

# **The Orange Revolution: A Challenge for the Russian Orthodox Church**

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The electoral campaign of the Ukraine's 2004 presidential elections and the Orange Revolution became a landmark of the recent history of Ukraine. During the last three years, it was an object for historical and analytical studies by Andrew Wilson, Paul D'Aniery, Andrey Kulchits'kiy, Bruno Cadène, Viatcheslav Avioutskii, Anatoly Galchins'kiy. The Orange Revolution was also considered in the scientific and publicistic articles by A.Karatnycky, M.McFaul, J.Sherr, A.Ryabov, N.Petrov, M.Pogrebinskiy, A.Migranyan, A.Moshes and others, and in memoirs by journalists A.Wojcehowski and A.Kolesnikov. Such Russian authors, such as S.Kara-Murza, A.Mukhin and S.Zhiltsov, consider the Orange Revolution in a context of conspirological theories.

Still, the overwhelming majority of authors neglects the religious factor of the Orange Revolution, or mentions it casually. Just some of them define the confessional rivalry as an important part of the Ukraine's 2004 electoral campaign.<sup>1</sup> But, as Metropolitan Isidor wrote, it is impossible to imagine a history of Ukraine without a history of the Ukrainian Church.<sup>2</sup> A significant impact to the studies of a religious factor of the Orange Revolution was made in Ukrainian by the editorial board of the "Bohoslovia" journal.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this paper aims to discover a role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukraine's Orange Revolution, amending the existing studies in this domain of the modern history of Ukraine.

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In accordance with an ancient Byzantine tradition, the Church was under the state control. Even nowadays the Greek Orthodox Church is not separated totally from the state, and priests' salaries are paid by the state budget. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was always dependent from the rulers, as rulers chose it as a major religious institute for society. Thus, Russian governors played significant role in the ROC's activity. In 1722, Russian czar Peter the Great,

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<sup>1</sup> Viatcheslav Avioutskii, *Les Révolutions de Velours*. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006). 117.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan Ogiyenko (Metropolitan Ilarion), *Ryativannya Ukrainy*. (Kyiv: Nasha kultura i nauka, 2005). 418.

inspired by the experience of the Anglican Church, abolished the position of the ROC's Patriarch. Thus, the ROC was governed by the State Synod till Russian Empire collapsed in 1917. During this period, the ROC lost the focus of public attention and lost influence over the peasantry, which was the main ROC's care for centuries.<sup>4</sup> After the Bolsheviks came to power, the ROC's clergy hesitated to express its attitude towards the new state system, despite the latter was based on the atheistic ideology.<sup>5</sup> In 1918, after an almost 200-year-old pause, the ROC elected its Patriarch, but during 1920-s the Bolsheviks regained control over the Russian Orthodox Church and the latter occupied a customary niche in a social hierarchy.

After Nikita Khrushchev became a ruler of the USSR, a domestic political climate was slightly changed. In 1972, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a famous philosopher and dissident, published an open letter to Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia. He called the ROC to use the experience of the Catholic Church of Poland and the political circumstances in order to reform the ROC.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the Russian Orthodox Church missed an opportunity for changes, and remained under significant state control till the end of the 1980-s.

### **The Russian Orthodox Church on the eve of the year 2004 in Ukraine**

In the beginning of the 1990-s, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced significant changes. After Patriarch Pimen's death in 1990, Alexis II became the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. The ROC was affected by the process of political liberalisation and decentralisation, launched by the Gorbachev's perestroika. Besides, the dissolution of the USSR and the Ukraine's independence eroded the ROC's casual structure. In 1990, the ROC granted the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) an autonomous status, but, still, the latter was subordinated by the ROC in external and foreign relations, id est the UOC remained a part of the ROC's structure. But the nationalist wing of the Ukrainian

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<sup>3</sup> "Analitychnyi oglyad "pomaranchevykh" podii: Religiynyi aspekt" [Analytical review of the Orange events: a Religious aspect], *Bohoslovia* 68, № 1-4 (2004): 209-295.

