

Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov--Orthodox Theology in a New Key*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, and Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000. 443 pages.

In this study, Paul Valliere offers a stimulating treatment of three significant figures who sought to articulate Orthodoxy in and for the modern world. The western orientation of Tsar Peter the Great and his successors had not found echo in Russian Orthodoxy, which did not particularly interact with Western European thought. The Slavophiles attempted to set forth a distinctly Orthodox stance as over against alleged western aberrations, but none of them had been trained theologians. The figures treated in this volume focused extensively (although not exclusively) on theology; indeed, two of them spent their professional lives as theologians. These three represented a subsequent movement which built upon some slavophile emphases, but who manifested greater appreciation for some aspects of Western European thought. In so doing, they ended up articulating a more nuanced Orthodox position in interaction with that modern thought.

Valliere treats Archimandrite Feodor (Aleksandr Bukharev) as the first in this line of thought. Although not directly influenced by Archimandrite Feodor, Vladimir Soloviev followed up on enough of his emphases and concerns that the author treats Soloviev as the middle figure in the sequence. Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, the most gifted theologian of the trio, was himself directly influenced by Soloviev. As Valliere notes, though, Bulgakov had no successors. With the huge transformation of the life of the Russian intelligentsia because of the 1917 revolution, and with the subsequent coming of the Neo-Patristic movement, this line of thought came to an end. In the post-Communist situation, as Orthodoxy necessarily interacts with thought in the rest of the world, Valliere suggests that Bulgakov and his forebears may still exercise influence.

Valliere's treatment of each of the figures is sympathetically critical. He offers biographical information on each of them, enough to set the particular developments of his thought in context. Then the author works through the main themes in each figure's thought, showing how they developed via careful reading and analysis of the respective authors' works. In so doing, Valliere indicates how the issues and concerns

of Western European thought received attention and shaped the discourse, but he also shows how each figure sought to articulate a faithfully Orthodox stance on the questions at issue. One finds, in addition to the treatment of sophiology in Soloviev and Bulgakov which one would expect to encounter, treatment also of apocalyptic interests. As well, with Bulgakov, Valliere indicates the steps in his development away from a youthful Marxism toward a theism that eventually embraced again the Orthodoxy in which he had grown up--but an Orthodoxy which received a remarkably contemporary voice with Fr. Sergei.

Throughout the work, the author is constantly engaged with the Neo-Patristic school which has displaced Bulgakov and his predecessors as the leading theological movement within Orthodoxy. Valliere notes that this Neo-Patristic school is unquestionably in the ascendancy; indeed, throughout the Orthodox world, Neo-Patristic approaches and assumptions dominate. However, Valliere indicates that Bukharev, Soloviev, and Bulgakov all were themselves rooted deeply in the patristic tradition. Where they differed from Neo-Patristic orientations was, he affirms, in their constant address to the complexities of contemporary questions; he argues that, for all the accomplishments of the Neo-Patristic school in refocusing Orthodox attention on the patristic heritage, that school has not yet been able to speak directly or effectively to the complex issues of contemporary life.

When he opines that Orthodoxy will have to look elsewhere than to the patristic tradition for resources for dealing with such issues, though, then in the opinion of this reviewer, he has overreached himself. While the Greek Church fathers could not have foreseen and explicitly addressed the particular contemporary issues which demand attention, that does not imply that the resources to do so cannot be found within the patristic heritage. Given Byzantium's turn to a "theology of repetition" after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843, a considerable portion of that patristic tradition was muted. Reclaiming that heritage in a fuller sense may well open up riches within it which can, *mutatis mutandis*, speak effectively to the complexities of contemporary society.

