

# Messianic Narrations in Contemporary Russian Statecraft and Foreign Policy

*Ostap Kushnir*

The article aims to uncover the nature and distinctive features of the contemporary messianic narrations in the Russian public discourse, as well as estimate their impact on the actual policy-making. For this reason, the article scrutinizes the political philosophy of Aleksandr Dugin, Nataliia Narochnitskaia, Egor Kholmogorov, and Vadim Tsymburskii. Their major messages are contrasted and compared to a variety of recent developments in Russia's domestic and foreign policies. The hypothesis is put forward that the messianic narrations are furtive, though unalienable factors which propel and justify Russian domestic and foreign policies. Therefore, it is always worth considering Russian policy-making through the prism of the nation-wide religious self-identification, as well as acknowledging a number of 'eschatological duties' which derive from this self-identification. Finally, the article provides an overview to the Western scholarly perspectives on Russian messianism with a specific emphasis on British and US contributors.

*Keywords:* Russian foreign policy, Russian messianism, Russian expansionism, Third Rome, Dugin, Narochnitskaia, Kholmogorov, Tsymburskii.

## **Orthodox backbone of the Russian state**

The fall of Constantinople became a great occasion for the Grand Dukes of Moscow to strengthen the geopolitical stance of their fief-

Ostap Kushnir. Messianic Narrations in Contemporary Russian Statecraft and Foreign Policy. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 13, no. 1: 37–60.

© 2019 CEJISS. Article is distributed under Open Access licence: Attribution - NonCommercial 3.0 Unported (cc by-nc 3.0).



dom.<sup>1</sup> Filling the vacuum of power, they proclaimed themselves heirs to Byzantine Emperors which automatically 'converted' the land under their rule into the mythical Third Rome. In a deeply religious medieval European society this made a lot of sense. According to the Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, there should always be a harbour of virtue in the world of sin to withstand the arrival of Antichrist.<sup>2</sup> As both Roman and Byzantium empires had fallen and, thus, had failed to become such harbours, the Grand Duchy of Moscow remained the only power capable of succeeding.<sup>3</sup> Morini defined this as Milleniarism in the Russian political and religious culture – belief in the imminence of Judgement Day and getting ready for it.<sup>4</sup> The idea of their Duchy as the salvation of humankind had started to take shape.

Along with the Third Rome, the salvation of humankind had also much to do with the theological concept of Katechon (from the Greek *ὁ Κατέχων*, 'the withholding'), which the Grand Dukes of Moscow also applied to their fiefdom. As one of the interpretations of the Second Epistle, Katechon originally emerged in the times of the Roman Empire and stood for the kingdom of vigour and true faith which protected the world from the advent of the Antichrist.<sup>5</sup> To be efficient with this task, the kingdom should have secured a *symphony* between political and religious powers.<sup>6</sup> In the early Russian tradition, Katechon became a euphemism of Moscow as the Third Rome thus providing additional justification for such a heredity. With the flow of time the concept of Katechon evolved and embraced imperialistic flavour; apart from defensive and protective it also acquired offensive connotations.<sup>7</sup>

The religious component has always been – and still remains – of notable importance in interpreting Russian approaches to political reality. This becomes especially apparent in the light of Western secularism and clear separation of religion from politics. Engström is one of the researchers who systematically connects historical and contemporary Russian policy-making to the state's unique self-proclaimed messianic mission. The latter serves as a legitimization for Russian 'hard' and 'soft' geopolitical expansion into other states, as well as nurtures neo-imperial ambitions.<sup>8</sup> In contemporary domestic policies, as Engström claims, the religious component manifests itself in at least two dimensions. Primarily, it serves as an ideological substitute to the communist idea of the 'bright future' which proved to be fruitless. Secondly, it is commonly perceived as a backbone to a 'sovereign' and 'Russian'

alternative to a non-adjustable liberal democracy. In short, the new domestic political narrative is evidently conservative, strongly messianic, and full of anti-Western – or specifically anti-American – sentiment.<sup>9</sup>

In his turn, Sidorov argues that Christianity – in its Orthodox branch – is much more than a religion for Russians. From the very early times it directly impacted the construction of an indigenous worldview. As for today, according to Sidorov, Russia conducts 'Orthodoxy-related geopolitics' which resides in adjusting the church's historiography for geopolitical construction of 'various Orthodox, quasi-Orthodox or even secular currents in post-Soviet Russia'.<sup>10</sup>

The article puts forth the hypothesis that religious self-identification and messianic narrations are unalienable constituents of Russian domestic and foreign policies. They should always be considered by political scholars and practitioners when interpreting and predicting the Kremlin's advancements. Apart from this, the article argues that Russia has never been restrained by frameworks of a post-Westphalian sovereign state. Instead, in the cases of need and opportunity, it has frequently justified its assertive policies through self-branding itself as the 'force for good' – or the Orthodox Katechon – which uses its sovereignty as a tool to perform a global eschatological mission. One may speculate about the overall efficiency of this kind of a self-branding, however, its social impact cannot be disregarded, especially within Russia itself. The idea of struggling and fighting for the Orthodox Christian values has always worked to rally thousands of Russians around the flag. This idea continues to reoccur in contemporary public discourse and remains in the centre of attention of numerous Russian political philosophers and masterminds.

The article introduces the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of contemporary Russian messianic narrations?
2. Who are the major masterminds of Russian messianic narrations and what are their messages?
3. What is the real impact of Russian messianic narrations on practical politics and public discourse?
4. How do the Western academia react to the Russian messianic narrations as a justification for the state's assertive policies, specifically foreign policies?

As methodology is concerned, it will be based on Østbø's assessments of dominant religious narratives and 'messianic schools' in con-

temporary Russian political thought. Based on the diversity of interpretations of the Third Rome concept, Østbø pointed out four major ‘schools’ and highlighted crucial messages promoted by their masterminds (see Table 1):

CEJISS  
1/2019

Dugin is the founder and leading ideologist, as well as arguably the most outspoken popularizer, of neo-Eurasianism ... Kholmogorov is a prominent ‘young conservative’ and ideologist of Orthodox nationalism. Tsymburskii was also affiliated with the ‘young conservatives,’ but never departed from his irreconcilable isolationist stance. He is arguably the most innovative writer and the most respected academic ... Narochnitskaia is a leading neo-Slavophile and pan-Slavist, she wrote a best-selling history book, has been a parliamentary deputy and participates in Kremlin-supported ‘soft-power projects’ (i.e. think tanks) abroad ... Based on their general views I have classified Tsymburskii as ‘core oriented’ and ‘less Orthodox’; Dugin as ‘imperialist’ and ‘less Orthodox’; Narochnitskaia as ‘core oriented’ and ‘Orthodox’; and Kholmogorov as ‘imperialist’ and ‘Orthodox’.<sup>11</sup>

