

Ukraine and the Russian Orthodox Church

Substance of a talk given in Brecon, May 3rd 2022

The word 'Ukraine', as I'm sure everyone knows by now, means 'frontier' or border country. The border in question was the country that separates Poland, Russia and the Crimean Tatars. The Poles were Catholic, the Russians Orthodox. The Tatars were the descendants of the religiously eclectic Mongol 'Golden Horde', which had swept through the whole area in the thirteenth century but had since allied with the Ottoman Empire and therefore represent Islam.



This map shows the frontier as it was in the late seventeenth century, more or less following the line of the Dnieper river. Had I shown a map from earlier in the seventeenth century, the line would have been further to the East. 'Poland' would have been bigger. But I chose this map because it shows the wider area - the relationship to Constantinople in the South and to the Baltic region in the North. The line of the frontier shown here coincides roughly with the 'Varangian route' - the trade route that ran from the Baltic, the Scandinavian countries, in the North to the Black Sea in the South, which explains the importance of the city of Kiev, which also lay on the trade route from East to West, from Asia to Europe.

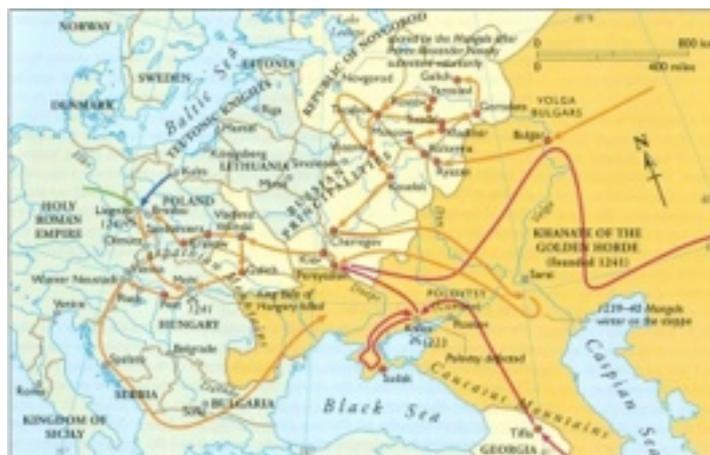
Both Ukrainians and Russians claim descent from the tenth century Kingdom of Rus, centred on Kiev. The Kingdom lasted as a cultural unity for some three hundred years but had a tendency to break up into smaller, more or less allied principalities.



In this map one could see in Novgorod and Suzdal in the North the seedbed of what was to become Russia and, in the West, in Galicia/Volhynia, the seedbed of what was to become modern Ukraine. Note that the actual coastal area of both the Black and Azov seas were out of control of the Kievans as they would continue to be out of control of Poles, Lithuanians and Russians until the late eighteenth century.

Kiev had adopted Orthodoxy from Constantinople in 988. Poland in the West had adopted Catholicism from Rome in 966. Although the formal date given for the Great Schism between Rome and Constantinople, Catholicism and Orthodoxy, is 1054, the difference between them was already deeply felt.

Kievan Rus was submerged in the great wave of the invasion by the Golden Horde in the thirteenth century.



Kiev was sacked and its population massacred in 1240. As a result the Metropolitan of Kiev transferred, first (1299) to Vladimir, then (1326) to Moscow. In the same year (1240) as the sack of Kiev, a young prince in Novgorod, Alexander, won the battle of the Neva against the Swedes, thus earning the name Alexander Nevski. This and the subsequent victory over the Teutonic Knights in 1242 was a civilisational choice. Alexander had accepted submission to the Tatars in preference to incorporation into the Catholic West. A similar choice was made by the Galician-Volhynian Prince, Daniel Romanovich, on the advice of the then Metropolitan of Kiev and against the appeals of the Pope. He was the founder of the town of Lviv. But in 1340, about the time of the Battle of Kulikovo when the Russians broke free of the Tatar yoke, Galicia-Volhynia made an opposite choice. The last prince of Galicia-Volhynia, Yuri II Boleslav, was murdered, poisoned by his boyars. Galicia fell into disarray and was fought over by different Galician factions, Hungary and Poland until, through an agreement between Poland, Hungary and Lithuania, it was incorporated into Poland in 1387. After struggles with Poland, Lithuania gained control of Volhynia in 1370.

