

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR: THE ROLE OF UKRAINIAN STUDIES IN EXPOSING RUSSIAN FALSIFICATIONS AND MYTHS

Fihurnyi Y. S.

INTRODUCTION

On February 24, 2022, the fourth year of the full-scale phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war ended and the fifth year began its countdown, and if we count from February 2014, then the thirteenth year of war began. But this chronology is somewhat incomplete, since this is not an ordinary military conflict, but an existential confrontation between the Ukrainian democratic tradition and Russian imperialism. Now, the aggressor country has once again decided to test the ability of the Ukrainian state to preserve its own sovereignty, remain an independent subject of international relations, and guarantee its citizens stable political, economic, social, and ethnocultural development under martial law.

The full-scale aggression of raskists has become a huge test for Ukraine and Ukrainians, as the enemy is trying to finally destroy the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian political nation both on the battlefield and in the information and humanitarian space. Therefore, Ukrainian scientists need to update their research aimed at studying the state and prospects for the development of science, education, and culture in Ukraine, as well as preserving historical memory and national identity in order to accelerate victory over the enemy. In the terrible conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Ukrainian government and civil society use various factors, including military, diplomatic, economic, financial, informational, cultural, humanitarian, etc., to stabilize and strengthen national security.

Despite their specificity, science and education in Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war are gaining significant importance, as they de jure and de facto respond to challenges and perform important tasks in the context of national security and the post-war reconstruction of the Ukrainian state. Among the various humanities, in our opinion, Ukrainian studies has great potential. Ukrainian studies is, first of all, an interdisciplinary integrative

science, a comprehensive educational discipline, and has the potential to become a significant element of the national ideology of the Ukrainian state. Ukrainian studies as an interdisciplinary science and educational discipline, at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, actively forms a Ukraine-centric humanitarian and information space, really contributes to strengthening national security, establishing Ukrainian national identity in Ukraine and beyond, thereby actualizing Ukrainian statehood, nation-building, ethnic formation, and ethnic-culture formation. Ukrainian studies also help refute Russian myths, fakes, and falsifications of Ukrainian history, with the help of which the enemy is trying to divide Ukrainian society, contribute to the consolidation of the Ukrainian political nation, and bring victory over the aggressor closer. Therefore, the active involvement of Ukrainian studies in the scientific and educational space of the Ukrainian state will help to successfully protect national security and significantly strengthen Ukrainian national identity in Ukraine and abroad (especially among Ukrainian refugees and the diaspora), thereby contributing to its functioning and sustainable development in the Third Millennium.

1. The formation and development of modern Ukrainian studies, an interdisciplinary integrative science and educational discipline

Ukrainian studies, according to P. Kononenko (the creator of modern Ukrainian studies and founder of the Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies), is a complex system of scientific integrative knowledge about Ukraine and world Ukrainians as a whole, as a geopolitical reality, developing in the inseparability and interconnection of space and time. This interdisciplinary, integrative science consists of the following main elements (concentrates): Ukraine – ethnos; Ukraine – nature, ecology; Ukraine – language; Ukraine – nation, state; Ukraine – culture, material and spiritual; education, art, literature, philosophy, religion, economics, law, valeology, science, army; Ukraine in international relations; Ukraine – mentality, destiny; Ukraine – historical mission. P. Kononenko emphasized that the main task of Ukrainian studies is not only the comprehensive revival of

historical memory, but also the creation, on the basis of the lessons of the past, of prerequisites for a comprehensive understanding of the pressing problems of the present and the determination of further prospects and ways to achieve the goal of Ukraine and world Ukrainianism in the near and distant future¹.

One of the first to introduce the term «Ukrainian Studies» into scientific circulation was S. Yefremov in the early 1920s, who published the bibliographic index «Ukrainian Studies» in Kyiv in 1920. He described the main task and leading direction of the promising science about Ukraine and Ukrainians as follows: «The time has come for sober work, and for it, first of all, scientific tools and those solid foundations that provide positive knowledge from all areas of what, in a broad sense, constitutes the science about our native land – Ukrainian studies».

The defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution and the national liberation struggles of 1917–1921 had a very negative impact on the institutionalization of Ukrainian studies. This was facilitated by the so-called «Ukrainization» of the 1920s and early 1930s (this is an element of the indigenization process carried out by the Bolsheviks to actualize their own leading party and economic nomenclature in areas of compact settlement of non-Russian peoples). Although it initially provided some impetus for the development of education, science, and culture in Ukrainian lands, however, over time, determined by the party leadership from above, Ukrainization transformed, or rather degenerated, into a wave of Stalinist repressions against Soviet Ukraine and the Ukrainians who lived on its territory. Ukrainian artists are a vivid example of the so-called «executed revival», and it is difficult to write about how many educators and scientists were destroyed, but it is necessary that these tragic pages of our past never be repeated².

During World War II (1939–1945), Ukrainians again waged an armed struggle for the Ukrainian Independent United State. The fighters and officers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Ukrainian nationalists, sacrificially defended their ideals in the struggle. Although Stalin's totalitarian system defeated them, it could not over-

¹ Kononenko P. P. *Ukrainian Studies*. Textbook for Higher Educational Institutions. Kyiv: Millennium, 2006. P. 17, 24.

² Fihurnyi Yu. Petro Kononenko – the creator of modern Ukrainian studies. *The founder of modern Ukrainian studies-Ukrainianism*. Kyiv, 2021. P. 38.

come their victorious spirit. At a time when Ukrainian rebels, with weapons in their hands, fought for Freedom and Liberty, Ukrainian scientists, who were forced to emigrate from their native homeland, began their struggle for the Ukrainian cause. Thus, outside Ukraine, patriotic scientists led by Volodymyr Kubyovych and Zynovy Kuzely began publishing a multi-volume «Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies»¹.

