

RUSSIA AND THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

State, Religion, and Society



Report from a conference at Schæffergården 3-4 November 2016

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Preface

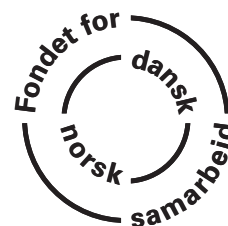
“The Nordic Pearls” – a network consisting of Fondet for dansk-norsk samarbeid (Lysebu and Schæffergården), Hanaholmen, Nordens folkehøgskola Biskops-Arnö and Voksenåsen – have together with Nordens Hus in Reykjavík addressed different aspects of past and present Nordic-Russian relations in a conference series during 2015 and 2016. The aim was to create a better understanding of the contemporary and historical aspects of the relations between Russia and our countries.

The conference on “State, Religion, and Society in Russia and the Nordic Countries” at Schæffergården 3 - 4 November 2016 was a part of this series. It attempted to widen our understanding of this subject by focusing on significant differences in notions of religion-state relations as well as differences when it comes to the role played by religion in our societies.

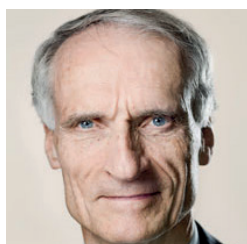
It is in our common interest to know and hopefully to understand the differences in order to create a basis for continuing mutual relations. At the conference, a number of specialists offered their views on Russia’s “special path” as a basis of interpretation and discussion. Their contributions are presented here.

The conference was arranged by Fondet for dansk-norsk samarbeid, and has been generously supported by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. The program has been planned by Dr Christian Gottlieb.

Terje Nygaard
General secretary
Fondet for dansk-norsk samarbeid



Contributors



Bertel Haarder
Opened the conference

Danmark's Minister of Culture and Ecclesiastical Affairs

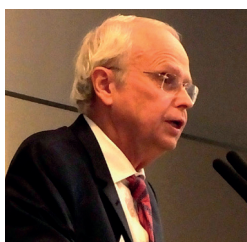
Christian Gottlieb

Organizier,
adjunct professor



Dr Christian Gottlieb is adjunct professor of church history at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen. He was for many years a research librarian and, in 2007-14, head of

HM the Queen's Reference Library, Copenhagen. He has also worked as an external lecturer of church history at Copenhagen University.



Per-Arne Bodin
Professor

Professor of Slavic literatures, Stockholm University. Main research interests are Russian poetry, Russian cultural history and Polish literature after the Second World War. Most recent books are

Language, Canonization and Holy Foolishness: Studies in Postsoviet Russian Culture and the Orthodox Tradition, 2009 and *Från Bysans till Putin: Historier om Ryssland*, 2016.

Geir Flikke

Associate Professor



Associate Professor at the University of Oslo. Assistant Director of NUPI (2006-2010) Currently heading the Norwegian Research Council project NEPORUS, analyzing the changing framework for

social organization and social mobilization in Russia.



Kristian Gerner
Professor em

Kristian Gerner is Professor Emeritus of History, Lund University. His research and journalism has focused on 20th century Russian (Soviet) Central and East European history and historical culture. His books on Russian and Soviet history include

Ideology and Rationality in the Soviet Model. A Legacy for Gorbachev. (With Stefan Hedlund: Routledge 1989) and *Ryssland. En europeisk civilisationshistoria* (Russia, a history of a European civilization: Historiska Media 2011, 2015.



Elina Kahla

PhD, Director

PhD, docent in Russian Cultural History, University of Helsinki. Conducts research in Russian cultural history, cultural orthodoxy, and the Russian Orthodox Church in post-secular society. Her research interests also include modernization studies and the cultural practices of Eastern

Orthodox Christianity. She is a fellow at the Center of Excellence in Russian Studies funded by the Academy of Finland (2012–2017), and the director of the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg.

Pål Kolstø

Professor



Professor of Russian studies at the University of Oslo. Dr. Philos. with a dissertation on Leo Tolstoy's relationship to the Orthodox Church. For the last 20 years he has mainly been working on nationalism and ethnic relations in Russia and the other former Soviet

republics. Latest publication (as editor together with Helge Blakkisrud): "The new Russian: imperialism, ethnicity, authoritarianism, 2000-2015", Edinburgh University press.)



Jeanne Kormina

Docent

Jeanne (Zhanna) Kormina is professor at the Department of Sociology, Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg.

Uffe Østergård

Professor em



Emeritus Professor in European and Danish History, Copenhagen Business School, Honorary professor, University of Aarhus. 1996-2000 Jean Monnet Professor in European Civilization and Integration. 1999-2000 Head of department,

Center for European Cultural Studies AU. 2000 to 2006 Head of Department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Danish Institute for International Studies.

Introduction

Christian Gottlieb

University of Copenhagen, cgo@teol.ku.dk

Until a few years ago we in the West had already got used to the idea that Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet experiment, was now finally on its way to becoming a “normal” country” with democracy, freedom, a market economy and all the other trappings of a modern liberal society.

But with the rise of the current Russian president, Vladimir Putin, these expectations have gradually been disappointed. Particularly since the Ukrainian crisis, culminating with the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the policies of Mr. Putin have been the cause of much controversy and a polarization of the debate on Russia and its relation to other parts of the world, particularly the West. Suddenly the “normality” that we had come to expect seemed to evaporate only to give way to a more sinister form of traditional Russian authoritarianism.

To many politicians and opinion makers in the West this change seemed to come as something of a surprise; and a very unpleasant one, at that. Many reactions to the change seem to indicate that there is not a great deal of understanding that while some factors in Russian society do indeed support a development of Western “normality”, several other factors weigh heavily in another direction. For many complex reasons Russian society remains characterized by a series of factors that impede or prevent its development according to western standards of “normality”.

The aim of this conference is an attempt to identify some of these factors and to consider them from the perspective of the Nordic countries that are among Russia’s closest neighbors.

In order to identify these factors the conference will focus particularly on the relationship between state, religion and society in both Russia and the Nordic countries. This is done in a belief that this theme is where some of the most hotly contested issues are to be found. It is also believed that precisely a comparative analysis will help to promote a mutual understanding of the issues.

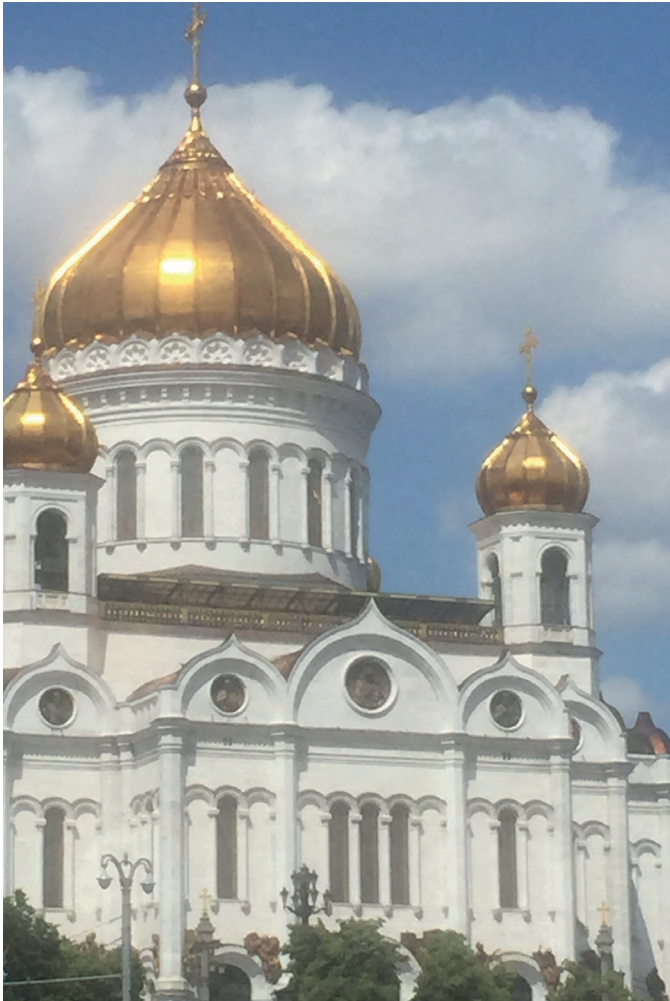
Conference themes

The conference theme is based on the proposition that three important historical factors have contributed particularly to the formation of Russian society. These are:

- The role and functioning of theocracy.
- The idea and practice of Russia as an Orthodox Christian empire.
- Russia/Orthodoxy as an (imagined) independent civilization.

All have deep roots in Russian/Orthodox history and, although dormant for most of the 20th century they are all now back as objects of public discussion. All of them are connected with each other but also need to be considered individually in their own right. Most of the following lectures will be devoted to an examination and discussion of these factors while the last two will attempt to consider them in the light of the parallel historical experience of the Nordic countries.

So much for the introduction to the conference theme.



Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Moscow



Marmorkirken_Copenhagen.jpg

Before we proceed with lectures and discussions, there is one more issue that I think it important to address right from the beginning in light of the current situation in Ukraine and Syria. Considering the fact that the Russian government has recently been accused of war crimes, even by the foreign minister of this country, it hardly needs saying that some of the issues to be dealt with here are potentially or actually controversial; subjects of heated debate, if not even actual fighting.

On this basis it is important to stress that this conference is not intended as an exercise in “Putinverstehung” as they say derisively in Germany of attempts to “understand” or defend Putin, whether naively or perhaps for more sinister reasons. This conference is not intended as an apology for the views and policies of Vladimir Putin and the current Russian government.

The conference is however, intended as an attempt at “Russlandsverstehung”, understanding of Russia. It has been planned on the basis of a conviction that whatever may be thought about Mr. Putin and his government, which are, after all, transitory phenomena, there is a more deep-seated Russian historical experience, a special mentality and more enduring Russian points of view that deserve a hearing even if Mr. Putin is indeed a scoundrel. Whatever Mr. Putin’s intentions he may in fact still be a representative of beliefs, views and interests sincerely held by many Russians. Things that we as Russia’s neighbors need to know something about under all circumstances.

In conclusion, it should also be mentioned that the views expressed in the following lectures are those of the speaker in question.

The history and theology of Russian theocracy

Christian Gottlieb

University of Copenhagen, cgo@teol.ku.dk

On theocracy

Theocracy literally means rule by God. While this obviously implies that theocracy presupposes an assumption of God, it also makes it a rather difficult term.

Thus, even if God is assumed, theocracy in its strictest sense – direct rule by God – is hardly applicable as a descriptive term to any concrete human society or state. If everything that happens is assumed to be actively willed by God, every human society would then in some sense be theocratic, and it would be impossible to distinguish any specific society as *particularly* theocratic. If we assume only some things to be willed by God, it remains difficult to determine which things and hence to understand why some communities of believers may be considered theocracies while others may not.

In other words: even the most ardent believer in the possibility of theocratic government will have to admit that any given society that considers itself theocratic can only ever be an *approximation* to an ideal. Even if the entire organization and practice of such a society or state are believed to be an expression of Divine will, it will always inevitably have to be somehow mediated by mortal and sinful men prone to all manner of mistakes and limitations. Theocracy in this yet unredeemed world remains a utopia.

To some this may seem a somewhat trivial observation but, given the unfamiliarity with the concept of theocracy in today's world, it may still be useful as an introduction to the concept. In practice "rule by God" has always meant rule by priests and/or by rulers "appointed by God" in accordance with laws and rules derived from or inspired by sacred texts.

In a consideration of theocracy in Russia, this is very obviously the case.

The Byzantine origins of Russian theocracy

The roots of theocracy in Russia are much older than Russia itself and reach back to the origin of the Byzantine or East Roman Empire in the early 4th century. The theocratic tradition begins with the emperor Constantine, the first Roman emperor to embrace Christianity and establish it as the privileged religion of the Roman Empire. One of the most decisive turns in the history of Christianity and of Europe and even of the world at large.

The Constantinian turn implied that the emperor was now no longer to be seen as a god himself, one among many, but rather as the particular favorite of the one omnipotent God. As the chosen instrument of Divine will on earth.

For the Christian Church the turn entailed a sudden and totally unexpected promotion from the status of a suppressed underground movement on the periphery of society to that of a protagonist at the highest level of power and prestige in the Roman Empire. Within a few generations, Christianity achieved monopoly status in the empire, which was now perceived as the Christian empire that was to be the vehicle of the missionary zeal of Christianity and the tool of its spread to all mankind in all corners of the world. The universalist aspirations of Christianity had provided the Roman Empire with what it had hitherto been missing: a grand universal purpose; a universal idea suitable to the actual status of the empire as ruler of almost all the known world.

Centered in the new imperial capital of Constantinople – Constantine's city – the universal Christian empire was now perceived as an image or reflection of the rule of God in heaven. As there is only one God in heaven, there can be only one emperor in this world and only one universal empire as a premonition of the true Kingdom of God that is to come on the latter day. Based on this idea the universal Christian Empire wielded a combination of secular and spiritual power on a scale never before seen in this part of the world.

In more practical terms, the idea of the Christian Empire translated into the formal arrangement of Byzantine government; i.e. of the formal relationship between the worldly rule of the emperor and the spiritual rule of the supreme bishop, known as the patriarch. Or, as we would say today, of the relationship between Church and State.

The first to formulate the nature of this relationship was the emperor Justinian. In 535, he announced the concept that was to become the basic principle of the Church/State relationship in the Orthodox world: The *symphonia*, or symphony, that ought to prevail between emperor and patriarch. Describing the ideal of a harmonious collaboration between the two, the symphony assumes that both are engaged in the same project: the protection and spread of the Christian Church and its message of salvation for all mankind.

The idea of the symphony was further developed in the 880s by patriarch Photius. In his *Epanagoge*, he expressly drew the logical conclusion seemingly implicit in the symphonia principle: That emperor and patriarch are not merely collaborators but equal partners. None of them takes precedence over the other and both of them need each other. Although this assertion by the patriarch did not in practice prevent later emperors from demonstrating their power over the church, Photius' assertion has remained a central aspect of the ideal of Orthodox symphonic government.

As ideally perceived, Orthodox theocracy does not imply the total identification of Church and State. There still remains an important distinction between them. But while Church and State retain their distinct identities, they are always in fundamental agreement because both are engaged in the same overall project, which is, of course, fundamentally religious. Like two sides of the same coin, Church and State are seen as inseparably united, of equal value, but each representing their distinct face to the world. To put it in the terminology of Western Christianity, the ideal Orthodox theocracy is neither "caesaro-papist," nor "papo-caesarist." The emperor is not head of the Church, nor is the patriarch head of State. But both are harmoniously united in a re-

lationship of mutual respect and collaboration on God's plan with the world.

Obviously, this construction does not allow the possibility that the emperor might profess any other religion than Orthodox Christianity. Neither could he be a-religious, even anti-religious, nor merely assume a position of religious "neutrality." Theocracy, in other words, is by definition fundamentally incompatible with the idea of secularization. The idea expressed already by Christ himself that there should be a distinction between what belongs to the emperor and what belongs to God – which may indeed be the first ever distinction between a secular and a spiritual sphere – seems quite difficult to realize in a construction like the Byzantine theocracy. Indeed, it may cause us to wonder counterfactually what Christ would have answered, if the coin famously presented to him, had indeed carried not only the portrait of the emperor on the one side but also that of the patriarch on the other.

So much for the theory of Orthodox theocracy. Although the theory was often quite far from actual practice in the Byzantine Empire, it has remained the basic ideal of church/state relations in the Orthodox Church.

As such, it was also inherited by the Russian Orthodox Church, though it could hardly be realized in the initial stages after the Christianization of Kievan Russia in the late 10th century. In any case, an independent church/state relationship could obviously not be practiced in the well over 200 years of the Mongol hegemony in the 13th-15th centuries. However, in the course of the 15th century when the Russians, under the leadership of the Moscow princes, managed finally to defeat the Mongols and to reestablish a unified and independent Russian state, the ideas of the Byzantine theocracy also began to surface in the Russian context.

Theocracy applied to Russia

In 1448, the Russian church achieved autocephaly, i.e. ecclesiastical independence from Constantinople. The importance of this move was confirmed a few years later in 1453 when the fall of Constantinople to the Turks marked the final collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the end of more than a thousand years of continuous theocratic government. The historic centre of the Orthodox Church was now no longer master of its own home. This major event was decisive not least for the Russians who also happened to find themselves in a period of transition. As they liberated themselves from the Mongols, they were now in a position to form their own independent Russian state and to define its relationship to their own independent Russian church. The fall of Constantinople further entailed that Russia was now

not only the largest but also the only Orthodox country left with political independence; the only country in the world where Orthodoxy was free to develop on its own terms. This situation was to remain the state of affairs for the subsequent almost 400 years, i.e. until the Balkan Orthodox nations managed to achieve independence in the 19th century.

Although it is debatable whether the fall of Constantinople and the contemporaneous rise of Russia ever entailed a concrete “transfer of empire” (*translatio imperii*), contemporary Russians evidently chose to understand it this way: After the fall of Byzantium, Muscovite Russia took over the purpose, ideals and symbols of the Christian Empire. The most famous, classical formulation of this idea is found in the letter of 1524 by the monk Filofei (Philotheus) asserting that, after the fall of both Rome and Constantinople, the Russian ruler is now the only Orthodox emperor (tsar) in the entire Christian world and Moscow the only hallowed seat of the holy, universal, apostolic church. And so it shall remain forever after. As Filofei memorably put it:

Two Romes have fallen, but the third one stands and a fourth there shall never be.

The idea of Moscow as the “third Rome” has been interpreted differently, in both apocalyptic and imperialist terms, either as a strict admonition piously to observe Orthodoxy in the awareness of judgment day, or as an outburst of self-aggrandizing imperial ambition. In any case, whether a cause of humility or pride, the idea presupposes a theocratic mode of thinking. It was a mode of thinking that had previously been expressly inculcated by the Byzantine establishment itself, as in the letter of about 1394 by patriarch Antony of Constantinople to Grand Prince Basil I of Vladimir:

It is not possible for the Christians to have a Church without an Emperor, for the imperial sovereignty and the Church form a single unity and they cannot be separated from each other. [...] Hear what the prince of the Apostles, Peter, says in his first epistle: “Fear God, honour the Emperor”. He did not say “the Emperors” for he was not referring to the so-called “emperors” of various different countries, but he said “the Emperor” in order to emphasize that there was only one Emperor in the world. [...] the single Emperor whose laws, ordinances and decrees hold throughout the world, who alone, with none other, is revered by all Christians.”

If the Russians were to take such thinking seriously, they would now – with the Byzantine Emperor gone – have to establish their own emperor and, by implication, their own empire. Otherwise, their church could not continue to exist.



Tsar Peter I, known as “the Great”. Portrait by Jean-Marc Nattier, 1717

In practical terms, it was to take some time before the formal set-up of theocratic government was established. Although the grand princes of Moscow began to be referred to as “tsars” (Russian for Caesar) already in the early 16th century (as in Filofei’s letter), the tsardom was only officially established in 1547 with the coronation of Ivan IV, later known as “the Terrible”. In 1589 the autocephaly of the Russian church was definitively confirmed when Moscow was recognized by Constantinople as a patriarchy in its own right. The formal basis of symphonic, theocratic government by tsar and patriarch in the Byzantine tradition had thus been re-established in the “Third Rome”.

In this form, the construction was to last for the subsequent 111 years, i.e. until the arrival on the scene of Tsar Peter I, known as “the Great”. During this period, the symphonic relationship was put to the test by the policies of patriarch Nikon, whose liturgical reform of the Russian Church in 1652 triggered the so-called Old-believers schism, which divided the church and has endured to this day. His assertion of the preeminence of the patriarch over the tsar was obviously also a challenge to the latter and can be seen as a breach of the ideal symphony; in any case, it became a cause of his own eventual downfall. His stance was carried on by several of his successors on the patriarchal throne and was to provide a perfect justification or pretext for Peter the Great to do something about the role of the church.

Theocracy dismantled or transformed

Peter's solution was radical. When the current patriarch Adrian died in 1700, Peter – who had achieved single rule as tsar in 1696 – decided to postpone appointment of a new patriarch and left the seat vacant for the time being. In 1721, Peter's Church reform definitively abolished the patriarchy and replaced it with a new government body known as the Most Holy Ruling Synod. As a department of Peter's newly reformed state administration, the Synod was formed as one among several state institutions whose ultimate head was the tsar himself. The Church reform, in other words, deprived the church of independent leadership and effectively turned the Orthodox Church into the official state church of the Russian Empire.

After Peter, his policies were continued and confirmed above all by Catherine the Great who in 1764 secularized all property belonging to the church whose economy was entirely overtaken by the state; thus depriving the church not only of administrative but also of material independence. In 1797 Catherine's son and successor, Paul I, for the first time officially declared the tsar "head of the Church".

It is important here to note that the idea of monarchical church government was not Peter's own invention, nor was it known from some alternative version of Orthodoxy. Rather the idea came to him expressly from Protestantism, which had until then had no consequences in Russia. On his extensive travels in Western Europe Peter had visited several Protestant states including England and the Danish-Norwegian kingdom (with whom he was allied in the Great Northern War against Sweden) where he had observed that the king was the head of the church. Inspired by this, he later entrusted the concrete formulation of his church reform to a theologian, Feofan Prokopovich, who, although Orthodox, was also heavily influenced by Lutheranism. Thus, the obvious Protestant tendencies in Peter's church reform were no coincidence but fully intentional.

Not because Peter had any intention of converting to Protestantism or of introducing an actual reformation in Russia, but because this Protestant practice seemed to him more conducive to the efficiency of modern rational government. More conducive to the "common good" that all government should promote according to the Enlightenment spirit that he had adopted from the West. As such, the church reform was just one among many reforming measures undertaken by Peter with the intention of turning Russia into a "European" country. The numerous western ideas, practices, institutions, things, tendencies introduced by Peter in the early 1700s all intended to make Russia an important player on the European scene, where it had until then played only a very minor role. Peter's sense that Russia was

lacking behind contemporary Western European states inspired the launch of his grand project of westernization – and modernization. In contemporary west European fashion Russia was now organized on the basis of enlightened absolutism and monarchical church government, much like, for instance, the Lutheran kingdom of Denmark and Norway in the age of absolutism.

It is also important to be aware that Peter's westernization project, and specifically his church reform, was not welcomed by the Orthodox church leadership. On the contrary, from the perspective of the Church, Peter's state church construction constituted a coercive imposition of principles that were not merely alien but directly opposed to the principles of Orthodox church government. A layperson at the head of the church – even if he were the tsar – is not permissible in Orthodox canon law. Furthermore, the submission of the church under the state implied a breach of the *symphonia* principle of equality between tsar and patriarch. Although the churchmen of Peter's day were not in a position to prevent his reforms, their view has persisted and is still echoed today by Orthodox church historians.

Thus, in the eyes of such historians, Peter's church reform constituted an undesirable and illegitimate challenge to the principle of theocratic government. While Orthodox theocracy is seen as a promotion of church *independence* of the state, Western absolutism entails subjection of the church under the state and is thus anti-theocratic and a step on the way to secularization. Some Russian church historians are even inclined to see Peter's state church construction as more or less "totalitarian". So from this point of view theocracy and totalitarianism are opposites. In the eyes of most western historians, it is usually the other way round.

Thus, it remains questionable to what extent the Petrine state church construction can still be described as a theocracy. From a Western point of view, it may seem to have retained a strong theocratic element from the past, but from an Orthodox point of view, it was no longer an authentic full-fledged theocracy. It can be described as a hybrid of Orthodoxy and Protestantism, perhaps a post-theocracy, or as a theocracy partially dismantled. However this may be, it is notable that, even if theocracy was challenged, the theocratic ideal lived on in the minds of Orthodox believers conscious of the basically illegitimate nature of the Petrine construction.

The relationship between the Russian state and the Orthodox Church during the reigns of the Petrine Empire, i.e. until its demise in 1917, is characterized by a recurring and growing ambiguity regarding the administration of Peter's heritage. To what extent his westernization project should take precedence over the pre-Petrine tradition represented not least by the Orthodox Church.

The tsars never managed to solve this problem, which became one of the basic causes of the revolution of 1917.

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that 1917 was a highly ambiguous year for the Russian church. On the one hand, it was a relief. The fall of the tsar also brought an effective end to the rule of the Synod, and it is characteristic that one of the first things the Church did after the fall was to convene a general council in order to re-establish the patriarchy. Consequently, the new patriarch was installed just five days after the Bolshevik October coup. Considering the role of the Emperor in Orthodox tradition it is ironic that it took the fall of the tsar to re-establish a self-reliant position for the Orthodox Church.

On the other hand, 1917 also saw the beginning of the Bolshevik regime that was soon to introduce the most vehement, violent and systematic attempt to eradicate any trace of religion from public space. According to the regime's ideology, this was done in order to build a communist society totally cleansed of any reactionary and repressive influences such as notions of a religious or spiritual dimension of life. A society characterized not merely by total separation of Church and State, but even an unrelenting war by the State against the Church. A policy that might be seen as the substitution of theocracy with its polar opposite.

The result was a disaster of monstrous proportions, not only for the Church but for all of society under Soviet rule. To what extent the struggle against religion was a cause of this disaster may be debated but that there was a connection is not in doubt. The fact remains that the grand attempt to rid society of God also managed to rid it of enormous numbers of human beings. The totally godless society also proved to be one of the most totalitarian societies ever seen.

The question today is: What comes after totalitarianism? What will replace militant secularization? What are we to make of the explicit and repeated references to the symphonia principle that are now being voiced by representatives of the Orthodox Church? Do they really mean it, and if they do, what are the implications?

These are some of the basic questions that this conference will address.

The “Symphony” in Contemporary Russia

Per-Arne Bodin

Stockholm University, pab@slav.su.se

One very difficult question to answer, in my view, is the character of the relation between the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian statehood both historically and at the present time. This is a crucial question for understanding both Russian history and the Russia of today. I will try to contribute to the answer pertaining to the situation today by using and discussing the term symphony. The term has a somewhat loose meaning which aptly describes the ambiguity between legality and practice, which seems to characterize this relation. On one hand contemporary Russia, like imperial Russia or the Soviet Union, is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state; on the other the Orthodox Church plays an important or at times a decisive role in the formation of its ideology.

Much has already been written and said on this issue, especially on the practical implications of this fact, but I will approach the question from a somewhat different angle and undertake a discourse analysis of the most authoritative statements from both the church and the state and also turn to the field of event studies to try to cope with this question.

Constitution and Law

In the first Russian constitution of 1906 it was clear that the Orthodox Church had the role of state ideology:

Article 62. The established and ruling faith of the Russian Empire is the Christian, Orthodox Catholic, Eastern faith.¹

In the Soviet constitution of 1936 and 1977 the Communist party took the role which the Church had had in the 1906 text. In the famous paragraph six in the Brezhnev constitution concerning the leading role of the Communist party it was formulated in the following way:

Article 6. The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organisations and public organisations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people.²

In the Yeltsin constitution of 1993 it was of primary importance not to designate any such specific ideological foundation to the state:

Article 14.