The Ukrainians could be described as those Orthodox descendants of Kievan Rus who came under Polish/Lithuanian domination, partly at least to protect themselves against the Tatars, still powerful in most of the area covered by modern Ukraine.



This map shows the area as it was in 1453. In the following, sixteenth, century, Novgorod and most of the territory covered by the khanates would come under Muscovy, led by the Grand Duke Ivan III and his son, the first 'Tsar', Ivan IV (the 'Terrible').

CATHOLIC AND ORTHODOX

Initially a distinction could be drawn between Poles and Lithuanians in that the Lithuanians, who had the larger territory - including, at least in theory, Kiev - were more tolerant of Orthodoxy. But there was a continual process of Polish-Lithuanian rapprochement encouraging an ever tighter identification with Catholicism. The pressure was felt especially by the Orthodox aristocracy. The advantages of conversion were

considerable, both materially in terms of political power and culturally, as Poland was open to the cultural and intellectual evolutions that were occurring in Europe. The peasantry on the other hand, and the artisan class, clung stubbornly to Orthodoxy. So an Orthodox peasantry was confronted with a Polish and increasingly 'Polonised' Ruthenian landlord class ('Ruthenian' - or 'Rusian' - being the term used to refer to former subjects of Kievan Rus). In addition, Poland had welcomed large numbers of Jews, fleeing persecution in Germany. For the Poles the Jews were useful to fulfil socially necessary tasks that were beneath the dignity of the noble class - merchant, tax collector, tavernkeeper, money lender, landlord's agent - all roles that made them very unpopular among the peasantry.

The peasants, however, had an escape route. They could flee westward into the area properly called the Ukraine, the borderlands, and join up with the Cossacks:



This map shows the 'wild fields' - the area out of all Polish government control - in the seventeenth century, superimposed on the contours of modern Ukraine.

I'm told that the word 'Cossack' corresponds to a Turkish word, *kazakh*, as in Kazakhstan, meaning 'free man', meaning that they weren't serfs. They were formed into self-defending military companies and from the early sixteenth century the Polish and Russian governments saw an advantage in their existence as a buffer against the Tatars. In 1526, the Polish government agreed to formally recognise the 'registered Cossacks' as a rather unpredictable part of the Polish defence force. But there were also Cossacks in the area 'beyond the rapids' - the 'Zaporizhia' - wildest of the wild lands in the Southern area of the Dnieper river. These were unregistered and from the point of view of the Polish and Russian governments quite unpredictable.

Meanwhile, in the mid fifteenth century, Constantinople, like most of the rest of the Orthodox world, had succumbed to the Ottoman Empire. But before that, in an attempt to secure Catholic support against the Ottomans, the Patriarch of Constantinople, together with other leading Orthodox hierarchs including the now Moscow based Metropolitan of Kiev, had agreed in the Council of Florence-Ferrara, to a union with Rome. The result was a revolt both in Constantinople and in Moscow. Moscow broke the connection with Constantinople, dissolved the Kiev metropolitanate and created a new metropolitanate of Moscow. Constantinople in turn, now returned to Orthodoxy but under Ottoman domination, create a new Metropolitanate of Kiev, albeit, given the continued vulnerability of Kiev, based in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania.

On the one hand one could say that Moscow was now out of communion with the rest of the Orthodox world. On the other hand, Moscow was now the only remaining Orthodox state - all the other Orthodox communities were either subject to the Muslim Ottoman Empire or, in the case of the Ruthenians, to the Poles (Rumania, though incorporated into the Ottoman Empire still had a relatively high degree of autonomy). Moscow was brought back into the wider Orthodox family when Constantinople recognised the metropolitanate in 1589, allowing it the title of Patriarch. This was shortly after the death of Ivan IV, the 'Terrible', and before the early seventeenth century invasion from Poland - the 'time of trouble'.

THE 'UNIATES' AND THE KIEV ACADEMY

As, in Poland, the Counter-Reformation got underway, and as they lost the protection of their own Ruthenian aristocracy, the pressure on the Orthodox clergy became ever harder to bear. As a result, a number of the higher clergy proposed joining the Catholic Church but being allowed to continue to use the Eastern liturgy and to have a married clergy - both necessary conditions for maintaining the loyalty of the peasantry. The result was the 'Union of Brest' of 1596. Although they were destined to become an important force in Ukrainian history, their immediate situation was uncomfortable - regarded with suspicion by the Catholics and with positive hatred by the Orthodox.

