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RUSSIA: Will Patriarch Kirill be an accomplice to war crimes and the gravedigger of the Orthodox Church?

Will Patriarch Kirill go down in History as an accomplice to war crimes and the gravedigger of the Russian Orthodox Church?

Patriarch Kirill's crucifixion on the cross

The Patriarch is The Patriarch is looking for a way out of the moral and political abyss while theologians from different countries raise the question of his excommunication (Novaya Gazeta, Peace Nobel Prize 2021, one of the last Russian independent media outlets)

HRWF Call to Patriarch Kirill: "Patriarch Kirill, you may be the only person who has the power to stop President Putin in his war in Ukraine. Will you use this power or will you go down in History as an accomplice to war crimes and as the gravedigger of the Russian Orthodox Church?"

Novaya Gazeta (20.03.2022) – <https://bit.ly/3N6SLD0> – The current catastrophe of humanity has become a challenge to religious consciousness. There were a number of religious figures in Russia who have shown that they are able to "justify" absolutely everything. Can a Christian, following the command of conscience, not fulfill the command of power, which forces a grave sin?

After reading the prayer "**On the "Brother Cain"**", on the evening of March 16, Pope Francis spoke via video link with Patriarch Kirill. The details of the conversation are unknown – the patriarchy sparingly **reports** that "a detailed discussion of the situation on Ukrainian soil took place" and the parties expressed "hope for an early achievement of a just peace".

On the same evening, Kirill talked to the head of the Church

of England, Archbishop Justin Welby. Both patriarchal interlocutors had previously harshly condemned what is forbidden to be called by real name. As condemned by the whole stunned Christian world (with rare exceptions, mainly coinciding with the border line of the Russian Federation). After all, the above... "situation" has a truly biblical, metaphysical scale.

"Justification" or at least "explanation" of evil and violence is a key problem of any philosophical system, any religion.

The current catastrophe of humanity has become a challenge to religious consciousness. There were a number of religious figures in Russia who have shown that they are able to "justify" absolutely everything.

How do they do it and how does the Christian tradition respond to them?

"Legisl law"

"A fight that has metaphysical significance," the head of the Russian Orthodox Church described what is happening in Ukraine in his **sermon** on Forgiveness Sunday. So, it is performed not only on earth, but also in the sky, in the invisible world. It is difficult to get rid of associations with Islamic jihad, a holy war in which external violence is only a reflection of spiritual content. Kirill compared his own position in this struggle to the crucifixion on the cross.

Three days later, on March 9, in a new **sermon**, he addressed the problem of the nature of the state and the right of some states to violence against others. States “are institutions that have the legitimate right to use force, forcing ... other countries, if they see them as a threat, to ensure that there is no threat.” This interpretation in principle justifies any war between countries, including World War II. The social concept of the ROC, adopted more than 20 years ago as its official doctrine, on the contrary, condemns state violence if it involves sin: “If the authorities force Orthodox believers ... to commit sinful, spiritual acts, the Church should refuse to obey the state. A Christian, following the command of conscience, may not fulfill the commands of power that force him to commit committing a grave sin.”

For more than 60 years, the ROC has been a member of the largest ecumenical association – the World Council of Churches (WCC), which considers peacekeeping its priority. Now the Secretary General of the Council is an Orthodox priest from Romania John Sauca, who appealed to Patriarch Kirill to influence the military and political leadership of the Russian Federation. On March 10, the Patriarch **signed** a rather harsh rebuke to the Secretary General of the WCC, where he accused NATO countries of what was happening, allegedly deceiving Russia and allegedly intending to attack. The Patriarch accused the West of excessive sanctions against the Russian Federation and rampant Russophobia.

This political concept is now included in the ROC worship. The Patriarchate ordered to proclaim a prayer at each liturgy, in which there are words addressed to Christ: “But with an infirmant language, to those who want and against Holy Russia to the rank – forbid and overthrow their plans.”