Østbø’s framework of four ‘schools’ each with its philosophic essence and leadership will provide the methodological backbone for assessing contemporary interpretations of Russian messianism, expansionism, and statecraft in this article. Østbø’s framework allows us to clearly highlight the connection between the transcendent justifications and indigenous policy-making in Russia on both international and domestic levels. With Østbø’s framework looking overly simplistic at first glance, there exists no apparent necessity to complicate it or introduce more specifications into it; at least not in this article (see Table 1).<sup>12</sup>

		Territory	
		<i>Core-Oriented</i>	<i>Imperialist</i>
Religion	<i>Less Orthodox</i>	Tsymburskii	Dugin
	<i>More Orthodox</i>	Narochnitskaia	Kholmogorov

Table 1

## Masterminds of Russian messianism and their visions of statecraft

Speaking of the first school defined by Østbø (neo-Eurasianism), one of its most outspoken representatives today is Aleksandr Dugin, a Russian national conservative. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Dugin continued to perceive the assertiveness of Russian foreign policy – especially in the Asian dimension – as something natural and unavoidable. From his perspective, Russia as the major land-power finds itself in an eternal struggle with the global maritime Carthage, which is the US. Russia is the new pivot of history, ideologically strong and consistent, legatee of all ancient Rome’s virtues while the US is a global demagogue, embodiment of the Carthage vices, which seeks to secure its geopolitical objectives at all costs.<sup>13</sup> Thus, no other power after the fall of Constantinople – the Second Rome – possesses enough power to redesign the world order and make it fair once for all. Here one may find similarity to Toynbee’s reflections on Russia’s struggle with the Franks; the latter is used as the collective term for Western states.<sup>14</sup> However, Toynbee’s struggle was a kind of an eternal civilizational competition while Dugin goes as far as propagating the total destruction of opponents; he often cites Cato the Elder and his famous ‘Carthage should be destroyed’.<sup>15</sup>

It is worth noting that the category of Christianity is not specifically emphasized in Dugin’s picture of Russia as the Third Rome or in assessing Russian messianism.<sup>16</sup> From his perspective, that was not religion, but lifestyle and cultural flexibility of the title nation which allowed the Russian empire to emerge, expand, and embrace heterogeneities.<sup>17</sup> Going further with this argument, Christian faith did not prevent the fall of the First Rome as the global defender; historically, many early Christians desired this to happen.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as Dugin deduces, the value of Orthodoxy should not be overestimated in justifying Russian expansion and messianism.

Dugin argues that Russia has no other way to exist except for being victorious and a constantly growing Empire: ‘The whole history of Russia is the history of the construction of the Empire. Russia either becomes the Empire or disappears’.<sup>19</sup> In order to prosper and fulfil its mission, Russia should build reliable alliances with Germany, Iran, and Japan; Dugin defines this as the New Empire.<sup>20</sup> Apart from this, Russia is doomed to establish firm control over Belarus, Ukraine, Mongolia, parts of China and other neighbouring states. This will allow it to

*Messianic  
Narrations  
in Russia*

strengthen its position as the heartland and jockey for commanding the world, as MacKinder provisioned it.<sup>21</sup>

According to Dugin, Russia, as the only geopolitical entity combining true Orthodox faith with true political leadership, should unite and lead other nations – especially the above mentioned Germany, Iran, and Japan – against Carthage.<sup>22</sup> Criticizing the superiority of religion in empire-building, Dugin strongly supports the idea of inseparability of altar and throne in his reflections; he calls it a natural symphony. Dugin also belongs to the cohort of supporters of the Katechon idea. However, his understanding of Katechon is imperialistic in a sense that Russia should ‘liberate’ and ‘lead’ other nations against a global enemy. Thus, Russian expansion throughout history was nothing else but a geopolitical manifestation of a sacred mission aimed at the unification of giant Eurasian territories into an eschatological and apocalyptic type of state.<sup>23</sup> Continuing with this point, Østbø concludes: ‘Since the Russians are a chosen nation and a God-bearing people, no rules that apply to other nations concern the Russians ... Consequently, to kill for the Third Rome is not a necessary evil, but a moral imperative’<sup>24</sup>

In a word, the utter objective of the Russian sacred messianism resides in an annihilation of the enemy – the pure evil – defined as the Carthage and currently represented by the US and Atlantic sea powers. In its turn, the utter objective of Russian imperialism resides in scrupulous organizing of other nations – the pure good – under one leadership, even if they are not aware of the eschatological mission.<sup>25</sup> The religious kinship of Russia’s immediate European neighbours serves as a proper ground and proper justification to meddle into their affairs. Russia’s statecraft is seen as a perpetual ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ expansion.

Nevertheless, Dugin’s narration often looks paradoxical and even mind-bending. While reading his books, one should be ready to encounter unexpected deductions, some of which are hard to believe in. Apart from this, his books contain a plethora of contradictions and may be regarded – in some respect – as a masterpiece of elegant demagoguery. Umland defines the overall Dugin philosophy as a very dangerous one, as it demonstrates clear appreciation for fascism.<sup>26</sup>

Similar to Dugin, Nataliia Narochnitskaia also stresses the importance of unique spirituality in understanding Russia and its historic mission. However, she is not as statist and Eurasia-charmed as Dugin; she represents the conservative Orthodox wing of Russian nationalists, who predominantly share pan-Slavist and Europeanist views.<sup>27</sup>

She constructs her narration on the dichotomy between Orthodox Russia and the Anglo-Saxon West, treating the latter *a priori* as God-alienated and heretic. According to Narochnitskaia, the history of humankind is a by-product of interactions between different religious groups and ideas.<sup>28</sup> Thus, it is impossible to interpret history by removing the spiritual element, as the West does it. Europe loses its identity by secularization and inappropriately replacing spiritual virtues with liberal democracy. Moreover, total secularization makes the West unavoidably hostile towards Russia. As Østbø summarizes Narochnitskaia's major ideas: 'The Russian state's expansion was for the most part in self-defence and can be justified by international law ... [The Western view on Russia – O.K.] is stereotypical and essentially false, partly because important research on Russia is not objective. It is rooted in heretical and inhuman thought and misunderstandings and is closely related to geopolitics, i.e. to the desire to conquer and annihilate Russia.'<sup>29</sup>

Narochnitskaia argues that Russia managed to preserve its spiritual identity because it avoided Renaissance frivolity, Cartesian rationalism, the revolutions of the 18th century, and the growth of Protestant ethics of labour and wealth. Since the very beginning, the Orthodoxy as a true faith existed in Russia in its purest form, which makes Russia a unique and superior nation, especially as its spiritual morality is concerned. This perspective allows Narochnitskaia to present her narration as ultimately truthful and notoriously uncompromising.

