

BOOK REVIEWS

Dennis J. Dunn. *The Catholic Church in Russia: Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars*. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004. Reviewed by Daniel L. Schlafly, Jr.

The Catholic Church in Russia has had a symbolic prominence far beyond its actual historical impact, since it is seen in the context of the universal Catholic Church, Western political powers, or even the West as a whole. This parallels Russia's image of its own Orthodox Church, reflecting what Professor A. YU. Grigorenko in 1999 called Russia's "conflation of national and confessional identification." Hence, Russian writers on Catholicism relate its story to the broader issue of Russia's national identity, particularly vis-à-vis the West. For nineteenth-century authors like Yurii Samarin, Mikhail Moroshkin, or Dmitrii Tolstoi, Catholicism was a serious threat to Russian religious and national values. Twentieth-century Marxists, especially the East German Eduard Winter, and a host of Soviet polemicists far less scholarly than Winter, such as D.E. Mikhnevich and M.M. Sheinman, continued to describe Roman Catholic aggression against the Russian Church and the Russian state, but now with the Church as the agent of Wall Street and Western imperialism. Echoes of these pre-revolutionary and of Soviet attitudes persist today, for example, in the late Metropolitan Ioann of St. Petersburg and Ladoga's anti-Catholic jeremiads or T.B. Blinova's portrayal of the Jesuits in Belarus as instruments of Catholic and Polish domination.

Another long scholarly and popular tradition sees Roman Catholicism as potential benefit to Russia, emphasizing variously the superiority of its doctrine, ecclesiology, culture, morality, or political impact. Some, like Antonio Possevino, Joseph de Maistre, and Petr Chaadaev, criticized the shortcomings of Orthodoxy, while such Jesuit scholars as Adrien Boudou, Paul Pierling, Jean (Ivan) Gagarin, and Marie-Joseph Rouët de Journal showed greater sympathy for Russia and its faith, while lamenting official hostility towards Catholicism. In works on the Soviet era, Frs. Edmund Walsh and Walter Cizek, James Zatko, Bohdan Bociurkiw, and Dunn here and earlier, have portrayed the Church as an innocent victim, more so than other religious groups, of Marxist-Leninist state persecution.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, there has been what a young Russian Jesuit characterized to me in 2002 as an "explosion" of publications on Catholicism in Russia, part of a general flood of books and articles on religious topics. Many of these reflect a natural impulse to tell a story long suppressed or distorted and so often are descriptive rather than analytical and tending towards hagiography, such as O. A. Litsenberger's *Rimsko-katolicheskaia tserkov' v Rossii* or I.I. Osipova's *Hide Me within Thy Wounds*. A number of younger scholars are reexamining the story of Catholicism in Russia beyond the traditional categories of aggressor or victim, however, such as S.G. Iakovenko or E.N. Tsimbaeva.

The Catholic Church and Russia is stridently pro-Catholic, hostile to the pre- and post 1917 Russian regimes, and highly critical of the Russian Orthodox Church. Despite the title, the real emphasis, seven of ten chapters, is on the Soviet and post-Soviet era. Invoking Christopher Dawson's thesis that the Catholic Church was the primary source of the individual liberty, limited government, and civilized life of Western Europe, Dunn argues that the Church could have played, and perhaps even now could play, the same role in Russia. But, Dunn argues, although Russia's tsars occasionally were impressed enough by the achievements of the Catholic West to consider imitating its ideas and institutions, they instead chose autocracy with disastrous consequences for their own people and their neighbors. The Orthodox Church was coopted by the autocratic state in both the tsarist and the Soviet eras, stifling any chance of reform. Russia compounded its mistake in choosing autocracy, according to Dunn, when it adopted the anti-religious Western ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Under its domination, traditional hostility to Catholicism escalated into savage persecution, and anti-Catholicism persists, albeit less virulently, in Russia today.

