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## THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF RASHISM PROPAGANDA BEYOND UKRAINE

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The article analyzes the religious dimension of rashism propaganda outside Ukraine as a component of the Russian Federation's hybrid information warfare. Drawing on the author's previous research on rashism, anti-Ukrainian ideology, and religious communication, the study examines the mechanisms through which Christian rhetoric, quasi-theological narratives, and church institutions are employed to legitimize aggression, construct a positive image of Russia, and delegitimize Ukraine in the international arena, including its deliberate distortion and negation of Christian truth, which effectively places the Russian Orthodox Church outside the boundaries of Christian doctrine. Particular attention is paid to the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church and the dissemination of related narratives in European countries and North America.

*Keywords:* rashism, religious propaganda, russian orthodox church, hybrid warfare, anti-Ukrainian ideology, „Russian world“.

### Introduction

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in 2022, the ideology of rashism acquired clearly defined features of a totalitarian system combining elements of imperial nationalism, anti-Ukrainian ideology, and sacralized statism. As demonstrated in the author's previous studies, rashism is not confined to political or military discourse but actively employs religious symbolism and theological concepts to justify violence and expansion.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that outside Ukraine, the religious dimension of rashist propaganda is often perceived less critically than overtly political messages. This creates favorable conditions for the spread of disinformation among religious communities, academic circles, and society at large. Central to this discourse is the narrative of the so-called “persecuted Church.”

### Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The methodological foundation of this article is an interdisciplinary approach that integrates theories of propaganda and information warfare, the concept of the

sacralization of politics, and the analysis of religious communication. This approach enables a comprehensive examination of the religious dimension of rashist propaganda as a phenomenon operating at the intersection of political ideology, mass communication, and sacral discourse.

Propaganda theory is applied to analyze mechanisms of loyalty formation, the legitimization of violence, and the construction of the enemy image under conditions of hybrid warfare. In this context, religious rhetoric is viewed as a tool for intensifying the emotional impact of propagandistic messages and reducing the level of critical perception among international audiences.

The concept of the sacralization of politics allows rashism to be interpreted as a quasi-religious ideology in which political power, the state, and military aggression acquire sacral meaning. Particular attention is given to the role of religious symbols, mythologized historical narratives, and appeals to a “divine calling” in the justification of the Russian Federation’s imperial policy.

The analysis of religious communication and Church media strategies is based on the author’s scholarly research on the functioning of religious institutions in the digital space, including studies of digital media strategies, the Church’s communication doctrine, and principles of audience engagement in online environments. This makes it possible to identify how religious structures affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church use contemporary media to disseminate ideological messages beyond Ukraine, as well as to demonstrate the extent to which these messages diverge from Christian doctrine.

An important component of the study is a comparative analysis of the ideological mechanisms of Nazi antisemitism and contemporary anti-Ukrainian rashism. This approach makes it possible to trace common features of totalitarian propaganda, including the use of sacral motifs, the dehumanization of the “other,” and the construction of pseudo-religious justifications for violence. Methodologically, the study combines discourse analysis, media content analysis, and the comparative-historical method, ensuring the scholarly validity and systematic nature of the research.

A separate strand of the author’s research focuses on the “newspeak” of rashism, which surpasses the newspeak of classical fascism in its level of cynicism and dehumanization. Particularly revealing is its articulation by representatives of the upper hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, which simultaneously contributes to removing Russian Orthodoxy and the Church institution itself from the Christian discursive field. In this study, the author presents a comparative analysis of the official rhetoric of the Russian Orthodox Church and the discourse it employs outside the Russian Federation.

### **Rashism as a Sacralized Ideology**

One of the defining characteristics of rashism is the systematic sacralization of political ideology, within which state power, military aggression, and the figure of the political leader are endowed with pseudo-religious meaning. The political objectives of the Russian Federation are presented not as the outcome of rational geopolitical decision-making, but as manifestations of “divine providence,” allegedly possessing a supranational and transhistorical character.

Within this ideological construct, the state is portrayed as a sacral organism entrusted with a “special historical mission,” the army as an instrument of divinely sanctioned violence, and the political leader as the bearer of ultimate truth and the guarantor of the nation’s “spiritual unity.” War, in this framework, is interpreted not as a crime or an act of

aggression, but as a “sacred mission” aimed at defending mythologized “traditional values” and an alleged “canonical space.”

