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Mediatization of Ukrainian Protestantism in the Book Culture Epoch

Balaklytskyi M. Mediatization of Ukrainian Protestantism in the Book Culture Epoch. Development of Ukrainian Protestantism in 15–late 20 century is embedded in the second phase of mediatization — i.e. history of (religious) printing. During this period Ukrainian Protestants' communication gradually egalitized, removing recipient's social status as a condition of access to religious information. Analysis of factors and manifestations of this phase allowed to formulate *the principle of mediatization of religious life*: «saturation of religious sphere with communication means attacks the social status of recognized Churches, giving religious minorities the chance to reach otherwise inaccessible audiences».

Keywords: *mediatization, Protestantism, journalism.*

Балаклицький М. А. Медіатизація українського протестантизму доби книжкової культури. Розвій українського протестантизму XVI — кінця XX століття вкладається в другий етап медіатизації — історію (релігійного) друку. Протягом цього періоду відбувалося звуження тематичного поля комунікації, егалітаризація, заниження вимог «входу» для комунікантів і аудиторії — словом, усунення суспільного статусу реципієнта як умови доступу до релігійної інформації. Аналіз чинників і проявів цього етапу дозволив сформулювати *принцип медіатизації релігійного життя*: «насищення релігійної сфери комунікаційними засобами підважує суспільний статус визнаних церков, даючи релігійним меншинам змогу звертатися до інакше недосяжних аудиторій».

Ключові слова: *медіатизація, протестантизм, журналістика.*

Балаклицкий М. А. Медиатизация украинского протестантизма эпохи книжной культуры. Развитие украинского протестантизма XVI — конца XX века вкладывается во второй этап медиатизации — историю (религиозной) печати. На протяжении этого периода происходило сужение тематического поля коммуникации, эгалитаризация, снижение требований «входа» для коммуникантов и аудитории — словом, устранение общественного статуса реципиента как условия доступа к религиозной информации. Анализ факторов и проявлений этого этапа позволил сформулировать *принцип медиатизации религиозной жизни*: «насыщение религиозной сферы коммуникационными средствами ставит под удар общественное положение признанных церквей, давая религиозным меньшинствам возможность обращаться к иначе недостижимым аудиториям».

Ключевые слова: *медиатизация, протестантизм, журналистика.*

Development of Ukrainian Protestantism of the 16th — the end of the 20th century is embedded in history of religious printing, which is the second phase of mediatization. During this period narrowing of the communication subject field, egalitarization, lowering of «entering» requirements for communicants and the audience took place. In short, it was removing the recipient's social status as a condition of an access to religious information. Analysis of factors and manifestations of this phase allowed formulating the principle of mediatization of religious life: «saturation of religious sphere with communicational means attacks the social status of recognized churches, giving religious minorities a chance to reach otherwise inaccessible audiences».

Actuality of work consists in studying communication of Ukrainian religious organizations with their target audience in the context of mediatization theory. The purpose of the article is to show the

ways of Ukrainian Protestant churches transformation under the influence of communication channels, printing technology in the first place.

Mediatization is a technical mediation of human communication. The first phase of informational exchange mediatization is writing [8–9], the second one is printing [4], and the third one is electronic communication [2]. Printing is a technological precondition of religious sphere mediatization. Protestant communication on the Ukrainian territory is embedded in the second phase of mediatization — i.e. history of (religious) printing.

The second mediatization attacked the exclusive authority of historical churches to possess and understand Holy Scripture by copying the Bible text. Due to the book publishing, Protestant centers began to seek to saturate informational sphere with printed Bibles. Perception (listening and later reading) of Bible text had individualized

and at last became personal practice. Printing as the leading means of communication elucidates the common features of variegated picture of Protestant movements on the Ukrainian territory, such as inclination to rationalism, the «sectarian» type of church organization, individualistic consciousness of movement followers.

We reckon the history of Protestant communication from the 16 century, when the term «Protestantism» itself appeared. That space of time included two periods. Printing communication of early Protestantism lasted from the 16th to the end of the 17th century. Printing communication of late Protestantism took place in the late 19th — the end of the 20th century. Early Protestantism was the age of prajournalism, when they issued only books. In the 19th century, late Protestantism used booklets and treatises including ones of Orthodox publishing houses. In the 20th century magazines dominated.

