

## Conference Paper

# Political Language of the Church in the Post-Soviet Period

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the political language of the Russian Orthodox Church as a social / public instrument of influence. Against the backdrop of post-secular processes, it considers the specifics of the language of political church strategies that go beyond the traditional religious domain. The ways and communicative approaches in the field of government relations and public relations are shown, by which the Russian Orthodox Church establishes relations with the authorities in the post-Soviet period, and already today demonstrates itself not just as one of the institutions of civil society, but also as an institution vested with political functions and political authority. To construct its social and political role, the Church acts situationally. On the one hand, it resorts to narratives of the 20th century, using different discourses - from the "victim" one to isolationism, on the other - to modern concepts typical for post-Soviet times, such as, for example, the idea of messianism, "Katekhon," that is, saving the world from sin. In one way or another, the Church acts as an open political player, in part as a political technologist offering recipes of "soft power" for strategic state purposes, especially foreign policy objectives. The authors analyze the evolution of public rhetoric of the Church leaders in the context of the post-secular institutionalization of Orthodoxy in the space of politics and law.

**Keywords:** post-secularism, political language, post-Soviet, Orthodoxy, Russian Orthodox Church, discourse of victimization, messianism, Orthodox civilization

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## 1. Monarchism as a Sign of Church Inquiry for Political System

The attitude for political influence has existed in Church from the very beginning of the 1990s, when Orthodoxy was prominent, as we can judge by the activism of monarchist movements, their grass-roots support, and the demand in the political environment.

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The popularity of these movements was expressed in particular by the views of Orthodox believers in the political sector, including the request for canonization of Nikolas II, for a monarchy as the most favorable regime.

The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church stipulates in the section "Church and State" that "The Orthodox tradition has developed an explicit ideal of church-state relations," namely "church and state symphony", which "could emerge in history only in a state that recognizes the Orthodox Church as the greatest people's shrine, in other words, only in an Orthodox state." (§ III.4). According to the Social Concept, "The state in such symphonic relationships with the Church seeks her spiritual support, prayer for itself and blessing upon its work to achieve the goal of its citizens' welfare, while the Church enjoys support from the state in creating conditions favourable for preaching and for the spiritual care of her children who are at the same time citizens of the state."

In the same document, there is a positive quotation of the Determination of the Local Council 1917 – 1918 on the legal status of Russian Orthodox Church: «The decrees and statutes issued the Orthodox Church for herself in the order established by herself, as well as deeds of the church government and court shall be recognized by the State as legally binding and relevant. These words show that Church is interested to have a state with not only protectionist policy towards the Church, but that receiving its (her) laws and regulations of many social relations alongside with the very state laws and regulations." (§ III.4). The quotes above show the interest of the Church in a supportive and Orthodox-based political system.

It must be borne in mind that at the time of the adoption of the Social Concept, there was no such interest in the archaic as we observe today, and the Church tried to make allowance for that, therefore, at the official level and at the Church senior establishment level it tried to deny any claims to create a political system (On political parties 2001 Federal law N 95-FZ). If they happened to speak about the monarchy as the most favorable political system, they did it without any reference to political realities, but in an abstract manner. But nevertheless, in some disguised manner, the sympathy for the monarchy is still perceivable in the text of the Social Concept of the ROC, although it has its own peculiarities and conditions for the exercise of power: "Any change in the form of government to that more religiously rooted, introduced without spiritualising society itself, will inevitably degenerate into falsehood and hypocrisy and make this form weak and valueless in the eyes of the people. However, one cannot altogether exclude the possibility of such a spiritual revival of society as to make natural a religiously higher form of government. (§ III.7). In particular, Bishop Tikhon

of Egorievsk, Chairman of the Patriarchal Cultural Council, also refers to unfavourable circumstances of the present: "The monarchy is the ideal condition, which is natural for Russia. The monarchy is natural to us, but I think it is totally wrong to speak about the renaissance of monarchy now,...one must elevate oneself and live through until the special monarchic consciousness emerges. We are, of course, totally in no condition at this time. Therefore, all the talk about the renaissance of monarchy now seems completely vain... And democracy is what we need in our poverty [25]."

One should see a certain evolution in the Church's political strategy. During the first 10 years of the 1990s, the Church tries simply to establish more or less constructive contact with power by organizing from time to time the signing of various kinds of treaties and agreements between the Ministry of Health, the Armed Forces, the Social Ministry to get the opportunity of spiritual care and supervision within the framework of the ministerial departments of these ministries.

