The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia , and: *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism* , and: *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov': Sovremennoe sostoianie i aktual'nye problemy* [The Russian Orthodox Church: Contemporary Condition and Current Problems] (review)

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Wallace L. Daniel, *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia*. 251 pp. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006. ISBN 1585445231. $29.95.

Zoe Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism*. 257 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005. ISBN 0415320534. $170.00.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Mitrokhin, *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov': Sovremennoe sostoianie i aktual'nye problemy* [The Russian Orthodox Church: Contemporary Condition and Current Problems]. 648 pp. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004. ISBN 5867933245.

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Post-Soviet Russia has been characterized by a visible resurgence of the country's arguably most important cultural institution, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). After seven decades of alternating persecution and soft repression by the atheistic Soviet state, the Church has experienced a remarkable renaissance, both in terms of recovered physical infrastructure and in social status.[1] Visitors to today's Russian Federation will observe the ongoing renovation and reconstruction of church buildings, the proliferation of kiosks selling religious materials on many city streets, the ubiquitous Orthodox clerics offering commentary to the mainstream television stations, and other daily manifestations of Orthodoxy's pervasive public presence. President V. V. Putin is, according to reliable accounts, a practicing Orthodox Christian, as are an increasing number of officials in the government apparatus.[2] Accordingly, scholars have begun to explore both the extent

[1] In 1988, the ROC listed 67 dioceses, 21 monasteries, 6,893 parishes, 2 spiritual academies, and 3 seminaries. By 2005, these numbers had increased to 133 dioceses, 26,600 parishes (12,665 of them in Russia proper), 688 monasteries, 5 academies, and 33 seminaries. See *Speech of Patriarch Alexei II to the Annual Diocesan Conference of the Clergy of Moscow from December 21, 2005* (www.interfax-religion.com/print.php?act=news&id=721).

[2] Among these accounts is Putin's own, most recently "Vladimir Putin vystupil protiv prikaznogo vvedeniia OPK v shkolakh," *Portal Credo*, 14 September 2007 (www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=56838&topic=361). See also Roman Lunkin, "Polisimfoniia ot polpreda: Predstavitel´ prezidenta RF v Privolzhskom federal´nom okruge Aleksandr Konovalov

and the implications of this phenomenon. Broadly, analysts have looked at the following issues: the degree to which Russian society can really be called Orthodox; the relationship between the Church and the political regime, specifically Orthodoxy's role in democratization; the position of the Russian Orthodox Church within civil society; and the contribution of Orthodoxy to the creation and maintenance of a cohesive post-Soviet Russian identity.[3] The deepening of the research agenda can be easily traced: if at first scholarship on post-Soviet Russian Orthodoxy found expression exclusively in academic articles or conference anthologies, since 2004 several serious monographs on the subject have been published both in Russia and in the West, three of which are reviewed here.

The disciplinary background of scholars currently working on today's Russian Orthodoxy is quite varied; it includes sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and, less frequently, historians. The methodological difficulty historians experience in tackling a modern-day subject hardly needs to be stated; at the same time, two of the three authors reviewed here—Nikolai Aleksandrovich Mitrokhin and Wallace L. Daniel—are historians by training, suggesting the timeliness of an assessment of the ways that history is employed in the scholarly analysis of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church. This review, then, focuses not just on how the three monographs treat the subject of their inquiry but also on aspects of these works that should be of particular interest to *Kritika*'s audience. Specifically, the review stresses the pitfalls inherent in the (unavoidable, to be sure) interpretation of a contemporary phenomenon through a particular reading of history; it also brings attention to the need for a critical reassessment of the way in which scholars (historians or otherwise) in general treat fundamental assumptions regarding the historical pattern of church–state relations in Russia.

All three books are welcome contributions to our understanding of the post-Soviet Russian Orthodox Church. In terms of institutional analysis, Nikolai Mitrokhin's 650-page volume is the most impressive. Based on eight years of research in over 40 dioceses, the book devotes attention to almost

narisoval protivorechivoe budushchee otnoshenii rossiiskogo gosudarstva i tserkvi," *Portal Credo*, 19 July 2007 (www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=55702&type=view).

