christians, for example, Muslims and Jews), were also monitored. I relied on the official greetings of different people holding the three highest government positions: the President of Ukraine, the head of the government (Prime Minister), and the head of Parliament. The voice of the President is often the loudest, while the voices of other high-ranking politicians remain in the background (the official political regime in Ukraine is a parliamentary-presidential republic, but it has shifted several times²⁰).

The period of analysis covers the years 1992 through 2016. The total number of greetings analyzed is 174 and their distribution is presented in Figure 1. The database of Ukraine's parliamentary

18 Casanova, J. 'Ethno-Linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Constructions in Ukraine.' In *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, edited by B. R. Rubin and J. Snyder, 81–103. London, 1998

19 Wanner, C. 'Orthodoxy and the Future of Secularism after the Maidan in Ukraine.' *Euxeinos*, no. 17 (2015), pp. 8–13.

20 In fact, after the Orange Revolution in December 2004 political elites negotiated the shift from a presidential-parliamentary to a parliamentary-presidential republic. In 2010, during Yanukovich's rule, Ukraine became a presidential-parliamentary again, and after the Euromaidan Revolution it switched again to a parliamentary-presidential republic.

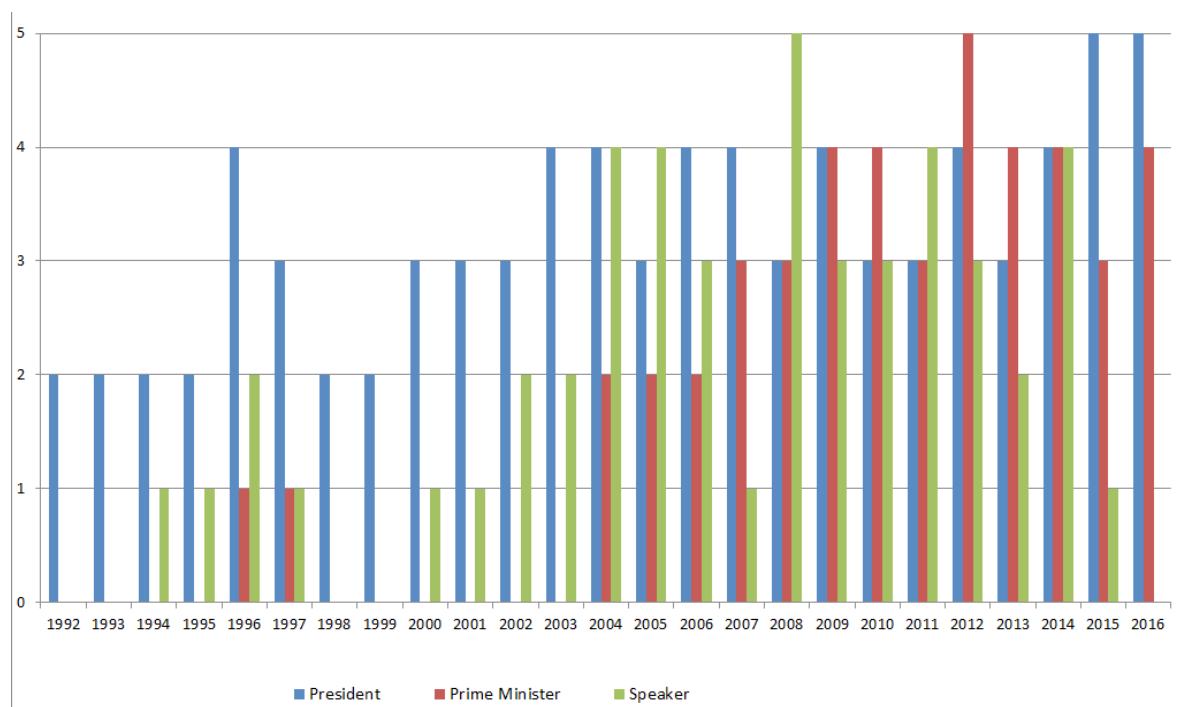


Figure 2. Distribution of greetings by political positions, 1992-2016.

library²¹ was used as the primary source of selection. The President's position seems to be the most visible (80 greetings), while the positions of the Prime Minister and Head of Parliament share almost equal portions of greetings - twice less, about 40 greetings each.

The tradition of greetings expressed by top politicians was established in the late 1990s and early 2000s, while the President has typically delivered a speech on New Year's Eve and Independence Day since 1992. Independence Day became an occasion for the first speeches by the Head of Parliament (1994) and the Prime Minister (1997) as well. The timeline of changes within the defined period can be followed in Figure 2. As we see, the tradition of powerful actors to deliver greetings was established in the 2000s, while

21 Speeches of top officials of Ukraine / Bibliographic resources of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine - <http://lib.rada.gov.ua/FirstPerson?post=15610&person=15620>

the President took the leading role during the whole period.

