

ROLE OF RELIGION FOR THE UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM

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Nationalism is the most characteristic feature of the present time world. It is possible now to speak even about a certain global tendency in the nationalism, that is an evidence of the inclusion in the processes of the national self-determination not merely of the separate ethnic associations but of all the human community.

Nationalism has become an essence and form of the revival of Ukraine too - one of the great European countries: the population of Ukraine amounts to 50 mln. persons; its area is more than that of Germany, Spain or France and is equal to 603700 sq. kms.

After achieving its independence not so long ago - in 1991, Ukraine is now on a threshold of the cardinal changes in all the spheres of life. It is only through consolidation of the national state and its social orientation, activization of the nationally outlined economy, revival of national culture, establishment of religion and church that the Ukrainian people will achieve a real independence and will become an active entity of the modern world. Until recently the world was not so much aware of Ukraine. It is because that during the number of centuries it was enslaved by the neighboring states.

The Ukrainian people had no opportunity to express freely its national and religious affiliation. During the Soviet empire which aspired to a society without ethnic and religious communities, all nations gradually had been turning into a superethnic community - "the soviet people" with a single antireligion, marxism-leninism. The real socialism tried to cancel

subjectivity of any nation, its originality, uniqueness, apartness. Losing such important components of the existence as religion and nationality, a person and at the same time the entire people also lost their real self. This tragedy has touched also the Ukrainians. As the consequence of denationalization it turned out that millions of them had renounced their native language and traditional culture. With the purpose of preservation of the Ukrainian language the new Ukraine had to accept a special "Law on Language". No state in the world encounters the problem of protection of its language against its own people. The Ukrainians, in particular the Ukrainians of the East and Southern regions, in their majority have a negative attitude towards the Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian language and in general to all Ukrainian things. Many of them identify themselves with respect to religion as affiliated to non-Ukrainian and sometimes even to openly anti-Ukrainian confessions. Other part of population links the revival of Ukraine only with some single religion and demands to fix legislatively its status as a single established religion. But what is most terrible is that the majority of the Ukrainians remains until now indifferent both to religion and to a national affiliation. It is necessary to recognize that this state of things threatens the stability of our society. This is why the national and religious sphere of Ukrainian existence nowadays is the most aggravated one. If one understands nationalism as "an entire process of formation and consolidation of nations or national states" and not just as "a comprehension of an affiliation to a nation", common character of language, mentality, a certain ideology or "the social and political movements for the sake of achievement of the purposes of a nation" (Smith, 80), in other words, if one considers nationalism in a broad sense of this word, then the religion had always an especial meaning in the life of the Ukrainian people, a meaning which is kept until now. So it had happened that the fate of the Ukrainians was formed in such a way that all historical events were developed around religion and nationalism, and the Ukrainian nation was formed as a detached ethnic community. In different periods of the Ukrainian ethnogeny, the religion played ambiguous, at times even inconsistent, role. All depended on a social and political context in which religion was functioning. The boundary position of Ukraine between East and West, between North and South, between Islam and Christianity, between Catholicism and Orthodoxy has caused a certain complexity in the

ethnic and religious processes on its territory. Without stopping on a particular historical material we shall pick up a number of retrospective regularities in the interaction of the religious and national factors in Ukraine. It was the relation between religion and proto-Ukrainian ethnic community during the tribal system that was the most natural and therefore harmonious relation.

A specific system of the eastern Slavic beliefs came into existence among the autochthonous population. It had grown from the local cultural traditions. The Slavic tribes which were the basis for the formation of the Ukrainian ethnic community deduced their origin from ethnic gods. The conclusion that "Russians are children of Dazhd'god" has its adherents among the Ukrainian neo-pagans even now. In the process of development of an ancient Ukrainian society, the separate tribal cults were united in a common for all russins pantheon of gods with the main god Peroun, the god of lightning and war. After having realized a necessity not only of the state but also of religious oneness for the ethnic unification of the country, the prince Vladimir - the future baptizer of Russia - has made a reform of paganism.