## 2. Orthodox Civilization as a Missionary Project

During the millennium, when a certain period of restoration of church life passed, the church began integrating into basic activity, which was the establishment of church and parish life, the public mission. It began to offer society its paradigms of social and moral life, based on Orthodoxy.

We can see the basic documents that were adopted by the Russian Orthodox Church. This is the "Basics of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church", "The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights" (Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights 2008), "Declaration on Human Rights and Dignity" (Declaration on Human Rights and Dignity 2006). Many documents were adopted by such a body as the World Russian People's Council, which is both a church and a public body. The chairman and organizer of this cathedral is the current Patriarch, who in 1993, then Metropolitan Kirill, initiated such a public platform on which socially significant and politically significant ideas would be spoken out. During the Council's work, several documents were adopted such as "Code of Moral Management Rules", "Wealth and Poverty: Historical Challenges of Russia", (XI WRPC), "Russia and the West: a dialogue of peoples in search of answers to civilizational challenges" (XX WRPC), "Russia and the Orthodox world" (VIII WRPC).

That is, as we see, the subjects are quite diverse, and it's not so much an internal church as the public agenda. Often it goes beyond the domestic framework. It should be noted that on the foreign policy front, the church placed a special emphasis on

foreign policy, which was devoted to the World Russian People's Council, dedicated to the theme "Russia and the Orthodox World" in 2004. The project of "Orthodox Civilization" was announced there, as well as an explanation of what the Orthodox world is and what it means for Russia (Orthodox Civilization). These issues should be considered in more detail.

Metropolitan Kirill claimed that "The socio-political body of the Orthodox world comprises the states of the Orthodox tradition, the formation of cultures of which Orthodoxy had a decisive influence. These are Bulgaria, Belarus, Greece, Cyprus, Moldova, the Republic of Macedonia, Russia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Ukraine. Also, the Orthodox world includes peoples who constitute a religious minority in the countries of residence, but are stable cultural and ethnic entities. These include parts of American, Arab, Albanian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Finnish and other peoples. Finally, a new and very dynamic element are the diasporas of Orthodox peoples, usually living in countries of the Western tradition", - Patriarch Kirill notes [8]."

In other words, the Church has proposed a civilizational doctrine, using the tools of the Huntingtonian concept of "Clash of Civilizations", according to which several civilizations stand out, most of which being associated with religious cultures at a certain depth level as a kind of matrix that sets ethical-behavioral preferences, attitudes, sociocultural patterns. Huntington singles out Sino, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Western, Latin American civilizations (ibid). He also mentions the Orthodox civilization, which indicates that Orthodoxy is something more than just a religion, and serves as a basis for a specific socio-cultural way of life.

### 3. "VIP-mission". Mechanisms and Features of Church Political Language

To build its social and political mission and realize such a grandiose task as the construction of an "Orthodox civilization," the Church uses quite different strategic and tactical methods. Let's talk about them separately. One of them we call 'VIP-mission'. Almost from the very beginning of post-Soviet religious freedom, while lacking of means for influencing political life directly, the Church began to establish interaction with the authorities behind the scenes. The main strategic object of her mission was the state, political and economic establishment. The Church began to dedicate her sermon to officials, the government apparatus. It can be called VIP-mission. Metropolitan Kirill pursued this strategy without unnecessary public declarations. In the Department of External Church Relations during the time of his leadership, Kirill (Gundyaev, still in the

office of the Metropolitan) compiled lists containing as much detailed information as possible about every official, every person who occupies a position in the government so as not to bypass with "missionary attention", to congratulate every year with a birthday, New Year or any significant date.

When Kirill (Gundyaev) became a Patriarch, he started pursuing this strategy in a more open manner. In his meetings with the clergy in the dioceses, Kirill repeatedly urged the priests to pay special pastoral attention to the local elite, directors of enterprises, production workers, and businessmen, with a view of obtainian their administrative or financial support [10].

As part of this imperative, there is also a system of church awards and orders that are distributed for diplomatic considerations. There is an obvious desire to influence the government apparatus in order to gain its sympathies, and therefore support, to continue pursuing own policy using power, administrative levers.

