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Ukraine as a center of contemporary global religious confrontation: Constantinople – Rome – Moscow

Abstract. *The article analyzes the historical and contemporary status of Ukrainian churches of the Eastern Christian tradition, which at the beginning of the 21st century found themselves at the epicenter of the geopolitical confrontation between the three world's Christian centers. Being a border area between Europe and Asia, Ukraine always had to make choices of the ways of its civilizational development. There were periods in its history when Ukraine did so voluntarily, becoming an independent center of the east Slavic, in particular, of the Eastern Christian world. However, the presence of aggressive neighbors made changes to the Kyiv-centric discourse of the country, inclining Ukrainians either to Constantinople, Rome or Moscow. Under these circumstances, the orientation towards the development of an independent and distinctive Kyiv Church was partially lost, but at the same time opposition to the world religious centers, which sought to determine the spiritual life of Ukrainians, formed. Ukraine now seeks to rectify the situation of subordination to the foreign centers and to get rid of colonial dependence on different countries and religions. Having received Tomos from the Patriarch of Constantinople in 2018, the united Ukrainian Local Orthodox Church will in time effectively and confidently influence the geopolitical situation in the world. The framework of the historical religious-political triangle will gradually be destroyed, and Ukraine will confidently declare its autonomous standing in the Christian oekumene.*

Keywords: *Orthodox Church of Ukraine, religious geopolitics, world religious centers, Kyiv Christianity*

Relevance of the theme

Geographic coordinates, in which Ukraine historically existed and still exists, determined its civilizational orientation. Economic, social, political, cultural or religious choices were constantly wavering between East and West, between Asia and Europe, between Constantinople and Rome, between Moscow and Constantinople. Current Ukrainian situation is determined by many factors not only of Ukrainian origin, but also of international one, in particular religious and non-religious. Ukraine feels and is aware of the political, financial and economic, cultural influences of the European Union, the USA, Russia, Turkey, Poland and other countries. Nonetheless, the present spiritual (including religious) space of Ukraine is really defined, apart from the growing role of Kyiv as the historical and real nucleus of Ukraine, by three influential religious centers: Moscow, Rome, and recently – historical Constantinople. The purpose of the article is to analyze the prospects of the liberation of Kyiv from the power and influence of the three religious centers of the world – Constantinople, Rome and Moscow.

Basic material

The triangle that modern Ukraine is situated in is not something new. Since the advent of Christianity, Kyiv has often faced the question of who to spiritually connect with – Constantinople or Rome. And although more than half a century remained until the year of the official division of Christianity into Catholicism and Orthodoxy – 1054, and Rus' embraced the allegedly undivided Christianity, Constantinople and Rome, as independent religious centers of the Christian Church, already at that time vividly demonstrated different vectors of historical development, each seeking to economically, politically, culturally and spiritually attract Kyiv to itself. Historical documents tell of repeated contacts, embassies, missions to the city from both envoys from/to Constantinople and papal legates.¹ From the beginning of the Ukraine's written history, Rome and Constantinople have competed the most for Kyiv.² The latter was eventually chosen by Kyiv as the center from which Rus' received the Christian faith, first priests, bishops, liturgical books, rituals, and more. However, the adoption of Christianity was not a mechanical planting of the Byzantine tradition. Prince Vladimir baptized Rus' on his own, guided by the idea

¹ *Doxrystyyanski viruvannya. Pryjnyattya xrystyianstva. T.1.* Za red. B. Lobovyka, v *Istoriya relihiyi v Ukrayini: u 10 t. Vyd-vo "Ukr. centr duxovnoyi kultury"*, Kyiv 1996, 384 pp., pp. 220–225.

