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PRIEST OMELYAN KOVCH IN THE NATIONAL MEMORY: BETWEEN A RELIGIOUS SYMBOL AND A NATIONAL HERO

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Abstract. The article explores the role of priest Omelyan Kovch in Ukrainian national memory, analyzing his figure as both a religious symbol and a national hero. Omelyan Kovch, a priest of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, is known for his spiritual feat and heroic service during World War II, in particular for saving Jews from Nazi persecution, which led to his imprisonment and martyrdom in the Majdanek concentration camp. The article examines various aspects of his activities, including his participation in interfaith dialogue, his contribution to the preservation of the national identity of Ukrainians, and his international recognition as the «Righteous Among the Nations». The author examines the historical and cultural factors that influenced the formation of the image of Kovch as a symbol of Christian humanism and a moral example for modern Ukrainian society. The article analyzes the processes of beatification and commemoration of Kovch, revealing how his figure is integrated into the modern Ukrainian national discourse.

Key words: Omelyan Kovch, national memory, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), Holocaust in Ukraine, church service, righteous man.

Introduction. Omelyan Kovch is a unique figure in the history of Ukraine and the world, but his figure remains relatively understudied in world scientific literature. Basically, research on him is concentrated in the works of Ukrainian and individual Western historians and religious scholars, as well as within the scope of topics devoted to the Holocaust, spiritual resistance during the Second World War, and inter-ethnic relations.

In world scientific literature, interest in Omelyan Kovch is primarily related to his role in the protection of Jews during the Holocaust. Research on this topic is partially reflected in works devoted to the actions of individual Christian figures who risked their own lives to save the Jews. Historians note that Kovch is an example of a priest who did not limit his activities only to a spiritual mission, but showed an active humanitarian position.

A large part of the research concerns his activities in the Majdanek concentration camp, where he continued to support the prisoners, provided them with moral support and even in extremely difficult conditions performed his duties as a priest. Researchers emphasize that Kovch represents an example of high moral stability, which in the context of global history places him next to other religious and public figures who resisted the Nazi regime.

From the point of view of cultural and interethnic dialogue, Kovch is often mentioned in works that consider the models of coexistence of Ukrainians, Jews and Poles in the territory of Western Ukraine. Thanks to his activities in favor of the Jews, modern studies study Kovch in the context of Ukrainian-Jewish relations and their difficult historical past, which contributes to the formation of a more objective approach to the common history.

Despite the importance and uniqueness of this figure, there is still a lack of thorough academic works at the international level, as well as translations into other languages. Therefore, the figure of Omelyan Kovcha has a significant potential for further research, especially within the framework of the themes of spiritual courage, humanism and protection of human rights during catastrophic historical events.

The purpose of the article is to research and analyze the role in the historical memory of Omelyan Kovch as a clergyman and a righteous man who became a symbol of moral stability and self-sacrifice under extreme historical circumstances.

The main part. The task of this study is to reveal the significance of Omelyan Kovch's activities for the Ukrainian and world community, as well as to find out how his legacy affects modern ideas about inter-ethnic tolerance, humanism and spiritual resistance to evil.

This article also aims to systematize existing research on Omelyan Kovch, to find out how much his figure is integrated into national and international historical memory, and to identify key aspects contributing to the popularization of his legacy as a moral reference point in modern society.

Research material and methods. The material for the study of the figure of Omelyan Kovch in historical memory is archival documents, personal letters, eyewitness accounts, memories of contemporaries, as well as scientific articles, monographs and other works devoted to the topic of the activities of clergy during the Second World War. Considerable attention will be paid to the analysis of documents related to his activities in the parish and the Majdanek concentration camp, as well as materials from museums and memorial complexes, where information about Kovch is presented. Works on Ukrainian-Jewish relations and Omelyan Kovch's place in this topic will serve as an additional source. Research methods include: historical-biographical method – to reconstruct the life path of Omelyan Kovch, to determine the main stages of his spiritual and public activity and the context in which he acted; content analysis of textual sources, which allows to single out key aspects of his activities, statements and motivations that influenced the formation of his image in historical memory; comparative analysis – to compare the activities of Omelyan Kovch with other spiritual figures who actively opposed the Nazi regime, as well as to determine the uniqueness and common features in the behavior of clergymen in similar historical conditions; a sociological approach to the study of historical memory – to analyze how different groups (Ukrainians, Poles, Jews) preserve the memory of Omelyan Kovch and in what ways his figure is included in collective memory.

