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## **Anathema and the human community. Cultural-political context**

**Short introduction.** The concept of a hybrid war is well known to people of our day, and they realize that this kind of action is directed against the community. Due to the distortion of the facts, the power centers destroy the credibility of a separate authority, which leads to instability in the individual community. Now I propose to consider the phenomenon of anathema as an ancient kind of cultural and social weapon to make destabilization in an unstable community. In particular, I analyze, not solved by now, the incident which is the curse of the Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Mazepa commissioned by Tsar Peter I and performed by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The theme is **relevant** because it is important to make it clear to Christians, in particular Ukrainians, that their faith is independent of anathema, and on the contrary, resists this kind of stamp. Building up your own community is possible on a positive identity, and this goes by all kinds of anathema.

My **goal** is to show that "Mazepa's anathema" is a state-owned Russian multi-century project, sanctified by the Church, in the form of fake news stories, to enslave the thought of a separate category of people who are subjected to it, for lack of critical thinking.

### **Introduction**

In order to understand the concept of anathema, one must take into account the cultural and historical features of its implementation. Depending on the worldview, the anathema is a phenomenon that must be taken with religious obedience or cannot be ignored or even rejected as an ideological and political factor.

When it comes to Russian-Ukrainian relations, an anathema to the Ukrainian Hetman of Zaporizhian Host Ivan Mazepa (1639-1709) became one of the instruments of the national-religious war. Through the anathema in the eyes of the Orthodox of this region, for centuries, the discretion was not only the image of the person, but mainly the ideas that he represented - the Ukrainian statehood, and the church's possible separateness, and then to culture and language.

To assess the true value of anathema, we propose: (1) to consider the historical context of the practice of anathema; later (2.) to touch Ivan Mazepa's case; and if we

manage to bring this concept into the sphere of rational thinking, (3) to submit an appropriate assessment.

### **The various meanings of the anathema**

In the epic poem of Alexander Dovzhenko "Life in Blossom" (1946-1947), the classic transmits two kinds of perception of anathema. When Father Christopher Protasiev opposes the "crossing of wood and cereals" and submits Michurin as the author of the experiment, anathema. Then the wife, Alexandra Vasilievna, dies from this, and her husband "spits on his anathema." So everything depends on the recipient's cultural matrix.

### **Anathema in the Old Testament**

On the example of the Old Testament, which belongs to Jewish culture, we see an anathema as a form of transaction with a deity. When something was consecrated to God in the form of anathema to comprehend a goal; and when the purpose was achieved, then the consecrated thing or man should have been brought to the deity as a sacrifice, that is simply destroyed.

Anathema can also freeze a person in a curse, in the sense that no one then could change the position of the person.

### **Anathema in the New Testament**

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul tries to challenge no one in an anathema if there are no proper grounds for this, and there is only one reason for the anathema - that is, when a person or community moves away from Christ and creates another "gospel."

### **John Chrysostom "About an anathema and a curse"**

In the fifth century, in Antioch, John Chrysostom, in particular, referred to the example of the Apostle Paul, who, having a very strong love for Jesus Christ:

*No one was subjected to any form, nor coercion, nor anathema: otherwise he would not have attracted so many people and whole cities to God*

and in particular stressed that:

*It is necessary to curse the heretical doctrine and expose the wicked dogmas, but people have to spare in every possible way and pray for their salvation.*

## **About the variable understanding of anathema**

The first ecumenical council proclaimed the anathema, only with the truth of faith. They did this to protect the truth of faith against forgery, so that anyone had a false doctrine as true, was excluded from the Christian community by an anathema. Such a sentence of the curse ended with the canons. They consisted of a short text that generalized the doctrine before the sentence was pronounced according to the formula: "If someone says [nasty], let him be an anathema."

## **Anathema to the division of the Church in 1054**

If we look at various incidents when the Church proclaimed an anathema, then we are witnessing many injustices and conditions: 341 - Atanasius the Great, 754 - Joan Damaskin, 878 - Patriarch Photius, 1054 - Patriarch Michael Kerularii and Humbert of Silva Candida.