² *Doxrystyyanski viruvannya. Pryjnyattya xrystyianstva. T.1.* Za red. B. Lobovyka, v *Istoriya relihiyi v Ukrayini: u 10 t. Vyd-vo "Ukr. centr duxovnoyi kultury"*, Kyiv 1996, 384 pp., pp. 232–233.

of creating an independent church.³ Search for its own model of Christianization of the Rus' resulted in the creation of the Kyiv Church with its specific hierarchical structure, system of security and ecclesiastical legislation, development of intellectual and philosophical thought, its original theology of Kyiv Christianity.⁴

Mongol invasion of 1240 and decline of Kyiv significantly influenced the geopolitical and religious situation in Eastern Europe. The spiritual and religious heritage of Kyivan Rus' was de facto organizationally divided between Kyiv, whose metropolitan, Greek of origin, Maxim, eventually moved to the Volodymyr-Suzdal principality (1300), and Halych – the center of the Halych-Volyn principality (1303). Halych received a certificate from Constantinople and the first Metropolitan of Greece, Nifont. As a result of lengthy and difficult negotiations, the Patriarch of Constantinople appointed a common Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Rus', Peter, for the north-eastern and western principalities of the former Kyivan Rus'. First, the residence was in Vladimir-na-Klyazma and later in Moscow.⁵

This transfer of the Kyiv pulpit of the Rus' Metropolitans of the Constantinople Patriarchate, creation of the Moscow Church with the subsequent self-proclamation of the Moscow Patriarchate and its 141-year history of recognition by the Ecumenical Patriarch included Moscow in the geopolitical system of inter-church relations of that time. The long-standing inter-Orthodox confrontation between Moscow, Constantinople and Kyiv began.⁶

Until 1689, Kyiv made titanic attempts to preserve the identity of its church, but did not find the strength to resist Moscow and defend its interest and status, and was eventually absorbed by the Moscow Patriarchate. Constantinople tried to protect its historical rights of the Mother Church by periodically reminding Moscow of the primordial origins of the Christian faith in the Slavic lands, but distance and limited communication opportunities did their job. Later, Moscow took advantage of historical circumstances (first of all, the fall of Constantinople) and aggressively expanded its canonical lands, often confusing the provisional right to ordain Kyiv metropolitans with subordination of the religious Kyiv to ultra-Orthodox Moscow.

Rome also declared its claim for the Ukrainian territories. Remembering the fact of Pope Clement of Rome's exile in Chersonesos, as well as the exiled Pope Martin I Confessor (Spovidnyk), repeated contacts between the princes of Kyiv and the throne of Kyiv with Rome, the Apostolic Capital made repeated attempts to assert its rights in these territories. Various unions oppressed the Orthodox Church,

³ *Istoriya relihiyi v Ukrayini*. Za red. prof. A. Kolodnoho i P. Yaroc'koho, Vyd-vo "Znannya", Kyiv 1999, 735 pp., p. 92.

⁴ *Xreshhennya Rusi-Ukrayiny. 988-2018. Almanax*, Vyd-vo "Lohos", Lviv 2018, 112 pp., pp. 13–23.

⁵ I. Vlasovskyj, *Narys istoriyi Ukrayins'koyi Pravoslavnoyi Cerkvy*. T. I (X–XVII), Vyd-vo UAPC, Nyu Jork-Kyyiv-S.Bavnd Bruk 1990, 294 pp., pp. 102–103.

⁶ Arximandryt Kyryl (Hovorun), *Meta-ekleziolohiya: xroniky samousvidomlennya Cerkvy*, Vydavnytstvo DUX I LITERA, Kyiv 2018, 328 pp.

and granted privileges to Catholics.⁷ Through the efforts of Rome and the Polish nobility, the year of the signing of the Union of Brest, 1596, made its adjustments to the balance of religious and political power, and further depleted Ukraine with the Orthodox-Catholic confrontation and the long-running inter-church controversy.⁸

Each side proceeded from certain church-political interests, sought to defend them in different ways, even through bribery, captivity, poisoning, etc., winning or losing in these historical confrontations. For 460 years (988–1448) Kyiv church has existed without Moscow. In different ways and configurations, with different metropolitans and church orientations. However, from 1448 until 2018 – 570 years – Kyiv firmly “stuck” to Moscow due to objective circumstances and peculiarities of malorossiys’ka (“little-russian”) mentality. At the same time, Moscow, which “managed to keep Ukraine within its jurisdiction and influence,”⁹ has always been the winner in the complex formats of Kyiv-Moscow-Constantinople relations.