High-ranking politicians comprise a special group that both influence and are influenced by existing social trends and needs in Ukraine. In my research I applied both content and critical discourse analysis of official sources to distinguish and study the ways in which Ukraine's top politicians publicly present their attachment to the sphere of religion during different periods of post-independence Ukraine. Political secularization, in this case, would be evident when one observes a conceptual separation of "sacred" and "profane" (above all, the absence of religious concepts in public discourse beyond the religious sphere) either from the very beginning of Ukraine's independence or as a tendency accompanying its development. Indicators of religiosity are differentiated

according to the five-dimensional classical scheme by Charles Glock²²: belief, knowledge, experience, practice, and consequences. Emphasis is also placed on “spirituality” as a phenomenon that is important for understanding the place of religion in public discourse. Hence, the scheme of conceptual relationships is as follows: the dimension of “belief” encompasses such concepts as “holy,” “belief,” and “sacred”; the dimension of “knowledge” includes such notions as “God,” “Christian,” “Christianity,” “Orthodox Christians,” “other denominations,” “Jesus Christ”; the dimension of “experience” encompasses the concepts “religious” and “spiritual”; the dimension of “practice” – “religious symbols,” “religious actions,” “religious holidays,” and “clergymen”; and the dimension of “consequence” – “God’s blessing, grace.”

Besides content analysis, the critical discourse analysis was conducted at three levels - the text level, discursive practice, and sociocultural context²³. The *text level* covers the topics pertaining to religion and religiosity. *Discursive practice* is aimed at defining the main discourse(s) of religiosity in the texts of greetings and the linguistic means of their realization. *Sociocultural context* gives a broader perspective on the reasons for and consequences of the emergence of specific greetings.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the content of the greetings

22 Glock, C. Y. ‘On the Study of Religious Commitment.’ In J. E. Faulkner (ed.) *Religion’s Influence in Contemporary Society, Readings in the Sociology of Religion*, edited by J. E. Faulkner, 38–56. Ohio, 1972.

23 Fairclough, N. ‘Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research.’ In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, edited by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer. London, 2001.

enables us to understand the political greeting agenda and its possible shifts to a more or less religious pole during the years of Ukraine’s independence.

Greetings expressed on the secular and religious holidays mentioned above were present or absent in various years, and their themes differed too. It must be emphasized that appeals to communities other than the Orthodox Christian community were made from the very outset. Leonid Kravchuk, the first president of independent Ukraine, established the tradition of greeting the “Christians of Ukraine” on Christmas and Easter in accordance with the Western style in 1992, while his successor, President Leonid Kuchma, conveyed his official greeting on Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) in 2001. The latter tradition was upheld by Viktor Yanukovich during his term as president, as well as by President Petro Poroshenko in 2015. Moreover, both these leaders greeted the Jewish community on other occasions, such as Hanukkah or Passover. Several Muslim holidays (Kurban-Bayram and Uraza-Bayram) have also been mentioned in the public greetings of Leonid Kuchma and Petro Poroshenko. It is evident that religious invitations of different communities come from Ukrainian authorities in different periods.

The examined holidays differ in terms of the number of appeals to religiosity. If we imagine two opposite sides of a continuum, Constitution Day would be located at one end (no appeals to religiosity), and New Year’s Day on the other (many appeals to religiosity). This may be explained by the relatively formal status of Constitution Day and, according to the above-mentioned poll of Ukrainians’ favorite holidays, it is one of the least mentioned on the list, and the newest one. The only exception