Partly in response to the Uniates a very remarkable development occurred - the formation in 1632, under Cossack patronage, of the 'Greek Slavonic Academy' of Kiev. The leading figure was a monk of the Kiev Caves Monastery, Peter Moghila, who became Metropolitan of Kiev in 1633. This could be seen as the first modern theological school in the Russian world but although it was established as a bulwark for Orthodoxy, it was miles far removed from Orthodoxy as it was understood in Russia, and here we enter into a paradox of Catholic/Orthodox church history. The Catholic West was fascinated by the classical thought and culture of Greece and Rome, hence Thomas Aquinas's intensive use of Aristotle, but they had very little access to it. It was preserved in Constantinople but preserved, so to speak, in amber - regarded as a precious heritage from their ancestors which, nonetheless, had been superseded by Christianity. Plato and Aristotle were of interest for the purity of their language and as models for the process of reasoning but the actual philosophical questions they posed were now settled. So when Constantinople shared Christianity with the Slavs they didn't share their classical culture, whether because they thought the barbarians couldn't assume it or simply because they didn't think they needed it because they had something better.

But with the decline and fall of Constantinople, a huge treasure trove of classical literature passed over to the West and was a major influence on the Renaissance and on its shadow twin, the Reformation. None of this affected Russia. Russian Orthodoxy could be called Christianity without Classicism. But it had a huge effect on Poland and consequently on Peter Moghila and his Kiev academy. From a Russian point of view it had a very Catholic character. The instruction was in Latin, the method Scholastic and such exotic things as philosophy, rhetoric, classical literature and poetics were taught.

REVOLTS IN THE WILD LANDS AND DOOR TO THE WEST IN RUSSIA

On the face of it, it seems extraordinary that this academy should appear in the middle of what was effectively a sort of no-man's-land, but of course this meant that, although notionally on Polish territory it was out of reach of the Polish government. The period of the establishment of the academy was a period of extraordinary violence on the part of the

Cossacks, beginning with a revolt in 1630 which I believe to have been the model for Nicolai Gogol's *Taras Bulba*. But it came to a climax with the revolt in 1648 associated with the name of Bohdan Khmel'nitsky. This took the form of a massacre of Poles and Jews. It had a particularly traumatic effect on the Jews. It went far to destroy the privileged position Jews had held previously in Poland. It seems to have helped stimulate the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi. Some writers have suggested that the outpouring of sympathy it evoked among Jews worldwide marks the beginnings of a sense of Jewish nationhood.

Among Ukrainian nationalists, Khmel'nitsky has a mixed reputation. On the one hand, he created a state, the 'hetmanate', which could be described as the first more or less independent Ukrainian state since the area had come under Polish-Lithuanian domination.



This map is interesting. It shows the hetmanate in relation to the borders of present day Ukraine. You may notice that the territories to the East and South not included in the hetmanate correspond more or less to the territories at present being taken and, in the case of the Black Sea coast perhaps destined to be taken, in the present Russian intervention. The eastern part includes present day Luhansk and Donetsk, which were still, at the time, part of Russia. The southern parts are the territories occupied by the Tatars and Ottomans which would be taken in the late eighteenth century by Catherine the Great.