The collective historical memory of Ukrainians preserves different pages of relations between the Orthodox centers – Moscow, Tsargorod (Constantinople) and Kyiv, but negative memories of the events, which, surprisingly, retained the Orthodox tradition in these lands, dominate. Because of these tragic episodes, a stack of mutual claims and grudges, unjustified expectations and hopes have accumulated. The tangle of contradictory relations between these centers can be disentangled into specific axis-directions:

1. Kyiv-Constantinople axis

1) Having received from the most powerful political center of that time – Byzantium – the Christian faith and the church, Kyiv wanted from Constantinople protection, patronage, assistance, and at the same time free and uncontrolled independent life of its metropolis, approval of the candidates for the seat of metropolitan, if not recognition of those already elected;

2) Constantinople expected from Kyiv eternal gratitude, regular tribute, contribution to the formation of a religious empire and preservation of the glory of Byzantium, strengthening of the status of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

⁷ *Istoriya relihiyi v Ukrayini*. Za red. prof. A. Kolodnoho i P. Yarockoho, Vyd-vo “Znannya”, Kyiv 1999, 735 pp., pp. 114–132.

⁸ *Ukrayinske pravoslav’ya. Tom 2*. Za red. prof. P. Yarockoho, v *Istoriya relihiyi v Ukrayini*: v 10 t., Vyd-vo “Ukr. centr duchovnoyi kul’tury”, Kyiv 1997, 376 pp., pp. 211–229.

⁹ *Константинопольський патріархат в історії України: минуле, сучасне, майбутнє*. Зб. доповідей міжн. наук-практ. конф., Видво “Київське Богоявленське Ставропігійне Братство”, Київ 2017, 152 с., с. 69.

2. Moscow-Constantinople axis

1) Moscow demanded Constantinople to recognize its patriarchate as the savior of the universal Orthodoxy from the Ottomans and, consequently, its primacy in the Orthodox world, where it would stand as a global defender of the true Orthodox faith – not only in the fight against Muslims but also Catholics. All this should have guaranteed Moscow autonomy, independence, equality, and even superiority among other Orthodox churches. Non-interference in the internal affairs of Moscow and recognition of the independence of Moscow Orthodoxy – the ultimate goal of Moscow, which claimed to be the “third Rome,” the highest point of the development of Orthodoxy, the completion of civilization, which monk Philotheos so directly formulated in the XVI century in his letters to Grand Duke Basil III: “Moscow is the Third Rome, and a fourth there will not be!”.

2) Constantinople awaited from Moscow protection from the Ottoman Turks, recognition of the motherhood of the Church of Constantinople for the Mos-patriarchy, and at the same time financial support, which eventually grew into maintenance.

3. Kyiv-Moscow axis

1) Kyiv hoped that Moscow would not interfere in the affairs of the Kyiv Metropolitan, would not go through the historical glory of Kyiv, the titles of Metropolitan, would not either capture or subjugate the canonical lands of Kyivan Rus,⁹ or establish Moscow practices.

2) Moscow had its own plans for Kyiv: Kyiv should “lie” under Moscow – and not only spiritually, recognizing the Moscow Patriarchate as its “mother church,” but also politically, by being subordinated to a new tsar, to secular authority, and should transfer the glory of the “mother of the cities of Rus” to Moscow, by promoting in this way the establishment of the Moscow kingdom as an empire.

As one can see, Kyiv proved to be a reality that interested both Tsargorod and Moscow. It has become for many years a kind of “apple of discord” – between not only Moscow and Constantinople through the Orthodox people, but also between Moscow and Rome through the Greek Catholics, as well as between Constantinople and Rome over the long-standing struggle for domination in the region.