Such a comprehensive approach makes it possible to objectively analyze the place of Omelyan Kovch in historical memory and to determine the key factors contributing to the preservation and popularization of his heritage in modern society.

Results and their discussion. Omelyan Kovch was born on August 20, 1884, in the village of Kosmachi, Kosiv District, Hutsul Oblast, in the family of a clergyman. He was educated at the Roman College of Saints Sergius and Bacchus. Studied theology at Urbanian University. At first he worked in Galicia, and later in Bosnia. In the middle of the First World War, he returned to Galicia. In 1919, he joined the Ukrainian Galician Army as a military chaplain, where he served with the soldiers of the Berezhansky Kuren and remained there until the end of the existence of the Ukrainian Galician Army (Zelisko, 2014: 309).

In 1922, Omelyan Kovcha was appointed parish priest in the city of Peremyshlyany in the Lviv Region. About 5,000 residents lived in the city, most of whom were Jews, while there were about 1,000 Ukrainians, most of whom were Polonized. Father Omelyan Kovch quickly became an active participant in the religious and public life of local Greek Catholics. Thanks to his efforts, the temple was restored, the «Prosvita» building and the cooperative were built. Every year, on the initiative of O. Kovcha, a number of events were held in the city, including Eucharistic conferences, district congresses, Plast and the youth organization actively developed. On the initiative of Omelyan Kovch, a house was bought in Przemyśl, where a kindergarten was opened, which later became the center of Maids and Studite sisters under the guidance of Sister Maria-Fanka Lyakhir. Amateur groups, church and high school choirs were also organized under the auspices of Omelyan Kovch. Even then, his active participation in the public and cultural life of the Greek-Catholic community caused concern of the Polish authorities, and he was imprisoned several times and interned in the Lviv Monastery for

his social activities. Kovcha's residence was frequently searched, about 40 times between 1925 and 1934 alone (Lytvyn: 2012, 95).

When Soviet power came to Western Ukraine in 1939, Father Omelyan Kovch continued to defend the rights of Ukrainians and awaken their national consciousness.

At the end of 1941 mass arrests began, NKVD officers arrested people on Sunday after church services and took them to an unknown destination. At the same time, there was an attempt by the special services to capture Omelyan Kovch himself and his family, then they were saved by a sudden raid by German aircraft, which helped the priest's family to escape and hide for a while. After that, the NKVD started a hunt for Father Kovch, promising a reward of 5,000 for him. rubles However, the local population did not betray the priest, on the contrary, people hid Father Kovch and his family until the Bolsheviks left the Przemyśl region (Berezanska, 2019: 167).

However, after the departure of the Bolsheviks, the Germans entered these territories and began to establish their occupation regime here. First of all, they began to destroy the Jews, who made up the vast majority of the city's population. It was during this period that Father Kovch began to actively save Jews in various ways. One of them was baptism, he baptized about 2000 Jews. Omelyan Kovch even wrote a letter to Hitler in which he condemned the mass murders of Jews and demanded permission to visit Jews in the ghetto. The reaction to this was the arrest of the priest. Kovcha was imprisoned in Lviv prison. At that time, family, friends and higher Greek Catholic clergy, in particular Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytskyi, made significant efforts to free Father Kovch. Thanks to Andrei Sheptytskyi's petition, he could be released, but on the condition that he refused to provide further assistance to the Jews. Father Kovch did not sign such a statement, so he remained in prison (Stasiuk, Hnidyk, 2018: 70).