1. The Russian Federation shall be a secular state. No religion may be established as the State religion or as obligatory.
2. Religious associations shall be separate from the State and shall be equal before the law.³

There is no mention of God in the present Russian Constitution in contrast to, for example the German fundamental law ('Im Bewußtsein seiner Verantwortung vor Gott und den Menschen').

This divine legitimation is stronger and is overtly expressed in the current national anthem, with the text written originally by Sergei Mikhalkov in 1942. The mention of Stalin in the original version is now replaced by that of God:

You are unique in the world, one of a kind –
Native land protected by God!

Russia is preserved by God, but no reference to any particular confession is made. This use of rather general use of a divine legitimation for the state is a parallel to the 'In God we trust' in the USA, for example on banknotes, decided on as late as in 1956.

In the law on religion from 1997 not only God, but more precisely Orthodoxy is given a special role, not

only from a historical point of view, but also in the establishment and development of Russia's spirituality and culture. The whole ambiguity in the church–state relation is expressed here in one sentence. The state is secular, yet Orthodoxy plays a special role and at the end of the sentence other religious denominations are also assigned a place, albeit secondary:

Basing itself on the fact that the Russian Federation is a secular state; Recognizing the special contribution of Orthodoxy to the history of Russia and to the establishment and development of Russia's spirituality and culture; Respecting Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions which constitute an inseparable part of the historical heritage of Russia's peoples.⁴

These are the defining official documents of the state in its relation to the Church and other confessions.

Symphony

In a lengthy text from the year 2000, 'Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church', the Church defines its view of its relation to the State. This text functions as its fundamental document, sketching the role of the Church in society in the new situation after the fall of the Soviet Union. The word used to describe the ideal relation between church and state is 'symphony', [*simfoniia*].

In their totality these principles were described as symphony between church and state. It is essentially co-operation, mutual support and mutual responsibility without one side intruding into the exclusive domain of the other. The bishop obeys the government as a subject, not because his episcopal power comes from a government official. Similarly, a government official obeys his bishop as a member of the Church seeking salvation and not because his power comes from the power of the bishop. The state in such symphonic relationships with the Church seeks her spiritual support, prayer for itself and blessing for its work of achieving the goal of its citizens' welfare, while the Church enjoys support from the state in creating conditions favourable for preaching and for the spiritual care of her children who are at the same time citizens of the state.⁵

The term symphony – coined in Byzantium by the emperor Justinian (6th century) in his sixth Novella – is thus the key word used in this document to define the ideal relation between Church and State as below. These Novellae are considered by historians to be precisely a way of strengthening legitimacy and, in this case,

Justinian's rule.⁶ The sixth Novella expresses the relation between church and state as below. The text is also partially quoted in the 'Bases of the Social Concept'. The exact wording of the novella runs as follows:

The greatest blessings granted to human beings by God's ultimate grace are priesthood and kingdom, the former taking care of divine affairs, while the latter guiding and taking care of human affairs, and both come from the same source, embellishing human life.

Therefore, nothing lies so heavy on the hearts of kings as the honour of priests, who on their part serve them, praying continuously for them to God. And if the priesthood is well ordered in everything and is pleasing to God, then there will be full symphony (*συμφωνία τις ἀγαθή*) between them in everything that serves the good and benefit of the human race.⁷

This special term from Byzantine jurisprudence is thus a key word today in the self-image of the Orthodox Church in mapping its relation to the State.

The frequent use of the word 'symphony' by the new patriarch, Kirill, shows a development in the relation between church and state. It was used more historically in the social document of 2000, but since then it has been seen more or less as a fact, the current or future relationship between church and state. I would argue that this term has been internalized in the discourse on the relation between church and state: earlier scholars of church history used it only rarely. The word is absent from extensive handbooks on the Byzantine Empire from earlier times as well as from Kazdan's new three-volume encyclopaedia of Byzantium.⁸ It was however used in some cases by Church historians, such as Anton Kartashev in his History of the Russian Church from the 1930s, but most other books on Byzantium and the Orthodox Church do not mention it at all. The term existed and has its origin in Justinian, but has been revived for use in the special context of post-Soviet Russia. It is used as if it has always been the common notion to depict an ideal relation between Church and State. It is a word found in the archive of historical Church terms to be used and loaded with new meanings in a very different context from that in which it was originally used. Nowadays it can even be seen in a newspaper headline, as in this rather witty example from *Izvestiia* in 2009 about the president's reception for the new patriarch, playing on the two meanings of the word: 'Dmitrii Medvedev and Patriarch Kirill performed a symphony'.⁹

The Holy Synod and Beyond

Before the time of Peter the Great, the patriarchate was an independent organisation. From Peter up to 1917,

a governmental organ – the Holy Synod – ruled the church as it is declared in the constitution of 1906:

Article 65. In the administration of the Church the autocratic power acts through the Holy Directorial Synod, which it has created.¹⁰

In late Soviet times, contact with the Church was maintained through the odious Council for Religious Affairs. Today there is no such organisation. This is a token of the independence of the church in its relation to the state. The Holy Synod is now as in Soviet times the name of the decision-making body of the church itself without any secular participation. The lack of a church ministry is one more real and symbolic fact demonstrating the symphony between church and state, in the meaning of non-intervention in each other's affairs. The election and enthronement of a new patriarch without any intrusions is an even more important statement of an independent church.

The Enthronement

The function of the symphony can be studied in the ceremony of the enthronement of the new Patriarch Kirill as patriarch of Moscow and all Rus' on 1 February 2009. The existence of a ruling patriarch is the most important token of an independent church in relation to the state. From the time of Peter the Great up to 1917 and from 1925 up to 1943 the state bluntly denied the church that right.

The ceremony took place in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in the presence of the then President Dimitrii Medvedev and the then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. The president and the prime minister were positioned in the most prestigious place of honour for a layman – in the right kliros, that is on the right hand side at the front of the church.



The president and the prime minister in the altar room

During the enthronement the president and prime minister were both invited to the altar room, but not the female guests of honour, because traditionally women are not allowed to enter the holiest part of the church.

At the enthronement of Kirill, the president and the prime minister thus had the same access to the altar room which the Byzantine emperor and the Russian tsar once had.¹¹ The position of president and prime minister inside the altar room however was completely peripheral; in principle, as far from the throne of the patriarch as was possible. In principle, it is permissible for all men, to enter the altar room. Still, the invitation to enter the altar room was something very special.

In Old Russia, the tsar together with one metropolitan (archbishop) performed the enthronement ceremony in practice, that is they placed the elected patriarch on the throne. Now it was done by two senior metropolitans. Moreover, the commentator in the TV broadcast did not mention the president and prime minister's presence until far into the broadcast and the cameras focused on them rarely. A clip of the president and the prime minister was always followed by a clip of ordinary believers. One can see this at once important and insignificant role of the civil power allocated from two perspectives. On the one hand, it was a semiotic marker of the relationship between church and state and, on the other, the loyal and independent position of the church in relation to the civil power. This broadcast seemed to show symphony in practice in the new way. It differs in relation to Byzantine time, to late imperial time and to the Soviet era.

The assigned role of the secular power is due to the Constitution: the Russian state is secular, while the Orthodox church has a special historical role, as evidenced by the preamble to the Constitution, as we have noted. It is this complexity of church–state relationship that is portrayed in the complex relationships between the president and prime minister on the one hand and the patriarch on the other.

The Reception Given for the Patriarch. The Speech of President Medvedev and of the Patriarch

One main point stressed by the president during a reception given in honour of the new patriarch after the enthronement was the importance of the Church in creating the Russian statehood. It is something more added to the history, spirituality and culture mentioned in the law on religion. This is the most precise way of using the church for the legitimization of the existence of Russia in its contemporary form.



Putin and the patriarch in the Annunciation cathedral after the inauguration

I am pleased to once again congratulate you, Your Holiness, – said Dmitii Medvedev, taking his seat at the table. – In the new Russia relations of church and state are based on non-interference of state bodies in the activities of religious organizations and at the same time recognizing the enormous contribution of the church in the establishment of statehood.¹²

The patriarch stressed in his speech the importance of 'symphony', thus again focusing on the church-state relation. This term has made a journey from the books of church history into the language used in a speech to the president of the Russian Federation.

In Byzantium the word 'symphony' was used to describe the relation [between state and church]. That is a harmonious combination of accountability and responsibility. We need to recognize that the spirit of symphony ought to direct our thoughts and deeds.¹³

The Inauguration of the President

My next example is the inauguration of President Putin on May 7, 2012. The patriarch, was placed in the front row during the ceremony, but did not participate in any

way. During the inauguration of president Boris Yeltsin, the patriarch even stood in the front together with the president during the ceremony.

During a divine service the same day but after the inauguration in the Annunciation Cathedral in the Kremlin, the patriarch blessed the president, reading a prayer in Church Slavonic for him. The president was thus included in the sacral sphere through the use of a prayer in Church Slavonic pertaining to his official capacity.

Look down also now on our fervent prayer and bless the good intention of the President of our country Vladimir. Strengthen and guide him to accomplish this great task without hindrance. Give him understanding and wisdom, in peace and without sorrow protect the Russian people. Guide his subordinates on the path of truth and righteousness in governance, and protect them from partiality and corruption.¹⁴

Some of the words were identical to those in the prayer read at the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II on 14 May 1896. At the same time, the church stressed that the ceremony was the usual one for 'beginning any good action'. Furthermore, the president is never mentioned in the litanies of the church, in the same way as in the



President Putin at Athos, May 2016

Soviet period only the word 'powers' was used in the prayers for the secular leaders of the country. Before 1917 the Tsar as well as other members of the imperial family were frequently mentioned in the litanies of the church.

Pussy Riot

And then to the government's reaction to the action of the punk group Pussy Riot. In the view of the church, the deeply insulting action profaned one of the most important churches in Russia, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. The text of the punk song deals with precisely the close relationship between church and state in contemporary Russia:

The patriarch believes in Putin.
Better believe in God, you vermin!

The government's decision to indict the group can be seen as a practical manifestation of symphony, a term that was mentioned in the press debate on the demonstration.

Athos, the president and the patriarch

My third example of the use of the term symphony in today's Russia is the joint visit of the patriarch and the president in May 2016 to Athos, the holy mountain, as part of the millennial celebration of Russian (or more correctly East Slavic) monasticism on the peninsula. The word "symphony" was widely used in press comments on the event, as, for example, in the following newspaper heading: "The Athos Symphony of Patriarch Kirill and Vladimir Putin."

Athos is a conservative stronghold well suited as a symbolic space in today's official Russian politics. Putin underscored in a speech the importance of the site as a source of the moral foundation of society, and he also highlighted the financial support the Russian government had provided for the restoration of the Russian Panteleimon Monastery. As in the case of the meeting between the pope and the Russian patriarch earlier this year, Kirill wants to be a key representative of Christianity. The Russian participation in the war in Syria is widely seen in Russia as a defense of Christianity against militant Islam. On this and other issues the church and state share a common agenda. Many of the photographs taken at the event illustrate and can be considered a showcase of symphony. At the same time, the president's statements were rather vague. As in

earlier cases he must consider the fact that a large part of the population do not defacto adhere to Orthodox beliefs or practices.

Conclusion

Thus the relation between church and state illustrated in these three cases is utterly ambivalent and can only be so. There is opposition between the Constitution, the law on religion and the practice which is impossible to resolve, but possible to describe using the abstruse term of symphony. This ambivalence also permeates all practical relations between church and state on issues such as the Principles of Orthodox Culture lessons for schools, icons at military units, and permission to use a blue light on the patriarch's limousine. At the same time, the situation differs not only from that of the Soviet era, but also that of pre-1917 Russia and also from the Byzantine time, although seen by the church as an ideal. There is in every case a reservation showing the secularity of the state, and this reservation is in every case overruled. This is one important part in understanding the relation between Church and state in today's Russia.

Why is the church needed when only a few per cent come to divine services? Why these often very elaborately staged events modelling the relation between state and church? Let us acknowledge that some or many of the people in power are sincere in their return to Orthodoxy. Still, there is a strong wish on the part of the politicians to create historical continuity and legitimation through the use of Orthodoxy as we have already observed. Yet there is also the problem of guilt from the secular power. Many of its representatives still have their origin in the old regime and have themselves in their youth talked derisively about the church and religion. Thus both a personal and collective guilt is a reason for this benevolent treatment of the Orthodox Church. One further factor is the longing for an ideology after communism ceased to be the state ideology. The situation is not at all as unique as it seems: we have the same discussions here in Sweden, where the relation between the Swedish church and the state is also rather ambiguous. Still the Orthodox faith and what I would call a living traditional religion insisting on a strong transcendental and mystical element is quite a complicated component in modern state-building.

For the state the church is needed to create legitimacy in a situation where the state is new and its legitimacy is rather shaky. The church stands, as we have noted, for a cultural, historical continuity and as a basis for Russia's statehood. Both the church and the state still talk with two tongues on this question, and it can not be otherwise.

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Third Rome Today or State Church Collaboration in Contemporary Russia

Elina Kahla

University of Helsinki, elina.kahla@helsinki.fi

Introduction

Let me first express my gratitude to the organizers of the highly topical conference. In this dramatic geopolitical situation, what appears to mark the beginning of the Second Cold war era, the chance to discuss within a Nordic-Russian expert network the collaboration between State, Religion and Society actors gives us some hope for future.

In this presentation my purpose is to shed light on the question of State Church Collaboration in contemporary situation, from the perspective of a cultural scholar specialized in Russian studies, especially Orthodox culture in past and present. Having now lived in Russia more than four years I have had the opportunity to make observations on how the societal climate has changed during this period, what kind of transformations have taken place in the relations between secular and religious authorities.

“Civil religion”

I am likely to argue that when discussing the state-church relations in post-Soviet Russia, it is perhaps appropriate to speak of a special phenomenon of “civil religion”. To my mind, Russian version of civil religion *sui generis* can be shortly described in the following: it is linked with de-secularisation of societal climate and manifests itself through the symbolic language of cultural Orthodoxy, comprehensible to all citizens living in civilizational sphere of Russian Federation and more widely, in the *rusски mir*, i.e. Russian citizens and/or Russian speakers around the world. It is important to note that Russian version of civil religion does not require participation in rituals or individual faith. It requires, in contrast, commitment to venerate the sacred common values in the name of national coherence and

identity building. Today, the conservative curve and moral values are strongly based on “civil religion” manifestations in the public sphere of life.

This “civil religion” – that is, not necessarily requiring personal belief in God, merely veneration of shared values – is mostly evident in cultural sphere, “Cultural Orthodoxy”. Not coincidentally, there are textbooks in schools labeled “Bases of the Cultural Orthodoxy”. In this frame “Cultural Orthodoxy” denotes public sphere national idea embedded in symbols, manifesting itself in memory politics and cultural production. “Civil religion” dressed in the uniform of Cultural Orthodoxy is in constant flux, secular-sacral transformations take place and the project lies at the core of Russian political agenda. It is an important component in identity building in today’s situation, and is also used as pretext for encouraging citizens to individual and collective sacrifices. Examples of this we see in state sponsored broadcasts and other media on a daily basis.

“Civil religion” appears as the core channel in communicating national symbols, traditions and feasts. Because citizens are well aware of the core symbols and heroes, the symbol language can easily be used to rewrite, to reinvent and to reinterpret national history, myths, heroes and feasts. Civil religion is everywhere. It is not possible to tell, where the “Church” or the religious authority starts and the secular ends, or vice versa.

As for the concept “civil religion”, I have borrowed it from the American sociologist Robert Bellah, who invented it to describe the national civil religion in the United States, based on Protestant tradition and specific history of founding myths and cataclysms of the nation (Bellah 1967).



Representations of Ideal Symphony [between secular and religious authority] in the Byzantium (left) and 19th century Russia (right), Tsar Nicholas II in the altar

Orthodox tradition

In Russia, however, the core tradition is not in Protestantism, but in Orthodoxy in the widest, “civilizational” meaning. Orthodox tradition lies at the core of the national founding myth famously coined by monk Philotheos in his mythical thesis of *translatio imperii*; and coining Moscow as successor of Rome and Constantinople as the leader of Christianity. As my illustration indicates, *symphony* – close collaboration between religious and secular authority – are at the core of Orthodoxy as civil religion.

To compare, in the East we face the phenomenon of continuation of undivided collaboration between secular and sacred (sometimes called *cesaropapism*) vs. in the West we have gradual division of secular and religious authority (Renaissance I, Reformation II, Enlightenment III.)

In Russia, it is important to realize that “civil religion” addresses non-Orthodox population and other denominations as well. Russian leaders are nominally Orthodox, but they simultaneously emphasize that Russia is multi-confessional.

Recycling of symbols

Important is that embodiment of “civil religion” is constantly in flux, new versions of founding myths are created and restored while simultaneously replacing some old one; in symphony between secular and religious actors. Jeanne Kormina (2015), has suggested the

term recycling. She argues that the return of religious objects to the Church, and process of de-secularisation in the post-Soviet context was carried out by non-religious cultural workers. Orthodox churches, icons, sacral objects were saved and cherished by non-believers, due to their acknowledgement of their beauty and part of national identity. “This is our truly Russianness, there is no way out of it”, is the motto. Shooting of the film Andrei Rublev (by Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966) as another example in the sphere of cultural production was the result of this attitude: imperative calling to save the ancient, own beauty.

Examples of reinvented tradition

Next, let us take some topical examples from today’s state-church collaboration and recycling of symbols. Today - on the eve of fourth of November - it is timely to notice, that in 2005 the State дума reinvented the old tsarist feast day of expelling Polish occupation forces from Moscow in November 1612, and more generally the end of the Time of Troubles, when Russia was without a tsar and in historiography described as a period of deep misery. The day was celebrated in the Russian Empire until 1917, when it was replaced with a commemoration of the Russian Revolution. In new Russia, the commemoration of Bolshevik victory has lost its accuracy, consequently, it was replaced by the day of national unity celebration on 4 of November.

Not coincidentally, the day is also the feast day of the Russian Orthodox icon of Our Lady of Kazan. This



"Day of National Unity 4 November" Photo 2015 . Patriarch Kirill of Moscow greets the leaders of traditional religions of the Russian Federation

concurrence between secular and sacred is the sine qua non factor of Russian civil religion. The Russian state ideology lies at this harmony and symphony.

According to the myth related to the events of 1612, invocation of the intercession by Virgin Mary through the icon of Kazan helped the commanders Minin and Pozharsky to repel the Polish invasion of 1612, and later, the Swedish invasion of 1709, and Napoleon's invasion of 1812. In general, the Kazan icon of Virgin Mary is credited wonderworking. When the original icon was stolen in Kazan in 1904, it was interpreted as a sign of upcoming tragedies. Similar interpretations are crucial part of endurance and flexibility of national-religious myths.

According to one of the myths, after the Revolution of 1917 there was speculation that the original icon was in fact preserved in St. Petersburg. Reportedly, an icon of Our Lady of Kazan was used in processions around Leningrad fortifications during the Siege of Leningrad.

Let us take another example; of reinventing old tradition. In 2013, as part of celebrations of 300 years anniversary of Romanov House in Russia, in St. Petersburg Orthodox processions were restored for the first time in 100 years. Although controversial, while monarchism is not unanimously supported by majority, the first processions were very popular and closed traffic along Nevsky Prospekt to the Lavra of Alexander Nevsky, named according to a saintly prince, for a while.

Function and performance

In organizing these public events outside the church building and domain, the Russian Orthodox Church collaborates with secular power and acts in the sphere of secular performances, as has been theorized by Peter

Beyer (1994, 86-88, 2006, 62-116; based on Niklas Luhmann.) As Luhmann wrote, function is the pure, 'sacred' communication involving the transcendent and the aspect that religious institutions claim for themselves: the basis of their autonomy in modern society. Religious performance, by contrast, occurs when religion is "applied" to problems generated in other systems but not solved there or simply not addressed elsewhere (cf. Luhmann, 1977, 54ff; 1982:238-242) - via Peter Beyer 1994, 86-88.

In contemporary Russia, many topics are not addressed in institutions but left to the sphere of performance.

Therefore, topics not addressed in institutions are dangerous – they become in sociological terms negative sacred. The Pussy Riot case and judicial verdict strikes as an example par excellence of this problem: it is a taboo to criticize the supreme leader without punishment.

Obscurantism

The Economist (Oct22 2016) wrote recently in a special report on Russia, that "aggressive obscurantism is imposed by both state and church. This takes many forms, from banning modern-art shows to organizing anti-gay campaigns, promoting anti-Darwinism and attempting to stop abortions." (Tell me about Joan of Arc, economist.com/news/special-report/21708882).

This typical notion of "obscurantism" in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church to my mind is a bit misleading. It undermines the holistic nature of Orthodox culture as the fundamental legacy in society, its manifestations as the visible side of civil religion, long history of symphony and cesaropapism. One would like to argue, that on the contrary, the very history of Orthodoxy itself in Russia is the history witnessing the battle against corruption. Take Metropolitan Philip and Tsar Ivan IV as an example.

What we need to analyze Orthodoxy in the public secular sphere is double vision: we need an insider expert vision to be aware of inherent myths, feasts, heroes, symbols. To be able to recycle requires familiarity and recognition. To produce is to consume, and vice versa. Second, we need an outsider expert vision to be able to compare.

The president and the patriarch

One more important point is the relationship between the head of the state and head of the church. Here, it is accurate to bring into mind what Professor Bodin (2016) wrote about the donkey, tsar and patriarch. We can over and again come back to the very same question – is it the monarch walking the donkey while the patriarch is sitting on it? Or is the monarch sitting on the donkey and patriarch walking? What is the key issue in the

balance between secular and religious authority? As the author argues, the answer is unambiguous: the secular keeps the upper hand.

Today, we often see the two, president and patriarch, together in public performances. But has anyone seen the president asking for a blessing from the patriarch in public? For an outsider this might strike as obscurantism. For the Russian civil society it is about symbolic language that citizens are able to interpret. And it is about the bond between trusted institutions – secular and sacred – that not only keeps the performance going on, but denotes stability in society.

Military and civil defence performances.

Before I finish, I would like to shortly mention the desecularisation in the sphere of military and civil defence performances.

This brings us back to the figure of saintly prince Alexander Nevsky. Through his image, the warrior prince, the audience can venerate and emulate his example. The figure also alludes at what is at stake today – simulation of the battle of 1240 – “against the west with swords, and against the east by act of humiliation,” that



Holy warrior Admiral Fyodor Ushakov. Most illustrious naval commander and admiral of the 18th century; glorified also as local saint and patron of the Russian Navy in 2001, and of nuclear-armed strategic bombers. «Do not despair, these terrible storms will turn to Russian glory».



Alexander Nevski 1220 - 1264. Righteous Prince. Prince-soldier and defender of Russia

is, by negotiation. The point is to emulate today the example of past experience. Orders of St. Alexander Nevsky, of St. George the Victorious, or Andrey the First-Called are examples of restored imperial orders, which can be given as recognition of military e.g. exploits.

Some words of the public relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the army. The patriarch blesses missiles, and he has inaugurated a first military bishop in new Russia. The duties include blessing soldiers to operations, as well as commemorating those killed in action or collateral damage.

I quote Patriarch Kirill: The readiness of the Northern Fleet, which keeps the peace in Russia and abroad, depends largely on the spiritual strength and faith of its sailors; spiritual support of our forces is one of the key tasks of the Church. Those who take the military oath especially need spiritual help; we all believe that the sailors of the Northern Fleet will show full combat readiness if they have strong faith and strong spirit.

Addressing the staff of the Northern Fleet after his arrival in Severomorsk, Vladyka Kirill emphasised:

“As we’re a nuclear power, spiritual healthiness in our personnel is key to maintaining the peace, both domestically and globally; it guarantees that they can carry out their duties, with all that such brings to the life of the Motherland. Maybe, one day, there may come a time that the outcome of a battle or a successful endeavour will depend precisely on the spiritual state of our soldiers.” (<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/print/4586753.html>)

In turn, Vice-Admiral N.A. Yevmenov, Commander of the Northern Fleet, told the patriarch:

‘For all Orthodox, a word from our pastor and the Word of God mean a lot. Let’s take some examples... Admirals Ushakov and Nakhimov are holy names for every one of the Orthodox warriors under the flag of St Andrew the Apostle. Our grandfathers fought under this flag... under this flag, we go out to sea and carry out our service. The words, “All those who go to sea pray to God”... these aren’t empty words for us. ‘(18 August 2016. Aleksei Mikheyev , <http://ria.ru/religion/20160818/1474695054.html>;)

St Petersburg is a city of memory. Secular and religious go hand in hand. One lights candles in the churches and at the squares. One commemorates the victims every day. When you go to a supermarket you see a notice - veterans of international operations and of the defense of Leningrad are served beyond the queue. The ques-

tion of guilt and punishment is addressed at a lower level of authority, beyond it, is the taboo. Regicide is a taboo. There is no way to penetrate the secret bond between the tsar and the church; all you can do is to study history and the present, and quote Patriarch Tikhon, The balm accords with the relics.

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Nickolas II: Orthodox Understanding of Empire

Jeanne Kormina

Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg, jkormina@hse.ru

It is a privilege to talk about the last Russian Emperor in the city where his mother Maria Fedorovna, Princess Dangmar of Denmark was born (1847) and died (1928). In 2006 her remains were transferred from Roskilde Cathedral in Denmark to St Peter and Paul Cathedral in St Petersburg,



*Ipatiev House, Ekaterinburg, where the Romanovs were killed in 1918.
Destroyed in 1977*



Church on Blood. Built on the place of the Ipatiev house 2000-2003

My hero today will not be the Russian Tsar Nikolas II in his earthly life, which was difficult and even tragic. Instead, I'll be talking about his posthumous life as an Orthodox saint.

Who are the saints in Orthodox (and Catholic) Christianity? The cult of saints appeared already in Roman Empire. They are special dead people who are commemorated not only by their relatives, but also by a larger community of co-believers. The community builds special ties with these dead people, the ties of spiritual kinship which involves reciprocity and mutual responsibility.

What does the Church need saints for? The theological answer to this question was given by St. Augustine the Blessed in the end of 4th c. He argued with a Manichean who contended that Christians "change the idols into martyrs, to whom you pray as they do to their idols." St. Augustine responded, "It is true that Christians pay religious honor to the memory of the martyrs, both to excite us to imitate them and to obtain a share in their merits, and the assistance of their prayers." In other words, for a Christian believer saints are role models and helpers.

There are different categories of saints in contemporary Orthodoxy. There are holy fools and enlighteners, wonder-workers and passion-bearers, and martyrs of course. As the social life changed, the Church (or the believers) needed new up-to-date saints as their helpers and role models. In these saints', images and ideas of sanctity are reconstituted, and the continuing gracefulness of the church and actuality of ancient dogmatic and moral truths are proven. To fulfill this function the profile of a new saint should be up-to-date, it must

be possible to understand the main idea of his or her Christian mission and to imitate the saint's religious deeds in the current social circumstances, or there must be maximal recognizability of his or her social position and life experience. The former meaning creates a perfect role model, the latter one represents the portrait of an ideal helper – a saint patron for everyone who hopes that the saint will understand the nature of his or her problem. This is why new categories of saints have been elaborated and new saints have been canonized (that is officially recognized as such).