This phenomenon of gift is described in detail by the American psychologist Robert Cialdini, who calls it a "reciprocation rule", which is part of socialization and the rule of many cultures. "A small initial favor can produce a sense of obligation to agree to a substantially larger return favor," Cialdini notes and continues:

"The reciprocation rule often makes people obey the demands of others. The gist of one of the favorite "lucrative" tactics of a certain kind of "compliance professionals" is to give something to a person before asking him for a reciprocal favor. This tactic is very effective due to the three aspects of the reciprocation rule. First, this rule is universal, its influence often exceeds the influence of other factors, which usually determine compliance. Secondly, this rule comes into force even when we are given favors that we did not ask for. Thus, our ability to make independent decisions decreases and the choices are made from us by those to whom we owe something. Finally, the rule of reciprocation can lead to unequal exchange. To get rid of an unpleasant sense of moral obligation, people often agree to do a much more serious favor than the one provided to them. [2]"

Cialdini calls the said practice "the most powerful tool of influence of people on each other" (ibid). Given the rootedness and normality of these schemes in society, one can assume that the actions of the ROC are justified and its strategy well-thought [26]. It is no accident, even at the legislative level of Russia, the mechanism of accepting gifts by civil servants is being regulated (On Counteracting Corruption 2008 Federal Law Clause 7 part 3 of Art. 12.1 No. 273-FZ of December 25).

The missionary VIP strategy of the Moscow Patriarchate started bringing qualitatively more tangible fruit in the 2000s, when Vladimir Putin, appointed at the head of the Russian government, related his political image to Orthodoxy through participation in festive divine services in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and gave privileges to the Church establishment (which did not reflect positively on the actual situation of ordinary believers). In particular, the Patriarch's status was upgraded to a person of federal significance being served by the Federal Security Service ([16], p. 50). A certain "fashion for Orthodoxy" emerged amidst the significant part of high-ranking officials. It was in the first half of the 2000s that the custom of celebrating Orthodox holidays, plunge into the ice-cold water on the Epiphany spread among high-ranking people, the press was full of reports that officials observe fasts, and the Kremlin dining room offered a special fast menu [15]. A certain subculture was formed, which can be designated by the words "pro-church nomenclature" - Orthodox or orthodox-oriented officials and politicians ([16], p. 56).

#### 4. Church as a Political Technologist

The Church, however, is entering into a qualitatively new phase of building a relationship with power aimed at active participation the law-making, showing itself as a political player who knows the methods of the political game, and finally, the Church begins to offer the state itself as a political technologist capable of solving problems both in domestic and foreign policy. In the domestic politics, the Church is increasingly talking about the importance of reliance on traditional conservative values, in one joint commission of representatives of the church and the State Duma, it was even suggested to compile a set of "basic values" on which one could build an ideology of state and society ([23]; [16], p. 53).

As far as foreign policy is concerned, the Church offers here the services of political technology in line with geopolitical objectives. The specificity of the Moscow Patriarchate's implementation of the political language, oriented at foreign policy, is very clearly presented in the article by Elena Zhosul titled "Realpolitik of Patriarch Kirill", published in the magazine *Expert* in 2011. It states:

"The travels of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All as the first hierarch outside the Moscow Diocese that he carried out as the first hierarch during the first eight months of service, may offer new perspectives in the analysis of the situation in the former Soviet republics." In these travels, oversaturated in

the meaningful, semantic terms, the vector of the foreign activity of the Russian Church and its new model of geopolitical strategy it develops is clearly crystallized. This model should be carefully studied by the secular political technology community, first of all by experts in Russia's near-foreign policy, as well as by those who identify themselves as political technology class, but would like to place political technologies on a solid foundation of the value basis. [27]"

There's another peculiar quote next:

"A separate vector for the external work of the Moscow Patriarchate is the opening of new temples and the organization of parishes for Russian communities in the far abroad." Be it the premises of embassies, diplomatic and consulates, former Catholic or Lutheran churches, empty because of impoverishment of their congregations, or the new church buildings that are purposefully built, usually with the support of local authorities, the Russian Church "entangles" the entire planet with its own communication network, making all the new "watch tower" parishes in different locations. The more "watch towers" there are, as we know, the better the connection is, the more clearly the Russian Orthodox culture is captured in that state. (ibid)"

The article was intended to draw the attention of the political establishment to the Russian Orthodox Church as a political force. And we see that the Church, through its representative, does not renounce the language of political technology, but instead is ready to use it, playing in the field of political technologists. Professional PR managers of the ROC (remember that Elena Zhosul led the PR Department of the ROU) apply clichés and patterns that are specific to the political sector.