In August 1943, Father Omelyan Kovch was transported to the Majdanek concentration camp near Lublin. Omelyan Kovch, prisoner № 2399 of Majdanek, worked with everyone else in the camp, but after hard physical labor, he still served as the pastor of the terrible factory of death. He secretly celebrated the Holy Liturgy, confessed the prisoners, blessed with holy water the remains of the prisoners who were to be burned. In February 1944, Father Omelyan was admitted to the camp hospital and died there, and his body was burned in the crematorium on March 25, 1944. In one letter to his relatives, he wrote: «Pray for those who created this concentration camp and this system. They are lonely who need prayers... May the Lord have mercy on them» (Sambirsko-Drohobyt'ska yeparkhiia).

So even such a brief description of the life path and activities of Father Omelyan Kovch gives good reason to assert the need to honor such figures in the historical memory of today. I would like to dwell in more detail on the ways in which the memory of O. Kovch is preserved.

First of all, these are, of course, church honors. On June 27, 2001, during the historic visit of Pope John Paul II to Lviv, Mykola Charnetsky and Omelyan Kovch were canonized as blessed Ukrainian new martyrs. Since then, every year, believers celebrate the Day of the Hieromartyr Bishop Mykola Charnetsky, 24 co-martyrs and Hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch on June 27 (according to the Julian calendar).

In the fall of 2008 The Synod of Bishops of the UGCC proclaimed Blessed Hieromartyr Omelyan the Patron Saint of Pastors of the UGCC. On April 24, 2009, in Kyiv, on the territory of the construction of the Patriarchal Center of the UGCC, the solemn proclamation of Omelyan as the Patron Saint of Pastors of the UGCC took place (Zelisko, 2014: 311). As the patron saint of the clergy, Omelyan Kovch embodies the ideal of a priest who puts love for his neighbor, devotion to his calling, and the courage to defend human life and dignity, even in the most difficult circumstances. The proclamation of Omelyan Kovch as the patron saint of pastors has a deep symbolic and practical meaning for the UGCC. This recognition is intended to remind all pastors of the importance of serving people, which goes beyond confessional, national, and social barriers, and calls for imitating his sacrifice and openness. As the patron saint of pastors, the Ark is a model of moral responsibility and deep humanity,

which is especially relevant in the modern world, where the church faces new challenges. The figure of the Ark inspires the clergy to support people in difficult times, become a moral guide for them, and preach the universal values of humanity and dignity.

In many churches of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, services are held every year in honor of Omelyan Kovch, where priests pray to him as a patron and intercessor before God. His memorial day becomes not only a moment of remembrance, but also an opportunity to rethink the mission of the church and the role of priests in modern society. The proclamation of Omelyan Kovch as the patron saint of UGCC pastors is an important step in preserving and spreading his legacy, which calls for mercy, spiritual stability and devotion.

In May 2012 In the city of Przemyślany in the Lviv Region, the Forgiveness of the clergy and laity of the UGCC was held, dedicated to the memory of the Blessed Holy Martyr Omelyan Kovch. It was attended by the bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church led by the Head of the UGCC His Beatitude Svyatoslav Shevchuk. The dedication and opening of the monument to Omelyan Kovch was held. In the city Przemyśl residents in 2002 a memorial plaque was also erected in honor of Omelyan Kovch (Lytvyn, 2012: 99).

In March 2009 the «Sources of Spirituality» center of the Lviv Archdiocese of the UGCC organized a pilgrimage of clergy and laity to the memorial complex-museum «Majdanek» (former concentration camp) on the territory of Poland, on the occasion of the opening of a memorial tablet (in stone and bronze) dedicated to the blessed holy martyr Omelyana Kovcha and accepting the ashes and transferring them to the cathedrals of each diocese. The initiator of the perpetuation of the memory of Fr. Father Stefan Batruh gave the prayer. The commemorative tablet is a commemoration of father Kovch's will, in which he urged not to discriminate between people of different nationalities. Inscribed on the tablet are the words: «Here I see God – a God who is the same for all of us, regardless of our religious differences». People's Artist of Ukraine Ivan Samotos embodied the idea of a commemorative plaque to Omelyana Kovcha in bronze and stone (Gazeta.ua, 2019).