In the editorial, they noted: «The «Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies» is based on those eternal ideals that formed the basis of our worldview and our culture, its approach is based on idealistic-Christian principles and state traditions, and therefore it has a scientific, objectively valuable character, providing the most important information from various areas of Ukrainian studies»².

From the late 1940s to almost the mid-1990s, the «Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies» became an important source of knowledge about Ukraine, Ukrainians, and global Ukrainianism as a holistic geopolitical and geocultural reality of the 20th century. The editors of this important Ukrainian study are extremely right-wing, who emphasized: «The «Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies» is also important from the point of view of promoting the Ukrainian name abroad. Meeting strangers encourages each of us to inform them about our country; to do this, we sometimes need to refresh our knowledge. In addition, the appearance of the «Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies» is to some extent a matter of our national prestige, proof of our value before the cultural world. Finally, the «Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies» should directly inform foreigners about our country»³.

Over time, when the totalitarian regime began to degrade, the conceptual ideas of Ukrainian studies began to be actively promoted and developed by Ukrainian Soviet scholars in the late 80s and early 90s of the 20th century, but were actually implemented only in independent Ukraine.

Since 1991, Ukrainian studies have been actively developing as an interdisciplinary science and educational discipline. Within the

¹ Fihurnyi Y. Petro Kononenko – the creator of modern Ukrainian studies. *Founder of modern Ukrainian studies-Ukrainianism*. Kyiv, 2021. P. 39.

² Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies: in 2 vols. / ed. by V. Kubyovych, Z. Kuzel. Munich; New York., 1949. Vol. 1. P. 5.

³ Ibid.

structure of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies was established in Lviv and began active research work.

In early 1992, the Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv State University was founded in Kyiv, which in 2000 was reformatted into the Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and in 2024, after the fourth reorganization, it returned to the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University. Departments of Ukrainian studies were opened in many universities and institutes of Ukraine, and in secondary educational institutions Ukrainian studies were taught as an invariant and variable educational discipline. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, Ukrainian studies as an educational discipline and a complex integrative science began to rapidly lose its position in the educational and humanitarian space of Ukraine. All this resulted in the fact that pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian narratives began to prevail in many spheres of state, social, civic, and cultural activity. They caused extremely great harm to the educational, linguistic, cultural and general human legitimate needs of citizens of the Ukrainian state, significantly weakened the national security of Ukraine and the national identity of Ukrainians¹.

Ukrainian national identity is a combination of worldviews, views, concepts, and ideas regarding the basic interests of the Ukrainian nation and the search for effective means and ways to ensure them. Ukrainian national identity is a long-term process of the Ukrainian people's awareness of their belonging to European civilization and the Ukrainian political nation through nationalization, deprivation of the colonial inferiority complex (Little Russianism), and the final destruction of the vestiges of the totalitarian era. The essence of Ukrainian national identity lies in a complex combination of innate and acquired traits, mythologized ideas and real images, and its main component is the conscious, rational choice of a Ukrainian citizen, which is based on national

¹ Fihurnyi Yu., Shakurova O. The Role of Ukrainian Studies in Ukraine's National Security and Exposing Russian Fakes. *SKHID (EAST)*. 2025. Vol.7. Issue 3. P. 12.

consciousness, political will, political culture, citizenship and national-patriotic position¹.

Therefore, the actualization of Ukrainian studies will contribute to the intensification of the national-patriotic education of Ukrainian citizens, which in turn will significantly strengthen national security and Ukrainian national identity in Ukraine and beyond.

2. Regularities and features of informational and ideological confrontation with the aggressor

With the restoration of its independence in 1991 and for a fairly long period, Ukraine and Ukrainians remained in the post-Soviet informational, humanitarian, political, economic, spiritual, financial, military, historical, educational, and cultural space that the Russian authorities tried to control. The Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the RF) sought to stop Ukraine's movement towards a European democratic community and direct its vector towards Eurasian political, economic, and humanitarian projects. The slowdown of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic integration course has led to the stifling of reforms. Russian ideologues have tried to spiritually enslave Ukrainians, systematically using information and propaganda narratives to do so.

V. Putin personally initiated the process of developing and forming a new ideology that would help restore the newest modernized Russian superpower. It was the «Russian world» that was to become such an ideological doctrine or its important component².

In 2006, a discussion was held in the RF on the problems of its strategic development. Many politicians and experts participated in it. Russian Presidential Aide V. Surkov noted regarding the basic ideological principles of the modernization of the RF: «If Russia does not create its own discourse, its own public philosophy, its

¹ Fihurnyi Yu. Ukrainian national identity. In the book: Fihurnyi Yu. S. *Cossack armed uprisings of the 20s–30s of the 17th century as an effective factor in Ukrainian ethno-state formation in the Ukrainian dimension*. Monograph and selected Ukrainian studies. Kyiv: NRIUSWH. 2012. P. 143.

² Fihurnyi Y. “Russian world” – an important factor in the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and Ukrainians. *Ukrainian Studies*. 2016. No. 3 (60). P. 45.

own ideology acceptable at least to the majority, and preferably to all our citizens (we are not talking about state ideology, but about national, although the term «national idea» is somewhat worn out and devalued), then they will not talk to us ... If we do not talk, they will not take us into account»¹.