It must be admitted that the religious history of Ukraine has almost never been independent, except for the short periods of reign of Yaroslav Mudryi (the Wise) of the XI century (Metropolitan Hilarion), Volodymyr Monomakh, XII century (Metropolitan Klyment Smoliatych), Danylo Halytskyi of the XIII century, Cossack state in the middle of the XVII century, the first revolution (1917–1921) and the last three

(1990 – the Granite revolution, 2004 – the Orange revolution and 2013–2014 – the Dignity revolution), when Ukraine allowed itself to elect its spiritual leaders and to exist in a virtually free conditions of spiritual and religious life. However, it is clear that even in times of relative freedom, Orthodox Ukrainians sought union or support either from Constantinople or from Moscow, and Catholics and Greek Catholics from Rome.

It is difficult to deny the importance of spiritual connection with the mother church: the Ukrainian Churches were affiliated to Constantinople (from which Kyiv received Christianity and the first metropolitans), and to Rome (with which the Kyiv Orthodox hierarchs signed a union against the expansionist ambitions of Moscow and Poland, and, thus, received not only spiritual, but also actual protection for themselves), which is an indispensable historical church tradition. However, any church will protest against unauthorized interference in the internal affairs of its structure by another church, even the mother church, in particular into the simple matters - the formation of the agenda, election of metropolitans and priests, the provision of liturgical books, the definition of the language of worship and prayer texts, imposition of the manner of icon painting and church singing, promotion of the cult of foreign kings and emperors, and more. Nevertheless, Moscow has imposed itself on Kyiv for 430 years as the center of the universe, including an Orthodox, both for the Orthodox (the existence of Ukrainian churches exclusively within the Russian Orthodox Church) and non-Orthodox Ukrainians (re-subordination of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to Moscow and its inclusion in the Russian Orthodox Church).

In the process of the national and religious identification, the collective consciousness of the Ukrainians has defined, and the historical memory has kept, the list of those injustices that Ukraine has suffered:

1) from Moscow, which brutally stole territory, history, culture, church from Kyiv, destroying all non-Moscow things – Kyiv print books, Kyiv paintings, icons, singing, etc. Moscow objectively and subjectively contributed to the weakening of the Kyiv state, led to its decentralization, in every way imposing from the XII century the idea of the need to divide it. In the XIV–XV centuries this became a completed fact when the northeastern and northern dioceses of the Kyiv Metropolis of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, led by Moscow, carried out a split.

After all, Moscow itself broke away from the Metropolis of Kyiv. The first metropolitan with the title “of Moscow” appeared in 1461. The Patriarchate of Constantinople did not recognize the Metropolitan of Moscow for a long time. The Ukrainian and Belorussian dioceses, which remained in the Kyiv Metropolis, were further governed by the Kyiv Metropolitans, who have since sat in Novogradok or Vilna. The status of the Patriarchate was granted to Moscow Metropolis by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Jeremiah II, as early as 1589. However, the elevation of the Moscow Church was facilitated by Constantinople itself, who often

received generous donations from the princes of Moscow and then the kings (the Moscow Patriarchate thus arose in 1589). It is for many centuries that the lands of the Church of Kyiv became one of the main feeders of the Patriarchate of Constantinople – the representatives of patriarchs, if not the patriarchs themselves, came here to collect donations. Consequently, this resulted in the fact that Moscow “bought Kyiv Metropolis.”

The Moscow Empire required historical legitimization, which in this case was associated with the possession of Kyiv as the cradle of East Slavic civilization. The steps towards this were an alliance with the Hetmanate in 1654, which each party understood in its own way, and the subordination of the Kyiv Metropolis to the Moscow Patriarchate as mentioned above.

The crowning achievement of the creation of the empire of the “Third Rome” was the activity of Tsar Peter I, who proclaimed his state an empire called Russia (before it was the Moscow Kingdom), abolished the patriarchate, and became the head of the church in the Anglican manner. The Kyiv Metropolis, by the time already territorially stolen-cross, was transformed into a regular archdiocese.

Ukraine has repeatedly sought to overcome its spiritual and cultural dependence on Moscow, its direct and indirect (hybrid) aggression. Only after 1917, in the wake of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, did Ukraine consciously attempt to break free from “marriage ties” with Russia.¹⁰ Researchers disagree on the number of attempts to obtain autocephaly in the twentieth century. Archimandrite Cyril Govorun calls 3, and Metropolitan Alexander Drabenko – 4.¹¹ The repeated proclamation of the autocephaly of the Kyiv Church, which resulted in the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church, Ukrainian parishes of the Polish Orthodox Church which received Tomos from Constantinople eventually – all ended tragically: the autocephalous movement along with other churches of Ukraine was destroyed by the Bolsheviks. At that time, for the first time – in political and church circles – the slogan “Get away from Moscow” was proclaimed, which is still relevant for many Ukrainians.

