

Book Reviews

Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism by Zoe Knox. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005. Hardback, xi + 257 pp., £70.

Civil society is located in the space between the private realm and the state where its constituent social organisations operate. It follows then that analysis of civil society can concentrate on the relationship which those groups making up civil society have with the state, on the one hand, and with the individual on the other. In practice, certainly in the field of political science where *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church* locates itself, the emphasis is most often on the interaction between the state and civil society. This is doubly the case in relation to states such as Russia, where civil society is developing from a very low base as a result of decades of communist rule when independent organisations were either banned or subject to surveillance and harassment by a suspicious ruling regime.

The past few years have seen significant research published on Russian civil society, notably Marc Morjé Howard's *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (2003) and *Russian Civil Society* (2005) edited by Alfred Evans *et al.*, which includes a chapter on religion. In these accounts, the state is the key actor, whose decisions act upon those bodies constituting civil society – such as religious organisations – facilitating or hindering their development as independent social groupings. Where Knox's volume differs is that instead of considering the role that the state plays in encouraging or discouraging civil society, her focus is on the role of the Russian Orthodox Church itself in civil society's development. This is an original approach and as a device for framing analysis it enables a broad-ranging discussion of all the key features of the church's public life in the first decade or so of the postsoviet era. Where the approach proves more problematic is in terms of the analysis itself. The place of the church as both a part of civil society and – in Knox's framework – an organisation which is central to the development of civil society presents a tension which is never quite resolved. The claims of Orthodoxy's centrality to the formation of Russia's civil society are not sufficiently convincing. As is discussed below, from the analytical perspective the missing actor in this volume is the state, and the missing context is that of Russia's wider civil society.

Leaving aside for now the more conceptual critique of this work, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church* provides an excellent overview of religious civil society in non-Islamic Russia. Knox has written an extremely useful volume which serves as a synthesis of writings on developments such as the religious 'free market' of the early 1990s in Russia, the 1997 religion law, the place of the Orthodox Church in the 'rediscovery' of Russia's national identity, the relationship between Orthodoxy and extreme nationalism, and the social activities of the church. Anyone wanting to get up

to speed with the place of Orthodoxy in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union could usefully read this book, although it is clearly aimed at the academic market rather than the general reader.

A particular strength of Zoe Knox's analysis is the care taken to distinguish between the Orthodox hierarchy and the broader church, and between different streams of opinion within the church. The picture that emerges is of a broad church whose leadership is reluctant to bring contentious debates into the public sphere for fear of precipitating schism. And so strongly nationalist and antisemitic views held widely but not universally in the church are tolerated so long as broad loyalty to the Patriarchate remains. Knox delineates in detail the struggles of the Russian Orthodox Church against what it perceives as proselytism, and outlines too how the perceptions of such issues as mission work, the individual as opposed to the collective, and the question of spiritual territory differ in Russian Orthodoxy compared to Catholicism and Protestantism.

The story told is not always the standard one. In an impressive section (p. 100) Knox rejects the easy notion that religious groups new to Russia in the immediate postsoviet period flourished because decades of atheism had left a 'spiritual vacuum'. Instead she presents five clear, complementary and convincing alternative explanations. In other places though, analysis is not so thorough, and there are assertions which are not subject to the same rigorous scrutiny. Two examples stand out. First the assertion, often cited elsewhere too, that western missionaries were guilty of 'buying souls' because 'mission workers had significantly more money than indigenous missions, including the Orthodox Church' (p. 174). Given the substantial fiscal concessions given to the church by the state in the Yel'tsin era, and the success of commercial ventures such as the 'Saint Springs' mineral water concern, there are strong grounds to doubt that the Russian Orthodox Church was financially incapable of competing with the comparatively few western missionaries and the minor 'incentives', such as free literature or meals, which sometimes went alongside their evangelism. Second, Knox's conclusion that 'the Church is not independent [from the state]' (p. 131) is too stark; close and mutually advantageous connections do not amount to a lack of independence.

Wider conclusions could also usefully be challenged on the grounds of the need for more rigour. In an interesting section on the approach of some western missionaries, Knox says that their 'cultural insensitivity . . . resulted in a tide of anti-American, anti-Protestant and xenophobic sentiment that ultimately led to restrictive religious legislation and to a notable increase in Russian national chauvinism' (p. 175). Little attention is paid here to the fundamentals of research methodology such as questions of cause and effect or of measurement. Xenophobia, anti-Americanism and so on were present both before and after the presence of culturally insensitive western missionaries; an academic assessment of the impact of their insensitivity requires evidence to back up the assertion that it increased xenophobia and chauvinism and led to restrictive legislation. Eastern Orthodoxy is a traditional supporter of laws against proselytism and the church would have pressed for them with or without a few dozen western evangelists stepping on Russian cultural sensitivities in their shiny shoes.

