

BOOK REVIEWS

The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation, by Nicholas E. Denysenko, Illinois, Northern Illinois University Press, 2018, \$39.00 (paperback), ISBN 9780875807898

In January 2019, the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, issued a *tomos* granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, thrusting Ukraine's seemingly intractable ecclesiastical crisis into the international media spotlight. The publication of Nicholas E. Denysenko's *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation* is therefore quite timely, offering deep background for understanding the issues at hand.

Until 2019, post-Soviet Ukraine housed three rival Orthodox jurisdictions. Two of them—the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UOAC) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP)—claimed independence from any external control, while the third, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), was an autonomous part of the larger Russian church. Of the three, only the UOC-MP was recognized as legitimate by the “autocephalous” Local Churches representing the world's canonical Orthodox community.

Bartholomew's intervention was meant to unify the three rival groups into one. However, the unification council held in December 2018 succeeded only in bringing together the two non-canonical jurisdictions into a new organization, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), with the UOC-MP proclaiming its continued loyalty to Moscow. Currently, the UOC-MP retains strong positions in Ukrainian society, even if reduced by the transfer of a few hundred parishes to the OCU, while the latter stands riven by leadership struggles that threaten to break it once more into two separate churches. Thus, we come to the puzzle central to Denysenko's book: what explains the inability of Ukraine's Orthodox population to get along under one ecclesiastical roof?

The Orthodox Church in Ukraine does what no English-language work of its length has done previously, shedding light on a hundred-year-old history of schism within the Ukrainian Orthodox community that has affected millions of Ukrainians both in the homeland itself and in the North American diaspora. As Denysenko demonstrates, the existence of rival jurisdictions dates back to the collapse of the Russian Empire, at which time a sizeable segment of the population favored independence from the Russian Orthodox Church, which was widely seen as representing imperial oppression and spiritual stagnation. Initial attempts to obtain autocephaly through ecclesiastically acceptable channels failed, leading to a seminal event that gave rise to charges of illegitimacy that the autocephalist movement has had little success in countering for nearly a century.

At a 1921 council in Kyiv, a group of Ukrainian clergy and laypersons formed the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (in Denysenko's terms, “the 1921 UAOC”). Lacking episcopal support, the council performed an extraordinary rite in which the participants ordained a bishop for themselves. The refusal of the other Local Churches to recognize the UAOC hierarchy has haunted attempts to set up an autocephalous Ukrainian church ever since, even as the 1921 UAOC itself was decimated by Soviet authorities, surviving in North America and re-emerging in another iteration in German-occupied Ukraine.

At the same time, the UAOC positioned itself as the champion of a truly Ukrainian Orthodoxy, characterized by conciliarity (*sobornopravnist'*) and respect for Ukrainian traditions, most of all language, countering claims of ecclesiastical illegitimacy with those of national authenticity. Indeed, Denysenko's main and most convincing argument is that, 100 years after the original schism, the antagonists are unable to come together precisely because they spent the intervening decades fashioning distinct identities, forged by polemical exchanges and public statements by the clerical leadership on all sides. The UOC-KP (formed in the early 1990s as a result of entirely different

historical circumstances) has followed this pattern, countering the UOC-MP's arsenal of canonical arguments by appeals to Ukraine's independent national path.

Basing his conclusions on meticulous readings of internal church documents, polemical tracts, and other utterances, Denysenko paints a picture of not just one but several distinct Orthodox Ukrainian communities, each convinced of the rightness of its own path and of the perfidiousness of any other. Canonical legitimacy versus the interests of the nation, the never ending argument over collaboration with Germany during World War II, the American and Canadian diaspora experiences versus that of the homeland, differences over the Ecumenical Patriarch's prerogatives in relation to other Local Churches, attitudes toward the Soviet and imperial pasts—where one stands on these issues places the average Ukrainian believer in one camp or other, with little hope of resolution without a great deal of purposeful work toward finding common ground that would respect the parties' differing historical paths.

Denysenko's book represents an important step in this direction; he treats the protagonists of this story with laudable even-handedness, presenting all points of view with genuine respect. At the same time, the reader would have been well-served had he provided more historical context for understanding the beginning of the schism in 1917; the question of *why* the autocephalists wanted independence from Moscow is given short shrift, such that an interlocutor who has not read elsewhere on the subject would not understand what Denysenko means by "restoration of the Kiyv metropolia" and return to "Ukrainian traditions."

Similarly, placing the Ukrainian situation in the larger context of processes affecting the entire Russian Orthodox Church would have been helpful, at a minimum treating seriously the Soviet regime's attempt to eradicate religion by fomenting schism within the Moscow Patriarchate, and examining the links between the Renovationist/Living Church movement in Russia and the formation of the 1921 UAOC. Having said this, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine* is an indispensable work for anyone seeking to understand the religious situation in that country, as well as the ongoing troubled relationship between Ukraine and Russia generally speaking.

Irina du Quenoy
Georgetown University
Irishenka2008@gmail.com
[doi:10.1017/nps.2019.89](https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.89)

Dark Pasts: Changing the State's Story in Turkey and Japan, by Jennifer M. Dixon, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2018, \$55.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9781501730245.

Jennifer Dixon's *Dark Pasts* examines the politics of memory in two countries that have long drawn negative attention for their persistent official denial or relativization of mass atrocities: Turkey and Japan. For studies of official acknowledgement, repentance, and memorialization as tools of justice and reconciliation within and between nations, these two countries often represent the example for what not to do. The history of discrimination and violence against minorities in the late Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey, as well as Japan's history of past wrongs in East Asia during the first half of the twentieth century, present a dispiriting number of cases to study. Dixon selects two emblematic cases: the Armenian Genocide (1915–1917) and the Massacre of Nanjing (1937–1938).

Dixon's meticulous archival work confirms earlier scholarship in a broad sense: Policymakers in Turkey have either denied that Armenians suffered systematic mass murder or portrayed the deaths as the unintentional byproduct of wartime emergency. Meanwhile, their counterparts in Japan have usually acknowledged that the Nanjing Massacre was wrong, but they failed to develop an unambiguous, consistent policy of apology. Moving beyond this generic finding, however, *Dark Pasts* presents enormous detail on the twists and turns of memory politics in both countries. Deconstructing simplistic binaries of denial and acknowledgment is the theoretical and empirical