The distinctions between those periods are explained by the difference between master's or «high» reformation and public or radical one on Ukrainian soil. Communication of master's reformation was characterized by a width of views, inclination to ecumenism, tolerance (revival workers expressed disregard toward confessional discrepancies [1:27]), using advanced technologies, European orientation, union with Orthodox against Catholics, sporadic protection of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Orthodox population's rights by Protestants. The second period is distinctive by lower intellectual level of informational product, conservatism, intolerance, alternate converging of churches with socialism against state Orthodoxy and later vice versa, technological lagging — Ukrainian Protestants could began speaking through electronic mass media only in 1990s with the change of the political system.

Within two mentioned periods, there was gradual narrowing of the subject field of communication, egalitarization, lowering of «entering» requirements for communicants and the audience. In short, there was removing the recipient's social status as a condition of access to religious information. Both periods are characterized by social and political instability or rather anarchy that made possible the short periods of religious freedom.

During the first period book publication («in the second half of the 16th century Protestant literature in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth outnumbered Catholic one» [3:85]) was a part of the wider cultural program that included schooling, translating, literature and science. Protestant educational institutions were more

open-minded than schools of other churches in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They also were characterized by «presence of secular beginning» [3:130], gave higher academic level than Catholic schools, preparing not only priests but also political and cultural figures.

Calvinists played the important role in preparing the Polish Radzyvillov Bible (1563) that impelled publication of the Ostrog Bible (1581). A socinian V. Tyapynsky translated the Gospel into the Slavo-Russian language.

Activity of Ukrainian Orthodox laypeople allow the researchers to speak about the «inner reformationality of Ukrainian Orthodoxy» [1:8]. Scientists call reading and interpretation of Bible texts by secular individuals, brotherhood formation as search for communal life of full value to be pro-Protestant phenomena in Orthodoxy.

Social-psychological prerequisite of Ukrainian religious sphere mediatization is the existence of active recipients of religious Publicistics (publishing and later press), which under the mentioned conditions joined the formation of Protestant communicators stratum. At different time, Orthodox Ukrainians demanded «democratic» church life, understandability of service, participation in church divine services equally with clergy. These requirements of feedback, equality, rationality turned observers of divine services into active participant of church intercourse, produced new potential audience of religious communication. As in other national versions of Reformation, Bible text (in understandable language) often appeared to be the central ideological basis of resisting church hierarchy abuse.

In the middle of the 19th century traditions of active laypeople were set as basis for gospel awakening between peasants of the South of the Russian Empire, their seeking for holiness in Orthodox context and volens nolens overrunning the borders of Orthodox traditions by these activists. «Sectarian» services were improvised and highly interactive, and it was not accidental. Ukrainians like church singing, and «sects» attracted by an opportunity to sing together. Therewith, peasants of that time «criticized Orthodoxy as the theological basis for their enslavement by nobility» [10:59].

Illiterate peasants built their contacts on personal connections and verbal communication. The informational network of reformation groups with Orthodox origin was formed by travelling preachers, messengers, who later read the general epistles of the movement leaders. Services were based on charismatic displays (let us recall book metaphors of duhobors and malyovantsis) and oral explanation of lectures, songs and poems.

Soon religious dissidents adopted the culture of spiritual literature reading and began to differ from the rest of peasants by the highest level of literacy. Splitters «supported present schools and founded their own ones. Ukrainian Stundists were the first peasants that made their own educational system on the South of the Russian Empire. Those were the first schools that belonged to peasants themselves in a Ukrainian village» [10:223].

During the 19th century, access of peasants to religious literature had been growing. Activity of Russian Bible Society (RBS, 1813–1826) became the precedent of mass religious enlightenment. RBS branched out in Kamyanets-Podilsky (1814), Kharkiv, Simferopol and Odessa (1816), Kyiv and Volodymyr-Volynsky (1817), Chernihiv and Poltava (1818). They had been selling certain editions of books from the Elizabeth's Bible (1751). In 1858–1876, the synodal committee had been working on Bible translation that was fated to get the «canonical» status for the next generations of Russian-speaking Christians, and Protestants even more. The spiritual-moral reading encouragement society (1876–1884) issued more than 200 popular brochures with average circulation of 10 000 copies each [6:93]. Colporteurs brought spiritual editions to the remote regions of the Empire.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Protestant magazines came out in the west (Stanislaw, Ternopil, Russian Rava, Kolomyia, Kremyanets) and east of Ukraine (Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkiv). The publication of magazines was broken on the territory of soviet Ukraine in 1928; this press had been keeping until 1939 in Right-bank Ukraine. Only in western part of Ukraine such «long-livers» as «Faith and Science» (14 years of publication), «Truth Messenger» (12 years), «Mediator» (10 years) were possible. The average time of Protestant periodical publishing in soviet Ukraine was 2 years (or even less).