April 27, 2009 from Majdanek to Odesa, the ashes of many people burned by the Nazis were brought. Due to the fact that it was impossible to find the real relics of blessed Omelyan Kovch, the leadership of the UGCC decided to consider these ashes as the relics of the blessed martyr (ZAXID.NET, 2009).

A monument to Father Kovch was also opened in Lublin, Poland, on October 4, 2021. The opening ceremony of the monument was attended by a delegation from Ukraine, which included Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba, representatives of the Polish government and local self-government, the Ukrainian community, and journalists from both countries.

Before that, a divine service was held in the Lublin Cathedral under the chairmanship of the head of the UGCC, His Beatitude Sviatoslav, and candles were lit in the «Majdanek» concentration camp museum in memory of those killed in the concentration camps during the Second World War. The official opening ceremony of the monument took place with the participation of Ukrainian platoon soldiers and Polish scouts, military guards. In his address at the ceremony, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, read a letter from President Volodymyr Zelenskyi, in which it was noted that the figure of Omelyan Kovch became «a unifying force for the Ukrainian and Polish peoples, an example of how valuable mutual support and mutual respect are regardless of nationality and religion». The head of the Ukrainian state also expressed hope that the sacrifice of Omelyan Kovch will be properly appreciated, and his memory will be honored by awarding the title of Righteous Among the Nations. In turn, the letter of the President of Poland Andrzej Duda, which was also read, expressed the hope that this monument will become a place of meetings and joint prayers for Ukrainians, Poles, Germans and representatives of other nations (Ukrinform, 2021).

The image of Omelyan Kovch appears on icons in many churches of Ukraine, as well as in church communities of the diaspora. The iconographic image of Omelyan Kovch is designed to depict him

as a symbol of spiritual courage, self-sacrifice and moral fortitude, focusing on his mission of serving people regardless of nationality or religion.

The image of Omelyan Kovch in church iconography has its own special symbolic features. Koch is often depicted in traditional priestly garb, reflecting his service as a Greek Catholic priest and bearer of the faith. In his hands he can hold the Gospel or a cross, symbols of his spiritual mission and testimony of faith (Sambirsko-Drohobyska yeparkhiia).

Icon painters pay special attention to the face of the Ark, emphasizing his calm but determined expression. In some icons, he is depicted with rays of light or a nimbus, which indicate his blessed status in the church and sanctity of life.

Some of the icons include symbols connecting Omelyan Kovch with the Majdanek concentration camp, where he died. Sometimes the iconographic compositions use images of barbed wire or sad prisoners, which remind us of the context of his martyrdom. Such details reflect the conditions in which Kovch carried out his mission. In a number of iconographic images, Omelyan Kovch appears surrounded by people of different nationalities, which reflects his role as a defender of those who suffered from Nazi persecution. In some icons, Omelian Kovch is depicted alongside symbols that indicate his connection to the Jewish people, such as the Star of David or other signs symbolizing the friendship and support he gave to the Jews during World War II. This feature makes his iconography particularly relevant for the inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue that is developing in modern Ukraine.

The name of Omelyan Kovcha's father is also preserved in the memory of descendants thanks to the naming of toponymy objects in his honor, in particular in May 2012. Lviv City Council renamed the street Vynnytsia on the street at Omelyana Kovcha. There is also Omelyana Kovcha Street in the city of Peremyshlyany. And even in Lublin, Poland, at the intersection of Armiya Kraiova and Ivan Paul II streets, you can see the street named after Father Omelyan Kovch (Berezanska, 2017: 126).