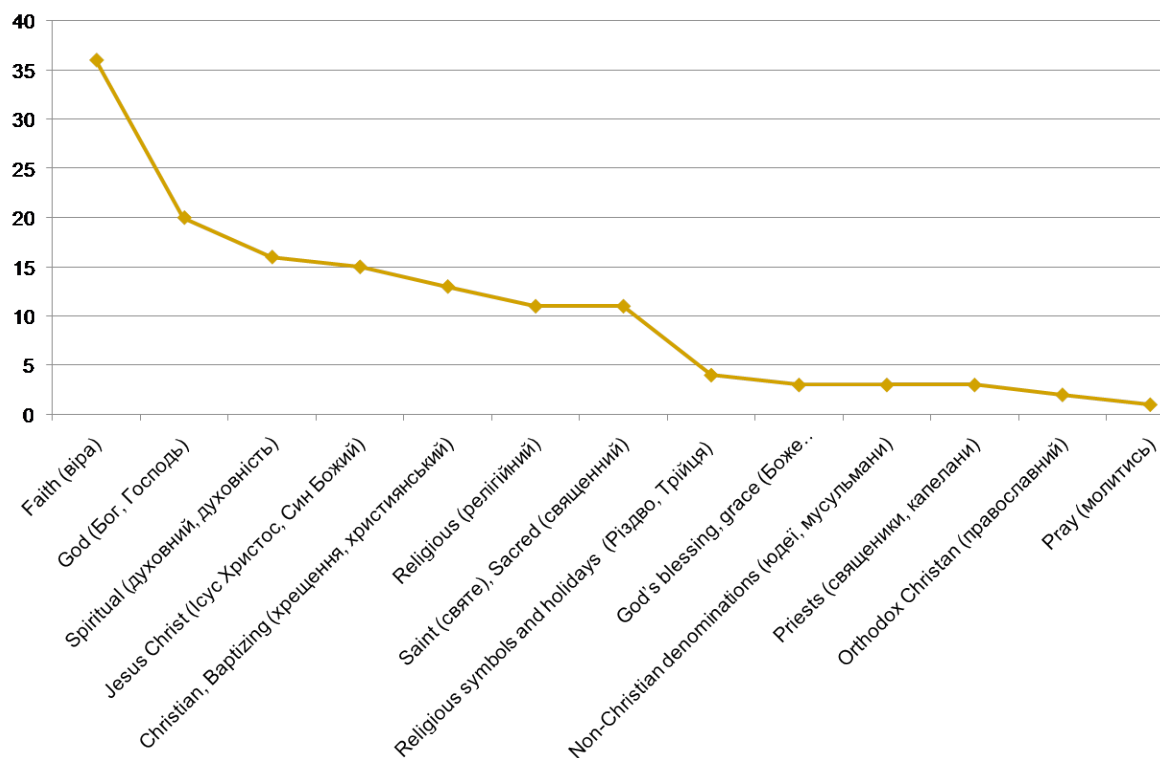


Figure 3. Number of references to concepts in greetings with secular holidays, 1992-2016.

occurred in 2016, when President Poroshenko recited the words of a prayer, simultaneously emphasizing its unexpected connection to the Constitution of Bendery, drafted by Pylyp Orlyk, who is regarded as the father of Ukrainian constitutionalism.

New Year's Day remains one of the favorite holidays celebrated in Ukraine. Its enduring connection to Christmas, symbolizing renewal and hope for a better future, can suit religious issues too (despite the Soviet roots of New Year's greetings). Another holiday with numerous religious connotations is Independence Day, owing to its invaluable role in state and nation building in Ukraine). Exclusive references to spirituality are found in greetings expressed on International

Women's Day (in this case, spirituality is linked to the role of women as custodians and givers). Victory Day may be located in the same imaginary continuum as Constitution Day, although greetings conveyed on the former holiday rarely pertain to religion; they contain references to the concept of "sacred". The concept has a religious background, but does not equal being "religious"; all in all "the sacred constructs the idea of human society as a meaningful, moral collective"²⁴. This concept is used in various contexts of political speeches to emphasize the moral obligations of an individual or a group in Ukrainian society.

The most frequent word from our

²⁴ Lynch, G. *The Sacred in the Modern World: A Cultural Sociological Approach*. 2012. - Oxford; New York, p. 233.

framework (see Figure 2) is “belief,” used both as a noun and a verb (“to believe”). In the majority of cases, it refers to the embodiment of Ukraine as a state or nation (“Let us believe in Ukraine,” “I believe in the people”), and despite its religious background, it has nothing to do with God or religion, at least not explicitly. Thus, its meaning fits better with another frequent word in the table: “spiritual.” “Spirituality” characterizes both clusters and may be interpreted as a *sui generis* substitution of the word “religious”; typical word combinations in this regard are “spiritual revival,” “spiritual development,” and “spiritual legacy.” As mentioned earlier, this concept is characteristic of International Women’s Day, but it is typical of other holidays, especially Independence Day. Based on existing data, initial assessments indicate that all the greetings by the top politicians have been in line with the political strategy of Ukraine’s state-building goals: integration into a wider space (both post-Soviet and European) and the demonstration of support for moral values, not necessarily religious values.

The term “religious,” used to define the sphere of religion, was a term typically used in the early 1990s. It had a neutral form with no specific denominations, and it was used mostly during speeches delivered on Independence Day. Later, other more specific terms were used. This trend may be explained by the initial necessity to determine the place of “religion” in the former non-religious USSR and to describe potential problems through religious dialogue, while references to “religiosity” mostly referred to the characteristics or subjects of religion. Another explanation may lie in the dominant genre and time of narration in holiday greetings.

Originally, the dominant way of

expressing greetings on Independence Day and New Year’s Day was a report, and such a report usually contained information about problems related to transition processes underway in all spheres of the Ukrainian state and society. In my view, the New Year’s Day and Independence Day holidays convey more reflexive messages about what was done during the previous 12 months, while the other holidays (Constitution Day, Victory Day, and International Women’s Day) convey general messages that are not time-bound. Victory Day also refers to events of past commemorations and contains such terms as “sacred” to differentiate remembrance from profane “forgetting.”