## **Anathema in the Catholic Church**

Such anathematization practice continued after a big split. This, however, was rather carried out in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). 1080 - Pope Gregory VII to Emperor Henry IV, 1281 - Pope Martin IV to Emperor Michael Paleologus, 1411 - Jan Gus, 1466 - King of Bohemia George, 1453 Joan of Arc, 1600 - Giordano Bruno, 1497 - Girolamo Savonarola, 1521 - Martin Luther.

## **Rejection of anathema in the Catholic Church**

In the Code of Canon Law of the RCC since 1983, all "punitive laws" (canon 6), issued by the Roman throne and the term anathema are no longer used. However, theoretically, even today, "the apostolic function of imposing an anathema is part of the rights of the Magisterial interventions; and use of it can become his duty".

## **Anathema in the Orthodox Church**

It looks like the Orthodox Church does not have a widespread system of anathema as it was once in the RCC, except for the ROC. According to the historian Cinamas, an anatomy fell in the XII century Andronic Manuel.

In the Russian Orthodox Church, as once in the Greeks, there are ecclesiastical and secular motives of anathema, but the main difference between the Greeks and the Russians that the Russians began to make an anathema in the Order of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, with a view to a more lasting political resonance.

So, for political reasons, Moscow Metropolitan Photius, who escaped from the Kyiv cathedral, was subjected to an anathema of an independently elected, in Navahrudak, 1415, Metropolitan of Kyiv, Grigory Tsamblak. In the XVII-XVIII centuries, those who claimed to be royal power in Russia, or undermined its authority, was proclaimed anathema. 1604 - Grigory Otrepyev (False Dmitry I), 1654 - Tymofey Ankudinov, Ivan Bolotnikov, Stepan Razin (1671), Omelyan Pugachev (1775). In this series of anathema, we have the curse of hetman Ivan Mazepa in 1708. The anathema to Stepan Hlibov was not imposed by the bishops' council, but by the king's decree in 1718. In 1901, the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, without naming it as such, imposed anathema and excommunicated the famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy from the Church.

An interesting film "Anathema" (1960) by Sergei Gippius. It shows the spiritual evolution of Protodeacon Olympius, who read an unknown author, who was Leo Tolstoy. As a result, in the Order of Orthodoxy, he anathematized, for example, Ivashka Mazepa, then, when the turn to Leo Tolstoy came, in a powerful voice translated the anathema into another prayer.

Already in our days, 1997, we have the revenge of the Church against Father Gleb Yakunin and Metropolitan Filaret (Denisenko).

In all these anathemas, we observe a political trace. And for religious reasons, let us recall that in the years 1490 and 1504 anathema was imposed on the "heresy of the Judaizers". In 1690 anathema was imposed on the "heresy of bread worship", 1667 - anathema was imposed on the Old Believers, and in 1713-1723 the anathema was imposed on "iconoclasts" Dmitry Tveritinov.

We see the difference between Greek and Russian anathema. In the Greeks, anathema was chiefly a threat, and there was no need to bring them into the order of Orthodoxy. Instead, in Russia, political anathematization is included in the order of Orthodoxy, and thus the implication was created for the transfer of Russian great-power thought to future generations.

### **Removing anathema in Orthodoxy**

The only known practice in the Russian Church to remove anathema imposed by the council is the removal of the oaths of prohibition from 1667 on those who adhere to the "old ritual" (1929 and 1971). It happened without any repentance of anathematized or even any requests from the latter. There is another kind of casualty. The Moscow Prince Dmitry Donskoy, anathematized by the Kyiv Metropolitan Cyprian for the church plunder in 1378, was, without any procedure, the removal of an anathema, proclaimed as saint by the local council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1988.

The dramatic mutual anathemas of Humbert of Moyenmoutier and Patriarch Michael I Cerularius in 1054 were shot in 1964 in Jerusalem. This was done by the Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras and by the Pope of Rome, Paul VI. Subsequently, on this basis, in 1966, the Russian Orthodox Church opened an eucharistic hospitality for the Catholics, since it did not add any dogmatic obstacle for this.

### **Intermediate conclusions**

From the above, we see that anathema in both the Catholic and Orthodox churches is a public imposition of punishment for religious or political misconduct. That marks the complete deprivation of the participation of the convict in the life of the Church, which issued the relevant sentence.

