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The conflict over the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy as an element of the hybrid war

Konflikt wokół autokefalii ukraińskiego prawosławia jako element wojny hybrydowej

Abstract: The issue of the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy has once again demonstrated that the concept of atheism and the fight against religion propagated by the communists did not bring the expected results. On the contrary, religion has become a factor that connects societies in the republics of the former USSR with the former metropolis, especially for Slavic and Orthodox populations. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that the problem of the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy has been exploited in the current Russian-Ukrainian dispute, described as a post-imperial hybrid war. The aim of this article is to show how both sides of the conflict are using the issue of the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

Keywords: Orthodox Church of Ukraine, autocephaly, tomos, post-imperial hybrid war, Russia, Ukraine

Streszczenie: Kwestia autokefalii ukraińskiego prawosławia po raz kolejny pokazała, że propagowana przez komunistów koncepcja ateizmu i walki z religią nie przyniosła w perspektywie takich rezultatów, jakich oczekiwano. Odwrotnie – religia stała się czynnikiem integrującym społeczeństwa republik byłego ZSRR z dawną metropolią, a uwaga ta dotyczy zwłaszcza ludności słowiańskiej i prawosławnej. Nie powinno zatem dziwić, że problem autokefalii ukraińskiego prawosławia został wykorzystany w aktualnym sporze rosyjsko-ukraińskim, określanym jako postimperialna wojna hybrydowa. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie, jak obie strony konfliktu wykorzystują temat autokefalii ukraińskiego prawosławia.

Słowa kluczowe: Kościół Prawosławny Ukrainy, autokefalia, tomos, postimperialna wojna hybrydowa, Rosja, Ukraina

Introduction

The hybrid war in Ukraine has intensified the interest of researchers involved in studying new types of wars. Although it is not an entirely

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new phenomenon, the dominant view is that the conflict in Ukraine is the first hybrid war to occur on such a scale in practice. Due to the fact that hybrid wars were analyzed in world literature even before the start of the conflict in Ukraine,¹ the introductory part of this article is devoted to the definitions provided by Polish authors.

According to Bogusław Pacek, a hybrid war is:

a military conflict conducted with the participation of states, international organizations, as well as national and social groups, using available means of combat (from very traditional to the most modern ones), with the participation of soldiers and civilians, started after a declaration of war or without it, conducted with the use of means allowed by law or in violation of law, with a significant share of non-military measures, using economic, political, information and propaganda activities on a large scale, with different and changing objects of attack (states, societies, organizations, or nations), aimed at defeating the opposing party or forcing it to carry out a desired action (behavior).²

Olga and Sergiusz Wasiuta perceive hybrid war in a similar way:

Hybrid wars have shown us a new reality, where there is no longer a clear division between state, army, and nation. Earlier, states fought one another with “official” armies and were forced to carry out certain obligations under international law (the Geneva Conventions). When it comes to fourth-generation warfare, figuratively speaking, “everything is possible”, restrictions are eliminated, and civilians serve as weapons or “human shields.” It should be borne in mind that Russia did not declare war on Ukraine, does not make official demands and ultimatums, and denies her participation (apparent to everyone) for one purpose only – in order not to take responsibility for the actions of the “invading army,” occupation of foreign territories, fate of war prisoners, terrorist groups, etc.³

- 1 V. Gerasimov, ‘Tsennost’ nauki v predvidenii’, *Voyenno-promyshlennyi kur’yer* [В. Герасимов, *Ценность науки в предвидении*, “Военно-промышленный курьер”], 27 February 2013; F.G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: Rise of the Hybrid Wars*, Arlington 2007; W.J. Nemeth, *Future war and Chechnya: A case for hybrid warfare*, Monterey 2002.
- 2 B. Pacek, *Wojna hybrydowa na Ukrainie*, Warszawa 2018, p. 111.
- 3 O. Wasiuta, S. Wasiuta, ‘Militarne i niemilitarne metody prowadzenia wojny hybrydowej Rosji przeciwko Ukrainie’, *Visnyk of the Lviv University. Series International Relations*, no. 39, 2016, p. 11.

The dispute over the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy is an excellent example of this type of hybrid warfare in which post-imperial and post-colonial resentments are central. Therefore, I would like to suggest the term “post-imperial hybrid war” to describe this phenomenon. Russia is losing influence in Ukraine both internally and internationally, and therefore she is taking offensive actions, including those in the ideological sphere. This is the way the concept of the “Russian world” has been promoted throughout the former USSR, but especially in Slavic and Orthodox Belarus and Ukraine, with the Moscow Patriarchate as the main proponent and its local structures as the primary medium. Furthermore, it fits perfectly into non-military strategies of conducting hybrid warfare, alongside economic pressure, high levels of activity among the secret services, offensive actions in cyberspace, and multidirectional diplomatic activities, and demonstrates the powerful role of information and propaganda activities. The aim of the study is to show how both sides of the conflict use the subject of autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy. A case study methodology is used, with particular emphasis on the analysis of the determinants of conflict and discourse analysis.

Referring to the classification of religious conflicts I have previously proposed, the dispute over the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy should be considered as an example of the *sacrum-sacrum* model, since it involves entities of a strictly confessional nature, but at the same time as an example of the *sacrum-profanum* model since state institutions, secular organizations or individuals holding public positions play a significant role.⁴ Interestingly, the involvement of Ukrainian state authorities in religious conflict is contrary to the model of separation of church and state which has been promoted so far in official documents.

4 T. Szyszlak, ‘Próba teoretycznego ujęcia postradzieckich konfliktów religijnych’, in: *Religia i polityka na obszarze Europy Wschodniej, Kaukazu i Azji Centralnej*, ed. T. Stępniewski, Lublin–Warszawa 2013, p. 50.