In the 1990s Christmas and Easter greetings conveyed by other denominations appeared on the front pages of newspapers (usually in the upper right-hand corner, next to the masthead). This layout began to change in the 2000s, when such greetings were moved to the second page. Such a shift may be viewed as an expected signal of change in the functions of these greetings—from visible respect and otherness to ritual attention. The increase in the number of greetings each year (see Figure 2) offers proof of a shift to this formal format. In fact, the only greetings visible for wide audiences were those broadcasted on TV - so to say, the President’s address on New Year’s Eve, Independence Day and major Christian holidays. In several recent years, social networks have also become a tool for sharing official greetings and are possibly far more effective in reaching the audience²⁵.

One could speak of a rapid turn toward concepts such as “holy” and “sacred” and the general increase of appeals to religion in 2016

25 For instance, the press service of the current Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman posts his official greetings on his personal web-page on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/volodymyrgroysman/>

in comparison with recent years (previous “surges” were recorded in 2009, during the greeting speeches of Viktor Yushchenko and the New Year’s Day speech of Viktor Yanukovich in 2012). This signifies that both context and personalities form the religious agenda of greetings. For instance, Yushchenko used the phrase “I believe” six times during his Independence Day speech in the final year of his presidency, and Viktor Yanukovich placed extraordinary emphasis on God, Christianity, and Christmas in his New Year’s Day speech in 2012. President Poroshenko launched the tradition of inviting the clergy of different denominations to attend official state celebrations of all national holidays. He emphasizes their role with a special greeting (for example, by addressing “holy fathers” during greetings delivered on Constitution Day and Independence Day in 2016, or by declaring that “by its solemnity and celebratory spirit Independence Day is like Christmas to us”). Such trends indicate that appeals to religion in the 2000s increase during the most critical periods in Ukraine’s transformations or personal careers of Ukraine’s highest-ranking politicians.

It is hard not to notice the religious background of some recent greetings which both reinforced the message and emphasized the role of either branch of Christian Orthodoxy in Ukraine. It was the Moscow patriarchy when Viktor Yanukovich shot his New Year’s video in Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, the main bastion of the patriarchy. The current President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, by contrast, gave his first New Year’s speech in Mykhaylivsky monastery, which belongs to the Kyiv Patriarchy and was a hideaway for the Euromaidan protesters beaten by police in December 2013.

It is possible to distinguish at least three

linguistic means particular to the analyzed texts.

1) Using references to Christmas as a ritual “coda” in the general New Year’s Day greeting in the immediate post-independence period (“Happy New Year and Merry Christmas to you!”), with the consequent extension and self-sufficiency of Christmas greetings. It was typical to have separate greetings on New Year’s Day and Christmas in the early 2010s, just as it was typical to have a common greeting in the 1990s.

2) Appeals to God’s will and benevolence, especially in New Year’s Day greetings, as well as in Independence Day messages. I have observed that appeals to Jesus Christ are mostly made in New Year’s greetings, which is explained by its temporal proximity to Christmas (which is celebrated in Ukraine according to the Julian calendar). Such appeals demonstrate religious hope instead of offering a strategic plan for future achievements, and they are typical for the whole period under study.

3) Emphasizing the immanent spirituality of the Ukrainian people and, at the same time, their fragility and need to “revive,” “retain,” and “maintain” in greetings conveyed during the majority of Ukrainian holidays. In his first New Year’s Day speech in 1992 President Kravchuk declared that the collapse of the USSR marked a “spiritual turning point” for Ukraine. In recent times this innate spirituality is complemented by the mentioned concepts of “holy” and “sacred.”

Such linguistic instruments form the general discourse that I call “keeping spirituality, remembering God.” In this regard, it is important to stress that mentions of Christianity, which started to appear no earlier than the 2000s, clearly outnumber the mentions of Orthodox Christianity or other

non-Christian denominations (see Table 1). On the one hand, this is a sign of inclusion of various Christian groups under a common umbrella and, possibly, sensitivity to non-Orthodox Christians. I mentioned the closeness of Orthodox Christian and Greek-Catholic (second biggest religious group) in Ukraine which makes this unity even natural. This is very significant in terms of religious tolerance, as it even references Ukraine in ecumenical terms, not as an Orthodox or even Eastern Christian country, as one would expect.

On the other hand, such a religious shift in public politics is an articulate exclusive message both to non-Christians and atheists. It is surprising given the 74 years of official state policy of promoting atheism and clamping down on open religious practice. In the post-Soviet period, government leaders seem to be doing precisely the reverse. This may be explained by two factors: the ongoing process of “de-communization” for Ukraine, opposition to non-religiosity which was previously treated as a collective good; the simultaneous worsening of the economic situation and increasing dangers of political integrity of Ukraine.