The most ancient category of saints, so to say saints per

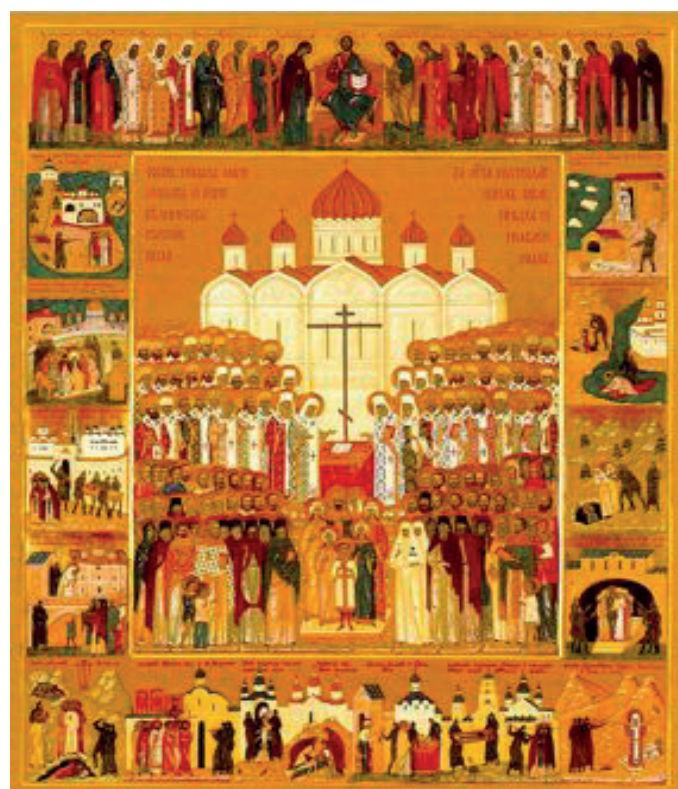
Soviet history. The Church reproached the Soviet state for its militant atheism and especially for the murder of priests and devoted believers during the civil war of 1918-1920 and Great Terror of 1937-8. Like many post-Soviets, Orthodox historians started doing research in the newly opened archives in order to write the tragic story of state-church relations during Soviet times and to rehabilitate those brothers in faith who were killed or who died in Soviet prisons and camps.

The result of this "archival" period for Orthodox people was the mass canonization of so-called "New Martyrs and Confessors" of Russia.

The first martyr of the Soviet regime was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church already in 1989 (Patriarch Tikhon); it had canonized twelve more by 2000 when the Jubilee Bishops' Council decided to canonize all martyrs and confessors of the twentieth century known by name (there were 1,071 at that time), as well as those who were still unknown. All in all, by the beginning of 2011 the list contained the names of 1,774 saints. A commemoration day for the new saints was established (Feb 8) and a special icon, The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia Known and Unknown, was created. The icon depicts crowds of people, some with written names, others without, concentrated around a central group of royal saints - Russian Tsar Nicholas II and his wife and five children, killed in Yekaterinburg by Bolsheviks in July 1918.

Yet, though the royal family exemplifies all New martyrs, it was not canonized as martyrs in Russia. The Romanovs were canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church as passion-bearers, to great dissatisfaction of prominent minority of pro-monarchist believers. In Church tradition, passion-bearers are saints (they are rare) who were tortured by fellow believers and compatriots rather than by those who persecuted Christians as martyrs. The debate about categorization of sainthood went alongside with the painful process of rewriting Soviet history. The crucial question was whom to blame for this crime.

In 1993 Patriarch Alexei II called upon the Russian people to repent the collective sin of regicide. In this way, as Kathy Rousselet (2011: 150) notes: "a new moral judgment was to be made on Soviet history. The understanding of the spiritual dimension of the Soviet tragedy and the subsequent repentance were considered to be grounds for reconciliation of all Russian people." (I have to add here that the canonization itself was also a political act as it was one of the prerequisites for reconciliation of the ROC and ROCA which happened in 2007. For ROCA Romanovs are the martyrs, of course).



Icon of Holy Neo-Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, known and unknown

se, are the martyrs. They are the heroes of Christians, the saints who were persecuted for their Christian faith by the hostile state authorities of the Empire where those Christians happened to live, originally by the pagan Emperors of Roman Empire. The Neo-Martyrs are those who suffered from the hands of Turks (Muslims) in the Ottoman Empire after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and through the 19th c. (relevant for Greece, Georgia). There are also those new Neo-Martyrs who were killed by the Soviet atheistic state (in Russia; in Romania).

From the late 1980s through the 1990s the Russian Orthodox Church – like the rest of Russian society – was enthusiastically involved in the process of rewriting



*Royal passion-bearers. Canonized in 1981 by ROCA (as martyrs)
in 2000 by ROC*

Martyrs are heroes and political symbols more than helpers. To become the objects of popular veneration, that is to become media connecting the living with the heavenly world, these special dead have to reveal potentiality of making miracles. To be venerated as saints by common believers, the special dead in Orthodox tradition need to have their material representations – first of all, the remains and the place where they are buried (a grave, a tomb, a casket or a chapel where the remains are kept). These material representations serve as means of communication between the believers and God, as embodiment of the sacred. No body – no saint. (The same logic applies to modern secular states that preserve the bodies of political leaders whom they have “canonized” as their creators).

New martyrs (the majority of them) are the saints without bodies. They were buried in mass graves somewhere in the forests or in the swamp, and this circumstance, together with some other reasons, brilliantly analysed by Karin Vibeke Hyldal Christensen in her recent PhD thesis «The Making of New Martyrs of Russia. Soviet Repression in Orthodox Memory» defended in the University of Copenhagen this year, prevent the believers from making new martyrs their personal role models or heavenly helpers.



Nikolas II as a Redeemer, fresco Pskov oblast

However, a decade later the call for collective repentance disappeared from the political agenda of the official Church, to be maintained only by groups of right-wing monarchist Orthodox dissidents. These people insist that Nikolay Romanov be canonized as a martyr. But they go further: for them Nikolay is the “Redeemer” (iskupitel’), who by his death expiated the sins of the Russian people in the same way as Jesus Christ did for the whole of mankind.

Although the Church denounced this way of venerating new saints as a heresy of tsarebozhie (veneration of Tsar as God), it failed to stop the activities of these Orthodox dissidents. Icons and other images of the emperor depicted as a redeemer and a martyr can be found in many parts of the country. One “underground” icon known as “Zealous sacrifice” depicts the head of Nicholas II in a Eucharist vessel or on a plate. These “zealots” suggest their own variant of the Soviet history, they use rhetorics of the conspiracy theory. For example, they insist that this crime was a ritual murder committed by the inner enemies of the nation (like Jews and masons). This position helps them to reconcile with the Soviet past.



Burial ceremony, St Petersburg, 1998. Officers carrying the coffin with the remains of Nikolai II

The Romanovs' remains are also in question, as the ROC does not recognize authenticity of the remains found near Yekaterinburg. "The royal remains" were first found by a group of enthusiasts and local history amateur students in 1979 in the course of the "black archeology" illegal excavations. Frightened with possible consequences of their findings and having no idea what to do with them, these people reburied the skulls and bones to reveal the case only ten years later, when the proper time came. The remains were officially found by the same group of people, with support of the local authorities in 1991. The remains, however, have not been solemnly buried right after finding, as one could suppose. It seems nobody knew what to do with these treasures. As the governor of Yekaterinburg explained later (in 1997), he did not allow to move the remains to Moscow for examination, as he was afraid that they could be just «sold out». In that period this politician (Eduard Rossel') was developing a federalist (or separatist if you wish) political project of building the Ural republic with Yekaterinburg as its capital, and maybe he was thinking of these treasures as potentially useful in building regional identity. Anyway, only in 1993 (two years after the finding) a special «Governmental commission for investigation of the matters concerning examination and reburial of the remains of the Russian Emperor Nicholas II and his family» was created and the police was allowed to commence criminal investigation into the «unknown persons» death.

In 1998 the case was closed, the bones identified as Romanovs', and the remains buried solemnly in St. Petersburg in Peter and Paul Cathedral where Russian Emperors have been entombed since the eighteenth century. The church hesitated.

In 2007 new important discovery was made by the team of Yekaterinburg volunteers. They found missing remains of Romanovs, the bones of Prince Alexy and



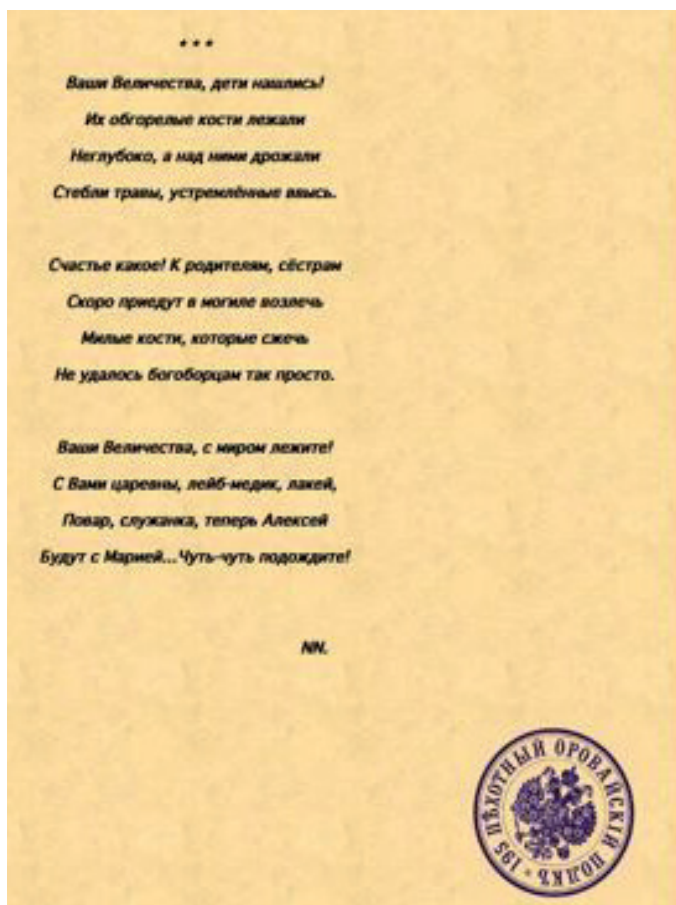
The group of local enthusiasts (amateur historians and military archeology club members) who found the remains of Prince Alexy and Princess Maria in 2007

Princess Maria. These two bodies were buried – or rather hidden - in a small distance from the main burial spot. These remains went through the genetic tests again, and were identified as Romanovs' bodies.

The local enthusiasts not only have been doing archaeological excavations with no state support, they also organized a memorial at the burial place. They organize excursions to this spot and keep it clean and do other things for memorialization of Romanovs in Yekaterinburg. In their activities which they themselves understand as a "work for the future", the searchers do important ethical work of translating the historical narrative of crime and terror into a story of love and responsibility. They convert political murder into cultural heritage. They depoliticize the image of the Romanovs, moving the accents from parents to children, and from much discussed political causes of the killing or the people who committed it to their own duties and responsibilities as citizens and human beings. For them, the main character in the tragedy is neither Nikolai II nor his wife, but their children. When the remains of Alexy and Maria were found, somebody from the circle of the searchers wrote a poem.

The poem started "Your majesties! Your kids have been found!" and promised that the meeting of the whole family will happen in the near future: "What a happiness! The precious remains will join the parents and sisters and share the same grave." It hasn't happened yet.

Why haven't the Church recognized the Romanovs' remains until now? It seems that this way it exercises the right of veto in the sphere of historical heritage it



"Your Majesties, the children have been found!" Poem from web site of the history club in Yekaterinburg

managed to obtain within last decade or so. By means of Romanovs' unrest bodies ROC reminds to the society about Russian uncertain past and the Church's role in defining the picture of this past.

Conclusion

American anthropologist Catherine Verdery in her wonderful book "The political lives of dead bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist change" (1999) tells about such highly symbolic activities as moving the bodies (remains and statues) of national political leaders and cultural heroes around the territories of states in Eastern Europe after 1989. Some bodies were 'invited' after long period of 'exile' to be reburied in their native land, whereas other where removed from the central locations to peripheries (Memento Park in Budapest) or publicly destroyed and vandalized, that is have been symbolically punished or killed – like many statues of Lenin in the new independent states. As Verdery convincingly explained this, the "reburials narrow and bond the community of mourners" and they also establish blame and involve "creating certain kinds of social actors. (...) Which kind of social being can be effectively blamed and held accountable? The state? The former regime? An ethnic or national group? Single individuals?"

The reburials of cultural heroes in Eastern Europe marked the moment of "turning the page" in history of the countries, the boundary between before and after, between Socialism and something which "came next". In post-Soviet Russia the main dead bodies are still in transition waiting for their "true burials" and proper yearly (that is eternal) commemoration ceremonies. Lenin's body is still in Mausoleum in Moscow (Yurchak 2015), and Romanovs' remains are still waiting for their authenticity certificate and the status of "truly dead". Before that, they remain ghosts, the spirits, which cause troubles in the community of their descendants and prospective mourners. "The page" has definitely not been turned.



Portrait of Nicholas II by Misha Brusilovsky. 2016. Yekaterinburg

The significance of the Russian imperial tradition today

Pål Kolstø

University of Oslo, pal.kolsto@ilos.uio.no

Centuries of expansion

For some 600 years – between around mid-1300 and 1945 – the Russian state constantly expanded its territory. In the beginning one might say that this process represented a gathering of Russian lands under the political authority of Moscow, who managed to eclipse all the other Russian principalities and emerged as the power center of a strong Russian state. However, from around the times of Ivan the Terrible, Russian state began to expand also into territories that were not

primarily inhabited by Russians or other Eastern Slavs. Specifically, we can date this change to the conquest of Kazan', the capital of the northernmost Tatar Khanate, in 1552. This was a watershed in Russian history by including increasing numbers of non-Russians, non-Orthodox peoples in the state and thereby laying the foundations of the multinational Russian Empire.

Already the grandfather of Ivan the fourth had begun to use the title "czar", which of course is a Russian version





Statue of Ivan the Terrible in the Russian city of Oryol, erected in October 2016

of “Caesar”, and thereby indicated that he did not see his status as a mere “king”, but belong to a more select group of “emperors”. In the early 18th century Peter the Great – the greatest reformer on the throne in Russia changed the official nomenclature of the Russian state, and began to refer to himself as “Imperator” and his state as the “Russian Empire”, “Rossiiskaia imperiia”. This remained the official name of the Russian state until the 1917 revolution when the czar was toppled and the new communist leaders began to refer to their state as the “Union of Socialist Soviet republics”. They would emphatically deny that their state was an empire of any kind, and indeed, the non-Russians got more formal rights than they had ever achieved before, including separate “homelands” – Union republics for the largest once. Even so, the central power institutions were dominated by Russians and other Slavs, while the non-Russians were allowed a high degree of control and privilege within their respective republics. And, in fact, according to many political scientists a defining feature of imperial systems, which one may find in such different structures as the Ottoman Empire and the British colonial empire, is a high degree of indirect rule: the peripheral areas are controlled by local elites. So the fact that indigenous political elites enjoyed considerable leeway in how they ran their business can therefor in fact be seen as adding strength to the argument that also the Soviet Union was an empire.

Finally, after Second World War a new, outer layer of dependencies was added to this Soviet empire when the East European countries were turned into small clones or satellite states: also they were run by indigenous, elites, after having first adopted the Soviet-style communist ideology. The end of the Second World War, by the way, also marked the end of territorial expansion of the USSR, when Western Ukraine – Galicia – was

added to Soviet Ukraine. (The other annexations of new territory in the West had previously been part of the Russian Empire under the tsars, but Galicia had not.)

After several hundred years of steady expansion, the Russian empire began to unravel in the 20th century. This happened twice, first during World War I and then after the end of the Cold War. In the first instance, the state most reassembled under the new communist leaders, and its dissolution could be seen as a short-term aberration. The second dissolution in 1991 will in all likelihood be permanent. But are the Russians prepared to live at such a truncated state as they have now?

Nation-state versus Empire nostalgia

In terms of territory, the difference between Soviet Union and the Russian Federation is not very great: contemporary Russia makes up more than 75 percent of the former Soviet state. With regard to population, however, the situation is very different. While the total Soviet population in the latest census in 1989 was 285 million, the number of inhabitants in Russia today is only approximately half of that. But while smaller, the state is also more ethnically and culturally homogeneous. Whereas ethnic Russians made up only half of the Soviet population towards the end of the last century, their share of the population of Russia today has risen to more than 80%. The overwhelming majority of the remaining 20% are also fluent in Russian, and for the most part well integrated into Russian society. In the early 1990s, the leading Russian social anthropologist, Valery Tishkov, claimed that Russian now, finally, had all the prerequisites to create a nation-state.

The leading West European states – France and England – have started their developments towards consolidated nation-states at the end of the Middle Ages and in early modern times. But this period – early modernity – was precisely when Russia took a huge step away from nation-state consolidation towards the building of a multi-ethnic empire. In this perspective, one might say that now, after a long- long delay, Russia had the chance to try out the nation-state option, to see if it could work for them also.

The mental adaption which this would require has proved to be difficult. When so many Russians today hate Gorbachev as much as they do, it is not only due to the economic hardships they have endured since perestroika, but even more to the fact that they blame him for the breakup of the unitary Soviet state. The people behind the failed coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 were not primarily motivated by a need to salvage the communist economic system. The main thing for



Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev

them was to keep their great Fatherland together. And also in the Yeltsin period the leading Russian nationalist movements were what we would call imperialists. They wanted to restore as much possible of the defunct Soviet state – and some of them also the Russian Empire. In 1990x there's Parliament – the Duma – passed a resolution declaring that the dissolution of the USSR was illegal. This resolution sent shockwaves throughout the outside world, even though nobody understood exactly what the practical political implications of it would be.

Most famous among these so-called empire restorers was Vladimir Zhirinovskii, who also fantasized about protecting Russian power all the way down to the Indian Ocean. In the early and mid-1990s many alarmist Western pundits predicted that Zhirinovskii might end up as the next Russian president Yeltsin which, as we know did not happen. Instead, Yeltsin's handpicked successor Vladimir Putin took over, and after a short interlude with his sidekick Dmitri Medvedev as a stand-in president 2008-2012, is now back at the helm.

One of Putin's most famous statements, at least one of the statements most remembered in Western countries, is that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest tragedy in the 20th century. This of course was an outrageous statement since it apparently belittled the Holocaust, and other tragedies in World War II, and seemingly placed Putin squarely among the empire-restorers. However, we tend to ignore that he has also said that Russians who does not deplore the dissolution of the Soviet Union have no heart while those who wants to restore it has no brains. Of course it is possible to be nostalgic about something which you realize cannot be relived, like one's childhood for instance.

But, you may ask: has not Putin, by annexing Crimea and supporting the rebels in eastern Ukraine, proven that he is prepared to follow up his Empire nostalgia with deeds, and has started the resurrection of the Empire? Well, this is simply the way Russian imperialists

see it, or hope to see it. For instance, the prolific writer and redoubtable imperialist, Alexander Prokhanov, claims that under Vladimir Putin Russia is building a fifth Empire, the first four were the Kyiv state, Muscovy, the Russian Empire in the Petersburg period, the Soviet Union. For Prokhanov and people who think like him – and I admit that they are quite a few – Russia can only exist as an empire: empire is a fundamental trait of Russian self-understanding. In his book *The Torch of Novorossia* One of the leading ideologues of the Donbass rebels – Pavel Gubarev –, claims that “we are imperialists: we despise small petty, national states.” But even if they want to Gubarev does not speak on behalf of Putin and the Kremlin. He and the rebels realize that themselves, they understand that Putin's Russia is not ready to help them win the war and annex more Ukrainian territory. In fact, Russian imperialists increasingly call Putin a traitor.

Orthodoxy in imperial ideology

Now let us turn from political history to the history of ideas, from the history of the Russian Empire to the history of Russian imperialism, and ask: what has been the ideology of this imperial expansion? This is such a huge question that I could easily have filled the entire semester of lectures at my university with it, and since the overarching thematic so this conference is religion I will narrow down my question to this: what has been the role of religion – and in particular of orthodoxy – as non-ideology of this expansion? Let me begin with my conclusion and sets forward the claim that we should be extremely wary of overemphasizing this role. It is my contention that very many historians and commentators have made too much out of the alleged influence of orthodoxy on Russian policymaking. But we should be careful to distinguish between two possible roles which religion can play in politics: it can either be the driver of policies, or it can function as legitimization of policies already decided upon for very different reasons some of which may be so cynical that they need some more acceptable justifications. Russian orthodoxy has in certain periods function in this latter own but hardly ever in the former.

If we go back then to the beginning of the Russian Empire – which I dated to the capture of Kazan' in 1552, we can note that what has often been interpreted as the ideology of Empire in czarist Russia was formulated even half century before that, at the very beginning of the 16th century. I am of course referring to the theory or myth of the third Rome, which probably is the most famous concept that springs to mind for most of you when we are discussing religion and Empire in Russia. The main elements of this myth you probably know way already: before the great schism in 1054 also the

Eastern churches recognized the Bishop of Rome – the Pope – as the head of Christendom, but when Catholics and Orthodox parted ways Constantinople as the second city of the Roman Empire took over as the geographical center of Christianity, as a holy city with God's special blessing. However, when Constantinople fell into the hands of the Ottomans for centuries later in 1453, clearly the Greek church no longer enjoyed the blessing of God, proving that they strayed from the true path. But thanks be to God, the Russians had hand on to true religion, in the special dispensation of God had moved again, this time to Moscow. Moscow was the third Rome, and "chetvertomu ne byt'": which is normally translated as "there shall be no fourth". Some people believe that this amounts not only to a program of triumphalism – Russia is the crowning achievement of God's creation, stronger and holier than any other nation – but also that it is a program of Messianism. By that is meant that Russia and the Russians have an obligation to spread the truth by faith to all of mankind. Russia is an instrument of God in the history of salvation, a collective Messiah

We should note, however, that this myth, or theory, was which forward not by the metropolitan head of the Russian church for his apparatus in Moscow, but by a rather obscure monk in a peripheral monastery interest on Russian, starets Filofei. Secondly, many scholars with good reason interpret the sentence "there shall be no fourth" not as triumphalism or as a claim that Moscow will rule as the center of Christendom at all times until Jesus returns to the earth and establishes his eternal kingdom. No, it is more likely that it is in admonition to the czar: look at the two first Romans: they fell because they did not behave as true Christian monarchies. If the Russian ruler does not heed the commandments of God's kingdom can be discarded with just as the two previous ones. In this interpretation starets Filofei is seen as a chastising prophet rather than as an ideologist of Empire.

Thirdly and finally, we can note that the Russian Czars to a very, very little degree have invoked the myth of the third Rome in order to underpin their imperial expansion. It is true that we can find that certain echo of this myth in the book *History of Kazan'*, which at the behest of Czar Ivan IV, the terrible, was written to justify the capture of the northernmost Tatar, but it also seems clear that even Ivan saw himself just as much, or perhaps even more, as the legitimate inheritor of the gravel on the Mongols than the legitimate inheritor of the Byzantine legacy. And after that the myth of the third Rome went into decline and was more or less forgotten about for almost 300 years after it was resurrected by the second generation of Slavophiles in the late 19th century. We can note that even the Slavophiles where no messianists: they focused on the need to sanctify



Vladimir Putin and patriarch Kirill in Sergieva Lavra, 2014'

Russia and the Russians only not on saving the rest of the world.

It is of course true that Muscovy was a theocracy and the czars until Peter the Great claim to ruler with divine right. The only clear traces we can find in the sources of the third Rome idea is in critical, oppositional literature, in particular in the autobiography of the leader on the so-called Old believers, archpriest Avvakum. But Avvakum and his followers of traditionalist believers were severely persecuted by the czarist authorities, which to them only proved that Filofei's warning had come true: the czar had strayed from the true Orthodox path, and Moscow, therefore, was no longer third Rome.

So if Russia was not ruled by Orthodox ideology, what was the ideology of the Empire then? Peter the Great, of course, inaugurated a secularizing, Westernizing, and modernizing rule in Russian history, the so-called St. Petersburg period. He had no patience with the church which he saw as a hopelessly backward-looking, reactionary institution. He's ideology, if we can call it that was very pragmatic, it was to strive for the "common good" and for a strong state and blooded bites strong leader. All over Europe the 18th century was the age of absolutism to Russia was here only following the typical European trend. Peter's successors in the 18th century followed up on this program. And Catherine the great, for instance, confiscated two thirds of the church property enclosed the vast majority of Russian monasteries. At the same time, however, she was not averse to using orthodoxy as a legitimation whenever it suited her, and she could for instance justify war against the Muslim Ottomans by the need to protect the Sultan's Christian subjects against discrimination. This of course is orthodoxy as legitimation and not as a driver of policies. The role of the church as a prop of the tsarist regime increase during the 19th century, especially after the rise of the Russian revolutionary movement. If any Russian monarch after Peter the Great tried to fit the



Moscow - May 7th, 2015: Young musicians in the beautiful St. George's uniform with ribbons and drums of a military band go after a rehearsal of the Victory Parade

role of a true Orthodox believer it was probably Nicholas the second, who in certain respects atavistically tried to resurrect the Muscovy tradition, but, as we know, he was ignominiously toppled in February 1917, and soon the godless Bolsheviks took over.

Empire and Orthodoxy under Communism

Quite a few commentators have claimed that the Bolsheviks continued the czarist Russian tradition under a new inverted ideology. The strongest and most famous proponent of this idea was the Russian thinker Nikolai Berdiaev, who in his book *The Sources of Russian Revolution* from 1932 set forth these claims. Some of Berdiaev's observations are quite intriguing, and of course

the Bolsheviks fell back on the Russian tradition of authoritarian, centralized rule, after a short period of proto-democracy between the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. But sometimes his claims are so far-fetched that they border on the ridiculous such as when he claims that the Third International, which Lenin established in 1919 as an instrument to bring communism to the rest of the world, it is simply a new incarnation of the idea of Russia the third Rome. This, to my mind is only a play on words. If anything, the idea behind the Third International shows how little regard Lenin had for Russia as a state in his scheme. The Congress of the Third International were held in Moscow simply because his party was the only Communist Party in the world which had accomplished a successful revolution, and he looks forward to moving its headquarters to Paris and Berlin as soon as



Rehearsal for the military parade at Victory celebrations 9th May, in Moscow



Monarchist demonstration by the statue of Ivan the Terrible in Oryol

possible. Lenin was certain respects a secular messianist, but as far removed from Russian nationalist as you can get. Ironically, it was only when a non-Russian – the Georgian Joseph Stalin – moved into the Kremlin that Russian or more precisely Soviet patriotism became an important plank in seventh ideology. After the Second World War the Soviet ideologists claimed that for communists in all countries internationalism and support for so beginning was one and the same thing. Moreover, Stalin even to some degree began to use the church as a prop for his regime. This happened in 1943, when the soviets were battling for their life against the German invaders and Stalin had to use all available ideational resources to mobilize the population in the war effort. There are such arsenals allowed to elect a new patriarch, churches were reopened and most astonishing of all, the Moscow patriarchate was allowed to organize a huge pan- Orthodox Congress in Moscow in 1947, where prelates from all over the Orthodox world participated. Apparently, the Kremlin for a while toyed with the idea of using the church as an instrument to legitimize the sovietization of Eastern Europe; many of the peoples who now came under Soviet hegemony were traditionally Orthodox Christians, especially in the Balkans. Apparently, Stalin concluded that the ideological difference between communism and orthodoxy was too great for this strategy to be credible.