Also, V. Surkov emphasized that the urgent task of Russian culture is to create its own system of images and meanings, this will make it possible to maintain the integrity of the nation, since it cannot hold on by administrative means alone, because only that people can live and develop organically who has a holistic idea of themselves, their essence, who they are, where they are going, for what and with what purpose².

Scientists from the National Institute for Strategic Studies note that the term «Russian world» was introduced into the broad public and political discourse of the RF by Russian President V. Putin, who, in particular, in late 2006 and early 2007, in his public speeches, addressed in detail issues related to compatriots living abroad in terms of their linguistic, cultural and civilizational unity³.

On October 24, 2006, in his welcoming speech to the participants of the World Congress of Compatriots, V. Putin stated: «This day, of course, unites not only the multinational people of Russia, but also millions of our compatriots abroad, unites the entire so-called «Russian world». We are truly one, and no borders and obstacles will hinder this unity. We have only one common goal – to make this unity even stronger»⁴.

In June 2007, in accordance with the decree of V. Putin, a non-governmental center for the support and popularization of the Russian language and culture, «Russian world», was established. The co-founders of the Foundation were the Ministry of Foreign

¹ Surkov V. Yu. Main trends and development prospects of modern Russia. Moscow: Saratov State University Publishing House, 2007. P. 40.

² Surkov V. Yu. Main trends and development prospects of modern Russia. Moscow: Saratov State University Publishing House, 2007. P. 40.

³ Ukraine and the project of the "Russian world": analytical supplement / S. I. Zdiuruk, V. M. Yablonsky, V. V. Tokman [et al.]; edited by V. M. Yablonsky and S. I. Zdiuruk. Kyiv: NISS, 2014. P. 12.

⁴ World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad: Opening Remarks by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad. St. Petersburg, October 24, 2006. URL: <http://vksrs.com/publications/vstupitelnoe-slovo-prezidenta-rossii-v-v/>

Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science of the RF. Its main tasks were written specifically and ambitiously: ««Russian world» is not only Russians, not only our compatriots in countries of near and far abroad, emigrants, people from Russia and their descendants. These are also foreign citizens who speak Russian, who study or teach it, all those who are sincerely interested in Russia and who are concerned about its future. All layers of the Russian world – multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, socially and ideologically heterogeneous, multicultural, geographically segmented – are united through the awareness of belonging to Russia. By forming the «Russian world» as a global project, Russia finds a new identity, new opportunities for effective cooperation with the rest of the world, and additional impulses for its own development»¹.

According to these important documents, the spheres of influence of the geopolitical ideological doctrine of the «Russian world», according to the plans of its creators and providers, were to extend not only to the territories of the RF and the post-Soviet space, but also to the entire world, where ethnic Russians and so-called «Russian speakers» live. Under the cover of this quasi-cultural project, the RF began actively spreading its geopolitical, political, economic, spiritual, and cultural expansion².

With the election of Kirill (Gundyaev) as Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter referred to as the ROC) on February 1, 2009, the ideas of the «Russian world» acquired a so-called «sacred» sound. Thus, in the program speech of the head of the ROC at the III Assembly of the «Russian world» on November 3, 2009, it was emphasized, in particular: «The core of the Russian world today is Russia, Ukraine, Belarus. And the holy Monk Lavrenty of Chernigov expressed this idea with a famous phrase: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus - this is holy Rus'. It is this understanding of the «Russian world» that is embedded in the modern self-name of our Church. The Church is called Russian not on the basis of ethnicity. This name indicates that the Russian Orthodox Church carries out a pastoral mission among the peoples who accept the

¹ About the Foundation. Goals and objectives. Ideology. 2007. URL: <http://www.ruskiymir.ru/ruskiymir/ru/fund/about>

² Fihurnyi Y. The Doctrine of the “Russian World” as a Political Ideology of Russia’s Aggression against Ukraine. *Ukrainian Studies*. 2021. № 4 (81). P. 77.

Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of their national identity or at least as its essential part»¹.

In his speech, the Patriarch of the ROC outlined not only the priorities of the «Russian world», but also its basic elements of «support» – Orthodoxy, the Russian language and culture, and a common historical memory and common views on social development. In particular, he emphasized: «Finally, the third pillar of the «Russian world» is a common historical memory and common views on social development. As a result of the joint creativity of the peoples of Rus' and those who formed a single whole with them over the centuries, a way of communal living emerged that is associated with the Russian tradition throughout the world. Our peoples have a strong awareness of the continuity and succession of the Russian state and social tradition, starting from the times of Kievan Rus' and ending with present-day Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and other countries of the historical space of Rus'. Our ancestors together built and developed Rus', defended it from foreign invaders. This was the case throughout the existence of our single Fatherland, regardless of the prevailing political system»².

Using Orthodoxy, the Russian language and culture, and a common historical past (the main elements of the «Russian world»), Kremlin ideologists planned to gradually absorb Ukraine. However, the Ukrainian national revolution of the early 21st century thwarted all of V. Putin's plans, so he was forced to use, in addition to the «soft power» of the «Russian world», also «hard power» – by seizing Crimea and unleashing war in Eastern Ukraine. Thus, in February 2014, an undeclared hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war began, which is still ongoing. Despite the predominance of military, diplomatic, geopolitical, and economic factors in this conflict, the Russian leadership continues to actively use the «Russian world», believing that only the comprehensive use

¹ Address by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the opening ceremony of the III Assembly of the Russian world. November 3, 2009. URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html>

² Address by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the opening ceremony of the III Assembly of the Russian world. November 3, 2009. URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html>

of all means will allow them to completely defeat Ukraine and the Ukrainians¹.