2) from Constantinople, who actually agreed to the annexation of the Metropolis of Kyiv to Moscow. Unlike the Russians, who consider 1686 to be the year of the complete and final transfer of Kyiv from the jurisdiction of Constantinople to the power of the Patriarch of Moscow, the Ukrainians, despite the objective set of circumstances, did not approve of the position of Tsargorod, which received some compensation for the retreat from Kyiv. Despite Constantinople’s documented

¹⁰ M. Denysenko, *Pravoslavna Cerkva v Ukrayini: Stolittya rozdilennya*, Vyd-vo DUX I LITERA, Kyiv 2019, 246 pp.

¹¹ Arximandryt Kyrylo (Hovorun), *Ryshtovannya Cerkvy: vbiik poststrukturalnoyi ekleziolohiyi*. Perekl. z anh. O.Panycha, Vydavnytvo DUX I LITERA, Kyiv 2019, 312 pp., pp. 147–151; Mytropolyt Oleksandr (Drabynko), *Ukrayinska cerkva: shlyax do avtokefaliyi*, Vyd-vo “Fond pam’yati bl.mytropolyty Volodymyra, Dux i Litera”, Kyiv 2018, 684 pp., pp. 268–551.

evasion of the final transfer of Kyiv to Moscow's jurisdiction, since the document referred to Moscow's right to ordain bishops for Kyiv, but this was a clear victory for Moscow.¹² And no matter how much Constantinople made excuses, no matter how much it convinced that re-subordination of Kyiv to Moscow is a myth, that Constantinople never renounced Kyiv, Ukrainians have heard almost no protests from the Mother Church for centuries. Constantinople's voice was very weak for a variety of reasons. Historically, the Metropolis of Kyiv was the largest among the Metropolises of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to which it belonged. Byzantium, given the rapid and successful development of the young state and the international ambitions of the princes, sought to restrain its local independence in every possible way. None of the Rus' metropolitans of that time was recognized by Constantinople. That is, during the heyday of the Kyivan Rus' and Byzantium, the relations between them were far from cloudless. Everyone upheld their interests.

From the XV century Constantinople, under the pressure of the Ottomans, had to think of itself, and it definitely could not bother with the outskirts of its former empire. From the tragic for the Ukrainian Church year of 1686, which was gladly embraced by the Moscow Patriarchate, the Constantinople Church, being on the maintenance of Moscow, did not insist on its special role in the life of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine for more than two centuries. It seemed that Constantinople had forgotten its mission of the Mother Church towards the Metropolis of Kyiv. Only in the 1920s, Constantinople declared the act of 1686 to be invalid and provided the Orthodox Church in Poland (a large part of the old Metropolis of Kyiv) Tomos about autocephaly (1924). This was a time when part of the Kyiv Church declared of its desire to live independently.

Aimed at ecumenicity and all-Orthodox unity, Constantinople sought in various ways to prevent a split, and, thus, for so many hundreds of years remained silent not to annoy Moscow, too seldom reminding of its Mother Church rights over Kyiv. Although dissatisfaction with Moscow's policy toward Kyiv gradually accumulated, it did not, until 2018, lead to decisive steps for regaining the historical patronage and spiritual custody of Kyiv. Only with the granting of Tomos to Ukraine, by which the autocephalous status of its church was recognized, did Constantinople finally respond to Moscow's unprecedented aggression.

The list of Kyiv's historical claims to Constantinople can be detailed, deepened, refined, but it has lost any strategic significance after receiving Tomos in 2018.

