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As a manuscript



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**SACRED IMAGES AND CHARACTERS IN THE CULTURE OF
SOVIET CIVIL RELIGION (BASED ON THE MATERIALS OF SOVIET
LITERATURE AND FINE ARTS OF 1920-1980)**

Annotation of the dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Philosophical
Sciences
in the specialty 5.7.9. – "Philosophy of Religion and Religious Studies"

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The main results of the dissertation of M.V. Storchak

"Sacred Images and Characters in the Culture of the Soviet Civil
Religion (Based on the Materials of Soviet Literature and Fine Arts of
1920-1980)"

The dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences Storchak M.V. was carried out in the scientific specialty 5.7.9. "Philosophy of Religion and Religious Studies" is a complete independent study that involves a new understanding of the concept of "civil religion" in the context of Soviet culture within the framework of the philosophy of religion and religious studies and the subsequent inclusion of new scientific knowledge in understanding modern processes in society. The thesis presents a set of conclusions containing scientific novelty, which makes a certain contribution to the development of Russian science and practice, as well as having a significant potential for use in the educational process when reading courses in the humanities, in particular, by specialists in the fields of philosophy of religion, social philosophy, religious studies, history of Russia, who focus on the issues of quasi-religions, historiography of Russia and the phenomena of sacralization of space and characters in the culture of civil religion. The thesis presents a set of conclusions containing scientific novelty, which makes a certain contribution to the development of Russian science and practice, as well as having a significant potential for use in the educational process when reading courses in the humanities, in particular, by specialists in the fields of philosophy of religion, social philosophy, religious studies, history of Russia, who focus on the issues of quasi-religions, historiography of Russia and the phenomena of sacralization of space and characters in the culture of civil religion.

Relevance of the research topic. The 20th and 21st centuries have given the world a wide palette of new religious and religious-like phenomena. Already in the 20th century, there began to be a trend towards an expanded interpretation of religion not only in religious studies, but also in the humanities as a whole. Religious scholars raised questions about the dominance in modern life of such

phenomena as "faith without belonging" and the "deprivatization" of religion. In this state of affairs, the scope of the concept of "religion" is growing, as well as the boundaries of the very subject of religious studies, which includes the phenomena of "spiritual culture that exist in the same space with religions and, in a certain sense, compete with them." This is connected with the emergence of the problem of "religious-like" phenomena: in the most general sense, these are those phenomena of social and spiritual life that are excluded from the concept of religion in its narrow interpretation and included in its broad interpretation. The descriptive approaches created by religious studies in the past turned out to be difficult to apply to new forms of religiosity. There is a need for new theories describing these forms. In the context of such changes, the problem of drawing boundaries between religion and non-religion, between religious and other phenomena becomes especially relevant.

Among these phenomena, **civil religion** is also found. Existing models of the content of religions are hardly applicable to this phenomenon. This is due, firstly, to the fact that today there are different approaches to the substantive aspects of "civil religion". Secondly, because the terminological designation of this category is still in the debatable plane associated with the development of its identical understanding. And thirdly, an urgent problem for modern religious studies is the need to create a typology and classification of the phenomenon under study, since there are no exhaustive works in this aspect today. Therefore, there is an urgent need for further study of new approaches to the phenomenon of civil religion.

The study of civil religion has not only a purely theoretical, but also a practical meaning. Today, the state's appeal to traditional values is associated with the search for a common model of national self-identification of Russian citizens, based on the value orientations of past generations. The history of our recent past has shown that blind adoption of Western political models while ignoring domestic experience leads society to a dead end in its development. In our opinion, the radical breakdown of all the parameters of society's life and the disregard for the

mental foundations of Russian national identity have led to negative results that have put Russia on the brink of survival. Therefore, today the state is faced with the task of creating a single national idea that could unite and unite the nation. Under the conditions of a multi-confessional and multinational state, the Russian civil religion would be able to fulfill this function. Therefore, the study of theoretical developments in this field of knowledge, as well as the existing phenomena of civil religion both in the past and in the present, is very relevant for modern Russian science.

Civil religion, in general, and Soviet civil religion, in particular, has been an important segment of research in Russian religious studies in the last decade. However, its cultural component, which reflects sacred characters and material symbols through literature, painting, monumental art, etc., is still a little-studied topic. The presented dissertation work is devoted to solving this problem.

The object of this research is the phenomenon of civil religion, considered in the process of its socio-historical evolution.

The subject of this research is the cultural content of sacred characters and images in the Soviet civil religion.

The purpose of the study is to conceptualize the essence and contents of sacred characters and images in the context of Soviet civil religion.

The main objectives of the thesis:

1. To give an analytical review of the theoretical foundations of civil religion in the history of foreign and domestic scientific thought existing in religious studies.
2. To analyze methodological approaches to civil religion.
3. To identify the forms of manifestation of civil religion.