The Third Rome concept in the understanding of Narochnitskaia is solely a religious one. Third Rome is not imperialist, but imperial; it is more spiritual than secular; it should not be regarded beyond its historical context. This said, the Anglo-Saxon West misinterprets the whole idea of Russia as the Third Rome. It is not about building a strong mega-state – the global empire – where Christians could feel secure, but an attempt to build a strong community imbued with Christian religion.<sup>30</sup> Autocracy in such a community – which may, but does not have to, surpass state's borders – is the only truly form of governance. The existence of such a community is a dire need for the salvation of all humankind.<sup>31</sup>

Coming back to geopolitical issues, Narochnitskaia perceives the struggle of global super-powers for control over the space between the Baltic and the Black Seas as of the paramount importance. The Anglo-Saxon West tries to enroot itself there by all means possible seek-

ing for acquisition, in MacKinder's terms, the access to the Heartland. From this perspective the democratization of the post-communist European states is an artificial process; it neither reflects indigenous nation-forming trends, nor should be regarded as some kind of liberation. Narochnitskaia defines it as a straightforward implementation of Anglo-Saxon strategies aimed at penetration into the traditionally Orthodox area.<sup>32</sup> These arrogant moves undermine the overall geopolitical architecture, question the pivotal role of Russia, and lead to some very grave consequences. For instance, the recent geopolitical frictions on Anatolian peninsula, Balkans, in the Middle East, and Eastern Europe emerged because of the Western negligence.<sup>33</sup>

Narochnitskaia goes even further stating that the Anglo-Saxon accusation of Russia in expansionism serves as a mask for the former to hide its imperialist desires.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the majority of Russia's troubles derive from Western hostility towards Slavs, or even towards the whole Orthodox world. In this light it is perfectly moral, right, and dutiful for the Russian leaders to withstand assaults from the Anglo-Saxons. Apparently, this requires the construction of an authoritative sovereign entity capable of securing the Orthodox faith on lands where it has been practised for ages; here Narochnitskaia arrives with the term Russian fiefdom to define these lands.<sup>35</sup> The unification of all Orthodox peoples – Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Greeks, and others – is necessary to address the geopolitical, demographic, and ideological challenges of the modern world, which have much to do with the Western vices.<sup>36</sup>

According to Narochnitskaia, Russia does not expand into third states, but defends what has traditionally been Orthodox and Byzantine. If, to paraphrase, Russia always strengthens its presence in lands which are targeted by the Anglo-Saxon West; it prevents the latter from erasing the rich spiritual culture in these lands for the sake of heretic emptiness and liberal democracy. Acting assertively in the international arena, Russia ruins Western deceptive plans and reinforces the organic Orthodox regimes whenever necessary. By doing so – predominantly in the European dimension – Russia indirectly changes the way the world looks like. This has always been the role of Russians in the global history.

Thirdly, Østbø defines Egor Kholmogorov as a self-proclaimed nationalist and partisan of a self-invented theory of pragmatic imperialism. His views emphasize the unquestioned superiority of Orthodox Christianity and can be – in some respects – defined as fundamentalist.<sup>37</sup>



Seemingly flexible and inclusive, Kholmogorov's nationalism nevertheless is very dichotomic. Its nature can be best illustrated through the structure of concentric circles. In the core of the structure the title Russian nation resides, which shapes and spreads the only correct version of Russian identity. Other ethnicities – or distinctive social groups such as Oldbelievers, Pomors, and others – simply orbit around that sense-awarding core; some farther, some closer, but none willing to exist on their own. Kholmogorov argues that Russia is a political imperial nation which unites citizens who recognize Russia as the worthy state to live for and live in.<sup>38</sup> This inclusiveness provides an appropriate environment for a hassle-free coexistence.

Kholmogorov admires the imperial order and awards it with numerous positive features. For him, the empire represents the ultimate religious form of governance and thus serves as an appropriate tool to convey God's grace to Earth. In particular, this applies to Russia and the sacred mission of its nation; Russia needs to be an empire to fulfil itself.<sup>39</sup> Going further with this argument, it is only Russia who can ever become a true Holy Empire, the Third Rome, or the Katechon, which possesses enough strength and vigour to act for the good of humankind.<sup>40</sup> That said, Russia has a transcendent right to expand in order to strengthen itself and create some kind of a sacred space inhabited and governed by Russians;<sup>41</sup> thus, expanding and Russification – in its wider meaning – is the only justified and appropriate geopolitical behaviour. According to Kholmogorov, 'Russians always "defend", even when it might seem that they attack'.<sup>42</sup>

Imperialism and Orthodoxy in foreign policy are complementary for Kholmogorov. One should not only apply a 'setting' of religion to understand Russia, as Narochnitskaia argues, but Russia is the only power which applies religion properly in the world context. Global affirmation of Orthodoxy serves as a shield against physical and metaphysical threats. Even the Western heretic and "anti-imperial" states are protected by Russia from the destructive elements which can simply not break through the vast Russian heartland: starting from Mongol invasion ending with the contemporary Islamic terrorism; these and others symbolize metaphysical evil in its physical incarnation.<sup>43</sup> Kholmogorov argues that if Russia fails, there will be no Fourth Rome, but instead the Apocalypse. He is also sure that Russians should apply all means possible – including the nuclear destruction of the world – to prevent evil from coming into our dimen-

sion. As Engström presents Kholmogorov's understanding of Russia as the Katechon:

Katechon "stands on the bridge between the Antichrist and the world and which does not let the Antichrist into the world. Nowadays it is not a bridge but rather a manhole, the lid of which is removed from time to time, and some vampires, or werewolves or murderers come out of this hole. The Russian tarpaulin boot stamps on that lid, and restores the silence for some time. The crawling beast knows that if it shows itself too much, the Russian will not hesitate to blast it together with the whole world. Because 'there shall not be the fourth one', and if before us there was the Flood, after us there is only the Apocalypse."<sup>44</sup>

Following this logic, contemporary Orthodoxy is not purely a religion, but the uncompromising justification for Russia to become the empire-defender and the ultimate stabilizer of global processes. The doom of this mission penetrates the Russian military-industrial complex and forces it to be ready for the intrusion of global evil – under various guises. As no other options exist, Russia should be strong enough to face its predefined future any moment and in full arms.<sup>45</sup> Developing this argument, Kholmogorov arrives with the concept of Nuclear Orthodoxy. The latter requires from Russia to possess enough nuclear weapons to defend Orthodox values – and thus defend the whole world from transcendent evil – as only the truly Orthodox state can do.<sup>46</sup> Naturally, the empire-defender should be governed by authoritarian leaders with almost unlimited control over their people; in their turn, people should be conscious enough to mobilize against evil at the very first request.<sup>47</sup>

Kholmogorov's philosophic reflections are utterly dichotomous and ultimately Russia-centric. He claims that it is only Russia who can fight global evil (which is visible only for Russians). Fighting that evil is the self-proclaimed Russian mission for the sake of all humankind. This type of apocalyptic thinking – which also justifies unlimited and pragmatic Russian expansion – does not inspire trust. On the contrary, it appears extremely worrying if one assesses Kholmogorov's elusive rationale for using the Russian nuclear arsenal.

