

dependence on the Russian Empire and its successor to the USSR and the Russian Federation. Post-colonialism manifests itself in a disloyal attitude toward the Ukrainian state, an orientation towards Moscow and Russian religious structures, a pilgrimage to Russian religious centers, and agreement and decision-making after consultations with Russian religious offices. But gradually there is their reorientation towards non-Russian religious centers, in particular Jews have direct connection to Israel or the United States, Muslims communicate directly with Turkey or Saudi Arabia, even with Iran and Iraq. Buddhists are “friends” not only with Buryatia, but also Japan, China, Korea. Gradually, the Moscow offices as centers of the Eastern European representation of many organizations are transferred to Kyiv, as the leaders of these organizations see the danger of their stay in a totalitarian and autocratic Russia, which has intensified persecution of its citizens on a religious basis. And this applies not only to the newest religious organizations, but also to some historical churches (Old Believers, Autonomous Orthodox Church, Greek Catholics, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.).

Is there a danger of the retaliation of totalitarianism in Ukraine, and hence the return of Ukraine to the colonial state of its religious sphere, as well as all others? Yes, but this is the subject of another report.

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THE STATUS OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSE IN UKRAINE

1. In 2018-2019, under the administration of President Petro Poroshenko, the post-colonial discourse in Ukraine has been an important (if not the key) component of the official authorities’ political philosophy and theoretical argumentation for their policies within the cultural sphere. It contained two major

elements: (a) radical anti-communism and (b) a hard stance against Russian imperial heritage and Russian language.

These political positions were not part of the initial programme proposed by Petro Poroshenko in 2014 when he was elected to the presidency, and later were gradually formulated and sharpening during his stay in power, due to the post-revolutionary peculiarities of internal political life, the volatile constellations of political alliances and the geo-political situation that has ensnared Ukraine.

The stress on the post-colonial and anti-colonial discourse and the corresponding legislative and administrative practices have created a clear gap between (a) the revolutionary State (the State of a transitional type) policies and (b) the European legislation protecting cultural and religious rights, as well as standard democratic pluralistic norms contained in Ukraine’s current legislative framework.

2. An attempt to marginalise the allegedly “colonial” Russian language (and thus limiting cultural rights of Russian-speaking and bilingual Russian-Ukrainian communities) in Ukraine was embodied in two major relevant laws (and in a number of by-laws and other regulations): “The Law of Ukraine on Education” (especially its Article 7) [1], and the “Law of Ukraine on the protection of functioning of Ukrainian language as the State language” [2].

Although the content of these legislative acts is in sharp contradiction to Articles 10 and 22 of the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine [3], they have a clear revolutionary legitimation for quite large strata of Ukrainian citizens, due to the anti-colonial logic, well known from the history of a number of contemporary African and Eurasian countries.

From “purely” theoretical positions, such legislation and such policies in general are aimed at changing the cultural identity and the type of the State (see: [4]): replacing (a) the State supporting a multilingual society by (b) the State promoting monolingualism (or in other terminology: unilingualism or monoglottism).

3. In 2018-2019, the unofficial presidential slogan “Finally, good-bye for ever” (for the Russian Empire, the Russian Federation and the Russian Orthodox Church) was combined with Petro Poroshenko’s pre-election and election campaign’s official Triade: “Army, Language, Faith”. In fact, the term “faith” in this context meant only “religious communities’ institutional design”, not the religion. President Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019) finalised policies initiated by President Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010) and managed to provide strong elements of canonical legitimation to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate by allying it (and some smaller Ukrainian Orthodox churches) to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (in Istanbul, Turkey) through “*Tomos*” from Constantinople. (A “*tomos*” in Eastern Orthodox Church is a decree of the head of a particular Orthodox church on certain matters, such as the level of dependence of an autonomous church from its “mother church” [5, p. 173]). It was a very strong supportive step for the national-patriotic (anti-Russian) segments of Ukrainian society.

Meanwhile, there was another aspect and component in these “post-colonial” policies in the sphere of religious organisations’ activities in Ukraine – pressure on that part of Ukrainian Orthodox community which stays in a close spiritual and institutional communion with the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). Various kinds of political pressure were taken towards this religious community in Ukraine, including passing (and start implementing) the laws which names are quite self-evident: “The Law of Ukraine On Amendments to Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" regarding the names of religious organizations (associations) that are part of a religious organization (association), the governing centre of which is located outside Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having carried out military aggression against Ukraine and / or temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine” [6], and “The Law of Ukraine on Amendments to some Laws of Ukraine

on the Subordination of religious organizations and the procedure for State registration of religious organizations with the status of a legal entity” [7].

4. Ambiguous and controversial results and the further complex repercussions of all these political actions undertaken within the post-colonial and anti-colonial logic are not yet entirely clear. In particular, there are some signs of serious discrepancies within the newly created Ukrainian Orthodox Church structure allied to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (see: [8; 9]).

Still topical are the sage thoughts expressed by Henry Kissinger as to the Ukraine’s preferable “balancing” role as a “bridge” between the West and the East, but not as a peripheral part of each of them [10]. Prudence as to choosing particular arguments from a post-colonial discourse is especially important in the present time when geo-political conflicts around Ukraine are combined with a strong and unpredictable logic of a fierce internal political fight among the US elites with some story lines directly related to Ukraine (accusations of involvement of the part of Ukrainian administrative and political elites in the 2016 US elections on the side of “Hillary Clinton – George Soros” forces) [11].

After the 21st of April 2019, when comedian Volodymyr Zelensky won the presidency by landslide [12] with the final result of 73.22% of the votes to Petro Poroshenko’s 24.45% [13], there are hopes that any ideologically biased experiments would be limited and there would be more room for political and cultural pluralism. Ukraine needs peace and national reconciliation, not exacerbation of inter-cultural and inter-regional confrontation. Ukrainian citizens are looking forward for the realistic policy of country’s reintegration and efficient decentralisation, as well as for the re-establishment of fair and solid relations with all of the neighbouring nations.

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