1 The origins of the conflict

● Among the determinants of the conflict over the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, the extreme polarization of the confessional scene in Ukraine stands out. Although the functioning and registered religious organizations are dominated by ones related to Orthodoxy, it is heterogeneous Orthodoxy composed of several trends. In addition, other faiths play a larger or smaller role locally, e.g. Greek Catholicism in Galicia, Roman Catholicism in the central part of the country, and Calvinism in Zakarpattia. Certainly, religious life in Ukraine is much richer than in other republics of the former USSR, as can be seen by the number of religious communities. The table below presents data from before the annexation of Crimea and the start of the War in Donbas (January 2014) as well as the latest information published by the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture.

Nevertheless, the above data do not take into account the varying potential of each religious community, including the size of its parishes. Therefore, declarations of confessional or religious affiliation made as part of sociological and public opinion research are worth noting. According to the results of the survey conducted between August 30 and September 9, 2019 by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, the Razumkov Center and the Socis Center, on a representative sample of 10,005 respondents to identify the attitudes of Ukrainians towards religion, 68.8% identified as Orthodox; 9.6% as “simply Christian;” 9% as irreligious; 8.5% as Greek Catholic; 1.2% as Evangelical or Protestant; 1% as Roman Catholic; 0.7% “other” religions or denominations; 0.5% as following non-Christian religions (Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism); and 0.8% refused to respond. Among those who identified as Orthodox, 45.2% indicated that they belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate (hereinafter: UOC-KP); 33.9% described themselves as “simply Orthodox;” 16.9% belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (hereinafter: UOC); 2.1% belonged to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (hereinafter: UAOC); and 1.9% refused to respond or were unable to indicate their affiliation.⁵

5 ‘45% опитаних українців відносять себе до УПЦ КП, 17% – до УПЦ (МП)’ [45% опитаних українців відносять себе до УПЦ КП, 17% – до УПЦ (МП)], *Relihiya v Ukraini*, 17.09.2018, <https://www.religion.in.ua/news/vazhlivo/41031-45-opitanx-ukrayinciv-vidnosyat-sebe-do-upc-kp-17-do-upc-mp.html> [2020-03-06].

Table 1. Basic information about religious organizations in Ukraine as of early 2014 and 2019

Church / religious denomination	Religious organizations			
	2014		2019	
	Parish communities	Other (dioceses, monasteries, missions, brotherhoods, schools)	Parish communities	Other (dioceses, monasteries, missions, brotherhoods, schools)
Ukrainian Orthodox Church	12714	339	12437	337
Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate	4661	153	5363	152
Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church	1185	45	1171	48
Other Orthodox and Old Believers Institutions	193	6	238	12
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	3765	184	3912	196
Roman Catholic Church	942	188	943	187
Protestant communities	9968	535	10031	564
Muslim communities	1221	16	265	12
Jewish communities	283	27	287	28
Other	714	70	515	41
TOTAL:	35646	1563	35162	1577

Source: own study based on: RISU, *Relihiyni orhanizatsiyi v Ukraini (stanom na 1 sichnya 2014 r.)* [PISU, *Relihiyni orhanizatsiyi v Ukraini (stanom na 1 sichnya 2014 r.)*], 4 April 2014, <https://risu.org.ua/index/resources/statistics/ukr2014/55893/> [2020-03-06]; RISU, *Relihiyni orhanizatsiyi v Ukraini (stanom na 1 sichnya 2019 r.)* [PISU, *Relihiyni orhanizatsiyi v Ukraini (stanom na 1 sichnya 2019 r.)*], 17 April 2019, https://risu.org.ua/index/resources/statistics/ukr_2019/75410/ [2020-03-06].

In turn, between February 15 and February 27, 2020 the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology conducted research on a representative sample of 1,223 respondents on the attitude of Ukrainians towards particular Churches and their expectations related to the functioning of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (hereinafter: OCU). It should be noted that three out of five interlocutors expressed a positive attitude towards the OCU, 32.5% were neutral and 5.4% were negative. For comparison, when it comes to the UOC, every fourth interlocutor declared a positive attitude, 41.2% were neutral and 28% of respondents had a negative perspective.⁶

In addition, experience with Soviet religious policy and attempts to overcome its effects are particularly important. The decades of implementing communist ideology in the Soviet reality included a fight against religion. The objective was to take full control of the officially functioning churches in the country and to impose sanctions on the unruly element. The Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter: ROC) was treated liberally compared to other confessional communities and enjoyed great freedom both regionally and temporarily. This was the case, for example, in West Galicia, where after the liquidation of Greek Catholic communities at the so-called Lviv Council in March 1946, Orthodox parishes began taking over. Throughout the whole period of Galicia's affiliation with the USSR, the freedom of these communities was not much restricted, so that people would not turn their backs on the legal confessional structure and support the underground Greek Catholic Church.⁷

In Soviet times, the Moscow Patriarchate had a monopoly on establishing and running Orthodox parishes throughout the state, except for Georgia. Although the Georgian Orthodox Church had been granted autocephaly in antiquity, it lost its separateness with the conquest of the country by Russia in 1811. It regained it at the end of World War I, but this was not approved by the ROC until 1943. After World

6 'Stavlennya do okremykh tserkov Ukrainy i ochikuvannya vid diyal'nosti Pravoslavnoyi tserkvy Ukrainy: lyutu 2020 roku' [*Ставлення до окремих церков України і очікування від діяльності Православної церкви України: лютий 2020 року*], KMIS, 3 March 2020, <http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=921&page=1> [2020-03-06].