<sup>4</sup> N.I.Tsimbayev, "Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov' v gody ispytaniy (1900-1944)", *Voprosy Filosofii* №5 (2004): 34.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Orthodox clergy aspired to attain an autocephaly, and in 1992 separated from the Moscovian Patriarchate. The split became the main problem for the ROC on the post-Soviet area. But, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced many more difficulties in Ukraine:

1. The ROC's ideological monopoly in the post-Soviet area was endangered by the nationalist trends. After Ukraine declared its independence, an idea of totally independent national church was in great demand among the Ukraine's political elites. According to a logic of its inert existence, the ROC's top-level priesthood perceived the collapse of the USSR as an attempt to split the Russian Orthodox area, and didn't support new independent states.

Thus, the Ukrainian government tried to meet the demand itself. The first president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk promoted the unification the Ukraine's Churches around the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC KP), but it caused a resistance of the Moscow Patriarchy. Later, Leonid Kuchma tried to make the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) an ideologic basis of the state, but the other Ukraine's Churches rejected his idea.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, in the 1990-s, the ROC/UOC MP's leaders did not share the Ukraine's nationalist aspirations and sympathised with the pro-Soviet ideas and political movements, attracting left political forces of Ukraine<sup>8</sup>. So, during the Ukraine's presidential and parliamentary campaigns of 1999 and 2002, the ROC supported Petro Symonenko and his Communist party of Ukraine, despite the CPU's atheist ideology is extremely different from the ROC's ideology. Moreover, nowadays, a significant part of the ROC/UOC MP clergy wants the USSR to be restored, considering the Ukraine's independence as a "tragic fault".<sup>9</sup> These aspirations are reflected on the ROC's international activity, which has a prior task

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<sup>6</sup> L.Lux, "Tserkovnaya bor'ba v SSSR i kommunisticheskoy Pol'she", *Voprosy Filosofii* №5 (2001): 46-47.

<sup>7</sup> Myroslav Marynovich, *Ukrains'ka ideya i Khrystyanstvo*. (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2003). 366.

<sup>8</sup> Anatolij Kolodnyi, *Ukraina v yiyi relihiynyh vyjavah*. (L'viv: SPOLOM, 2005). 215-216.

<sup>9</sup> Myroslav Marynovich, *Ukrains'ka ideya i Khrystyanstvo*. (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2003). 353.

“to preserve and to reunite the ROC’s canonical territory, supporting the Commonwealth of Independent States.”<sup>10</sup>

2. Modern Ukraine – is a religious center of the post-Soviet area<sup>11</sup>. In Ukraine, the number of registered religious organisations per capita is three times as much as in Russia.<sup>12</sup> The number of the orthodox parishes per capita in Ukraine is four times as much as in Russia. While Ukraine was a part of the USSR, the correlation of numbers was changed dramatically,<sup>13</sup> but it did not change the main thing – Ukraine today is the largest Orthodox country in the world. In October, 2004, the Moscow Patriarchate had 26 590 parishes, including 12 638 parishes in Russia and 10 377 parishes in Ukraine<sup>14</sup>; the UOC KP and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) had 3 395 and 1 156 parishes, respectively.<sup>15</sup> United under an idea of the Single Local Ukrainian Church, they might be a part of a new powerful actor on the world religious scene, competing the influence of the ROC.

3. Nationalist, liberal and democratic trends of the second half of 1980-s and the proclamation of Ukraine’s independence in 1991 undermined the ROC’s property and religious monopoly. After the UGCC was banned in 1946, it was officially registered again, the RCC augmented its parishes (especially, in *Podillya*), a great number of Protestant organizations appeared in Ukraine. Except the UOC MP, the Orthodox wing was represented by the UOC KP, the UAOC and many other smaller Orthodox congregations.

A burth of a great number of religious organisations triggered a struggle for the flock and property. The most fierce and desperate struggle for patrimony

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<sup>10</sup> Olga Tserpitskaya, *Vzaimodeystviye Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi i rossiyskogo gosudarstva v mirovom soobshchestve*. (Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg University Press, 2006). 149.

<sup>11</sup> See the data about the religious situation in Ukraine, based on information of the Ministry of Justice’s State Department of Religions. “Relihiyna karta Ukrayiny-2006”, *L’vivs’ka hazeta* №111, July 3, 2007. P.7.

<sup>12</sup> Nikolay Mitrokhin, *Pravoslavnaya Tserkov’: sovremennoe sostoyeniye i aktual’nye problemy*. (Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2006). 482.

<sup>13</sup> In October 1945, there were 2 606 Orthodox parishes in Russia, and 6 073 Orthodox parishes in Ukraine. Cited: Andrey Kuraev, *Tserkov’ v mire lyudey*. (Moscow: Sretenskiy Monastery Press, 2006). 524.