So, the «Russian world» is not an ordinary cultural pseudo-liberal project that parasitizes on universal human patterns. «De jure» declares a humanitarian, geopolitical, religious, cultural and civilizational orientation to unite the entire Russian-speaking population on planet Earth for the preservation and development of the Russian language, culture, literature, science, education, traditions, etc., both in the RF itself and in the countries of the so-called «near abroad» (former Soviet republics) and «far abroad» (around the World) among the so-called Russian-speaking population, and «de facto» Putin's geopolitical doctrine is aimed at the theoretical substantiation and practical restoration of the «Great Historical Russia» within the borders of the Russian Empire in 1914. It was the «Russian world» that became a significant element of the neo-imperial political ideology – «rashism», a tool for the Russian autocratic power of «putinism» and the ideological narrative of first the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war, and later the full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine.

3. The Russian-Ukrainian War: Essence, Main Stages and Challenges

The modern Russian-Ukrainian war is, first and foremost, a civilizational and existential confrontation between autocracy and democracy, between the Eurasian Russian neo-empire and the European Ukrainian state. This war is characterized by the following specific features: First, complexity – combining geopolitical, geostrategic, geoeconomic, socio-political, socio-cultural, ethno-cultural, ideological, religious, national, ethnic, territorial, economic, cultural and other factors. Secondly, by its extensiveness and intensity – for the first time since the end of World War II, hostilities of this scale are taking place on the European continent, with the use of almost all types of modern weapons (except nuclear), the length of the fronts (battle lines) is measured in thousands and tens of thousands of kilometers, the involvement of more than a million mobilized citizens in the

¹ Fihurnyi Y. The Doctrine of the “Russian World” as a Political Ideology of Russia’s Aggression against Ukraine. *Ukrainian Studies*. 2021. № 4 (81). P. 78.

fighting armies, the injection of huge financial resources into the economy, etc. Thirdly, by aggressiveness – in order to achieve their strategic goal, namely, the liquidation of the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian political nation, the rashists are pursuing a genocidal policy in Ukraine, ruthlessly destroying civilians regardless of their age, gender, religious beliefs, etc., destroying critical infrastructure, the economy, cities, villages, kidnapping children, and generally doing everything possible to force Ukrainians to capitulate.

The main prerequisite for the current Russian-Ukrainian war, in our opinion, was the consistent policy of the RF aimed at the complete destruction of Ukrainian statehood and Ukrainian national identity. Starting in 1991, the Russian authorities strongly supported the so-called pro-Russian «fifth column» and purposefully destroyed the unity of pro-Ukrainian forces. It seemed that under the presidency of V. Yanukovich, Ukraine would finally lose its own subjectivity, stop moving towards the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereinafter referred to as NATO), and join the RF as an autonomous state. However, the Ukrainian National Revolution of the early 21st century became a turning point for the state-building, nation-building and ethno-cultural development of Ukraine. The passionate part of the Ukrainian people managed to repel the offensive of the revanchist pro-Russian forces in Ukraine. The Eurasian integration processes, to which the Russian authorities actively tried to involve the Ukrainian state during 2010–2014, were stopped, and the Euro-Atlantic vector of the development of Ukrainian society again became dominant. For the Russian neo-imperial establishment, these revolutionary events became an existential challenge to which it had to respond. However, if at the turn of 2004–2005, Russian revanchists limited themselves exclusively to moral and financial assistance to their puppets in Ukraine, then the fateful events of the Ukrainian winter of 2013–2014 were met by the rashists and their proxies prepared, and on February 20, 2014, an undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war began, which continues to this day. Its course can be conditionally divided into the following main stages: 1) the annexation of Crimea (February – March 2014); 2) the «Novorossiya» project (April – July 2014); 3) covert military aggression of the RF against Ukraine (July 2014 – February 2015); 4) stabilization of the front line in eastern Ukraine,

permanent combat clashes in the most important areas of the confrontation and continuous disguised military and open information aggression of the RF (February 2015 – February 2022); 5) full-scale invasion of the Armed Forces of the RF (hereinafter referred to as the AF RF) from the north, east and south into the territory of Ukraine (24.02.2022 – to date).

First, the rashists occupied Crimea, launched anti-Ukrainian activities in the East and South of Ukraine (the so-called «Russian Spring»), created terrorist quasi-state entities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the so-called «Donetsk People's Republic» (hereinafter – «DPR») and «Luhansk People's Republic» (hereinafter – «LPR»), and introduced Russian occupation military units into Ukrainian territory.

In turn, pro-Ukrainian forces managed to unite and, thanks to a powerful voluntary and volunteer movement, stopped the Russian invaders and their proxy terrorists. Although, tactically, the Russian revanchist forces achieved some successes in Ukraine (the seizure of Crimea, the creation of the terrorist enclaves of the «DPR» and «LPR», etc.), strategically the Russians lost, since the Ukrainian state survived, and the Ukrainian political nation became a fait accompli.

If in 2014, at a critical time for the state, it was the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the AFU) with the help of the National Guard of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the NGU) and volunteer military formations, the so-called «dobrobats», that stopped the offensive of the Russians and their proxies, then already in late February and early March 2022, the Territorial Defense Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine supported the soldiers of the AFU and NGU and thwarted the aggressor's plans to capture Kyiv in 3 days and finally buried the dreams of the rashists regarding the lightning-fast liquidation of the Ukrainian state and the extermination of the Ukrainian political nation.

