

The New Emperors? Post-Soviet Presidents and Church-State Relations in Ukraine and Russia

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Twenty years ago, the theme of this conference, “Power and Authority in Eastern Christian Experience” would have been considered by many to be of interest primarily to historians and theologians, but not particularly relevant to the political discourse underway in many of the countries which traditionally formed part of the Eastern Christian world. As the Soviet Union began to collapse, its own constituent republics and the countries of the Eastern Bloc, comprising the historic core of the Eastern Christian world, began looking to the West, and particularly the United States, for their political models.¹ The last Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, attempted to emulate Western “economic and political practices”² rather than turning to pre-Communist traditions and models.

However, it was highly unrealistic that the majority-Orthodox nations of the formerly Communist world would automatically “meekly restructure their culture, society, politics and economy along the norms provided to them from the West.”³ Almost immediately there began the search for what S. Frederick Starr has labeled the “usable past”⁴—those traditions and elements rooted in the past that could help buttress new political and economic structures. In his study of how reform efforts were successful in Novgorod and other Russian regions, Nicolai N. Petro has concluded that it was when elites embraced a “positive political myth rooted in [the] past” that they successfully “eased the shock of cultural discontinuity, broadened the social constituency in favor of reforms, and

¹ James H. Billington, *The Face of Russia: Anguish, Aspiration and Achievement in Russian Culture* (New York: TV Books, 1998, 1999), 236-237.

² Michael McFaul and Regine A. Spector, “External sources and consequences of Russia’s ‘sovereign democracy,’” in *New Challenges to Democratization*, ed. Peter Burnell and Richard Youngs (New York: Routledge, 2010), 116.

³ Nicolai N. Petro, “A Russian Model of Development: What Novgorod Can Teach the West,” in *Civil Society and the Search for Justice in Russia*, ed. Christopher Marsh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 91.

⁴ S. Frederick Starr, “Russia’s Democratic Roots: A Usable Past,” *New Republic*, May 15, 1989, 24-27.

contributed to dramatically higher levels of confidence in local government.”⁵

In the two largest Orthodox countries of the post-Soviet states—Ukraine and the Russian Federation—there has been an ongoing search for inspiration from the past. Post-Soviet Russian leaders, particularly over the last ten years, have been interested in finding and applying useful precedents from their history and culture, holding conferences and workshops designed to plumb the past for useful insights.⁶ Vladislav Surkov, the deputy chief of staff to president Dmitry Medvedev, and one of the articulators of the ideology of United Russia, the ruling party, told United Russian party activists at a 2006 congress: “If a people cannot develop their own images and thoughts ... then they will have, in general, no political or cultural thought of their own ... We should have our own voice... We should have our own version of political language.”⁷ To some extent, this search for roots in Russia is to help differentiate the Russian experience from that of Western Europe and North America; as Surkov observed, the “new democratic order arises from European civilization. But within this there is a specifically Russian version.”⁸

Former president (and current prime minister) Vladimir Putin himself draws inspiration from the past as he charts policy; “the Russia he repeatedly invokes is a great, powerful, divinely ordained state that stretches back a thousand years.”⁹ Moreover, Russian elites acknowledge that part of that Russian inheritance is the East Roman (Byzantine) legacy—and the Byzantine experience is no longer seen as part of Russia’s curse (separating it from the Western world) but contains within it the seeds of Russia’s regeneration as a global power in the twenty-first century. As Nina Khrushcheva observed: “Under Boris Yeltsin, the double eagle got little play, but in the Putin years its significance has come to equal that of the Communist red star. Byzantium and its symbols are discussed on talk shows, their imperial grandeur cited as an example for Russia's own future glory; Orthodox priests with distinguished beards

⁵ Petro, 44.

⁶ For instance, in the area of foreign policy, the former foreign minister Igor S. Ivanov makes the case that post-Soviet Russia can and should learn from its past experiences, and cited some of the work being done by the ministry to examine the Russian past for guidance. Igor S. Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 4, 26-29.

⁷ Quoted in Nikolas K. Gvosdev “Russia's Future,” *Orbis* 53:2 (Spring 2009): 350.

⁸ Vladislav Surkov, “Russian Political Culture: A View from Utopia,” in *Russian Political Culture: A View from Utopia*, ed. Konstantin Remchukov (Moscow: Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 2007), 7.

⁹ Serge Schmemmann, “A Visit with Putin,” *New York Times*, September 16, 2007, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/16/opinion/16iht-edserge.1.7519839.html>.

read sermons on how Russia, if it is to achieve greatness, must look into its Christian predecessor's past.”¹⁰ In 2008 the documentary, “The Destruction of the Empire: a Byzantine Lesson,” authored and produced by Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), a conservative cleric with close ties to the Kremlin, aired on Russian state television—and proved to be so popular that an encore was scheduled, along with an additional discussion—and provoked discussion and debate as to the appropriate uses (or misuses) of the Byzantine tradition. Yet among supporters and critics alike, what was striking about the film and the subsequent conversations it engendered was its attempt to make the historical past relevant to current conditions—especially in the way in which Emperor Basil II (reigned 976-1025) was held up as a model of leadership to be studied and emulated.¹¹

While Russia’s post-Soviet leadership has turned to imperial pasts—both Byzantine and Russian—for inspiration, in Ukraine, it is the legacy of the Cossack hetmanate (particularly the seventeenth-century hetmans like Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny , Bogdan Khmelnitsky and Ivan Mazepa)—which for centuries fought for autonomy and freedom for the Orthodox Church—which contemporary Ukrainian politicians cite as their inspiration.¹² When he was inaugurated as president of Ukraine in January 2005, Viktor Yushchenko “also took the symbolic oath of hetman, or leader of Cossacks - the historic defenders of Ukraine against foreign oppression.”¹³ In contrast to the anti-Western tinge that is associated with current Russian interest in the Byzantine

¹⁰ Nina L. Khrushcheva, “Lost in Byzantium,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 2008, at <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jun/01/opinion/op-khrushcheva1> [accessed December 23, 2010].

¹¹ “A Byzantine sermon,” *The Economist*, February 14, 2008, at http://www.economist.com/node/10701960?story_id=10701960 [accessed December 26, 2010]. Basil II is praised for having created a “stabilization fund” to cushion the economy against shocks, for campaigning against “oligarchs” who sought to concentrate power at the expense of both the state and ordinary people, and struggling against “separatists” who sought to divide the empire. This led *The Economist* to note, “The film's usage of modern words and imagery is so conspicuous that the moral cannot escape a Russian viewer.” The film can be watched via this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP9pMVaEuLE> [accessed December 27, 2010]. A copy of the script is available (in Russian) at <http://www.taganrog.orthodoxy.ru/index.php?id=5229> [accessed December 27, 2010].