Dunn's subject is important, particularly since no comprehensive account of the Catholic Church and Russia exists. Nor, as he emphasizes, do most accounts of Russia past and present pay adequate attention to the role of religion. The treatment of the Soviet era, on which Dunn has done considerable earlier work, is the best part of the book. But overall, and even in the twentieth century, Dunn applies his thesis in partisan and mechanical fashion, minimizing evidence that contradicts his point of view, and jumping to unsubstantiated conclusions. While most of the relevant sources are cited, they are used rather uncritically. The book is further marred by factual errors, misspellings, and transliteration inconsistencies and mistakes.

To claim that the Orthodox "Church used its position and influence with the Mongols and the East Slavs to erect a powerful autocratic government called Muscovy" (p.217) reverses causality; Muscovy was the creation of the grand dukes, with the Church playing a supporting but not primary role. To say that the seventeenth century schism was "precipitated" by "Catholics and Catholic-influenced Ukrainians" (p.218) ignores more important causes. Dunn states that Muscovy had no schools until the eighteenth century (p.12), but one was founded by Fedor Rtischev in 1648, another by Symeon Polots'kyi in 1665, and the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy established in 1685. There were no Catholic priests in Moscow in 1691, when Dunn claims SS. Peter and Paul Parish was founded (p.28). The Jesuits returned to Russia in 1698, not 1702 (p.28). The two Moravian clerics who came in 1692 were diocesan priests, not Franciscans (p.30).

It is misleading to state that, starting with Peter I, Russians "opened the door partially to Catholicism, because it had a proven track record in modernization" (p.ix). While he was willing to borrow from the Catholic West, Peter was influenced far more by Protestant states such as Sweden and Holland and Protestant models of church-state relations, especially as articulated by Feofan Prokopovich, whom Dunn does not mention. The Academy of Sciences was founded in 1725, not

1726 (p.30). Dunn says that Paul I's reversal of Catherine II's hostility to Catholicism was "an ephemeral, if not loony, reaction to being dominated by his mother." (p.40). But while Catherine limited papal authority in Russia, she established a formal Roman and Uniate hierarchy, protected the Jesuits, and recruited Catholic settlers for Russia. Paul's support of the Catholic Church was no emotional whim but a key component of his general policy of opposition to revolution and atheism. Calling Napoleon's opponents "a group of religious powers" (p.53) misrepresents the real reasons they fought; witness the cynicism and skepticism which greeted Alexander I's 1815 appeal to Christian principles in the Holy Alliance.

James Flynn did not say that "the Jesuits were expelled primarily because of their support for education" (p.49) by Alexander I, but instead that they incurred his displeasure by opposing his educational reforms. Dunn is right that Nicholas I in particular was anti-Catholic, but none of the seven nineteenth-century Russian converts Dunn claims "had to emigrate because of intolerance" (p.54); several became Catholics while abroad, and others left Russia for non-religious reasons. Later in the nineteenth century, the link between Slavophilism and Pan-Slavism is not as close as Dunn implies (p.53). To suggest that "a turn to Catholicism was possible" after the Crimean War (p.56) is unfounded.

In the early twentieth century, the leaders of the French Third Republic and the Kingdom of Italy would have been surprised to learn they were part of a "Christian bourgeois global order" (p.72), not to mention the gap between the professed Christian principles of other states and their actual policies. And although Patriarch Tikhon may have called the Bolshevik Revolution "the work of Satan," (p. 79), he refused to endorse the White opposition and hoped that the Orthodox Church could survive in a Soviet state. To speculate that the Catholic Church might not "have been much better off" if the Whites had won the Civil War (p.80) contradicts Dunn's own description of limited toleration for and occasional expressions of interest in Catholicism before 1917 and of near extinction under Soviet rule. Bishop Anton Zerr of Tiraspol died in 1934, not 1932 (p.82).

