11-2008

Stan & Turcescu's "Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania" - Book Review

Ines Angeli Murzaku

Seton Hall University, New Jersey

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree

Part of the Christianity Commons

Recommended Citation


Available at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol28/iss4/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University.
BOOK REVIEWS:
Reviewed by Ines Angeli Murzaku

Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania is meticulously researched and succinctly presented by Professors Lavinia Stan, a political scientist, and Lucian Turcescu, a theologian. Stan and Turcescu bring to the reader their scholarly expertise as well as their deepest knowledge of the subject matter. The authors with depth and breadth explore Romania’s church state relations including the very intricate post-communist period and the church-state relations in a post-communist milieu. The monograph analyzes the theological and political reasons behind “the established church model” as represented by the Romanian Church case. Under this model, as explained in the book, the church and state form a partnership in advancing the cause of religion and the state.

Furthermore, the study gives the necessary tools to students and scholars of Eastern Europe to understand the most recent events in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church including the most recent internal problems the church is facing with its own clergy. The abyss between the Romanian church hierarchy and the low-level-clergy prompted the clergy to set up clergy trade unions, which were unacceptable by the Patriarchate. The relations of the Romanian Orthodox Church with other churches, including the Romanian Greek Catholic Church, are part of the study. The authors scrutinize the persecution suffered by the Greek Catholics during the time of communism as well as the current problems the community is facing in regard to the restitution of church properties.

We are all in Professors Stan’s and Turcescu’s debt for offering such a refined, informative and elucidating study which makes the post-communist transformative period of Romania accessible to the English-speaking audience. The book is a valued reference for both graduate and undergraduate courses focusing on church state relations in Eastern Europe, Romanian religious and political history, post-communist religion and politics, as well as church-state relations in more general terms. The book will appear in Romanian in early 2009, published by the Bucharest publishing house Curtea Veche.

Tolle, lege! Take up and read!

Ines Angeli Murzaku, Associate Professor of Church History, Seton Hall University, NJ

Reviewed by Joseph A. Loya, O.S.A.

Dostoevsky averred, through his main antagonist in Crime and Punishment, that Russians are a people of expansive nature and ideas, as expansive as the vast land they inhabit. In the first chapter of this book Froese credits theism’s antagonists for the breadth of their dreaming. The Bolshevik’s bold and massive “Soviet Secularization Experiment” employed, through time, a number of key theoretical assertions about religion. These assertions tested “the extent to which religious vitality or decline are a product of ignorance, ritual activity, social institutions, social rewards, salvation incentives and church-state relations” (page 5). In the concluding chapter these same theoretical perspectives are revisited and clarified as to how each were supported or