¹² Yushchenko, for instance, has called for the construction of a “Cossack capital” near the capital, to emphasize these linkages. “Yushchenko hoping for construction of ‘Cossack capital’ outside Kyiv,” *Kyiv Post*, February 22, 2010, at <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/city/detail/60142/print/> [accessed January 1, 2011].

¹³ “Yushchenko takes reins in Ukraine,” *BBC News*, January 23, 2005, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4198957.stm> [accessed December 23, 2010].

Empire, embracing the Cossack brotherhood (*sich*) is seen as a way for Ukraine to demonstrate its membership in the European and Western community of nations—but on its own terms.¹⁴ To the extent that the hetmanate viewed itself as an Orthodox Christian commonwealth, an appeal to its traditions is also part of the process of reclaiming the Eastern Christian experience as something relevant to twenty-first century life and politics.

One of the areas where the influence of the past can be observed is in relations between the Orthodox Church and the executive branch in both Russia and Ukraine. In the traditional conception of the relationship between Church and state in the East, the holder of the supreme executive power—the emperor, the prince, the tsar—enjoyed a privileged position within the Church; he (or in some cases, she¹⁵) was not simply an ordinary member of the laity. In the twelfth century, the canonist Theodore Balsamon, patriarch of Antioch, asserted that “Orthodox emperors have the right to teach Christian people and like priests burn incense as an act of worship to God.”¹⁶ Russian emperors, at the time of their coronation, entered the sanctuary to take communion, and explicitly claimed temporal headship over the affairs of the Orthodox Church within the boundaries of the empire (as per the decree issued by Emperor Paul I on April 5, 1797).¹⁷ Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, set the pattern for considering the emperor as a quasi-hierarch of the Church, as its protector and benefactor, noting: “He exercised a peculiar care over the church of God: and whereas, in the several provinces there were some who differed from each other in judgment, he, like some general bishop constituted by God, convened synods of his ministers.”¹⁸ The

¹⁴ See, for instance, the comments made by former president Viktor Yushchenko about Hetman Ivan Mazepa. “Yushchenko calls for myth of Hetman Mazepa's treason to be dispelled,” *Interfax*, March 20, 2009, at <http://www.interfax.com.ua/eng/main/10291/> [accessed December 26, 2010].

¹⁵ Empress Catherine the Great of Russia, for instance, was addressed by Georgian Orthodox bishops as the “Mother of all Orthodox Christians”, the protector and benefactor of the Church. Cf. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives Toward Georgia, 1763-1819* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 28.

¹⁶ Quoted in A. A. Vasiliev, *A History of the Byzantine Empire*, volume II (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1958), 70.

¹⁷ Daniel H. Shubin, *A History of Russian Christianity*, vol. III, *The Synodal Era and the Sectarian, 1725-1894* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 87; see also Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *Emperors and Elections: Reconciling the Orthodox Tradition with Modern Politics* (Huntington, NY: Troitsa Books, 2000), 78.

¹⁸ Chapter XLIV. A copy of Eusebius' *The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine* is archived by Paul Halsall of the Fordham University Medieval Studies Center as part of the online *Medieval Sourcebook*, at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-constantine.html> [accessed December 23, 2010].

secular ruler was also expected to use the power of his office to turn people to the “true faith” and to mediate to solve schisms when the hierarchs themselves were unable to bring about unity. The Russian Church reiterated this “special role” played by the Emperor; even as late as 1906, the Pre-Sobor consultation, in its “12th point”, declared: “The Emperor, being of the Orthodox faith, is the supreme patron of the Orthodox Church and the guardian of her well-being.”¹⁹

While Cossack hetmans were not consecrated to their position, as heads of the Cossack brotherhood, they nevertheless also considered themselves to be protectors and benefactors of the Orthodox Church, and could influence the selection of hierarchs and the outcome of church councils. But perhaps the most important precedent for contemporary Ukraine was the role of the “chief executive” of the Cossack host in restoring an independent Orthodox hierarchy in Ukraine, after the existing bishops had agreed to the terms of the union with the Catholic Church in Brest in 1596. It was the hetman, Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny, who negotiated with Patriarch Theophanes of Jerusalem (and who threatened to deprive the patriarch of Cossack protection when traveling from Moscow back to the Ottoman Empire should he refuse the hetman’s request) who succeeded in getting Iov Boretsky consecrated as Metropolitan of Kyiv (Kiev) in 1620, as well as filling other vacant sees with Orthodox bishops.²⁰ In addition, when dealing with competing ecclesiastical hierarchies (those who supported the Union of 1596 and those who were against it), the Cossack leaders could use their temporal authority to hand over parishes and monasteries to the control of the faction they supported²¹—another precedent that has echoes in current developments in Ukraine. Having restored an Orthodox hierarchy in the ancient lands of Rus’, the Cossack hetmans did not then stand aside to let the Church run its own affairs but considered themselves the “lay protectors” of the Orthodox Church within their territories.

Twenty years ago, the prevailing assumption was that the largest components of the traditionally Eastern Christian heartland had definitively entered into a post-Constantinian age and that political leaders would not seek to restore this earlier model of Church-state relations.²² The regime would no longer be the protector and sponsor of

¹⁹ Quoted in Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998), 196.

²⁰ Serhii Plokyh, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 109-116.

²¹ Plokyh, 134-35.