Calling England, France, Poland, China, and the United States "religious-based civilizations" against the "Nazi-Communist-Japanese campaign" (p.95) exaggerates the significance of religion among the Allies, particularly in China, and overlooks the Catholicism of such Nazi allies as Hungary, Slovakia, and Croatia. Besides, no such "campaign" existed, as each of the three pursued its own ideological and geopolitical goals. Gorbachev did not admit that "Communism was the wrong choice for Russia's development" (p.vii) but instead continues to believe that a reformed Marxism-Leninism could have achieved a successful *perestroika*. Finally, it is improbable to suggest that Catholicism by itself or in combination with a reformed Orthodoxy "is the logical solution to Russia's [current] dilemma" (p.220)

Far too much of a book covering over a thousand years in 221 pages of text and notes is devoted to irrelevant discussions of topics like the Treaty of Rapallo, Nazi-Soviet relations, Pius XII

and the Holocaust, Reagan's foreign policy, or the breakup of Yugoslavia. There are numerous misspellings of foreign words, for example, Magadin for Magadan, Geimschaft for Gemeinschaft, Yevsevi for Yevsei, or zamtki for zametki. Transliterations are inconsistent, so that the same Russian letter is rendered variously as -e, -eo, or -yo. Foreign first names sometimes are given in the original and sometimes in anglicized versions. Accents, umlauts, Russian soft signs, and other diacritical marks appear and disappear haphazardly in Russian, Polish, German, French, Italian, Czech, Croatian, Romanian, and Hungarian words.

Dunn's subject is important, but his grand concept of the Catholic option for Russia over the centuries is dubious. His picture of Russia and its Church is one sided and minimizes the impact on Russian historical memory of real Western aggression from the Teutonic Knights or during the Time of Troubles. An academic survey of the Catholic Church in Russia is long overdue. This book is not it.

Daniel L. Schlafly, Jr., Saint Louis University

Ivan Cvitković: *Konfesija u ratu [Religion in War]* Sarajevo, Zagreb: Svjetlo riječi and Interreligijska služba Oči u oči, 2004; 223 pp.

Vjekoslav Perica: *Balkan Idols – Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 332 pp. Reviewed by Mitja Velikonja.

Both books deal with one of the most misinterpreted elements of the last wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1991 to 1995: with the role of religious organizations, believers and clerics, and the role of religion in general in them. In some opinions, they are undoubtedly responsible because of their radical politization, even militarization; on the contrary, in some other views, they were presented just as another victim of the new nationalistic policies. Cvitković's and Perica's books go beyond these oversimplistic and reductionist views (which extended from pure ignorance to deliberate malevolence). Using different approaches and methods they both come to similar conclusions. Both show how, when and why religious organizations became part of dominant political and nationalistic platforms on all three sides, and as such have their share of responsibility – and also guilt – in what was happening there. Leading institutions and personalities of Croat Catholicism, Serbian Orthodoxy and Bosniak Islam were not only 'used', 'instrumentalized' by some political forces, as it is often assumed – they willingly entered in an alliance with them and they also 'used' or 'instrumentalized' nationalistic politics for their own goals. What is equally frightening, such tendencies persist in both countries even today, ten years after the end of the wars. So in many aspects - to paraphrase Clausewitz – 'peace is just the continuation of war with other means'.

Ivan Cvitković is a sociologist of religion from the University of Sarajevo who experienced war in his besieged city. On one side his book contains very broad theological, philosophical and

sociological considerations on violence, war, (in)tolerance, and peace. But on the empirical side he compares some basic data of religious and national structure - from censuses and public opinion surveys of the general population or just some groups (like military units or university students) - of pre-war and post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. Passing to the religious dimensions of the last conflict, he is right in stating that "war again confirmed that in this region, religion is considered as political doctrine." (p. 140). Beyond any doubt all religious communities strengthened their role in their respective societies and in political life – but the question remains whether this can be understood as genuine religious revival. Namely, people are well aware of the destructive role of religions during the wars: for example, recent survey among the Bosnian freshmen showed that 60.6 percent of them considered their influence as 'somehow negative' and 'completely negative', while only 7.8 percent as 'somehow positive' and 'completely positive' (p. 180). For this reason it is difficult to understand the author's astonishment and disappointment with chauvinistic words that were coming from religious dignitaries themselves (as for example quoted in a footnote on p. 174). Examples from those two wars and many others before them clearly show that none of the religions is *a priori*, as such *good* or *bad*, pacifist or militant, that sacred books and their interpretations contain ambivalent teachings regarding violence – at the end there are actions of their faithful (from the religious hierarchy to believers) who make them such.