Russian Society and the Orthodox Church is based on a PhD thesis and is published by the admirable RoutledgeCurzon series which is doing much to disseminate academic analysis of Russia today. Its originality comes not so much from its sources – there is a lack of evidence of fieldwork in terms of interviews with major protagonists, survey work, focus groups, and so on – but rather from its placing of the empirical knowledge within the theoretical setting of civil society. In many ways,

Zoe Knox might have been better off eschewing the analytical framework required of a doctoral study and writing a more generalist book. As noted above, in seeking to assess the impact of the Russian Orthodox Church on the formation of civil society, she is attempting more than the evidence and framework presented will bear. Individual parts of civil society of course make a contribution to civil society as a whole, particularly in their own sphere of activity. But the notion that the Orthodox Church is of central importance across broader civil society is not convincing. So, for example, since the mid-1990s the Russian state has sought to manage civil society, and a primary means for this has been registration by the Ministry of Justice. Yes, the Orthodox Church encouraged this in the religious sphere, but the state enacted it and did the same in other sectors of civil society, such as 'social organisations' and political parties, independently of the religious arena both before and after the 1997 law on religion. The difficulty with focusing on one organisation, in this case the Russian Orthodox Church, is that it can be made to seem more important than it actually is in the broader context.

EDWIN BACON

La croce e il potere: la Chiesa russa sotto Stalin e Chruščëv by Michail Škarovskij. Milan: La Casa di Matriona, 2003 (originally *Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve*, 1999, Italian edition revised by Giovanna Parravicini). 281 pp., photographs, €14.

Drawing on his scrupulous training as a historian and archivist, Škarovskij presents a comprehensive analysis of the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet state during the period between the outbreak of the Second World War, when Stalin was induced to relax persecution, and the fall of Khrushchev. Using documentation from Soviet archives, he divides the period into five stages. Except in his perceptive introduction, he is perhaps too sparing in interposing personal comments. He stands back and lets the documents speak for themselves, supplying ample pertinent comments from Soviet policymakers.

He points out that Soviet society faced three ideological crises: in the early 1940s, in the mid-1950s and at the end of the 1980s. Each crisis coincided with a spontaneous upsurge of religious revival, which forced the authorities to revise their tactics. In what is necessarily often a harrowing or convoluted narrative Škarovskij draws on brief apposite personal records for illumination. He skilfully alternates between exhaustive analysis of tactical oscillations in party policy and the resultant response within the church hierarchy, a technique which requires intense concentration on the part of the reader.

Škarovskij supplies many instances of inspiring individual, parish and collective resistance. We learn of the massive return of people to the church during the siege of Leningrad. We hear how the devoted archpriest father of a Kirov ballerina never missed a liturgy at St Nicholas Cathedral, while his family feared he would collapse from hunger and die or be shot on the way. The 'Living Church' parish of the Transfiguration managed to maintain a shelter within the church providing at least a minimum of heating, warm water, medicines, bunks and basic necessities. Škarovskij provides instances of local party obstruction to the reopening of churches, as well as instances of general public approval. Khar'kov tractor workers were enthusiastic about 'the holy Patriarch's election, because it will allow church leaders to influence our country too. At the next elections of the Supreme Soviet Christian candidates will

be elected as deputies and defend the interests of the church' (p. 112). This was not quite what party leaders wanted to hear. We are also taken into the catacombs. For ten years Bishop Makari (Vasil'yev) never slept in the same bed two nights running.

Škarovskij outlines the eventual collapse of the 'Living Church' schism after negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate. He notes wryly that the 'Living Church' had a problem with its surplus of bishops – 13 in 1943 – which impelled its leader Metropolitan Aleksandr Vvedensky to designate the majority as parish priests. '*Episcopi vagantes*' often proliferate during schisms.

The often amazing renaissance of religious life in territory occupied by the Germans, as in Pskov, is thoroughly covered. Škarovskij emphasises that although the Nazis allowed churches to open and parishes and monasteries to function once more, in the long term they were due to be suppressed and annihilated just as surely as they had been under the communists. He quotes a document of 31 October 1941 (p. 59):

It is absolutely essential ... to prepare as swiftly as possible a new class of preachers who can ... offer the people a religion free of any Jewish influence. It is obvious that the isolation of 'God's chosen people' in ghettos and its elimination ... must not be handicapped by a priesthood which, on the basis of Orthodox church doctrine, preaches that the salvation of the world owes its origins to Judaism.