Overall, the military campaign of the Defense Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the DFU) in 2022 was generally successful. Initially, the so-called «Putin's blitzkrieg» was stopped. Despite some successes of the AF RF in the first half of 2022, the DFU managed to stabilize the line of combat contact, accumulate military potential and in the second half of 2022, launch a successful counteroffensive. The DFU successfully conducted two counterof-

fensives – the September Kharkiv and the summer-autumn Kherson. As a result, almost the entire Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and right-bank part of the Kherson regions with Kherson were liberated.

The enemy managed to stop the Ukrainian counteroffensive only by mobilizing over 500,000 of its citizens into the AF RF and straining its own military resources.

2023 was supposed to be the year of Ukraine's final victory, the liberation of temporarily occupied territories, including Crimea, and the entry of the DFU to the borders of Ukraine in 1991. The reality turned out to be different. Why did this happen: 1) Mistakes were made when planning the military campaign; instead of one main offensive, three were planned (on the cities of Tokmak, Berdyansk, and Bakhmut). Such a dispersion of forces helped the AF RF prepare powerful lines of defense and stop the summer counteroffensive of the DFU. 2) Ukraine's economy was not rebuilt on «military rails». 3) Ukraine's partner states did not want the RF to lose completely; they feared the Kremlin's possible use of nuclear weapons and the possible collapse of the RF, so they supplied high-quality weapons slowly and in insufficient quantities, and the issue of strengthening Ukrainian aviation with modern F-16 aircraft was postponed to 2024. 4) the Russian authorities have worked quite successfully on their mistakes, the military-industrial complex has operated at full capacity, and due to the huge financial revenues from the sale of energy resources, the economy, banking sector, and society have not felt the full burden of Western sanctions and have continued to develop more or less stably. 5) Ukrainian civil society, after the shocking events of 2022, in 2023 was lulled by politicians' speeches about the victorious counteroffensive of the DFU, which would finally destroy the occupiers, and was unable to solve the problems of mobilization.

Despite all these problems, in 2023, the DFU stopped the offensives of the AF RF on the cities of Vugledar, Chasiv Yar, Kupyansk, Lyman, Avdiivka, successfully advanced in the Zaporizhia direction, created a number of bridgeheads on the left bank of the Kherson region, and ousted the Russian fleet from the Western Black Sea theater of operations. In order for 2024 to become a turning point, it was necessary to: 1) wage war not symmetrically, but asymmetrically; 2) transfer the economy exclusively to servicing the DFU, significantly increase the

production of Ukrainian weapons, both high-precision and conventional, in order to destroy the enemy and its military potential on an industrial scale; 3) create a clear strategy for victory, protect human potential in every way and actively apply modern innovative means of warfare; 4) adopt the enemy's know-how, build powerful lines of fortifications, and if necessary, be able to switch to defense to destroy the military resource of the AF RF; 5) consolidate the Ukrainian political nation and significantly strengthen the national-patriotic education of citizens of the Ukrainian state, using for this purpose Ukraine-centric humanitarian policy in general and Ukrainian studies in particular.

Unfortunately, not all of these tasks were implemented by the authorities and society. The military campaign of the DFU in 2024 was strategically successful, despite the fact that the enemy had tactical advances in some areas of the front. The main result of 2024 is that Ukraine survived and systematically prepared for the de-occupation of the territories temporarily captured by the aggressor.

On October 10, 2023, the AF RF launched their counteroffensive near Avdiivka, which later developed into a frontal offensive along most of the front line. During this time, the enemy captured the Avdiivka and Vugledar fortified areas, launched a surprise offensive on May 10, 2024, and attempted to create a bridgehead (the so-called «buffer zone») in the north of the Kharkiv region, and conducted active offensive operations in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, with the aim of inflicting heavy losses and ultimately destroying the DFU.

Temporary failures of the DFU are directly and indirectly related to the following factors: 1) external and international, as a result of inter-party struggle in the United States of America (hereinafter referred to as the USA), for almost six months (from the end of 2023 to mid-2024), American military assistance to Ukraine was provided in meager quantities, and other partner countries were unable or unwilling to increase it. 2) intra-Ukrainian, only from May 18, 2024, the Law of Ukraine «On Mobilization Training and Mobilization», which is very important for the DFU, came into effect, which, although it significantly improved mobilization issues, could not fully contribute to replenishing the ranks of the DFU with motivated and trained soldiers, while at the front the

problem of replenishment and rotation of personnel of units remains very relevant.

The Kursk offensive operation of the DFU, which began on August 6, 2024 and ended in the spring of 2025, once again demonstrated the high level of planning of the military leadership and high-quality professional training of Ukrainian soldiers. In conducting modern maneuver warfare, the Ukrainian army has no equal, everything rests only on resources – human and material.

On October 16, 2024, during a speech in parliament, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky unveiled the Victory Plan. It consists of five points (geopolitical, two military, economic and security, and three secret annexes): 1) inviting Ukraine to NATO, which could become the foundation for peace and evidence for the Russian dictator-autocrat that his geopolitics towards the Ukrainian state has suffered a crushing defeat; 2) defense of Ukraine, continuation of DFU operations on enemy territory; 3) deterrence of the AF RF, Ukraine proposes to deploy a comprehensive non-nuclear strategic deterrence package on its territory, which will be sufficient to protect the country from the enemy; 4) using Ukraine's powerful economic potential for the needs of strategic partners; 5) security, involving in the post-war period Ukrainian units of the DFU, which have gained real experience of modern warfare, in ensuring peace in Europe and beyond¹.