Vjekoslav Perica, a Croatian-American social scholar and former reporter of one Croatian journal, chose a more chronological approach. After a short summary of religious history and the gradual creation of the 'leopard-skin' religious geography of Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, and their formative national myths, he concentrates on developments in the last three decades. So, both sides - historiographical and mythological - are represented, which proves to be extremely productive for the further analysis. He also indicates the main historical reasons from the religious side that contributed to the tragic events in the first half of the nineties: religious-national integristism and religious monopolization, exclusivity and homogenization within these nations, poor ecumenism on an institutional level (and much broader and stronger among believers themselves, so 'from below'), conflicts with the left or liberal secular ideologies, and coexistence, even close cooperation with rightist ones, self-glorification, self-victimization and an increasing sense of menace from the neighbors on one side and simultaneous condemnations of other religions and nations, and widespread triumphalism, conservatism, patriarchalism and traditionalism within the three largest religious organizations. For him, they were 'among the principal engineers of the crisis and conflict' (p. 166) and never really learned historical lessons from their previous mistakes, so that they – and as a consequence together with them, willy-nilly, also the whole societies – are condemned to repeat them. It is then no surprise that the author is pessimistically convinced that today's "Bosnian and Herzegovinian clergy are still this country's curse" (p. 236).

Perhaps less elucidated in these two studies is the comparative dimension, that is, confrontation of religious dimensions of the Croatian and Bosnian wars with similar contemporary or recent phenomena in armed conflicts in other parts of the world. Adding this perspective would prevent notorious misjudgements like *that was possible only in that part of the world*. Quite the contrary, the religious dimensions is today present in most international conflicts, usually as a very convincing 'mask' or 'smoke-screen' of the real causes for them. I would have also expected that the fate of the secular population in both countries would be more intensively discussed in these two studies. From one side, these wars – that were by some wrongly labeled as *religious conflicts*, *Crusades* or *Holy Wars* - were paradoxically fought in societies which were to a considerable degree secularized. But on the other side, most of this secular part of the population simply disappeared during last fifteen years. What happened to them, how many of them – including most of the political leaders - became suddenly *fighters for the faith* and how many remained as they were, even if they were forced to leave their country for this reason? How come that the three national communities are now almost completely religiously homogenous? Is the people's new-found religiosity only temporal, or a true, intimate return to the faith, or is it now manifested for opportunistic reasons or for political pressures? – these are only some of the open sociological questions that remained unanswered.

Also, less is said about the 'positive' role of religions and hierarchies, about ecumenism and tolerance - but unfortunately this is simply because there was not much of it (with the exception of some outstandingly courageous individuals!). There were some contacts of religious dignitaries before, during and after the wars, but behind big words there were no real efforts or deeds. Calls to end violence and 'misuse' of religious symbols, rhetoric and justifications for military purposes were too abstract or misleading (for example, blaming only the *other side* or *Godless Materialism*, of course *Communism*, or even *the Devil* himself!), without any practical consequences, and totally non-credible because they were soken by the inciters and perpetrators of religious nationalism themselves (including some of the highest religious dignitaries). In addition, when they finally raised their voices against the war and ethnic cleansing, they as a rule (and again with some exceptions) forgot to condemn also the extremist politics and militants of 'their' sides.

Nevertheless, both authors showed a rare quality of combining and uniting broader analytical and historical insights with the 'close-up' approach (by focusing on symptomatic details) in one place. In both studies we find plenty of dates, first-hand observations and facts, biographic recalls, references to interviews, media reports, literature and different documents - but also abstract considerations and elaborations. Then, they also dealt with formal structures and dominant discourses in these societies as well as with the views and experiences of 'ordinary people', that is on an informal level. Knowing the local language, people and environment just added to the value of these studies. But there are also important differences between the two: not only between the sociological synchronicity in Cvitković's and the more diachronical approach in Perica's, but also between evidently bittered and disillusioned

humanistic discourse (with few emotional escapades) of the former, and much more analytically reserved, 'colder' tone of the latter. Anyway, I had the impression that the silent layer of both studies is a typical intellectual dismay and incapacity in the face of the frenzy in their own countries, as can be observed for example in Ernst Cassirer's posthumous *The Myth of the State* (1946) or Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947).