I would note that the quotes given are well within the scope of the concept of "political orthodoxy". Its ideologist, Egor Kholmogorov, speaks of this in a similar technological context in an article published in a special collection of "Political Orthodoxy." He writes that the opening of new temples and parishes should become "an infrastructure of salvation" and even introduces the term "urban lifestyle of the Orthodox Church", which is understood to mean the religious transformation of the entire social organization:

"Sacred 'reindustrialization' should be one of the most important points of the political orthodoxy programme, with the anticipated construction of churches and monasteries, the expansion of orthodox education programmes, the formation of Byzantine models, a distinctive urban Orthodox

lifestyle, which is a fundamentally new task for Russia, since, in the age of blossoming of Orthodox, Rus was a predominantly agrarian country. The formula for the marginal development of the infrastructure of salvation could be the principle that no locality in Russia shall have a point where the domes of the church or the tent of the bell tower cannot be visible. ([6], p. 69-70)"

Unlike Zhosul, Kholmogorov discusses intense Orthodox transformations, not in foreign policy, but in the domestic politics, but his programme has the same intentions of providing a meaningful Orthodox substrate. Moreover, Kholmogorov sees the temples not only in the independent role of the center of spiritual life, but also as the instrumental, socio-political function to provide an effective arrangement for the organization of Orthodox society and the state.

This way of integrating the church into political space is in line with the technique used by Patriarch Kirill, who situationally changes the language of evangelical preaching into the language of state benefit. The Church offers itself as a political agent and in the field of population policy, directly recommending its influence and possibilities for developing and implementing a plan for increasing the birth rate. Interestingly, the Patriarch sometimes calls for an increase in the population not through articulating Christian values, but through arguments inherent in secular politicians. For example, in the quotations given below, he appeals to certain indicators such as population growth, land development, the importance of labor - that is, to things considered as matters of high national importance [13]. Speaking about the inadmissibility of abortion as a sin, he analyzes the situation economically, socially and politically:

"The issue of demography in our country is increasingly worrying – both amidst the specialists and the general public. Huge territories of Russia have to be mastered, but there are not enough workers' hands. (ibid)"

The patriarch shrewdly speaks about the reproduction of the population, about demographic forecasting, mentioning the consequences of today's reproductive policy.:

"And we know that the number of abortions is declining - in 2016 they were made about 650 thousand ... In order that you understand what is at stake, just think: in a city like Tyumen, there are 744 thousand inhabitants. So, the whole city was lost during a year! Over the past year, we lost a student population of 650 schools on average, if we count a thousand people per school! (ibid)"

It seems that the ROC still likes to employ many of the mechanisms of ideological influence peculiar to the Soviet period, it very actively employs Soviet patterns, rhetoric techniques and arguments in its political language. Orthodox authors themselves distinguish as a component of the Soviet period such a feature of the Russian church-parish culture as a commitment to declarations, slogan statements, a tendency to set largely global tasks in the absence of attention to detail and individual small steps. Just as in the Soviet times there were slogans like "Complete the five-year plan in four years!" or "Economy should be economical", today the Church calls for humility and upholding moral values. But often nothing is said about how to implement the tasks set in practice. This Soviet-style rhetoric is also used to condemn doctrines that are alien to Orthodoxy and ideological systems. For example, the sharp rejection of liberalism is disguised as a caricature, pejorative formulas inherent in the Soviet language ("a creep of liberalism," "a liberalism abscess," "liberal Russophobia").

Sometimes the Soviet military discourse is also borrowed from Soviet military songs. For example, in 2012, when the Church entered into an obvious confrontation with the Liberal Democrats associated with the rally on the Bolotnaya Square "For Fair Elections", held on December 4, 2012, one of the church speakers - Fr Dmitry Smirnov decided to paraphrase a well-known Soviet military song aimed at combating fascism, where he styled a "swamp force" as an enemy, i.e., the liberal public that following the rally on Bolotnaya, continued, along with politician Alexei Navalny, to support protests against the current government.