However, such a definition does not correspond to the real essence of anathema, because, even in the Russian Orthodox Encyclopedia, it is written that:

*The use of anathema outside the ecclesiastical (in particular, political) purposes is not considered to be canonical, for there is no basis for canon law. This was also reported by leading canonists and theologians, such as Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos and Matei Angel Panaret, who relied in their argumentation on the treatise attributed to the saint John Chrysostom, and according to Theodore Balsamon.*

It is also worth noting that "the imposition of an anathema is not an act that irrevocably closes the path to return to the Church" and ultimately to salvation. An external withdrawal of anathema may occur in the Church, either after repentance, or through the conversion of the Church of their own thoughts, mainly without acknowledging their guilt. But as John Chrysostom wrote, human judgments are not God's.

### **Anathema for Hetman Ivan Mazepa**

When it comes to an anathema for the Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Mazepa, we have collected four documents which testify about it. The first is the nominal decree of the Tsar Peter I to Metropolitan Ryazan, Stefan Yavorsky, in which, on October 31, 1708, the tsar personally wrote an order that the Metropolitan publicly in the Cathedral bequeathed a curse to Mazepa that "left the Orthodox Church and went to the Swedish heretics". The second document dates back to November 12, 1708. In the name of the royal decree it was announced that, in the presence of Tsar Aleksei Petrovich, the clergy and officials, the whole sacred council, curse Hetman Ivan Mazepa forever, and the choice of Ivan Skoropadskyi in his place. Then, we have a brief and delusional anathema, that is, the curse and excommunication of Hetman Ivan Mazepa from the Church, which originated from the same time and became part of the anathema that has been carried out for centuries. Mainly to the sixties of the

XIX century, in the Order of the Triumph of Orthodoxy in the first week of the Great Lent in various temples of the Russian Orthodox Church.

These documents became the basis for a hated ideology against the entire national and ideological, that representing by the person of Ivan Mazepa from the part of the faithful of the ROC, as well as some of the unbelievers who are culturally attached to that kind of religiosity. And this, that Ivan Mazepa represented Ukraine's independence, accurately stated, during the summer of 1990, Levko Lukyanenko, at a meeting of city council deputies: "The impulse given by Ivan Mazepa has kept the Ukrainian self-reliant tradition for more than two hundred years - until the beginning of XX century. The minimum task is to continue it for future generations, but most likely we will have a chance to escape from the USSR. "

From the cited documents one can see how the anathema against Mazepa was organized, as it arose when it was included in the Order of Orthodoxy. The fact that it has become an effective state-owned Great Russian instrument in the national suppression of all kinds of independent Ukrainian ideas is known from the further Ukrainian-Russian history.

Its anathema and a loud ceremony in Hlukhiv was not enough to damage the memory of Ivan Mazepa, and for this it was necessary to put into it "the concept of a public or political crime." This was done through the annual mention of the name of Mazepa at the time of the Order of Orthodoxy. Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church Gregory Lurie explains this phenomenon by the fact that "in church affairs, ritual is always more important than words: few people listen, but rituals act as electrodes inserted directly into the brain."

This kind of negative evaluation of the person extends to all thoughts, ideals that the anathema man carries. Orest Subtelny, an American historian of Ukrainian origin, explains how Mazepa's infidelity to the Russian tsar turned into infidelity to Jesus Christ:

The common interest, public good and public interests - such were the motivating elements that could turn the Hetman's apostasy from action, whose influence was limited to the interests of the tsar, to an act of broad interest and condemnation.

### **Anathema - Russian political weapons of a religious type**

A prominent public figure and human rights activist, guest lecturer at the Philosophical and Theological Faculty of UCU, Elena Volkova, in 2016, spoke about new religious imperatives in Russia, and in particular about the fact that the term "Christian" is seldom used in the discourses of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the similarities between such religions as Russian Orthodoxy and Neo-Stalinism. In such beliefs, new enemies always appear, and they call them heretics, and they have a

large number, from the Catholics to the melancholic ones. Volkova also argues that since 1993, the Russian Orthodox Church has reconstructed the imperial and Soviet rhetoric and forms in which the “Russian world” is equal to the Russian war. In the cultural sense, Russia is "Orthodox", but because it is not enough, the “Russian world” comes to the rescue. It does not work effectively, then there is a "space struggle" against evil in which human life has no value.