3) and from Rome, which often, while establishing its relations with Moscow, neglected the interests of Kyiv. In the XVII century, the territory of Ukraine became a field of intense struggle between Catholics and Orthodox. 1596 – signing of the Union of Brest and the creation of a Uniate, later called the Greek Catholic Church, further polarized Ukrainian society, exacerbating the opposition of all participants

¹² Mytropolyt Oleksandr (Drabynko), *Ukrayins'ka cerkva: shlyax do avtokefaliyi*, Vyd-vo "Fond pam'yati bl.mytropolyta Volodymyra, Dux i Litera", Kyiv 2018, 684 pp., pp. 251–260.

in the process. Now there are more actors in the religious field of Ukraine, which has undergone even more tension through the aggravation of the Orthodox-Catholic controversy between the Apostolic Capital and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. As they were negotiating the relationship of primacy between themselves that was becoming increasingly difficult to resolve,¹³ and were lobbying for their globalized geopolitical interests, Ukraine was undergoing blows both from the East and from the West.

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Since 2019, the situation has changed significantly. There are no canonical or non-canonical, Orthodox, or pseudo-Orthodox churches in Ukraine. All are finally legal, all recognized, all canonical, even the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP). The reformatted religious map of Ukraine, which not all of the churches, including the pro-Russian UOC, like, changes the strategy and tactics of the behavior of ALL the churches – both Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant. Now, churches that have shyly not invited the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) and UAOC, the so-called non-canonical churches, to receptions, to official celebrations, to meetings of various ecumenical commissions, etc., will have to acknowledge the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). It will also be necessary to determine its position towards the UOC, which is fully subordinate to the Russian OC, regarding the rejection and condemnation of the actions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, towards the non-recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and towards those Orthodox churches that have begun to recognize the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Tomos equaled everyone in their rights and opportunities. Tomos testified to the new canonical status of the Ukrainian Church and the redrawing of the religious power map of Ukraine, opened new perspectives for ecumenical communion of Christians, and participation in interreligious dialogue.

However, the relations of the Ukrainian churches are still unclear:

1) with Constantinople. Despite the received Tomos, which has partially restored historical justice, Ukrainians expect all of their problems, desires, hopes to be solved. They wanted everything at once: Tomos, the patriarchate, the patriarch, independence, equality with all Orthodox churches, not the last place in the diptych, instant recognition by ALL Orthodox churches, communication on equal terms, opening of all shrines and all borders. Orthodox Ukraine, has for centuries lacked church, including the Eucharistic communion with the Mother Church, has been actually isolated from the Universal Orthodoxy due to the age-old orientation towards the Orthodox Moscow, and only now is getting acquainted with the other Orthodox world, with the fullness of Orthodoxy. It discovers not only the historical

¹³ Arximandryt Kyrylo (Hovorun), *Ryshtovannya Cerkvy: vbiik poststrukturalnoyi ekleziolohiyi*. Perekł. z anhl. O.Panycha, Vydavnyctvo DUX I LITERA, Kyiv 2019, 312 pp., pp. 155–172.

Byzantine tradition, but also its modern life, in various dimensions, through the study of Greek, the Greek liturgical order, through common liturgies with the Orthodox Greeks, Orthodox Africans, through pilgrimage to Mount Athos and other Greek shrines, and more. Personal contacts with Greek hierarchs and priests are being established, not to mention ordinary believers. There is a careful acquaintance with one's Mother church, mutual discovery, acquisition ("turning") of one another.

There remains a separate talk about the diasporic Ukrainian churches, which so painstakingly appeared abroad as Ukrainian ones, who identified themselves with the Patriarchate of Kyiv, but under the terms of Tomos lost this status, falling under the omophor of Constantinople. It is clear that the OCU prefers to reclaim these parishes in Canada, the USA, Latin American countries, even in Australia and more.