The military campaign of the DFU in 2025 was strategically successful, despite the fact that the aggressor had an advance on some sections of the front line. The most important result of 2025 is that the Ukrainian state has survived, the DFU has preserved its combat capability, is accumulating material and human resources, and is consistently preparing for the de-occupation of the territories temporarily captured by the enemy. The aggressor country's accumulation of vast resources allowed the Russians to attack the DFU positions along most of the front line. In the first half of 2025, the AF RF, with the help of an expeditionary military contingent from totalitarian North Korea, gradually pushed the DFU out of the Kursk region of the RF. Somewhat later, the AF RF launched an

¹ The victory plan consists of five points and three secret annexes. October 16, 2024. Official website of the President of Ukraine. <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/plan-peremogi-skladayetsya-z-pyati-punktiv-i-troh-tayemnih-d-93857>

offensive and tried to create not only a bridgehead in the north of the Sumy region, but also planned to capture even the city of Sumy, but thanks to the heroic resistance of the DFU, the enemy suffered heavy losses and was stopped. The AF RF also conducted active offensive operations in the East of Ukraine with the aim of inflicting heavy losses and finally destroying the DFU.

Temporary failures of the DFU are directly and indirectly related to the following factors: 1) external, international, as a result of the presidential elections in the fall of 2024, the Republican Party led by Donald Trump came to power in the USA. Unfortunately, the US President blocked free American military aid to Ukraine (the DFU received weapons and military equipment in small quantities, allocated by the previous Joe Biden administration) and only in the second half of 2025 began to provide it with money from partner countries, mainly from the EU. 2) internal, Ukrainian, the Ukrainian authorities have failed to solve the mobilization problem during the year, namely, to fully contribute to replenishing the ranks of the DFU with motivated and trained soldiers, while at the front the problem of replenishing and rotating the personnel of the units remains very relevant. The Ukrainian authorities are also not systematically fighting corruption in Ukraine. Currently, corruption scandals are demotivating the DFU, Ukrainian society, and the leadership of partner countries, and are intensifying anti-Ukrainian rhetoric and rashist propaganda.

The main task of the DFU in 2026 is to stop the advance of the AF RF on most sections of the front line, complete the corps reform (transforming the corps into powerful military formations capable of performing operational-tactical tasks), and fill the corps with motivated and trained personnel, which will allow all vacancies in military units to be fully filled, strengthen their combat capability, stop the offensive of the AF RF, and help the DFU launch a powerful counteroffensive.

In turn, the Ukrainian authorities, with the support of civil society, should intensify anti-corruption policy, strengthen the Ukrainization of the humanitarian space of Ukraine, and use the achievements of Ukrainian studies as an integrative science and educational discipline to counter the «Russian world» and Russian falsifications and fakes.

So, the soldiers of the DFU first stopped the hybrid, and then the full-scale invasion of the AF RF, stabilized the military situation, and now they are courageously restraining the offensive of the rashists. We hope that the balanced policy of the Ukrainian authorities, powerful military and financial assistance from partner countries, consolidation of the Ukrainian political nation, coordination of cooperation between scientists and educators will significantly strengthen national-patriotic education, which will actualize the mobilization resource of the DFU. All these systemic actions will help unite the citizens of the Ukrainian state for victory over the AF RF. Thanks to the heroes of the DFU, the Ukrainian state will restore unity and sovereignty, while Putin's Russia will suffer a shameful defeat and this post-Soviet empire will collapse into several dozen state entities.

4. Exposing the main Russian myths and falsifications of Ukrainian history

Russian military aggression, initially hybrid (from February 20, 2014), and from February 24, 2022 a full-scale war, was aimed at finally resolving the so-called «Ukrainian question», that is, to destroy Ukraine as a state, eliminate the Ukrainian political nation and obtain a powerful political, economic, financial, military, cultural and human resource for the restoration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 2.0 in the format of the modern Russian superpower (neo-empire) of «Greater Historical Russia» under Putin's leadership. Currently, the total destruction of Ukraine and Ukrainians is taking place both on the battlefield and in the humanitarian sphere, therefore, in order to strengthen national security and strengthen the national identity of Ukraine, Ukrainian scholars must make considerable efforts to debunk Russian falsifications and myths that are aimed at discrediting Ukrainian statehood and significantly weakening national security. This ideological direction is important in the civilizational confrontation with the autocratic Eurasian neo-empire and will contribute to Ukraine's victory¹.

¹ Fihurnyi Yu., Shakurova O. The Role of Ukrainian Studies in Ukraine's National Security and Exposing Russian Fakes. *Skhid (East)*. 2025. Vol.7. Issue 3. P. 11.

It is important to emphasize once again that the full-scale war of the RF against Ukraine is being waged not only by traditional armed means, but also with the involvement of modern innovative technologies, including the imperial doctrine of the «Russian world» and various information and propaganda tools aimed at weakening national security, destroying the national identity and national consciousness of Ukrainians. All these measures should lead first to the weakening of the Ukrainian state, and later to its complete liquidation.