²² The Church-state status quo that had evolved in the East Roman/Byzantine realm in the fourth century, to some extent, set the “Orthodox norm” through to the modern age. As

the Church—as in the tsarist period—nor would it be the Church’s active opponent—as during Soviet times. From henceforth, Church and state would go their separate ways. The 1990 “Law on Freedom of Conscience”²³ envisioned a Church-state relationship based on absolute separation; there was no sense of Church and state forming a single, united commonwealth. Article 5, for instance, proclaimed that “all religions and denominations are equal under the law” and forbade “the establishment of any advantages or restrictions with respect to one religion or denomination over others.” In that same article, the Church was banned from participating “in the activity of political parties.” Article 17 permitted local councils to return property to the Church (or to set up long-term leasing arrangements) but did not mandate that the government had to provide restitution for real estate that had been seized from the Church after the Revolution. Article 29 was to transform the Council for Religious Affairs (at both the union and republican levels) from an instrument of control over the Church into an “informational, consultative and expert center.” The legislation adopted by the Russian Federation in that same year went even further, disbanding the Council for Religious Affairs and signaling the “complete nonintervention by the state in religious affairs.”²⁴

After the dissolution of the USSR, both Ukraine and Russia set themselves up, in constitutional terms, as secular republics, with the separation of church and state written into law, and no special status for the Orthodox Church. Article 35 of the Ukrainian Constitution proclaims: “The Church and religious organizations in Ukraine are separated from the State, and the school — from the Church. No religion shall be recognized by the State as mandatory.” Nothing in Chapter V—which outlines the duties of the presidency—contains any reference to involvement in religious affairs, and while there is the requirement that the president have a command of the state language (Article 103), there is no religious test for holding office. Similarly, the Russian Constitution

Alexander Schmemmann observes, “The conversion of the Emperor Constantine resulted in the greatest change that the Church had ever undergone. Its significance was by no means limited to the altered relations between Church and state—the external conditions of Church life. Far more important were the developments in the mind of Christianity itself, the profound internal transformation that took place gradually in the Church community.” Alexander Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, trans. Lydia W. Kesich (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 62.

²³ The text of the law was published in *Pravda*, October 9, 1990, 1.

²⁴ Mikhail Zherebyatev, “Revising Russian Religious Legislation,” *Prism* 8:4 (April 30, 2002), at

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=20287&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=224 [accessed January 2, 2011].

proclaims: “Everyone shall be guaranteed the right to freedom of conscience, to freedom of religious worship, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion, or to profess no religion, to freely choose, possess and disseminate religious or other beliefs, and to act in conformity with them.” (Article 28) As in Ukraine, there is no reference to any religious duties in the section on the presidency (Chapter IV). [In contrast, the Constitution of Greece (the Hellenic Republic) explicitly opens “In the name of the Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity” and proclaims (Article 3): “The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ.”] So, in constitutional terms, Russian and Ukrainian presidents have no formal rights or obligations vis-à-vis the Orthodox Church.

In a post-Constantinian environment, the Church would be left to its own resources, and it would conduct its affairs without reference to or the involvement of the civil power. To paraphrase U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, under such conditions the government (and its officials) should not attempt to set up a church; to pass laws which aid one religion or prefer one religion over another; or to “openly or secretly participate in the affairs of any religious organization or groups.”²⁵

Yet the older notion, set forth by the Emperor Justinian in his famous Sixth Novella (535), that church and state should cooperate to establish harmony (*symphonia*) for the good of the commonwealth, continues to exert an influence on thinking among the hierarchs, some of the clergy and some political leaders in both Ukrainian and Russian society. Church and state are not seen as separate institutions, but two types of authority--spiritual and secular--both charged with promoting the welfare of society. The classic ideal of "symphony," therefore, encourages the government to take a very close interest in the well-being of the national church, which in turn works for the benefit of the nation. It also means that the president is expected to take up some of the functions that, in the past, were exercised by Orthodox emperors, monarchs and other leaders.

However, none of this is mandated by law. The extent to which Russian and Ukrainian presidents have assumed quasi-imperial/quasi-hetmanal roles vis-à-vis the Church has depended on a number of factors: the president's own personal faith and sense of commitment to the Church; his conception of the presidential role; and his assessment as to whether being seen as a protector and defender of the Church resonates with his political supporters and with the voters in general. Boris Yeltsin was respectful of the Church but not particularly pious.

²⁵ *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), 15-16.

While the Orthodox Church did succeed in gaining privileges and successfully lobbied his administration on a number of policy issues, Yeltsin accommodated the Church because he felt it helped him politically, not because he saw himself as continuing in the historic roles of the emperors and tsars.²⁶

In contrast, Vladimir Putin viewed himself as an active member of the Church but also saw the Church as part and parcel of the Russian system²⁷--an attitude shared to some extent by his successor Dmitry Medvedev. Indeed, as Irina Papkova has concluded, "Medvedev is, by all accounts, an active parishioner in the Orthodox church to a higher degree than his predecessor V. Putin, inspired perhaps by Russia's religiously activist first lady Svetlana Medvedev."²⁸

Both Putin and Medvedev have used quasi-symphonic language to describe the relationship between Church and state, even when acknowledging the post-Constantinian outlook of the constitution. For instance, after the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow in 2009, Medvedev proclaimed that the event "creates new conditions for a fully-fledged ... dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the state."²⁹ In February 2010, Putin addressed the patriarch as follows: "Under your leadership, the dialogue of the Church with state and public organizations in the resolution of important social problems is notably expanding and is being filled with new content. The influence of the Russian Church and Moscow Patriarchate is growing not only in Russia but also abroad."³⁰ The moves towards a greater establishment of the Orthodox Church in Russia led one observer of the church-state relationship to conclude that both Putin and Medvedev have "willfully undermine[d] the constitutional principles of secularism,

²⁶ John Anderson, "Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church: Asymmetric Symphonia," *Journal of International Affairs*, 61:1 (Fall/Winter 2007): 186-187.

²⁷ Zoe Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia After Communism* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 128, 130.

²⁸ Irina Papkova, "From Tandemocracy to Triumvirate? Implications of the Election of Patriarch Kirill for Russian Domestic Politics," paper presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 11 at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1641524> [accessed January 3, 2011].

²⁹ "Medvedev: Kirill's Enthronement Creates New Setting for Broader Dialogue Between Church and State," *Interfax*, February 1, 2009, at <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=5655> [accessed January 6, 2011].