7 T. Szyszlak, *Lwowskie sacrum, kijowskie profanum. Grekokatolicyzm w ukraińskiej przestrzeni publicznej od pierestrojki do pomarańczowej rewolucji*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 68-74.

War I, the process of moving towards autocephaly or at least the autonomy of Orthodoxy in Ukraine also began with the support of the authorities in Kyiv. However, it was suppressed after the communists established their power. During World War II, attempts at this matter were made again, and the hierarchy and clergy of the established structure constituted the foundation for the UAOC, which operated until 1989 only in the Ukrainian diaspora. Since then, empowered by perestroika, autocephalists have been allowed to register their communities in Ukraine.

However, the UAOC did not enjoy its monopoly on organizing religious life for the Orthodox who did not wish to belong to the ROC. In the face of the collapse of the USSR, the Ukrainian exarchate of the ROC under the leadership of Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko) acted. In October 1990 this structure was raised by the Moscow Patriarchate to the rank of an autonomous church called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Filaret asked Moscow for autocephaly, but the authorities of the Moscow Patriarchate held off the issue in April 1992 and condemned the Metropolitan for his secession activities. Since Filaret did not want to submit to the decision of his superiors, in May 1992 a group of hierarchs convened an extraordinary council to Kharkiv where he was dismissed from office. In response, at the end of June 1992, a council was held in Kyiv and the supporters of Filaret and the UAOC were united into one community under the name "Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate". Due to Filaret's authoritarian tendencies, some of the hierarchs and clergy left the UOC-KP a year later and renewed the functioning of the UAOC.

The above issue of the fragmentation of Orthodoxy relates to another condition important for the vitality of the conflict in question, namely the politicization of religion, which should be understood as the use of the confessional subject for the purpose of achieving current political goals. This was the case, for example, during the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk. Therefore, the hierarchs of the UOC repeatedly stressed that the existence of the UOC-KP and the UAOC was only possible thanks to the support of the state authorities. They also ac-

cused the Kyiv Patriarchate above all of ethnophyletism, i.e. favoring one national group within the Church.⁸

On the eve of the Pan-Orthodox Council, on June 16, 2016, the Supreme Council asked the Ecumenical Patriarch to grant autocephaly to Ukrainian Orthodoxy to overcome the effects of church divisions by convening the Unification Council, as well as to declare the incorporation of the Orthodox Kyiv Metropolis into the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686 invalid, which was supported by the Ukrainian World Congress.⁹ In the spring of 2018, Bartholomew I met in the Fanar with President Petro Poroshenko, whose point of honor was to obtain the status of autocephaly for Ukrainian Orthodoxy. Besides, the motto of his election campaign in 2019 was “Army, language, faith,” indicating the three foundations of Ukrainian politics. During his speech in the Supreme Council on September 20, 2018, he said: “We want to build a fighting army together. We will restore Ukraine’s worthy place in the world Orthodoxy. We will strengthen the Ukrainian language – an element of strength and success of our nation. [...] Army, language, faith is not a slogan. It is a formula of Ukrainian identity.”¹⁰

The different attitudes of the Ukrainian Orthodox communities towards the Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea, and the War in Donbas are the sources of the conflict. For the UOC, which is in canonical unity with the Moscow Patriarchate, it is an internal conflict, a civil war with no foreign factor, certainly not in the form of Russia. The accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation was accepted very quickly, but nevertheless three dioceses located on the disputed peninsula remained under the jurisdiction of the UOC – the Dzhankoy Diocese, the Simferopol-Crimean Diocese, and the Theodo-

8 W. Pawluczuk, *Ukraina. Mistyka i polityka*, Kraków 1998, pp. 129-133, 138-146.

9 ‘Rada prosyt’ Vselens’koho patriarkha Varfolomiya nadaty avtokefaliyu pravoslavniy tserkvi v Ukraini’ [*Рада просить Вселенського патріарха Варфоломія надати автокефалію православної церкви в Україні*], UNIAN, 16 June 2016, <https://www.unian.ua/politics/1377545-rada-prosit-vselenskogo-patriarkha-varfolomiya-nadati-avtokefaliyu-pravoslavniy-tserkvi-v-ukrajini.html> [2020-03-06].

10 S. Surepin, “Armiya, mova, vira”: Poroshenko nazvav formulu suchasnoyi ukrayins’koyi identychnosti’ [С. Сурепін, “Армія, мова, віра”: Порошенко назвав формулу сучасної української ідентичності], *Zaborona*, 20 September 2018, <https://zaborona.com/armiia-mova-vira-poroshenko-nazvav-formulu-suchasnoi-ukrainskoi-identychnosti/> [2020-03-06].

sian Diocese, all three considered to be foreign.¹¹ This was confirmed by the attitude of the hierarchs and clergy of this confession to blessing the soldiers who were going to the front in order to fight against the separatists. A different view was presented, for example, by the UOC-KP, for whom the War in Donbas was a sign of Moscow's aggression against Kyiv, an occupation and an attempt to destroy the Ukrainian state and church.¹²

2. Towards open conflict

Although the idea of the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy was brought to light several times in the past century, in various versions and on different scales, the struggle in this direction intensified in spring and summer 2018. In April 2018, the leaders of two of Ukraine's largest non-canonical Orthodox communities asked Istanbul for autocephaly.¹³ In response, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (Archondonis) stated that "Constantinople has never agreed to hand over the territory of Ukraine to anyone except for the chirotony of the Kyiv Metropolitans in Moscow, provided that they are elected in Kyiv by the local council and that the Ecumenical Patriarch is fully informed." However, the incorporation of the Kyiv Metropolis into the ROC occurred without canonical basis.¹⁴ At the request of the

11 A. Vetrova, 'Nikolay Danilevich: Khristos nas ob'yedinyayet, a politika raz'yedinyayet', [A. Ветрова, Николай Данилевич: Христос нас объединяет, а политика разъединяет], *Argumenty i Fakty v Ukraine*, 21 October 2015.