The slogan compiled by Fr Dmitry Smirnov unequivocally indicated with whom exactly one had to "fight" and who is to blame for the troubles of Russia and the Church:

"Arise, great country,  
Get up to fight to the death!!  
With the dark swamp force,  
A hundred-spired horde"

Thus, the "people from Bolotnaya Square", the opposition was identified with the fascists who attacked the USSR in World War II.

## 5. European Liberalism as Heresy. Politics in the Church-dogmatic Categories

Interesting statements are increasingly often made by representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, which deliberately emphasize her messianic, salvific role in the

world, which is losing its Christian dimension. The main force that Orthodoxy must oppose is the ideology of liberalism, which today dominates the West. The Patriarch not simply characterizes it in eschatological tones as a destructive force that takes man away from God and brings apocalypse closer, but most importantly, calls it **“a global heresy of man-worship [12]”** That is, the conversation is translated into the plane of ecclesiastical dogma. Accordingly, the Patriarch makes a completely “dogmatic” conclusion: “we must defend Orthodoxy, as the fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council defended it, as Patriarch Methodius and Empress Theodore defended it with a host of hierarchs, as St. Mark of Ephesus and our confessors and new martyrs of the Russian Church defended it. (ibid)”

It should be born in mind that translation the political dispute into a theological-dogmatic plane, Patriarch Kirill gives it a qualitatively stronger, different purport. In the eyes of those who are ready to recognize the dogmatic categories, liberalism and Western civilization acquire literally demonic features that are inadmissible from the point of view of the Orthodox consciousness. The confrontation of the modern ideology of Western civilization, liberal-humanistic values and the principles of building a modern European society is becoming a global messianic task of strategic importance. In a recent interview with the Serbian writer Goran Lazovich, the Patriarch once again formulates the struggle against the “global heresy of human piety”:

“We, the Orthodox Serbs and Russians, are called, as previously, to stand shoulder to shoulder in this battle for our spiritual identity, for preserving the Orthodox civilization, defending the understanding of God-established marriage as a union of man and woman, the value of human life from conception to natural death, not succumbing to temptations of visible material well-being and not being tempted by false ideas about human freedom and happiness. [14]”

Similar methods of the ROC political language are manifested in the framework of the participation of church representatives in international organizations, for example, during the meeting in UNESCO in 2007 in the matter of affirming the conservative understanding of human rights [9].

## 6. "Sin" as a Factor of Justifying Coercing Institutions

This mechanism refers not so much to the internal positioning of the Church, but rather to the external socio-political discourse inherent in the state in which the Church takes part.

Here are a few quotes from the "Basics of the Social Concept" and explain why we pay attention to it. "As secularization progressed, the high principles of inalienable human rights turned into concepts of the individual's rights outside his connection with God. At the same time, the protection of a free individual has transformed in defense of self-will, until it harms other individuals." In this case, in paragraph IV.7. states that "outside of God there is only a man fallen, very far from the ideal of perfection practiced by Christians, manifested in Christ." According to paragraph XVI.3.:

"There is an aspiration to present the universal non-spiritual culture based on the understanding of the freedom of a fallen man who does not limit himself to anything, as the only possible option, as an absolute value and measure of truth. This development of globalization by many in the Christian world is compared with the construction of the Tower of Babel." (Basics of Social Concept of the ROC, XVI.3.)

There is one more appeal to the notion of "fallen" and "sin" in paragraph XVI.3.: "The Church cannot positively perceive such a global order, in which the human personality obscured by sin is placed in the center of everything."

From these quotes we see that the appeal to sin is very well used in political language. It should be noted that this appeal to sin is not just beautiful theological formulas calling to reflect on high matter about being and human nature, it is political consequences, in particular, that are used as a justification for the coercion machine. The functioning of the state coercion apparatus is grounded not solely by the need to establish order in society, but by the need to counteract sin.

According to the Basics of the Social Concept, "the answer to the earthly reality distorted by sin, helped to avoid an even greater sin through opposing it by means of secular power." § III.3 of the ROC the Basics of the Social Concept stipulates that «The church should not assume the functions belonging to the state: opposition to sin through violence, the use of worldly powers, the assumption of the functions of state power, involving coercion or restriction." Simultaneously, it is said that "the Church can appeal to state authorities with a request or an appeal to resort to power in certain cases"" (§ III.3). It is interesting, in itself that the function of the state was articulated

as “confronting sin through coercion”, as well as the fact that the Church can initiate opposition to sin by using a coercive machine, directing the state apparatus in one direction or another. That is, the state retains a function of a kind of “policeman”, which will help her maintain a moral and moral lifestyle in society.