That is, some foreigners turned against Russia, however, in his other sermon, the patriarch made it clear that he had attacked... Ukraine:

“Political forces have emerged on a nearby, native Ukrainian land... How nasty and mean it is to use the fraternal people to implement their geopolitical goals! How terrible it is to set this people on your brothers! How terrible it is to arm him so that he can fight his half-brothers and half-believing brothers!” However, elsewhere in the same sermon, Kirill claims that Russians and Ukrainians are one people, which means that the “special operation” takes place not between countries, but within the same people: “Frightened by his power, the neighbors began to do everything to divide this people to inspire parts of this people that you are not one people at all.”

The main theological authority in the ROC in recent decades was considered Honored Professor of the Moscow Theological Academy Alexei Osipov, who – to the disappointment of many of his fans – today has been actively involved in military propaganda. His main arguments simply repeat TV: “protection of Donbass residents”; “NATO containment” and “denazification”. The last slogan **was answered** by the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, which, in active cooperation with the State of Israel, is engaged in the evacuation of the Jewish population from the combat zone. “Thesis about “denazification,” says the community, “is a mistaken choice of Russian propaganda... – Is there a need to “denacify” a country where the law “On Countering and Preventing Anti-Semitism” was adopted for the first time in 30 years of independence?.. Criminal liability for anti-Semitism has been introduced.”

During the conflict, both the buildings of the synagogues and the Babi Yar memorial in Kiev, where the Jewish cemetery used to be located, were damaged. "In the Talmud, desecration of bones is called a kind of form of killing," the community reminded.

Is justice higher than forgiveness?

On the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, on March 13, the Patriarch presented in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior to the head of Rosgvardia the August Icon of the Mother of God, which appeared to Russian soldiers at the very beginning of the First World War, in August 1914. This phenomenon occurred near the city of Mariampol (consonant with Mariupol) in East Prussia. Both cities bear the name of the Mother of God, but what is happening in Mariupol is incomparable to what happened in Mariampol.

Pope Francis dedicated his last Sunday **sermon** to the universal tragedy of Mariupol: "The city bearing her name, Mariupol, has become a martyr city tearing the soul [*a word that the RKN forbids to use*], which exhausts Ukraine. Before the barbarism of the murder of children, innocent and defenseless civilians, there can be no convincing strategic arguments: it is necessary to stop this unacceptable armed [*the word prohibited by the RKN*] before it turns cities into cemeteries... In the name of God, I ask you: stop this bloodshed!"

As if in response to the call of 286 clerics of the Russian Orthodox Church to stop hostilities and remember mutual forgiveness Kirill said: "Forgiveness without justice is surrender and weakness."

It is obvious that such “weakness” is overflowing with the entire Gospel and all Christianity, which should be replaced by religion that raises morale and nurtures hatred for the Western world.

“Russian World” as heresy and Manichaeism

Orthodox theologians from different countries recently **signed** a document in which the concept of the “Russian World” – one of the ideological foundations of “special operation” – is understood as a theological heresy. This document can form the basis for the condemnation of the ROC and the excommunication of its patriarch at the summit of the Pentarchy (the five oldest churches of the Orthodox East), which will meet in April in Constantinople. In his “historical speech” on the night of February 22, Vladimir Putin appealed to the doctrine of the “Russian World”. Professor of Theology Archimandrite Kirill (Govorun) (ROC) identifies this idea of Putin with Manichaeism – a Gnostic syncretical doctrine of the III-VI centuries, which influenced later occultism.

Putin’s Manichaeism is the belief that NATO and the United States are some kind of ontological evil and everything they say is a lie. Ukraine turned out to be the scene of a clash of light and darkness: being an organic part of the Russian World, it suddenly came under the full control of the West, which contradicts its nature, so Ukraine must be “saved”.

Oh. Kirill draws attention to the fact that Putin’s “Orthodoxy” on many points clearly contradicts the church

tradition. For example, the president declared that Islam is closer to Orthodoxy than Catholicism, and that Saints Boris and Gleb should not be honored because they voluntarily went to death instead of fighting the enemy – Svyatopolk the Cursed. The professor notes the obvious occult aspects of this religiosity: numerology (the beginning of “military special operations” on “beautiful” dates such as 08.08.08 or 22.02.22) and dependence on parapsychologists.

According to Sergei Shumilo, Director of the International Institute of Athos Heritage, the Soviet-Orthodox ideological hybridity “combines painful ideas that have inspired residents of Russia over the past 30 years. They believe that there was no Ukraine, that someone is constantly “inventing” Ukrainians. The city of Kiev takes the place of a magical symbol in this doctrine.