<sup>14</sup> Iz doklada Svyateyshego Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseya Rusi Aleksiya II na pervom plenarnom zasedanii Arkhiyereyskogo Sobora, *Informatsionnyi byulleten’ Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 12.

<sup>15</sup> Cited: Nikolay Mitrokhin, *Pravoslavnaya Tserkov’: sovremennoe sostoyeniye i aktual’nye problemy*. (Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2006). 485.

developed between the UOC MP and the UOC KP. Since the split of 1992, the UOC KP tried to redistribute the UOC MP's property. The UOC MP considered redistribution of property had been illegal and sued the UOC KP. Despite the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian courts decided in favour of the plaintiff, the UOC KP, relying on the local authorities, where it was possible, did not follow the legal provisions. Sometimes municipal authorities transferred themselves lands and parishes from the Moscovian Patriarchy to the Kyiv Patriarchy. For example, in January 2004, in Kiev the Church of Christ's Birth was restored. This church was a place, where, in 1861, the burial service was read for Taras Shevchenko, a famous Ukrainian writer. After the restoration, the Church was carried over to the UOC KP, and the mayor of Kiev and some deputies of the Verkhovna Rada presented at the ceremony of consecration.

The Russian Orthodox Church was in strained relations with the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC). Being banned in 1946, the UGCC was legalized in 1989, and set up a claim to the alienated property in *Galitsia* and *Zakarpattya*. In 1990-s, the UGCC restituted the majority of its parishes in Ukraine. The restitution provoked the ROC's indignation against UGCC and the clashes between the parishes. Nevertheless, there were examples of peaceful restitution, like it was in Lviv, when the St. George's Cathedral was carried over to the UGCC.

Despite the ROC's objections, John Paul II visited Ukraine in 2001. The clergy of the Moscow Patriarchy were sceptical about the Pope's visit to Moscow. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2004, during the briefing in Moscow, Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany told that the meeting between patriarch Alexiy II and Pope John Paul II would be inappropriate because of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) counteracted on the ROC's canonical territory, in particular, in Ukraine. The Archbishop stressed that annexes did not contribute to the high-leveled dialogue.<sup>16</sup>

The term "annexes" was a ROC's interpretation of the fact that in 2003-2004 the RCC founded two new provinces in Ukraine (Odessko-Simpheropolska and

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<sup>16</sup> *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata* №5 (May, 2004): 82-83.

Kharkivsko-Zapirizska). The problem is that the ROC considers that Ukraine is the ROC's territory. Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia was indignant because the RCC did not enter negotiations with the ROC.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, the RCC supported the foundation of the UGCC's two new exarchates (Donetsko-Kharkivskiy and Odesko-Krymskiy). The ROC's clergy interpreted such an activity as the UGCC's claim to become an All-Ukraine's Church.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in 2003, the UGCC initiated the discussion of the possibility to create its patriarchate in Ukraine, but the Moscow Patriarchate persuaded Vatican to postpone this issue.

By 2004, the ROC experienced difficulties in relations with Ukrainian executive and legislative branches of power. The ROC did not agree with a 2004 bill "On the freedom of faith and religious organisations' activity". In February 2004, Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan) of Kyiv asked Volodymyr Lytvyn, the Head of Verkhovna Rada, not to bring the bill in the Verkhovna Rada's agenda. Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv wrote that the Ukrainian Orthodoxy would support any bill, which would recognize a special role of the canonical Orthodox Christianity in the history of Ukraine; which would give back all the restituted property and which would grant the UOC MP a status of a juridical person.<sup>19</sup>

The ROC could not increase the number of its parishes in the Western areas of Ukraine. Archbishop Augustin of Lviv and Galitsia complained president Kuchma of oppressions in Lviv region and of refusal to grant the UOC MP a land to build a cathedral in Lviv.<sup>20</sup> And on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2004, the clergy of the UOC MP's eparchy of Lviv stood several hours in front of buildings of the President Administration and the Verkhovna Rada, in order to draw attention to the problem.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Iz doklada Svyateyshego Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseya Rusi Aleksiya II na pervom plenarnom zasedanii Arkhiereyskogo Sobora, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 24.

<sup>18</sup> Iz doklada mitropolita Smolenskogo i Kaliningradskogo Kirilla Arkhiereyskomu Soboru RPTs, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 82.