Despite the numerous personnel changes in key political positions, Ukraine’s general course as a secular and religiously tolerant state has existed from the very beginning. It was Viktor Yushchenko who, of all the presidents to date, had a general reputation of being a more religious person (according to his lifestyle and public interviews); the majority of other top Ukrainian politicians comprised a more “formally religious” group. Yulia Tymoshenko occupies a special place among Ukrainian prime ministers in terms of her attitude to religion and religiosity. She is known for delivering multiple greetings to the faithful of various Christian denominations

and the strong religious accents of these messages (for example, on St. Nicholas Day on December 19, 2009). The public speeches of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk were characterized by similar, but less intense accents. Such trends underscored the necessity to “recycle tradition” in new social conditions.

Debates over the religious identity of Ukraine’s leading politicians have not been a typical characteristic of public media discourse (with several exceptions, for instance, for Oleksandr Turchynov, former Head of the Ukrainian Parliament, who was called a “bloody pastor” due to his open affiliation with one of the Protestant churches). However, a growing tendency toward “political de-secularization” which I found in this research implies that a leading politician in Ukraine is obliged to maintain the rituals of the established system of popular greetings.

CONCLUSIONS

In the past 25 years of Ukraine’s independence, religion and religiosity have been a feature of public speeches not as an inherent characteristic, but rather as a “health and wealth cult”²⁶, and as a sphere that requires additional attention. Appeals to various aspects of religiosity became more intensive in the 2000s and were characterized by the opposite trend: the need for additional help through God’s grace and, in general, “political de-secularization” in Ukraine.

Political greetings remain an important instrument for communication for Ukrainian top politicians (first of all the President) with

26 Turner, B. ‘Religion in a Post-secular Society’ In *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, edited by B. S. Turner Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, Mass., 2010.1. ‘Religious Speech: The Ineffable Nature of Religious Communication in the Information Age.’ *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, nos. 7–8: 219–235.

wider audiences. The explanations for this are based on the fact that any official greeting in the scope of our analysis demonstrates a milestone in the development of a relatively young state; this was especially evident in the very first greetings for New Year and Independence Day. Greetings are implicitly associated with positive emotions quite necessary in the communication of the politicians and their electorate, typically having articulated a negative attitude to the former.

This research demonstrates that religion and religiosity have occupied a special place in Ukrainian society since the proclamation of independence. This place has been different in various periods, shifting from the establishment of attention and support for all religions and the development of the tradition of greeting the representatives of many faiths (1990s) to the subsequent embeddedness of religious concepts (belief, God) into political life; from ritual to more conceptual observance, which is essential for nation building and for the legitimization of top politicians as the leaders of Ukraine.

The shift in agenda toward the religious pole may be characterized as being context-dependent. For example, the unprecedented years of military conflicts and human loss in the Donbas region, which created a situation requiring an effective resolution and an extra dose of hope for a better future, may explain the intensification of religious appeals. Two simultaneous trends have been observed. The first marks the religious sphere as heterogeneous and deals with many religions, including non-Christian confessions; the second (more long-term) places emphasis on religiosity in its Christian version (not necessarily Orthodox Christian) with regard to two secular holidays, New Year's Day and Independence Day. The most visible processes of secular-religious interaction in public

speeches attest to the separation of Christmas greetings from New Year's Day greetings.

Special attention should be paid to the transitory status of some dates, a worthy topic of future research. For instance, October 14 has a mixed religious-secular history in Ukraine: Leonid Kuchma marked it as Cossacks' Day in his 2004 greeting; Viktor Yushchenko, as the Day of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in 2008; Yulia Tymoshenko, as both Pokrova (Intercession of the Theotokos) and the Day of the Ukrainian Cossacks in 2009; Mykola Azarov, as Pokrova. October 14 was finally proclaimed as Defenders' Day by President Poroshenko in 2015.

All in all, the analyzed processes, which characterize the discourses of greetings on national holidays, may be perceived as a sign of "political de-secularization." Religion seems to be enjoying a revival, marked by more heterogeneous declarations aimed at special target audiences and a general Christian version in declarations intended for the general population. Appeals to spirituality, so numerous in the 1990s and early 2000s, became a rarity in the 2010s. As a result, Ukrainian politicians address religious issues regularly despite Ukraine's political status as a secular state; religion serves as a powerful background for political legitimization and as an instrument for national consolidation during and after the Euromaidan. In the short term, it may usher in a period of relative political stability and unification of people during the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, as well as an economic slump; in the long term, the pairing of politics and religion may lead to popular dissatisfaction, which occurred as a result of Victor Yanukovych's religious stance. At the same time, such "political de-secularization" may be driven by a "social de-secularization" from below or, at least, remain congruent with it. Apparently, the processes

unfolding “from above” and “from below” must be further monitored in contemporary Ukraine.