[3] For example, Alexander Agadjanian, "Revising Pandora's Gifts: Religious and National Identity in the Post-Soviet Societal Fabric," *Europe–Asia Studies* 53, 3 (2001): 473–88; Marat Shterin and James Richardson, "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Precursors of Russia's New National Law," *Journal of Church and State* 40, 2 (1998): 319–41; Leslie McGann, "The Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Aleksii II and the Russian State: An Unholy Alliance?" *Demokratizatsiya* 7, 1 (1999): 12–27; Lee Trepanier, "Nationalism and Religion in Russian Civil Society: An Inquiry into the 1997 Law on 'Freedom of Conscience,'" in *Civil Society and the Search for Justice in Russia,* ed. Nikolas Gvosdev and Christopher Marsh (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 57–73; and Zoe Knox, "The Symphonic Ideal: The Moscow Patriarchate's Post-Soviet Leadership," *Europe–Asia Studies* 55, 4 (2003): 575–96.

every imaginable aspect of the ROC's activities. Mitrokhin begins by dissecting the membership of the Church, critically assessing the actual number of active Orthodox believers in Russia and their socioeconomic backgrounds and analyzing the inner workings of parish communities (35–75). He then looks at the organizational administration of the Moscow Patriarchate, its economic activities, and the internal divisions among various Orthodox factions vying for control over the Church's spiritual and political agenda (76–234). The second part of the book analyzes such related issues as the relationship between the Church and the state, the social outreach of the Russian Orthodox Church, its missionary and educational endeavors, and its relationship with the media (235–408). Finally, the author explores such complex problems as the ROC's attempts to limit religious competition on Russian territory, the possibility of a rapprochement between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and the missionary work of the Church in countries where there is no indigenous Orthodox population (409–573).

For the non-specialist, Mitrokhin's book is a valuable introductory survey of the workings of the Russian Orthodox Church and its position in the domestic political, economic, and social spheres. Moreover, the volume's main theme—that underneath the glitter of rebuilt cathedrals and the outward rhetoric of politicians and clergymen, the Church faces serious internal problems and is unable to exercise real social or political influence—is largely correct, at least where it concerns the federal plane of Russian life. Thus Mitrokhin provides a much-needed corrective to the concerns of Russian human rights activists and U.S. policymakers regarding the undue influence of Orthodoxy on the federal state. To elaborate, since the passage of a 1997 Russian federal law meant to restrict the activities of "non-traditional" religions, the U.S. Department of State has issued regular reports criticizing what it views as an inappropriately close church–state relationship; here the U.S. government's position coincides with the Russian liberal opposition's assessment of the situation.[4] Mitrokhin also underlines the discrepancy between the proportion of the population identifying itself as Orthodox and the actual number of believers, rightly pointing to the fact that for most Russians, Orthodoxy appears to function as a marker of ethno-national, rather than religious, identity. (For example, in terms of church attendance, estimates have consistently placed the number of Orthodox Christians attending church

[4] See, for example, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, May 2005," 90 (www.uscirf.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/index.html); and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "International Religious Freedom Report 2005 (Russia)" (www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51576.htm).

once a month or more at between 3 percent and 7 percent, one of the lowest levels in the world.)[5]

As indicated by the titles of Knox's *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism* and Daniel's *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia*, both authors focus on a more narrow aspect of Orthodoxy's role in modern Russia than does Mitrokhin, specifically zeroing in on the complex relationship between the Church and the creation of a civil (and therefore presumably democratic) society. In the process, they come to radically different conclusions, even as they both at times intersect with and, more often, disagree with Mitrokhin's evaluation of the state of affairs.

Knox's book is devoted to three basic propositions. First, the Russian Orthodox Church occupies an increasingly powerful position in Russian society. Second, whether or not this is a positive development depends on whether the Church acts to support civil society (in which case democracy is strengthened) or acts to impede it (in which case democracy suffers) (2). Third, within the ROC there are two factions, one liberal and one conservative; the liberals are supportive of civil society, while the conservative ecclesiastical leadership is doing its best to crush both the liberals and civil society in general (105–31). Like Mitrokhin, then, Knox recognizes the existence of divisions within the Church along political lines; however, she assesses the institutional influence of the Moscow Patriarchate on Russian politics as significant and growing in a largely negative direction.