Valliere suggests that--in the post-Communist situation, as Orthodoxy seeks to speak to contemporary life and has the freedom to do so--the thought of Bukharev, Soloviev, and Bulgakov still has something to offer. While he recognizes that their works do not speak adequately to the current situation of Orthodoxy and modern thought, nevertheless those works offer a stimulus to thought about how to relate Orthodoxy to and present it in the present world. Indeed, contemporary scholarship defends his claim: among some leading Orthodox thinkers in the present day, one finds not only considerable interest in the patristic tradition, but also study of the perspectives of the figures whom Valliere has so well treated in this volume.

Valliere's book is a welcome addition to the literature on Russian theologizing. It should be added to university and seminary libraries. As well, many scholars will want to obtain it for their own collections.

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Janine R. Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. 322 pages.

The author is an anthropologist who teaches in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. She has previously published two books on Poland. With this study she widens her horizons to consider the other states in the northern tier of Eastern Europe, as well--the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, and Russia. (None of the Balkan nations are treated.)

In this volume she examines how the nations of the West dispensed monetary aid and economic advice in Eastern Europe since the collapse of the Communist Bloc. Her research included hundreds of interviews with leading figures in various bureaucracies of the Eastern European states and Western nations alike. As well, she has explored in painstaking detail reports and other materials about Western aid initiatives and endeavors. This all provides a solid basis for her assessments.

As the author notes, Western nations were eager to assist the nations of Eastern Europe in a quick transition from a Communist system into a privatized, free-market economy serving a democratic polity. As the Communist Bloc imploded, supposed experts from the West found their way to the various Eastern European nations, offering insights and suggestions. This "Marriott Brigade" (to use the designation developed for them by some Eastern European leaders) flew from one country to another, strewing presentations and promises generously. In their wake came numerous organizations (whether from western governments or with their endorsement) which advised on privatization and on restructuring economies. Multiplied millions of dollars in aid were funnelled through these organizations and the Eastern European channels they decided to support. That some of it was misused should come as no surprise, given the magnitude of the aid endeavors; that so much of it managed to enrich the few while impoverishing the many should be recognized as a scandal.

The author demonstrates that much of this aid, while well-intended, was dispensed with scant awareness of the peoples, societies, cultures, and histories of the nations of Eastern Europe. Western advisers seem often to have come with the notion

that the representatives they met from the fledgling democratic states of Eastern Europe were naïfs unsophisticated in economics and politics; actually, as the author repeatedly shows, the naïveté belonged to these advisers from the West. For example, under Communism, people had honed the fine art of dissimulation as a way of securing what they wanted from leaders without committing to substantive change. As the author points out, several of these Eastern European representatives quickly learned to use the expected terminology (“free market,” “business,” “privatization,” etc.) that would open the doors of the Western treasuries; subsequent use of the money showed a considerable difference in the meaning of the terms, however.

As well, the author shows that many of the Western organizations sought to circumvent the slow-moving structures of government in some of the Eastern European nations, preferring to operate more efficiently with select individuals and their private organizations. However efficient this might appear, it nonetheless invited abuse: without local governmental control, the moneys earmarked for public service ended up enriching these individuals and their cronies, rather than serving the public good. To complicate matters further, Western advisers encountered a significant difference in economic culture: much of Eastern Europe has none of the “conflict of interest” legislation which we in the West take for granted. Professor Wedel offers numerous instances of an official from an Eastern European country offering a second business card to Western advisers--with the second card a private business which dovetailed with the official’s government ministerial responsibilities. Another problem pattern identified by the author was that some of the Western advisers struck up exceptionally close relationships with their Eastern European counterparts--relationships which ended up feathering the nests of both, to the detriment of the supposed aid projects. (At the time of publication, several advisors from the USA [whom the author names and regarding whose cases she gives some detail] were under federal indictment for alleged misappropriation of such funds.)

For readers of this journal, this volume is valuable for its demonstration that Western foibles in reaching out to post-Communist Eastern Europe were not confined to proselytizing religious organizations. In both regards, the West manifested woeful

ignorance of the histories, societies, and cultures of the Eastern European nations.
Professor Wedel's study offers much to consider and lament.

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