³⁰ "Patriarch Kirill's first year: priests in barracks, religion in schools, better ties with Catholics," *RIA Novosti*, February 1, 2010, at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100201/157743960.html> [accessed January 6, 2011].

nondiscrimination and equality through a variety of special privileges, cooperation agreements and legislative initiatives.”³¹

The first president of post-Soviet Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, was a former member of the Politburo of the Ukrainian Communist Party who after Ukraine gained its independence threw his support behind the project of creating a distinct Ukrainian autocephalous Church independent of the Moscow Patriarchate, seeing this as part and parcel of the Ukrainian state- and nation-building project. His successor Leonid Kuchma, on taking office, distanced himself from this effort and issued a statement (July 29, 1994) pledging to uphold the separation of church and state and the strict neutrality of the Ukrainian state towards religious questions.³² The next two presidents of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich, have both presented themselves as faithful sons of the Orthodox Church, but with very different jurisdictional allegiances; Yushchenko to the Orthodox groups which have separated themselves from Moscow, and Yanukovich to the jurisdiction of the Moscow patriarchate—and both have used their position as president to extend favor and support to their preferred choice.³³

The Case of Russia

While post-Soviet Russian presidents are often compared to the tsars of old, particularly given the vast panoply of powers that they wield³⁴, for the most part, they have not claimed the symbolic and liturgical roles of the former emperors. When Boris Yeltsin, the first president of post-Soviet Russia died, he was buried using the office prescribed for any ordinary member of the laity. Andrei Zolotov observed that “the Book of Psalms was read overnight, as befits laymen, over Yeltsin’s coffin by Moscow seminarians – and not the Gospels, as tradition prescribes for priests and the emperor.” However, in a conscious echo of past practice, Yeltsin was identified by his title (president) and his name and patronymic, instead of the formula “the

³¹ Robert C. Blitt, “One New President, One New Patriarch and a Generous Disregard for the Constitution: A Recipe for the Continuing Decline of Secular Russia,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 43 (2010): 1339.

³² Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 257.

³³ Pawel Wołowski, “Patriarch Kirill in Ukraine – the servant of God in the service of politics,” *EastWeek* 26:19 (August 4, 2010): 2.

³⁴ See, for instance, Dmitri Trenin, “Putin-Medvedev Double Act is Prelude to Either Reform or Marginalisation,” *The Scotsman*, December 31, 2009, archived at <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=24418> [accessed January 8, 2011], for reference to the president as a new type of tsar.

servant of God Boris”, which, as Zolotov also noted, “used to be reserved solely for royalty. That’s how the emperor and his immediate family were commemorated in the liturgy before the revolution – by their name and patronymic. It has never been done since then.”³⁵

Neither Putin nor Medvedev has asked for or been extended the privileges of being able to enter the sanctuary area to make their offerings, which Canon LXIX of the Sixth Ecumenical Council “in Trullo” (691) permits to the emperor, nor have either played any liturgical function such as censuring the icons, bestowing blessings or preaching to congregations³⁶--with one notable exception; President Putin did speak at the ceremony in Christ the Savior Cathedral, at the church service, which proclaimed the reunion of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 2007, declaring: “Unity of the Orthodox Church is the necessary precondition for unity across the entire Russian world.”³⁷ Neither president has ever been escorted inside the altar area to observe services. For Christmas services in January 2011, prime minister Putin, attending the small village church of the Intercession of the Mother of God in the village of Turginovo in the Tver region, simply stood in the midst of the congregation. President Medvedev and his wife, First Lady Svetlana Medvedev, stood on the right side of the ambo in Christ the Savior Cathedral, but outside the iconostasis, in the spot that is usually reserved for dignitaries.³⁸

Yet, in other areas, the imperial legacy is being imitated. One of the roles of the emperor was to mend schisms within the Church. As president, Yeltsin played no role in facilitating talks between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which had split in the 1920s over disagreements as to how to deal

³⁵ Andrei Zolotov, “Boris Yeltsin’s Last Contribution to Building a New Russia,” *Europaica Bulletin*, 120, May 16, 2007, at <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/120.aspx#3> [accessed January 8, 2011].

³⁶ These were functions that Byzantine emperors did exercise; cf. Deno J. Geanakoplos, “Church and State in the Byzantine Empire: A Reconsideration of the Problem of Caesaropapism,” *Church History* 34:4 (December 1965): 390-391.

³⁷ “80 years on, Putin blesses the end of the schism within the Russian Orthodox Church,” *AsiaNews.it*, May 17, 2007, at <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/80-years-on-Putin-blesses-the-end-of-the-schism-within-the-Russian-Orthodox-Church-9291.html>.

³⁸ Photographs of the president and prime minister at services were published by United Press International, at : http://www.upi.com/News_Photos/News/Medvedev-attends-Orthodox-Christmas-service/4421/2/ [accessed January 8, 2011], and footage of the events was broadcast by ITN courtesy of the Telegraph newspaper, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/8245454/Vladimir-Putin-celebrates-Christmas.html> [accessed January 8, 2011].

with the reality of Soviet control of Russia. Nor was ending the schism a priority for his administration, and the talks dragged on for years.

In contrast, Putin took an interest in this question, and appears to have played a pivotal role in helping to end this division. While talks between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia had been reaching accord on many issues, and the decisions by the Moscow Patriarchate to canonize the imperial family as “passion bearers” and to recognize more of the “new martyrs” lost during Soviet times met key demands of the exile Russian church, most observers credited Putin with playing “a key role in facilitating reunification.”³⁹ In particular, the event that many believe broke the logjam was the 2003 meeting between Putin and the hierarchs of the exile jurisdiction. The Russian president told the assembled hierarchs and senior clergy: “I want to assure all of you that this godless regime is no longer there. You are sitting with a believing president.”⁴⁰ One is left with the impression that the event which cemented the reunion was the declaration of faith made by the Russian president. Certainly Patriarch Aleksii II gave credit to the Russian president, noting that “President Vladimir Putin's meeting with Metropolitan Laurus in New York in 2003 greatly contributed to the reunification efforts, showing to ROCOR that ‘not a fighter against God, but an Orthodox Christian is at the country's helm.’”⁴¹

In a post-Constantinian world, the faith preferences of the chief executive of a secular republic shouldn't matter to hierarchs working to solve an internal Church schism. Putin's declaration of faith in New York, however, hearkened back to the decree issued by the Moscow Council of the Russian Orthodox Church on December 2/15, 1917, “On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church”, which declared that the “head of the Russian state ... must belong to the Orthodox Church.”⁴²

Another imperial role that Putin and Medvedev have seemed to adopt is that of patron and benefactor of the Church. Again, the contrast with Yeltsin is indicative. Yeltsin certainly extended a number of favors and benefits (such as the return of some property and tax concessions) to

³⁹ See, for instance, press coverage, such as David Holley, “Russian Orthodox Church Ends 80-Year Split,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 18, 2007, A19.

⁴⁰ As relayed by the Rev. Serafim Gan, quoted in Ron Dreher, “A believing president,” *Beliefnet*, May 17, 2007, at <http://blog.beliefnet.com/crunchycon/2007/05/believing-president.html#ixzz15e3jLYOI> [accessed December 23, 2010].

