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society and churches, magnified by the Stasi revelations of complicity by some church officials. In her view, the Stasi penetration was relatively limited and did not compromise church decision-making structures. For its part, the Catholic Church, free-riding on the Protestant nurturing of civil society groups, benefitted inordinately from reunification, despite its political abstinence in the GDR period and similar Stasi complicity.

Most of Tyndale’s conclusions are reasonable ones, although her characterization of the church as largely pacifist in orientation does not comport with the findings of this reviewer. However, there are some weaknesses of this monograph. Even for a work that defines itself more in theological than political terms, some theological topics seem shortchanged. For example, the theological debates over the separation from the EKD in 1960s are hardly covered. Although pro-SED groupings are mentioned, the Christian socialism of the early East-CDU goes undeveloped. The book also has some errors in terminology (“Two Kingdoms Theory”) and translation (“Evangelical Student Communities” for Evangelische Studentengemeinde). Notwithstanding the numerous interviews referenced, the reader deserves more credible secondary sources for the historical narrative. Factual errors also arise periodically (e.g. purges by Ulbricht occurred in 1953-53, not 1950, p. 20; Kurt Scharf was provost, not bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg, when the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, p. 36), minor irritations that nonetheless create the impression of carelessness.

Yet the author’s fundamental conclusion remains valid: though its results may have left eastern German churches ambivalent and susceptible to Ostalgie, the non-violent process of the 1989 revolution is impossible to explain without reference to the churches’ self-conception as witnessing “in the storm of the world” of this dictatorship. The violent versions of the Arab spring are a sobering reminder of the alternative trajectory such democratic movements can take.

Reviewed by Robert F. Goeckel, Prof. Of Political Science, SUNY Geneseo.


John and Carol Garrard introduce their latest work by claiming that the resurgence of the Russian Orthodox Church has largely been overlooked by academics who prefer to see Russia “through the traditional secular lens of economics, politics, demography, and other social sciences (x).” In *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent*, the Garrards hope to correct this problem by adding a cultural lens to the analysis. However, the authors have a strong propensity for overstatement, and the manner in which they address this problem offers no exception. If other Western academics have overemphasized traditional social scientific approaches to the neglect of religion, the Garrards go to the opposite extreme, referring to Orthodoxy as the “hidden mainstream coloring Russian domestic behavior and shaping Russian policies abroad (13).” This lack of balance and proportion is perhaps the salient feature of this book and brings into question its utility even as an introductory analysis of this very important topic.

Perhaps the most important contribution the Garrards make is their addition to the argument surrounding the legacy of the late Patriarch Aleksei II, which provides the “leitmotif” of this book (xi). A controversial prelate historically positioned to play a pivotal role not only in the resurrection of the Russian Orthodox Church but in the process of post-Soviet Russian identity formation, Aleksei has received mixed reviews at best by Western analysts primarily concerned with the attitude of the Russian Church toward minority religious viewpoints and its conformity (or nonconformity) to “appropriate” standards of church-state relations. To this field, the Garrards
offer an unabashedly positive perspective that attempts to explain Aleksei’s actions within a distinctly Russian context with all of the competing pressures and sensitivities that one must manage to accomplish anything in such a context. As if to head off potential criticism, the Garrards claim that they are not writing a hagiography, but a “warts-and-all’ portrait of both man and institution (xii).” With that in mind, it should be noted that the book concludes with the assurance that Aleksei will be canonized and speculates about what his future icon will look like (253-254). Whereas the Garrards present the numerous warts of the institution, it is more difficult to find any on the man.

The Garrards take as their starting point the heroic actions of Aleksei during the abortive coup attempt in August of 1991. They then proceed to discuss the various problems confronting Aleksei and the Russian Orthodox Church from Soviet atheism to his history with the KGB to anti-Semitism and monarchism to inter-faith relations and conclude with his ingratiation with the army. However, the drama of the August coup never leaves the text and seems to provide the emotional grounding for the Garrards’ view of Aleksei. They only appear critical of his actions regarding other Christian confessions operating within Russia. Aleksei’s seeming repression of Western missionaries is explained if not justified in what stands out as the worst chapter in the book—chapter 5, “Irreconcilable Differences.” This chapter provides a flawed narrative of Russia’s relationship to the West that conflates Orthodox-Catholic issues, Russian-Catholic issues, and Eastern-Western Christian issues in a confusing jumble demonstrating the authors’ lack of a clear grasp on the subtleties of these relationships. From an intellectual perspective reminiscent of Samuel Huntington’s “clash-of-civilizations” thesis, their goal seems to support the claim inherent in the chapter’s title—that Christian relationships between Russia and the West are irreconcilable.

They then proceed to base their entire argument about the irreconcilability of Russia and the West on what is perhaps the most dubious claim of the book—that the whole conflict can be reduced to rival claims of apostolic succession. According to the Garrards, these rival claims will never be reconciled because the division is implicit in the Gospels—it comes down to whether one chooses to believe Matthew’s claim that Peter was called first by Jesus or John’s claim that Andrew was called first. Since Russian Chronicles claim that Andrew came to Russia and has therefore become one of Russia’s patron saints, John’s Gospel would give Russia the claim to primacy, making this claim the “basis of the Russian Orthodox Church (177).” The Garrards consider all other issues between East and West as secondary, as is clear from this astonishing statement: “Though the professed reasons for the split concern whether the priesthood should be celibate or married, whether the Eucharist should use unleavened bread versus leavened bread, and how the Holy Spirit ‘proceeds,’ the language of the papal bull itself indicates the decisive conflict: which church, east or west, had the right to be called the Church of the Apostolic Succession (157).” There is not enough space in this review to delve into the many historical and theological problems with these claims. The Garrards not only reduce all of the major theological problems of the East and West to one point, but they pick one of the least important subpoints of a larger argument. Why then do the Garrards focus on Andrew? Perhaps because it is the only way that the myriad contributing factors to the 1054 schism can be related to Russia at all. Thus, the Garrards rewrite history in an attempt to create a coherent narrative—a particularly ironic twist, given that they compare a Russian Orthodox coloring book (for six-year-olds!) to Soviet historical censorship because it does not depict the violence and promiscuity of Kievan Rus’ (151-156).

In their defense, however, this historical miscue is just one among too many to catalogue for this review and is probably not intentional. They set events on the wrong dates, grossly overstate Russian losses in the Russo-Japanese War and World War I, have events occurring in the
wrong order, attribute incorrect attitudes and motives to historical actors, and completely miss the larger logical framework for both the Great Schisms of 1054 and 1666-1667, to name a few. They spend an entire chapter discussing the Moscow Patriarchate’s relationship to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), as if they were two different institutions! For a work heavily invested in history and theology, this book does not display an adequate understanding of either. More fundamentally, the tendency to reductionism throughout the text is a chronic problem, as the authors frequently begin sentences with the words, “Orthodox Russians believe” and “To Orthodox believers,” then proceed to attribute beliefs and attitudes that are seldom universally applicable, then repeatedly build on them with analogies that are anything but watertight. If these methodological problems did not affect the larger contentions of the book, they could perhaps be excused. Unfortunately, they often provide the very foundations of the book’s main arguments. Thus, despite the fact that this book addresses an important topic and the writing is generally accessible, it can only be recommended for specialists capable of seeing through its many errors and misdirections.

Reviewed by Erich Lippman, Bethany College.