The Christianity has not arisen in Ukraine as a result of a natural self-development of society. As a rule all its confessional forms were brought in Ukraine from the outside: Orthodoxy - from Byzantium, Catholicism and Greek-Catholicism - from Rome, Protestantism - from the different European countries. Their spreading had a centrifugal character. This circumstance conducted to a split of society, to an occurrence of the inter-confessional collisions, to large tragedies in the national existence which were caused by the religious factors. From the time of emergence of Christianity on the Ukrainian lands, an influence of religion on the ethnic development of Ukraine was considerably strengthened and became complicated. It is necessary to recognize that Christianity as the state religion in X-XIth centuries had sped up the crystallization of the ethnic community of Kiev Rus'. At the same time the introduction of a new religion has resulted in the loss of a religious, social and cultural unity of the society. During centuries the paganism functioning alongside with the Christianity remained as the religion of the bulk of population which resisted (consciously or unconsciously) the conversion to Christianity. As a consequence we notice a formation of the phenomenon of dual faith which in a pecu-

liar way unites the pagan and christian elements in the beliefs of the people. Since that time the Christianity exists during a long period of time in the national form (for the bulk of population) and the orthodox form (for the elite).

The Christianity could ensure its successful and sound functioning in Ukraine only under a condition of being involved in the historical and ethnic context. With the course of time it acquired the ethnic features. The Christianity of Kiev Rus' is participated actively in ethnogeny and dominated in the spiritual life of a new ethnic community, in other words, it executed a role of a factor to create and integrate an ethnos. Due to Christianity the origin of the Russins was connected with the biblical Japheth's tribe, that is, the Russins entered in the model of the world development. The particular features of the Ukrainians (a certain individualism, a domination of the intellectual and strong-willed elements by a sensual one, an aspiration towards a spiritual solitude, the high endurance and patience, the desire to have the defender etc.) were the favourable ground for an inclusion of the new religion into the process of national identification. Certainly, the Christianity had affected on the Ukrainians by changing their mentality and moral qualities according to Jesus Christ Commandments. At the same time the conditions of life of the Ukrainian ethnos reformed the religion itself. This allows us to speak about an especial type of religion - the Ukrainian Christianity. Such features as the council government, democracy, sophistication, openness, aesthetism etc. are inherent in this type of religion. Until the XVIth century the Christianity in Ukraine existed in its eastern form - Orthodoxy. As a result of the reformatory movements in which Ukraine also was involved the confessional unity was lost in connection with the task of these movements to create the national churches. The Uniate church has appeared, the first Protestant communities have arisen. Thus, the Christianity has divided the Ukrainian people according to the confessional affiliation. The social delimitation of the society has gone deep on the basis of its religious heterogeneity.

The bulk of the population remained faithful to the Orthodoxy or Greek-Catholicism, the upper strata belonged mainly to the Catholic or Protestant church. In Ukraine the politics dominated practically always over religion. While accepting the decision for the problems important for

the nation the representatives of authority were guided not by the religious but political motives, what had excellently proved to be true both with the adoption of the Christianity in 988 and with the conclusion in 1596 of Beresteis'ka Unia which had united the Orthodoxy and Catholicism as well as with the submission in 1686 of Kiev Orthodox metropolitanate to the Moscow church. Meanwhile under the conditions of absence of other imperious forms of power (the state, the state bodies etc.) the church institutions turned to a means for acceptance of the political decisions necessary for ethnic community.

During the periods of political crisis or degradation of life of the Ukrainian people the guiding role in the development and integration of ethnic community passed to one of the Christian churches, either Orthodox or Greek-Catholic church. At that time these churches acted as a sole champion of the national idea and a tool for an integration of all national forces promoting an individualization of the Ukrainian ethnic community.

The crisis epoch in the Ukrainian history came to an end in the form of national and religious revival. They, as a rule, coincided in Ukraine, feeding, stimulating and making active each other. The presence of several churches in Ukraine resulted frequently to the interconfessional contradictions. Polarizing the Ukrainian people these contradictions detained the process of the national integration and self-determination and made the people an easy prey to the various states and churches. So the Christianity served as a means of social and national enslavement of the people. Simultaneously it was also an instrument of struggle of the people against the social and national oppression. It was the confessional variety that did not allow the Ukrainians to be fully Russinized (in a case of existence only of the Orthodox church) or to be fully Polonized (in a case of existence only of the Catholicism).