Such sacralization of politics performs a crucial propagandistic function: it removes moral and ethical constraints on the use of violence by transforming aggression into a form of “spiritual duty.” Within this discourse, any criticism of state policy or military actions is framed not merely as an attack on the state but as an assault on the sacral order itself, thereby rendering rational public debate virtually impossible. Language thus becomes an explicit instrument of power and, ultimately, of war, through the arbitrary substitution and distortion of key concepts<sup>1</sup>.

A central role in this process is played by the Russian Orthodox Church, which, within the framework of rashist ideology, effectively loses its status as an autonomous religious institution and instead functions as an ideological partner of the state. Through sermons, official statements, public addresses, and various media channels, the Russian Orthodox Church provides theological and symbolic legitimization for the imperial project, cloaking violence in the language of religious tradition<sup>2</sup>.

Beyond Ukraine, these narratives are disseminated through foreign parishes, religious media outlets, and digital platforms, contributing to the formation of a distorted perception of the war among segments of the international audience – one that frames it as a “spiritual confrontation” rather than a violation of international law. Consequently, the sacralized character of rashism becomes one of the key factors underlying its effectiveness in the international information space.

A recent documentary confirmation of this tendency can be found in the programmatic document “*The Present and Future of the Russian World*” (March 24, 2024). According to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, “the directives consist of eight sections and address the Special Military Operation, the Russian World, foreign policy, family, demographic and migration policy, education and upbringing, as well as economic, spatial, and urban development... The primary task of these directives, as well as of the long-standing activity of the World Russian People’s Council as a whole, is the protection and strengthening of the Russian World. The division and weakening of the Russian people, the deprivation of their spiritual and vital forces, has always led to the weakening and crisis of the Russian state. Therefore, the restoration of the unity of the Russian people, as well as of their spiritual and vital potential, constitutes a key condition for the development of Russia and the Russian World in the twenty-first century”<sup>3</sup>.

However, the document sanctioned by the Patriarch and the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church fundamentally contradicts the Gospel message, the Christian worldview, and Orthodox theology. Rather than reflecting Christian doctrine, it constitutes an explicit apologetics of anti-evangelical ideas, including the legitimization of violence, xenophobia, and genocidal practices<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Zwoliński, A. (2023), *Zepsucie języka jako źródło destrukcji kultury*, Kraków.

<sup>2</sup> Центр протидії дезінформації (2024), «Аналітичний звіт “Священна війна”: мілітарна діяльність РПЦ», 26 серп. URL: <https://cpd.gov.ua/reports/analytichnyj-zvit-svyashchenna-vijna-militarna-diyalnist-rcp/>

<sup>3</sup> Шумило, Сергій (2024), «Звичайний фашизм»: розбір тез про “священную войну” Росії проти України та Заходу, *Радіо Свобода*, 5 квітня. URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/zvychaynyj-fashyzm-rozbir-tez-pro-svyashchennyu-voynu-rosiyi/32890534.html>

<sup>4</sup> Там само.

In an official document of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, Russia's aggression against sovereign Ukraine is explicitly described as a "war," a "holy war," and as the "defense of the unified spiritual space of Holy Rus' and the world against the pressure of globalism and the victory of the West that has fallen into Satanism"<sup>5</sup>. Through such assertions, the Russian Orthodox Church places itself outside the core commandments of Christianity and thereby confirms that Russian Orthodoxy can no longer be classified as a Christian religion. Christian theology is fundamentally oriented toward the pursuit of peace and love; it does not justify aggression, does not glorify war, and certainly does not designate it as sacred. Such an understanding of war today is characteristic of pagan, fascist, and neo-Nazi movements. Fr. Prof. A. Zwoliński argues that Russians may have adopted this attitude toward war from the Mongol invaders<sup>6</sup>, who nevertheless continue to occupy a negative place in Russian historical memory. The very term "holy war," or "racial holy war" (Racial Holy War, RaHoWa), is widely used among contemporary neo-Nazi, anti-Christian movements of a pagan–occult orientation<sup>7</sup>.

In the subsequent paragraph, which defines the mission of the "Russian world" as the existence of a distinct Russian spiritual and cultural "civilization". It is further confirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church gravitates not toward Christian unity ("that they may all be one" (John 17, 21)), but toward claims of civilizational exclusivity and expansion over other "Orthodox" and non-Orthodox peoples alike. The proclaimed goal of restoring the "unity of the Russian people" and building a "millennial kingdom" reproduces a series of pseudo-Christian heretical teachings, as well as elements of the contemporary doctrine of Aleksandr Dugin, which represents a synthesis of occultism, paganism, fascism, and neo-Nazism.