4. To study the main components of Russian messianism, their dialectical content and forms of manifestation as a religious phenomenon.

5. To consider the sacred images of Soviet culture through the prism of the messianic paradigm.

6. To give a meaningful description of the sacred characters in the culture of the Soviet civil religion.

Methodological and methodical foundations of the study.

The theoretical basis is the scientific works of domestic and foreign researchers, which were devoted to the phenomenon of civil religion and Soviet messianism. The study is based on general scientific approaches to the cognition of social phenomena based on the principles of objectivity, consistency, historicism, dialectical and interdisciplinary approach.

In terms of methodology, the method of comparative analysis is used to compare the substantive concepts of quasi-religions and other theories of "religious-like" phenomena, the method of causal analysis is used to clarify the relationship between the concepts of quasi-religions and approaches to the definition of religion. The thesis uses the methods of logical analysis, narrative study and interpretation of source study material.

Of great importance for the thesis were the methods of typology and classification associated with the author's identification of the relevant methodological approaches and forms of manifestation of civil religion, as well as discourse analysis focused on determining the characteristics of the images and characters of the Soviet civil religion.

Scientific novelty of the study.

1. In the dissertation research, on the basis of the material summarized to date, a holistic religious analysis of the category of "civil religion" is carried out, which significantly complements the theoretical aspects of the category under study, in particular, related to the seven-part typology of approaches and classification of six forms of civil religion.

2. The main methodological approaches to the concept of "civil religion" are identified and presented, in particular, philosophical, phenomenological and communicative-psychological approaches.

3. The author's classification of already known and new forms of manifestation of civil religion, in particular, cultural, messianic and ideational, is revealed, presented and formulated. In the last two forms, the vectors and directions of their development are determined.

4. On the basis of the studied and analyzed material, the thesis presents the author's formulation of the concept of "civil religion".

5. For the first time, the sacred images of the Soviet civil religion are studied and characterized through the prism of the dialectical interaction of two messianic categories: messianism and missianism in the context of Soviet poetry of art. The dissertation complements and concretizes the already known messianic ideologemes ("Holy Russia" - "Great Russia") in the context of the cultural content of the sacred spaces that echo them: the USSR - "New Israel" and the USSR - "New Rome".

6. As a result of the analysis of literary materials and Soviet fine arts, the thesis for the first time shows the image of Moscow as the sacred capital of the world - Moscow - "New Jerusalem".

7. For the first time, the author gives meaningful characteristics of the sacred characters of the Soviet civil religion (Lenin and Stalin) in the context of various trends in Soviet culture (literature, fine arts, monumental monuments).

Provisions submitted for defense and having scientific novelty:

1. Civil religion is one of the important areas for research in modern religious studies, in particular, in the theoretical aspect. In methodological terms, the thesis presents the main and defines new methodological approaches to the concept of "civil religion", in particular, philosophical, phenomenological and

communicative-psychological approaches. Based on the direction and definition of the topic chosen in the dissertation, the author mainly adheres to the historical and evolutionary approach to the Soviet civil religion.

2. An important component in the classification of civil religion can be its consideration from the point of view of the forms of manifestation in the sacralization of civil space: state-public, socio-political, cultural, messianic (national-mythological and international-mythological directions), ideational or national-ideological (non-confessional and confessional directions).

The work presents the author's formulation of the concept under study: **civil religion** is secular in form, but religious in essence value contents, sanctifying the phenomena of state and social existence. Value contents mean ideas, characters and symbols of civil life that cause a strong emotional excitement and sensual empathy in a person.

3. The dialectics of Soviet messianism has deep historical roots both in antiquity and in the pre-revolutionary ideology of "Moscow is the Third Rome". In the conceptual sense, the presented ideology has two substantive aspects: **messianism** (to a greater extent connected with the religious, eschatological beginning of the "holy kingdom" and the "God's chosen people", the symbolic prototype of the sacred place of messianism is the Judeo-Christian "Holy City of Jerusalem"; in Russia - "Holy Russia") and **missionism** (to a greater extent it is associated with the worldly principle of building an empire, which is aimed not at heavenly, but at earthly aspirations. Ancient Rome. In Russia, the ideal of "Great Russia" is the Third Rome).

4. The thesis proves that the concept of messianism in pre-revolutionary Russia - "Holy Russia" appears in the twentieth century in the form of the USSR - "New Israel". The main features of this concept in Soviet culture are such contents as a special path of development and purpose of the USSR; the "God-chosenness" of the Soviet people and country; The USSR is a new sacred "promised land"; the

providential path of development of the USSR; the country's possession of the absolute truth – the "world Truth", etc.

5. The messianic interpretation of the special path of the USSR in the world requires the sacralization of its capital – Moscow as the "New Jerusalem" – as a new image of the "promised land". The main characteristic features of the "sacred capital of the world" in Soviet culture are such essential characteristics as its central position in the world spatial dimension, its absolute perception in spiritual and moral meanings, the eschatological orientation of Moscow as the future capital of the world, and the location of the "Soviet celestials" in it.