The most radical example of practical application of such a stance is the words of Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin he said during a talk show with the eloquent title “Children in Sin”, where the priest, then chairman of the Synodal Department of the Russian Orthodox Church for Relations between Church and Society, stated that “morality should be forced on precisely because man is not good as is, his nature is distorted by sin [4]”. The priest stressed that “as such, man will not come to morality,” which means “he must be educated, including with harsh methods. (ibid)”

Appeal to sin, of course, is used to justify the right to participate in wars, and even can meet when justifying the need for the existence of nuclear weapons. For example, during a speech at the Nagorny Palace of Sports in 2009 in Nizhny Novgorod, Patriarch Kirill noted that “as long as sin exists, it is impossible to abandon nuclear weapons, since it is possible to completely abandon such sinful phenomena as war and foreign policy confrontation only when sin no longer exists. [18]”

Thus, an appeal to sinfulness is used to promote the arms race, which is little correlated with the ethical principles of Orthodoxy, as they reached us before the revolution and before the creation of nuclear weapons [21]. That is, there was literally an inversion. In the very beginning of the 90s, the church environment often cited as performatives the words by St Seraphim of Sarov: “Acquire the spirit of peace and thousands around you will be saved”, which contained a frank ecclesiastical message urging a person to pacify, search for conflict resolution and conflict-free existence. The irony of fate is that same St. Seraphim of Sarov was recognized as a mystical harbinger and defender of nuclear weapons, since the words in the Akathist to St. Seraphim “you are our shield and defense” were interpreted in a nuclear-strategic way: it was suggested that the word “shield” should mean a “nuclear shield”, and not anything else [22]. Orthodox publicist Yegor Kholmogorov and pro-Orthodox nationalist Maxim Kalashnikov have even developed the doctrine of “atomic Orthodoxy”, where “Orthodoxy” and “nuclear bomb” are presented in one bundle, as two conjugated “allies of Russia” [7] – in the pendant formula of Alexander III, who said that Russia has only two allies - the army and navy. There is also a rephrase of this formula, which belongs to Kirill Frolov: “Russia has three allies - the army, the navy and the Church. [5]”

## 7. Appeal to the Victim Image

Church speakers are constantly reminding in their public statements of the persecution the Church had to endure during the twentieth century in the Soviet period. There are real grounds for this, since the religious denominations were very much affected by the actual persecution of religion, and at the beginning of the Soviet period, even to a particular extent, the Orthodox Church was subjected to attacks while different religious movements and other faith persecuted before the revolution by the authorities began to enjoy freedom and sometimes certain benefits. The discourse of victimhood, a permanent appeal to the image of the victim was used very actively in the 1990s, a logical reaction to the first opportunity to speak of persecutions that were not previously mentioned in Russia, but this discourse was not subsiding, but on the contrary, it increased in the 2000-ties, and it continues to do so, even though there is no stigma, and the Church enjoys many privileges. The discourse of victimhood phenomenon became a phenomenon that had been existence.

An example of this is the speech of Patriarch Kirill he delivered during his visit to Kazan. On July 21, 2016, when laying the capsule in the foundation of the restored church of the Icon of the Mother of God of Kazan, the Patriarch said the following words:

But the ruins we have here in the center of Kazan, these ruins emerged not because the foreign invaders came to Kazan, but because we destroyed this beauty with our own hands. Now, let's ask the question: How has it come that the Orthodox people, the Muslim believers, have allowed them to destroy temples and mosques in the country? Because they got them persuaded that if you do this, you'll be happy. And if you have something wrong in your life, this is because an old, anachronistic worldview encumbers you [1].

That is, by laying the stone, the Patriarch tries to remind of the persecutions the Church endured during the Soviet period. But he implicitly ingrains another thought.

In order to be immune from mistakes similar to which we have witnessed, looking at these ruins, we must promise ourselves to never again be seduced by any insane ideas that require the abandonment of faith, history, and culture." It is not easy now because we all live in a globalizing space (ibid).