⁴¹ Russian church leader opens Synod's reunification session, *RIA Novosti*, May 16, 2007, at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20070516/65591907.html> [accessed November 25, 2010].

⁴² Cited in Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, vol. I (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 37.

the Orthodox Church, but did so from his sense that aiding the Orthodox Church was part and parcel of rebuilding the country's moral and ethical framework so as to sustain liberal-democratic principles, that support for Orthodoxy helped to advance the repudiation of the Soviet past, or out of political calculations. The latter was the driving force behind Yeltsin's ultimate acceptance of the 1997 "Law on Religious Freedom" which modified the 1990 legislation by creating a two-tiered system of faith communities in Russia, with "traditional" communities like the Orthodox Church enjoying more benefits and privileges and "new faiths" facing a series of restrictions on their activities; Yeltsin fought this legislation for years and even vetoed it when it first passed the Russian Duma in 1997 but ultimately concluded that it was politically safer to sign it into law, which he did in September 1997.⁴³

His successor, Vladimir Putin, both as president and as prime minister, has been a more enthusiastic proponent of church-state cooperation in advancing the common interests of the Russian commonwealth. Addressing Church leaders during a reception to celebrate the 1020th anniversary of the baptism of Rus', Putin declared: "The state will continue to support the initiatives of the church aimed at strengthening civil and interregional accord, its social, cultural, educational and charitable mission. It was the position of the Russian Orthodox Church that contributed to the creation of the Russian state both as a multinational and a multi-confessional one."⁴⁴ This has continued during the Medvedev administration. During his 2010 visit to Russia, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople commented on this shift, telling Medvedev, "We are happy for the flourishing, very successful cooperation of the Russian Orthodox church and the state. The Russian leadership and the leadership of the Russian Orthodox church have written a new page in history."⁴⁵

In three areas, Putin and Medvedev have given the Church far more than it received during the Yeltsin period. During the Yeltsin administration, the school system remained resolutely secular; now, a "religious culture and secular ethics" course, which highlights the role Orthodoxy has played in the formation of Russian society, has been

⁴³ See the discussion of the Yeltsin period in Wallace L. Daniel, *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2006), 54-70.

⁴⁴ The speech, delivered on June 28, 2008, is archived at the website of the Russian prime minister, at <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/1525/> [accessed January 8, 2011].

⁴⁵ "Patriarch Bartholomew Values Highly Church-State Dialogue in Russia, Interfax-Religiia, May 25, 2010, at <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/print.php?act=news&id=35723> [accessed January 8, 2011].

introduced “in an experimental fashion” in nineteen regions of Russia as part of the federal curriculum, and Medvedev has signaled he supports the addition of a voluntary “Orthodox component in the federal public school curriculum.”⁴⁶ While this is not a return to the mandatory Orthodox catechism classes that existed in Russian schools in pre-revolutionary times, the Church, after years of lobbying, has managed to gain a foothold in the public school system.

Under the Yeltsin administration, clergymen were permitted to minister to the armed forces or to state institutions, but did so at their own resources. The Church requested that formal chaplains—paid as government officials—be reinstated, and in July 2009 a presidential decree issued by Medvedev authorized “providing priests already ministering to the armed forces state salaries, effectively opening the door for the introduction of the military Chaplaincy.” In March 2010, responding to direction from both the president and the prime minister, the Ministry of Defense began to define the legal status of chaplains; chaplains are to be assigned to units based on the “preferences of individual army units”, which in essence will favor the Orthodox Church, since most Russians, whether practicing or not, claim an affiliation to it.⁴⁷

But the most significant and wide reaching “gift” has had to do with property. The 2010 Russian Federal Law “On the Restitution of Religious Property” (signed into law by President Dmitry Medvedev on November 30, 2010) provides for both real estate and movable property that had once belonged to the Church which is now in public ownership to be either transferred back to the Church’s ownership or for the Church to have “free use” of it.⁴⁸ This is not merely a symbolic gesture. As one news report concluded, “Real estate analysts have said that given the value of land in Moscow and other cities, the law could put the Church in the league of the gas and railroad monopolies, Gazprom and Russian Railways.” Prime Minister Vladimir Putin made the decisive push to get the Economics Ministry—which had been drafting legislation since 2007—to complete its work, and has also tasked the Culture Ministry to begin work on related legislation that would allocate state funds to

⁴⁶ Papkova, 24.

⁴⁷ Papkova, 26.

⁴⁸ As noted on the website of the president of the Russian Federation, November 30, 2010, at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/acts/1395> [accessed December 22, 2010].

parishes and monasteries to rebuild or repair derelict churches and buildings.⁴⁹

While these steps do not amount to establishment of the Orthodox Church as the state church—and in theory other religious groups (such as Jews or Muslims) can avail themselves of these provisions, they do reflect a major shift in the position of the Church in Russian society. What is interesting, however, is that these steps—on education, on restoring chaplains, and on the return of property—did not arise from “pressure from below”, that is, from demands being articulated by a broad base of society. Instead, they were initiatives taken by state leaders who wished to bestow these benefits on the Church. Patriarch Kirill himself noted, one day after the bill on restoring Church property was signed into law, that the measure did not have grass-roots support.

Speaking with members of the Synodal Department for Relations between State and Society in Moscow, the Patriarch expressed disappointment at the reaction of society to the new course of relations between the Church and the Kremlin. "In the field of relations between church and state there are no longer any questions of principle that remain to be resolved . . . All three outstanding issues - the presence of religion in schools, the clergy in the army and the return of property illegally confiscated from the Church - have been resolved. " Yet something is still missing: the broad support of society for those goals. Kirill denounced a "hostile reaction from the majority of public opinion."⁵⁰

Some have raised the point that a Church that is dependent on the executive power for its privileges and position will be overly supportive of whatever initiatives the secular power puts forward. The Russian Orthodox Church certainly does not find itself supporting the political opposition to the Putin-Medvedev tandem and, citing non-interference in secular political matters, does not challenge the swath of domestic and foreign policies implemented by the government. But there are limits to what the presidency can demand of the Church when it comes to matters that are deemed as touching directly on the Church's competencies. One question—again with echoes from Byzantine history—has been relations with the Church of Rome.

⁴⁹ Maxim Bogodvid, “Putin gives boost to law on church property return,” *RIA Novosti*, January 1, 2010, at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100114/157543576.html> [accessed December 22, 2010].