<sup>19</sup> *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata* №2 (February 2004). 86.

<sup>20</sup> *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata* №2 (February 2004). 87.

<sup>21</sup> *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata* №5 (May 2004). 106.

Thus, the ROC had some difficulties and problems of different character in Ukraine. The ROC supported Yanukovich, and it considered him to be a person, who could become a president and could stop the struggle for the patrimony and flock, and facilitate a reunification of the Ukraine's Churches under the ROC's authority.

### **The Orange Revolution and the ROC's activity**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2004, the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party of the Regions elected Viktor Yanukovich as an official presidential aspirant<sup>22</sup>, and the Yanukovich's electoral campaign began. The ROC took the most active part in it. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sobodan) of Kyiv accompanied Yanukovich during the visit to the St. Panteleimon Monastery on the Saint Mountain of Afon<sup>23</sup>, as well as during the trip across the Saint Land on the 28-29<sup>th</sup> of August. In September 2004, he gave Yanukovich his blessing to take part in the 2004 presidential elections.<sup>24</sup> Later on, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2004, being interviewed by the "Inter" TV channel, Metropolitan Vladimir (Sobodan) of Kyiv would say that for the presidential elections he had blessed Yanukovich only.<sup>25</sup>

On the 3-8<sup>th</sup> of October 2004 the Congress of the Russian Orthodox Church took place in Moscow. By that moment, the ROC and the Russian government agreed upon many issues, such as war on terrorism and extremism,<sup>26</sup> the permanent right of the ROC to use land areas,<sup>27</sup> stimulation of the birthrate in Russia<sup>28</sup> and others. Moreover, the Congress set the prior goals for the ROC's development within the years 2005-2008, namely, to strengthen inter-Orthodox links and to

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<sup>22</sup> See: Official information web-page of the Party of the Regions, "VII z'yizd Partii Rehioniv".

<http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/meet/congress/425fc993a51f0/>

<sup>23</sup> Blazhenneyshiy Mitropolit Vladimir i Prem'er-Ministr Viktor Yanukovich prybyli na Svyatuyu goru. *Official web-page of the UOC MP* (dated August 11, 2004).

[http://pravoslavie.org.ua/index.php?action=fullinfo&r\\_type=news&id=3451](http://pravoslavie.org.ua/index.php?action=fullinfo&r_type=news&id=3451)

<sup>24</sup> Cited: *Moskovskie novosti*, №49, December 24, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> See: Roz'yasnennya Press-sluzhby UPTs ot 9 lystopada 2004. <http://archiv.orthodoxy.org.ua/page-1454.html>

<sup>26</sup> Zayavlenie Arkhιεreiskogo Sobora RPTs o protivodeystvii ekstremizmu i terrorizmu, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 180-181.

<sup>27</sup> Federal'nyi zakon RF №123-FZ ot 3 oktyabrya 2004 goda "O vnesenii izmeneniy" v Zemel'nyi kodex RF, Federal'nyi zakon "O vvedenii v deystvie Zemel'nogo kodexa RF" i Federal'nyi zakon "Ob oborote zemel' selskohozyaystvennogo naznacheniya", *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, October 7, 2004.

overcome the split in Ukraine.<sup>29</sup> The Ukraine's 2004 presidential elections were mentioned in the speeches and reports of the top-level hierarchs. Metropolitan Kirill (Gundyayev) of Kaliningrad and Smolensk told that no matter who would become the president of Ukraine, Russia would remain friendly oriented towards the canonical Orthodoxy.<sup>30</sup> On behalf of the Congress, Patriarch Alexis II send a message to the president of Ukraine. The Patriarch called Kuchma to support the canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine, and stressed that "the Church always supported only those, who stand for a unity of the canonical Orthodoxy"<sup>31</sup>.