The absence of an absolute concurrence of religious (confessional) "we" and national "we" is a characteristic feature for the Ukrainians. Such discrepancy existed during all the Ukrainian history. The substitution of the national feeling by the religious one took place gradually. After the submission of Kiev Orthodox metropolitanate to the Moscow church, the Orthodox church turned into a tool for denationalization of the Ukrainians. The Russian church forbade the national language of worship,

the worshipping and theological books of the Kiev edition, it did not recognize the Ukrainian ritual of baptism. This led to the destruction of the national feeling in the Ukrainians, to the degradation of ethnic self-consciousness, to the internal quarrels on a religious ground. Thus, the national and religious elements in a history of the Ukrainian people are connected closely. The decline of a nation occurred because of an absence of the cultural and spiritual unity of the people and because of religious and church weakness of the country.

The state and national crises of Kiev Rus', Galitchina-Volynsk and Russian-Lithuanian principalities, of the Kosak's state in many respects were caused by the religious decline. It is only then when the church became a national institution and national slogan, when the church incurred the functions on consolidation, acted as the sole defender of the people that the aspirations to the formation of the state achieved their purpose. The historical elucidation of an influence of religion on the ethnogeny of the Ukrainians enables us to understand the present condition of religion in Ukraine, its role in the formation of the Ukrainian nationalism.

Today the social status of the religion and religious organizations became more high. The estimates of religion as a decisive factor of the spiritual culture revival and as an important basis of the spiritual values and national life are prevailing in the ideas and views of the society. The number of people who considers that religion plays an important role in their life has grown too. The religiosity has increased during the last seven years from 7-10 % up to 70 %. During this same period of time the number of religious communities has increased by four times (from 4500 up to 18.500), followed by the simultaneous growth of the number of the confessional trends by 7 times.

But I think that the potential possibilities of the sharp growth of the religious communities and religiosity of the population in Ukraine are already exhausted. If the year 1989 is to be considered as the year of the highest increase when the growth of the number of religious communities was higher than 50%, then the speed of growth was decreasing all the time in all the next years, with the lowest value being equal to 1.8% in 1994 and 5% in 1997. Ukraine is a polyconfessional country where there are about 70 different religious trends and cults. On its territory together with the traditional and widely spread Christianity there exist also other con-

fessions, for example, Judaism and Islam which are traditional for Ukraine. The religious trends unknown in Ukraine in the past are now coming into being. Their number as well as the number of Moslem communities were increasing during the last five years most rapidly.

It is well known that Ukraine is a traditionally Christian country. The Christian communities, both new and traditional ones, amounts to 97 % of all the religious communities registered. This high percentage of Christians is not too surprising for the present time because it washigh already for a long time.

Among the Christian communities there are the Orthodoxes that are considerably dominant in the general number of Christians (9650). They are followed by Catholics (Greek - 3098 and Rome - 716) with the varieties of the Protestant communities (4400). There are communities which do not belong to these three mentioned groups, but which are Christian communities, for example, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Last Days Saints etc. It is these communities that has increased most of all in 1991-95 by 475%.

The stabilization of the religious life in Ukraine is demonstrated by the **following factors:**

- the activities of the confessions prohibited in the past such as the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox Church and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Jehowa Witnesses, the Christians of the Evangelic Faith (Pentecost), the Adventist-Reformists, the Church Council of the Evangelic Christian-Baptists etc. are resumed;
- the confessions obtained the possibility to conduct their canonical, catechismization and preaching work freely and without obstruction. To get this possibility there are created the favorable conditions in Ukraine that can be described, for example, by one of the factors which is the average number of believers in one community. Today Ukraine is considerably ahead of such countries as Belarus' and Russia and is approaching the countries of Central Europe.
- the Local Orthodox Autonomous Church of Kyiv Patriarchy is established;
- the cult buildings taken away by the communist regime for worldly needs are now being given back to the confession organizations;

- the religious organizations are able to support their connections with the centres abroad;
- the publishing business by the confession organizations and publishing of theologian literature, newspapers and magazines is being arranged;
- the priest training system for the religious trends existing in Ukraine and the system for religious education and enlightenment are being established;
- the construction of the new cult buildings, repairing and restoration of the old ones are in the process of improvement; etc.