Russia's imperial legacy today

Fast-forward: the last Soviet President, Gorbachev, and the first Russian president after the fall of communism, Boris Yeltsin, were secular, West-leaning leaders who made few efforts to woo the church. They stopped the persecution of believers, but the vast majority of Russian Orthodox remained deeply sceptical of them and claimed that the new reformers in the Kremlin had opened the floodgates for a deluge of pernicious, decadent Western influences, which undermined the traditional Russian real life including Christian, Ortho-

dox values. Only when Vladimir Putin took over after the turn of the millennium have we seen a rapprochement between altar and throne. Already in his first major statement to the Russian people – the so-called millennium article from December 1999 – Putin claimed that the Russian idea had to be based on a combination of universal values and traditional Russian values, including spiritual values. By the way in which he talked about universal values it was clear that this was for all practical purposes identical with Western values, such as democracy, freedom of speech, human rights and so on. So at this stage Putin tried to be both a westernizer Russian traditionalists at the same time. I guess it is worth reminding ourselves about this today even though now it sounds like a faint echo from bygone years. To be sure, Putin and his entourage still pay lip service to democracy, freedom of speech and human rights, but the content of these concepts they will define themselves: it has to be so-called “sovereign democracy” not a copy of liberal Western democracy, and some human rights – such as rights of sexual minorities, waiting have to be circumscribed in such a way that they do not conflict with the sentiments of the majority population and their values. This message is enthusiastically embraced by the church which fully supports Putin's policies, outwardly at least. Patriarch Kirill has publicly claimed that after the experience of the horrible 1990s, Putin's entry into the Kremlin was a miracle from God. Even so, not everything is rosy in the relationship between church and state in Russian. For instance, the church has worked hard to get a new class called Foundations of Orthodox culture – which in reality would be an Orthodox catechism class – introduced as a mandatory subject in Russian schools but has been rebuffed. When it comes to foreign policy and in particular the policy towards the “near abroad”, the church leaders – as virtually all Russians – exuberantly supported the annexation of Crimea, but in Ukraine the church has its own concerns which do not always coincide with the priorities of the Russian state. As much as half of the parishes of the Moscow patriarch-



Patriotic demonstration in Moscow

ate are located in Ukraine, and it is very important for the patriarch not to antagonize his Ukrainian faithful. In Ukraine there are no less than three Orthodox churches, so if the Ukrainian faithful conclude that the Moscow patriarchate is running the errands of Ukraine's enemy, the Russian-supported rebels in Donbass, they can go to one of the two other churches.

The Russian church, one might say, has its own variety of imperialism, by which it claims that the entire space of the former Soviet Union is its so-called canonical territory. Elsewhere in the Orthodox world the general principle is that each nation has its own independent church, a so-called autocephalous church, meaning that it has its own "head" or autonomous leader. As long as the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union were intact, this principle of one state--one church worked well also for the Moscow patriarchate, but it became deeply problematical when this unitary state fell apart. Logically, each Soviet successor states should now be granted the right to have its own church, but this, the Moscow patriarchate claims, would be tantamount to religious nationalism, for which they have a technical term, they call it "phyletism". So far the Russian church has been able to hold onto most of his parishes not only in Ukraine but also in Belarus, Moldova and Central Asia, but my guess is that it is a losing battle.

Neoimperialism and soft power

Russian imperialism today is by necessity what we might call neo-imperialism. The Empire is gone, the former Soviet republics are now independent states, the best Russia can hope for is to influence politics and culture in these states and other states, by various kinds of pressures and inducements from afar. This is perhaps not too different from American neoimperialism in Latin America, which stretches back to the Monroe doctrine of the 19th century. In the Russian neo-imperialism the Russian state has at its disposal in various kinds of weapons, "weapons" in quotation marks. Much has been talked about the energy weapon which they can wield against neighboring countries which depend upon Russian energy supplies – oil and gas. But when we talk about the Russian imperial tradition today, we must also focus upon what we might call the ideological weapons. Or maybe "weapons" is not the most appropriate word, when other states behave in a similar way, we often use the expression "soft power" instead. one of Russia's most talked about "soft power" weapons in the near abroad is the so-called Russian world concept – *Russkii mir*. This is a very fuzzy concept which can mean many different things and for that reason is interpreted by some observers as very menacing by others as innocuous. In a broad sense it can include all people who either know the Russian language and love Russian culture irrespective of where they live: in that sense I would also be a member of the *Russkii mir*. In a narrower sense it refers to ethnic Russians and

other Russophones in the former Soviet republics who in Moscow's view are susceptible to Russian cultural influences and propaganda. Special programs have therefore been designed to support Russian cultural centers and Russian language courses in the neighbouring countries economically and otherwise. Even if Russian authorities insist that what they are doing is not so different from what Germany is doing through their Goethe Institute and Great Britain through British Council, many observers claim to detect more sinister, aggressive objectives behind these programs. It could be pointed out that the Russian church wholeheartedly embraces the Russkii mir concept but gives it a somewhat idiosyncratic twist, by emphasizing the spiritual common core of the East Slavic countries, tracing it back to the baptism of St. Vladimir's, the Prince of Kiev in 988.

Another related concept which also conveys the notion of the former Soviet union as unified civilizational space is the so-called Eurasianism, or to be more precise, neo-Eurasianism. The word Eurasianism it is of course created by combining the name of the two continents Europe and Asia into one, Eurasia. For the vast majority of the adherents of this ism, however, the concept of Eurasia does not cover this entire landmass, it only it's North Eastern part, specifically the territory of the Russian Empire/Soviet Union. The first Eurasianists when a group of Russian intellectuals had immigrated from Russia after the Bolshevik takeover, I tried to elaborate an ideology for the Russian state after the collapse of the Russian Empire which did not rely on either czarism or communism. They maintain that having lived together for hundreds of years various peoples of Russian Eurasia had acquired a large number of common cultural denominators, in fact, a common Eurasian civilization, which spanned dozens of languages, historical traditions and lifestyles. This might sound like a pluralistic program – a Russian variety of the American slogan "e pluribus unum", one out of many. The Eurasianists, however, even if they acknowledged that the peoples of Eurasia professed a number of different faiths and religions, they insisted that Russia, as soon as Bolshevism had been overthrown could only have one religion that was Orthodoxy.

So Eurasianism must be written regarding this program for cultural imperialism, no less than "the Russian world" concept. Two other crucial elements in Eurasianism is its skepticism towards liberal democracy and its rejection of the West, and of Western influence in Russia.

Eurasianism has large number of adherents in Russia today, in fact, also in several other post-Soviet states, in the contemporary interpretations of Eurasianism also numerous, indeed, so many that it is very difficult

to pinpoint that this is Eurasianism. The most famous ideologue of Eurasianism is no doubt Alexander Dugin, a self-styled philosopher who has often been labelled fascist or neofascist, if not that, at least belong to the extreme European right. Dugin has occasionally been claimed to be the leading ideologue of Putinism, which certainly is a gross exaggeration. We can, however, note that when Putin decided to create what he hoped would become a strong and tightly knit Commonwealth of former Soviet republics he indicative the called it "the Eurasian union".

Eurasianism, as pointed out, is a civilizational program, and "civilization" is increasingly becoming a pivotal concept in Russian self-understanding under Putin. In this self-perception, Russia does not only have a unique culture but it is "a unique civilization". Precisely what this unique civilization consists of may be somewhat difficult to pinpoint. It is and is not European. While Alexander Dugin vehemently insists that Russia is not a European country, since it is a Eurasian country – Putin has always insisted – and continues to insist – that Russia is a European country. However, it is not European in the way we are used to think, with European values embodied in for instance the statutes of the Council of Europe. No, it is a defender of traditional European values which allegedly have been betrayed by the majority of European leaders today, such as defence of religion, cultural traditions and family values, community life and so on. It is Russia more than any other that stands up for true Europe against what they derisively call Gayropa. And as we know, this is a message which resonates reasonably well in parts of Europe, suggesting Greece, Serbia, Hungary, but surprisingly also in Poland and the Czech Republic. And even further afield, Putin has ideological friends in Front National in France, in Geert Wilders' Party for freedom, not to mention in homophobic countries in the third world. In this way we see that Putin's soft power message of traditional civilizational values functions as a cultural imperialism also beyond Eurasia.



Double headed eagle at Palace Square, St Petersburg

Conclusion

Up until the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia had been vast, multicultural multi-ethnic state which could well be called an empire, and indeed until the 1917 revolution also was called an empire. But in contrast to the British and French empires the Russian Empire consisted of one consolidated landmass, with very hazy boundaries between core and periphery. This was the state which Russians have lived with and it would have been strange indeed if the dissolution of the state did not leave a strong imprint on the Russian mentality. The fact that many Russians today are experiencing what you might call territorial phantom limb pains and a hankering for the lost Empire is therefore probably less remarkable than the basically peaceful manner in which the state collapsed and the way in which the vast majority of Russians have, however grudgingly, accepted this historical outcome.

When we talk about Russian imperialism today the first thing that springs to mind is probably the annexation of Crimea, an act professed Russian imperialists such as Alexander Prokhanov see this as the first step towards the reestablishment of the Russian Empire. This is certainly a pipe dream that would never be realized. Crimea is an exception, an aberration, when Russian imperialism continues to exert some influence in Eurasia and Europe today it is in the form of soft power, perhaps not too different from American culture of power projection.

Russia's "special path" in the relation between state and nation

Geir Flikke

University of Oslo, geir.flikke@ilos.uio.no

Introduction:

Is there a "special path" in the relation between state and nation in Russia? While it would be difficult to answer this question with a simple and affirmative "yes" or "no", one could recognize that there is a discourse on the special path in Russia, and that this discourse – in contemporary Russia – has at least two main components: the state (not the regime) and its ideational underpinning on the one hand, and a society, which is diversely affected by the more often than not asymmetric exchange between modernity and memory, on the other.

There is also a historical context, however; the fragile composition of the latter has always – also throughout history – led to a strong emphasis on the former. While this is not a discursive trait, it is a structural one, which impinges on how traditional values are read and interpreted, and this again has an impact on the discourse. To exemplify: With Putin, the state has once again risen as the least common denominator, or rather, the highest common aim, of all attempts to define Russianness. Notably, Russianness was here defined as distinct from the West, or as stated in the Millennium speech:

"(...) Russia will not soon become, or may be not at all, a second edition of, let's say, the USA or England, where liberal values have deep historical traditions. Here, the state, its institutions and structures, has always played an exceptionally important role in the life of the country and the people (*v zhizni strany i naroda*). A strong state is for the Russian (*rossiyanin*) not an anomaly, not something he would struggle against, but on the contrary, a guarantor of order (*poryadok*), the initiator and major driving force of all change" (Putin, 1999).

What Putin frames as a fact, is indeed a paradox of history, not an ideal form of existence. As Vera Tolz stated about the Petrine reforms: "Russia became an Empire before ever contemplating becoming a nation" (Tolz, 1998). Peter the Great also built a state on the ruins of Byzantine Muscovy, imposing it on his gentry, clergy and subordinates. Hence, the state came to be planted upon the citizens, and not to emerge alongside with a process of nation building.

Now, one may suggest that this has changed: As Pål Kolstø suggested in the preface to the book *The New Russian Nationalism* (2016), "Nationalism is featuring increasingly in Russian society and in public discourse. Previously dominated by 'imperial' tendencies – pride in a large, strong and multi-ethnic state able to project its influence abroad – Russian nationalism is now focusing more and more on ethnic issues" (Kolstø & Blakkisrud, 2016). This dovetails with James Billington's approach in his *Russia in Search of Itself* (2004); he suggested that the discourse of what it means to be a Russian is one that takes place in "a political entity that – for the first time in history – has become a *nation* rather than an empire, and a *democracy* rather than an autocracy." (Billington, 2004, p. x).

No one would today claim that Russia is a democracy. But has Billington at least delivered a premise for understanding that *discourse on the nation* is a part of *becoming* one, and not solely a sign of failing nationhood? However, discourse on the relationship between state and nation cannot be seen as something, which is disconnected from the political context over-all.

Indeed, we could claim that "discourse on the nation" is by no means an anomaly in the Russian history of ideas, but that they emerged belatedly, and at a stage when the contextual framing of the "nation" was not favorable for its adoption as a principle of organizing Russia proper. So it was that the French concept of the "nation" understood as the political authority emanating from the people, and the polity being organized along the lines of territorialized power on behalf of that political principle, came into being alongside with the Russian intelligentsia's embracing of revolutionary ideas, and in a situation when the Polish question dominated in the geopolitics of Europe.

Polish gentry advisors, not the French, prompted the Czar to consider constitutional reforms and liberalizations, but the French made Russia all too convinced about its vulnerabilities. Ideas of a nation seen as rule for the people and by the people polarized the Russian debate: the radical Radishchev wanted autocracy gone, whereas the Slavophile conservative, Karamzin, saw in the state of Russia, serfdom and economic organization, the only panacea for anything "national" to continue its existence. Furthermore, the Decembrists came to organize themselves in communities that reflected the dilemma of constitutional monarchy versus republic, and, in the upshot, both of these lines perished under the official nationalism of Nikolai 1st.

As the 19th century saw the rise of culture and shared history as markers of nationhood, Slavophiles and Westernizers sprung forth from the same nest – the discussions in the Historical society of Moscow – to engage in a debate no less riveting and even devastating for Russia – that of the Slavophile debate. When the dust settled on this debate, Russia was remarkably changed – changed in the way that both camps had to admit to Russia's relative backwardness in comparison with Europe, a backwardness that the Slavophiles embraced, and the Westernizers wanted to use as a call to revolution. In the late 19th century the basic features of the agrarian Russian peasant commune (*obshchina*) was used as a rallying and reference point for almost every possible political concept and idea available, with the exception of one: the policy of the state. The state set the serfs free, but the policy that made use of the serfs by means of transforming them to owners of the land did not shoot off until 1907, that is, after more than 40 years of social unrest and terrorist attacks on the monarchy and the state.

And herein lies the first strand of discourse in the current profiling of the "Russian Idea" ala Putin: that the Russians have always "preferred the strong state." They have not. The Russian intelligentsia – a sizable minority, claiming to represent the people – was fostered to despise the state, and did so, with a fervor well described

by both Dostoyevsky in *The Possessed* (*Besy*), and Nikolai Berdyaev in his *Russian Idea* and *The Sources of Russian Communism*. As the Soviets took power, however, the state was soon resuscitated, albeit in a new form: that of the single-party state. Hence, rather than see the state dissolve, as Lenin's original work *The State and the Revolution* suggested, the Bolsheviks reformatting the state, re-built it, and adopted even a policy of statehood-granting – the policies of the nationalities.

Surely, what was not solved, however, was the problem of the state versus the autonomy of society, and vice-versa. In terms of the distribution of power, society has held an asymmetric position with regards to the more dominant positioning of the state; 19th century Russian society was agrarian, and shock-urbanized into the 20th century, and the Soviet experiment gave leeway to "nationhood," but not to free society. Indeed, the "society of nations" as it emerged in the Soviet Union was held together only by the volatile "nation-planning" of the Stalinist terror, and also, the promise of a future where all entities, nation, class and even state-society relations, would be transformed, only to dissolve and disappear.

Hence, if there is one continuous scheme in Russian history, it is that society is not – even now – fully empowered in Russia. Rather on the contrary, the regime finds way in which to plug most political conduct into the question of the state's dominance, and unsanctioned right to interfere. Here again, however, a new conundrum arises: While the state is a *sine qua non* for Russian politicians (elites), and also, reproduced in speeches and talks of the political elite today as somewhat essential to the Russian character, this idea is sculpted more on what distinguishes Russia from the West than to fit the realities emerging in Russia after a decade of an oil-booming economy.

So, in order to outline the questions treated in this presentation:

- How does the Putin regime format and underpin the idea of the state in rhetoric and speech acts?
- Does society make itself known in Russia today, and how do they format and conceptualize "the state"?
- What is "special" about Russia's path, and at which level does that "special path" make itself manifest?

Concepts and definitions

In order to conceptualize "continuity" in the field of the history of ideas, we need a) clearly definable concepts, b) a clear understanding of context. Can we with cer-



Yeltsin at the balcony by The White House

tainty claim that historical development in any sensible way influences upon contemporary social and political life? Is history not solely a contextual thing, that is, dependent upon the outlook of the actors at that time, the constraints they faced, and also, the socio-political structure of state-society relations?

We cannot, for certain, assume that "history repeats itself." There is no cyclic model, which explains outcomes by means of suggesting that patterns of mid-18th century discourse, as if by cultural default, are doomed to repeat themselves today. Can we, however, put these insights on some kind of sensible formula? Are there concepts that may help us sort out how to analyze the use of history in contemporary affairs, on the one hand, and how this utilization involves a repetitious pattern of things past?

The Russian historian Aleksey Miller in his distinctly important Pro et Contra article from 2009 talked about the "politization of history" and the "politics of memory" as two distinct branches of interpretation, the former being a reactivation of scientifically generated problems of history in a contemporary context, and the latter being the politics adopted, as it were, to "guide" memories and use it as a tool for building an acceptable "state-identity," or, as Miller suggested:

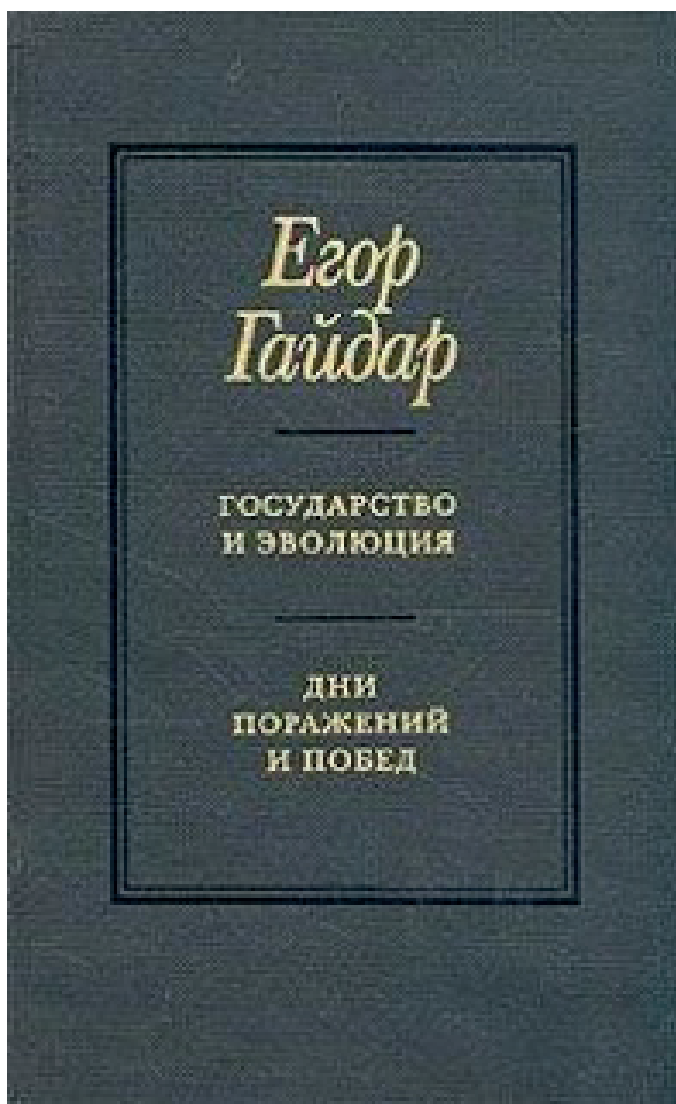
"to direct attention towards some single plots of history and silence and marginalize others; to pay pen-

sions to the veterans of one such plot, while declining payments to the veterans of the other" (Miller, 2009).

Aleksey Miller also suggests that the two options memory politics and/or politization of history are present in all modern states and their societies. There is, however, one particular quality, which preserves the balance --- political pluralism. "The presence of a parliamentary opposition," Miller holds,

"... and also independent social and professional organizations, that defend perceptions that are distinctly different from parties in power positions, will, accordingly, secure pluralism in the politics of memory" (Miller, 2009).

In my presentation today, I shall accentuate exactly the "politics of memory," and only indirectly talk about the "politization of history." The two are, however, certainly interlinked, also in the sense that too much of the former, may bring about the latter in a very articulate, and for Russia, recognizable way. State-guided, or regime-guided, history does, indeed, seem like the exact version of "politization of history" that Miller indicated: memory politics harnesses politicized history that is, patterns of failed nation building, sharp social polarization, and societal passivity. My question will then be: how does this happen?

Yegor Gaydar's pamphlet *The State and the Evolution* (1994)

State and Nation under Yeltsin/ Putin

Concerning the sources of Putinism and the state/nation nexus, we have two: we have the speeches and speech-acts of politicians on the topic, and we have the practical conduct of politics. We know, then, that the state-leader may define politics within a certain realm, and, in the Russian system, he can do so relatively unchallenged. We do also know, however, that whereas the public definition of issues meets with few constraints, the policies conducted can meet with several, and it can also produce constraints.

This summarizes the conundrum of the policy of nationhood under Yeltsin and under Putin. The following logic will be based on two primary assumptions:

Yeltsin's policy of "nationhood" was articulated in two ways, both fundamentally unsustainable: a) a rapid approximation to the West, security-wise and economical-

ly, and b) a regional policy, giving the regions "as much sovereignty" as they could possibly swallow. In this mix of approaches, the "Russian" issue disappeared. Democrats and Yeltsinites were reluctant to make it into a single issue, and Yeltsin himself called a national competition on delivering the "Russian Idea" for contemporary Russia.

At the deeper level, however, there was a struggle for the state, and nowhere was this more clearly described than in Yegor Gaydar's pamphlet *The State and the Evolution* (1994), where he formulated this dilemma not primarily as a function of the Western or Asiatic path of Russia, but rather, as a consequence of what he termed "nomenklatura capitalism." True, Gaydar departed from the theory of Asiatic despotism to formulate the problems of Russia in the 1990s, but he saw the greed of nomenklatura capitalism in his own country as inevitably linked to a specific "Russian" entity and cultural context – that of the state. If state and property have never been divided, historically, and in present times, Gaydar held,

"(...) even the most powerful state would, in reality, be weak and degenerate (*trukhlyavy*). The state servicemen, the bureaucracy (*chinovniki*) will eat the state completely, and they will not halt the hunt for property. Everyday corruption will soon become the real state of affairs. The servicemen will intuitively try to stabilize the situation, by converting power into property" (Gaydar, 1994).

Gaydar clearly linked this to the paradox of the liberation from the Tatar Yoke, asserting that the dissolution of the Horde put Russia on a firm path towards despotic Asian rule, firmly expressed by Ivan Grozny. With it, he suggested started the thriving expansion of Russia, ending only in 1945. And, this is important, the steady expansion left Russia void of important processes of nation-building and it also tapped state resources; Russia became a ".... Civilization" (*dogonyayushchaya tsivilizatsiya*), dedicating most of its resources to "catch up" with its constituent other --- the West:

"Russia was captured, colonized by itself, ending up as a hostage of the militaristic-imperial system, which profiled itself in front of the kneeling people as its eternal benefactor and savior from external threats, as the guarantor of the existence of the nation" (Gaydar, 1994, p. 46).

It seems fair to say that other issues were more important than the "soft" package of a national idea; the GKO crisis of 1998 and the Chechen wars 1999 – 2002 stymied discussions of "nationhood" and gave a thorough boost to demands for "statehood." As matters of state-security rose to the forefront, so did the call for a "strongman," capable of inducing the needed amount

of respect in the polity and the elite. As Putin adopted his first "position papers," to paraphrase John P. Willerton, the idea of statehood towered over that of "nationhood" (Willerton, 2014). As a matter of fact, the "nation" and the "nationality question" were completely gone from the agenda of public policy. What surfaced was a mildly passionate version of an ancient theme: Russia is not the West, and Russia has always been, and will always be, a unitary state.

Most of Putin's subsequent reforms should be interpreted in this light. The state, crumbling under Yeltsin's multiple bilateral agreements with the regions, the near financial collapse of the state, and a secessionist war in the South, needed a complete makeover, to use a phrase from an average Western TV-show. The redo was both swift and relentless: in the period from 2002-2004, the state vertical was strengthened by ousting political competition from the Federation Council, oligarchic groups, and federal autonomy was retracted with the introduction of the presidential representatives, and the direct appointment of regional heads of the executive. Moreover, by 2007, the dominant party, United Russia, had risen not only to supremacy, but to dominance, holding 2/3 of the votes in the State Duma. A carefully designed manipulation of thresholds and voting rules also led to the final and irreversible ousting of the last partisan remnants of Yeltsin's "Westernization."

Indeed, the name "Edinaya Rossiya" is a telling one; unity was expressed in state-terms, *edinstvo/edinny*, meaning "one single entity," as opposed to *razchlenenie* (pulverization); the metaphor, or rather, executive command of "unity" was also associated with the Russian "nation," that is, Russia.

2006-2012: The Apotheosis of Statehood

As the state grew more centralized, I argue, what rose was not a doctrine of the nation, but of the state. This sprout had been present also in the millennium speech, but notably not formulated explicitly as a strategy, I argue. One interesting example in this regard is the oft-cited work of presidential advisor and grey cardinal, Vladislav Surkov, and his speech to the dominant party United Russia congress in 2006.

For some reasons, many scholars have accentuated what Surkov wanted them to accentuate, the terms "sovereignty" and "democracy." Take Stephen White, for instance, who suggests that the "West" failed in projecting the expectations of electoral democracy onto Russia, and hence, logically, he came to see the doctrine as "a form of rule that shared general democratic principles but combined them with the ability to take decisions without deferring to the views of other

powers – in other words, real rather than nominal sovereignty" (White, 2010, p. 278).