Finally, Vadim Tsymburskii can be defined as the most consistent anti-imperialist and isolationist. Østbø writes that the philosophy of Tsymburskii represents the views of a new generation of moderate Russian nationalist intellectuals.<sup>48</sup>

Tsyburskii favours a civilizational approach to explain global processes. That said, he regards Russia as a unique civilization which emerged as early as the 16th century.<sup>49</sup> Since that time Russia as the Third Rome – which he defines as the locked spiritual community of Orthodox people – has existed in the environment of apostates. Actually, Russia became an isolated Orthodox island which is foretold to stand alone in the ocean of disbelief.<sup>50</sup> It is separated from the West by a belt of geopolitically ‘unstable’ states and cultures – the so called *Great Limitrof* – which prevent careless penetration of all Western ideas into its heartland.<sup>51</sup> This transforms Russia into a self-organized ‘stable’ geopolitical system with its unique geopolitical memory and identity.<sup>52</sup>

As a civilizationalist, Tsyburskii criticizes globalization and the impact it has made on international relations. He specifically disapproves the agility of the Western states to violate national sovereignties in the name of protection of human rights and other values. Tsyburskii claims that civilizational uniqueness – nurtured within the borders of the state – sees its utter enemy in any invader who crosses the border under any alien justification. The NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia in 1999, thus, was a severe crime from Tsyburskii’s perspective; this crime stirred the indigenous ecumene, caused a domino effect, and indirectly brought to life another atrocity, the 9/11 attacks. In a word, the isolationist civilizational approach makes Tsyburskii praise the self-containment and self-sufficiency of every state. These features – at least in the Russian case – constitute the source of power which may hypothetically attract states-‘straights’ from the *Great Limitrof* to the Third Rome in future.<sup>53</sup>

As one can see, Tsyburskii, unlike all three of the above mentioned philosophers, does not clearly support any kind of expansionism. He also speaks against a profound Russian engagement into European affairs, which includes – among other issues – the transplanting of ideas from Europe onto Russian soil. According to Østbø, ‘an ardent anti-imperialist, he argued that Russia’s historical obsession with expansion into Europe had been destructive, as expansion was always followed by forced retreat. At the same time, he was much less pre-occupied with Slaviness, ruralism and even Orthodoxy than other non-imperialists.’<sup>54</sup>

In the light of his anti-imperialism, Tsyburskii deduces that Russia became ‘more Russian’ by removing the ‘burden’ of the Soviet Union

from itself and alienating itself from the non-Slavic republics on its borders. This is the same as when the Grand Duchy of Moscow became 'more Orthodox' after the fall of Constantinople. Therefore, Tsymburskii argues that Russia should not 'expand' to bring Orthodoxy to others and thus fulfil its mission; its mission is different as it resides in erecting a spiritually strong Third Rome within its borders. By doing this Russia will undergo its civilizational purification and return to the old Slavic roots.

To present Tsymburskii's philosophy in a nutshell, he argued that Russia's post-Cold War borders were adequate and there was no need to project power onto new territories. Moreover, he condemned imperial expansionism, claiming that it brings more negative than positive effects; especially as the expansion into Europe is concerned. Russia, according to Tsymburskii, is a civilizational island and should always keep its distance from the outer world. Those states and nations situated on the periphery or on the borderlands between civilizations are likely to drift towards Russia by themselves. Even if they do not, this should not become a major issue of Russia's concern<sup>55</sup>.

Drawing conclusions on the general features of contemporary Russian messianic philosophy it is worth referring to observations of Khrushcheva:

Although Russia's position in the world could never exist in a vacuum, with a remarkable consistency the country insists on defining its global role on its own, as a unique and special nation. The Russians insist that their destiny to rule the world isn't influenced by other international conditions, such as economy, war, or energy and natural resources supply and distribution.<sup>56</sup>

Three of the four addressed above philosophers portray Russia as an outstanding and mysterious entity endowed with some kind of a transcendent aureole. Because of this, the state takes global responsibility for shaping fates of other nations and civilizations, either through coercion or attraction. The burden for Russians here resides in the necessity to fulfil their mission regardless of the worlds' protests; thus, Russians pertinently struggle, but stubbornly proceed because they understand that their mission is *a priori* incomprehensible for the logic of non-Russians. These and other similar messages are being regularly sent into the Russian public discourse. Only selected philosophers, such as Tsymburskii, favour a more cautious approach.

It is also worth stressing that the reflections of the four mentioned above philosophers can hardly be defined as properly academic. Their work with facts and arguments, so crucial for Western science, sometimes lacks consistency and accuracy. At the same time, their narration may look excessively metaphoric. This is especially common for Kholmogorov who, actually, may not have even acquired the proper higher education qualifications.<sup>57</sup>

### **Western views on Russian messianism and statehood**

Addressing the Western philosophic and geopolitical views on Russia, one may hardly encounter any understanding of its messianism, exceptionalism, or 'duty' before humankind. On the contrary, Russia's aggressive foreign policy is defined by many in the West as an existential threat.