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Crimean Tatar Religiosity: Between Privacy and Politics

by Olena Soboleva

Abstract

This article analyzes how forms of collective religiosity have transformed Crimean Tatar communities throughout the twentieth century, and especially since the political events of the last few years. As a result of forced secularization during the Soviet period, some aspects of religiosity reproduced within local communities went through a process of “domestication” (using the term of T. Dragadze). The most widespread family rituals involved collective prayers, or *Dua*, including canonized religious texts and the performance of certain ritual acts. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these collective religious practices co-existed with institutionalized forms of Islam. Today, under the influence of political repressions by the new Russian administration, these collective religious practices have taken on defined political meanings and are used by the Crimean Tatars as a manifestation of resistance and disobedience.

Key words: Crimean Tatars, collective prayers, forced secularisation, *Dua*, political resistance.

*“In spite of everything, our flags are streaming in the wind and the old men have begun to read the *Dua*”*

Aishe Umerova

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This article retraces the political significance of collective prayers, or “*Dua*,” among Crimean Tatars from the second half of the twentieth century up to their important role today. *Dua* prayers are performed in families and local communities. When speaking about the Soviet period, I use the term “domestication” of religion, as suggested by Tamara Dragadze.² This term captures the process of privatizing the sacred practices that took place in the Crimean Tatars’ religious lives. To understand of the importance of religion in processes of political mobilization, I use theoretical frameworks from the field of social movement theory (SMT).³ The revival of Islam during the Crimean Tartar return

migration (repatriation) and adaptation to their homeland will be also discussed in terms of social mobility.⁴ The particular importance of religion in the process of collective action has been a subject of study in works of scholars in the social sciences⁵. Using the example of collective prayers or “*Dua*”, I consider how religiosity shifted to the family domain under the pressure of forced secularization. I will also show how family and private practices became a tool of disobedience towards state authorities and a means to demonstrate political opposition under tense political circumstances. This article is based on field research conducted from 2006 to 2011 and complemented by historical analysis as well as an analysis of ongoing media reports.

The principal religion of Crimean Tatars is Sunni Islam. Since the Middle Ages, Sufi orders (*Tariqah*) have played a significant role in shaping Islam during the entire period

1 https://www.dialog.ua/news/128317_1503222823

2 Dragadze, T. (1993). The domestication of religion under Soviet communism. *Socialism: Ideals, ideologies, and local practice*, (31), pp. 141-150.

3 Klandermans, B., & Roggeband, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Handbook of social movements across disciplines*. Springer Science & Business Media.

4 Zaloznaya, M., & Gerber, T. P. (2012). Migration as Social Movement: Voluntary Group Migration and the Crimean Tatar Repatriation. *Population and Development Review*, 38(2), 259-284.

5 Wald, K. D., Silverman, A. L., & Fridy, K. S. (2005). Making sense of religion in political life. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 8, 121-143.



Mestura, Crimea. 2010. © Olena Soboleva

of the Crimean Khanate and even after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire. The Soviet forced secularization campaigns undermined the Muslim religious and public life in Crimea as well as in the other territories where Communist authorities were established. Mosques and monasteries were closed, religious leaders were persecuted, and the traditional system of theological education was destroyed during the Soviet period. Under such circumstances, some forms of religious practice were performed secretly and became “domesticated,” meaning that they were performed at home and rarely for overtly political purposes.

The forced deportation of Crimean Tatars to Central Asia on 18 May 1944 considerably affected religious life. The connection with spatial markers of religiosity, such as cemeteries, mosques, shrines, was lost. After the Crimean Tatars were expelled from

their ancestral lands, the Soviet government began an ideological transformation of the Crimean cultural space. Soviet authorities launched the process of renaming places with Turkic names beginning in the middle of the twentieth century. Although Muslim cemeteries and mosques had been either destroyed or rebuilt, Soviet authorities began to colonize abandoned Crimean territories. Immigrants from the central regions of Russia were brought to Crimea to populate deserted villages.

During the Soviet period, vertical or horizontal family/communal channels were an important means of transmission of religious beliefs. At a time when professional religious practitioners were repressed, ritual practices were led by the eldest representative of the family, who was often a woman. For example, in 2010 Mestura served as a “dzuvudzylar,” a ritual specialist, who is responsible for



Mestura, Crimea. 2010 © Olena Soboleva

washing the bodies of deceased people during funeral ceremonies. She also read prayers that had been ordered for different family occasions. To do this, she used a book, which was a collection of prayers that she received from relative who could not read Arabic. She also learned the Arabic alphabet at a relatively old age in Uzbekistan. Her colleague, an Uzbek teacher of mathematics, helped her to study Arabic and to pray. “It all happened in our school. I taught mathematics. There was a teacher. She used to secretly read prayers, read Namaz. When children were at lunch, she used to come in my classroom, and I would close the door. Then she used to read a prayer. I said her: “Teach me Arabic!” And she taught me. So I learned to read gradually. I have learned, yes.”⁶ Mestura’s history of turning to Islam is a fairly typical one for Crimean Tatars at the time of deportation.