2) with Moscow. Moscow is an aggressor against Ukraine and acts aggressively. Not only do they physically kill Ukrainians, but they also cripple thousands of souls with their hypocrisy, treachery, lies, and more. Moscow is unable to communicate through dialogue, and seeks to solve its problems only through blackmail or force. We are far from imagining some perfect completeness of Universal Orthodoxy, the idea that it had no and has no internal problems. However, today, in the age of new international relations, Russia's aggressive stance is unacceptable. And the reason for the lack of unity in the Universal Orthodoxy is Moscow, which cannot give up its imperial appetites, live according to the new rules of the new globalized world. For Moscow, anyone who is not with it, is its enemy. It does not solve problems, but exacerbates them. It constantly threatens to sever and severs Eucharistic ties with Constantinople, with other churches, forbids congregation, praying, performing rituals, pilgrimages, renders anathema to persons whom it dislikes. That is, Moscow behaves like a judge who is always right and exclusively owns the truth. Nevertheless, the most characteristic feature of Orthodoxy is "sobornopravnist" ("councilruling"). However, this argument is used by Moscow to establish rules for granting autocephaly. It is necessary to decide conciliarly whether or not to give autocephaly to Ukrainian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin churches.

The break of Eucharistic communion is not here for the first time: the last one occurred in the 1990s, when Constantinople took the Estonian Orthodox Church under its direct patronage. However, after a while the incident was exhausted, communication resumed. Estonian Orthodoxy is divided. However, now Moscow is going down the same road. And in the sphere of religion, in church affairs, the ROC acts as a political Moscow – by force, coercion, blackmail, and aggression.

Ukraine is confidently, though not rapidly drifting from Moscow to the EU. The results of a recent poll by the Razumkov Center on Ukrainians' trust in church leaders are indicative. Thus, 31% of those polled are now trust the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and 16% do not trust. Pope Francis is trusted by 42% of Ukrainians versus 15% of those who do not. However, the lowest level of trust was received by Patriarch Kiril of Moscow. If in 2013, trust exceeded distrust –

38 against 25, in 2019 – the ratio of those who trust and those who do not trust, is already 16 versus 45.¹⁴ As we can see the trust of Ukrainians in the Patriarch of the ROC has fallen catastrophically, which undoubtedly indicates a change of political and ecclesiastical landmarks.

Despite the incompleteness of establishing normal relations between Kyiv and Constantinople, the existing debating issues between them, which must be acknowledged, is particularly influenced by the Patriarch Bartholomew, who dared to go against the Kremlin-Mospatriarchy coalition by providing Ukraine with Tomos in 2018. It would be difficult to overestimate the results of this remarkable operation – led by our diplomats, ecclesiastical figures, the first persons of the state who acted in an extremely difficult situation, when Ukraine became the center of violent confrontation – and not only religious, but also political, social, civilizational – both for Orthodoxy and Christianity in general;

3) with Rome, which still will not agree to give the UGCC a patriarchate, though it is the largest church of Eastern law. It seems that Rome is afraid of losing control of the Greek Catholics, does not trust them as an independent religious organism, does not beatify Sheptytsky and Slipyi, holds back the growth of the Ukrainian bishopric, constantly correlates the number of Catholics and Greek Catholics, uses the UGCC in its church-diplomatic talks with the ROC, etc. It seems that the Vatican was mesmerized by Moscow. Exaggerating the influence of the latter in spiritual and political processes, Rome chose a strategy of pleasing the aggressor, because it hopes to enter the religious space of Russia, the vast majority of the inhabitants of which are convinced that the name Catholic comes from the word “cut” (executioner).

As one can see, Ukraine not at its will happened to be in the center of global religious and political confrontations. The border of the civilizational rift between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian orientations is now being defined in Ukraine. Here the interests of certain churches coincided with those of certain states. Yes, it is obvious that the Kremlin and Putin are behind the ROC. Constantinople and Rome also have their patrons.

Speaking of global religious confrontation in Ukraine, we single out this triangle: Constantinople-Moscow-Rome. Due to the historical tradition, the interests of Rome and Moscow have converged on the current religious field of Ukraine, which has manifested itself in the escalation of contradictions between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Moscow orthodoxy, and between pro-Ukrainian Greek Catholics and pro-Moscow Orthodox, between Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics. It is not common to talk about the latter line of division: neither Roman Catholics nor Greek Catholics will disclose this confrontation to anyone, although there is tension between them, which is manifested in many things. For example, the rejection of

¹⁴ *Derzhava i Cerkva v Ukrayini-2019: pidsumky roku i perspektyvy rozvytku vidnosyn (informacijni materialy)*, Vyd-vo “Razumkov centre”, Kyiv 2019, 70 pp., p. 7.

the meeting of Pope Francis with the Moscow Patriarch in Havana (12.02.2016), which was swallowed by Greek Catholics, albeit with a bitter aftertaste.