The third paragraph of the "religious" document establishes Russia's future political course, once again confirming the status of the Russian Orthodox Church as a de facto state institution. Within the envisioned new world order articulated by representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the ruling Russian political elites, the right of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people to independent existence is entirely denied. Instead, the document proclaims a return to an obsolete and wholly anti-scientific Russian imperial-mythological "doctrine of the triune Russian people," according to which the Russian nation consists of Great Russians, Little Russians, and Belarusians as branches (sub-ethnic groups) of a single people, while the concept of "Rus'" is said to encompass all Eastern Slavs<sup>8</sup>. Subsequent paragraphs of the document contain ideas characteristic of German National Socialist ideology, including the concept of "blood and soil," the cult of childbirth and demographic expansion, and the modeling of the family as the basic cell of a "national society".

The Russian Orthodox Church increasingly employs religion as an instrument of propaganda, promoting Kremlin narratives through the sacral sphere. Churches, icons, and ecclesiastical interiors function to justify aggression and to create the illusion of a "sacred mission." The Russian Orthodox Church does not merely bless the war; it legitimizes

<sup>5</sup> Там само.

<sup>6</sup> Zwoliński, A. (2003), *Wojna. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Wydawnictwo WAM, Kraków.

<sup>7</sup> «Звичайний фашизм»: розбір тез про «священную войну» Росії проти України та Заходу. 05 квітня 2024. URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/zvychaynyy-fashyzm-rozbir-tez-pro-svyashchennyu-voynu-rosiyi/32890534.html>

<sup>8</sup> Там само.

violence, helps to remove moral responsibility from soldiers, and prepares society for even greater bloodshed. For the Kremlin, the Church has become yet another tool of mobilization and control<sup>9</sup>.

Visual narratives promoted by the Russian Orthodox Church warrant separate scholarly examination, particularly the imagery that appears within Orthodox churches. For example, the Main Cathedral of the Armed Forces of Russia initially included project designs depicting Vladimir Putin and his inner circle, Stalin, and Soviet soldiers engaged in fictitious victorious battles whose very existence has been refuted by historians<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, on the grounds of the Valaam Monastery, a fresco appeared depicting a Russian terrorist marked with the symbol “Z” bandaging the head of a Ukrainian soldier, alongside an image of Christ Not Made by Hands.

### **Religious Narratives of Rashist Propaganda Beyond Ukraine**

Beyond Ukraine, racist propaganda actively employs adapted religious narratives aimed at diverse target audiences – ranging from religious communities and diasporas to Western intellectual and pacifist circles. These narratives are characterized by a high degree of flexibility, shifting their emphases depending on cultural and confessional contexts while maintaining a shared ideological foundation.

In most cases, such materials and ideas originate not from independent journalism but from political statements and interviews, and they may present seemingly rational arguments supporting narratives of alleged persecution without verified evidence of systemic facts.

This, however, does not mean that disinformation spreads exclusively through official or institutional channels. It is also disseminated through local networks and interpersonal communication – including sermons, brochures, informal church gatherings centered on themes of the Soviet past, and youth conventions that more closely resemble motivational trainings or leadership schools. Within these settings, there is an active and systematic imposition of Kremlin political ideology, presented as the only correct and logical worldview and as the path to the future. In this framework, Orthodox youth are explicitly encouraged to disseminate these narratives globally<sup>11</sup>.

To facilitate this strategy, a vast network of Orthodox parishes operates abroad. According to data published on the official website of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), there are 43 Orthodox parishes in the United States and Canada designated as canonical subdivisions of the ROC (Representation). The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, according to official reports of its Department for External Church Relations, has also been actively establishing parishes abroad, reaching a total of 84 by the end of 2023. In Europe, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) operates 489 parishes, with the largest concentration located in Germany<sup>12</sup>.

Overall, the key narratives can be grouped into three main categories.

#### **1. The Narrative of the “Defense of Traditional Christian Values”**

<sup>9</sup> Hado, N. (2022), „Rosyjska propaganda religijna podczas wojny w Ukrainie: historia powstania i mechanizmy oddziaływania”, *Media i Społeczeństwo*, 17(2), 44–50.