Similarly, Daniel believes that the ROC plays a crucial role in shaping post-communist Russia (3). He also describes the existence of two ideological factions within the Church (30–33). Unlike Knox, however, he does not assume that the conservative clergy and laity need necessarily be anti–civil society, only that their vision of Orthodoxy is turned inward, focused on reviving spirituality rather than on social service, which remains the domain of liberal Orthodoxy (151–66). Instead of focusing on official-level discourse and church documents, Daniel constructs his book around several carefully nuanced case studies of individual parishes and monasteries. In doing so, he provides a picture of Russian Orthodoxy and its relationship to society that is subtler and manifestly more optimistic than that of the other two authors. Both Knox and Daniel, in any case, explicitly underscore the importance of approaching the Russian Orthodox Church as a multivocal institution, even if they both make the mistake of assuming that there are only two ideologically opposed poles within the patriarchate. (Mitrokhin, following recent Russian scholarship on the matter, correctly recognizes at least three—traditional, liberal, and fundamentalist.)[6]

[5] Rick Fawn and Stephen White, eds., *Russia after Communism* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 102.

[6] See most notably the analysis of Aleksandr Verkhovskii, *Politicheskoe pravoslavie: Russkie pravoslavnye natsionalisty i fundamentalisty, 1995–2001 gg.* (Moscow: Tsentr "SOVA," 2003).

It remains to ask the question: who is right in terms of the actual influence enjoyed by the Russian Orthodox Church? On the national level, Mitrokhin argues persuasively that despite outward appearances, the Church is institutionally weak and is in any case an ineffective political actor. Indeed, with the exception of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience, the patriarchate has been unable to persuade the federal government to implement any of its legislative or policy proposals; the latest spectacular failure in this regard has been the attempt to obtain federal approval for the introduction of Orthodox education in public schools.[7] Moreover, even the onerous 1997 law has been implemented sporadically and has, over the past ten years, been challenged with some success in the Russian courts.[8]

At the same time, however, the failure of the Moscow Patriarchate to influence policy significantly at the federal level does not automatically mean that the Church is not important in modern-day Russia. The key words here are "federal" and "politics." Unfortunately, to date there has been no attempt at a comparative assessment of church–state relations across the 83 subjects of the Russian Federation. Mitrokhin acknowledges this dimension of the problem but devotes to it only a few pages of his own 600-plus-page tome (255–56). Admittedly anecdotal evidence suggests that regionally, the power of the Church in local politics is in places quite significant, depending on the personal relationship between the local bishop and the regional administration.[9]

Moreover, let us remember that the post-Soviet experience is not only about politics but also about a profound reconfiguration of symbols and ideas that provide meaning to everyday life. The collapse of communism entailed not only a shift from a planned economy and one-party rule to something presumably resembling a market economy and democracy; it also involved moving from a national ideology based on atheist materialism to one that would somehow have to be filled with new spiritual meaning. All three authors recognize the importance of this historical cataclysm for the analysis of the complex role of Russian Orthodoxy in post-Soviet Russia and

[7] See, on this topic, "Klerikalizatsiia obrazovaniia v Rossii: K obshchestvennoi diskussii o vvedenii predmeta 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul′tury' v programmu srednikh shkol," September 2006 (www.krotov.info/history/21/1/2006mitrohin.htm).

[8] Interview with Geraldine Fagan, resident reporter for *Forum 18 News Service* in Moscow, 15 February 2006. Also see the analysis by Anatolii Krasikov, president of the Eurasian Division of the International Association for Religious Freedom: Krasikov, "Svoboda sovesti—vazhnoe uslovie grazhdanskogo mira i mezhnatsional′nogo soglasiia," in *Svoboda sovesti—vazhnoe uslovie grazhdanskogo mira i mezhnatsional′nogo soglasiia: K 10-letiiu Rossiiskogo otdeleniia MARS*, ed. Krasikov (Moscow: Tsentr sotsial′no-religioznykh issledovanii Instituta Evropy RAN, 2003), 17–31.

[9] I am relying here primarily on data gathered during a research trip to Russia in the spring of 2006, as well as on private conversations with members (both clerical and lay) of the Russian Orthodox Church both before and after that trip.

highlight societal expectations: in the wake of the collapse, many Russians expected that the Church would take on the mantle of moral and social leadership, providing impoverished citizens with desperately needed assistance and serving as a spiritual and intellectual beacon lighting the way into a happier post-communist future.[10] Both Mitrokhin and Knox chronicle the disappointments that followed when these expectations were not met on the national level; Daniel focuses on the local successes. Having said this, however, all three authors underestimate one crucial historical context.