In accordance with the ROC understanding of the matter, Yanukovich was one of those, who stood for a unity of the "canonical" Orthodoxy. Before the first round of the presidential elections, on the 9-10<sup>th</sup> of October 2004, in Peredelkino (the residency of Patriarch Alexis II), Yanukovich met with Patriarch Alexis II. The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia expressed his support to the Yanukovich's political program and wished him to be courage and tolerant during the presidential elections.<sup>32</sup> The Yanukovich's respond was in the end of October 2004, when the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers transferred the St. Vladimir's Cathedral and the Temple of the Seven Saint martyrs of Khersoness in Kherson to the UOC MP. The Metropolitan of Crimea and Simpheropol Lazar admitted that this decision had been a pleasant surprise for him.<sup>33</sup>

In November 2004, Patriarch Alexis II reacted to the Orange Revolution events, and sent Kuchma a message with a hope, that the difficult times would pass Ukraine.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan) of Kyiv

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<sup>28</sup> Obraschennye Arkhiereiskogo Sobora RPTs po voprosam demografii, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 182.

<sup>29</sup> Iz doklada Svyateyshego Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseya Rusi Aleksiya II na pervom plenarnom zasedanii Arkhiereyskogo Sobora, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004).48.

<sup>30</sup> Iz doklada mitropolita Smolenskogo i Kaliningradskogo Kirilla Arkhiereyskomu Soboru RPTs, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 97.

<sup>31</sup> Poslanie Arkhiereiskogo Sobora RPTs prezidentu Ukrainy L.D.Kuchme, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, special issue (October 2004). 184-185.

<sup>32</sup> See: *Official web-page of the Moscow Patriarchate* <http://www.mospat.ru/text/news/id/7846.html>; and also [http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art\\_id=9637671&cat\\_id=41229](http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=9637671&cat_id=41229)

<sup>33</sup> *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, №10 (October 2004). 99.

<sup>34</sup> *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, №12 (December 2004). 88.

called the Ukrainian people to forget all political discords, and said that “the Church – is out of politics”<sup>35</sup>. However, the ROC remained an active actor of the Ukraine’s political scene, despite even the Basics for the ROC Social Concept. In the ROC’s cathedrals, the leaflets saying that “Yanukovich is an Orthodox president” had been distributed<sup>36</sup>. According to the statements of International Election Observation Mission, the UOC MP’s parishes had distributed the papers, which claimed Yushchenko an enemy of the Orthodoxy<sup>37</sup>. During the second round of the 2004 presidential elections, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2004, the temples of the UOC MP held public prayers for the victory of Yanukovich.<sup>38</sup>

After the second round of elections, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2004, the deans of six Christian Churches of Ukraine published an appeal to the President, where they drew his attention to the falsification of elections and required to call to account the officials, who abused the power.<sup>39</sup> There were no signatures on behalf of Moscow Patriarchate representatives in this message. That moment, it was already clear that the political initiative was drawn by Yushchenko’s proponents, and the victory of Yanukivich would not possible. In the interview to the “Interfax” information agency, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, Patriarch Alexis II did not touch upon the Ukraine’s 2004 presidential elections, he only expressed his deep concern regarding the plans of the UGCC to create the patriarchy in Kiev, and lamented that the political crisis in Ukraine complicated the relations between the ROC, the RCC and the RGCC<sup>40</sup>.

Only two days before the restart of the second round of presidential elections, Patriarch Alexis II addressed the Orthodox people of Ukraine, warning not to make

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<sup>35</sup> Obrascenie mitropolita Kievskogo i Vseya Ukrainy Vladimira i Svyaschennogo Sinoda UPTs k narodu Ukrainy ot 30 noyabrya 2004 goda, *Informatsionni byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, №12 (December 2004). 76-77.

<sup>36</sup> V tsekvyakh molyatsya Bogu i agitiruyut za Yanukovicha, *Berdyansk delovoy*, №47, (November 18, 2004) <http://www.delovoy.berdyansk.net/n549/0.html>

<sup>37</sup> IEOM Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. November 22, 2004. P.9. // [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/11/3811\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/11/3811_en.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Andrey Kuraev, “Pochemu Ukrainskaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov’ podderzhala Yanukovicha?”, *Web-page of the “Radonezh” Orthodox brotherhood*. <http://www.radonezh.ru/analytic/articles/?ID=699&forprint>

<sup>39</sup> Lidery shesti hristianskih Tserkvey obratilis k deystvuyuschemu Presidentu Ukrainy s prizyvom k deystviyu, *Web-page of the RISU*. <http://www.risu.org.ua/rus/news/article:3802>

any “wrong steps”, which could ruin “the unity of brotherly Slavic peoples” that had been created for ages. He was also sure, that the majority of the Ukrainian population aspired to a wide Orthodox unity, and called to express the will for such a unity by the means, which would overcome the crisis<sup>41</sup>. After the elections were over, the ROC kept out the Ukraine’s political crisis till the president Yushchenko visited Moscow, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2004.