As early as the age of Enlightenment, Montesquieu claimed that Russia was a huge prison led by the autocratic monarch whose rule – as well as the rule of his favoured nobility – was based on fear. Rousseau and Diderot shared a similar opinion.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Diderot condemned the autocracy as a major obstacle for any progress. Even if the monarch decided to implement political reforms, they would not reflect the will of the people and thus cease to exist in the short run. The reforms of Catherine the Great were exemplary in this regard. Inspired by the ideas of French philosophers, she provided common people with more liberties, but this resulted in anarchy and increased social tensions. Thus, she reversed reforms and awarded the nobility with even more power than ever before; paradoxically, this turn reflected one example of absolutist misconduct which led to the revolution in France.<sup>59</sup>

A fair number of the contemporary British and US assessments of Russian messianism and statecraft are in line with what was argued during Enlightenment times. Specifically, as Russian interpretation of the Third Rome concept is concerned, Arnold J. Toynbee should be named as one of the leading scholars here. He stated that throughout centuries, Russians cherished the feeling of their belonging to the Byzantine civilization, which had always conflicted with the Western one. The latter, in its stead, was perceived as akin to Byzantine, but much more aggressive and defective, and thus should be resisted and contained. It was, however, more technologically advanced. Toynbee argued that Russians lived in constant stress that their Byzantine belonging may be overridden by non-welcome Westerners. To relieve

that stress, Russians applied tactics of borrowing the newest technologies, incorporating them into the indigenous discourse, and turning them afterwards against the West. For instance, this was the case with the atomic bomb. Toynbee claimed that the Russian aggressiveness and expansionism was, above all, a counter-offensive of a 'spiritually holistic' and conservative society against the threats coming from its 'heretic' and protean arch-rival. From a wider perspective, this had always been a traditional way of policy-making between the Byzantine and Western civilizations; the competition of the Heirs of the Promise with whom the future lay: 'When Byzantium and the West are at odds, Byzantium is always right and the West is always wrong'.<sup>60</sup> Thus, Russia's alignment to the Byzantine legacy – which envisages the subjugation of the church and society to the state's interest – will always be criticized by the West. In turn, the West – because of its pragmatism, secularism, and feeling of superiority – will always be misunderstood by Russia and remain impenetrable for its values. Above all, the West will never go along with Russia's dictum of its spiritual exclusiveness and certainty of being the only 'true doer' regardless of circumstances.

Unlike Toynbee with his moderate approach, Harvard historian Richard Pipes claimed that Russia had always favoured brutality and primitivism in its foreign policy. There existed no reasonable justification behind its messianic idea, except from its overinflated ego. According to Pipes, the Third Rome brand and respective 'obligations' were unilaterally adopted by the Dukes of Moscow and popularized among their nationals. No one actually knew what stood behind the brand, but that did not discourage Dukes from awarding it with some transcendent meaning and starting conquests. As Pipes writes:

Heady ideas now began to circulate in the towns and villages of north-eastern Russia. Princes, whose ancestors had to crawl on all fours for the amusement of the khan and his court, now traced their family descent to Emperor Augustus and their crown to an alleged Byzantine investiture. Talk was heard of Moscow being the 'Third Rome,' destined for all time to replace the corrupted and fallen Romes of Peter and Constantine. Fantastic legends began to circulate among the illiterate people, linking the largely wooden city on the Moskva river with dimly understood events from biblical and classical history.<sup>61</sup>

Because of his staunchness, Pipes became the major target for Narochnitskaia, who constantly accuses him of utter misinterpretations

and distortions of the history of Russia. According to Narochnitskaia, Pipes is the classical example of a secularized Anglo-Saxon scientist who lacks the appropriate tools to assess Russian civilizational complexities fully and obtain a consistent picture.

Daniel B. Rowland also raised the issue that Western academia and statesmen had always perceived Russia as an inherently aggressive state. From its very dawn, the whole idea of Russian statehood imminently implied readiness to conflicts and wars. As Rowland presented it:

This idea, which sometimes seems like the only idea that the general public knows about Muscovite Russia apart from the imagined character and reign of Ivan the Terrible, has helped to create the impression that Muscovite Russia was exotic and expansionist, a worthy predecessor of the 'evil empire' that occupied people's attention in the 1980s and before. This image of Muscovy, in turn, promotes the notion in the minds of Russians and foreigners alike that Russia is destined by her Muscovite past to behave in certain ways.<sup>62</sup>

The US ambassador to the Soviet Union and one of the Cold War architects, George F. Kennan, stated the following of the Soviet Communists: 'From the Russian-Asiatic world out of which they had emerged they carried with them a scepticism to the possibilities of permanent and peaceful coexistence of rival forces. Easily persuaded of their doctrinaire 'rightness,' they insisted on the submission or destruction of all competing power'.<sup>63</sup> As one may see, Kennan reiterated the idea of Russians perceiving themselves as 'true doers' under strong unchallenged leadership, which often entailed the destruction of external competitive forces.

More recently, Robert C. Blitt also notes that the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on the contemporary Kremlin policy-making goes beyond its spiritual domain. The only Patriarch Cyril enjoys very good connections to state officials and plays a notable role in shaping and promoting the Russian foreign policy objectives. Blitt unequivocally points to the amalgamation of the religious and political agendas – regardless of their formal constitutional separateness – in Russian *modus existendi*, which makes the Kremlin advocate the Orthodox 'traditional' values on the domestic level and overseas.<sup>64</sup> This amalgamation can never be regarded positively as it leads to positioning the religious institutions above law and sovereignty. Here is how Blitt presents his conclusions in a nutshell:

*Ostap Kushnir*

To be certain, the unfolding relationship [between the Church and the government – O.K.] has fomented a counter-intuitive situation, whereby a constitutionally declared secular state promotes a particular religious agenda as part of its foreign policy on the global stage. The consequences of this partnership have serious implications at the international level, manifested in efforts to supplant universal human rights norms and legitimate the rationale that certain select “traditional” or “major” religions merit greater influence in the formulation of international rules than others... [Apart from this] Russia’s neglect of explicit constitutional directives in the foreign policy context compounds the already negative treatment afforded to domestic human rights protections intended to safeguard.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, Daniel P. Payne adds to Blitt’s conclusions that the Russian Orthodox Church has established a profound symbiosis with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Church provides support – institutionalized through the respective working group in 2003 – for the Ministry’s strategic activities. In particular, Payne underscores three layers of this support. Primarily, the Church contributes to the development and implementation of national security objectives, specifically ‘spiritual security’. Secondly, the Church serves as the intermediate and mechanism to re-acquire the lost Soviet property which the Kremlin perceives as rightfully theirs. Thirdly, the Church serves as a magnifier of the Kremlin’s influence in the world through the use of its networks and the promotion of Russia’s strategic interests. The latter also entails keeping the broadly understood ‘Russian diaspora’ under one centralised cultural and political umbrella. Payne argues that if Russia aims to restore its superpower status – and there is no apparent evidence to deny this – than an appropriate tool is needed. The Russian Orthodox Church with its geopolitical ‘messianic’ potential and non-subjugation to the foreign ‘secular’ agendas can easily become such a tool.<sup>66</sup>

Bearing all of the above mentioned in mind, the rivalry between Orthodox Russia and the ‘Carthaginian’ West should never come as a surprise; it cyclically reappears in history. Haukkala stresses that even if Russia tries, the principles of Western coexistence and democratic identity cannot be incorporated genuinely into the state’s nature.<sup>67</sup> Instead, centuries-old Russian traditional expansionism seems to constitute a much more efficient and rational *modus operandi*. One may find



the latest proof in the post-Cold War experience. Deliberate attempts under President Yeltsin to preserve and enhance Russian geopolitical importance through democratic mechanisms were faulty.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, Putin's return to assertive outward-looking policies was predictable; it is the return to Byzantium roots which successfully nourished the Russian Tsardom, Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union.