In assessing the Russian Orthodox Church's successes and/or failures in the post-communist environment, none of the books reviewed here adequately addresses the institutional devastation experienced by Orthodoxy over the more than seven decades of the communist regime and its consequences for the church leadership's ability to play an adequate post-Soviet role. While all three acknowledge the violent persecutions by early Bolshevism, only Mitrokhin addresses the fact that in the early 1990s, "On the religious map of an enormous country which had once been overwhelmingly Orthodox … there were only a few scattered islands of Orthodox parishes and dioceses" (10). Yet he does not connect this initial low starting point with the subsequent institutional failures of the Church that he proceeds to detail.

The ontological reasons for underplaying this crucial aspect of Russian Orthodoxy's post-Soviet travails differ among the three authors, which may stem from where they fall within the debate regarding the traditional pattern of Russian church–state relations. Roughly, this debate can be construed around two poles. On the one hand, we are presented with the image of a "Suffering Church," which was almost entirely destroyed by the Godless Bolshevik state and miraculously arose with its liturgy and hierarchical structure intact. (This is, in fact, the dominant narrative within the patriarchate itself.)[11] The emphasis here is on the many martyrs for the faith; the capitulation before the Communists in 1927 is seen as a courageous compromise undertaken to preserve the most important aspect of Orthodox life, the Eucharist. In the alternative interpretation, the Russian Orthodox Church was indeed subject to bloody repressions in the early years of communism, but the 1927 declaration by then-Metropolitan Sergii expressing loyalty to the Soviet motherland merely returned the Church to its traditional role of handmaiden to the state; in 1943, Stalin sealed the concordat by reinstating the patriarchate, assisting the Orthodox Church in forcibly returning to it thousands of Greek Catholic parishes in Ukraine and Belarus, and ultimately according privileges to the Moscow Patriarchate that it would happily enjoy

[10] For an examination of these hopes, see Lyudmila Vorontsova and Sergei Filatov, "Religiosity and Political Consciousness in Post-Soviet Russia," *Religion, State, and Society* 22, 4 (1994): 397–402.

[11] For example, Vladislav Tsypin, *Istoriia Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi, 1917–1990: Uchebnik dlia pravoslavnykh dukhovnykh seminarii* (Moscow: Khronika, 1994).

until the demise of the Soviet Union. Worse, all this was to be expected, given the ROC's history of acting as a complacent buttress of autocracy, whether in its Muscovite or its imperial forms.[12]

How one relates to this debate obviously affects one's analysis of the contemporary situation. Of the three authors, Mitrokhin's approach is the most nuanced. In his introduction to the book, he presents the Russian Orthodox Church as certainly the victim of a large-scale assault by the state that left the Church ultimately in an extremely weakened position (9). More than 150 pages later, he finally addresses the issue of collaboration with the Soviet state and its impact on the careers of the Church's current senior hierarchy. Here Mitrokhin presents evidence that would seem to contradict the idea, widespread among critics of the Moscow Patriarchate, that the post-Soviet patriarchal leadership is unquestionably morally compromised by the fact of its collaboration with the atheist authorities. He writes specifically about the state's attempt, in the early 1960s, to strangle the Church from within by ensuring the appointment of a number of pro-Soviet priests as bishops, who would presumably work to undermine Orthodoxy from within. However, as Mitrokhin writes, "the authorities miscalculated," for the newly minted bishops "did not become willing weapons in the hands of the state.... They did not want to show personal initiative in the strangulation of the Church but, on the contrary, tried very carefully to save what they could" (176). Such a version of events is particularly important considering that several of the bishops described in this episode currently occupy centrally important positions within the Church, among them the patriarch, the metropolitan of St. Petersburg, and the metropolitan of Khar´kov (177).