It must be emphasized, however, that this was not at the expense of analytical profundity and validity. The authors' difficult personal experiences did not spoil their ability for critical and reflexive thinking on these complex, controversial, and highly delicate issues. Cvitković's and Perica's books are examples of excellent, analytically sharp studies: intense, precise, critical, convincing, able to point out general factors and similarities, but not forgetting many important differences and specific cases. As such, they can be compared with some of the best on these same issues, written or edited so far by authors like M. Sells, P. Mojzes, S. Vrcan, N. Malcolm, R. Radić or X. Bougarel. If science is to provide answers and to help make people live better, then studies like these should become a 'must' not only for scholars, but first of all for decision-makers within and outside religious hierarchies. Precisely because religious organizations were part of the problem, now it would finally be time - instead of avoiding the responsibility, even complicity - to become part of the solution.

Mitja Velikonja, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Leslie László. *Church and State in Hungary, 1919-1945*. Budapest, International Society for Encyclopedia of the Church in Hungary, 2004. (METEM Books, Nr. 47.) pp 400. Reviewed by Csaba Fazekas.

The publication of this work, which has long been completed in manuscript, in many respects is a great delight for researchers dealing with ecclesiastical history in Hungary. Despite the fact that comprehensive monographs have already been published on the topic – the work of Leslie László has its place in the historiography of the ecclesiastical history in Hungary, as it is a good reference book, an aid in research as well as in teaching. Research in the field of ecclesiastical history produced several outstanding results in the course of the 20th century; these findings, however, were not available to researchers in the English language. Therefore this work summarizes in English the historical knowledge of the first half of the 20th century concerning the topic.

The author himself gives reasons at some length as to why he felt it possible to publish his dissertation, which he defended more than three decades ago – in 1973 – at a university in the United States. He rightly concludes that it is worth rereading the manuscript after some years. And we can also add that this work is well worth adding to the research and study of ecclesiastical history in circulation.

Anyone could easily rebuke the author (who emigrated in 1950 as a young man of 25) that in his work he utilized only a limited number of sources, therefore his work is necessarily one-sided. This

criticism, however, is not correct. On the one hand, it is true that documents from the archives were not accessible for him, still Leslie László did use the printed sources as fully as possible. In the large American libraries he read and intensively studied practically everything which was printed about the topic. Had he collected sources for his work in Budapest, his bibliography would have been just as rich, though less complete, but the author used not only the Hungarian sources, but with great competence he also linked the Hungarian data with the international studies and findings of the Christian social and political movements. Furthermore, his statements about the relationship between the church and the state have been confirmed by the documents published in Hungary since, so these statements could definitely not be questioned. We have to mention that the author analysed not only books but also an enormous amount of newspaper articles. He reviewed the published documents of the archives (a good example for this is chapter 3.3), and a further positive feature of the work is that he also used handwritten memoirs. (The latter occasionally substituted for those documents which were not available for him, see for example chapter VI).