⁵⁰ “Russia: Medvedev signs law on restitution of religious property,” *Spero News*, December 2, 2010, at <http://www.speroforum.com/a/44316/Russia---Medvedev-signs-law-on-restitution-of-religious-property> [accessed December 26, 2010].

Although Putin has always considered himself a faithful Orthodox Christian, he was also in favor of improved relations with the Vatican, as part of an overall strategy of improving Russia's relations with Europe. His outreach to the Pope of Rome—Putin visited Pope John Paul II in 2000 and 2003 and Pope Benedict XVI in 2007—did strain his relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate.⁵¹ In his meetings with the Catholic pontiff, the Russian president did not limit the discussions to “secular” matters but did raise the subject of the relationship between the Churches; his foreign policy aide Sergei Prikhodko noted after the 2007 Putin-Benedict meeting, “The president favours improving relations between the two Churches.”⁵² In 2009, Medvedev also met with Benedict, and upgraded Russia's relations with the Vatican, permitting the Catholic Church to have an apostolic nuncio in Moscow.⁵³

But there are also limits to what the president could do. Neither Putin nor Medvedev have been able to compel the Russian Orthodox Church to issue a formal invitation to the Pope to visit Russia, a *sine qua non* for any papal visit, nor could they force the pace of Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. While the Russian president was willing to start a process, the presidential administration made it clear that he would not involve himself as a “middleman” in intra-Church dialogue.⁵⁴ This also points to other areas where the Russian president, although assuming some “imperial” functions, falls short of taking up the full mantle of the tsars vis-à-vis the Church. In the post-Soviet period, the Russian Orthodox Church does not turn to the president for permission to convene councils or confirm their actions (a routine practice in Byzantine and tsarist practice).⁵⁵ The Moscow Patriarchate has made it clear it

⁵¹ Anderson, 193.

⁵² Philip Pullella, “Putin, Pope discuss strained ties between churches,” *Reuters*, March 13, 2007, at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKL136128420070313> [accessed January 9, 2011].

⁵³ “Russia, Vatican establish diplomatic relations,” *Agence France Press*, December 3, 2009, at <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jwcub6qCgS4GSGTsVgGJXBS8zoZA> [accessed January 9, 2011].

⁵⁴ Philip Pullella, “Putin, Pope discuss strained ties between churches,” *Reuters*, March 13, 2007, at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKL136128420070313> [accessed January 9, 2011].

⁵⁵ See, for instance, the letter addressed to Emperor Theodosius by the hierarchs of the Second Ecumenical Council (381), thanking him for permission both to assemble and also for the ratification of the Council's decisions. The Orthodox Church of Estonia has published this letter, taking the 1899 translation made by Henry R. Percival, as part of its collection of “Documents of the Second Ecumenical Council (The First Council of Constantinople),” at

<http://www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/canonlaw/canons2econcileGB.htm> [accessed

absolutely opposes the restoration of any sort of State Council for Religious Affairs or tsarist-style ministry for church matters to supervise the Church.⁵⁶ Most significantly, neither Putin nor Medvedev has the ability to appoint the patriarch or otherwise “steer” the election. Indeed, in 2009, after the death of Patriarch Aleksii, there were clear signals that the Kremlin wanted to see Metropolitan Kliment of Kaluga, a leader of the traditionalist camp and someone considered to be “more ‘willing to be subservient’ to the government’s interests”, become the new patriarch, instead of Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and the head of the Department of External Church Affairs, who ultimately was elected. Moreover, president, Putin had appointed Kliment, rather than Kirill, to be the Church’s representative to the “Public Chamber”, an advisory body to the president.⁵⁷

So the Russian president has only partially imitated his imperial predecessors, and what has emerged today is an odd hybrid of expectations drawn from the past of how a Russian leader ought to relate to the Orthodox Church combined with the continued legal supremacy of the notion of the secular state.

The Case of Ukraine

After Ukraine achieved independence in 1991, the Orthodox Church on its territory splintered into competing jurisdictions. The bulk of parishes and priests remain part of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), the only jurisdiction recognized as canonical by the established patriarchates; returning émigrés repatriated the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) to Ukrainian soil; with the backing of Ukraine’s first post-Soviet president, Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyivan Patriarchate (UOC-KP) was set up, combining some of the UAOC communities with ex-Moscow-Patriarchal communities; and there are some smaller splinter jurisdictions which also claim to be the authentic Ukrainian Orthodox Church. While most parishes and priests remain affiliated with the UOC-MP, the allegiances of Ukrainians are much more fluid. While each jurisdiction has its core membership (polling data indicates that 15.4 percent of Ukrainians identify as members of the UOC-MP, 11.7 percent

January 6, 2011]. Tsar Nicholas II refused to give his permission for a Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church to convene; this permission was only granted by the Provisional Government, which had inherited imperial authority, in 1917.

⁵⁶ Papkova, 6.

⁵⁷ Blitt, 1342.

as members of the UOC-KP, and 0.7 percent as members of the UAOC), more than half of Ukrainian Orthodox decline to specify “which” Ukrainian Orthodox Church they are members of.⁵⁸

The fluidity of the situation of the Church in Ukraine has created conditions which make it difficult for presidents to assume a post-Constantinian stance and in fact invite imitation of imperial and hetmanal precedents. Frank E. Sysyn asserts: “Neutrality in Orthodox affairs is, in fact, an impossible goal for the Ukrainian central or regional governments . . .”⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, therefore, despite the formal constitutional proclamations of the separation of church and state, Ukrainian presidents have often become directly involved in Church affairs.

Given the divisions in Ukraine among the Orthodox—meaning that no hierarch commands the allegiance of all the faithful—the president has, at times, assumed a quasi-liturgical role in “national” celebrations, such as Ukrainian independence day. For instance, President Yushchenko dispatched his brother, Pyotr Yushchenko, to Jerusalem to obtain the “Holy Fire” at Pascha; the holy light was then brought to St. Sophia Cathedral to be given to the president, who then passed it to the representatives of the different jurisdictions. The president would also deliver a Paschal address to the nation at St. Sophia’s.⁶⁰

The first president of post-Soviet Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, having been the Ukrainian Communist Party’s secretary of ideology during the Soviet period, was well aware of the importance of having a national, autocephalous Orthodox Church as part of his state-building project (as well as the historical precedents set by the Cossack hetmans), but distrusted the émigré Ukrainian Orthodox who were already attempting to set up a separate Ukrainian jurisdiction. He was already close to the exarch of Ukraine for the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko), who had, in 1990, become the head of the UOC-MP, the autonomous Orthodox Church in Ukraine affiliated to Moscow. Kravchuk appealed to Patriarch Aleksii of Moscow to grant full autocephaly to the UOC-MP in March 1992, but this request was denied

⁵⁸ Frank E. Sysyn, “Politics and Orthodoxy in Ukraine,” *Harriman Review*, 15:2-3 (May 2005): 8-9.