As in the past, today, in this hybrid war, Mazepa's anathema is a powerful weapon against everything that symbolizes or points to the distinctness of Ukrainian culture and being from the Russian ethnic group. Elena Volkova so appreciates the effects of anathema:

Anathema can inflict any person a moral and physical harm, as it is a public act of condemnation and punishment. [...] Widespread in modern mass consciousness, religious prejudices may cause serious prejudice against such a person as being cursed by God or obsessed with dark forces, etc. This can lead to the breakdown of social ties, the professional and social isolation of a person, resentment and even physical violence in relation to a person.

Anathema, perceived through the ideological cultural code that was formed in Russia in Soviet times, becomes in the public consciousness analogous to the sentences imposed in the past by the "enemies of the people" (in the present ideological situation, the "enemies of the church"), which causes anger against the convicted person, who share the Orthodox ideology, and criticize the Church - the opponents of the ideological use of religion.

Elena Volkova also adds that the process of using the Church is not only from the side of the Russian state against the Church, but vice versa. And the author gives an example of the persecution of Father Gleb Yakunin.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, let's add that how someone perceives an anathema - seriously or not very much - completely depends on the understanding of the person of the institution of the Church. If the Church is a closed fortress for the elect, then the anathema becomes the closest to the fate of a particular person, and at worst, it is the "confidence" of her eternal curse and the "impossibility" of God's Merciful to manifest His Love.

More concretely, talk about the case of Hetman Ivan Mazepa. The Mazepa anathema is still perceived differently in the world, depending on the geopolitical and geo-clerical context.

From the perspective of the Ecumenical Church, there has long been no problem with Mazepa's chastity, for example, for example, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has been praying for the souls of the Cossack Hetman for over a century, because it simply does not recognize the existence of political anathema, considering such a

phenomenon non-existent. The same conclusion was reached by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate.

Such facts show that "Mazepa's anathema" has long been a problem for critically minded Ukrainian and Russian Christians and non-Christians. However, the anathema continues to be a brand for a mass of uncritical people affected by a syndrome of inferiority, generated by violent psychosomatic methods of enslavement of their individuality and isolation.

We believe that eliminating the consequences of this large-scale problem in Ukraine is rather ethnopsychological than religious order. To this end, we propose: 1. Adopt the law of inadmissibility of the use of external religious centers of defiling rhetoric in which there are political aspects that could affect the dignity of Ukrainians as a separate nation; 2. To express a common position on the issue of "Mazepa's anathema" as a separate document of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations; 3. Since the prayer for the soul of the deceased introduces the idea of salvation into the mentality, which is the opposite of the declared anathema, which denies this salvation, to initiate an inter-religious campaign of prayers for the restoration of the soul of the servant of God, Ivan Mazepa.

### **Ethno-psychological problem**

And in conclusion, I quote a Russian journalist Eugene Kiselyov, from 2016:

*O Lord, and in Russia, for 300 years, official propaganda speaks of Hetman Ivan Mazepa as a traitor and a state criminal in a tone that he, a former yesterday defector or corrupt Russian official, issued to the government of another country some super-secret state secrets the day before yesterday!*

*In order for reconciliation to take place, I am afraid that deep civilizational changes will take place in Russia itself, which will take many decades. Because the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia, like the new Cold War between Russia and the West, in my opinion, is based on the conflict between two different civilizations, two different values systems. And such conflicts can last very long.*

When a civilization world is waiting for changes in Russia, and in particular those peoples which Russia considers to be part of its canonical or geographic territory, it is important for them to understand the essence of the destabilization methods of the hybrid war. It is worth remembering President Putin's words that Russia has two main forces on which to lean - nuclear weapons and Orthodoxy. This awareness, in turn, will help these peoples to discover new pages of their existence, such as the modern process of maturation of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy to autocephaly recognized by the Ecumenical Church. Only such positive shifts will hopefully help the Russian people change their minds on themselves and their neighbors and thereby become the great people who will truly love all their neighbors, and this will be mutually reinforcing.