But the Surkovian point of gravity was all about the state: as he suggested in the speech on sovereign democracy, where he was toying with the various "paths" and "concepts" of the Russian separate path:

"The most romantic of all the rationales for preserving state sovereignty that the Russians (*russkie*), the Russians (*rossiyane*) have already for 500 years been a state-forming people (*gosudarsvoobrazuyushchiy narod*)—we are a nation (*natsia*) which has adapted to statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*). Unlike many of our friends from the Soviet Union and many other countries, we have always been the vessels of an idea of statehood. It is clear that some countries that formulate joining the EU as their national idea are fortunate: they do not have to think as much as we do. It's all very simple for them: 'the Muscovites (*moskali*) are bad, everything is their fault, but we will run to Brussels, and everything will be fine.' We should remember that none of these nations (*natsii*) have ever been sovereign in history; they do not have the habits of statehood (*navyki gosudarstvennogo sushchestvovaniya*)" (Surkov, 2006).

In other words, statecraft, Surkov suggested, was the essence of the Russian path. This vision of the "past," he then flipped into an eternal future, suggesting that finding "concepts," also meant to model the future. He modeled it in the following way:

"(...) a striving toward political wholeness through the centralization of power functions. Second, we have an idealization of the goals of political struggle. Third, we have a personification of political institutions (...) Through the centuries, a strong central state gathered, consolidated, and developed an enormous country stretching broadly over space and time. It conducted all significant reforms. (...) It is not so important whether Russia's model of the centralized state was a consequence of the 'monocentric' archetype in the national unconscious or whether this archetype itself took shape under the pressure of historical circumstances. In any case, today, too, the majority views the presence of a powerful center of authority as a guarantee of the preservation of Russia's wholeness—territorial, spiritual and every other kind" (Surkov, 2008, p. 83).

Would it be an exaggeration to suggest that Surkov laid the foundation for Putinism – or that he staged the apotheosis of statehood as personalized power? We can recognize that there are divergent versions of Russia's path today, and that these version, as in the 1990s, are gravitating towards modernization and innovation, plu-



Putin at Athos

of full state sovereignty, and sovereignty can achieve results only in conditions of a democratic political regime" (p. 281).

On the other hand, we also have to note that the return of Putin has brought about new versions of what Luke March (2012) calls "official nationalism" --- this is not "nationalism," March argues, but ways in which to mobilize and crack down on expressions of "nationalism." Hence, he suggests that it is all about regime utility, not ideational content:

"I will argue that the Russian authorities' nationalism (which I call 'official nationality') is moderate in its content relative to historical and contemporary forms of Russian nationalism. This is because its aim is not the expression of nationalism per se, but its control and utilisation for regime goals. However, the effect of official nationality is far less benign than its content because of contradictions inherent in its political utilisation: the regime takes a profoundly administrative approach that is far less post-Soviet than the content of its nationalism, and its approach to extreme nationalism is ambiguous and inconsistent" (March, 2012, p. 402).

But "regime utility" is a Damocles Sword: the powerful state may become the weak state, since it suppresses pluralism in society, real popular initiative, and finally, solidifies the regime at the cost of state governance. This brings me to the last section.

2012-2016 – The Imbalanced State: Restrictions and Governability

I have argued elsewhere that following the protest demonstrations of the 2011–2012 electoral cycle, tensions between the limited modernization efforts of Medvedev and what I term the resurgent authoritarianism of Putin have become more visible.

There are numerous evidences that suggest this: Within two months of Putin's inauguration on 7 May 2012, the Russian prosecuting authorities held high-profiled trials against protesters, detained the most visible political protest leaders, and amended the 1995/2006 Law on NGOs. Starting from 2012, any NGO that receives foreign funding must register as a "foreign agent" and conduct stricter, more regular reporting. Refusal to register may entail enforced dissolution, high fines, or even imprisonment. This and other laws have gone down in history as the May decrees, disciplining the government to work for objectives that de facto limit and contain the autonomy of society.

Let me be clear: the protest events in 2011/2012 were "cracks in the wall" for the doctrine of building the state. What emerged from this protests was the demand that the state should not intervene in the electoral process, and that the state's preponderance in public and economic affairs suppressed free choice and a pluralist society. And the issue is not about numerical strength; it's about state preponderance and the inherent contradictions that emerge from this.

I shall make two points. First, even though the opposition is weakly organized, the very tools used for re-instating authoritarian rule may construct a policy of orchestrated repression and public denial far outdoing what once passed as selective and measured repression. In crushing all actions connected with popular protests against electoral manipulation and ballot-stuffing, a hybrid regime can make fatal mistakes in repressing society and public political organization, undermining governability by erecting control instances that compete for positions in the state. Moreover, excessive control can undermine the main criterion of regime stability: the organizational power of incumbency.

Second, the long expected program for "nationhood," left over from the Yeltsin period in the advent of economic growth and governance stability, has emerged in a context where the question "where is the nation" has been acutely articulated by means of military conflict. It's a dissonance of formidable magnitude that Putin, in a position article, printed in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on 23 January 2012, was important. Putin for the first time used the term "state-forming people" (*gosudarstvenno-brazuyushchiy narod*) about Russian ethno-nationals (Putin, 2012), this at a time when Russian "nationalism" was taking to the streets and defying the state. Moreover, as the supplementing government policy on "nationhood" was developed, the Euromaidan broke out, making Brubaker's triadic nexus a fearsome reality.

Conclusion:

Where does all this lead us? I shall attempt a short and sweet recapture of the main arguments.

If there is one single question that more than anything has puzzled Russian nation-builders, and that has created fear and security measures from the state, it's the issue of "nationhood". Thus, the doctrine of the state as the single unifier is a product of an inherent, fundamental sense of insecurity.

The statehood doctrine does not, however, settle the issue of political and societal pluralism in Russia, however, as the major fault lines are now developing around issues of how much power the state should have over nascent societal organization. This contradiction will only intensify with the generational shift, and a policy of discrimination may lead to more articulate forms of nationalism.

Finally, and here I would like to recall Miller's distinction between the "policy of memory" and the "politization of history" – a policy of streamlining society along the lines of exalting the principle of statehood and state control over that of societal autonomy may certainly be accompanied by a cultivation of "what to remember" and how. On the other hand, this may lead to the politization of history, that is, recurrent patterns of conflicts of interest, where the liberal segment of Russian society will withdraw, become more assertive, or vanish in a puddle of chauvinism, patriotism and social polarization.

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Clericalization, militarization and acquiescence

Kristian Gerner

Lund University, Kristian.gerner@hist.lu.se

Introduction

The theme of the seminar is State, religion and society in Russia and the Nordic countries. My contribution addresses the Russian dimension. The title is inspired by current Russian opinions among the intelligentsia concerning Russia's plight but also by the memory policy of the present regime in Russia.

Clericalization refers to the impact of the Russian Orthodox Church, militarization to the image of the state and acquiescence to the atmosphere in political life. Concerning the Church, the attention is on its stance regarding public affairs and not on theology. The term Intelligentsia refers to a social category and a concept whose history has come full circle in Russian history. The trajectory starts in the Enlightenment at the time of Alexander Radishchev and his *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* in 1790. It continues via names such as Vissarion Belinskii, Peter Chaadaev and Alexander Herzen, to change guise in Soviet times with dissidents such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sinyavskii and Andrei Sakharov – called dissidents, because the Soviet regime appropriated the term intelligentsia – and to end today with names such as Lyudmila Ulitskaya, Vladimir Sorokin and Alexander Sokurov.

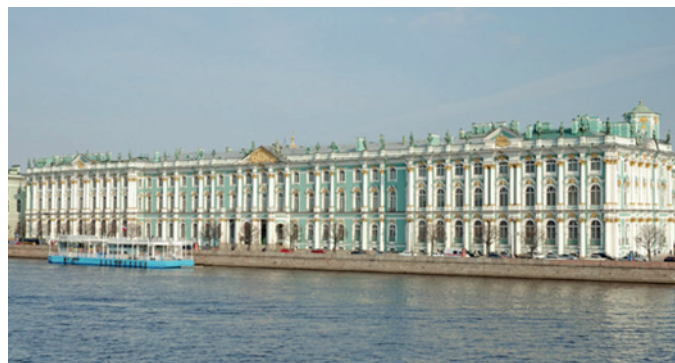
Russia and Europe – a strained relation

On the eve of the parliamentary election in Russia on 18 September 2016, Alexander Sokurov gave an interview in the Russian newspaper *Novaja Gazeta*. He was critical of the reactionary ideological and political atmosphere in Russia and declared:

There is not any enlightenment for the Russian people, in Russian society. Clericalization and militarization have become paramount in the consciousness of

young people. This means that among those where there is a certain social energy, it is geared towards aggressive politicization, party-mindedness and superstition.

There is a certain weight in this statement by Sokurov. As a film director he became internationally known with his movie *Русский ковчег* (*The Russian Ark*, 2002) as a guardian of Russia's European cultural heritage. The film is a narration about the Europeanization of Russian society from the reforms of Peter the Great in the early 18th century until the eve of World War I. The film is a single 96-minute Steadicam sequence shot through the halls of the Winter Palace and Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. Actors demonstrate episodes from Russian history and culture. The narrator who encounters and confronts the Russian culture is the Marquis de Custine, who is notorious as a French aristocrat who went to Russia in 1839 and hoped to find arguments against representative government but was abhorred by the autocracy and the acquiescence of the population, and by the backwardness, for which he blamed the Russian Orthodox Church.



St. Petersburg, The Winter Palace and the Hermitage.
Photo: Kristian Gerner

Sokurov's aim with the film was to celebrate Russia's new encounter with the West after the Cold War: the West should repent having been equivocal and arrogant in the manner of Custine concerning Russia's fate under Soviet rule. This film was followed up by Sokurov with the film *Francophonie* (2015). The latter movie is set in the Louvre, Paris, during World War II. It tells

the true story of the friendship between the Louvre's wartime French curator and the Nazis' head of artistic preservation (or, perhaps more accurately, appropriation). In what may be the film's most affecting sequence, Sokurov turns closer to home and compares the Louvre's relatively benign wartime fate with that of the Hermitage Museum in besieged Leningrad.

The message of these two movies taken together is that Russian culture is one with Europe's. The Hermitage is the Louvre's equal. The polemical point of *Francophonie* shines through in scenes from Leningrad under the terrible German siege of 900 days in 1941-1944: whereas the French collaborated with the German occupiers during the war in order to save the treasures of the Louvre, "Europe" did not care a bit for the fate of the Hermitage or of Leningrad and the Russian people during the Nazi war of annihilation.

War and Warrior

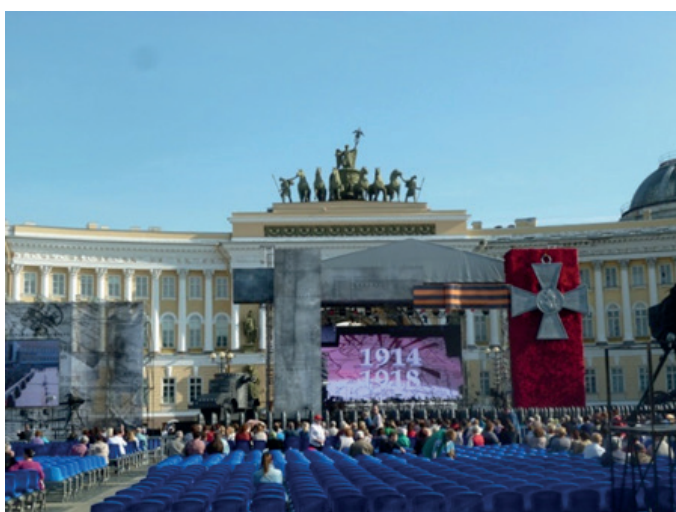
On August 1, 2014 on the occasion of the centennial of the German attack in World War I on Russia in 1914, a monument to the Russian army and people was unveiled at Victory Park in Moscow. President Vladimir Putin declared at the solemn inauguration:



*Moscow, Victory Park, August 2014
Monument to the Russian Heroes of WW I
Photo: Kristian Gerner*

Russia withstood the attack and was then able to launch an offensive. The Brusilov offensive [1916] became famous throughout the whole world. But this victory was stolen from our country. It was stolen by those who called for the defeat of their homeland and army, who sowed division inside Russia and sought only power for themselves, betraying the national interests.

In October 2016 an equestrian statue of Ivan the Terrible was unveiled in the Russian city Oryol. The business daily *Vedomosti* observed in an editorial that this was the first monument to Ivan the Terrible in Russia's history and commented: "It is a salvo in memory wars and a statement in a political discussion of the government's right to use force domestically." The monument was backed by Russia's culture minister, who has argued that Ivan the Terrible's brutal rule is a myth – i.e. a delusion – and that Ivan's name was tarnished by western travelers who slandered him in their writings.



*St. Petersburg, Palace Square August 2014
Centennial Jubilee of World War I
Photo: Kristian Gerner*



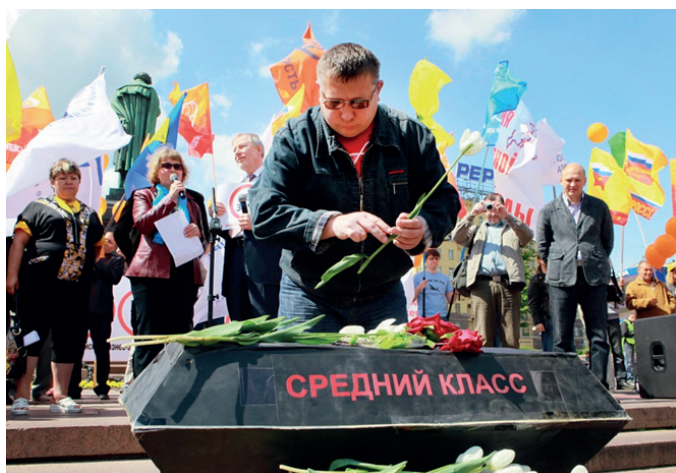
*Russia's first monument to Ivan the Terrible inaugurated
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/14/russias-first-monument-to-ivan-the-terrible-inaugurate>*

An acquiescent middle class

It seems that the Russian people are encouraged to be proud of the distant past of Russia in order to accommodate to today's harsh realities. Because half a year before the patriotic manifestation and celebration of the deeds of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century, the Russian economist Tatyana Maleva observed:

People have understood that the promising future belongs to the past— there are no perspectives. The atmosphere is “negative stability.” Discontent might increase in geometrical progression. Only a spark is needed, even an insignificant one, to trigger anything – for example a social explosion.

In the first quarter of 2016, according to Statistics Russia, 22.7 million people had an income below the existential minimum (as opposed to 14.4 million people at the end of 2015).



Moscow, September 2016. “The Burial of the Middle Class.” <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2016/09/07/69769-krizis-srednego-klassa>

Under the intriguing heading “Unstable equilibrium of stability” the Opinion Research institute the Levada Center in August 2013 painted a rather contradictory and not quite assuring picture of the atmosphere. The Center observed that the increase of street protests contradicted the widespread total pessimism in society: “Nobody knows where a revolt may erupt.” However, the Center’s final conclusion from its opinion surveys was that the most important fact was that the depressive mood in Russian society did not favor neither growth of the economy, nor a healthy political life and a striving of citizens to change the situation. One may thus state that acquiescence characterizes Russian society of today rather than the danger of immediate social unrest.

According to a more recent poll by the Levada center in early 2016 65% percent of the Russian population wished that relations between Russia and the West should become “harmonious.” However, 65% were also against Russia making concessions. The chairman of the Russian Council for Foreign and Defense Policy Fedor Lukyanov observed, in an interview in March 2016, that during the Cold War the Soviet Union had nurtured cultural relations with the West in the guise of “popular diplomacy.” Today, on the contrary, the Russian leaders led foreign policy according to the classic slogan “If you want peace, prepare for war.” Lukyanov quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin, who in the fall 2014 had declared to the members of the Russian Security council: “Thank God that Russia will not have any ally.” Lukyanov noted that Russia did not need any allies.

A new “symphony”

The only trustworthy ally of the Russian state is the Russian Orthodox Church. Alexander Sokurov argued in the interview which has been referred to above that the Church and the state had become one. He did not use the classical word for this, symphony, but used the Russian verb *спасти*, literally “to grow together”:

Today the Church has merged ostensibly with the state and has become a political instrument, as all can see. In my opinion this is one of the most important and serious moments for the survival of Russia as such. If today in Russia religion was separated from the state, many current problems would not exist. It means that terrorism wouldn’t have the same scale. This is because religion has offered a political platform and in our country religion has acquired priority over Enlightenment.

President Putin’s assertion that Russia can stand alone as a strong player in international relations can be



Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, Moscow February 1, 2013. (Picture provided by RIA Novosti. REUTERS /Sergei Guneyev)

interpreted as an instance of *katechon*. This Greek term is used in Orthodox Christian language to describe the Christian Empire as the “obstacle”; i.e. the force that stops Anti-Christ. This *katechon* may in a secularized form be translated to mean that the Russian national interest is different from that of all other states, because Russia’s national interest is the mission to protect the whole world against the evil forces.

The Russian Enigma – a factoid

A very well-known but often miss-quoted saying by Winston Churchill is that the foreign policy of the Soviet Union was enigmatic. The context was the not foreseen and unexpected fact that the deadly enemies Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union had concluded a pact of non-aggression and friendship in the late summer 1939 and then proceeded to divide Poland between them.

Churchill’s famous phrase was a rhetorical device. It has very often been quoted out of context and then referred to as a “factual” statement. Such a false verisimilitude is called a factoid. Churchill uttered it at the start of a live radio speech to the British people in October 1939. Immediately after the enigma phrase, Churchill added that the key to solving the riddle was to consider “Russia’s national interest”. Given our concern with the foreign policy of Putin’s Russia today, it is relevant to note that Churchill’s statement was based upon his analysis of the implications of the then recent German-Soviet non-aggression pact for the policy of the Soviet Union in the long run. These are Churchill’s own words:

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest of the safety of Russia that Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea or that it should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of south Eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.

Churchill’s prediction came true – after having been attacked by Germany the Soviet Union would stand up against Germany and become an ally of the United Kingdom. Moreover, Churchill’s assessment of the rationale behind Stalin’s policy in 1939 tunes in not only with the official Soviet interpretation retrospectively of the reasons behind the pact with Germany in 1939 but also with President Putin’s interpretation today. In November 2014, after the Russian annexation of the Crimea, President Putin declared that whereas some people had said it was horrendous that the Soviet Union had concluded the pact with Nazi Germany in

1939 it was not horrendous at all – the Soviet Union did not want to wage war but to protect peace.

Soviet patriotism acclaimed – and refuted

President Putin linked his retrospective endorsement of Stalin’s foreign policy in 1939 to an outright re-habilitation of the history of the Soviet Union as a legitimate part of Russia’s history of patriotism when he awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky to Marshal Dmitry Yazov, on his birthday November 8, 2014):

...for his contribution to strengthening the nation’s defence capability and promoting patriotic values among the younger generation. Vladimir Putin thanked Dmitry Yazov for his efforts, noting he was proud to be with him on this special day. The President expressed hope that Marshal Yazov will continue his work to support the Russian armed forces and young servicemen.

Marshal Yazov is notorious for being a member of the so-called “State Committee on the State of Emergency” which was organized in August 1991 in an attempt by vice president Grigori Yanayev, Yazov and others to topple President Mikhail Gorbachev and re-construct the Soviet Union as a unitary state. Putin’s declaration that Yazov had been a patriot thus retrospectively endorsed the attempted coup in 1991.

Putin’s patriotism is obviously intimately linked to militarism. It is important to note that dismissal of patriotism lies at the core of Alexander Sokurov’s criticism of the clericalization-militarization nexus which he observes in Russia today. He argues that “patriotism” is a superficial sentiment:

What does it mean to be proud of the Motherland? To believe that it is better than other countries? Well, why is Canada worse than Russia? Why is the Caucasus better than Italy, Switzerland or France? Or, why are the latter better than the Caucasus? In my opinion, one can only be proud of the work of man. [...] If patriotism is proudness, then one can be proud only of the work of man. One cannot be proud of nature, because it is only given to us.

Alexander Sokurov’s strong dismissal of “patriotism” must be interpreted against the background of the combined message of his movies *The Russian Ark* and *Francophonie*, i.e. that Russia is a repository of European high culture and its defender, although it is not recognized as such by the self-proclaimed guardians of European values in the West.



*President Putin and Marshal Yazov, November, 2014
(<http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/23207>)*

Conclusion: Holy Russia reaffirmed

In the interview in *Novaya Gazeta*, Sokurov gave an eloquent description of the merger of the Church with the militarized Russian state in the name of patriotism. He posed the rhetorical questions why a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church took part in the meeting of the Marshal Staff of the armed forces but not a Mufti or any representatives of the other confessions in Russia, and why Russian fighter planes were consecrated and sprinkled with holy water by an Orthodox priest. He wondered whether the leaders did not trust their engineers or believed that the planes not made by man. The last comment indicates that Sokurov insinuated that Putin's Russia has returned to the medieval era of superstition.

Sokurov's observation squares well with the opinion among some Russian intellectuals, namely the journalist in *Novaya Gazeta* Yulia Latynina and the leader of the liberal Russian opposition party Yabloko (which did not make it into the State Duma in the September election), Grigori Yavlinskii. Both argue that Putin's regime has thrown Russia back to the time before the reforms of Peter the Great in the early 18th century, i.e. to the time

before secularization and enlightenment. Yavlinskii even wrote of the "de-modernization" of Russia.

An idea that has been nurtured by generations of Russian intellectuals is that Russia's history has never been, and will not become, a smooth process of progress. It has been and will probably rather continue to be characterized by sudden, abrupt turns. In a classic text, well known to scholars of Russian culture, Soviet semioticians Yurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii once wrote:

Russian culture in the medieval period was dominated by a different value orientation. Duality and the absence of a neutral axiological sphere led to a conception of the new not as a continuation, but as a total eschatological change. --- Under such circumstances, the dynamic process of historical change has a fundamentally different character: change occurs as a radical negation of the preceding state. The new does not arise out of a structurally 'unused' reserve, but results from a transformation of the old, a process of turning it inside out. Thus, repeated transformations can in fact lead to the regeneration of archaic forms.

In the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, President Putin declared that the baptism of Great Prince Vladimir of Kiev had taken place in Kherones, an ancient Greek settlement in the Crimea. Putin thus demoted Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, as the birthplace of the Russian Orthodox Church in 988. As a consequence of this Muscovite expropriation of Ukraine's ancient history, a statue to Great Prince Vladimir was inaugurated by President Putin and Patriarch Kirill in Moscow on Russia's day of national unity, November 4, 2016. It stands to reason that Moscow is known in medieval sources only in 1147, a century and a half after the Christianization of Rus'. However, on November 4, 2016, a peculiar *translatio imperii* occurred: the Crimea (Kherones, Sevastopol) was linked to Moscow in the name of Holy Russia.

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Lutheran political culture versus Orthodox political culture

– The importance of the Reformation and the Lutheran Evangelical Church
for the rule of law, democracy and political culture in the Nordic Nation States ¹

Uffe Østergård

CBS, uoe.dbp@cbs.dk

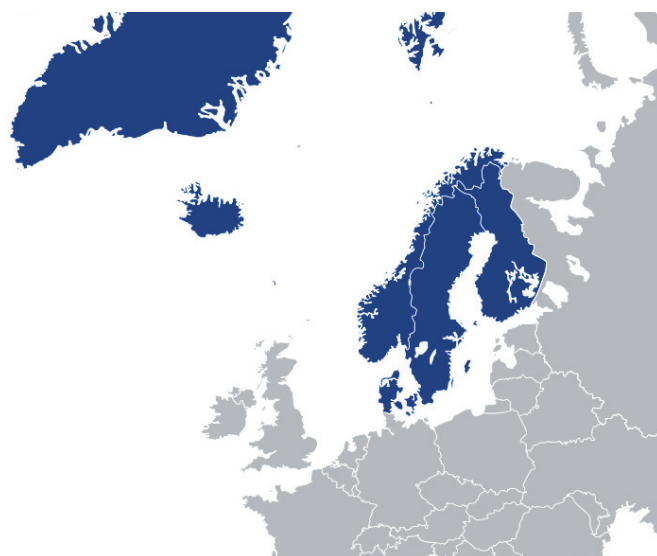
Why is it that the Nordic countries of today are characterised by rule of law, lack of corruption, a strong civil society based on voluntary associations and welfare states that provide services for all members of society? And at the same time are internationally competitive with strong economies either based on natural resources as oil and fish in Norway, or absence of them as in Denmark? Size is obviously of importance. Small states have to behave peacefully according to international rules, whereas great powers such as Russia are tempted to set their own rules. Yet, Moscow Russia was not larger than the two Nordic empires Denmark-Norway (the Oldenburg Monarchy) and the Swedish Baltic Empire at its height between 1630 and 1721. Only Peter 1's victory at Poltava in today's Ukraine in 1709 turned the tables and placed Russia as the hegemonic power in Northern Europe and protector of Denmark except for a brief episode in 1762. Before that they were of comparable size and influence so it makes sense to compare their social and political orders, all geographical differences aside.

Apart from the two hundred years of Mongol domination the most important difference seems to be religion, i.e. Orthodox Christianity and Lutheran Protestantism respectively. Contrary to the supranational Catholic Church both of these versions of Christianity are organised in national churches. But apart from this organisational similarity their differences abound, especially as regards the consequences of religion for political culture and state order. The most distinguishing factor in explaining social order in the Nordic countries is that they are Lutheran. Not all Lutherans live here, far from it. But the five Nordic nation states of today are the only ones in the world where Lutherans exercise hegemony over the state through a national church. Even though Sweden separated church and state in 2000 the Lutheran-evangelical church still dominates the picture. Seen from a historian's point of view the legacy from five

hundred years of Lutheran state churches explains the most, even the origins of the universal welfare as secularized social democracy (Østergård 2011 and Nelson 2016).

The Nordic countries

The five Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – share a number of cultural and economic characteristics that distinguish them sufficiently to speak of a “Nordic world” of its own within the overall international community of nations. According to Robert Nelson the Nordic countries are distinguished, among other cultural features, by higher levels of trust in other people than almost any other nations of the world. Only the Netherlands – another Northern European Protestant country – is comparably high in world values surveys (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 72). They differ from one another but differ still more from other nations according to measures such as “expenditure for social welfare, tax rates, large public service



The Nordic countries

sectors, a large public transfer sector and a more active labour market policy.” (Marklund and Norlund 1999, 51). On the whole, as the director of the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study Björn Wittrock wrote in 2012

[...] in the early twenty-first century, the Nordic countries form a rather unique part of the world, characterized by a unique form of common belonging arguably stronger than that which may be found among the other nations of Europe.
(Wittrock 2012, 108).

Given the high level of social security why do people in these countries work at all? If Nordic workers behaved according to the standard economic assumption that rational individuals pursue their self-interest, the economies of such Nordic countries might collapse for lack of a labor force. Since this does not happen, there must be something distinctive happening in the Nordic welfare states (Iceland and Finland would likely be comparable in the above respect to Denmark, Norway and Sweden). One explanation of this apparent paradox is that the Scandinavian countries share some distinctive social and cultural attitudes and norms that could contribute to the willingness to work hard for a small personal net gain economically. Rather than an economic motive, work in Scandinavia is more like the fulfillment of a religious calling. It was not only in Calvinism but also Lutheranism where pursuit of a calling could stimulate seemingly irrational levels of work effort by ordinary private economic standards. As one might say, it is seemingly part of the strong sense of “social solidarity” in the Nordic world that all able-bodied adults are morally required to work and thus to contribute to the economic success of the whole society, even when this is not in their self-interest narrowly defined. Indeed, failure to contribute will subject an individual to strong social sanctions, unlike in many other more “cynical” nations.