That is, appealing to what has been done in the context of the persecution of the twentieth century, the Patriarch does not simply draw a conclusion that there is no need to destroy temples, but that different recipes for social modernization, social and

political change must be taken with distrust and rejected given the tragic experience of the collapse of the socio-political system in the Soviet period.

## 8. "Orthodox Holocaust" with a Sign "Plus". "Heroic Victim" Type

If we compare the appeal to the image of the victim in the Russian Church with a similar discourse connected with the suffering of Jews during the Holocaust, we can use a toolkit suggested by Korotetskaya, which identifies a heroic victim – a sacrifice and a victimized person – a victim. According to the researcher, "if the sacrifice with inherent proactivity automatically gains recognition within the society, a victim is passive, and therefore innocent by definition, needs to confirm its sacrificial status: a process that requires time, cultural processing in society and political will. ([17], p. 109-110)"

The appeal to the victim, which we see in the church discourse, corresponds exactly to the first type: deprivation and humiliation since the persecution of the twentieth century are mentioned not so much to cause compassion for the church as a sacrifice, but for some self-affirmation, justification of rightness, preferential position in the face other social forces that have not undergone such a strong test of strength. The emphasis is placed on heroic overcoming, and this overcoming is articulated with the simultaneous triumphalist message.

As part of this "heroic" attitude, during the post-Soviet period, the Church gradually realizes its power role, the importance of its own re-rating in the eyes of society and state structures through appeal to power institutions. The Church does not mind gaining respect for herself through the government institutions of coercion (and sometimes not only the government ones).

For example, claiming the right to call on the state to punish the participants of Pussy Riot, one church speaker came up with an argument:

"The church should not bear any grudge at all (reaction to Pussy Riot - note). But here it is very important that some actions of the Church cannot be taken as a proof that this kind of behavior is ever possible... Many had an impression that it was a test of the fight. About us they say "quilted jackets", "non-passionate people"; "And who are the Orthodox? They are grannies, they are not be reckoned with."... Until recently, such a stance was very common - they say, the Orthodox are not a very important factor, everyone will tolerate... And suddenly such a reaction! [11]"

“Therefore, I assure you, there was no malice in our hearts, but to do so (to forgive Pussy Riot – ed.) - meant to make a significant mistake, to convey a wrong message to our society, our people. We could not go this far. (ibid)”

## 9. Conclusion

Our reflections can be summarized by that the political language of the Church is an abundant area for research, an interesting phenomenon from the culturological point of view. Here, the contradictory paradoxes of the presence of religion in politics, as well as the post-secular processes as a whole are clearly revealed.

The gospel, the principles of asceticism are the values that overbear politics in the ecclesiastical consciousness, however, the imperative of influencing society urges us to develop in one way or another the political mechanisms for incorporating these values into the society, which often leads to their distortion and, of course, the departure from the gospel simplicity. The more Orthodoxy in Russia is institutionalized, the more developed and complex the political language of the Church becomes. The Church demonstrates itself as an independent and substantial political force. In addition, it is clear that it seeks to include in the arsenal of its appeals to society different patterns, belief patterns, apologetic discourses that pay due regard to the tragic experience of the twentieth century. It applies the tools used by various political forces to overcome discriminatory situations, to raise authority or simply to exit from an underreported position in the social system. It is also obvious that the Church enjoys the legal rhetoric of the institution protecting human rights, developed in the West, but at the same time it fundamentally discards the Western values as they are, trying to direct these institutions to defend their own mindset, their traditionalist principles and even to oppose the West itself.

That is, we see the endorsement of the phenomenon, which Ronald Dor described as “the second indigenization.” This is the stage of indigenization, when after a certain initial revival of the national culture and, including the religion traditional for this culture, the driving forces of this national cultural revival begin the process of encapsulation and isolation from Western values. Continuing to use the technical, social and economic tools developed in the West, the agents of national revitalization and revivalism initiate the process of isolation from the West, labelling Western liberalism and ideology with the term of “westoxification”. We see, one way or another, that as long as the ecclesial life in the post-Soviet period was restored, the political language of the Church evolved from a certain stigmatization to the triumphalist discourse aimed

not so much at protecting the institution of the Church as at reinforcing its influence on society. Accordingly, the usual liberal human rights mechanisms are being replaced by new ones aimed not to “protect” the Church as a minority, but to assert the Church’s ideological principles at the level of the country and society.

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