*Messianic  
Narrations  
in Russia*

### **Repercussion of Russian messianism on real-life policy making**

The impact of messianic narrations on the Russian public and political realities is paradoxical. Even if people do not recognize themselves as conscientious practitioners, they do agree, nevertheless, to the pivotal role of religion in a society. According to the most recent Levada Center survey *Russians about Religion*, 35 percent of Russians do not attend religious institutions or services at all, 16 percent attend them once a year, and 13 percent attend them less than once a year. Overall, these are 64 percent of the state's citizens who do not practice their faith according to all canons and traditions. Apart from this, 62 percent of Russian Orthodox and Catholic Christians do not find it necessary to receive Communion at all. The paradox here is that 68 percent of respondents all across Russia define themselves as Orthodox Christians.<sup>69</sup>

Speaking of the state's leaders, they regularly reiterate that Russian identity is incomplete without its religious constituent. Specifically, Putin himself stated a couple of times that the Russian state, people, and Orthodoxy are indivisible. As van Herpen presents: 'In August 2011, after a visit to a monastery in a Solovki Islands in the White Sea, he said that Russia is "the guardian of Christianity", and he recalled that his country was traditionally known as "Holy Russia". Without the Orthodox religion, he said, "Russia would have difficulty in becoming a viable state. It is thus very important to return to this source"'.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, Blitt cites Minister of Culture Alexander Avdeev, who underlined the connection of Russian culture with Russian Orthodoxy even earlier, in 2009: 'Russian culture will flourish and remain the centre of the national idea only if it will be in very close dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church, if it is connected with the understanding that the spiritual and historical value are both sacred values.'<sup>71</sup>

In general, Russian leaders and decision-makers appear to be very sympathetic to the messianic narratives as popularized by political philosophers and masterminds. Moreover, they cautiously support

and reinforce the symbiosis of a state with the Orthodox Church. For instance, looking at the 1999 National Security Concept of Russian Federation, one may find a 'spiritual security' objective among others. It stands for the intention to defend traditional values in the light of 'aggressive expansion' of the Western world. This justifies utilization of networks and parishes of Orthodox Church as instruments for moderating inter-cultural experiences within selected communities and territories.<sup>72</sup> Apart from this, Elena Mizulina, one of the most charismatic State Duma MPs, proposed in 2013 to add a provision to the Constitution of Russian Federation that Orthodoxy constitutes an exclusive feature of the national cultural identity.<sup>73</sup> Evgenii Fedorov, another MP, submitted at the same time a wide number of amendments to the Constitution which appraised the spirit of Orthodoxy and justified the introduction of a dominant national ideology. Amongst other issues, Fedorov advocated the necessity to remove any reference to the 'alien' norms of Western-originated international law, which would make the latter inapplicable in the Russian judicial system.<sup>74</sup>

As for the most recent updates, it was in December 2016 that Putin signed the Doctrine of Information Security of Russian Federation. In a few of its provisions – in particular III.12. – one may find a clear reference to the uniqueness of moral and spiritual values of a multi-national Russian population; the values which require defence as being eroded and distorted by external foes.<sup>75</sup> It is also important to mention that the Doctrine constitutes a part of the military policy of Russia aimed at prevention and prompt resolution of armed conflicts through information means.<sup>76</sup>

Speaking of the individual engagement of the contemporary 'messianic' philosophers into the state's political affairs, one should bear in mind that Kholmogorov cooperated with Putin's United Russia party in 2007. He led the 'Russian Project' in the media and tried to stimulate public discussion on the nature of patriotism and faith.<sup>77</sup> Narochnitskaia was appointed in 2008 as a chair of the branch of the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation in Paris, a Kremlin-supported think tank, which conveys Russian cultural messages to the West.<sup>78</sup> She also served as an active contributor to the Presidential Commission to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests (active 2009-12).<sup>79</sup> Not to mention that between 2003 and 2007 Narochnitskaia, as MP, represented the interests of the national-conservative party *Rodina* in the State Duma. As of Dugin, he is considered to have a sig-

nificant influence on Putin's advisers Yakunin and Glazyev. He cannot boast, however, of a direct connection to the President. Dugin's major impact on Russian policy-making is through his publishing activity, media presence, networking, and establishing international connections.<sup>80</sup>

The linchpin between messianism and statecraft in Russia can also be observed in the evocation and circulation of the Nuclear Orthodoxy concept.<sup>81</sup> The concept as such belongs to Kholmogorov. In its core, it advocates the necessity for the Orthodox narratives to constitute an ideological filling for the national military and, in such a way, justify Russia's transformation into an ultimate defender of humankind, the 'force for good'. Russian leadership seems to regard this concept with certain sympathy. For instance, Putin once stated that the Orthodox faith and the nuclear shield became the guarantors of Russian sovereignty and provided the backbone of Russian security on the domestic and international levels.<sup>82</sup> Apart from this, Patriarch Cyryl has chosen Holy Great Martyr Barbara to be the heavenly protector of the Russian nuclear deterrent. As the Patriarch stated, Holy Barbara is the only saint to inspire soldiers and officers with clear minds, love for their motherland, and feeling of responsibility before God and their nationals.<sup>83</sup> It is needless to reiterate again that President and Patriarch are on very good friendly terms.

*Ostap Kushnir*

## **Conclusion**

The hypothesis outlined at the very beginning of this article proved to be correct. The religious self-identification and messianic narrations are unalienable constituents of Russian domestic and foreign policies. They should be taken into consideration by scholars and politicians when attempting to analyse the Kremlin's policy-making.

In their essence, messianic narrations are the multifarious messages which circulate nationwide and convey transcendental justifications for pursuing certain external and domestic policies, often expansionist, imperialist and irrational. These narrations portray the target nation as the one chosen by the God to withstand the unceasing assaults of the 'global evil' (usually vaguely defined) and secure the preservation of humankind. In this light, messianism appears to be the ideology – or the mass-shared belief – which advocates the perception of the target nation as an ultimate 'true doer' or the tool of God. For messianism to gain momentum, it requires a certain political order – usually with elements of authoritarianism – to come into being.