However, these positive changes in the status of religion and believers in the independent Ukraine are not indicative of a decisive role of church in the national revival. Unfortunately, the religious organizations are included still poorly in the national processes. The churches as a whole are not focused on a national element and understand it one-sided manner. Meanwhile it is high time for all to be determined at last in the attitude to the nationalism and to the prospects of development of Ukraine. Such determination does not depend on the status of the particular church: it may be a national church or a state church or a church beyond national limitations or it may not be registered in general. The churches can have the various attitude to nationalism: they may either to support it or to condemn it or to accept and even sometimes to use it with the purposes of expansion and strengthening of the church influence. For the purpose of any church is to promote an overcoming of the social conflicts and enmity among the people without substituting the religious element by the national one.

Among all existing religions in Ukraine, the idea of national development finds support most of all only among neo-pagans. They accept unconditionally a necessity of the independent state, preservation of territorial, economic, social and spiritual integrity of Ukraine. Aspiration to revive pre-Christian beliefs and on their basis to construct a new Ukraine is based on the idea of the greatest adequacy of the Ukrainian paganism to the archetype of the Ukrainians, to their traditions and spirituality.

The Christian churches in Ukraine in the conceptual aspect are basically beyond the national limitations. However, among them there are also

such churches which are inclined in a pro-nationalistic way. These are the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church renewed in 1989 and the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox church renewed in 1990. They arose as the national churches, as the protests against the Polonization and Russification of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchy formed as a result of the amalgamation of a part of the parishes of the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox church and Ukrainian Orthodox church in 1993 passes more and more and more to the Ukrainian positions thus winning the status of a national and even of a state church in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchy does not refuse also a trusteeship of interests of the Ukrainian people. But it aspires by all ways to be on a distance from the national problems and movements, making a stress on an that element in the Christian doctrine which is common to the whole mankind and stands above national element. The clergy of this church acts for the preservation of the east slavic unity on the basis of the Russian Orthodoxy.

The presence in Ukraine of three Orthodox churches with the various approaches to a national question is the sign of crisis of the Orthodoxy. This crisis has not only an intrachurch but also an explicitly expressed geopolitical aspect. It is one of the nuances in the state relations between Ukraine and Russia and of probable changes in the midst of the oecumenical Orthodoxy. The contradictions which exist among three Orthodox churches, the unwillingness to renounce their own ambitions, a fear to lose the flock and the managing posts, the personal relations among the chief priests, the prevalence of the confessional interests over the religious and national ones etc. - all this scatters the forces of a traditionally prevailing confession, the Orthodoxy, and kicks the Orthodoxy out of the factors of national revival.

The religious Ukraine is concerned now with a problem of the relations between the Orthodox believers and the Greek-Catholics in addition to the intra-Orthodox conflict. This problem crossed the Ukrainian borders is also discussed now by the joint Vatican-Russian Commission. For example, only in Lvov region more than 600 settlements are involved in this conflict. Here churches are not able to share the temples, the church

property, the spheres of influence upon the followers of faith.

However, in the basis of the conflict there is not only a religious factor, but also a political one. The interconfessional contradictions lead to a division of Ukraine into the separate regions according to the religious affiliation, they limit and even discredit the role and importance of religious organizations for the process of the national consolidation.

These intra-Orthodox and Orthodox-Catholic complications are replenished with the collisions of interests of other religious associations. This creates the multilateral and multiplane conflict situations in the religious life. These situations are spreading and influencing other public spheres. The oppositions between the churches traditional and non-traditional for Ukraine and between the religious organizations are aggravating. At the time of totalitarianism the traditional churches were lead up to a complete ruin. They are in a material distress up to now and experience the shortage of the priest staff. At this time the religious field of Ukraine is filled by various foreign missions. So the effective help on the part of the society is necessary in order to revive the historical churches in Ukraine and to strengthen their role in the processes of a national construction of the state. Otherwise they will suffer a defeat in a competitive struggle for a believer with the new religions and foreign missionaries.