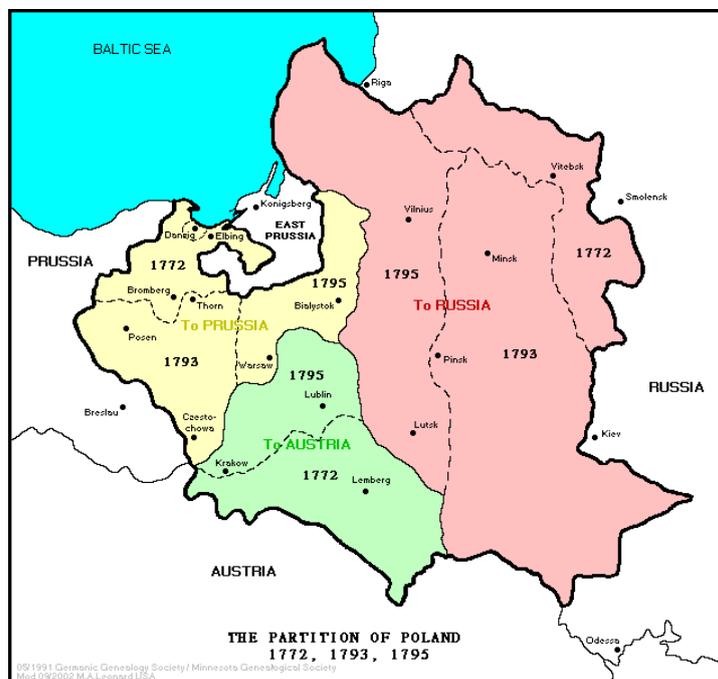
But in addition to founding the hetmanate, Khmel'nitsky, in his war with the Poles, entered into an alliance with the Russians, at first with the Treaty of Pereislav of 1654, which was tightened by the Treaty of Andrusovo in 1667. The three hundredth anniversary of the Treaty of Pereislav was celebrated in the Soviet Union in 1954 as the coming together of the two Russian peoples, Little Russians and Great Russians, on which occasion, as a token of their eternal friendship, Nikita Khrushchev bestowed Crimea on the Soviet Republic of Ukraine.

The hetmanate quickly fell apart in what Ukrainian historians call 'the ruin', with the west Bank of the Dnieper reverting to the Poles while the east bank, still notionally under Cossack control, went to Russia as shown in the first map I showed you. The Russian territory now included Kiev and, in 1686, the Patriarch of Constantinople passed the metropolitanate of Kiev over to the Patriarch of Moscow. This was the settlement which

Bartholomew, the current Patriarch of Constantinople, rescinded in 2019, when he recognised the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, with its own Metropolitan of Kiev, resulting in a breaking of communion between Constantinople and Moscow.

We're now entering into the period of the rule of Peter the Great and no sooner had Constantinople given Kiev to the Patriarch of Moscow than Peter suppresses the patriarchate of Moscow. The last Patriarch of Moscow - prior to 1917 - died in 1700 and Peter prevented the appointment of a new one. In 1721 he set about a radical reorganisation of the administrative structure of the Russian church, and who did he turn to to organise it but the Rector of the Kiev academy, Theophan Prokopovich. The twentieth century Orthodox theologian, George Florovsky in his *The Ways of Russian Theology*, complains that the early eighteenth century saw what he calls a 'ukrainisation' of the Russian church. But where Moghila was suspected of having a Catholic caste of mind, Prokopovich, also educated in European universities, had reacted strongly against Catholicism and, according to Florovsky, was not just influenced by Protestantism but should be seen as part of the history of Protestantism. The education of the higher clergy in Russia was now remodelled along the lines of the Kiev Academy. Through Ukraine, Russia was getting a whiff of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Meanwhile the Russians were taming the Cossacks, essentially by turning Cossack military chiefs into Russian noblemen and landowners and the ordinary, previously free Cossacks into serfs. But on the Polish side of the Dnieper, the opposite was happening. The Polish government officially suppressed the Cossacks in 1700 but large numbers of peasants flowed into this now depopulated land and soon launched on a series of violent popular revolts called 'haidamaki', culminating in 1768 in the Koliivschvina revolt which took the form partly of a civil war with the Polish nobility, themselves engaged, as the 'Confederation of Bar', in a revolt against the Polish King; but also a war between Orthodox and Uniate. The Koliivschvina is celebrated in a long epic poem, *Haidamaky*, perhaps the most important work of the nineteenth century poet Taras Shevchenko, regarded as the national poet of Ukraine. Nonetheless it contributed mightily to the final collapse of the Polish state and the partitions which, by the end of the eighteenth century brought the whole west bank of the Dnieper under Russian control.



IN RUSSIA AND AUSTRIA

I'm not sure that I can account for it but it seems to me a quite remarkable fact that after two centuries of almost unimaginable violence while notionally ruled by the Poles this part of the world is relatively pacified throughout most of the nineteenth century. A large part of the explanation is of course Catherine's defeat of the Tatars and incorporation of their territory at more or less the same time as the Polish partitions.