12 "'Ves' svit viznae": Filaret vykriv UPTS MP u brekhni' ["Весь світ визнає": Філарет викрив УПЦ МП у брехні], *Obozrevatel*, 2 August 2018, <https://www.obozrevatel.com/ukr/society/ves-svit-viznae-filaret-vikriv-upts-mp-u-brekhni.htm> [2020-03-10]; 'U mistakh Ukrayiny molylysya za peremohu Ukrayiny u viyni z Rosiyeyu' [У містах України молилися за перемогу України у війні з Росією], *RISU*, 7 March 2020, https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/articlesbytag?tag=16335&articles_p=20 [2020-03-10].

13 'Konstantynopol' dav "zelene svitlo" stvorennyu ukrayins'koyi pomisnoyi tserkvy, Kyiv's'kyu patriarkhat i UAPTS vzhe pidpysaly zvernennya' [Константинополь дав "зелене світло" створенню української помісної церкви, Київський патріархат і УАПЦ вже підписали звернення], *UNIAN*, 17 April 2018, <https://www.unian.ua/politics/10084154-konstantynopol-dav-zelene-svitlo-stvorennyu-ukrajinskoji-pomisnoji-cerkvi-kijivskiy-patriarhat-i-uapc-vzhe-pidpisali-zvernennya.html> [2020-03-06].

14 'Vselens'kyu Patriarkh: Moskva pryednala ukrayins'ku tserkvu nekanonichno' [Вселенський Патріарх: Москва приєднала українську церкву неканонічно], *Ukrinform*, 2 July 2018, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/2490633-vselskij-patriarh-konstantynopol-nikoli-ne-vidavav-dozvolu-peredavati-teritorii-ukraini-budkomu.html> [2020-03-06].

hierarchy, a group of theologians, historians and lawyers conducted an analysis, on the basis of which the Archbishop of Constantinople – New Rome advised the synod to annul the decision of 1686 made by his predecessor, Dionysus IV, and justified taking such steps by the fact that its provisions had been violated.¹⁵ The proper decision was adopted by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on October 11, 2018, which stated that Ukraine was a canonical territory directly subordinate to Constantinople and, as such, would be granted autocephaly in the near future.¹⁶ At the same time, the anathema imposed by the Moscow Patriarchate on Filaret (Denysenko) and other schismatics was abolished.¹⁷ At the beginning of September, Bartholomew sent two of his exarchs to Ukraine: Bishop Daniel (Zelinski) from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the US and Bishop Hilarion (Rudnyk) from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, i.e. hierarchs of autonomous churches in unity with the Constantinople Patriarchate, whose task was to prepare church structures independent of Moscow. At the President's request, the Supreme Council handed over St Andrew's Church in Kyiv, in accordance with the act of October 18, 2018, to the seat of the stauropegion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.¹⁸

In mid-December, the Unification Council (Sobor) was held in Kyiv. All Orthodox hierarchs in Ukraine were invited to participate, accepting the preconditions, including the ban on running for the position of metropolitan for the current leaders of the UOC, UOC-KP and UAOP, and the decision that the new church's activity would be limited to the territory of the Ukrainian state. Eventually, in addition to 126 delegates from the UOC-KP and 36 delegates from the UAOC,

15 Oikoumenikón Patriarcheíon, 'O Oikoumenikós Thrónos kai i Ekklísia tis Oukranías – Omiloún ta kéímena' [Oikoumeunikón Patriarxeíon, O Oikoumeunikós Thronós kai i Ekklísia tis Oukranías – Omiloún ta kéímena], ec-patr.org, 25 September 2018, https://www.ec-patr.org/deltiotypou/ukraine/final_oukraniko-1.pdf [2020-03-06].

16 'Rishennya Synodu: Ukrayins'ka tserkva otrymaye tomos. Povnyy tekst' [Рішення Синоду: Українська церква отримує томос. Повний текст], *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*, 11 October 2018, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2018/10/11/7194911/> [2020-03-06].

17 Ł. Kobeszko, 'Patriarchat Ekumeniczny rehabilituje Patriarchat Kijowski i Cerkiew autokefaliczną, ekumenizm.pl, 12 October 2018, <https://www.ekumenizm.pl/koscioly/wschodnie/patriarchat-ekumeniczny-rehabilituje-patriarchat-kijowski/> [2020-03-06].

18 Zakon Ukrayiny no. 2598-VIII "Pro osoblyvosti korystuvannya Andriyivskoyu tserkvoyu Natsional'noho zapovidnyka 'Sofiya Kyuyiv's'ka" [Закон України № 2598-VIII "Про особливості користування Андріївською церквою Національного заповідника 'Софія Київська'"], 'Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady', no. 46, 2018, p. 373.