Russian messianic narrations and understandings of statehood have evolved significantly from the Middle Ages but continue to be intertwined and to praise similar political convictions. These are necessary to regard Russia as the mythical Third Rome, heir to Byzantium, unceasing empire, and the last harbour (Katechon) of true religion, which is the Orthodoxy. Four of the most outspoken masterminds who develop this field of political philosophy are Aleksander Dugin (conservative and Eurasionist), Nataliia Narochnitskaia (neo-pan-Slavist), Egor Kholmogorov (nationalist and pragmatic imperialist), and Vadim Tsymburskii (isolationist). All of them were defined by Østbø as providing the most valuable and consistent impetus to the development of the four “schools” – more or less formalized – of Russian messianism. The differences in their views reside in the degree of interconnections between Orthodoxy and statehood, the degree of secularity of Russian messianic mission, and the degree of tolerance towards the West.

Three out of the four mentioned philosophers portray Russia as an eternal voluntary defender against ‘global evil’ – or even a metaphysical Antichrist – which may take different shapes and reveal itself in different ways: starting from development of ‘heretic’ technologies ending with the ‘apocalyptic’ trans-boundary terrorism. Non-Russian people may simply not understand the defensive Russian mission and mistreat its good intentions. Moreover, in case of resistance such people become minions of the global evil, and thus foes. As paradoxically this may sound, Russia operates overseas for the sake of humankind; accepting this statement as an axiom one can better explain the regularities in Russian foreign policy. Recalling Dugin, Russia has its own truth which is different from the Western one and the West should accept it.<sup>84</sup> It is only Tsymburskii who favours Russian isolationism and claims that Russia in its post-Soviet borders returns to its true Orthodox identity.

It would be incorrect, however, to overemphasize the role of messianic narrations and religious self-identification in propelling Russia’s assertive foreign policy. The Kremlin’s strategies and approaches are much more sophisticated, with the Orthodox leitmotif immanently present though frequently implicit, furtive to a degree, and perhaps even deliberately disguised. Thus, at times deeper scrutiny is needed to uncover it, properly identify it, and assess its impact on Russian political realities. That said, the impact is observable: the actors involved are not only the Kremlin’s elites but include a wide variety of recognizable

figures and opinion makers who highlight the dogma of Orthodoxy in their public activities. There also exists a close institutional link between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Foreign Ministry. Finally, the Russian media also reiterates certain religious messages and shapes public opinion appropriately.<sup>85</sup>

*Messianic  
Narrations  
in Russia*

Addressing the Western philosophic and geopolitical views on Russia, however, one may hardly discover anything related to the acknowledgement of messianism, exceptionalism, or a duty before humankind. Russia's aggressive foreign policy was defined by numerous scholars and decision-makers as an existential threat. Some of the philosophers portrayed Russia not as a saviour, but as a nomadic barbarian. Bearing this in mind, the rivalry between Orthodox Russia and the secular West should never come as a surprise; it cyclically reappears in history.

Western disapproval is often perceived by Russian philosophers as a heretic deed. It is nothing but a deceptive measure of the disguised evil to undermine the true doing of Russian leaders in their attempts to strengthen the empire-defender and reinforce the Orthodox shield for the good of all humankind. Once again, three out of four addressed Russian philosophers reiterate that the assertiveness of their state is a way to fulfil a transcendent mission, which should not be criticized by secular Western thinkers as they simply do not understand it properly.

Having accumulated enough resources, contemporary Russia attempts to promote its kind of world view globally. For this reason, in December 2013 a new International Information Agency Russia Today (IART) emerged and embraced its predecessor, the RIA *Novosti*. That was not an ordinary re-branding, however; an informational giant delivering uniformed messages domestically and externally came into being. Apart from this, the RT television network continues to broadcast in dozens of Western states and enjoys immense financial support from the Russian budget. For instance, in 2014 – after the Crimean annexation – state funding of the RT rose to 450 million US dollars.<sup>86</sup> Apparently, such generous investments allow the Kremlin to let the world know about Russian view on global affairs, as well as portray Russia as a dedicated, underestimated, struggling, but nevertheless ambitious and independent sovereign player.

OSTAP KUSHNIR is affiliated with Lazarski University and may be reached at o.kushnir@lazarski.edu.pl.

CEJISS

1/2019

## Notes

- 1 Richard Pipes (1995), *Russia under the Old Regime*, London: Penguin, p. 73.
- 2 Maria Engström (2014), 'Contemporary Russian Messianism and New Russian Foreign Policy,' *Contemporary Security Policy* 35 (3), p. 363.
- 3 Dmitrii Sidorov (2006), 'Post-Imperial Third Romes: Ressurections of a Russian Orthodox Geopolitical Methaphor,' *Geopolitics* 11, p. 321.
- 4 Daryl Morini (2009), '“Holy Russia”: The Cultural Influences of Orthodoxy on Russian Foreign Policy,' *The Annual Crossroads*, p. 74.
- 5 Sidorov (2006), p. 330.
- 6 Lee Trepanier (2007), *Political Symbols in Russian History: Church, State and the Quest for Order and Justice*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, p. 4.
- 7 Ostap Kushnir (2018), *Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism: The Divergent Break*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, p. 44.
- 8 Engström (2014), p. 357.
- 9 Ibidem.
- 10 Sidorov (2006), p. 318-20; Jardar Østbø (2011), *The New Third Rome. Readings of a Russian Nationalist Myth*, PhD diss., University of Bergen, p. 16.
- 11 Østbø (2011), p. 19-20.
- 12 Ibid., p. 47.
- 13 Ibid., p. 130-31; Aleksandr Dugin (1997), *Osnovy Geopolitiki*, Moscow: Arktogeia, p. 140; Aleksandr Dugin (2004), 'Karfagen Dolzhen Byt' Razrushen. Antiamerikanskoie Bol'shynstvo,' in *Filosofia Voyny*, Moscow: Yauza, p. 186.
- 14 Arnold Toynbee (1952), *Reith Lectures: The World and the West. Lecture 1: Russia*, 16 November, available at: <[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1952\\_reith1.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1952_reith1.pdf)> (accessed 08 February 2018).
- 15 Dugin (1997), p. 141.
- 16 Østbø (2011), p. 133.
- 17 Dugin (1997), p. III.
- 18 Østbø (2011), p. 133.
- 19 Andrei Rezchikov (2007), 'Imperskii Marsh Proshel po Moskvie,' *Vzgliad*, 8 April, available at: <<http://www.vz.ru/politics/2007/4/8/76422.html>> (accessed 08 February 2018).
- 20 Dugin (1997), p. 140.
- 21 Østbø (2011), p. 134.
- 22 Dugin (1997), p. 141.
- 23 Ibid., p. III; Østbø (2011), p. 143.
- 24 Østbø (2011), p. 157.
- 25 Ibid., p. 159.
- 26 Andreas Umland (2017), 'Alexander Dugin – A Russian Scarecrow,' *New Eastern Europe*, 20 March, available at: <<http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/interviews/2295-alexander-dugin-a-russian-scarecrow>> (accessed 08 February 2018).
- 27 Østbø (2011), p. 5.