The yellow areas here are the territory taken from the Tatars and Ottomans at the end of the eighteenth century and collectively known as 'Novorossiya.'

The division of classes in the territories taken from Poland, now known as 'Malorossiya' - 'Little Russia' - still resembles the old order - Polish, therefore Catholic, landowners; Orthodox peasants; Jewish middlemen. This, together with Belarus to the North, and Moldavia to the South West, is still the part of the world with the largest Jewish population and of course towards the end of the century we have the famous 'Russian' - in fact Ukrainian, Belarusian or Moldovan - pogroms but these, terrifying as they were at the time, are still - at least in the nineteenth century - on a small scale compared to what had been happening in the Polish territories in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

What Russia gained in the Polish partitions was the more anarchic, Cossack element of the people destined, in the twentieth century, to live in a distinct Ukrainian state. The more stable population in the West, in Galicia with its capital, Lviv, was taken by Austria and this marks an enormous improvement in their lives, or at least in the lives of the Uniates. For a start they cease to be called 'Uniates', a name which had already become derogatory, indicating an inferior, half-in-half sort of Catholic. The Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa, declared that there should be no distinction drawn between Latin rite and Eastern rite Catholics who were now renamed as 'Greek Catholics'. In Austria, the Greek Catholic Church flourished mightily and became the organising centre for the development of a distinct 'Ruthenian' identity. In the second half of the century, the Church launched a comprehensive programme of educating the peasantry through reading clubs, which then

became the means - quite contrary to the Church's intentions - by which National Populist and Socialist intellectuals were able to get access to them.

One thing that emerges clearly from the story so far is the existence of two quite distinct political entities - Galicia, centred on Lviv, which is now part of Austria, and on the other hand what might be called Ukraine proper, the old borderland, centred on Kiev, which is now part of Russia. The distinction existed even when both were notionally part of Poland, with Galicia as a relatively stable entity, Ukraine as a very turbulent entity. Looked at purely from the religious point of view (not the only angle from which it could be looked at) both sides could now be reasonably content. The Greek Catholic Church had a well respected place in Catholic Austria; the Orthodox Ukrainians were now living in an Orthodox country - still the only Orthodox country outside the Ottoman Empire. It's true that the Orthodox still living in Austria were having a harder time and there was a tendency within the Greek Catholic Church which aspired to becoming more like Russian Orthodoxy - the more or less contemporary Anglo-Catholic tendency in the Church of England comes to mind. They were regarded with great suspicion and eventually suppressed. Also, the Greek Catholic Church in Russia was suppressed (or, as the Russians would claim, restored to Orthodoxy) in 1839. But this concerns more the history of Belarus than of Ukraine.

1917 AND ITS AFTERMATH

Everything, though, changed in 1917, when, in conditions of war, a liberal revolution was followed by the Bolshevik revolution. With the liberal revolution and the abdication of the Tsar a great council was held to reorganise the Russian Orthodox Church and restore the Moscow patriarchate. I say 'restore' but I really regard this as a quite new development. The original Moscow patriarchate was established with the blessing of Constantinople in the sixteenth century but I very much doubt if Peter and Theophan Prokopovich consulted Constantinople when they suppressed it and replaced it with the 'Holy Synod.' Nor have I seen any sign that Constantinople was consulted when the patriarchate was restored. The installation of the first of the new patriarchs, Tikhon, coincided almost to the day with the Bolshevik seizure of power.

In Ukraine, the liberal revolution in February or March (depending on the calendar you use) produced an initial outpouring of patriotic fervour. Kiev was full of crowds waving blue and yellow flags and a 'Ukrainian Central Rada' was formed along the lines of the Provisional Government in St Petersburg. It was made up of parties that supported some form of autonomy for Ukraine but there was little interest in the idea of complete independence until January 1918 when the area was invaded by a Bolshevik army under Mikhail Muraviev, following a desperate appeal from Lenin to requisition grain and other foodstuffs to feed the starving St Petersburg (or Petrograd as it was known at that time, sounding less German): 'For God's sake, take most energetic revolutionary measures to send bread, bread, and bread again! Otherwise Piter may perish.' The energetic measures included a prolonged bombardment of Kiev followed by a radical purge of anyone suspected of separatist or monarchist sympathies.