six representatives of the UOC came to Saint Sophia's Cathedral on December 15, 2018, including two bishops: Metropolitan of Pereiaslav Khmelnytskyi and Vishnevsk Aleksandr (Drabynko) and Metropolitan of Vinnitsa and Bar Simeon (Shostatsky), although earlier on, there had been information propagated, among others, by Filaret himself, that there would be at least 10 hierarchs on behalf of the Moscow Patriarchate.¹⁹ As specialists later explained, the reluctance to participate in the Council was a result of the difficult character of the Kyiv Patriarch.²⁰ The meeting was chaired by the Metropolitan of France, Emanuel (Adamakis), and the Council's guest was President Poroshenko. The liturgy was followed by a vote on the statute of the new community, as a result of which the UOC-KP and UAOC have been dissolved. Three candidates for the head of the Kyiv Metropolis were identified by representatives of the hierarchs, clergy, and believers. Only bishops took part in the final vote, 28 of whom voted for the Metropolitan of Simeon (Shostatsky) and eight more voted for Epiphanius (Dumenko), the Metropolitan of Pereiaslav and Bila Tserkva of the UOC-KP, the protégé of Patriarch Filaret.²¹ Thus, the first Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine was Epiphanius (Dumenko). His cathedral, St Michael's Golden-Domed Sobor together with the entire monastery complex, had been destroyed in the 1930s and rebuilt with the funds from the state budget after the independence of Kyiv.

The result of the Unification Council was to give autocephaly to the new Orthodox community, which also took place by virtue of the tomos granted on January 6, 2019 in the Istanbul Fanar. In addition to the hierarchs of the OCU with Epiphanius as the head of the ceremo-

- 19 'Oprylyudnyly spysok arkhieriyevyiv Moskovs'koho patriarkhatu, yaki maly buty na Ob'yednavchomu soborі' [*Опрілюднили список архієреїв Московського патріархату, які мали бути на Об'єднавчому соборі*], *Misto*, 25 February 2019, <https://www.gazeta-misto.te.ua/oprylyudnyly-spysok-arhierarchyevyiv-moskovskogo-patriarkhatu-yaki-maly-buty-na-ob-yednavchomu-sobori/> [2020-03-06].
- 20 'Teper vsi bachat', chomu til'ky dva yerarkhy UPTS MP pryvykhaly na ob'yednavchyyu sobor – ekspert pro zvernennya Filareta' [*Тепер всі бачать, чому тільки два єрархи УПЦ МП приїхали на об'єднавчий собор – експерт про звернення Філарета*], *RISU*, 15 May 2019, https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/confessional/orthodox_relations/75802/ [2020-03-06].
- 21 С. Кравченко, 'Об'єднавчий собор: розкрито інтригу обрання Епіфанія митрополитом' [*С. Кравченко, Об'єднавчий собор: розкрито інтригу обрання Епіфанія митрополитом*], *Narodna Pravda*, 16 December 2018, <https://narodna-pravda.ua/2018/12/16/ob-yednavchij-sobor-rozkrito-intrigu-obrannya-epifaniya-mitropolitom/> [2020-03-06].

ny, a delegation of state authorities as well as President Poroshenko participated. Thus, the OCU has become the fifteenth Orthodox autocephalous church according to the diptych of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Apart from the ROC, the Orthodox churches in Poland and Serbia have not recognized it. According to Epiphanius, the Moscow Patriarchate persuaded every Orthodox hierarch in the world not to recognize the autocephaly of the OCU.²²

3. Using autocephaly in the hybrid war

3. Of the first events which demonstrated that the issue of autocephaly would become one of the themes of the Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war, the fact that Putin urgently convened the Security Council of the Russian Federation on October 12, 2018 is worth noting. According to the information provided to the media, the discussion topic for the members of the consultative-advisory body to Russia's head of state was "the status of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine after the decision of the synod of the Constantinople Patriarchate to grant autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine, annulling the 1686 document on the transition of the Kyiv Metropolis to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate and informing about the renewal of the stauropegion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Kyiv."²³ After the meeting, President Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov concluded that the Kremlin shared the concerns of the ROC about autocephaly granted to Ukrainian Orthodoxy by Constantinople, and added: "If the situation starts to develop into lawlessness, then, of course, as Russia protects the interests of Russians and Russian-speaking people everywhere, Russia will also, as Putin has said more than once, stand up for the interests of the Orthodox."²⁴

22 S. Khomenko, V. Chervonenko, 'Mytropolyt Epifaniy: "My ne mayemo prava rozpaluyuvaty v Ukraini relihiynnyu front"' [С. Хоменко, В. Червоненко, *Митрополит Епіфаній: "Ми не маємо права розпалювати в Україні релігійний фронт"*], BBC, 1 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-47408699> [2020-03-06].

23 Prezident Rossii, 'Soveshchaniye s postoyannymi chlenami Soveta Bezopasnosti' [Президент России, *Совещание с постоянными членами Совета Безопасности*], kremlin.ru, 12 October 2018, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58813> [2020-03-06].

24 'V Kremle obeshchayut zashchishchat' interesy pravoslavnykh na Ukraine politiko-diplomaticheskimi metodami' [В Кремле обещают защищать интересы православных на Украине

The reaction of the Ukrainian authorities was clearly negative. President Poroshenko supposedly stated that the issue of autocephaly had become yet another element of the hybrid war, and that addressing the problem in the Security Council of the Russian Federation had interfered in the internal affairs of Ukraine. Moreover, he noted the use of the phrase “Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine” by the Kremlin press services.²⁵

On the eve of and during the Unification Council of December 15, 2018, the Security Service of Ukraine was to thwart a series of provocative actions in the capital and elsewhere in the country, which were to be conducted by the Russian secret service. According to the Ukrainian side, Metropolitan Pavlo (Lebed), the father-superior of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery, was to receive 5000 USD for organizing a demonstration in Kyiv. In Donetsk, on December 6, 2018, at a meeting about the granting of autocephaly to Ukrainian Orthodoxy, in which representatives of the Russian secret services were to take an active part, it was agreed that processions would be held on the day of the Council in Kyiv, Odessa, Zaporozhye, Kherson and Mykolaiv. On this occasion, clashes with the police were to be provoked in order to create a “bloody message” for the Russian media.²⁶

Furthermore, a few days before the Council, Moscow Patriarch Kirill (Gundyayev) addressed an official letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Pope Francis, and other religious leaders, as well as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emanuel Macron, in which he accused the Ukrainian authorities of interfering in intra-church affairs and using the issue for political purposes, as well as violating human rights, including the right to religious freedom. He also claimed that the hierarchs of the UOC were summoned

политико-дипломатическими методами], Interfaks, 12 October 2018, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=70959> [2020-03-06].