<sup>10</sup> BBC News. Україна (2020), «Під Москвою відкрили головний пропагандистський храм російської армії. Як він виглядає», 14 червня. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-53042400>

<sup>11</sup> Аналізуй, блог (2024), «Як працює церква Путіна за кордоном і до чого тут українські біженці?» URL: <https://analizuj.org/teksti/yak-pratsyue-tserkva-putina>

<sup>12</sup> Там само.

One of the central instruments of international racist propaganda is the appeal to the rhetoric of “traditional Christian values.” Within this discourse, Russia positions itself as the alleged last bastion of “true Christianity,” opposing the “morally degenerate West,” secularism, and liberal values. Ukraine is deliberately incorporated into the image of this “fallen West” or portrayed as a state that has allegedly lost its spiritual identity.

This rhetoric resonates with conservative religious groups in various countries and enables Russia to create an illusion of shared values, while masking the real nature of its aggressive policies and systematic violations of fundamental Christian moral principles.

Statistics show the exact opposite of what is declared: only 2 percent of believers come to Orthodox churches in Russia on Christmas and Easter<sup>13</sup>.

## 2. Discrediting Ukraine through Religious Disinformation

Another significant narrative involves the systematic discrediting of Ukraine through the dissemination of religious disinformation. Within the international information space, claims circulate about the “persecution of Orthodox Christians,” “repression of the Church,” “bans on faith,” or alleged “neo-Nazism” that supposedly threatens the Christian population of Ukraine.

American or English-language sources that have addressed – directly or indirectly – the theme of the “persecution of Orthodoxy / the UOC” in Ukraine are often highly biased. This includes, for example, Vadym Novynskyi’s appearance on *The Tucker Carlson Show*, where he claimed that the United States finances the persecution of the UOC, as well as interviews between Tucker Carlson and Robert Amsterdam, such as “*Bob Amsterdam: How USAID Is Helping Zelensky Destroy Christianity...*”, in which the host and an international lawyer discuss alleged “persecution of the Orthodox Church” in Ukraine. Other reports typically consist either of statements by politicians who have not sufficiently examined the issue or of interpretative reporting on meetings between U.S. representatives and Orthodox delegations. Some American politicians (e.g., Anna Paulina Luna) have publicly described Ukraine’s policy toward the UOC as “persecution of Christians.” Reports suggesting that the White House might be discussing the alleged persecution of the UOC with American church representatives generate secondary interpretations among readers, who then disseminate this information on social media. Examples include posts about “Christian persecution under Zelensky’s leadership” on Facebook/X, which circulate widely among conservative audiences.

In reality, the narrative of a “persecuted Church” in Ukraine emerged because of the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine as a de facto terrorist organization. Clergy members were repeatedly found in possession of anti-Ukrainian brochures promoting the idea of a “single people” and a “tsar-father,” as well as weapons, Russian passports, and awards for service to the Russian Federation. This raises serious questions as to how, during 35 years of Ukrainian independence, these individuals were not deported earlier. In 2023 alone, Ukraine’s Security Service exposed more than 60 clergy members affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church<sup>14</sup>. Clergy recruited by the Russian Federal

<sup>13</sup> Bojke, Arleta (2025), “KGB i miliardy. Podviine zhyttia Kyryla”, *Koniec Świata*. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVKzUkZPBgo>

<sup>14</sup> Пустіва, Валентина (2023), «На співпраці з РФ викрито понад 60 кліриків УПЦ», *Кореспондент.нет*, 4 жовтня. URL: <https://ua.korrespondent.net/ukraine/4628897-na-spivpratsi-z-rf-vykryto-ponad-60-klyrikyiv-upts>

Security Service transmitted information about Ukrainian military positions, observation posts, and troop movements to the enemy for the preparation of missile strikes, and in some cases reported pro-Ukrainian parishioners or refused to conduct funerals for Ukrainian soldiers killed in the war. In the fourth year of the war, a Russian-language school operates in the premises of an Orthodox church, where they openly teach to adore the values of the Soviet Union and sing the Russian anthem<sup>15</sup>.

Because Russian Orthodoxy within Ukraine previously enjoyed influential lobbyists within political institutions and even within the Security Service, investigations into its activities were largely ineffective and began in earnest only after 2022.

In the United States and Europe, the most frequent recent publications addressing alleged “persecution of Orthodox Christians” are fact-checking materials that identify such claims as part of Russian disinformation or political rhetoric.