6. The missionary destiny of the USSR ("Great Russia") in Soviet culture included the following contents: the fulfillment of a special, universal, state or national mission of the USSR in the world; awareness of the greatness, power and statehood of the USSR and the Soviet people, which were associated in quasi-religious tones; the sacrificial vocation of the USSR for the sake of all mankind.

7. The cult of Soviet leaders in the ideology of the USSR - Lenin and Stalin - is embedded in the culture of the Soviet civil religion. In terms of content, it correlates with such religious characteristics of "divine" characters as the pantheistic property of all-presence, all-penetration into all that exists; the theistic property of all-guidance of the world; the immortality of the leader. The dissertation also highlights the charismatic qualities of the leader, which are inherent in the ancient polytheistic and monotheistic gods: all-seeing, omnipotent (omnipotent), omniscient, tireless.

Approbation of research results. The main results of the dissertation research were discussed and approved at the Department of State-Confessional Relations of the Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA).

The main provisions and conclusions of the study are presented by the author in scientific publications, including: 8 articles, including 7 articles in journals included in the list of publications recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation for candidate and doctoral dissertations.

1. *Storchak, M.V.* The Prophetic Tradition in the Culture of Social Utopianism and the Quasi-Religious Ideal of Building the "Kingdom of God on Earth" / *Storchak V.M., Ogorodnikova O.V., Storchak M.V.* // *Religious Studies.* – 2022. – №1. – P. 91-104. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission, Scopus).

2. *Storchak, M.V.* Russian messianic idea in the context of modern problems of historiography of the country / *Storchak V.M., Ogorodnikova O.V., Storchak M.V.* // *Ethno-society.* – 2022. - №4 (166). – P. 43-52. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission).

3. *Storchak, M.V.* Religious Symbols in Collective Memory (on the Example of Russian State Symbols) / *Sitnikov A.V., Storchak V.M., Storchak M.V.* // *Religious Studies.* – 2022. - №2. – P. 94-100. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission, Scopus).

4. *Storchak, M.V.* "Holy Trinity" of Communist Symbolism of Faith in the Culture of Civil Religion / *Storchak V.M., Tokareva E.M., Storchak M.V.* // *Man: Image Essence. Humanitarian aspects.* – 2022. - № 4 (52). – P. 57-81. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission).

5. *Storchak, M.V.* "Russianness" in the context of philosophical, cultural and historical discourse / *V.M. Storchak, M.V. Storchak* // *Russia and the world: transnational communications and search culture: Collection of staters of the international interdisciplinary interdisciplinary conference (Moscow, April 22, 2022)* / *Ost. O.A. Ogorodnikova, A.A. Emelyanova.* - Moscow, Knigodel Publ., 2022. – 544 p. (P. 104-115).

6. *Storchak, M.V.* Phenomenon of prophecy in proletarian revolutionary and Soviet quasi-religious culture / Storchak V.M., Tokareva E.M., Storchak M.V. // Religious Studies. – 2023. - № 1. – P. 110-124. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission, Scopus).

7. *Storchak, M.V.* Sacral Plots of Civil Religion in the USSR / M.V. Storchak // The mission of confessions. – 2023. – Volume 12. Part 6. (71). – P. 14-21. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission).

8. *Storchak, M.V.* Charismatic properties of Lenin in the culture of Soviet civil religion / M.V. Storchak // Mission of confessions. – 2024. – Volume 13. Part 1. (74). – P. 14-20. (list of the Higher Attestation Commission).

The study was tested in the author's speeches at international, Russian, regional and interuniversity conferences:

- International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference "Russia and the World: Transnational Communications and Interpenetration of Cultures" (Moscow City Pedagogical University, Moscow, April 22, 2022) with the report "Russianness in the Context of Philosophical, Cultural and Historical Discourse";

- All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference (with international participation) "Three Dimensions of the Political History of Russia: Ideology, Politics, Practices" (Moscow City Pedagogical University, Moscow, March 29-30, 2023) with the report "Sacralization of Soviet Leaders in the USSR";

- International Conference Session "Public Administration and Development of Russia: Civilizational Challenges and National Interests" (RANEPA, Moscow, May 15-20, 2023) with the report "The Ideologeme "Holy Russia" in the Context of the Ideological and Socio-Cultural Space of Pre-Revolutionary Russia";

- International Scientific Conference Session "Public Administration and Development of Russia: New Horizons and Image of the Future" (RANEPA,

Moscow, May 20-24, 2024) with the report "Civil Religion as a Religious Phenomenon: Theoretical and Methodological Aspect".

Thesis structure. The work consists of an introduction, 3 chapters and 8 paragraphs, a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix. Volume of work: 250 pages.