It may seem that Moscow has quarreled with Constantinople because of Ukraine. It is so, and not quite. Ukraine has become a catalyst for the intra-Orthodox conflict between Constantinople and Moscow, and in Ukraine between the UOC MP and the UOC-KP and UAOC (until 2018), and now between the UOC MP and the OCU. World Orthodox centers (and this is obvious) are behind this confrontation.

The contradictions between Moscow and Constantinople are ancient and very deep, their roots are in history. However, there are even more reasons for competition and confrontation of these two Orthodox centers in the future. The question remains: will there be Orthodoxy at all, who will determine its fate, what will prevail – traditionalism and conservatism bordering on bigotry, or openness, adequacy, responses to contemporary people's calls and requests?

In new circumstances, Ukrainian churches are looking for their new identity. For a long time, the UOC KP, as a precursor of the OCU, has sought to be as UOC MP, ROC, but now a new task has arisen: contrarily, not to become as ROC, but to propose a new model of the Church – an open, modern, European one that is ready to engage in dialogue with all Orthodox churches, even with different religions, but more so – with secular worldviews and ideologies.¹⁵

Having historically fallen into this triangle, in a three-dimensional clinch, everyone is interested: what awaits the Ukrainian Churches? What is their future? Will their historical dependence on different religious centers remain, or will the Ukrainian Churches follow the path of independent, autonomous development? The key word here is development, which is seen in different ways:

- *institutional*: The church will grow with new communities, new church structures, and interesting initiatives. During the first year of independence from Moscow and being under Constantinople, many new structures have emerged, as the new leadership of the church did not forbid but allowed the Orthodox initiative to emerge. Hardly is the head of the Church Epiphany aware of all the activities of his faithful and their priests, who is still stepping in the line of the old tradition;
- *organizational*. The church will gain experience in managing the lives of parishes, their members, protecting their interests, meeting new needs. There is something to be learned from the same Greek Catholics here;
- *theological*. A new generation of theologians is growing in the bosom of the OCU, able to respond in good time in a Christian way to the events of the church and social life in accordance with the intrinsic content of the Gospels and the Canons of the Church;

¹⁵ JU. Kovalenko, *Vidkryte Pravoslav'ya yak alternatyva i perspektyva*, "Ukrayinske relihiyevnavstvo" 86/2018, pp. 49–57.

– educational. Spiritual schools are being reformed, teaching levels are rising, and so is the level of learning. Students are focused not on Moscow, but on Greece, and on Constantinople.

In addition to these areas, the Church is active in the social, charitable spheres. It has been an active supporter of the volunteer movement from the very beginning and is a part of it. The vast majority of the chaplains are priests of the OCU. The church develops cultural, mass-media, mediative, and ideological discourse. It is beginning to actively explore the international space, strengthening itself on the international stage – and not only on the ecclesiastical, inter-Orthodox, but also on the interstate. Thanks to the thoughtful foreign policy – church diplomacy, the Church can be successful in representing the country on the international stage. Contemporary foreign relations are not a charity ball, but a field where fierce competition applies to every slice of free space, and where religion plays a very serious role in mobilizing the millions of people whom it equips with powerful symbols and gives sense to their actions.

Conclusion

Ukraine and its religious life are not yet fully independent. They are influenced by various political and religious centers, which have always been interested in Ukraine, in having their impact here. However, it matters to Ukraine whether it will be the object of these relations, or, after all, will turn into a fully-fledged participant in inter-religious and inter-state dialogue, will become its agent, whether other countries and foreign centers will reckon with it. After the Maidan, Ukraine got a chance because it declared itself as an independent unit of world life. It is now important to retain this status by completing the mission entrusted by the challenges of our time.

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