### 3. Manipulation of Ecumenical and Peacebuilding Discourse

A separate group consists of narratives that exploit ecumenical and peacebuilding discourse. Representatives of rashist propaganda appeal to broadly Christian values of peace and reconciliation, calling for “dialogue without preconditions” and the “immediate cessation of the conflict.”

In practice, such rhetoric represents an attempt to legitimize the aggressor and to morally equate the victim with the perpetrator. It replaces the Christian understanding of peace as justice and responsibility with pseudo-peacemaking that avoids clear moral judgment of evil.

#### The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the International Sphere

The Russian Orthodox Church and its affiliated institutional structures play a key role in disseminating rashist ideology beyond the borders of the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Owing to its status as a religious actor, the Russian Orthodox Church has access to international religious platforms, ecumenical forums, theological discussions, and diaspora communities, which significantly expands its communicative reach.

Within diaspora contexts, the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church often extend beyond pastoral care and acquire a clearly ideological character. Through parish structures, cultural centers, and affiliated media outlets, narratives are transmitted that promote loyalty to the policies of the Russian Federation, justify aggression, and delegitimize Ukrainian statehood. Under such conditions, religious identity functions as a marker of political affiliation.

In theological circles and international religious organizations, the Russian Orthodox Church actively lobbies interpretations of the war and socio-political processes favorable to Russia. By appealing to the language of peace, traditional values, and the defense of Christianity, representatives of the Church attempt to impose a discourse in which responsibility for the war is blurred and the aggressor and the victim are presented as equivalent parties to a “conflict.”

Particularly problematic is the systematic substitution of theological discourse with political propaganda. Theological concepts such as “sin,” “repentance,” “peace,” and

<sup>15</sup> Слідство.Інфо | Розслідування, репортажі, викриття (2025), «Діти вчать російську та співають гімн РФ: як у Києві працює підпільна школа при монастирі» [“Children Learn Russian and Sing the Anthem of the Russian Federation: How an Underground”, 06.01. URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ht\\_PJXsOCgQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ht_PJXsOCgQ)

“unity” are employed outside their authentic theological meaning and transformed into instruments of ideological manipulation. As a result, religious language loses its ethical and transcendent dimension and becomes a means of legitimizing violence and imperial policy, incorporating key elements of the newspeak of racism.

The danger of such activity lies in the fact that religious institutions traditionally enjoy a high level of public trust, especially in environments where religion is perceived as a moral authority. The instrumentalization of this trust for propagandistic purposes undermines not only international solidarity with Ukraine but also confidence in religious communication itself, creating long-term risks for interconfessional and intercultural dialogue.

Both media discourse and academic research still lack sufficient information to effectively counter racist myths, particularly regarding the differences between the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine (ROC), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) – both of which supported Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as early as 2014 – and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 2018 and to which religious communities of the UOC-MP in Ukraine have been transferring en masse.

Russian Orthodoxy remains silent about the persecution of Christian churches within Russia itself and continues to resist any acknowledgment of the brutal persecution of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church during the Soviet period, culminating in the so-called Pseudo-Sobor of March 8–10, 1946, after which all UGCC properties were transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church, some of which it used until recently, including the Pochayiv Lavra, known today as an Orthodox center<sup>16</sup>.

There is also insufficient information about the connection between the ideology of the Russian world and the Russian Church. “This constitutes an Orthodox heresy, a conclusion confirmed this year by an appeal from prominent Orthodox theologians. Patriarch Kirill promises the remission of all sins to Russians who agree to go to the front. A new narrative has also emerged – ‘the liberation of Ukraine from Satanism’ – which represents a revised version of the concept of the ‘katechon.’ The katechon is an idea developed by Aleksandr Dugin, another ideologue of the Russian world. According to this concept, the Russian Federation is the last bulwark of the world against the devil, and Russia is saving humanity from Western godlessness and satanic decadence. In line with this concept, every Western city with a population exceeding 100,000 should host a Russian church – effectively a Russian outpost. One such center exists in Paris, adjacent to the country’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs”<sup>17</sup>.