Knox views the matter in simpler terms: the attempts by the Moscow Patriarchate to secure for itself a privileged position in the post-Soviet configuration are to be understood as a continuation of the preference of the Orthodox hierarchy for a good relationship with the state power in exchange for political influence and, especially, economic benefit.[13] In her view, the prelates' main interest after 1927 was protecting "the few privileges they were

[12] Most famously, but by no means alone, in this regard, see Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 243. For a particularly critical evaluation of the Moscow Patriarchate's passivity under communism, see Gleb Yakunin, "The Orthodox Church and Prospects for the Future," in Sergei Pushkarev, Vladimir Rusak, and Yakunin, *Christianity and Government in Russia and the Soviet Union: Reflections on the Millennium* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989). Nikolas K. Gvosdev provides a cogent summary of this view of Orthodoxy and the state in his unfortunately little-noted book, *Empires and Elections: Reconciling the Orthodox Tradition with Modern Politics* (Huntington, NY: Troitsa Books, 2000), 15–38.

[13] A point Knox has reiterated subsequent to the publication of *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church,* most recently in "Church and State in Late Twentieth-Century Russia: Continuity and Change," a paper presented at the annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, New Orleans, 17 November 2007.

accorded"; if one equates privilege with truncated institutional survival at the cost of total control by a state bent on the extinction of religion, then one could agree with Knox on this point (52). For his part, Daniel presents the Church as a victim rather than as a collaborator. In describing the Moscow Patriarchate's Soviet trials and tribulations, however, he focuses primarily on the early stages, thus like Knox underestimating the traumatic effect of the entire 70-year period on the patriarchate's ability to function in the new reality (28–33).

Yet, in light of the research left us by Jane Ellis and continued by Nathaniel Davis, it is difficult to discount the evidence that by the time Gorbachev initiated *glasnost'* and *perestroika,* the Orthodox Church was in danger of imminent extinction, or what Davis termed "institutional death."[14] In the mid-1980s, a mere few years before major changes on the religious-policy front, it appeared as though Khrushchev had been almost on target when he had promised to "show the last Christian on TV by 1980."[15] Portents of the impending revolution were nowhere to be found; on the contrary, as late as 1986, Deacon Vladimir Rusak was sentenced to seven years in a labor camp for his book *Svidetel'stvo obvineniia* (Witness for the Prosecution), which chronicled the state campaign against the Russian Orthodox Church throughout the existence of the Soviet Union, not just the 1920s and 1930s.[16] At a minimum, both the defensive position of the Moscow Patriarchate toward the influx of foreign missionaries in the early 1990s and the Church's attempts to build a positively cooperative relationship with the suddenly friendly state should be understood in light of memories of the very recent trauma experienced by Russian Orthodoxy: if the early Bolshevik repressions could perhaps be thought of as belonging to the no longer threatening past, Khrushchev's crusade had occurred within the relatively recent personal experience of the patriarchate's *perestroika*-era leadership. To support this claim, one may recall the open support of Patriarch Alexii II for Boris Yeltsin in the 1996 presidential campaign. What some observers, Knox included, have interpreted as traditional servility before the secular authorities stemmed in reality from the patriarchate's not unreasonable fear of renewed suppression of Orthodoxy should the Communists regain executive power.

Thus far, the critique here has focused on the authors' treatment of relatively recent history. There is, however, a deeper problem with the manner in which the monographs interpret Russia's historical pattern of church–state relations. For Mitrokhin, Knox, and Daniel, this relationship is unquestioningly

[14] Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2003), xvii. See also Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

[15] Davis, *A Long Walk to Church,* 33.

[16] Vladimir Stepanov, *Svidetel'stvo obvineniia: Tserkov' i gosudarstvo v Sovetskom Soiuze* (Valley Cottage, NY: Multilingual Typesetting, 1987).

informed by the two supposedly Russian Orthodox attributes of *sobornost´* and *symphonia* (Mitrokhin, 236; Knox, 105–31). Following a historical interpretation perhaps best exemplified by James Billington, all three authors understand *sobornost´* as a term laden with democratic connotations (Mitrokhin, 76; Knox, 157; Daniel, 76).[17] To be sure, when it comes to *symphonia,* the agreement between the authors dissipates: Mitrokhin and Knox view a model in which the state shares equal power with the Church as an impediment to democracy; Daniel believes that such a governing structure holds a positive promise, since the Church may be expected to moderate the state's unjust impulses. Neither Knox nor Mitrokhin claims that *symphonia* was ever perfectly applied in practice; Knox especially usefully refers to the "symphonic ideal" rather than its practical realization (107). Daniel, however, considers that symphonic harmony characterized both Kievan Rus´ and Muscovy (12–13).