The Nordic countries of today are small, peaceful and egalitarian democracies, internationally oriented and strong supporters of law and order among the nations of the world. There is some truth to this conventional wisdom but it does not cover the whole picture as the countries represent surprisingly different national routes to modernity and welfare society. The overall result is that the successful cooperation among the Nordic states in the 20th century builds on recognition of every nation's right to independence, regardless of its size. Many have doubted the ability of Iceland to establish a successful state in an island with little more than 250.000 inhabitants.² Yet, even small Iceland is a thriving and wealthy society combining traditional agriculture, fisheries, hyper-modern industries and information technology. Its economy crashed during the financial

crisis but the island nation has made it back again. The same goes for the Faroe Islands with a little more than 50.000 inhabitants (Østergård 2008c).

In early modern times, from 1523 to 1814, the Nordic countries were divided between two multinational, conglomerate states or empires, Sweden under the Vasa dynasty and Denmark under the House of Oldenburg. After defeat in the Napoleonic wars, Denmark was forced to cede Norway to victorious Sweden under Carl 14. Johan, formerly the French general Jean Baptiste Bernadotte. Finland had become a separate state entity in 1809, when Russia took away the Finnish half of Sweden and established an arch duchy in personal union with the Russian empire, gaining full independence in 1917. Sweden got Norway as a compensation for the loss of Finland in a shaky personal union which lasted until 1905, when the union was peacefully dissolved. Iceland broke away from Denmark in two phases, 1918 and 1944 respectively, while connections were suspended because of the world wars, effectively preventing Denmark from intervening. The Faeroe Islands gained their autonomous status in 1948, Greenland got home rule in 1979 and the Sami in northern Norway and Sweden will probably follow suit in the future. The Åland Islands were accorded status as a separate, non-militarized part of Finland in 1921 as compensation for not allowed to join Sweden; 1951 followed home rule, a status the Åland Islands interpreted as to implying a separate vote on their entry into the European Union in 1994 – and the upholding of tax free sales on the ferries to and from the islands although both Sweden and Finland are members of the EU.

All together the Nordic countries are at the size of the German state (Bundesland) Nordrhein-Westfalen with around 23 million inhabitants. From this point of view they are hugely overrepresented in international organisations such as the UN which rely on the principle of independent nation states. The Nordic countries also collaborate, primarily through the Nordic Council which is an interesting blend of cooperation among parliaments, civil society and states. The cooperation is hugely popular among average people, although linguistically the Nordic peoples today seem to lose the ability to understand the languages of the other nationalities. English is the preferred language of communication among the younger generations, also at university level. This tendency is deplored among traditional upholders of the so-called “Nordic unity”, but nothing much is done about it as a common television channel never got off the ground in 1960s and 70s when it might have made a difference. Because of this lack of understanding and the importance attached to the European Union since Sweden and Finland joined in 1995, political and administrative elites do not invest much energy

in Nordic cooperation, although they still pay lip service to “Nordic values” at festive occasions. This tendency seems most dominant in Denmark, but can be detected in different versions in all the countries. Nevertheless, Nordic unity and Nordic values still score highly in surveys and Scandinavians still seem to prefer each other’s societies and values over those of the rest of Europe.

One Nordic political culture or several national political cultures?

“Norden” as a region, today consists of independent nation states with their own quite different histories and separate political traditions. Yet, they also share a long range of culture traits from the Lutheran version of Christianity to economic flexibility, absence of corruption and a high degree of social equality. Entries in Scandinavian encyclopedia consistently represent Nordic identity with the following national stereotypes: Norway “as Norwegian and only Norwegian”, Denmark as “Danish in Europe”, Iceland as the “island of the learned”, Sweden as “Nordic in Europe, with a capacity for self-criticism and tolerance towards immigrants”, and Finland as “hard-working advocate of human rights, equality, international understanding and peace”. The Faeroe Islands and Greenland, too, have gradually won the right to be recognized as independent national variations of Nordic political culture. Only the Sami identity is represented as ethnic, though this will in all likelihood hold only until the Sami are recognized as an independent nationality with their own seat on the Nordic Council.

The nation states of today, then, are the configurations through which the common Nordic identity manifests itself. As they have achieved the recognition of the surrounding world, they have come to appear as “natural” entities. Even though Danes and Swedes may have had difficulties in appreciating this because of their age-old struggle for supremacy in Northern Europe. Both Denmark and Sweden have a long, unbroken history, though strictly speaking not as homogeneous nation states, but rather as composite states or small empires, exercising various kinds of hegemony over their neighbors inside and outside Norden. Denmark and Sweden thus belong to the traditions of territorial state nations basically on a par with France, Britain, Spain, Poland, Hungary and Portugal although of course smaller, Norway and Iceland belong to the family of integral national movements who in the 19th century resurrected their medieval nations to independent status as did the catholic Irish and the Czechs whereas Finland did not even have a medieval pas to refer back to. The rudiments of a state were established within the conglomerate Russian empire and subsequently gave rise to a bilingual political nation of Finlanders.³

Geopolitical contrasts have always been the constant in the history of the Nordic countries. But after 1814, common interests dominated over the conflicts to the degree that the Nordic countries, with the exception of the occasional threat to Denmark and Finland, no longer felt exposed to direct threats. During the period of the Cold War, the Nordic countries remained in a relatively safe and peaceful situation because of the Iron Curtain that separated the Baltic Sea. At the time the Nordic peoples did not realize how safe they in reality were, but this became obvious after the collapse of communism in 1989. The predictable character of world politics to a large degree explains popular enthusiasm in Denmark for the neutral Nordic alternative to NATO in the years between 1945 and 1989. During this period Sweden was able to play the neutral card, while Denmark quite free of charge was able to emerge on the winning side as member of the NATO alliance. In Denmark at least, NATO only became a popular issue after the need of the alliance had expired in 1991. The exception among the Nordic countries is Finland. This small state demonstrated a determined will to fight in 1939-44 and thus escaped the tragic fate of the small Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

This era of relative peace, however, did not last and today appears as little more than an historical parenthesis. Viewed in the long historical perspective, the Nordic countries differ much less from the European countries as Nordic ideology and the discourse of a Scandinavian or Nordic model would have us believe. There is, however, one major difference. The Nordic countries are Lutheran⁴. They did not become so immediately with the Reformation in the 1530s, but at some time in the 18th century, the pietist revivalist movements, later to become political and economic in nature, began to gain ground among the ordinary peasants and fishermen in all the Nordic countries. The Lutheran countries secularized faster and produced fewer fundamentalist movements than countries which embraced the Calvinist brand of Protestantism, once the governments in 18th century moved from strict Lutheran intolerant Orthodoxy to enlightened perceptions of state and society.

It is reasonable to assume that the mental and organizational background of the Nordic welfare state is to be found in the traditions and institutions of the national churches in these overwhelmingly homogenous Lutheran states. In other societies as Germany and the United States, Lutheran communities form a constituent part. In other cases the Lutherans were subjects to rulers of a different religion as was the case in Estonia, Latvia and Siebenbürgen in Transsylvania, today’s Romania. The Lutheran state-church way of thinking originally was a Christian-conservative principle of caring that guided charitable. Early on this principle was converted into the state’s obligation to provide the basic needs of

the population on a collective and state basis. The links between Lutheran religious traditions and institutions and the rise of the universal welfare state in particular and the political culture in general have not yet been systematically studied, but from a perspective of the history of mentalities it seems a plausible hypothesis (Østergård 2010). Should the hypothesis be correct, the consequence would be that the political culture in the Nordic societies is the product of secularized Lutheranism rather than democratized socialism.

The origins of the success of Lutheranism may be traced back to three societal features resulting from the peripheral nature of the Nordic societies in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. Law codes for the whole realm were introduced in Norway in 1274 (not Iceland) and in Sweden (including Finland) around 1350, while Denmark had three so-called landscape laws for Jutland, Sealand and Scania (Skaane) from the 13th century. The Oldenburg Monarchy acquired a unitary law in the form of 'Danske Lov' in 1683 and 'Norske Lov' 1687. This too was relatively early in a European context, yet the difference in time testifies to the fact that Denmark in many ways always has been closer to the continental pattern of social development than the rest of "Norden". This certainly holds true for the continued political role of free peasants and as a consequence weak feudal structures and very small and insignificant towns.

Though not yet completely understood, an interesting bond seems to exist between the continued domination of small, but free peasants in the clearances in the forests on the northern peripheries and literacy among ordinary people. The further to the north the more widespread the literacy seems to be a Nordic rule of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, a rule which also holds true for the poor peripheries of Iceland and the Faroe Islands.⁵ It is true that many Icelandic farmers did hand over their valuable Medieval manuscripts to Danish civil servants such as Árni Magnússon. He was a native Iclander who lived and worked in Copenhagen and left his vast collections of manuscripts to the University of Copenhagen in 1730, collections that only were turned over to Iceland in 1965 after a heated debate. The reason why the Icelandic owners parted with their manuscripts was not lack of interest or declining literacy, but on the contrary that they kept copying the manuscripts in the 16th and 17th centuries, only now on the cheaper material paper instead of parchment. This change enabled the owners to sell the older manuscripts to collectors from the continent as interest in this uniquely preserved literary treasure grew.

Literacy, thus seems to have been widespread, and more so the further to the north in the Nordic countries. This trend was not reversed with the introduction of Lutheran Protestantism. On the contrary, literacy now

spread to the south into Denmark and northern Germany in particular. That Lutheranism also meant a narrowing of cultural horizons and stronger German influence among the elites of society only has to be added in order to complete the contradictory picture of the specifics of "Nordic" features of social development. Whether Lutheranism was the cause or the result of previous existing factors is not yet clear, but however that may be, it seems impossible to overestimate the importance for the Nordic countries of the Lutheran reformation in the 16th century and the subsequent developments of religious movements on the one hand and an enlightened bureaucracy consisting of priests and other theologically trained academics. This Lutheran background goes a long way to explain what the Polish-Norwegian researcher Nina Witoszek has called the "pastoral enlightenment" of Scandinavia.

Yet, as already mentioned, the dominating tradition in comparative welfare state studies is to describe the welfare state in the Nordic countries as a result of particular Nordic features, the so-called "Nordic" or Social Democratic model.⁶ Until the breakdown of the Communist block the model of the "Nordic" welfare state was perceived to represent a third way between the two dominant superpowers and their attendant ideologies.⁶ Interest in a particular Nordic model is no longer dominating among comparative political scientists and historical sociologists who now concentrate on describing the specific national varieties of capitalism (see Campbell, Hall and Pedersen 2006 on the particular Danish model).

Models develop when there is a success story to tell. The Scandinavian states only managed to assume importance in their own right in the interwar years; they did not become a model, though, until after World War Two when a social democratic developed, thanks to alliances with agrarian groups. This happened in slightly different ways in the different Nordic states, but everywhere the strength of the hegemony of the working classes reflected the weaknesses of the divided middle classes. Such consensus took longer to evolve in Denmark, Norway and Finland than in Sweden. This explains very well the Nordic model much discussed in the social scientific literature of the 1960s and 70s in reality was a Swedish model could with an integrationist view of society unparalleled in other countries of Europe. Only in the 1960s, partly thanks to an international project on the smaller European democracies, was the Scandinavian model discovered as a unique product of the North. The Nordic countries certainly lacked the "pillarization" (verzuiling) of sub-units of society which, in multi-confessional societies from the Netherlands to Switzerland, resulted in cooperation among élites. The élites of the Scandinavian model cooperated, though some sections of them still clung to a rhetoric of class

struggle, and the non-élite, for whom they negotiated a consensus, cooperated in their own way at the grass-roots level. The less strong the aristocracy had been in the history of the country concerned, the more markedly they did so – with Norway as a case in point.

Indeed, one may doubt whether a “Nordic model” in the proper sense has ever existed. Scandinavians have never seen themselves as representatives of one consistent and distinctive social model as national differences always have been considered more important. The notion of “Norden” as a conscious Social Democratic alternative to the continental European class struggles between bourgeoisie, workers and peasants first emerged outside Scandinavia with the publication of the American journalist Marquis Childs’ classic work in 1936, bearing the telling title *Sweden: The Middle Way*. The trend culminated in the 1980s with Gösta Esping-Andersen’s analyses of the Nordic welfare states as different variations of a parallel Social Democratic strategy (1985). He distinguished between three versions of “welfare capitalism”: the social democratic, the liberal and the conservative (Esping-Andersen 1990). The social democratic character of the Nordic welfare state has come under criticism from an American comparative historian of the younger school (Baldwin 1990), while others, as already mentioned, attempt to trace the origins of the Nordic universal welfare state back to the Lutheran version of Protestantism which was introduced by revolutions from above in Denmark and Sweden in the 1530s.

Despite the dubious character of the notion of a specifically Nordic model, it is an indisputable fact that the Nordic countries have experienced a more harmonious process of modernization in the twentieth century than most other countries in Europe. Thanks to the compromises of the 1930s, Norway, Sweden and Denmark proved largely immune to the temptations of the totalitarian ideologies of Nazism, fascism and communism (Lindström 1985). In many ways the Nordic countries still provide shining examples of social order and internal democracy – exemplary not only for the insiders, but also for surprising numbers elsewhere in the world, and with good reason. The Nordic countries, irrespective of the existence of a Nordic model, function more smoothly than the majority of societies. The problem, however, is that a majority in the Nordic countries has embraced the notion to such an extent that they believe in the mythical notion of Nordic unity as a contrast to the rest of Europe. Nordic history and culture, however, represent but one variation of common European patterns and themes, a variation which, due to geopolitical conditions, has resulted in small, nationally homogenous, socially democratic, Lutheran states. But a variation, nevertheless, of common European themes.



The Christian cross in eight of the nine national flags of the Nordic countries
norden.org

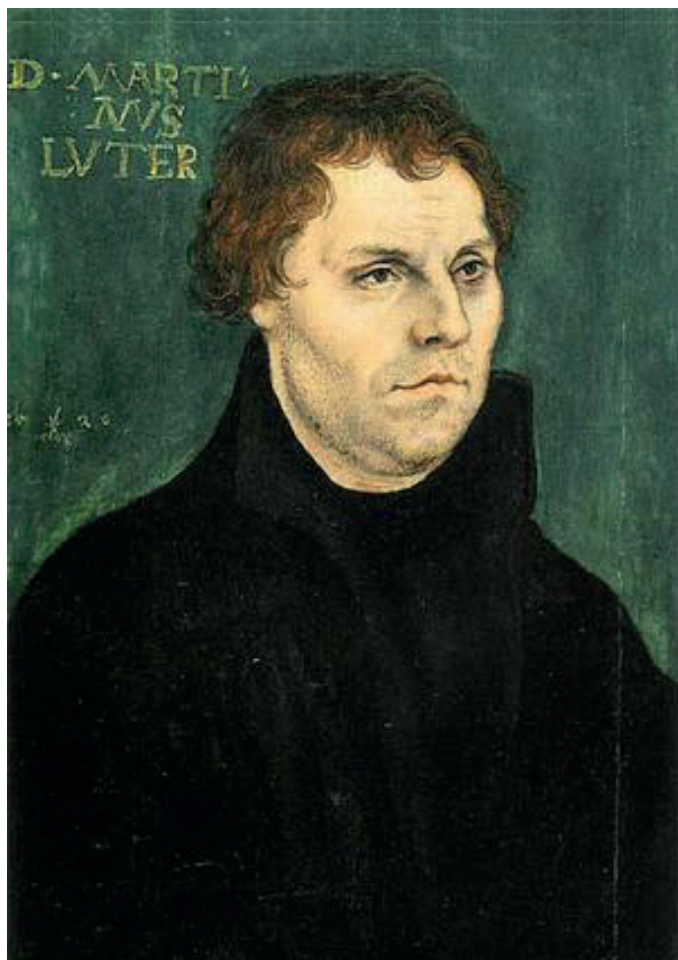
As Klaus von Beyme noted in his illuminating contribution from the early 1990s:

A model’s greatest success is its death. The things of value which it (the Nordic model, u.ø.) incorporated have already spread far afield in various forms – there is no longer a need to ideologize it. The sober and pragmatic approach of most Scandinavians makes them better equipped to realize this than the people of other nations who once ideologized the Scandinavian model.

(Beyme 1992, 209).

The Nordic countries of today all share a Lutheran monarchical heritage, even if Finland and Iceland formally are republics. This common heritage is demonstrated by the Christian cross in eight of the nine national flags of the Nordic countries. The peripheral position of the countries with regard to Europe made it possible to realize democratic potentials that less fortunate smaller nations such as the Czechs have experienced more difficulty realizing (Hroch 1996). But this fortunate history owes much less to homespun “Nordic” merits than normally assumed. The primary reason lies in the optimal geographical situation of the Nordic countries with regard to foreign policy as well as in relation to both economy and communications. The Nordic countries were in various ways useful as suppliers of raw materials to the industrial centres and have moreover been able to profit on a favourable relationship between low transportation costs and high manufacturing costs in the world economy. It was this stroke of cyclical good fortune that rendered the welfare states possible, despite unfavourable climatic conditions.

The Nordic countries happened to be in the right place at the right time. To the extent that this is no longer the case, it will become increasingly difficult to live on the



Martin Luther

Nordic myths and copious outpourings of yesteryear. Much would seem to indicate that the Baltic is about to regain its former position as the economic and civilizing pivot of Northern Europe as a region in a united Europe. To the extent this occurs, it will prove difficult to bridge the gap between the Atlantic, sea-facing Norden on the one hand and the land-based, Baltic Norden on the other. The Norwegian ethnologist, Brit Berggren, once stressed this important constant in the mental geography of the Nordic peoples in a contribution to a collection of essays on Nordic identity. The historical lesson is that there are no objective laws binding the people of Norden. No common, manifest destiny. But there is a historical and cultural raw material of traditions and discourses on which such an identity may be built. Providing, of course, that this is what the Nordic peoples want.

Lutheranism and political culture

The following section investigates the importance of Lutheranism for the political culture in general and the welfare state in particular in Denmark. The notion of a

close connection between Lutheran theology, Danish nationalism and the church has to begin by a consideration of Martin Luther's social doctrine. Sixteenth century Europeans did not differentiate between "church" and "society"; these institutions were perceived as inseparable as "church" and "state." In mediaeval monoculture, which still governed people's thinking, no such split existed. Paradoxically, it was Martin Luther who laid the foundation of the split by differentiating between the secular and the spiritual arm, paradoxically because he did not himself distinguish between church and state (Lyby 1983). In this regard, Luther still lived in the mediaeval universalistic-theocratic way of thinking according to which only one body existed, one Corpus Christianum, encompassing the Christian countries as a sacred whole. This "Christian body" has, however, both temporal and eternal needs and therefore a need for two arms and two judicial systems to represent it. But the tasks of the secular and ecclesiastical arms are not independent of each other. They must be co-ordinated since they each in their own way strive to perform the same task, to guide Christians through the dangers of life on earth towards the hereafter (Lyby 1983, 10).

Augustin (354-430) in *De Civitate Dei* (written between 413 and 427) and many later writers have called these two institutions *Imperium et Sacerdotium*. This way of thinking culminated in the High Middle Ages under the popes Innocent 3. (1160-1216) and Bonifacius 8. (1235-1303). But the ideal was still alive at the time of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and emperor Charles 5. (1500-1558) in the first half of the sixteenth century, even though it was out of step with political and social reality. Despite fabulous amounts of resources, the last ruler with an ambition of fulfilling the universal demands, the Habsburg Emperor Charles 5., had his plans of restoring the supremacy of the empire over all of Christian Europe dashed by the Protestant and Catholic German princes working in cooperation against all attempts to centralize the Holy Roman Empire (Gress 1998). His defeat led to the compromise in Augsburg 1555 which established the principle of religious freedom – that is, religious freedom for the princes to decide which religion their subjects should practise, *cujus regio ejus religio*, as the principle was put in Latin. Martin Luther was particularly active in bringing about this defeat of the emperor.

Luther differentiated between two "regiments", each of which should have had its own field and been respected on its own (Schwarz Lausten 1987, 19). The unity between them was created by God standing over both of them. The secular arm was supposed to be Christian and to govern its secular area with responsibility to God. In the "spiritual realm", one was only supposed to preach the gospel and not to interfere with the country's political rule. The introduction of Luther's thinking



Title page of the Danish Bible of King Christian III of 1550

took the form of a revolution from above in the Nordic countries. By royal decree a new, secular management of the churches was introduced in Denmark-Norway-Iceland and Sweden-Finland in the 1530s. This happened at the same time as a reorganization of the states after the final dissolution of the Kalmar Union in 1523 after the revolts of the nobility in Jutland and Sweden against Christian II (1481-1559). The new political order meant that the bishops were stripped of the direct political (and financial) influence they had secured during the mediaeval church-political struggles between the king and the church. According to the new Lutheran doctrine, the secular arm was under a duty to create a reasonable framework for the Evangelical Church but could otherwise govern as it wished, only duty-bound to God (and the nobility). Things did not remain this way, however, in Denmark, Sweden or the other Northern European (German) states that introduced the Lutheran-Evangelical faith. In Denmark, the new king, Christian 3. (1503-1559), followed Philipp Melanchton's (1497-1560) version of the theory on the relationship between the princes and the state (Schwarz Lausten 1987, 125). As the Christian authority, the king was not only responsible for his subjects' secular well-being but also for the salvation of their souls. He could not leave this to the church but had to, together with the church, take part in

the upbringing of the population to become true Christian people.

The background for this division of labour was that the church organization did not have any purpose in itself for Luther as it did for the Catholics, for whom the tradition is testimony to God's work for people. The Lutheran church is, according to the church historian Leif Grane (1928-2000), not divine but human. How the organization works depends on whether it "serves and advances God's commands" (Grane 1998, 8, my translation). These principles are clearly expressed in the Danish Church Ordinance of 1539, in which a distinction is made between "Our Lord Jesus Christ's Ordinance" and the "King's Ordinance": Christ's ordinance is God's alone, and the King has no power to change it. It commands that "God's word, both the laws and the gospel shall be preached properly, the sacraments shall be properly performed, children shall be taught properly and vergers, schools and the poor shall have their food". In contrast, the King's Ordinance concerns all the conditions that must be regulated so that Christ's Ordinance can be obeyed (Grane 1998, 8).

This does not sound like much, but turned out in practice to be extremely far-reaching. The division of labour meant that both Christian 3. and Gustav Vasa (1496-1560) maintained a firm rule over the church through their vassals (in Danish *stiftslensmænd*) and bishops. The latter were even for a short period called 'superintendents' to underline their role as the officials of the state. The king's direct rule over the church was emphasized at the new crowning ceremony, in his preface to the Church Ordinance and many other instances. The new organization of the church did not correspond entirely to Luther's thoughts on the separation of the state and the church. But it was in accordance with the views on the secular authorities' duties and rights of Philipp Melanchton (1497-1560), Luther's colleague as professor at the University of Wittenberg (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 39). Despite minor differences between the two theologians, the Danish reformers based their work entirely on the Wittenberg theology and tolerated no departures from the true doctrine, orthodoxy (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 49ff.).

In the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, "the poor" were defined much more broadly than today. In addition to the real poor, invalids, sick people who could not manage on their own, widows, orphans, street performers, vagabonds and those unable to work were also included. The lower classes in society thus consisted of very different groups. It is also worth remembering that everyone in society could risk ending up poor if they were out of luck. Such twists of fate were impossible to insure oneself against and the state provided no safety net. Some fanatic Protestants even



The leader of the Danish reformation, Hans Tausen (1494-1561) Painting by Carl Bloch after Wilhelm Marstrand in 1876. University of Copenhagen

thought that helping the poor could be interpreted as a lack of faith in God's providence. God must have had a reason for making them poor.

The Catholic Church had developed large-scale social aid since its teachings were based on the notion that charity benefited the soul of the giver. Alms were collected on behalf of the church primarily by the large mendicant orders, especially Franciscans and Dominicans. The church justified its organized mendicancy by promoting the mendicant friars to a special blessed state. Yet despite the church's comprehensive poor relief, nearly all large cities in Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century had to help the poor through special provisions. In Denmark, such "public" obligations can be seen in Christian II's reform legislations of 1521-22. With these laws he attempted to curb the church's unrestrained expansion of its landed property and especially the bishops' insatiable hunger for property. Moreover, he restricted mendicancy to four mendicant friar orders, introduced sharper control of the parish churches' properties and incomes and set up a new court of appeal for ecclesiastical matters. The concept of "need" and the distinction between "deserving" and "undeserving" became the foundations for the care of the poor, just as he limited mendicancy. The king impressed on the bishops their ecclesiastical duties and also made a number of decisions concerning

the improvement of teaching. However, it is important to emphasize that the reform programme was formulated within the Catholic doctrine. What Christian II had originally wanted was a reformed, Danish, Catholic Church on which he himself would have decisive influence like the kings of France and England had over the Gallican and Anglican churches respectively. Christian held discussions with humanists during his refuge in the Netherlands, held theological discussions with professors of theology and reformed the university and cathedral schools in Denmark in a humanistic direction when in power (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 30-31).

In addition to purely political motives Danish historians have emphasized the influence on the King by the humanist reform-Catholicism. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469-1536), the "king of the humanists", and like-minded reform thinkers took a new reading of the Bible as their point of departure. On this basis, aided by the Fathers of the Church, they formulated sharp criticism of the theology of the age, the pious life, monastic life, the political role of the church etc. and emphasized instead the moral life of each individual. They turned in disdain from the great constructs of medieval scholasticism and believed in simple and practical Christianity should. Northern European humanism was a religious-ethical revival, critical of traditional Catholic theology and piety. But one thing was given, despite all criticism one had to remain within the common Roman Catholic Church. It ought to be purged and reformed by returning to the Bible. Among the Danish humanists were Christiørn Pedersen (1480-1554) and Poul Helgesen (1485-1535). The greatest influence on Helgesen was the Swedish mediaeval saint Birgitta of Vadstena (1303-1373); besides the Church Fathers, he quoted no one as often as her.