During the Soviet period, the main form

6 Mestura, born in 1935. Interview recorded in 2010.

of religious practice was the collective ritual of Dua (“prayer” in Arabic), which was conducted in relatively small, local communities. Dua collective prayers can be divided into several groups according to their purpose. There are commemorative prayers after a funeral on the 7th, 36th and 40th day, and again six months and one year after the death (“kyigy duasy”, “kemlyk duasy” - “prayer of sorrow”). Other prayers accompany festal events in the life of a family (“koz aydın duasy”, “eilyk duasy”), such as a birth, the building of a new house, the return from a trip, and so on. Another category of Dua are aimed at blessing the intention “niyet” to do something (travel a distant road or make large purchases).

Dua is traditionally held in the house of the initiator of the event. Two rooms are usually prepared for the prayers, one for women and another for men. Elder members of the family and respected neighbors are



Collective prayer. Crimea, 2016. Photo by Anton Naumov © Olena Soboleva

usually invited to the collective prayers. The Mullah usually reads the prayer texts, and everyone recites the final parts of the invocations. Some of the prayers are read in turn by all participants, including women. Young people are not directly involved in the ritual, but they prepare and serve ritual food. During the Soviet period, elderly men who could read Arabic, even if they had no special theological education, assumed the role of Mullahs.

The Dua collective prayer consists of readings of three parts: the Koran; the Mevlid, which is a poem; and Illyahi folk poetry. The first part of Dua is obligatory, but the last two are optional and depend on the desire of the master of the house or the type of event. Informants note that not so long ago the reading of folk religious texts sometimes was accompanied by whirling prayers. This worship ceremony is similar to

dervish practices, which originated in Sufi communities.

The first part of the collective prayer has a canonized, sequenced structure of different parts: reading texts from the Koran; Dhikr; reading the 36th Sura Ya Sin; the dedication of worship “Bahyshlama;” and a closing prayer. Each part of the prayer has its canonized composition. The second part consists of a collectively read aloud Dhikr, or “tespe chekme,” (which means “to count prayer beads”) or “dzhemaat zikir” (public, collective Dhikr). Guzel Tuymova, a researcher of Crimean Tatar religious folklore, asserts that Crimean Tatars’ Dhikr resembles Sufi devotions that exist in some orders (Kadiriyya, and Mavlaviya).⁷ Dhikr ceremonies among Crimean Tatars are accompanied by head

⁷ Туймова Г. Р. (2008) Религиозные музыкально – поэтические жанры в традиционной музыке крымских татар: мавлид и иляхи : дис. канд. иск. С. 62.



Server Kerametov, Summer 2017. © Olena Soboleva

movements and the swinging of the body. The third part is central to the ritualized ceremony and is dedicated to the reading of the 36th Sura Ya Sin. The fourth part of worship –“bahyshlama “– is an offering of prayer to God. Before offering the prayer to God, the master of house asks some local religious specialists (a relative or neighbor) to read the entire Koran (“Quran hatym”). Besides that, several participants read the Sura Ya Sin forty times (“kyrklama”) before the event begins. When the readers enter the house, they mark each Koran with a candy and each of the “kyrklama” with a lump of sugar. At the Dua, a ritual of passage of the Koran (“Kuran bahyshlaylar”) and “kyrklama” to God takes place, the purpose of which, according to informants, is “sending prayers to heaven.” If the participants brought more “kyrklama” than necessary, the master may keep a few

lumps of sugar, which symbolizes recited prayers for some other important family event. This example shows how religious practices went through a process of folklorization and domestication in the local communal domain.

An extensive process of religious revival began during the repatriation and resettlement of Crimean Tatars on the territory of their ethnic homeland. Islam was institutionalized in several ways. First, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea (DUMC) was created. Second, other Muslim organizations from Arab countries and the Middle East arrived on the Crimean peninsula.⁸ If we look at return migration as a social movement, the subject of religion played a significant role in this process. Religion became a politically charged matter

8 Yarosh, O., & Brylov, D. (2011). Muslim communities and Islamic network institutions in Ukraine: contesting authorities in shaping of Islamic localities. *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe*, pp. 252- 264.

when it came to claiming territories in Crimea through the actualization of spatial markers of religiosity, including mosques, cemeteries, and shrines.