- 25 'Shche odyn element hibrydnoyi ahresiyi: Poroshenko pro rishennya Radbezu RF shchodo zakhystu rosiys'koyi tserkvy v Ukraini' [*Ще один елемент гібридної агресії: Порошенко про рішення Радбезу РФ щодо захисту російської церкви в Україні*], *Ругатуу*, 16 October 2018, <https://prm.ua/shhe-odin-element-gibridnoyi-agresiyi-poroshenko-pro-rishennya-radbezu-rf-shhodo-zahistu-rosiyskoyi-tserkvi-v-ukrayini/> [2020-03-06].
- 26 'Namisnyk Pechers'koyi lavry mav koordynuvaty provokatsiyi pid chas ob'ednavchoho Soboru – SBU' [*Намісник Печерської лаври мав координувати провокації під час об'єднавчого Собору – СБУ*], *RISU*, 13 December 2018, https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/community/extraordinary_situations/73884/ [2020-03-06].

to talks by the Ukrainian Security Service, held under various pretexts, including when crossing the state border, and subjected to humiliating searches. As an example, the Patriarch gave the impossibility of crossing the border between the Donetsk People's Republic and the rest of Ukraine for the Metropolitan of Donetsk and Mariupol, Hilarion (Shukalo), which was supposed to happen on December 9, 2018.²⁷

A few days after the Unification Council, at a meeting on December 20, 2018, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a law amending the regulations about religious freedom, obliging the UOC to modify its name in such a way as to clearly indicate its dependence on the ROC.²⁸ In the absence of an appropriate amendment to the statute of the UOC within four months of the implementation of the law and changes to the statutes of its parish communities, then within nine months, the amendment provided for the loss of the legal force of these documents in the part referring to the full name of the religious organization. Article 12 of the Act on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations of 1991 was supplemented with the following content: "A religious organisation (association), which either directly or as part of another religious organisation (association), is a member of a religious organisation (association) whose management centre (board) is located outside the borders of Ukraine, in a country that has been legally recognised as engaged in armed aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupying part of the territory of Ukraine, is required to reflect in its full name, written in its statute, the membership of a religious organisation (association) outside Ukraine, which it is part of, by obligatorily replicating in its full name the full statutory name of such a religious organisation (association) with the possible addition of the words "in Ukraine" and/or determining its place in the structure of a foreign religious organisation."²⁹ It is worth add-

27 'Tomos, "DNR" i tysk spetssluzhzb: yak Kyrylo pov'yazav tse v lysti do OON' [Томос, "ДНР" і тисячі спецслужб: як Кирило пов'язав це в листі до ООН], BBC, 14 December 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-46563440> [2020-03-06].

28 "Rosiy's'ka pravoslavna tserkva v Ukraini": Rada zobov'yazala UPTS MP pereymenyvaty's' [Російська православна церква в Україні": Рада зобов'язала УПЦ МП перейменуватись], BBC, 20 December 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-46632682> [2020-03-06].

29 Zakon Ukrainy no. 2662-VIII "Pro vnesennya zminy do statti 12 Zakonu Ukrainy 'Pro svobodu sovisti ta relihiyni orhanizatsiyi' shchodo nazvy relihiynykh orhanizatsiy (ob'yednan'), yakі vkhodyat' do struktury (ye chastynoyu) relihiynoyi orhanizatsiyi (ob'yednannya), kerivnyy tsentr (upravlinnya) yakoyi znakhodyt'sya za mezhamy Ukrainy v derzhavi, yaka zakonom vyznana takoyu,

ing that so far the UOC has not changed its name, undermining the constitutionality of the law that requires it.

According to the interpretation of specialists in canon law, with the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by the tomos of January 6, 2019, the church structures of other orthodox organizations have lost their canonical character. Metropolitan Onufriy (Berezovsky), the head of the UOC, has lost the right to use the title of the Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine, because it is a dignity reserved for the OCU.³⁰ In the hybrid conflict, the subject of the legality of the UOC structures began to be used. As early as October 2018, Patriarch Filaret (Denysenko) stated that “if there was one Church in Ukraine, there would be no war, as Putin would not have support in Ukraine. Now, he does. It is the Moscow Patriarchate. The clergy and the faithful of the Moscow Patriarchate not only with words, but also with their actions, help the separatists and aggressors.”³¹

The establishment of the new church intensified the process of the transition of those parishes belonging to the UOC to the jurisdiction of the OCU. To prevent conflicts, the Supreme Council, at its meeting on January 17, 2019, passed a bill amending the law on religious freedom, clarifying the process of changing the subordination of parishes. According to the supplemented Article 8 of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 1991, a general assembly of parishioners may decide by a majority of at least two-thirds of all members of the community (not only those present at a meeting), to leave the structure of one Church and submit to another one for canonical, organizational, and any other matters. An appropriate

shcho zdiysnyla viys'kovu ahresiyu proty Ukrainy ta/abo tymchasovo okupuvala chastynu terytoriyi Ukrainy” [Закон України № 2662-VIII “Про внесення зміни до статті 12 Закону України ‘Про свободу совісті та релігійні організації’ щодо назви релігійних організацій (об’єднань), які входять до структури (є частиною) релігійної організації (об’єднання), керівний центр (управління) якої знаходиться за межами України в державі, яка законом визнана такою, що здійснила військову агресію проти України та/або тимчасово окупувала частину території України”], *“Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady”*, no. 3, 2019, p. 23.