⁵⁹ Sysyn, 17.

⁶⁰ “Visit of Yushchenko to Easter night five temples,” FOR-UA, April 26, 2008, at <http://for-ua.org/ukraine/2008/04/26/123226.html> [accessed December 22, 2010]; Mikhail Zygar and Mustafa Naiem, “Wandering Candle,” *Kommersant*, April 9, 2007, at http://www.kommersant.com/p757095/r_544/Ukraine_Yushchenko_Easter/ [accessed December 26, 2010].

and Filaret was ordered removed from his position.⁶¹ Faced with these setbacks, Kravchuk then encouraged Filaret to reach out to the Ukrainian Autocephalists and brokered an uneasy union between bishops, clergy, and communities leaving the Moscow Patriarchate and the UAOC to create the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) on June 25-26, 1992. Using his position as president, Kravchuk was able to favor the UOC-KP in terms of encouraging members of the UOC-MP and UAOC to join the new jurisdiction, returning property (such as the historic St. Vladimir's/Volodymyr's Cathedral and St. Michael's Monastery in Kyiv) and treating the UOC-KP as the de facto "national" church of Ukraine.⁶²

Having been stymied by Moscow, Kravchuk then focused on lobbying Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in 1993 to recognize the legitimacy, canonicity and autocephaly of the UOC-KP. The Ukrainian Council for Religious Affairs, under Arsen Zinchenko, a presidential appointee, also worked to lobby for the interests of the UOC-KP.⁶³

Kravchuk, however, ran into some limitations. He could use the power of the presidency to engineer a union of the UAOC with Filaret and his defectors and to influence the selection of Filaret as the deputy to Patriarch Mstyslav (Skrypnyk), an émigré hierarch who had been enthroned in 1990 as the head of the UAOC and who then became the first head of the UOC-KP. But Kravchuk did not succeed in getting Filaret elected as patriarch in 1993 when Mstyslav died nor could he prevent part of the UAOC from repudiating the union and recreating their separate jurisdiction. Most importantly, given that most priests and parishes remained part of the Moscow Patriarchate, Kravchuk could not simply proscribe the UOC-MP. Indeed, growing hostility to his presidency from the Russophile southern and eastern parts of Ukraine were a contributing factor to the defeat of his 1994 bid for re-election.⁶⁴

His successor, Leonid Kuchma, seemed to adhere to a much more post-Constantinian view of his role as president. In 1995 he expressed his opinion that "as an individual", he would "be happy if the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were united. But as President, he opposes attempts to create a "state church" (he was referring to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate). The President also said he had no authority to intervene and would not intervene in conflicts

⁶¹ John B. Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church as an 'Empire-Saving' Institution," *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 23.

⁶² Ramet, 255-257.

⁶³ Dunlop, 23, 25.

⁶⁴ Sysyn, 12.

between the different branches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church ...”⁶⁵ Significantly, he took the decision to preserve the “neutral” status of the historic eleventh century St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, claimed by all Orthodox jurisdictions (as well as the Eastern-rite Catholics) by confirming its status as a museum.⁶⁶

In his second term, however, in order to consolidate his position and gain maneuvering room vis-à-vis Russia, he began to play the Church card. At times he spoke about the importance of having a united Ukrainian autocephalous Church as part of state-building, linking this back to the hetmans and the project of Bogdan Khmelnytsky.⁶⁷ At other times, he seemed to endorse a formal “split” in Ukrainian Orthodoxy, creating two churches—the UOC-MP and uniting the UOC-KP and the UAOC under the Patriarch of Constantinople.⁶⁸ Rather than leaving negotiations “up to the Church,” Kuchma involved the Council for Religious Affairs, sending its chairman, Viktor Bondarenko, to visit Moscow and Istanbul and to hold talks in Zurich. Filaret, who had succeeded in being elected as patriarch in 1995, complained, “We do not know what was discussed at those talks, but the fact that they were held behind our back testifies that some murky business is being done.”⁶⁹

The 2004 presidential race further politicized the Church situation, because the UOC-MP came out very strongly in favor of Viktor Yanukovich. It meant that the ultimate winner of the elections, Viktor Yushchenko, who had attended a UOC-KP parish during the 1990s, was less likely to assume Kuchma’s earlier stance of neutrality. As Frank Sysyn concluded, “Although Yushchenko consistently declared after the elections that the state should not determine religious issues, the new Ukrainian government has to face the reality that a major Orthodox church tied to a center in Russia had campaigned against it.”⁷⁰ Moreover, Patriarch Filaret was actively lobbying for direct state involvement, for the president *not* to assume a post-Constantinian role. He declared,

⁶⁵ Konstantin Parishkura, “Leonid Kuchma Expresses ‘Regret and Concern’ in Connection with July 18 Events,” *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 47:30 (August 23, 1995): 21.

⁶⁶ Per his decree of October 11, 1994. “Will the Immovable Wall Collapse upon Ukraine,” *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, December 28, 2010, at http://risu.org.ua/en/index/expert_thought/comments/39855/ [accessed January 3, 2011].

⁶⁷ Elena Shishkunov, “Kuchma Leads Putin’s Flock Away,” *Gazeta.ru*, August 23, 2001. ⁶⁸ Sysyn, 14-15.

⁶⁹ Jan Maksymiuk, “Kyiv patriarch warns against liquidation of independent Church,” *Ukrainian Weekly*, LXIX:48, December 2, 2001, at <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/2001/480105.shtml> [accessed December 22, 2010].

⁷⁰ Sysyn, 17.