Still, despite their differences on the implications of *symphonia* for modern Russian democracy, all three authors assume that both *sobornost´* and *symphonia* are somehow inalienable from that country's tradition of church–state relations. Yet an assessment of either concept as "traditionally Russian Orthodox" is problematic, for two related reasons. First, as will be discussed below, *sobornost´* and *symphonia* remain singularly undetermined ideas with questionable applicability to the realities of prerevolutionary Russian church–state relations. Second, because their historical manifestations remain open to a variety of interpretations, it is difficult for the Russian Orthodox Church to usefully employ either *sobornost´* or *symphonia* as the patriarchate attempts to restructure the church–state relationship in the hitherto unknown circumstances of administrative independence under a simultaneously secular and non-hostile regime.

In treating *sobornost´* and *symphonia* uncritically, Mitrokhin, Knox, and Daniel are fully in line with the approach of most scholars writing about Russian Orthodoxy. This is surprising, in light of the copious scholarship produced over the past two decades debunking long-held Russian and Western myths about the Church and its real relationship to state and society prior to 1917. Most obviously, this concerns Gregory Freeze, who has devoted much of his career to demonstrating that, contrary to widely held perceptions, the Synodal Church was not a willing handmaiden of the state, stagnantly ritualistic and staffed by theologically unenlightened clerics eager to participate in the subjugation of Russia's population.[18]

[17] See James Billington, "Orthodox Christianity and the Russian Transformation," in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux and John Witte, Jr. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 56–57; and Billington, "The Case for Orthodoxy," *The New Republic* (30 May 1994): 27.

[18] For example, Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Freeze,

Freeze's work has been fruitfully followed up by such scholars as Nadieszda Kizenko, Scott Kenworthy, Valerie Kivelson, Catherine Evtuhov, and numerous others, as evidenced most recently and most successfully in the volume of essays edited by Kivelson and Greene.[19] Through the work of these scholars, with its emphasis on studying both the "popular" and the "official" levels of Orthodox belief and practice, the Russian Orthodox Church in the imperial period emerges as a dynamic institution straining against the constraints imposed on it by a state that sought to transform the Church into a docile bureaucratic instrument. Yet neither Mitrokhin, Knox, nor Daniel addresses the historical contingency of the contemporary Orthodox understanding of either *sobornost´* or *symphonia*, an important omission considering the centrality of these terms in the minds both of scholars who believe that these concepts may be mined for positive contributions to democracy and of others who refer to *symphonia*, in particular, as proof that the Russian Orthodox Church does not accept Western norms of church–state separation.

The constraints of this review do not allow for a comprehensive deconstruction of either term; proposed, therefore, are a few limited observations. Regarding *sobornost´*, analysis of this term inevitably takes us no farther back chronologically than Khomiakov; it seems at least possible, however, that the famous Slavophile fell victim to a linguistic confusion stemming from the apparent similarity between Cyril and Methodius's translation of the Greek term *καθολικήν* ("universal") as *sobornaia* and the Russian word for "council" (*sobor*).[20] Furthermore, references in the literature to Khomiakov (and subsequently to Berdiaev, Solov´ev, and Bulgakov) as "Orthodox theologians" who developed the notion of *sobornost´* to its fullest extent are generally misleading, given that lay theologians in Orthodoxy do not have the authority to develop dogma that is automatically accepted by the entire Church; significantly, these particular Russian religious thinkers have been accepted within

"Subversive Piety: Religion and the Political Crisis in Late Imperial Russia," *Journal of Modern History* 68, 2 (1996): 308–50; and Freeze, "The Orthodox Church and Serfdom in Prereform Russia," *Slavic Review* 48, 3 (1989): 361–87.