The Pidvolochysk Local Lore Museum (Ternopil Oblast) is also named in honor of Omelyan Kovch, because before the First World War O. Kovch was a pastor in Pidvolochysk. The institution was actually created from scratch in 2011 on the initiative of collector B. Didenko. In addition to the exhibits illustrating the history of the region, the museum exhibits a rare edition of the Bible – a lifetime edition of the Bible translated by Ivan Puliu. And the Bible itself, presented by Patriarch Filaret. The museum has a communist-era hall and a political prisoner's cell. And two halls are dedicated to the national liberation struggles of the 1940s and 1950s (Vandzeliak, 2017).

The European Council of Ukraine awarded Omelyan Kovch the title «Righteous of Ukraine» in 1999. The awarding of the title «Righteous of Ukraine» became part of the official recognition of Omelyan Kovch as a symbol of inter-ethnic tolerance and spiritual leadership. His activities have been noted both in Ukraine and abroad: in 2008, Israel also added his name to the list of «Righteous of the World» for his heroic defense of Jews. This title emphasizes Omelyan Kovch's contribution to saving the lives of many people and serves as a reminder of the power of faith, humanism, and moral courage that he embodied even in the most dire circumstances (Zelisko, 2017: 311).

In 2010, the Committee to Commemorate the Blessed Hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch was founded. His Beatitude Lubomyr Husar was appointed honorary chairman. The head of the committee is state and public figure Ivan Vasyunyk. The activities of the Committee are carried out under the patronage of the Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk. The Committee's efforts are aimed at promoting the implementation of the ideas of the blessed hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch for the sake of inter-ethnic, inter-denominational and inter-religious dialogue, fostering tolerance and mutual understanding in society, popularizing socially useful and charitable activities. The Committee annually awards the Father Omelyan Kovch Award, founded in 2010, to outstanding individuals for a significant contribution to the cause of ecumenical dialogue, a personal example of sacrifice and humanism, and heroic deeds, for example in 2023 four Ukrainian military

chaplains, a paramedic from Azovstal, and the Polish people became laureates of the Father Omelyan Kovch international award for outstanding humanitarian contribution (Relihiino-informatsiina sluzhba Ukrainy, 2023).

Cherishing the memory of the blessed hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch, the UGCC established a distinction for clergy. By decrees of September 3, 2024 Father and Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church His Beatitude Sviatoslav proclaimed the Order of the Blessed Hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch, established by the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC, as well as its Statute.

This distinction will be awarded to clergymen of the UGCC for outstanding services in priestly service, pastoral activities and promoting the spread of Christian values.

«Cherishing the memory of the blessed hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch, the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC, which was held in Zarvanytsia on July 2–12, 2024, decided to establish the Order of the blessed hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch as the highest award of the Father and Head of the UGCC to honor clergymen for special merits (Resolution № 17)», the Decree states proclamation of the order (Ukrainska Hreko-Katolytska Tserkva, 2024).

According to the Statute, «The Order of the Blessed Hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch is one of the honorary awards of the Father and Head of the UGCC, established to award clergymen of the UGCC for outstanding merit in priestly service, for unparalleled pastoral zeal, for an active position in spreading Christian values in society, for achievements in evangelistic and missionary Church activity, for self-sacrifice in philanthropy, for success in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, as well as for other important achievements that the awardee contributed to the successful implementation of the Church's mission in the modern world» (Ukrainska Hreko-Katolytska Tserkva, 2024).

In 2017 with the financial support of the «Renovabis» charitable foundation and the head of the Committee for Commemoration of the Blessed Hieromartyr Omelyan Kovch Ivan Vasyunyk, the book «Father Kovch's Ark» was published (Kruk, 2017).

The publication tells about the life and activities of a priest of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, who is considered a disciple and associate of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytskyi. The book tells about the period of Father Kovch's life during his service as a parish priest in Przemyślany. It is emphasized that he always stood up for the persecuted and the persecuted, regardless of their ethnic origin and religion, for which he suffered from various authorities. Stories about the priest's life alternate with reports from the places where he lived and served. The publication contains numerous archival and contemporary photographs. The book is designed for everyone who is interested in the struggle of Ukrainians for freedom and human rights, the history of Ukraine, as well as moral and ethical problems of today.