When Crimean Tatars returned to their ethnic homeland, they found themselves surrounded by a new cultural environment. Only some architectural details and the natural surroundings evoked the “traditional” cultural landscape that existed in memories. The process of repatriation of the Crimean Tatar community to Crimea was accompanied by the reconstruction of an imaginary landscape. The movement for the restoration of ethnic space is an important process, which has acquired different forms. Objects, places and sites with visible ethnic and confessional symbolism, such as mosques, Islamic shrines, memorials to victims of deportation, and so on became symbolic mediators between the community and their ethnic lands, between the present and the past⁹. Today shrines (Azizler), mosques, and cemeteries, as sacred objects, are more than just the sites of religious practice. They have become strong ethnic and religious symbols. They legalize the resettlement of Crimean Tatars on their historical territory. Thus, for the past two decades privatized and underground Islam has started going public again. Religiosity has gradually come out from communal space into the public sphere. Dua collective prayers, however, remain entirely within communal practices and continue, as they have for decades, to co-exist with institutionalized Islam.

After the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, the religious life of Crimean Muslims was integrated into the formal system of Russian religious law.

9 Soboleva, O. (2016). Reciprocity or Conflict: Inter-confessional Situation around Muslim Shrines in the Crimea. *Українознавство*, (2), 157-163.

Some religious organizations operating at the time in Crimea acquired an illegal status and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea was transformed into the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims - Taurian Muftiat. At the same time, the religious and political persecution of Crimean Tatars began. People were arrested or kidnapped. The new administration forbade all mass political events and meetings without prior permission. Relatives of repressed or missing members of families started to hold Dua collective prayers at home. As more and more people began to participate in these prayers, they could no longer fit in the house or yard. Hundreds of people began to sit on the pavement, near parks or playgrounds. More than 1000 people came to pray for a politician, Ilma Umerov, who was placed under a compulsory treatment order and sentenced to a mental health clinic.¹⁰

Another event that occurred in Summer 2017 shows the transformation of religious community practices. On the 8 August 2017, a 76 year-old activist, Server Karametov, placed a single stake under the walls of the Supreme Court of Crimea to protest against political repressions on the peninsula. He was arrested by the police and detained for ten days. These events had great resonance among the Crimean Tatars in Crimea. On August 20, a large-scale collective prayer was organised by the local Crimean Tatar community at the Khan Uzbek mosque in the city of Old Crimea¹¹.

The participants continue to be closely monitored by the police and other controlling authorities, and they receive warnings. Although the content of these prayers is purely religious, Dua is not a private prayer anymore.

10 <http://qha.com.ua/ru/obschestvo/krimskie-tatari-pomolilis-za-ervina-ibragimova-foto-video/162780/>
11 <http://qha.com.ua/ru/obschestvo/v-krimu-prohodit-dua-po-sluchayu-osvobojdieniya-karametova/177387/>

It is a public demonstration of resistance and a tool to summon the community. A Crimean Tatar forced migrant, who now resides in Kyiv, thinks that the participants of these prayers are heroes and he admires them greatly¹². Although only religious texts are read during the prayers, it is clear that these events are not just of religious importance. Above all, they have political significance.

Religious practices began to accompany, or even substitute, purely political events. Already in the first year of coming to power, Russian security forces banned the organization of demonstrations in memory of the victims of deportations, which in previous years were usually held by Crimean Tatars in Simferopol and in all major Crimean cities. All commemorative events are now clearly regulated by local authorities. In 2016, local authorities arranged commemorative activities in the village of Suren on the occasion of the opening of a new memorial. Visitors were seated on folding chairs. Political leaders of Crimea and the official representatives of several confessions made speeches¹³. Such a format for commemorating the day of the victims of the deportation was nothing like numerous demonstrations that attracted tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars in the previous years. As a matter of fact, the authorities are trying to embody the slogan voiced by the "Vice Premier Minister" of Crimea Dmitry Polonsky, which says that "it is necessary to commemorate quietly, but to rejoice loudly"¹⁴. Today, in response to the prohibition of mourning rallies, commemorative events are gradually becoming religious gatherings. In

the center of these events is the traditional Dua collective prayer. However, these events are apparently not "quiet" at all. In 2016, in the village of Buyuk Onlar, about one thousand people gathered for a memorial prayer dedicated to the victims of forced deportation. All the participants sat in the city square, and dozens of national flags streamed in the wind over the heads of the participants. The local Mullah recited prayers with a megaphone, and his words were repeated by the men and women present.¹⁵

In conclusion, some elements of religiosity, under the stress of adversarial circumstances, such as political pressure, repression, or persecution, can move into the private sphere. The example of Dua collective prayer shows how intercommunal religious practices in the Soviet period acquired the function of consolidation and preservation of group identity for Crimean Tartars. Later the same private religious elements served as a mobilization tool, a manifestation of collective action and resistance, and a means to demonstrate belonging to ethnic and religious groups. Collective prayers in local Crimean communities today are an effective way of demonstrating group unity, collaboration, and national solidarity.

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¹² Erfan, 1968 year of birth, recorded in 2016.

¹³ <http://an-crimea.ru/page/articles/138734>

¹⁴ <https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/04/03/krymtatary/>

¹⁵ <http://an-crimea.ru/page/articles/138734>

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