[19] Among many others, see Nadieszda Kizenko, *A Prodigal Saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Scott Kenworthy, "Orthodoxy and the Social Gospel in Late-Imperial Russia," *Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe* 1 (2006); Valerie A. Kivelson, "The Souls of the Righteous in a Bright Place: Landscape and Orthodoxy in Seventeenth-Century Russian Maps," *Russian Review* 58, 1 (1999): 1–25; Catherine Evtuhov, "The Church in the Russian Revolution: Arguments for and against Restoring the Patriarchate at the 1917–1918 Church Council," *Slavic Review* 50, 3 (1991): 497–511; and Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene, eds., *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice under the Tsars* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

[20] On the proper translation of *καθολικήν*, see A. V. Lakirev, "Svoistva Tserkvi: Edinstvo, sviatost´, sobornost´ i apostolichnost´," *Biblia-Tsentr*, 4 August 2001 (www.bible-center.ru/article/properties).

the larger body of Russian Orthodoxy at best as philosophers, not as theological authorities. Ultimately, a serious inquiry into the history of *sobornost´* prior to its appearance in Khomiakov's discourse seems warranted.

Turning now to *symphonia,* most of the available literature follows the same pattern of unquestioningly assuming that the church–state relationship in pre-Petrine Muscovy followed, if imperfectly, the symphonic model, in which the church and state authorities were at least theoretically equal partners.[21] This paradigm especially concerns the period from the establishment of the patriarchate in 1589 to its dissolution by Peter in 1721. Peter's abolition of the patriarchate is seen as pernicious precisely because in doing so he supposedly destroyed the symphonic harmony between church and state (Daniel, 17). Yet the very circumstances of the patriarchate's establishment demonstrate the contrary: the Russian Orthodox Church received a patriarch not because of any demand for such an institution by the Orthodox clergy or laity, but because Boris Godunov reasoned that if the Russian tsar was the heir of the Byzantine emperor, then like his Byzantine counterpart he should have a patriarch by his side. The subsequent fate of the patriarchate during the Time of Troubles is instructive: every time the throne changed hands between 1598 and 1613, the new monarch deposed the sitting head of the Church and installed his own, leading to a situation where rival patriarchs paralleled the rival claimants to the monarchy. Later on, it is true, we see tsar and patriarch ruling together under Mikhail Fedorovich. This, however, was nothing more than a recognition of the fact that, had Fedor Romanov not been forcibly tonsured, he would have been elected tsar instead of his son; as Patriarch Filaret, he shared the burden of power until his death in 1633. Finally, the entire picture of symphonically concordant and equal relations between Orthodoxy and the state in Muscovy runs up against the phenomenon of Patriarch Nikon, who attempted, in barely disguised form, to subjugate the tsar to an Orthodox theocracy presided over by the patriarch. The analysis here closely follows the scholarship of N. F. Kapterev, who just before the Revolution of 1917 brilliantly and controversially presented this same critique of the idea that *symphonia* is inherent to Russian Orthodoxy.[22] Certainly, the propositions here are open to criticism; the point, however, is to emphasize the historically shaky nature of the *sobornost´* and *symphonia* constructs and perhaps to stimulate a broader discussion regarding their actual applicability to the Russian Orthodox tradition.

There is, then, much value to be found in the three volumes reviewed here. All three contribute to our empirical understanding of the contemporary

[21] See, for example, Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[22] See, for example, N. F. Kapterev, *Patriarkh Nikon i Tsar´ Aleksei Mikhailovich* (Moscow: Izdatel´stvo Spaso-Preobrazhenskogo Valaamskogo Monastyria, 1996); and Kapterev, *Kharakter otnoshenii Rossii k pravoslavnomu vostoku* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).

Russian Orthodox Church and its complex position within Russia's post-Soviet political and social spheres. When juxtaposed, Mitrokhin, Knox, and Daniel invite the reader to challenge preconceived notions about the ROC and its influence; the very fact that there is no consensus among these authors regarding the place of Orthodoxy within the new Russia and the patriarchate's institutional strength suggests that future research in this field is sure to continue yielding fruitful and frequently controversial results. Finally, even the failings of the monographs—particularly the uncritical approach to the implications of recent history for the Moscow Patriarchate's institutional capacity, and the unquestioning treatment of assumptions regarding the historical pattern of Russian church–state relations—contain in themselves promising directions for new and innovative scholarship. New investigations into the complicated links between historical legacies and contemporary outcomes in the post-Soviet context, revisiting the generally accepted models based on a better understanding of what *symphonia* and *sobornost'* have really meant for the history of both Russia and Russian Orthodoxy, would be a welcome contribution to the literature.

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