### Conclusions

The conducted study demonstrates that the religious dimension of racist propaganda beyond Ukraine constitutes a systematic and structured phenomenon, operating at the intersection of political ideology, mass communication, and sacralized discourse. Racism

<sup>16</sup> Гадьо Н. (2012), «Сліди радянської пропаганди в релігійних виданнях?», *Медіакритика*, 5.07. URL: <https://mediakrytyka.lnu.edu.ua/za-scho-krytykuyut-media/manipuliacia-propahanda/slidy-radyanskoyi-propahandy-u-relihiynykhy-vydannyakh.html>

<sup>17</sup> «Матеріали круглого столу на тему: “Московський патріархат у російській війні проти України”» (2022), Інститут зовнішньополітичних досліджень, 17 листопада. URL: [https://www.fpri.kiev.ua/news\\_view/post-reliz-kruglogo-stolu-na-temu-moskovskij-patriarhat-u-rosijskij-vijni-proti-ukraini/](https://www.fpri.kiev.ua/news_view/post-reliz-kruglogo-stolu-na-temu-moskovskij-patriarhat-u-rosijskij-vijni-proti-ukraini/)

emerges not merely as a political doctrine but as a quasi-religious ideology in which violence, aggression, and imperial ambitions are granted pseudo-theological justification.

One of the key mechanisms of the effectiveness of rashist propaganda is the sacralization of politics. Endowing the state, the military, and the political leader with the status of bearers of “divine providence” allows moral constraints regarding war to be removed, transforming it into a form of “spiritual duty.” Within this framework, aggression is presented as morally justified, while criticism of the war is framed as a denial of the sacred order, significantly impeding rational public discourse.

The analysis of the religious narratives of rashist propaganda in the international sphere reveals their adaptive character and orientation toward different target audiences. Appeals to “traditional Christian values,” manipulations of themes such as peace, the persecuted Church, and the “defense of spiritual heritage” are employed to legitimize the aggressor and undermine international solidarity with Ukraine. In this process, religious symbolism loses its ethical meaning and is transformed into a tool of ideological influence.

The religious narratives of rashist propaganda outside Ukraine constitute a complex system of ideological constructs that exploit Christian symbolism and language to manipulate international audiences and erode solidarity with Ukraine. These messages disregard the actual religious pluralism of Ukraine and are used to construct an image of the state as a violator of religious freedom. They are particularly effective in contexts where knowledge of the historical and confessional background of Eastern Europe is limited.

The Russian Orthodox Church plays a particularly significant role in disseminating these narratives, effectively functioning as an ideological partner of the state in the context of modern information warfare. Leveraging its status as a religious actor and the high level of trust vested in ecclesiastical institutions, the ROC and its affiliated structures influence public opinion within diaspora communities, international religious organizations, and theological circles, substituting theological discourse with political propaganda.

Thus, the religious component of rashist propaganda beyond Ukraine constitutes a serious challenge to international information security, interfaith dialogue, and professional journalism. Further research should focus on developing tools for the critical analysis of pseudo-sacred narratives, enhancing media literacy, and establishing ethical standards for religious communication in the context of hybrid warfare.

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## РЕЛІГІЙНИЙ ВИМІР ПРОПАГАНДИ РАШИЗМУ ЗА МЕЖАМИ УКРАЇНИ

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Статтю присвячено аналізу ідеологічного та релігійного виміру сучасної гібридної війни Російської Федерації проти України. Дослідження зосереджується на механізмах трансляції адаптованих квазіхристиянських наративів у міжнародному контексті, зокрема за межами безпосередньої зони воєнних дій. Розглянуто використання релігійних мотивів, риторики «переслідуваної Церкви», апеляцій до «традиційних цінностей» та сакралізації війни як інструментів легітимації російської агресії в західних суспільствах, релігійних спільнотах і діаспорах.

Показано, що зазначені наративи мають системний характер і є складовою державної інформаційної політики Російської Федерації, у межах якої Російська Православна Церква функціонує як ідеологічний інструмент. Проаналізовано адаптацію цих меседжів до різних культурних і конфесійних контекстів за умови збереження спільнотої імперської ідеологічної основи. Окреслено причини підвищеної ефективності релігійного компонента рашистської пропаганди за кордоном, зумовленої його менш критичним сприйняттям порівняно з відвертою політичною риторикою.

У статті розкрито механізми поширення зазначених наративів через діяльність за-кордонних парафій, релігійні заходи, неформальні освітні ініціативи та медіаплатформи. Зроблено висновок, що релігійна складова рашистської пропаганди є важливим елементом сучасної інформаційної війни, яка ведеться не лише у військовій, а й у символічній, ціннісній та моральній площинах.

**Ключові слова:** рашизм, релігійна пропаганда, Російська Православна Церква, сакралізація війни, «руssский мир», гібридна війна, антиукраїнська ідеологія.

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