One of the significant destructive tools of the RF is a powerful information and propaganda campaign to discredit Ukraine and Ukrainians, in particular, the spread both in Russia and beyond its borders, where the main focus group is citizens of the Ukrainian state, of various Russian myths, fakes, and falsifications of Ukrainian history. Among many of them, we can single out the following myths about: «a single Orthodox fraternal Russian and Ukrainian people»; «the Ukrainian language is a dialect of Russian»; «the non-involvement of Ukraine in Kyivan Rus and the promotion of its belonging only to Russian history»; «the Pereyaslav Treaty of 1654 is an «age-old voluntary act» of reunification of Ukraine with Russia»; «Ivan Mazepa is a traitor»; «the imperial project «Novorossiia» is the primordial Russian lands»; «Ukrainians are anti-Semites, and S. Petliura personally organized Jewish pogroms»; «V. Lenin is the creator of Ukrainian statehood»; «the Famine of 1932–1933 became a tragedy for the entire Soviet people, and not exclusively a genocide for Ukrainians and was not planned by J. Stalin, it was a consequence of temporary food difficulties caused by weather anomalies and mistakes of local authorities»; «victory in World War II is the merit of only the Russian people»; «soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army are traitors, collaborators and mercenaries of the fascists»; «Ukraine is an integral part of the «Russian world»»; «The Orthodox Church of Ukraine is non-canonical and fake»; «Crimea has always been and will be Russian»; «The Ukrainian national revolution of the early 21st century was planned and implemented by the leadership of NATO and the EU»; «Russia is not at war with Ukraine, but with NATO»; «in Ukraine, the authorities and Ukrainian Nazis are repressing Russian-speaking citizens», etc.

In his speeches, interviews, publications, etc., V. Putin systematically calls Russians and Ukrainians a single Orthodox fraternal people. Thus, on July 12, 2021, the official website of the President of the Russian Federation published his programmatic article «On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians» in Russian and Ukrainian, in which V. Putin once again emphasized that Russians and Ukrainians are one people, a single whole, and Russia and Ukraine are parts, in essence, of one historical and spiritual space. V. Putin is convinced that modern Ukraine is entirely the brainchild of the Soviet era, the first Ukrainian state – the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic – was created by V. Lenin exclusively at the expense of the territories of the so-called «Great Historical Russia» and founded the Ukrainian Soviet nation, thereby dividing the great Russian people. V. Putin emphasizes: «It was the Soviet national policy – instead of the great Russian nation, a triune people consisting of Great Russians, Little Russians and Belarusians – that established at the state level the position of three separate Slavic peoples: Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian»¹.

Ideologists of rashism and providers of the «Russian world» repeat V. Putin's information and propaganda quasi-historical narratives and try to convince both the so-called «deep Russian people» and ordinary Ukrainians that we are the only Orthodox brotherly people.

In turn, scientists and educators must refute falsifications of Ukrainian history and convince citizens of the Ukrainian state with arguments and facts. In particular, that the military-political union of the Cossack hetman B. Khmelnytsky with the Moscow Tsar O. Romanov was a fatal mistake that led to centuries-long domination of the Muscovites over the Ukrainians. Also, that as a result of the many wars of aggression waged by the Russian Empire and its successor, the Soviet Union, the Ukrainians lost millions killed and wounded, and the terror of famine by the totalitarian regime in 1921–1923, 1932–1933, and 1946–1947 could have completely destroyed the Ukrainian people as a unique ethnic community.

¹ Putin V. On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians. 2021. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66182>

The comprehensive and systematic distortion of Ukrainian national history, falsification and fakery have become a powerful weapon of rashist propaganda and an integral part of Putin's criminal regime. That is why a comprehensive analysis of historical events and their critical rethinking is an extremely important task for Ukrainian scholars. Refuting Russian quasi-historical myths, on which Russia's imperial claims to Ukraine are based, that Ukraine as a state and the Ukrainian people do not exist, and that Ukrainians are part of the great Russian people, which was artificially divided by V. Lenin and created the first Ukrainian state, is becoming a *modus operandi* for Ukrainian scholars. A comprehensive refutation of Russian historical myths will contribute to the strengthening of state and national liberation narratives in Ukrainian history, strengthening national security, and will become one of the key factors in defeating the enemy.

Because the RF full-scale war against Ukraine is not only a struggle for territory, but also planned information attacks against the civilian population and the capture of the mass consciousness of Ukrainians to weaken national security and ultimately eliminate the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian political nation. In the modern post-truth information world, myths, fakes, and various falsifications are gaining importance and are one of the most effective tools of informational influence on both the mass consciousness of ordinary citizens and the beliefs of the political, spiritual, business, military, intellectual, and artistic elite.

In turn, Russian myths are used as a powerful tool of hybrid warfare to falsify historical events and create false ideas about political, socio-cultural and ethno-cultural reality. Manipulation of falsified history allows myths and fakes to form a false and distorted reality in the objects of information influence, namely, in the citizens of the Ukrainian state. As a result of these complex and systemic actions of the enemy, the national security of the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian national identity are under threat of significant weakening, therefore, scientists and educators must intensify and coordinate their actions to refute Russian information and propaganda myths, falsifications, and fakes of the history of Ukraine.

The main task of de-occupation and demythologizing the mass consciousness of citizens of the Ukrainian state is to free themselves from the main myth of the rashists about the «single

Orthodox fraternal Russian and Ukrainian people» and to eradicate from the collective consciousness falsified ideas about the ethnic, national, political, historical, cultural and religious unity of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. An important mechanism for destroying Russian myths and fakes about Ukrainian history is the formation of new ideas about the place of Ukraine, Ukrainians, and Ukrainian civil society in the world civilization of the present and the future.

Therefore, Ukrainian studies as an interdisciplinary science and educational discipline has great potential and real opportunities to actualize the humanitarian achievements of the intellectual elite of Ukraine to strengthen national security and enhance the development of national science and education, and refute the propaganda myths, falsifications, and fakes of rashists. Ukrainian studies should become an important element of the national Ukrainian-centric ideology, the foundation of Ukraine's national security, a strong ideological narrative of the Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian political nation, and the Ukrainian national identity.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, having analyzed the development of science and education in Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, namely, having characterized the role of Ukrainian studies in exposing Russian falsifications and myths, we came to the following conclusions.