Also, the figure of Omelyan Kovch is highlighted through scientific research by domestic historians and the publication of scientific articles that analyze in detail the life of Omelyan Kovch, especially his spiritual activity during difficult historical events and his heroic participation in the rescue of Jews. For example, the article by S. Lytvyn «Parish Priest Maidanenko – Father Omelyan Kovch» describes in detail the life path and religious activities of Father Kovch. The researcher notes the personal courage of Omelyan Kovch during his service in Przemyślany, where he created cultural centers and openly opposed the Polonization measures of the Polish authorities. This allows for a better understanding of his desire to preserve the Ukrainian identity among the community, involving people in the national awakening through reading rooms «Prosvit», cooperatives and other cultural initiatives that he initiated (Lytvyn, 2012).

In the article L. Zelisko «Omelyan Kovch: Life and Spiritual Deed» reveals the meaning of the life of Father Omelyan Kovch as a living example of high human culture, mercy, service to the ideals of Christianity, the importance of his influence on the moral and spiritual consciousness of pastors of the Christian Church (Zelisko, 2014). I. Berezanska's research reveals both the issues of the biography and activities of Omelyan Kovch in general, and analyzes the features of the pastoral and public activ-

ities of the Greek Catholic priest of the city of Przemyslany in the Lviv region, Omelyan Kovch, in the interwar period. The author's special attention is focused on his activities under various occupation regimes: Polish, Soviet and German (Berezanska, 2019).

In the article I. Stasyuk and I. Hnidyk gives specific facts of the personal contribution of Fr. Omelyana Kovcha in enriching the spiritual heritage of Ukraine. The authors reviewed the life path of Fr. Omelyana Kovcha shows his practical steps to improve the situation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. His attitude to preaching as an important element of keeping the faithful in the bosom of his native Church and raising its authority is highlighted. His vision of the mission of helping the needy is shown. The authors find out why father Omelyan Kouch died and forever etched himself in human memory as a spiritual giant and a role model for many generations (Stasiuk, Hnidyk, 2018).

The mentioned scientific articles demonstrate the multifaceted character of Omelyan Kovch, who was not only a priest, but also an active fighter for spiritual and national ideals, which is still revered as an example of humanity and sacrifice.

Regarding mentions of Father Kovch in the media space, the documentary film «The Priest of Majdanek» (2005) is worth noting first of all, which tells the story of the blessed holy martyr Omelyan Kovch, who until the last day of his life confessed and administered communion to the prisoners of the «Majdanek» concentration camp in of Poland According to the director and author of the film's script, Grzegorz Linkowski, the idea was to show the quintessence, the idea of Father Kovch's activities, because this is not a historical film, but a documentary. The film «The Priest of Majdanek» aims to show Omelyan Kovch as an outstanding spiritual leader who showed exceptional courage and self-sacrifice in the conditions of Nazi terror. This is a documentary that seeks to portray Kovch's moral strength and unwavering faith, which became an example for many. The film deeply reveals Kovch as a priest who not only fulfilled his spiritual duties, but also fought for the human dignity and life of his parishioners, regardless of their nationality or religion. He actively helped Jews, exposing himself to danger and eventually ended up in the Majdanek concentration camp. In this context, the film emphasizes his universal values – love for neighbor, mercy and willingness to sacrifice oneself (Fundacja Kultury Duchowej Pogranicza w Lublinie, 2013).

The director emphasizes Omelyan's personal resilience, which remained steadfast even in the concentration camp, where he continued to serve and provide moral support to other prisoners. This makes his image more recognizable in modern historical memory, as he appears as a person who fulfilled his duty to God and people to the end.