Among those who signed the theological document condemning the “Russian World” there are only a few theologians from Russia. This is the rector of the Bible and Theological Institute Dr. Alexey Bodrov, Professor of Leningrad State University named after A.S. Pushkina Tatiana Pronina, Dr. Bishop Gregory (Lurier) and former editor of the “Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate” Sergei Chapnin. We must pay tribute to their courage. In short, the authors of the document call “Russian World” “ethnophyletic religious fundamentalism of a totalitarian nature.” The essence of the doctrine is that “there is a transnational Russian civilization called Holy Russia, which includes Russia, Ukraine and Belarus (and sometimes Moldova and Kazakhstan), as well as ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking people around the world. It is claimed that this “Russian World” has a common political center (Moscow), a common spiritual center (Kiev), a common language (Russian), a common church (Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow

Patriarchate) and a common patriarch (Patriarch of Moscow), who works in a “symphony” with a common president/national leader (Putin) in the field of governance of this Russian world, and also defends a common original spirituality, morality and culture... This “Russian world” (as the doctrine says) is opposed by a corrupt West led by the United States and Western European peoples, capitulating to “liberalism”, “globalization”, “Christophobia”, “rights of homosexuals” promoted on gay parades, and “militant secularism”. Against the West... the Moscow Patriarchate, together with Vladimir Putin, acts as true defenders of Orthodox doctrine, which they consider in the categories of traditional morality, rigorist and unyielding understanding of tradition and veneration of Holy Russia.

“Ethnophyletism” as a doctrine of a special place or special rights of one people in the Orthodox Church has already been condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 1872. The identification of the church with the mission of some earthly state contradicts the words of Christ: “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom had come from this world, my servants would have fought so that I would not be delivered to the Jews” (John 18:36). Adherents of the Russian World, on the contrary, reduce the function of the church to auxiliary work in the interests of the nation and the state. The “Association of Orthodox Experts” of the ROC writes that after the “liberation” of Ukraine, the church will be engaged in “the return of ... the Russian national identity of Little Russians, who need to be helped to remember “where did the Russian Land come from”.

It is not clear whether the authoritative book of the New Testament is for supporters of the Russian World. In it, for example, the Apostle Paul writes that “there is no more Jew,

nor Greek, nor slave, nor free, there is no more man and woman; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). What is the significance of the notorious "Russian identity" for connecting with Christ and saving the soul?! Christianity recognizes the unity of all human nature, in which Christ, the Son of God, was incarnated, and the nature of Russians in this sense is no different from the nature of Americans. In addition, theologians write that "the unleashing <...> is the final failure of Christ's law of love."

This is also evidenced by the Synod of the Ukrainian Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, which calls the phenomenon that we are forbidden to call by our name the most terrible sin.

"Do not touch my anointed, and do not do evil to My prophets" – such a commandment is contained in the Psalms (psalm 104). In the Orthodox tradition, it was customary to interpret it in the meaning of the inviolability of individuals of kings and priests. But during the "special operation" the facts of destruction and desecration of churches and violence against clerics were noted. On the night of the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the rocket hit the buildings of the Svyatogorsk Lavra of the Moscow Patriarchate, which was previously considered a stronghold of the Russian World. And in Berdyansk, after his "liberation" priest Oleg Nikolaev, who belongs to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, disappeared. Mission Fr. Oleg was studying the feat of the new martyrs of the twentieth century, and now parishioners fear that he may follow the path of martyrdom.

In Russia itself, there is already the first priest convicted of "Blessed are the Peacekeepers" – Fr. John Burdin from Kostroma.

The outstanding church writer Archpriest Valentin Svetsitsky wrote in 1906, addressing his modern hierarchy: “Woe to you, Pharisees and scribes, who exhausted the people, bless rapists, robbers, robbers who covered the entire Russian land with terrible wounds. Woe to you, metropolitans, bishops, priests, together with the servants of the antichrist, who tormented Christ, who came to you under the spect of a servant. Woe to you, who strangled the light of Christ, alienated the best people from the Church, guarded faith with machine guns, soldiers and gendarmes.” There’s nothing to add to that.

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