30 P. Kralyuk, “Тричі неканонічна” УПЦ (МП). Томос для України кардинально змінив ситуацію, *Radio Svoboda*, 6 January 2019, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/29693215.html> [2020-03-06].

31 V. Tsyachnyy, ‘Yakby ne UPTS MP, v Ukraini ne bulo b viynu – Filaret’ [В. Тисячний, Якби не УПЦ МП, в Україні не було б війни – Філарет], *Obozrevatel*, 10 October 2018, <https://www.obozrevatel.com/ukr/society/tomos-obovyazkovo-bude-filaret.htm> [2020-03-06].

change should be made to the statutes and registered. Only then does it not affect the property rights of a parish. The part of a community that does not agree with the decision to change the subordination has the right to establish a new parish and conclude an agreement on how to use the temple and movables with their owner (user). It is not obligatory to notify the state authorities about the establishment of such a community. In turn, Article 18 of the amended normative act contains a provision prohibiting changes in the property of a parish community until the amended statute is registered.³² The law was challenged by the MPs of the pro-Russian Opposition Bloc who appealed to the Constitutional Court. Two months later, however, on March 19, 2019, after the Grand Chamber had considered the subject of the dispute, the Constitutional Court refused to initiate proceedings.³³

Obviously, the transition process of a parish from the UOC to the OCU is not always peaceful. The possibility of the escalation of violence and bloodshed over church properties in this context was pointed out in June 2018 by the Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev),³⁴ the head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations. It is worth mentioning that these concerns were by all means justified. In the first half of the 1990s, many religious conflicts took place over property in western Ukraine, especially between the UOC and the Greek Catholic Church, which was reborn after more than four decades of functioning underground.³⁵ However, as of February 29, 2020, 551 parish communities have transitioned from the subjection to the Moscow Patriarchate to the OCU, the vast majority of which are in Volhynia (121 in the Volyn Oblast alone and 54 in the Rivne Oblast)

- 32 Zakon Ukrainy no. 2673-VIII "Pro vnesennya zmin do deyakykh zakoniv Ukrainy shchodo pidlehlosti relihiynykh orhanizatsiy ta protsedury derzhavnoyi reestratsiyi relihiynykh orhanizatsiy zi statusom yurydychnoyi osoby" [*Закон України № 2673-VIII "Про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо підлеглості релігійних організацій та процедури державної реєстрації релігійних організацій зі статусом юридичної особи"*], *Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady*, no. 6, 2019, p. 40.
- 33 'KS vidmovy u otsyntsi zakonu pro perekhid relihiynykh hromad u PTSU' [*КС відмовив у оцінці закону про перехід релігійних громад у ПЦУ*], *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*, 20 March 2019, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2019/03/20/7209743/> [2020-03-06].
- 34 'V Moskovskom patriarkhate opasayutsya krovoproliitiya v sluchaye legitimizatsii ukrain-skogo' raskola' [*В Московском патриархате опасаются кровопролития в случае легитимизации украинского раскола*], *Interfaks*, 28 June 2018, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=70115> [2020-03-06].
- 35 T. Szyszlak, *Lwowskie sacrum...*, passim.

and in the central part of the country (62 in the Khmelnytskyi Oblast, 86 in the Vinnytsia Oblast, and 48 in the Zhytomyr Oblast). The largest number of transitions in relation to the operating parishes of the UOC took place in the Lviv Oblast, where 46.3% of the parishes left, while the ratio for the whole country amounted to only 4.46%, i.e. within fifteen months the subordination was changed by fewer than one in 20 parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate.³⁶

Almost immediately after receiving the tomos by the OCU, animosities between Patriarch Filaret and Metropolitan Epiphanius began. Filaret believed that during the liturgy, the new Metropolitan could not mention the name of Moscow Patriarch Kirill (Gundyayev) in the diptych of autocephalous Orthodox churches. However, Epiphanius used the diptych of the Ecumenical Patriarchate literally. In early February 2019 Filaret claimed that for the time being the Kyiv Patriarchate was not being abolished, and official church institutions tried to mitigate this statement even further. It was difficult to explain that Filaret had invited the hierarchs of the former UOC-KP to Kyiv and to the traditional Kyiv Patriarchate prayer meeting in honor of St Macarius on May 14, 2019. The invitations were sent out on the stationery of the self-dissolved Church with Filaret's signature as the incumbent patriarch. It was understood unequivocally as a call for subversion, which, unfortunately for Filaret, was unsuccessful.³⁷ The same was true of the Council of the UOC-KP, which was convened to Kyiv on June 20, 2019, except that the Kyiv Patriarchate and the chirotony of new hierarchs had been renewed. According to data from December 2019, 10 to 15 parishes in Ukraine declared loyalty to Filaret.³⁸

The interview given by Filaret to the Russian state-owned TV channel Russia-24 at the beginning of July 2019, in which he talked about

36 M. Borovs'ka, I. Volos'ka, O. Martyniuk, 'Khto, de i skil'ky hromad pereyshly z UPTS MP do PTSU: analizujemo kartu' [M. Боровська, І. Волоська, О. Мартинюк, *Хто, де і скільки громад перейшли з УПЦ МП до ПЦУ: аналізуємо карту*], RISU, 13 March 2020, https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/analytic/79258/ [2020-04-01].