«The Reverend Majdanek» also touches on the topic of Ukrainian-Jewish relations, showing Kovcha as an example of tolerance and mutual understanding. During the occupation, he saved Jews, which gives the film a special significance in view of the difficult moments in Ukrainian-Jewish history. Koch appears as someone who sought understanding and unity, regardless of the enmity that divided the nations at that time.

The film uses documentary footage, photographs and eyewitness accounts to convey the atmosphere of the tragic events and Kovch's personal story. Emotional interviews with people who were familiar with his activities or who survived the Holocaust add authenticity and depth. They show how this priest left a mark in people's memory thanks to his courage and sacrifice.

In addition to the above-mentioned film, the figure of Omelyan Kovcha is mentioned in the modern media space also through coverage in Ukrainian and foreign media publications. In particular, leading Ukrainian publications such as «Ukrainian Pravda» (Vozniak, 2012) and «The Day» (Marukhniak, 2020) publish articles about Omelyan Kovch, especially on the eve of his death anniversaries or during important religious holidays. For example, articles on these resources often emphasize the role of Kovch as a righteous man who risked his life to save Jews during the Holocaust, and as a symbol of Ukrainian spiritual resistance.

In social networks, the figure of Omelyan Kovcha is mentioned in numerous thematic posts, especially on the days of remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust. Ukrainian public organizations, in particular the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, publish information materials and biographical articles about Kovch, telling about his contribution to the protection of Jews and highlighting his activities in the Majdanek concentration camp.

The memory of Omelyan Kovch is revered not only in Ukraine, but also in international religious circles. In 2009, Omelyan Kovch was declared the patron saint of Greek Catholic priests, and on the anniversary of his death, regular prayer services are held, which is often reported by Catholic media such as the «Vatican News». During such events, his figure is remembered as a symbol of sacrifice and love for one's neighbor.

The media space also mentions the activities of educational and memorial projects dedicated to Omelyan Kovch. For example, exhibitions and lectures dedicated to Kovch's life, especially in the context of Ukrainian-Jewish relations and the Holocaust, are periodically held in Lviv and Kyiv. Such events are often reported by cultural and educational publications such as «Zaxid.net» (Kovalenko, 2024) or «Gazeta.ua» (Gazeta.ua, 2019).

The figure of Omelyan Kovch is actively covered abroad, especially in the media specializing in the history of the Holocaust and intercultural relations. Events commemorating Kovch have been held in Poland and Israel, and have been covered by Polish publications such as «Gazeta Wyborcza» and «Israel's The Times of Israel». Thanks to such publications, Kovch gained recognition as a «righteous man» and became a symbol of compassion and moral responsibility.

The mention of Omelyan Kovch in the media space focuses on his spiritual strength, determination and willingness to help his neighbor regardless of the circumstances, which made him an outstanding example of a spiritual leader and righteous man in Ukrainian historical memory.

Conclusion. Omelyan Kovch is an important figure for the historical memory of Ukraine and the world, especially as a symbol of moral courage and humanism. His activity went down in history as an example of international solidarity. The scientific study of the life of Omelyan Kovch reveals the significance of his role in Ukrainian society and the church hierarchy. Scientific works and historical research on his biography allow a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of priestly service in the conditions of totalitarianism and war. In the media space, Omelyan Kovch is highlighted as a heroic figure who combines spirituality and humanistic principles. Attention to this figure in mass media and social networks helps spread knowledge about his contribution among young people and contributes to the formation of a positive image of Ukraine in the international context.

Veneration of Omelyan Kovch at the state level, including awarding and installation of memorial signs, contributes to the strengthening of national memory and education of patriotic values. State initiatives support the dissemination of information about it as part of the cultural heritage of Ukraine.

Further prospects for honoring Omelyan Kovch include the development of educational and cultural initiatives dedicated to his figure, including school programs, lectures and museums. In addition, projects for international recognition and cooperation with museums, memory institutes and other organizations preserving the memory of the Holocaust are promising.

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