Firstly, Ukrainian studies is an interdisciplinary integrative science, a comprehensive educational discipline, which at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century actively forms a Ukraine-centric humanitarian and information space, really contributes to strengthening national security, establishing Ukrainian national identity in Ukraine and beyond, thereby actualizing Ukrainian statehood, nation-building, ethnic formation, and ethnic-culture formation.

Secondly, the «Russian world» is Putin's geopolitical doctrine aimed at the theoretical substantiation and practical restoration of «Great Historical Russia» within the borders of the Russian Empire in 1914. It was the «Russian world» that became a significant element of the neo-imperial political ideology – «rashism», a tool for the Russian autocratic power of «putinism» and the ideological

narrative of first the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war, and later the full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine.

Thirdly, the modern full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war is a civilizational and existential confrontation between autocracy and democracy, between the Eurasian Russian neo-empire and the European Ukrainian state. It is characterized by the following features: complexity, extensiveness; intensity and aggressiveness. In order to achieve their strategic goal, namely, the liquidation of the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian political nation, the rashists are pursuing a genocidal policy in Ukraine.

Fourth, Russian information and propaganda pseudo-historical myths, narratives and fakes are a powerful tool of hybrid warfare aimed at falsifying historical events and creating false ideas about socio-political reality and forming a false social reality of objects of information influence. As a result of these systemic actions, Ukraine's national security and national identity suffer losses.

Fifth, Ukrainian studies has great potential and real opportunities to actualize the intellectual achievements of Ukraine's humanitarian elite to strengthen national security and national identity, and refute propaganda myths and fakes of rashists.

ANNOTATION

The development of science and education in Ukraine in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war is analyzed, namely, the role of Ukrainian studies in exposing Russian falsifications and myths is revealed. It was found that Ukrainian studies is an interdisciplinary integrative science, a complex educational discipline, which at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century actively forms a Ukrainian-centric humanitarian and information space, and really contributes to strengthening national security and establishing Ukrainian national identity in Ukraine and beyond. It has been found that the «Russian world» is Putin's geopolitical doctrine aimed at the theoretical substantiation and practical restoration of «Great Historical Russia» within the borders of the Russian Empire in 1914. It is revealed that the «Russian world» is a significant element of the neo-imperial political ideology – «rashism», a tool for the Russian autocratic power of «putinism» and an ideological narrative of first the hybrid Russian-Ukrainian war, and later the full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine. It is shown that the modern full-scale Russian-

Ukrainian war is a civilizational and existential confrontation between autocracy and democracy, between the Eurasian Russian neo-empire and the European Ukrainian state, it is characterized by the following features: complexity, extensiveness; intensity and aggressiveness. It has been traced that Russian information and propaganda pseudo-historical myths, narratives and fakes are a powerful factor in hybrid warfare with the aim of falsifying historical events and creating false ideas about socio-political reality and forming a false humanitarian paradigm in the objects of information influence. It is noted that Ukrainian studies as an integrative science and educational discipline has great potential and real opportunities to actualize the intellectual achievements of the humanitarian elite of Ukraine to strengthen national security and strengthen national identity and refute propaganda myths and fakes of rashists.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Проаналізовано розвиток науки і освіти України в умовах російсько-української війни, а саме, розкрито роль українознавства у викритті російських фальсифікацій і міфів. Виявлено, що українознавство – міждисциплінарна інтегративна наука, комплексна навчальна дисципліна, яка у кінці ХХ століття та на початку ХХІ століття, активно формує україноцентричний гуманітарний й інформаційний простір, реально сприяє посиленню національної безпеки, утвердженню в Україні та за її межами української національної ідентичності. З’ясовано, що «русский мир» – путінська геополітична доктрина спрямована на теоретичне обґрунтування та практичне відновлення «Великої історичної Росії» у кордонах Російської імперії на 1914 р. Розкрито, що «русский мир» є вагомим елементом неоімперської політичної ідеології – «рашизму», інструментом для російської авторитарної влади «путінізму» й ідеологічним наративом спочатку гібридної російсько-української війни, а згодом і повномасштабної агресії Росії проти України. Показано, що сучасна повномасштабна російсько-українська війна є цивілізаційним й екзистенційним протистоянням між авторитарією та демократією, між євразійською російською неоімперією та європейською Українською державою, вона характеризується такими особливостями: комплексністю, екстенсивністю; інтенсивністю та агресивністю. Простежено,

що російські інформаційно-пропагандистські псевдоісторичні міфи, наративи і фейки є потужним фактором гібридної війни з метою фальсифікації історичних подій і створення помилкових уявлень про соціально-політичну реальність та формування хибної гуманітарної парадигми в об'єктів інформаційного впливу. Відзначено, що українознавство як інтегративна наука й освітня дисципліна має великий потенціал і реальні можливості актуалізувати інтелектуальні напрацювання гуманітарної еліти України для зміцнення національної безпеки та посилення національної ідентичності й спростування пропагандистських міфів і фейків рашистів.

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Information about the authors:

Fihurnyi Y. S.,

Candidate of Historical Sciences, Senior Researcher, Senior Research Fellow of the Department of Ethnology and History of Ukraine, Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, 60, Volodymyrska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, 01601 (ukr.etnolog_fus@ukr.net)

Інформація про автора:

Фігурний Ю. С.,

Кандидат історичних наук, старший дослідник, старший науковий співробітник відділу етнології та історії України Науково-дослідного інституту українознавства Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка, вул. Володимирська, 60, Київ, Україна, 01601 (ukr.etnolog_fus@ukr.net)