UKRAINE March - November 1918 GERMAN OCCUPATION & HETMANATE



With the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Ukraine was occupied by the Germans who installed a Cossack general, Pavlo Skoropadsky as 'hetman' but with the defeat of Germany and Austria an independent Ukraine was established under the military leadership of long time national separatist Simon Petliura.

There is a controversy as to Petliura's personal responsibility for the massive assault on Jews that accompanied this first Ukrainian's People's Republic (ONU) but no controversy as to the fact of it occurring. The Odessa pogrom which followed the 1905 revolution had been on a much larger scale than anything that had preceded it, and the pogrom that followed the declaration of the ONU was on a much larger scale than the Odessa pogrom.

Our main concern here, however, is with the church and so it's worth mentioning that one of Petliura's first acts in January 1919 was to secure a government decree for the establishment of a Ukrainian Orthodox Church, independent of the newly established Moscow patriarchate. The actual Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church did not come into existence until after the defeat of Petliura and the apparently definitive incorporation of Ukraine into the Soviet Union. At the time, the formation of the UAOC was encouraged by the Soviet government, always on the lookout for opportunities to sow dissent and division within the church.

Unable to attract any canonically ordained bishops, the UAOC created its own episcopate. It was not recognised by any of the other main Orthodox jurisdictions.

But there is no way that at this stage in my talk I can go into the ins and outs of Soviet policy with regard to the church. I have on my website an attempt to make some sense of the history of the Moscow patriarchate during this period but I don't go into the very interesting specifics with regard to Ukraine.

I really have to try to wrap this up, even though I suppose I'm reaching the point everyone thinks is the most interesting, the point at which we approach recent events. But there is still some ground to cover. After the defeat of Austria, Ruthenian nationalists in Galicia briefly declared a 'Western Ukrainian Peoples Republic'. It should be remarked that, according to the historian John-Paul Himka, it was only in the very late nineteenth century that more nationally minded Ruthenians began to call themselves 'Ukrainians', recognising that it was only in conjunction with the Ukrainians in Russia that a nation-state could be formed. The western republic briefly united with Petliura's republic but they soon split, with

the western republic putting their hopes in Petliura's enemy, the White Russian Anton Denikin, while Petliura put his hope in the westerners' enemy, the Poles. In the post-war settlement, Galicia was delivered over to the newly created Poland and in the raw confrontation of nationalisms that followed the Ruthenians developed a hard ideology quite unlike anything that could previously have been expected of them. This period is crucial to understanding present day Ukrainian nationalism.

GALICIA AND THE SOVIET UNION

Bad as domination by the Poles might have been, in 1939, as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, they were delivered up to the Soviet Union. Those were the circumstances in which Ukrainians, and especially West Ukrainians, welcomed the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, taking the opportunity for a mass killing of Poles and Jews which, so far as I know, was a new development in Lviv. Radical antisemitism was certainly part of the old Cossack Ukrainian tradition but not, I think, of the Ruthenians under Austrian rule. I assume it was due to the widespread identification of Jews as supporters of the Communists. At any rate whereas in the nineteenth century, despite all that had happened, Ukraine had the largest concentration of Jews, it now has one of the lowest, through massacre and emigration to the United States and Israel.



The map shows the Reichskommissariat established in what had been Russian Ukraine. Galicia was part of the 'General Government' to the west, which covered Poland. The area to the east 'under German military government', was where the Soviet partisan movement was strongest.

The Nazi occupation saw a revival of the church, which had been heavily persecuted in the 1930s. Churches were restored, church festivals were again celebrated, Sunday was again respected as a holy day. In particular there was a revival of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church but it was challenged by what was called the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox Church which still saw itself as part of the much suffering Russian church. With the Soviet restoration, the Autocephalous Church was, of course, suppressed, surviving in the Ukrainian emigration. Galicia was now firmly installed as part

of the Soviet Union and in 1946, the Greek Catholic Church was suppressed and its buildings handed over to the revived Moscow patriarchate.