“[T]he important positive factor is that the president really wishes to have a single Local Ukrainian Orthodox Church... This problem can and must be resolved by a Unifying Church Council involving all Ukrainian supporters of the Local Church, including patriotically— minded Orthodox believers who are now members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate. I think that such people exist, and that they will attend this council, but only if the state facilitates the project.”⁷¹ At the beginning of his term, Yushchenko pledged to church leaders that he would commit the government to efforts to resolve the issues dividing Ukraine’s Orthodox faithful. The head of the presidential administration, Oleksandr Zinchenko, held meetings with Bartholomew in Istanbul in 2005.⁷² During his term, Yushchenko continued his efforts to negotiate with both the Ecumenical Patriarch as well as with the Russian Orthodox Church to facilitate creation of a separate, autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church around the UOC-KP.⁷³ When Bartholomew visited Kyiv in 2008, the president openly appealed to him: “I believe that a national self-governing church will emerge in Ukraine, and I ask your holiness for your blessing for our dreams, for truth, for hope, for our country.”⁷⁴

Yushchenko’s advocacy for an autocephalous Church and his patronage of UOC-KP and UAOC churches (although he would also attend UOC-MP churches as well) led the UOC-MP to assign blame on the president for the continuation of the schism. The president’s choice of church was not considered to be a private matter, and, as a spokesman for the UOC-MP noted, “A leader who accepts sacraments with schismatics isn’t only a participant in the schism, but also a teacher of schisms.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Clara Gudzyk, “The time has come for an independent church,” *Den’*, 38 (2006), at <http://www.day.kiev.ua/173174/> [accessed December 22, 2010].

⁷² Ukrainian Orthodox hierarchs from U.S. seek Church unity in Ukraine, *Ukrainian Weekly*, LXXIII:16, April 17, 2005, at <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/2005/160508.shtml>.

⁷³ Pavel Korduban, “Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill Visits Ukraine,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6:155, August 12, 2009, at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35402&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=9d5427dad9 [accessed December 27, 2010].

⁷⁴ “Yushchenko Seeks Bartholomew Blessing for Independent Church,” *RIA Novosti*, July 26, 2008, at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080726/114982557.html> [accessed January 3, 2011].

⁷⁵ Zenon Zawada, “UOC-MP threatens sanctions against President Yushchenko,” *Ukrainian Weekly*, May 14, 2006, at <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/2006/200607.shtml> [accessed January 3, 2011].

Yushchenko, however, could not force a definitive resolution of the church question, in part because after 2005, Ukraine's political system was in turmoil. Political forces supportive of the UOC-MP, notably the Ukrainian Party of Regions, became the majority in the Ukrainian Rada (parliament). Compounding this problem was the falling out between Yushchenko and his former prime minister, Yuliya Tymoshenko, fracturing the so-called "Orange bloc" which had tended to support the question of Ukrainian autocephaly.

In 2010, Yushchenko was defeated in his attempt to win a second term; Tymoshenko then lost the second round of the presidential race to Yanukovich, and Yanukovich's forces also secured a narrow majority in the Rada. The shift in Ukrainian politics has also affected the churches, with the Kyiv Patriarchate, which formerly enjoyed the patronage of the "Orange coalition", because President Yanukovich has made no secret of his preference for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, to the extent of excluding rival Orthodox jurisdictions from official events, such as his inauguration or the prayer service on Independence day.⁷⁶ When he was inaugurated, Yanukovich invited only Kirill of Moscow to preside at the service of blessing, sending no invitations to the heads of other Ukrainian Orthodox jurisdictions.⁷⁷ In summer 2010, the government also allowed Kirill to hold an exclusive service at St. Sophia's, retreating from the "neutrality" which permitted only "ecumenical" services at which all Ukrainian jurisdictions would be represented. Yanukovich, who received the highest decoration of the Moscow Patriarchate (the order of St. Vladimir), has made it clear that he would not offer government support for the project of setting up an autocephalous Ukrainian church and would not seek to negotiate with Moscow or other Orthodox patriarchates on the UOC-KP's and UAOC's behalf.⁷⁸

Before leaving Ukraine, Kirill and the UOC-MP noted that nothing should stand in the way of other Ukrainian Orthodox groups from seeking reconciliation with the Moscow Patriarchate. This

⁷⁶ "President Will Pray for Ukraine with Only the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, August 20, 2010, at http://risu.org.ua/en/index/all_news/state/church_state_relations/37404/ [accessed January 3, 2011].

⁷⁷ "Kiev church opposes Russian patriarch's inauguration prayer in Ukraine," *RIA Novosti*, February 22, 2010, at <http://en.rian.ru/world/20100222/157972553.html> [accessed October 26, 2010].

⁷⁸ Pavel Korduban, "Vladimir Putin, Moscow Mayor and Patriarch Kirill Promote Russian Interests in Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 7:145, July 28, 2010, at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36675.

apparently has been interpreted by some to mean that the policy of the Yanukovich administration is to encourage reunification under the UOC-MP. More recently, the Kyiv Patriarchate, has accused regional leaders, taking their cues from President Yanukovich, of encouraging clergy affiliated to the Kyiv Patriarchate to join the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (using police raids to pressure the recalcitrant) and denying Kyiv Patriarchate clergy access to public facilities—echoing the charges made by the UOC-MP against the Kravchuk government in 1992-1993.⁷⁹

The campaign by Kravchuk to create the Kyiv Patriarchate (in 1992-93) and the alleged efforts by Yanukovich to seek its dissolution today have precedents in Cossack history. In 1625, Cossacks used force to ensure the “undivided possession of Kyiv for the Orthodox” and to drive out clergy who favored the Union.⁸⁰ But it also reflects that hierarchs of both the UOC-KP and the UOC-MP have not embraced a post-Constantinian separation of church and state for Ukraine, and expect state support against their rivals for their respective visions for Ukrainian Orthodoxy.⁸¹

Conclusion

In both Russia and Ukraine, the older patterns have re-emerged, but there is also no attempt to slavishly imitate the past. John Anderson labeled the church-state relationship in post-Soviet Russia as “asymmetric symphonia”—and the extent to which Ukrainian and Russian presidents choose to emulate past emperors, hetmans or tsars in how they relate to the Orthodox Church is very dependent on whether the president is sympathetic to the Church⁸²—and there is no guarantee that in the future, new chief executives could come to power determined to implement a post-Constantinian system. But at present, the symphonic model continues to exert its influence.

⁷⁹ “Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate) Accusing Power Of Interference In Its Internal Affairs In Favour Of Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate),” *Ukrainian News Agency*, December 14, 2010; see also the statement released to the media by Patriarch Filaret, “A Statement to the media by Patriarch of Kyiv and all-Rus’-Ukraine,” *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, January 3, 2011, at http://risu.org.ua/en/index/monitoring/kaleido_digest/39960/ [accessed January 3, 2011].

⁸⁰ Plokyh, 134.

⁸¹ Sysyn, 17.

⁸² Anderson, 198.