- 28 Ibid., p. 168.
- 29 Ibid., p. 169.
- 30 Ibid., p. 172; Sidorov (2006), p. 323; Nataliia Narochnitskaia (2003), *Rossiiia i Russkie v Mirovoi Istorii*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, p. 119.
- 31 Østbø (2011), p. 173.
- 32 Ibid., p. 182; Narochnitskaia (2003), p. 507.
- 33 Narochnitskaia (2003), p. 413.
- 34 Østbø (2011), p. 185.
- 35 Narochnitskaia (2003), pp. 400, 422.
- 36 Ibid., p. 421.
- 37 Østbø (2011), p. 191.
- 38 Ibid., p. 197-98; Egor Kholmogorov (2006), *Russkii Natsionalist*, Moscow: Ievropa, p. 36.
- 39 Østbø (2011), p. 199.
- 40 Ibid., p. 202.
- 41 Egor Kholmogorov (2005), *Russkii Proekt: Restavratsiia Budushchego*, Moscow: Eksmo-Algorithm, p. 267.
- 42 Ibid., p. 280; Kholmogorov cited in Engström (2014), p. 365; Kholmogorov cited in Sidorov (2006), p. 330.
- 43 Engström (2014), p. 365; Veniamin Alekseev (2015), 'The Russian Idea: From Messianism to Pragmatism,' *Russian Social Science Review* 56 (3), p. 6.
- 44 Kholmogorov (2005), 18-19; Kholmogorov cited in Engström (2014), p. 368.
- 45 Østbø (2011), p. 203-204.
- 46 Ibid., p. 222; Engström (2014), p. 368-69.
- 47 Kholmogorov (2005), p. 34-35.
- 48 Østbø (2011), p. 20.
- 49 Vadim Tsymburskii (2007), *Ostrov Rossiia. Geopoliticheskie i Khronopoliticheskie Raboty 1993-2006*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, p. 7-11.
- 50 Østbø (2011), p. 102.
- 51 Sidorov (2006), p. 331.
- 52 Tsymburskii (2007), p. 21.
- 53 Østbø (2011), p. 119.
- 54 Ibid., p. 97.
- 55 Tsymburskii (2007), p. 7-11.
- 56 Nina L. Khrushcheva (2008), 'Russia's Rotting Empire,' *World Policy Journal* 25 (3), p. 110.
- 57 According to Østbø, Kholmogorov did not complete his studies at university. See Østbø (2011), pp. 191, 228.
- 58 Marcel H. Van Herpen (2016), *Putin's Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, p. 12.
- 59 Ibid., p. 13.
- 60 Arnold Toynbee (1947), 'Russia's Byzantine Heritage,' *Horizon*, August Issue, p. 81-87.
- 61 Pipes (1995), p. 73.
- 62 Daniel B. Rowland (1996), 'Moscow – the Third Rome or the New Israel?' *Russian Review* 55 (4), p. 591.
- 63 George F. Kennan (1998), 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct,' in Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge (ed.) *The Geopolitics Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 61.
- 64 Robert C. Blitt (2011), 'Russia's "Orthodox" Foreign Policy: The Growing Influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping Russia's Policies

Ostap Kushnir

- Abroad,' *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* 33 (2), p. 365.
- 65 Ibid., p. 373-74.
- 66 Daniel P. Payne (2010), 'Spiritual Security, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Russian Foreign Ministry: Collaboration or Cooptation?' *Journal of Church and State* 52 (4), p. 726-27.
- 67 Hiski Haukkala (2015), 'From Cooperative to Contested Europe? The Conflict in Ukraine as a Culmination of a Long-Term Crisis in EU-Russia Relations,' *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23 (1), p. 31.
- 68 Vladimir Horbulin and Aleksandr Litvinenko (2009), 'Bol'shoi Sosed Opredeleysia. Chto Ukraine Delat' Dal'she?' *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia*, 18 September, available at: <[http://gazeta.zn.ua/POLITICS/bolshoy\\_sosed\\_opredelilsya\\_chno\\_ukraine\\_delat\\_dalshe.html](http://gazeta.zn.ua/POLITICS/bolshoy_sosed_opredelilsya_chno_ukraine_delat_dalshe.html)> (accessed 12 February 2018); James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse (2016), 'Power Ideas and Conflict: Ideology, Linkage and Leverage in Crimea and Chechnya,' *East European Politics* 32 (3), pp. 316, 319.
- 69 Levada Center (2013), *Russians about Religion*. 24 December, available at: <<http://www.levada.ru/2013/12/24/rossiyane-o-religii/>> (accessed 12 February 2018).
- 70 Van Herpen (2016), p. 133.
- 71 Blitt (2011), p. 375.
- 72 Ibid., p. 368; Van Herpen (2016), 136.
- 73 Engström (2014), 375.
- 74 Ibidem.
- 75 Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (2016), *Doktrina Informatsyonnoi Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, available at: <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/6/5.html>> (accessed 22 October 2017).
- 76 *Sputnik* (2016), 'Putin Approves Russia's New Information Security Doctrine,' 06 December, available at: <<https://sputniknews.com/russia/201612061048209810-putin-information-security-doctrine/>> (accessed 12 February 2018).
- 77 Marlène Laruelle (2009), *Inside and Around the Kremlin's Black Box: The New Nationalist Think Tanks in Russia*, Stockholm: Institute for Security & Development Policy, p. 32-35.
- 78 Østbø (2011), p. 165.
- 79 Andrew Osborn (2009), 'Medvedev Creates History Commission,' *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 May, available at: <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124277297306236553>> (accessed 08 February 2018); Taras Kuzio (2016), 'Soviet and Russian anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism and re-Stalinization,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49, p. 88.
- 80 Umland (2017).
- 81 Engström (2014), p. 369.
- 82 Van Herpen (2016), p. 134.
- 83 Ibidem.
- 84 Gabriel Gatehouse (2016), 'The Russians Who Fear a War with the West,' *BBC Newsnight*, 25 October, available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37766688>> (accessed 11 March 2018).
- 85 Kushnir (2018), p. 66.
- 86 Theodore P. Gerber and Jane Zavisca (2016), 'Does Russian Propaganda Work?' *The Washington Quarterly* 39 (2), p. 82.