In 1528 Paul Helgesen published the treatise *Om kranke, arme og fattige mennesker, hvorledes de skal behandles* (On sick, unfortunate and poor people and how to treat them). It was addressed to the Mayor of Copenhagen, Niels Stemp. In the treatise, Helgesen gave an account of the Bible's demand that we should take care of the needy and formulated a concrete action plan for the treatment of the socially deprived in Copenhagen. He differentiated between the financially poor, the sick and the helpless and between public and private aid, wrote about the rules for the administration of poor relief and the conditions clients should meet, and put forth suggestions for preventive work and other initiatives (Schwarz Lausten 1987, 81-82). This social understanding was shared by many reformatory preachers, especially in Malmö. In a letter written in September 1536, the leaders of the so-called "Evangelicals" addressed the new Danish King Christian III, who had come to power after a bloody civil war in 1534-36 – incidentally, the last time the Hanseatic town of Lübeck tried to intervene



King Christian III of Denmark
Jacob Binck [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

had broken free of Denmark under Gustav Vasa thirteen years earlier and carried out the reformation more gradually in the entire Kingdom of Sweden, including the provinces in nowadays Finland – but not Eastern Karelia, which belonged to Russian Novgorod.

One of the many results of the reformation was a new notion of caring for the poor based on Martin Luther's teachings on justification and criticism of the church. Luther had, as noted previously, demanded that the church should only preach the gospel and relinquish all political and economic power. He rejected the Catholic conception of the nature of faith, the meaning of good deeds, the belief in forgiveness through confession, purgatory, sacraments, monasticism, pilgrimages etc. While the state should confine itself to political and social tasks and protect the church, it should not interfere with its internal affairs. It should be allowed to confiscate large parts of church possessions, but it should to a great extent use them for social purposes. Luther's theology would in time have a profound effect on Nordic society, which became much greater because the state and the church became completely interwoven through the development of what without exaggeration might be termed a Lutheran royal church similar to the princely led churches in the German states and the Anglican Church (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 39 and 49ff.).

in Danish politics through the military. The leader of the Danish reformation, Hans Tausen (1494-1561) by all accounts wrote the letter. The letter reminded the king that "the general reformation" had not been carried out under his father, Frederik I (1471-1533), who reigned from 1523-33.

Hopes were pinned on Christian because he had carried out the reformation in his lands around Haderslev as duke of part of Schleswig. The authors hoped that he would now do the same in Denmark and Norway. They made a list of seven points describing the aims of such a reformation: God's word should be preached "purely" everywhere, without force or coercion; the Catholic jurisdiction should be abolished; a university for scientific theological studies should be established; the school system should be expanded in all market towns (købstæder); every church should have a capable clergyman; every diocese should have a bishop; an archbishop should be appointed for the whole kingdom; and finally, hospitals should be renovated and the funds spent on social work up to that point should continue to be spent on it (Schwarz Lausten 1987, 107-08). Many of these goals were fulfilled with the recess (ordinance) of October 30, 1536, which marked the introduction of the reformation to the Kingdom of Denmark. In distant Iceland, however, the Catholic bishop remained in office for another 20 years. Sweden, as mentioned above,

Fundamentalism in the Lutheran revolution from above

In many ways, Luther's teachings laid the ground for the modern understanding of society, which in the very long run resulted in mass democracy and the welfare state. This was possible first and foremost because of the emphasis he placed on the parishioners' role and the direct relationship between each individual and God. Clergymen did not occupy a privileged position as a special, holy class but were rather technical experts in the organization of church services and the Holy Scriptures. Their role was to be preachers, not intermediaries between the public and God. This gave parishioners much more latitude and they became the principal institution in the church. The strong position of the parishioners is illustrated by the fact that right from the start (in principle, at least), they were supposed to choose the clergyman while the church was expected to select candidates to be appointed as bishops (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 40). This was a step in the direction towards the pietist revivalist movements of the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century (Wåhlin 1987). These movements were often in opposition to clergymen and the church but nonetheless remained within the inclusive national church. In Sweden, in contrast, the free churches broke away to a much greater extent from the official church, which partially explains



Poltava. Paintig by Pierre-Denis Martin
 museum.ru Catherine Palace, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=76504>

why it was possible in 2000 to separate state and church in Sweden.

The basis for the princely ruled churches was, however, the same: a clear authority structure coupled with an almost radical-democratic respect for the common believers: the parishioners. This democratic tradition became in the long term a distinguishing feature of Nordic society since the universal welfare schemes were administered locally by the rural districts, which were also responsible for collecting the taxes that funded the schemes. This local element in administration is unique in a European context and is, together with the universal benefits for all national citizens, the most characteristic element of the Nordic model of welfare (Knudsen 2000). Therefore, it is hardly rash to suggest that Lutheranism, after a series of intermediate stages, led to social democracy and thereby to the local administration of laws and regulations passed by the national government as well as centrally determined social benefits; in brief, the Nordic model of universal welfare administered by locally anchored democratic units.

However, one should be careful not to romanticize Lutheranism in the light of what it eventually led to. The break with the Catholic hierarchy initially gave free rein

to fanaticism, intolerance and superstition as illustrated by, for example, the witch trials, which were much more gruesome in seventeenth-century Northern Europe than in the more hierarchical Catholic lands to the south (Henningsen 1980). Witch-burning in Denmark-Norway culminated under the pious fanatic Christian 4. (1588-1648). The rejection of Catholicism also led to a catastrophic drop in the level of higher education since the universities in Copenhagen and Uppsala were transformed into primitive seminaries, where students were indoctrinated with a literal, orthodox Lutheranism. The religious fanaticism in Scandinavia and the close connection between the state and the church of the Lutheran orthodoxy are portrayed in an abundantly clear way in the Swedish historian Peter Englund's description of the Battle of Poltava in Ukraine on June 27, 1709 from 1988.⁷ His description of the significance of religion for the military in Sweden could apply just as well to the militarily less effective Danish state. At the same time, it applies to the rest of the society, which was essentially organized with war in mind in these two states, which were the most militarized in Europe. He described the day of the battle as follows:

In the Swedish army, a very strict church discipline prevailed with precisely set prayers every morning

and evening and church services every Sunday and holiday. These events were of great importance and were called off only in emergency situations, if at all. Despite the extreme cold that harsh winter, resulting in numb limbs and frozen corpses, the soldiers had performed their devotions outdoors every day. King Charles 12. attended the Royal Guards' service this Sunday. Andreas Westerrman, the 37-year-old chaplain of the battalion, expounded the text (...)

Westerman and his colleagues constituted an important cog in the Caroline army's machine. They comforted the haggard and the dying. They strictly supervised the warriors' conduct and performed all religious ceremonies. These people can only really be understood in light of the fact that everyone was a believer and that religion was an essential part of their world view; atheism was at that time unthinkable in practice. No one could imagine a world without a God. The world was dark and cold and humans were small and naked, surrendered to divine omnipotence by their own inadequacy. Religion was a very important means of influencing and controlling the people regardless of whether they were peasants or soldiers. In the army, the idea was to try to increase soldiers' willingness to fight and curb their fear by inculcating them with various religious patterns of thought, of which many were completely fatalistic. For example, storming a battery of hostile artillery was always a bloody and costly affair because of the high rate of fire of the guns. The soldiers were admonished not to try to avoid the hostile fire by seeking cover. Instead, they should walk straight with their heads held high, believing that "No bullets hit people without God's will, regardless of whether one walks straight and tall or stoops." After the battle, the officers were to remind the soldiers on behalf of the dead that nothing happens without God's Will. Army chaplains like Westerman played an important role in disciplining the warriors and building up their will to fight. They were the police of the spirit and the flesh.

Church discipline, among other things in the form of this early service, played a role in maintaining discipline. The soldiers prayed to God to teach them to obey the king and to "diligently perform whatsoever be commanded through my officers in your name". The servants of the church also had a role to play during battle. They usually accompanied the soldiers to the battlefield to encourage and watch over their flock. There were many examples of chaplains who fell in battle, for example, when they tried to get retreating soldiers to return to the line of fire. The army's strict church discipline becomes even more understandable when we take into account the fact that these people were firmly convinced that God had great influence

on the fortunes of war. In an infantry service manual it was stated simply that "since all blessing come from the supreme God, His great and holy name should be faithfully worshipped" (...)

The Swedish soldiers were thus equipped with a Christian armament that was not only intended to make them fight more willingly and with greater confidence but also to turn them into tough soldiers. Lutheran orthodoxy had forced its Old Testament straightjacket on Sweden and generated thoughts and ideas the army did not hesitate to drum into its soldiers. Punishment and revenge were strong leitmotifs in the gospel, and over the kneeling battalions cracked the message that any leniency should be shunned if God's word demanded retaliation. Army men were induced to burn and kill in the name of the Almighty. The Israelites' grotesque bloodbaths in the Old Testament were used as an excuse for their own acts of depredation. The fact that the thesis about God's support to the Sweden was based on a simple circular argument was both its greatest strength and weakness. The evidence was convincing in all its simplicity. The fact that God was on their side was proven through victory on the battlefield, something that was considered impossible without God's approval. The only question was what would happen if they lost a major battle one day. Then the whole thing would go to pieces; they would be felled by their own propaganda. God would openly demonstrate that He had transferred His power to the enemy; a terrible thought indeed."

(Englund 1988, 15-18 my translation).

This is exactly what happened to the Swedes on that muggy summer day in the Ukrainian cornfields, just as it had happened in the seventeenth century for the Danish Lutherans confronted with professional German and Swedish armies. But the defeat in distant Poltava had even greater significance for the Baltic area. With the founding of Saint Petersburg in 1703 and Russia's victory over Sweden in the Northern War in 1721, Russian history and Nordic history became intertwined in each other in a new and decisive way (Østergård 1997).

Victory of Protestantism in Denmark

The Reformation was not just a result of internal deliberations, but also a response to the rejection Luther had met with from the heads of the Roman Catholic Church combined with the support he received from the urban middle classes in the large cities and from some of the princes in the European territorial states. In December 1520, Luther received a papal bull threatening him with excommunication. He burned it in public and was there-

fore shortly afterwards excommunicated as a heretic. This meant that the temporal authorities were obliged to capture and execute him. Through clever diplomacy, however, his protector, Friedrich 3., Elector of Saxony, also known as Friedrich der Weise (1463-1525), managed to get Luther permission to present his case in person to Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles 5. (emperor 1519-56) at the diet of Worms in southern Germany, April 1521. The result was that the emperor abided by the pope's will and expelled Luther as a heretic from church and society. No one was allowed to give him shelter or food. He was to be handed over to the authorities and his books were to be burned. He evaded his fate by hiding in Frederick's Wartburg Castle. A year later he returned safely to Wittenberg, where he lived unharmed until his death in 1546, engrossed in his work as a professor of theology and writing his ever increasing body of works.

In Luther's view, poverty was not in itself laudable in God's eyes; nor was wealth. This was in stark contrast to the view of the Calvinists, who saw wealth as a result of god-fearing behaviour (Weber 1905). According to Luther, God looks at one's heart and character. Property and money should be used in the service of one's neighbours, family and the community. Luther knew that property and wealth can be necessary in society, but according to Luther it is the heart's intimacy with God that is essential. There can be pious as well as heathen poor, just as there can be infidel as well as believing heathens. But he rejected the notion that it should be particularly meritorious in God's eyes to renounce property and money. On the contrary, people were supposed to work on earth; the certainty of forgiveness was precisely supposed to make humans ready to throw themselves without restraint into the demands of life on earth, including the duty to help those in need. The notion of charity thus continued to play a role, but the justification for it was different. On the whole, it is interesting to compare Lutheranism and Calvinism, the doctrine Max Weber, the unsurpassed master of political research, so incisively analysed in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* from 1905. There is a crucial difference between the two protestant denominations, a difference that makes it practically meaningless to group them under one umbrella as "Protestantism" as Weber does.⁸

Historians have often claimed that the coming of the reformation did away with the medieval welfare system of the Catholic Church. This is not true. The Danish historian Troels Dahlerup has convincingly demonstrated that the Catholic mediaeval institutions continued for much longer than previously assumed and unprivileged were still taken care of (Dahlerup 1983 among other investigations). In the towns, that is. Neither the Catholic system nor the new Lutheran system extended

much further than the walls of the towns and embraced therefore only a minimal percentage of the population. But since I am primarily interested here in the origin of the principles, it is nonetheless relevant to analyze the organization of poor relief in more detail. In accordance with the German model, each diocese in protestant Denmark was supposed to set up a special fund for the poor, the so-called "poor box". Both these funds and the hospitals were to be run by lay people, but it was the bishops who were obliged to supervise them. In addition, the bishops were expected to ensure through the clergymen that the population supported the social work.

Peder Palladius (1503-1560), the first Protestant bishop of the important diocese of Zealand, dealt comprehensively with this aspect of poor relief in his various writings and visitation lectures. He described in vivid detail the various groups of needy and encouraged his flock to give alms as their Christian duty. However, he also emphasized the punishment motive: those who do not help will be punished by God. "The public" thus still acknowledged a responsibility towards the poor in society. But it is legitimate to ask whether the peasants understood this new and subtle theological message. Did the peasant class feel that it was necessary to give when the direct theological grounds in form of salvation in return for charity disappeared? This is questionable, as corroborated by the emphasis Palladius placed on punishment and reward; in fact, he revealed himself that there were great difficulties. The general sense of responsibility had deteriorated and there was greater distress than in Catholic times – which in Denmark, however, was also a consequence of the civil war that preceded the accession of Christian III to the throne (Schwarz Lausten 1987, 192).

The Nordic princes were ardently absorbed in Luther's new teachings. The Danish King Christian 3. had already been so when he was duke in Haderslev in Schleswig in the 1520s while Gustav Vasa was preparing a corresponding reformation in Sweden. There were many different motives for the princes to carry out the reformation. Nordic historical research has traditionally chosen to emphasize the kings' material interests in the church's property and power. This was of course important, but it is not impossible that they also believed in the theological content. It is for instance quite clear that Christian 2., who earned such a bad posthumous reputation in Sweden with the epithet "Tyrant", was a devout believer and spent much time on theological disputations. He had envoys at the diet in Worms in 1521 and was, as noted previously, strongly influenced by the humanist Erasmus. Nonetheless, he decided in 1524 in favour of Luther, even though it from a political point of view was practically suicide. After having been exiled by an uprising of the nobility in the peninsula of

Jutland in 1523, Christian 2. was completely dependent on the most prominent protector of Catholicism in Europe, Emperor Charles V, with whose sister Elizabeth he was married. Christian could only hope to reclaim the throne with the support of the Habsburgs, who went so far as to remove his children to give them a Catholic upbringing. Nevertheless, it was not until 1530 that he renounced Lutheranism and reverted to Catholicism. This, however, brought him into conflict with his allies among the urban Protestant middle classes, especially in Copenhagen and Malmö (Schwarz Lausten 1995 and 1999, 31).

Scandinavian historians have traditionally explained the Reformation as a result of narrow political considerations by the kings who wanted to lay hands on the third of all real estate that belonged to the Church. But, as modern Church historians as Martin Schwarz Lausten have convincingly demonstrated, both Christian 2. and Christian 3. were intensely involved in theological questions. It is a sign of narrow minded materialism, which tells more about nineteenth and twentieth century historians than about the sixteenth century, to deny the significance of religious conviction for political acts. The Lutheran teachings and the Evangelical preachers' formulations were important foundations of the new state that resulted from the reformations from above in Denmark-Norway-Iceland as well as in Sweden-Finland. Initially, the result of the confiscation of the wealth of the Church was a drastic deterioration of conditions for the poor. But this was not so much due to the theological programme as the result of the power struggle between the king and the high nobility. Especially in Denmark, the high nobility's desire for the church's property prevailed, with the result that most of it was distributed. In Sweden the result was comparable, but the nobility was in a weaker position than in Denmark. In Sweden proper, that is, for the nobility's position was extraordinarily strong in the Baltic and northern German empire, which the country conquered later on in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries after the intervention in Estonia in 1561. In Denmark the role of the king was weaker and in fact, at times in the period between 1560 and 1660, it is fair to characterise Denmark as a republic of the nobility with an elected king, somewhat along the lines of the elected monarchy in Poland-Lithuania rather than an absolutist monarchy which it only became after the near total defeat by Sweden in 1658.⁹ Just as in Poland, the result was very close to causing the dissolution of the state after the defeat to the more centrally governed Sweden in 1658. This fate was averted at the last moment when the great power of that time, the Netherlands, intervened on the Danish side in 1659-60 against Sweden.

From multinational absolutism to national social democracy

Rescued from defeat and near dissolution, Denmark in 1660 instituted the most absolutist rule in all Europe, although modelled on the French example. After protracted internal development and under the influence of the Enlightenment philosophers, this regime carried through a sort of revolution from above in the form of the great reform package from 1784 to 1814, which laid the foundations of an independent class of peasant-farmers and, eventually, democracy (Horstbøll and Østergård 1990). However, the gradual assumption of power by the peasant-farmers in the second half of the nineteenth century initially led to a deepening of class distinctions, culminating in the 1880s. At no point in Denmark's history was the difference between the farm owners and the landless agricultural labourers greater than in the 1880s in the midst of the fight for democracy. But the farmers nonetheless created a democracy that they called "popular". It was not popular in the sense that it embraced the entire population. The landless laborers and the civil servants in the towns were not included in the definition of "popular" by the peasant farmers. Nonetheless, they created the structures and a democratic political language the agricultural and industrial working class could later use to create the twentieth century's social democracy (Østergård 2004a). To put it somewhat pointedly, the discourse triumphed over the material interests. This is especially true in relation to the paradoxical introduction in 1891 of a pension for everyone, regardless of their connection to the labor market, which according to Tim Knudsen marks the beginning of the universal welfare state in Denmark (Knudsen 2000). The class interests in the universal pension are difficult to determine, but it was introduced surprisingly early, at a time when the notion of insurance was predominant.

There were naturally also other necessary preconditions for political and social democracy, but they were equally religious. Of particular importance were the eighteenth century religious (pietist) revivals mentioned above, which in many ways marked the penetration of Christianity into the broader classes. They gradually became different political movements in the course of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Common to both movements is that they found their language and concepts in a reading of the Bible that could be traced back to Martin Luther's, Hans Tausen's and Peder Palladius' educational translations of the complicated reformatory catechism to simple, rhyming sentences. It is in this great historical continuity that the Nordic welfare state should be understood. Social democracy is important, but more as a continuation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' evangelical-pietist movements within the setting of a diminished and therefore ethnically homogenous nation state after 1864 than as a translator of an interna-



*Haugianerne. Painting by Adolph Tidemand from 1848 .
Photo: Jaques Lathion, Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design*

tional socialism. Regardless of whatever social democratic platforms or generations of party members have said, the Danish welfare state is a result of secularized Lutheranism in national garment rather than international socialism. "Denmark for the people" as the Social Democratic platform formulated the program in 1934.

Today, the majority of the Nordic countries are Lutheran monarchies. Even though two of the states, Finland and Iceland, technically are republics, they demonstrate their Christian-monarchical origins with crosses in different colours on their flags. The countries' peripheral position in Europe made it possible to realize social democratic potentials that less fortunate small nations like the Czech Republic have found it more difficult to achieve. Yet this is to a much lesser degree due to "Nordic" merits often assumed. The main reason for the relative prosperity for large parts of the twentieth century is that the Nordic states were in the right part of the world in relation to both foreign policy and the interna-

tional economy and communication (Østergård 1997). The countries were important, each in their own way, as suppliers of raw materials for the central countries and have moreover been able to profit from a favourable relationship between low transport costs and the high manufacturing prices in the global economy. It was this market-determined good fortune that made welfare states possible in the Nordic countries in the twentieth century despite unfavourable climatic conditions. Whether these systems will be able to survive the changes in the global economy is however less certain. And if the material basis of the welfare states is eroded, the basis of the apparently so deeply rooted national and religious-ecclesiastical identities is also likely to disappear.

In this way, national identity, church and welfare schemes and state and nation building are closely connected. Therefore, it is also important in the analysis of the connection to distinguish between Protestantism in

general and Lutheranism in particular. The fact that Protestantism is not just Protestantism but several different churches emerges clearly, albeit indirectly, in Max Weber's aforementioned classic work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* published in 1905. Here, the connection between capitalism and Protestantism is analysed in exemplary fashion. Weber's thesis has been tremendously fruitful for research and has on several occasions formed the basis for empirical research. It is nonetheless important to remember that the Protestantism that Weber studied was Calvinism. That is why he had to devote so much space to analysing the complex connections between doctrine of predestination and the active, calculating and forward-looking merchant capitalism.

In many ways, Weber's arguments seem surprising to Danish or Nordic Protestants until they realize that because they are Lutherans, they think differently from Calvinists. The major difference stands out in particular in comparison with the US, where the Calvinism of the Puritan settlers set the framework for the entire political culture (Niebuhr 1929). This Calvinist nature applies even when the political culture is practised by people belonging to other religions like Judaism or Catholicism. Catholicism has become the largest single church denomination in the US in the past century without this meaning that the country has changed its fundamental political culture. Americans have traditionally explained this astonishing constancy with the influence of the constitution. Yet historical sociologists as Robert Bellah, inspired by Max Weber, have emphasized the significance of religion, or rather, religions, for political culture and mentality of North America (Bellah a.o. 1985). Soon, we will probably witness a US where the same public political and economic values will be shared by Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists in the same way that Jews and Catholics who were strongly influenced by Calvinist thinking on renunciation, saving up and the belief that God's will was behind public success joined the ranks of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant elite, the so-called WASPs.

Most recently, three Danish scholars have undertaken a similar investigation of the role of religion in the Danish national consensus (Gundelach, Iversen and Warburg 2008). They confirm the intimate connection between Lutheranism and Danishness. Jan Lindhardt (1938-2015), former bishop of Roskilde, has described the relation as follows: "Danes do not need to go to church because they live in their Danishness every day." This apparently paradoxical statement about a people that is often perceived as the most secularized in the world strikes a theme that Danes have gradually become more aware of in recent years as a result of the integration in Europe and the subsequent collision with other ways of organizing the relationship between state

and church. The Danish national church calls itself the "Peoples's Church". Organisationally its set up can best be described as "well-organized anarchy", as the church historian and folk high school principal Hal Koch (1904-1963), who was an ardent supporter of this system, once put it (Lindhardt 1968¹¹). Although it is a national church, it has never been regulated in accordance with the constitution of 1849, even though this was envisaged. The vague and undefined relationship between state and church is now beginning to raise problems, especially with regard to the relationship between so-called "real" Danes and the many immigrants of other religions, especially Islam, which has now grown to the position as the second largest religion in Denmark.

Likewise, the lack of clarification makes it virtually impossible for the Danish national church to enter into more binding ecumenical co-operation such as the Porvoo Declaration of 1995 on the relationship between the Evangelical churches and the Anglican Church. Martin Schwarz Lausten, in a recent account of the history of the Danish church, claims that the proposal for closer co-operation between the Nordic and Baltic churches and the Anglican Church was rejected by the bishops. They drew attention to the fact that the declaration's view on bishops and clergyman was contrary to the underlying basis of the Danish church (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 116). For on its establishment, the Lutheran church broke with the so-called apostolic succession, that is, that there is a direct connection to the Apostle Peter, whom Jesus made his representative on earth by the imposition of hands. This continuity was broken by letting Johann Bugenhagen (1485-1558), who himself was not anointed, anoint the first Danish bishops (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 43). For that reason, the bishops refused to sign the declaration. The same is true of the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" between Lutherans and Catholics (Schwarz Lausten 1999, 116-117). The problem with this interpretation is that not many people in the Danish national church recognized the bishops' right to speak on behalf of the church, not even after a hearing among the parishioners as took place in these cases. According to this consistent opinion, no one except the individual parish has the right to express an opinion on anything. Yet precisely this lack of authority is perceived as an advantage of the Danish system by the most prominent. The church historian Leif Grane concluded one of his last lectures on the subject as follows:

Aside from all the nuances, it could be said that Lutheranism's rejection of a divine church organization makes its view of the church far less comprehensible to outsiders than those churches that have a different ability to unite the outer organization with the claim that the visible church can speak on the behalf of God also outside the context of the church service. By the

context of the church service, I do not just mean the actual church service but also all situations in which exactly what carries the church service – and nothing else – is in the forefront. This, people think, is odd and not very forceful. “That’s not much”, as a journalist said to me recently. He wanted clear statements on important ethical questions so people had something to go by.

(Grane 1998, 10 my translation).

A similar opinion is put differently by the literary critic Hans Hauge who, in an article about the theological opinions of the priest and politician Søren Krarup (b. 1937), notes that in its consistent efforts to differentiate between the temporal and the religious in the gospel, Krarup’s movement “Tidehverv” (literally “New Era”) ended up “preaching the churches empty”. In his own words:

Krarup has been shaped by an undemocratic, theological-critical avant-garde movement, which began in Denmark in the 1920’s, “New Era”. The priests from “New Era” have never been understood, for their art of preaching is and was of the same type as modernist poetry. They consciously talked the churches empty. They believed that heaven belonged to those who played bingo. To call oneself a Christian, they said, was ‘humbug’ (Hauge 2002, my translation).¹²

All this is ultimately the result of the Lutheran doctrine on the direct connection between God and the individual. Clergymen are not privileged intermediaries between God and people. This means that parishioners and parishes have been given a special role in state management in the five Nordic countries, where the Lutheran-Evangelical church, for the historical reasons explained above, has had, as the only place in the world, a virtual monopoly.¹³ Danes apparently have absolutely no problem with this muddled situation, while in Sweden it has led to a formal separation of state and church, laying the grounds for a situation that has long since been in place in other civilized European countries.

There is apparently no need of this in Denmark, which may indicate that Jan Lindhardt is right in his assertion of the connection between national identity and the church. At the same time, it probably provides an explanation of the Danes’ particularly reluctant relationship to European integration, a co-operation the small states in Europe are otherwise so enthusiastic about (cf. Østergård 2000). Resistance to the EU’s supranational endeavours is normally found in large countries, or rather, in countries that believe they are still large. The majority of small countries see European co-operation as a way of winning influence through supranational regulation in the anarchist international system we

usually call international politics. This special Danish, religiously based nationalism is a large degree due to the influence of the clergyman, poet, historian, school thinker and much more N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). His thinking is reflected in the organization of the church, Danish nationalism and national identity in general and the welfare state in particular. That this view today has been taken to extremes by the priest and politician Søren Krarup and the nationalist-populist Danish People’s Party is a different story that underlines the complex character of the influences of Lutheranism. The inspiration from Luther and Grundtvig can lead to narrow populist nationalism as well as to universal and humanist social democracy. I have only indicated one of the lines of connection and influence in this contribution hoping not to have fallen into the trap of over-determined path dependence the sociologist Lars Bo Kaspersen and Johannes Lindvall have warned against in the recent essay on the absence of religion in the determination of the politics of poor relief and primary education in Denmark and Sweden (Kaspersen and Lindvall 2008).