At the end of the war, while many Ukrainians from Dnieper-Ukraine who had supported the Nazis, or used the Nazi invasion to oppose the Communists, were returned to the Soviet Union and ended up dead or in the camps, Galicians were able to persuade their American and British captors that they had only been incorporated into the Soviet Union as a result of the illegitimate Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and were therefore not really Soviet citizens. As a result they were able to continue living in the west, in particular in Canada where there was already a substantial Ukrainian emigré population following the Bolshevik takeover in the wake of the First World War. In many ways this Canadian Ukrainian body, militantly anti-Communist and identifying Communism with Russia, could be seen as the seedbed of the militantly anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalism of the present day.

The historian John-Paul Himka, himself a Canadian Ukrainian, specialist in the history of Galicia and Lviv and especially of the Greek (now 'Ukrainian') Catholic Church, is interesting in this respect. His father in law was the editor of a Ukrainian paper produced during the Nazi occupation, who emigrated to Canada. Himka maintains that: 'In Galicia, the Central European concept of national identity was *reconstituted* in the 1990s. I observed this as a frequent visitor to Lviv in 1989 and after, but the subject has yet to be researched by scholars ... Although the Soviet regime had been introduced into Galicia by tremendous violence, that violence ended in the 1950s and since then people had benefited from and grown used to the Soviet system.' He recognises that 'the resurgence of the Central European nationalism had many sources' but he attaches particular importance to the influence of the diaspora. The impetus did not come from the people of the area, it came from outside.

I think we can see this also in the current controversy concerning the Orthodox Church. When the Soviet Union was dissolved in December 1991, following a vote in Ukraine in favour of independence, there was still an assumption that good relations would prevail in the successor 'Commonwealth of Independent States.' The Moscow patriarch (Alexei II) gave a large degree of autonomy to the Metropolitan of Kiev, Philaret. Philaret called a council of the church which resolved on a complete separation from Moscow, with himself as patriarch (there had never previously been a patriarch of Kiev). But my impression is that the priests and hierarchs of the time thought this was what Moscow wanted. When Alexei called another council making clear that autonomy, not autocephaly was the intention the great majority supported him, possibly more out of conservatism, anxiety that other churches might not recognise a church set up in opposition to Moscow, than any real enthusiasm. Essentially they didn't much care one way or the other, it didn't seem important to their role as an Orthodox priesthood.

Philaret then set up his own rival Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kyiv Patriarchate. This was not recognised by any of the major Orthodox jurisdictions. So neither the UOC-KV nor the UAOC were recognised. It was in 2018 that the Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, for essentially political reasons, asked the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, to bless a Ukrainian church independent of Moscow. Bartholomew had his own quarrels with the Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill, who had refused to attend the Great Council in Crete in 2016, an attempt by Constantinople to create a more unified Orthodox Church, a forum in which the many disputes among the different jurisdictions could be resolved. Bartholomew brought the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church and the Kyiv patriarchate together in a new Ukrainian Orthodox Church, or (for those willing to let the Moscow church continue to use the title UOC) Orthodox Church of Ukraine with a new metropolitan of Kiev - Philaret assumed the rather unusual title of 'honorary patriarch.'

In establishing a 'new' metropolitanate of Kiev, Bartholomew wasn't admitting the existence of two metropolitans of Kiev. He was rescinding his predecessor's gift of the metropolitanate of Kiev to Moscow. The most interesting thing from his point of view was the assertion of his right to do it. In asserting that the metropolitanate of Kiev is still in his gift he is implicitly asserting that the patriarchate of Moscow is also still in his gift and that the long period in which Moscow acted without reference to Constantinople (in particular since Peter created the Holy Synod in 1721) could be regarded as illegitimate. I don't know if the title 'Patriarch of Kyiv' will continue in existence after the death of Philaret. Constantinople is geographically quite close to Ukraine and if the patriarchate of Constantinople could exercise direct power in Ukraine its position - so terribly weak in Istanbul - would be greatly strengthened.

The quarrel between Constantinople and Moscow is a remarkable development in the history of the Orthodox Church(es) worldwide. Whether it is of much benefit to the pastoral needs of the people of Ukraine is another matter.

How this pans out will eventually depend on the outcome of the current Russian 'special military intervention.' The long term consequences for the Orthodox Church will probably turn on who is most blamed for the large numbers of Ukrainian soldiers killed in the course of it - the Russians for the invasion and seizure of territory, or the Ukrainian nationalists and their western backers for, over the course of the past twenty years, pushing them into a confrontation which they didn't want and couldn't hope to win.