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The results of the Ukraine’s 2004 presidential elections and the Orange Revolution demonstrated an importance of the religious factor in the Ukraine’s domestic politics. Major presidential aspirants – both Yushchenko and Yanukovich – stressed its religious aspirations publicly. The Ukraine’s religious organisations, including the ROC/UOC MP, took an active part during the presidential campaign, as well as on the days of the Orange Revolution. However, the Orange Revolution showed that the Ukrainian society contains different ideas on the ways of Ukraine’s development, and neither ROC, nor other Ukraine’s Church is able to unify these ideas itself, and to be a single national spiritual basis for the Ukrainian state. But the religious pluralism is an obstacle for a religious monopolisation by one Church, and guarantees the freedom of faith in Ukraine<sup>42</sup>. In this context, it would be useful for the ROC to participate in the dialogue with other Ukraine’s Churches, and not to use an obstructionist and reactive tactics.

During the Ukraine’s 2004 presidential elections, the ROC was in the frames of the Russian foreign politics, id est in the familiar historic circumstances. As the Russian government, the ROC, addressing the Ukrainian people, called for the

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<sup>40</sup> Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia. Interview to the “Interfax” information agency, December 13, 2004. *The “Interfax” information agency web-page.* <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/orthodoxy/print.php?act=interview&id=2>

<sup>41</sup> Obrascenie Svyateyshego Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseya Rusi Aleksiya II k pastyryam i pastve Pravoslavnoy Ukrainy ot 24 dekabrya 2004 goda, *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Otdela Vneshnikh Tserkovnykh Svyazey Moskovskogo Patriarkhata*, №12 (December 2004). 32-33

<sup>42</sup> Oleg Turiy, “*Problema identichnosti vo vzaimootnosheniyah traditsionnykh tserkvey Ukrainy v usloviyah gosudarstvennoy nezavisimosti*”. Publication of the Informational-Analytical Center for the Studies of Social-Political Processes on the Post-Soviet Area, (August 22, 2006). [http://www.ia-centr.ru/public\\_details.php?id=109](http://www.ia-centr.ru/public_details.php?id=109)

Slavic brotherhood – not for the Christian one. Thus, the ROC used a national (not spiritual or religious) basis for its involvement in the Ukraine's elections. Along with the ROC's orientation towards the Soviet times, it testifies that the spiritual links between the ROC/UOC MP and the flock are weak. Moreover, during the Ukraine's 2004 presidential elections, the ROC/UOC MP acted as an external factor of the Ukrainian politics. It stimulated the national Churches to integrate around the national idea, but it also strengthened the political and religious antagonism inside Ukraine.

The Orange Revolution showed that the idea of a totally independent from Moscovian Patriarchate national Church is in great demand among the Ukraine's political elites. Histories of Bulgaria, Georgia, and Serbia testify that an independence of the Church follows an independence of a state, and vice versa, if a state loses its independence, a Church becomes also dependent.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, in the Orthodox countries, an overwhelming autocephaly of the Church is regarded as a mediate recognition of a state. Today Ukraine has everything needed to build an independent national Church, let alone the fact that the total number of Orthodox parishes in Ukraine exceeds the one in Russia. But, the ROC puts it in a different way, considering that the Yanukovich's victory on the Ukraine's 2004 presidential elections was stolen by the Orange Revolution,<sup>44</sup> and that the reunification of the Ukraine's Churches should follow the canonical rules, id est under the ROC's rule.

Besides, the Orange Revolution made the ROC feel a need for deep reforms, as today the ROC does not depend on its believers neither ideologically, nor financially. Thus, the ROC becomes more dependent on the state, paying little attention to its social functions and becoming an instrument of the state politics on the domestic and international arena. Without reforms the ROC may lose the links with its flock, and may isolate itself and be marginalized.

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<sup>43</sup> V. Yelens'kiy, "Relihiya ta formuvannya modernoi ukrayins'koi natsii", in L.O. Filipovich, ed., *Relihiya i natsiya v suspil'nomu zhitti Ukrayiny i svitu*. (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2006). 258-259.

<sup>44</sup> Anrey Kuraev. Speech at the School of International Relations. Saint Petersburg, February 21, 2007.