In appraising Leslie László's work we have to point out that he could not take into consideration the findings of the growing ecclesiastical research of the past 15 years in Hungary. At one point he uses an unjustly simplified classification describing the ecclesiastical historiography of the past decades, and the Hungarian reader may object that László has overlooked the works of, for example, Jenő Gergely or others. On the other hand, he shows his objectivity by widely adapting the relating literature written after 1945, the written monographs completed with scholarly thoroughness in the same way as certain products of the political propaganda. The historical attitude of Leslie László can be taken as well balanced as a whole. In case of questions concerning the relationship between the state and the church he maintains a fair distance from the sources which he examined, and he gives a competent picture of the different political attitudes. He helps the reader to judge these aspects, but he leaves the audience to decide, an apologetical approach is usually far from him. In certain questions (without doubt these questions are regarded as rather delicate issues) similar to several works on ecclesiastical historiography, he could not resist the constraint of an apologetical or rather publicist, rather than an historical approach. Concerning the relationship between the churches and anti-Semitism, for example, he only accepts in general that the former may have something to do with the latter, and to some extent – with the perceptible self-justifying intention of his church – finds excuses for the high priests of the churches in connection with their participation in voting in favor of the first two anti-Jewish laws in the Parliament. The arguments and data he had collected, however, are not at all convincing concerning the latter, and he could not even modify the doubts regarding the public manifestation of the churches in connection with the Jewish population.

A few words about the volume itself. In the rather lengthy introduction the author – being a catholic priest – points out that he does not take the history of the Christian church independently from the spiritual founder of the Christian church, what is more, he also gives an international overview of

the European historical patterns of the state-church relationship. Generally speaking, in his work Leslie László resisted the great temptation to write an ecclesiastical history in the most literary sense of the word but rather an ecclesiastical-political historiography. In other words not the internal relationship of the churches was put into the focus of attention, but he regarded the church as a social institution in his work and he was searching for the answer: how could this important institution be fitted into 20th-century Hungary among its social and political conditions? We can say that he tried to take all those aspects into account where the state could have any connection with the churches. In this way his monograph became a very thorough political-historical as well as ecclesiastical historical overview at the same time.

Unfortunately the title of the book (*State and Church in Hungary, 1919-1945*) is rather misleading, as the first chapter does not talk about the period given in the title but about the preceding decades. László followed an excellent procedure when he went back to the roots of the 19th century bourgeois changes. He provides details about the religious policy put on a new foundation in 1848 as well as about the acts passed by the liberal state in the second half of the 19th century, and about the debates on ecclesiastical policy. He is very good at illustrating the changes at the turn of the century, how did the social questions come into the limelight, the periods of the First World War and the revolutions and all those reactions which the churches gave as an answer to these challenges. Among the tendencies evoked by the renewed Catholic politicising, he emphasised Christian Socialism and the position represented by Ottokár Prohászka.

The period between 1919-1944 is described in three chapters of the book. The author offered a new but very good idea for the analysis of the Horthy-era. In the second chapter he summarized the events of the so called 'Christian course' between 1919-1922, then breaking with the rigid chronological approach, he wrote two thematic chapters. From an ecclesiastical point of view it is really worth separating the few long years of the foundation of the Horthy-era from the period of consolidation and stabilisation of the regime. The third chapter deals with the most important factors of the ecclesiastical policy of the state starting from the right of patronage through the inauguration of the bishops and the question of the concordat, to the institutional public role of the churches (e.g. participation in legislation). More briefly he dealt with the financing of the churches and the question of education. The fourth chapter shows a different approach: it does not show the church from the side of the state administration but it views society and public life from the perspective of the latter. It also examines the Christian social and political organizations (parties, trade unions etc.), and those questions which engrossed the attention of those forming Christian social politics. (I find it especially important that the author dedicates a whole chapter not only to the agrarian question but also to the questions of the industrial workers as well as to the Hungarian population living outside the country's borders). The final three chapters of the book focus on the relationship between the extreme right groups – which show a sudden advancement at the close of the era – and the churches. Besides the

'spiritual home defense' he also illustrates the aspects of Christian resistance against the persecution of the Jews, Nazism and the Hungarian Nazis.

The final chapter summarizes the most important points of the book, and besides a thorough bibliography and a short summary in Hungarian, adds a statistical appendix which gives details about the denominational division of the country. The statistics concentrating on the changes of the era demonstrate the social and demographic processes shaping the background of the political history. I would comment that the author should not have published the data from the census carried out in Hungary in 2001, as – unlike the census before 1949 – it was not based on a general population census but on voluntary declaration. In Hungary that process was subject to debate.

Csaba Fazekas, University of Miskolc, Hungary.