The Protestant churches without attracting an attention to the national element are actively carrying out the evangelization of the population and render also a spiritual and material support to the people, competing in some way with the Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

On the territory of Ukraine the representatives of other peoples - the Poles, the Jews, the Tatars etc. - live since long ago. The religions which they profess now promote the self-identification of different national communities. Nevertheless, the meaning of the religious factor in ethnic consolidation of these peoples is ambiguous too. Even Islam which does not know the borders cannot unite the believers in Ukraine. It suffices to note that three all-Ukrainian Islam centres which are focused on the different versions of Islam and different Islam centres are working in Ukraine.

As we can see none religion or confession has turned into a factor of the complete consolidation of the ethnic communities and into an active element of the national movements in Ukraine. First of all it is because the

interchurch contradictions tear up these confessions. For the time being they cannot overcome the conflicts among themselves. This is why, in our opinion, the intervention of the state into these processes is necessary in order to reconcile all the conflicting parties through political means.

For the solution of the interchurch and interconfessional problems, the Interchurch Council at the State Committee of Ukraine in Religious Affairs consisting of the representatives of 15 traditional religious trends was formed under the initiative of the state in 1996. This consultative body is called to remove pressure in the interconfessional relations. One can consider the signing of the special memorandum "On a Non-use of the Forceful Actions in the Interconfessional Relations" on July 21 1997 to be a positive step in this direction. This memorandum was signed by the leaders of the greatest Christian churches and religious organizations of Ukraine at the presence of the President of Ukraine. This circumstance has given the greater importance to this document. In his speech, the President has confirmed that the state will provide an equality of all religious organizations and their right on the independent solution of their own problems. All the participants estimate highly this memorandum, but they express fear that it may appear to be just the usual fiction and will not work in practice.

The society expects that this Interchurch council will unite the efforts of all the churches in the construction of new Ukraine. However, there is an anxiety that this council does not perceive unanimously all the nontraditional and new religions. This conducts automatically to the exclusion of the latter from the participants of a national movement.

Looking back on the way Ukraine passed, one has to recognize that religion by itself never was (and could not be due to particular historical conditions) in Ukraine the factor of creation and integration of an ethnic community. It did not play a role of a decisive means for the national revival. The priority here always belonged to the national idea - a comprehension of the fact that Ukraine is one, that it has the right on freedom and independence. Therefore the Christian confessions have not to achieve an exclusive influence in the religious and spiritual sphere, for they have already it, and to transfer the existing divergences in views on the national ground.

Being a polyconfessional state Ukraine can now achieve a national unity not by uniting all the Christian confessions in one local church, but through an adherence to a principle of world-outlook and religious pluralism. However, the idea of the state church is very popular in some public circles. Some churches apply now for the status of the state church. But, in our opinion, none of them can execute this function.

All confessions can be united around an idea of one God and united Ukraine. The churches have to rally the people on a principle of territorial patriotism leaving aside the ethnic origin of different groups of population, the social affiliation, the faith, the national and cultural consciousness. Ukraine should become a common native land for all citizens, but not only for one public layer, for the followers of one national church, not only for the ethnic Ukrainians.

This specific character of the Ukrainian's national history and the contemporaneous state of spirituality in the society have confirmed the Transcendence not only of religion but, in a certain scale, of the ethnic basic principle origin as well. Now this Transcendence has united them. Religion seeks its existence in nation and nation seeks its existence in religion. The Ukrainian nationalism has a solid religious basis. It is necessary for religion as well to find the right place in the processes of the national revival.

“The common past of the nation promotes arising of the stimulus of the future, because the nation can not live by the past or present only,“ - wrote *Ortega-i-Gasset*, the spanish philosopher. And we, the Ukrainians, are looking with a hope into the future. When doing this we turn our eyes on Galicia - the Ukrainian Galicia, which consolidates three western regions of Ukraine. The Ukrainian Galicia has been fulfilling the role of *Piemont* of the Ukrainian national life for more than a century. It was mainly due to the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church spread here that Eastern Ukrainian rite, popular folk traditions and Ukrainian language were preserved, and the personnel fully aware of its national affiliation was formed. One can say that the Ukrainians exist as a nation due to our Galicia. I think that the Spanish and the Ukrainian Galicia bore and will bear inside themselves the greatspiritual potentialities in all-national awakening of the Spanish and the Ukrainian people.