37 V. Chervonenko, S. Khomenko, 'Filaret proty Epifaniya: chy ye rozkol v PTSU i shcho bude z tomosom' [В. Червоненко, С. Хоменко, *Філарет проти Епіфанія: чи є розкол в ПЦУ і що буде з томосом*], BBC, 11 May 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-48233018> [2020-03-06].

38 'V uryadi pidrakhuvaly kil'kist' parafiy, yakі khochut' zalyshatys' z pocheshnym patriarkhom Filaretom [В уряді підрахували кількість парафій, які хочуть залишатись з почесним патріархом Філаретом], RISU, 5 December 2019, https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/orthodox/uoc_kp/78057/ [2020-03-06].

his grievances, was the last straw: the Patriarch was supposedly deceived by President Poroshenko and Epiphanius, as he was promised that after the Unification Council he would be the head of the entire Church in the country, while the Metropolitan would support him and deal with external relations on his own. However, he was left with only the Kyiv Archdiocese and St Volodymyr's Cathedral. Furthermore, he opposed the name of the Church written in the tomos, which differed from previous practices. This was supposed to result in the transfer of Ukrainian parishes in the diaspora to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.³⁹ According to Archbishop Eustraty (Zoria) the Chernihiv and Nizhyn Ordinary, former close associate of Patriarch Filaret (Denysenko), was "taking advantage of the patriarch's illness. Moscow humiliates and destroys him, but he is no longer able to understand it. The Kremlin's secret service is taking revenge for the fact that he once separated from them. Now, many years later, there is an opportunity for payback, so that their enemy destroys and humiliates himself."⁴⁰

The idea of autocephaly was also positively received by the American authorities. The Metropolitan Epiphanius was met twice by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (October 23, 2019 and January 31, 2020), which as the Ukrainian media stressed, was more often than President Volodymyr Zelensky. The leader of the OCU explains this with the Americans' concern about Russian influence in Ukraine being too strong. Moreover, Epiphanius in his talks with Pompeo stated that the separatists and the Russian authorities were violating the rights of autocephaly supporters in occupied Crimea and Donbas. The member of the American administration was then supposed to say that the US would fight for religious freedom for everyone in the world. In addition, Pompeo spoke positively about the recognition of the autocephaly by the world Orthodoxy in an interview with the Ukrainian president.⁴¹

39 'Nichego svyatogo. Spetsial'nyu reportazh Anny Afanas'yevoy – Rossiya 24' [Ничего святого. Специальный репортаж Анны Афанасьевой – Россия 24], *Rossiia 24*, 6 July 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmEncVFegvE> [2020-03-06].

40 "Khvoroba zminyła yoho nevpiznanno": Filaret dav telekanalu "Rossyia 24" rozhromne interv'yu pro tomos' ["Хвороба змінила його невпізнанно": Філарет дав телеканалу "Россия 24" розгромне інтерв'ю про томос], *Novynarna*, 7 July 2019, <https://novynarnia.com/2019/07/07/filaret-russia24/> [2020-03-06].

41 V. Chervonenko, 'Chomu Pompeo zustrichayet'sya z Epifaniem chastishe nizh iz Zelens'kym' [В. Червоненко, Чому Помпео зустрічається з Епіфанієм частіше ніж із Зеленським], *BBC*, 31 January 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-51324791> [2020-03-06].

In February 2020, Putin once again referred to the issue of autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, asking why it was so necessary to destroy the unity of the ROC. After all, the UOC has been completely independent from the Moscow Patriarchate. There existed only spiritual unity and mention of the Moscow Patriarchate in the churches. According to Putin, “as a result of the fact that people had lived on the border of the Catholic world and Europe, such a community began to emerge and perceive itself to a certain extent independent from the Russian state,” which should be treated with respect, but our community also ought to be remembered.⁴²

In response to these statements, the press service of the Ukrainian Head of State issued a statement which stressed that Russian-Ukrainian relations should not be determined by the geopolitical ambitions of individual leaders, and that these relations should be based on the interactions of people who live, work, create, and fight for peace on both sides of the border: “In Ukraine, church and state are separated. The not so distant unification of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine was a decision made solely by people, initiated in accordance with canon law and legally confirmed by an ecclesiastical document in the form of the tomos.”⁴³

Conclusions

The issue of the autocephaly of Ukrainian Orthodoxy has shown that religion in the former Soviet Union is not a marginal issue. Moreover, the phenomenon of religious conflicts in Europe is not limited to inter-religious ones, usually between Christian and Muslim communities, but can also occur within a single denomination. After the downfall of communist ideology and the collapse of the USSR, Orthodoxy has become a good substitute ideology, integrating the society outside Russia with the former metropolis based on resentments. Therefore,

42 'Putin narikaye, shcho Ukrayina "rozrizala po zhivomu" yednist' RPTS' [Путін нарікає, що Україна "розрізала по живому" єдність РПЦ], TSN, 21 February 2020, <https://tsn.ua/svit/putin-narikaye-scho-ukrayina-rozrizala-po-zhivomu-yednist-rpc-1495380.html> [2020-03-06].

43 'Ofis Prezidenta rizko vidreaguвав na slova Putina pro PTSU' [Офіс Президента різко відреагував на слова Путіна про ПЦУ], RISU, 22 February 2020, https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/orthodox/osu/78994/ [2020-03-06].

it should not come as a surprise that the autocephaly issue is strongly exploited in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which is an example of a post-imperial hybrid war.

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