Since then Protestants perceived journalism as indispensable component of church life along with mission, piety, confessional education and other forms of religious activity. When there was not a legal possibility for that then ersatz appeared regularly, such as circulars and open letters, verbal correspondence during preachers' visits, later self-publishing.

After the Second World War, communist party headed for legalization of churches in exchange for their efforts to improve the image of the Soviet Empire that was demonized by repressions in the 1930s by means of internal patriotic

education of population. They also should make efforts to improve the external public relations of the Soviet Empire by means of imaging the USSR as a peacemaking state on the international level. The all-USSR Council of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists (UCECB) that was the Protestant churches association, initiated by the authority, got the permission at its foundation in 1945 to publish the «Brotherly Messenger» magazine where the news from Ukrainian Baptist and Pentecostal churches were a marked element.

From 1960s self-publishing became the main manifestation of Evangelic public protest against the USSR war with religion. The main self-publishing output was books: handwritten, made on the printing machine, copied on the self-made printing press.

From the 1970s, the role of foreign journalistic output increased because of the fact that «the Cold war» strengthened anti-Soviet attitude between Christian fundamentalists of bourgeois countries. Western Protestants took part in long-wave radio station broadcasting that beamed to the USSR territory and went as smugglers, bringing books, audio-video records.

At the end of 1980s, the international contacts of many churches became legal and permanent. Constantly growing flow of free literature from abroad poured into the USSR, mostly the translation of foreign authors. The «first swallow» of free-from-censorship communication of Ukrainian Protestants became Baptist newspaper *Christian Life*, founded in 1989 in Kyiv.

After celebration of the 1000 anniversary of Christianity in Russia Ukrainian religious sphere entered the third period of mediatization, developing electronic communication. Gospel sermons became a common element of Ukrainian wire radio. From the beginning of the 1990s western preachers, mostly Pentecostal, appear regularly on domestic television. Their Ukrainian pastors-coreligionists try to promote video records of their speeches to local TV-channels. From the end of the 2000s the Protestant Internet has been intensively developing.

Pressure of electronic media allows fixating the change of religious consciousness under its influence. In post totalitarian society, Ukrainian Protestantism found itself in unexpected conditions. Instead of Christian revival caused by reading of the printed Bible, it is surrounded by relativity of postmodern television culture that puts it among the «low-rating» subjects. Instead of common ideology, religious or antireligious, the informational space is filled by advertisement and

kaleidoscope of private thoughts, then «religiousness of both majority and minority groups undergoes reorganizations, taking the shape of subcultures» [5:205]. Youth either dissociates from «herding» of church life, or trends toward «neo-protestant» churches of charismatic type that cultivate spectacular pompous rites instead of conscious simplicity. Emotions and miracles take place of theological structures, sectarian «heaping» is substituted by calls for all-Christian fraternization whose boundaries reaches interreligious space through involvement of the Judaic tradition. Looking for miracles and consumerism have been changing modesty and diligence in «theology of prosperity».

Succession of mediatization periods proves dialectical interdependence of communication technologies and religious church audience. The audience leaned on the influence of the technol-

ogy, used it for its purposes, gave it a specific coloring and at the same time was transforming according to peculiar features of this technology, the printing one in this case.

Conclusion. The conducted research give an opportunity to formulate the principle of religious life mediatization: «saturation of religious sphere with communication means attacks the social status of recognized Churches, giving religious minorities the chance to reach otherwise inaccessible audiences». Technisists are hardly right having tendency to see «radical changes under the influence of technology» everywhere. Establishment of this technology does not necessary revolutionize church. Not without reason religion is the most conservative sphere of society. However, technology varies effectively the competitive positions of churches in perception of the audience with the week/potential loyalty.

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