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Notes

- 1 The following contribution builds upon and elaborates former publications, in particular Østergård 1997, Østergård 2011 and Østergård 2012. Furthermore, I would like to draw attention to a most interesting analysis by the American economist Robert Nelson of the importance of Lutheranism for the social democratic welfare states in the Nordic countries, Nelson 2016. It has not yet been published but I have the privilege to have read it in an almost finished version. Among many interesting and provocative ideas it contains an in-depth analysis of the differences between Calvinism and Lutheranism.
- 2 In 1801 Iceland had just over 47.000 inhabitants, 307 of these living in the capital Reykjavik according to Agnarsdóttir 2004, 80.
- 3 A Finlander is a citizen of the bilingual state Finland which comprises Finnish as well as Swedish speakers, although the latter only constitute a small minority.
- 4 It is important to distinguish between Calvinism and Lutheranism. Normally the two are lumped together as Protestantism, see f. ex. the influential work of Max Weber on the relationship between Capitalism and Protestantism from 1905 (cf. Nelson 2016). Both versions of Protestantism broke with the supranational Catholic Church in the 16th century and share some points of doctrine. But the

- differences are enormous, in theology as well as in the perception of the relationship between church and state. National churches are a result of Lutheranism – and of the eastern Orthodox version of Christianity beginning with the establishment of a national church in Greece in 1833.
- 5 The early diffusion of literacy in the Nordic countries has been investigated in a comparative context in a series of detailed studies.
 - 6 See Stråth 1993 for a critical account of the notions of the Swedish "folkhem" and of a distinct Nordic model.
 - 7 Peter Englund has written an impressive number of scholarly – and best-selling – books on Swedish history in the imperial age in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. 2008-14 he served as secretary of the Swedish Academy which awards the Nobel Prize in literature.
 - 8 Only in Prussia the reformed and evangelical churches were successfully united in one church. In the Netherlands the so-called Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christlijk-Historische Unie collaborate in politics, but are separate churches. In 1975 these two protestant churches even joined hands with the Catholics in the party, Christen Democratisch Appèl (Manow 2008, 9).
 - 9 Among Danish historians the aristocratic system of governance in collaboration with the elected king is usually referred to as 'government by the aristocracy', "adelsvælde" in Danish (cf. Fridericia 1894).
 - 10 See Wählin 1987 and Sanders 1995. The Danish-American sociologist Aage Sørensen has analysed the importance of pietism for the development of the Nordic welfare state (Sørensen 1998).
 - 11 The church historian P. G. Lindhardt is the father of the former bishop Jan Lindhardt.
 - 12 An in-depth analysis of the importance of Søren Krarup and "New Era" for the rise of populist nationalism in Denmark over the last twenty to thirty years is provided in a doctoral thesis by Mette Zølner at the European University Institute in Firenze, published as Zølner 2000.
 - 13 At least until recently. In Sweden Church and state were separated in 2000 and the same may happen in the other Nordic countries. What the consequences of this will be for the welfare systems and the national homogeneity in the countries remains to be seen.

After secularization – in Russia and the Nordic countries

Christian Gottlieb

University of Copenhagen, cgo@teol.ku.dk

To say that secularization has developed differently in Russia and the Nordic countries would be something of an understatement, to say the least. While Russia has experienced secularization in its most radical, violent and coercive form, the Nordic countries have seen it as a peaceful, gradual and usually mild-mannered process. While Russia has experienced what could reasonably be described as a war waged by the state against the church, some of the Nordic countries, Denmark and Norway in particular, are still in a position where the close formal pre-secular relationship between church and state remains in place, more or less unchanged.

Even so, although the means of secularization have been different, the result may well be largely similar. Although the Nordic countries have experienced nothing like the violence and coercion applied in Soviet times against religion in Russia, secularizing tendencies have nevertheless had a profound effect also in the Nordic countries. The alienation of religious perspectives, the marginalization - even exile - of religion from the public square, the loss of tradition, erosion of a shared Christian consciousness and the disregard for traditional values have all occurred in the Nordic countries in varying degrees, as almost everywhere in Western Europe, particularly since WWII. Remarkable in a comparison with Russia and the other former socialist countries is the fact that the process of secularization in the West has happened "by itself". Although occasionally promoted by official government policy or influential movements and opinion makers, secularization as a whole has not been directly coercive. Rather, it has occurred in a general atmosphere of freedom.

The theme of this lecture, a comparative analysis of the prospects of post-secularization in Russia and the Nordic countries, is vastly complex and far beyond my

competence. What I shall attempt here are merely a few scattered observations and reflections on the theme that I hope may be a catalyst for further thinking and discussion. If there is to be any hope of a better understanding between Russia and the Nordic countries, and the West in general, we need to know and analyze both our own traditions, assumptions and prejudices and those of the other party. Whether such knowledge and understanding suffice to do the trick, to promote mutual understanding, is questionable but at least it may be a beginning.

The observations and reflections will be presented in the form of a series of theses, assertions, propositions, suggestions, questions. In fact, you may find, that as I progress, I shall become increasingly uncertain, out of my depth.

The historical relationship between Church and State in Russia and the Nordic countries has theoretically been organized in accordance with two different, mutually exclusive principles.

In Orthodox Russia the relationship has been based on the Byzantine Symphonia principle, which defines the inseparable unity between Church and State and the harmonious collaboration between them. This is by definition a theocratic principle.

In the Lutheran countries of the North, the relationship has been based on Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, the secular and the spiritual, which defines the fundamental distinction between them. Church and State may collaborate when appropriate, but they may also find themselves at odds with each other. This principle implies a rejection of theocracy.

In accordance with the symphonic principle, the relationship and the collaboration between Church and State in Russia cannot be too close, as long as both parties respect each other and do not seek to dominate the other party. In a traditional symphonic perspective, both Church and State are engaged in the same Christian project. Ideally, the State ought to be a Christian state.

A critique of a close collaboration between Church and State in Russia (or other Orthodox countries), as often voiced in Western media, will not seem relevant from a symphonic point of view.

In accordance with the doctrine of the two kingdoms the relationship between Church (or churches) and State in the Nordic countries can easily become too close. If the State, for example, attempts to force a secular agenda on the Church or if the Church attempts to influence the State with specifically religious views. Whether, or to what extent, the State is engaged in the same Christian project as the Church is uncertain and remains debatable.

A critique of insufficient Church influence on public policy, perhaps even public morality, in Nordic countries is therefore not a priori relevant.

Against this background, current actual formal practice in both Russia and the Nordic countries is remarkable: In Russia, the Church as a private institution remains separated from the State, which according to its constitution is a secular state with no official ideology or religion. In some Nordic countries, Denmark and Norway in particular, the Lutheran Church remains a state church enjoying a special position according to the constitutions of both countries. In Norway the constitution explicitly states that the basis of national values remains "our Christian and humanist heritage". In both countries, the secular parliament is the de-facto synod of the established Lutheran Church.

In both Russia and the Nordic countries there seems to be a contradiction between the formal principle of church government and actual practice. These contradictions have a long history and have developed over time.

In Russia, actual practice has long been and still is less theocratic than the principle prescribes.

In the Nordic countries, at least in Denmark and Norway, actual practice has been and perhaps still is more theocratic than the principle prescribes.

In both Russia and the Nordic countries, this situation is a product of a shared historical experience of absolutism.

In Denmark and Norway (which in this respect are the primary representatives of the Nordic countries), the absolutist State Church was made possible by the Reformation. With no Pope and no Catholic archbishop, the king could take over as head of the church in accordance with the Protestant practice of princely church government. Originally, a pragmatic solution, this practice was codified as a principle lasting for "all time" with the establishment of absolutism in the 1660s. With the king as sole head of both state and church, the two were united so closely that the Church almost disappeared as an independent institution. Although made possible by the Reformation, this amalgamation of State and Church was a blatant contradiction of the doctrine of the two kingdoms and implied an unprecedented elevation of the king in a manner that can only be described as theocratic.

In Russia absolutism as introduced by Peter the Great around 1700 was directly inspired by west European precedent, not least as practiced in the Nordic Protestant countries. Here too, the abolition of the patriarchy deprived the Church of its own leadership in favour of the tsar as formal head. Although a close relationship between Church and State is prescribed by Orthodox tradition, the subjection of the Church under the State is clearly a contradiction of the symphonic principle.

In the Nordic countries, absolutism was a movement towards theocracy. Endowing the king's person and the state as a whole with Divine right and a sacred purpose.

In Russia, absolutism was a movement away from theocracy. A mobilization of the Church for the purposes of the State and thus a movement towards secularization.

For a period of about 150 years, 1700-1849 Russia and Denmark-Norway (Norway only until 1814) share a history of closely related organizations of State and Church and, to a lesser extent, society more generally. Having arrived from opposing sides at a similar result, both organizations can be described as semi-theocratic. Both before and after this period, the histories are starkly diverging and far from compatible.

Can this bit of shared historical experience be a basis for better mutual understanding? Can it help us in the Nordic countries better to understand the Russian experience and appreciate their ongoing struggle to accommodate the western influences introduced by Peter with Russian-Orthodox tradition? Can it help the Russians to appreciate that not everything that has come to them from the West has been bad for them? That some of it has in fact helped them to become the great nation that they aspire to be.

As theocratic, the symphonia principle by definition does not permit the idea or practice of secularization. Not only because the symphony cannot function properly with a non-Christian or merely non-Orthodox ruler, but also more fundamentally because secularization is opposed to the principal aim of the (Orthodox) Church: to penetrate as much of the world as possible with Christianity. In view of the central Orthodox doctrines of the deification of man (theosis) and the transfiguration of all creation, the secular idea of a human sphere evacuated by God, where God has no place or no power, from where he cannot be invoked, remains a meaningless concept. Strictly speaking, secularization can only be seen as a retreat and surrender of Christian ground.

Traditional Orthodoxy evinces a strong anti-modern tendency.

When representatives of Orthodoxy challenge “modern” phenomena like secularization, democracy and human rights and defend “traditional values,” they may in fact be expressing not merely justifications of reaction and repression but sincere beliefs.

In contrast, the doctrine of the two kingdoms with its distinction between a secular and a spiritual sphere is by definition permissive of secularization. Indeed, this doctrine is often perceived as one of the beginnings of the secularization process. The idea that Christianity is a self-secularizing religion, prevalent not only in western theology but also in history and social thought, owes much to this fundamental doctrine, as well as to other aspects of Protestant theology.

Protestantism is widely seen as a precondition or even an essential part of modernity.

Even so, the secularizing dynamic of the two-kingdom doctrine obviously must have its limits. Of course, Protestantism can no more than Orthodoxy aim to see secularization taken to its extreme consequence of a total abandonment of Christianity. In practice the difficult question is: how to strike the balance between the secular and the spiritual, how to determine what belongs to the emperor and what to God.

In relation to the two-kingdom doctrine, two qualifications apply.

1. In Luther’s own definition, the doctrine clearly asserts that God had ordained not only the church but also the state (worldly authority) with the purpose of maintaining order in society. Even if the state behaves in an un-Christian manner, Luther assumes the situation of his own day that the state existed in a society generally defined by Christian concepts.

2. This also applies to day. Even if the doctrine does not explicitly require state representatives to be Christian, they must at least possess a minimum consciousness of Christianity in order to be aware of the doctrine. Even if they are not themselves Christian they must know and respect the doctrine and act in accordance with it.

Also for Luther, the idea of an entirely human sphere evacuated by God would be a meaningless concept. The power of God is everywhere, but salvation is only in believing the word of God; not in all sorts of worldly things.

Thus, the distinction between the two kingdoms is not wholly identical to a modern distinction between religion and politics. This distinction precisely presupposes the secularized society in which religion in general has been privatized and only politics may legitimately inhabit the public square. A classical Lutheran may protest this kind of society no less than a traditional Orthodox.

The modern distinction probably prevails. It is widely used in western societies on themselves but also on other societies such as the Russian. On the basis of this standard principle much criticism is leveled against the apparent growth of collaboration between church and state in Russia.

What now?

Here is just one final observation on the Russian situation.

Despite closer interaction with the Russian state, real or perceived, the Russian Orthodox Church will probably not want to become a formal state Church. It is hardly in accordance with the symphonic principle and historical experience with state church status under the Petrine empire was not favorable to the Church. From the Church’s point of view it would make better sense, if the Russian state were to declare itself officially Orthodox.

Then a full version of the Symphony might be re-established.



Thursday 3 November

From 11.00	Arrival. Registration
12.00-13.30	Lunch
13.30-13.45	The conference will be opened by Bertel Haarder, Minister of Culture and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Denmark
13.45-14.00	Introduction
14.00-14.35	Christian Gottlieb The history and theology of Russian theocracy
14.35-14.50	Questions and discussion
14.50-15.25	Per-Arne Bodin The "Symphony" in contemporary Russia
15.25-15.40	Questions and discussion
15.40-16.10	Coffee break
16.10-16.45	Elina Kahla Third Rome today: Russian Church/State collaboration
16.45-17.00	Questions and discussion
17.00-17.35	Jeanne Kormina St. Nicholas II: Orthodox understanding of empire
17.35-17.50	Questions and discussion
18.30-20.30	Dinner
20.30 -	Socializing Musical entertainment

Friday 4 November

08.00-09.00	Breakfast
09.00-09.35	Pål Kolstø Russia's imperial tradition today
09.35-09.50	Questions and discussion
09.50-10.25	Geir Flikke Russia's "special path" in the relation between state and nation
10.25-10.40	Questions and discussion
10.40-11.10	Coffee break
11.10-11.45	Kristian Gerner Clericalization, militarization and acquiescence: Reflections on state and society in contemporary Russia
11.45-12.00	Questions and discussion
12.00-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.05	Uffe Østergaard Nordic/Lutheran vs. Russian-Orthodox political culture
14.05-14.20	Questions and discussion
14.20-14.55	Christian Gottlieb After secularization: Russia and the Nordic countries
14.55-15.10	Questions and discussion
15.10-15.40	Coffee break
15.40-16.30	Concluding discussion

The symphony and the two kingdoms

The church-state relationship in
Denmark and Russia in the 15th–20th centuries

By Christian Gottlieb

APENDIX

This essay in comparison is based on the proposition that Denmark and Russia with specific regard to the relationship between Church and State can each be considered paradigmatic of their respective versions of Christianity: (Lutheran) Protestantism and Orthodoxy.

In the case of Russia, it is evident. After the demise of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, Russia took over the position as the principal upholder of Orthodoxy; the largest, and for the subsequent almost 400 years, also the only country in which Orthodoxy was free to develop on its own terms; the only country where Orthodox theocratic government could be practiced undisturbedly for a long period of time. Russia, therefore, can be considered paradigmatic of Orthodoxy also in a more general sense.

Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Moscow



Marmormirken, Copenhagen

In the case of Denmark, it is not quite as evident, though. This country cannot be considered paradigmatic of Protestantism or merely Lutheranism as a whole, since Protestant Christianity is present in a number of other countries that have managed to maintain political independence throughout several centuries; some of them are also considerably larger. However, with specific regard to the church-state relationship, the exemplary character of Denmark can be claimed with good reason: in no other country have the Protestant princely state and the Protestant princely church developed more consistently and durably than in Denmark; a fact that can be demonstrated by the enduring existence of the basic organizational structures even in the early twenty-first century. An additional part of the story is the fact that, until 1814, the Danish state also included Norway, and until 1864, also the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which therefore also partake to some extent in the first almost 300 years, almost 350 years respectively, of the development presented here.



Rune stone, Gripsholm, Sweden, about 1050. Ingvar, the “widely travelled,” lead a Viking campaign through Russia to Særkland by the Caspian Sea. The campaign ended in definitive defeat. Ingvar’s campaign is mentioned on 30 rune stones in the Mälär Valley

A study of the history of these two states thus facilitates a comparative consideration of the development of the church-state relationship in two versions characteristic of western and eastern Christianity, respectively; two versions sharing another decisive presupposition: independence of Papal influence. In both states the church-state relationship has developed on its own terms within the given national, or rather territorial, framework. This is not disturbed by the fact that the underlying theological and political ideas do not derive from either Denmark or Russia themselves, perhaps even on the contrary. Both countries overtake and promote an external inheritance to which they can hardly be said to provide original contributions even though their respective situations provide the opportunity to take the ideas to radical conclusions.

The chronological perspective

The paradigmatic character of the church-state relationship has been developing for several centuries in both states; in Russia since the mid-15th century, in Denmark since the early 16th century. In both cases the development of the relationship in modern times presupposes a kind of emancipation from the original “mother

church”: in Russia from Constantinople, in Denmark from Rome. In both cases this becomes decisive for the development of the relationship and basic to its evolving paradigmatic character.

In Russia emancipation and independence appear on two levels: externally and ecclesiastically as a consequence of the demise of the Byzantine Empire, internally and nationally as a consequence of the collapse of the Mongol hegemony. However, ecclesiastical independence of Constantinople remains a question only of ecclesiastical law, i.e. of institutional authority, not of Orthodox doctrine, which continues in Russia unchanged. From Byzantium Russia also overtakes the Byzantine ideology of the Christian empire which can now no longer be realized within its original framework. However, the ideology proves very useful in connection with the subjection of the foreign domination of Russia and national integration under the princes of Moscow. This development begins in the second half of the 15th century and is manifested most visibly in the establishment of the tsardom in 1547 under Ivan IV and in 1589 in the elevation of Moscow as an independent patriarchy. In 1552 begins the vast imperial expansion of Russia.

In Denmark and Norway emancipation comes in the shape of the Reformation. Emancipation, thus, is primarily ecclesiastical but, unlike in Russia, it is not only a question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction but also of ecclesiastical doctrine. As the Reformation marks a radical break with Roman-Catholic doctrine, the break with the Roman church becomes both a religious and a political demarcation placing Denmark and Norway among a small group of reformed countries in Northern Europe where church and state have to be re-organized a-new and in a new mutual relationship. This development begins in the 1520s and culminates in 1536-37 with the introduction of the Reformation throughout the kingdom by King Christian III. The Danish and Norwegian archbishoprics are abolished and the king made de-facto earthly head of the church. This becomes the basis of the state-church establishment unfolded by subsequent monarchs and definitively instituted by the introduction of absolutism in 1660 as formalized in the Law of Royalty (Kongeloven) of 1665, the Law of Denmark (Danske Lov) of 1683, and the Law of Norway (Norske Lov) of 1687. This construction remains formally in power for most of the subsequent two centuries.

In both Russia and Denmark-Norway the result becomes a church organized administratively and institutionally – though not doctrinally – on purely national or territorial terms, closely tied to the monarch who more or less formally becomes its earthly head and, with time, achieves absolute power. In the first stages of these developments – in the 16th-17th centuries – they



Title page of the Danish Bible of King Christian III of 1550

inalienable (ideological) presupposition of the state's existence. Within the framework of the system the state cannot abandon Christianity without giving up its own justification. In both cases it is clear that the relationship between church and state formally and theoretically, if not always in practice, retains a highly theocratic character.

The theocratic establishment exerts a decisive influence on the development of both Russian and Danish-Norwegian society, although in highly different ways. This becomes clear also in the latter stages of the church-state relationship as increasing modernization and secularization create a demand for dismantling of theocracy. The close connection between Church and State inevitably causes the simmering revolt against the state and the existing social order also to involve the church. As unfolded in practice the differences between the two countries and their churches here become highly visible.

In Denmark the dismantling of theocracy occurs in connection with the abolition of absolutism in 1848 that paves the way for the first democratic Constitution of 1849. With this follows the substitution of the state church of absolutism with the "people's church" (folkekirke) of democracy that, in consequence of the new freedom of religion, can no longer be vested with formal monopoly status. Even so, by virtue of the near total de-facto domination of the folkekirke in the popu-

occur entirely without mutual influence, as connections between Russia and (Western) Europe in this period remain highly sporadic. However, In Russia, the next stage in the church-state relationship occurs very much under the influence of Western Europe in general and the Protestant countries, including Denmark, in particular. The reforms of Peter the Great in the early 1700s attempt to reshape Russia in the image of Western Europe, involving also a re-organization of the Orthodox Church. The patriarchy is abolished (as were the Danish and Norwegian archbishoprics) whereby the church is deprived of independent leadership, and the Russian church is established as a state-church according to a Protestant model – though retaining its Orthodox confession. As such it exists for the subsequent two centuries.

In both cases the development from the principle of ecclesiastical independence to that of privileged princely state church has been seen as the state's overtaking of the church, which thereby becomes part of the state. The question remains, however, whether it could also be seen as the state becoming church, in as much as the state overtakes the fundamental purpose of the church: to work for the spread and upholding of the gospel, at least to the extent that Christianity is regarded as an

Peter the Great. Portrait by Jean-Marc Nattier, 1717



lation, this church still retains a privileged constitutional position and as such remains supported by the state. However, the ecclesiastical charter promised by the Constitution and meant to define the situation and leadership of the church is never realized, despite repeated attempts. Even though the introduction in 1903 of popularly elected parish councils has had considerable practical importance for daily church life, the fundamental situation of the church and its relationship to the state still remain formally unclarified. In 2016, remains of the formal theocratic order still live on side by side with democratically determined practice.

In Russia, the dismantling of the old order occurs in a much different and much more violent way. In consequence of the revolutions of February and October 1917, initially the monarchy and then every remaining connection between church and state are abolished. The Orthodox Church hardly manages to find its own feet in its new independent situation before the state's relationship to the church is turned into one of unremitting hostility. In the socialist October Revolution power is seized by the radically anti-religious Bolshevik party, which right from the beginning, and since 1922 within the framework of the newly established Soviet state, launches a comprehensive and systematic campaign of anti-religious propaganda and persecution; something that remains a recurring phenomenon almost throughout the duration of the Soviet Union. The purpose is the total annihilation of all religion that is seen as an obstacle to the achievement of the aim of the new regime: the construction of a socialist society. Despite enduring persecution at great human and material cost, the regime never succeeds in definitively obliterating religion. When, in an attempt at reform of Soviet society, the Soviet leadership under Mikhail Gorbachev decides, in 1987-88, on a change of course by concluding peace with the church, the latter is therefore still left with some foundation in Russian society. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 religion in general and the Russian-Orthodox Church in particular have achieved a remarkable renaissance and an explosive institutional growth that have turned this church into a significant player in present-day post-Soviet Russian society. According to the Russian Constitution of 1993, church and state remain separate but many indications suggest that the relationship is becoming increasingly close and mutually beneficial.

Theological and political perspectives

As mentioned above, it is characteristic of both Russia and Denmark that the fundamental theological, ideological and political ideas that have shaped the development of the church-state relationship, have been overtaken from outside. In Russia the introduction of

Byzantine Christianity entails the idea of the symphony or harmony, formulated in 535 by the Emperor Justinian as the Orthodox ideal of integration of state and church, which as equal partners collaborate harmoniously on the achievement of their shared goal: the construction of an earthly premonition of the Kingdom of God that is to come. In Denmark and Norway the introduction of the Reformation entails the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms, the spiritual and the secular, externally represented by church and state, which according to the principle may not interfere with each other's affairs. These two principles are thus obvious opposites. Whereas the doctrine of the symphony proposes the ideal symbiosis of church and state, thus formulating a theocratic norm, the doctrine of the two kingdoms is theoretically about the polar opposite: the proper distinction between spiritual and secular government in all relationships, including that between church and state. This is not a theocratic ideal.

Against this background it is possible to observe a marked contrast between theory and practice in Russia

The Law of Royalty, *Lex Regia*; was the formal juridical foundation of Danish absolutism, dated 14 November 1665



and Denmark(-Norway). Although the theocratic ideal has not been unchallenged in Russia and hardly ever fully realized, it is not surprising that the character of the church-state relationship in this country during the course of several centuries has been so decidedly theocratic. In other words, there seems to be a wide degree of coincidence of theory and practice, at least until the reforms of Peter the Great, which to a certain extent challenges the terms of the symphony.

In contrast to this, it is striking to observe in the Danish-Norwegian development how far the divide is between the official theory of the two kingdoms and actual practice. Although the doctrine of the two kingdoms is mentioned explicitly in the confession of the Lutheran churches, the Augsburg Confession of 1530, by which the Law of Royalty of 1665 obliges the Danish-Norwegian kings to abide for “all time”, the principle is ignored in practice in favor of the more politically determined principle of princely church government. Introduced already at the Reformation, this principle was later confirmed in Germany at the Augsburg Settlement of 1555. As a result, the Lutheran princes formally took over the episcopal rights formerly belonging to Catholic bishops. Within his domain, the individual prince acquired the status of a sort of supreme bishop (*summus episcopus*) with the power to decide both on ordinary administration of the church and on doctrinal issues. It was this principle, though not under this name, that was realized with great consistency in Denmark and Norway after the Reformation. With the subsequent introduction of absolutism, the result is the virtual disappearance of the church as an independent institution. Where the two kingdoms according to Lutheran doctrine had to be clearly distinguished from each other, they are in practice amalgamated into a unity that, at least on the surface, makes the Protestant princely church remarkably similar to the Orthodox theocracy. This is confirmed by the fact that precisely the Protestant state church could become relevant as a model for Tsar Peter’s administrative reform of the Orthodox Church whose government, therefore, became a hybrid of Protestant and Orthodox principles. Inspired by Protestant models, Peter’s reform dictates the subjection of the church under the tsar with whom the church thus loses its formal equality. The reform thus initiates a development that actually leads away from theocracy in its ideal Orthodox form in the direction of absolutism. The opposite takes place in Denmark and Norway where the introduction of absolutism – for the same reason: the king’s subjection of the church – initiates a development towards theocracy, hardly granted by earlier tradition.

The fundamental difference between the principles of the two traditions, the symphony and the two kingdoms, is not therefore without significance, however;

it just only becomes visible in connection with the dismantling of the theocratic establishment. As mentioned, this took place in very different ways in the two countries and even though these developments have many and complex explanations, the perception of the ideal character of the church-state relationship is likely to be one of them. Here the two principles evince a fundamental difference as to which possibilities may be permissible. Whereas the doctrine of the two kingdoms entails the possibility – and, as a point of principle, even the necessity – of perceiving theocracy as a theological misunderstanding, the doctrine of the symphony does not seem to allow this possibility. On the contrary, the symphony expresses the very principle of theocracy and thus assumes an absolute character. In practice, this means that where the doctrine of the two kingdoms makes it not only possible but also desirable to dismantle theocracy – also from a Christian perspective – and possibly to let this happen in a slow gradual process, the principle of symphony makes it neither possible nor desirable to dismantle or merely modify theocracy. On the terms of the symphony, a dismantling can therefore only acquire the character of total and radical abolition.

No matter how conscious of this problematic the actual Danish and Russian actors in the dismantling of theocracy may have been, this was what actually happened: in Denmark a peaceful, gradual development, which has in practice done away with theocracy, yet has also permitted remains of it to exist in the close connection between church and state still in existence; in Russia an abrupt, violent, radical abolition of theocracy, which throughout most of the 20th century entailed a total break of relations between church and state and came close to annihilating the church altogether as an institution.

This difference is also connected with the relationship of the two principles to the concepts of modernity and secularization. Considered in this light, it seems obvious that the doctrine of the two kingdoms is in itself a presupposition of modernity and also has a role to play in the secularization process, whereas the doctrine of the symphony is of premodern and perhaps even anti-modern character. Likewise, it is equally evident that this difference emanates from a more fundamental theological difference in the understanding of the nature of the church and the aim of the Christian life, in the church as well as in the state. However, an unfolding of this theological difference between East and West will lead too far in this connection and can therefore only be suggested here.

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