The religious revival in areas under Nazi control produced its martyrs. Metropolitan Sergi (Voskresensky), exarch of the Baltic lands, took full advantage of the German occupation for his people while remaining loyal to the Moscow Patriarchate. Who was responsible for his assassination in 1944 is still not clear.

Škarovskij follows Stalin's cynical *volte face* in 1943 when he reversed his government's previous policy of denying the Moscow Patriarchate any relations with the outside world and began to exploit its potential in the international arena. Foreign Orthodox church representatives were summoned to numerous gatherings in order to be recruited in support of Soviet policies and in opposition to the Vatican and the West.

Stalin's aim to make Moscow a Third Rome was not ultimately successful. The international activity of the Patriarchate declined from 1948 and the church was denied the possibility of opening more parishes. One reason for the failure of Stalin's design was reservations among the leading hierarchs. The maverick Bulgarian Metropolitan Stefan, for instance, mindful of his church's traditionally tolerant attitude towards other faiths, refused to condemn the Vatican's alleged involvement in politics until the Soviet foreign minister ordered the Bulgarian government to force him to comply. In 1956 the Council for Religious Affairs complained that neither Patriarch Aleksii nor Metropolitan Nikolai (Yarushevich) had uttered a word condemning the Hungarian uprising. Škarovskij draws attention to the efforts of Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) to normalise relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican: efforts which led, ironically, to two patriarchate observers arriving at the Second Vatican Council at only two days' notice, while Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras reluctantly had to withdraw his observers after protests from his own Synod and the Greek Church.

The period from 1953 to 1958 witnessed a political thaw which resulted in an extension of the scope of church life. Tolerance was soon reversed, however, with Khrushchev relying on hardline ideologues and Komsomol leaders, and bureaucracy clamped down on church activities. Škarovskij mentions simple restrictions which

often rendered normal church life very difficult. For instance, exorbitant retroactive taxes were levied on candles; in Rostov the bishop's telephone was removed and churches' running water disconnected. Thousands of religious books were confiscated. Virulent antireligious propaganda was revived and protesting believers imprisoned again. Monasteries in particular were singled out for closure, with police raids and surveillance at holy places and pilgrimage sites. What emerges here is a moving testimony to the resistance of an entire people to the regime's ideological anti-Christian pressures. We are introduced to an array of people who combined intense personal piety with heroic resistance to the actual or presumed corruption of the hierarchy: bishops like Luka Voino-Yasenetsky, Afanasi Sakharov and Yermogen Golubev; priests like Aleksii and Sergii Mechev and the hermit Tavrii; laypeople like Sergei Fudel' and Boris Talantov. Glimpses into their lives left me particularly eager to read several forthcoming biographies in La Casa di Matrona's excellent 'Witnesses' ('Testimoni') series.

In his final chapter Škarovskij indicates just how much continuity with the older generation of spiritual leaders contributed to the rise of dissidents within the church. He points out the deleterious long-term effects of state persecution on church and society and recommends that the state today abstain from any attempt to exploit religion for its own ends.

Russia Cristiana should be highly commended for its commitment to systematically presenting key works by the new generation of Russian historians in a Western European language. When are some publishers in Great Britain here or the USA – St Vladimir's Press for example – going to take the plunge and make such works available to readers of English?

JANICE BROWN

Rebel with a Just Cause: a Political Journey against the Winds of the 20th Century: Reminiscences, 1922–1951 by Spas Raikin. Sofia/Moscow: Pensoft, 2001. 494 pp., plus map and photographs.

This is the second of five volumes of memoirs written for his American wife and family by Spas Raikin, lecturer, church historian, and contributor to this journal. Since it is the only volume available in English as well as Bulgarian it would have been helpful had Raikin provided a brief chapter systematically summarising the other four. For instance I would like to know the circumstances of the murder of his father (after Spas Raikin's escape from Bulgaria to Greece), in retribution for his courageous political, moral and spiritual stance.

The book reads very much as if it was originally spoken; it is a no-holds-barred account, frequently bitter, of his childhood and early adult life. With drastic pruning, careful editing, correction of basic grammatical errors and the omission of repetitive polemics which were only too timely in 1950 but have lost their relevance now, this book would have been more acceptable to a wider western audience. There is, for instance, too much political self-justification as to why the young Raikin joined the Legionnaires (a fascist party) for a time when at heart he was inclined towards the Agrarian Party (a party with sound democratic credentials). The first chapter in particular, which refers to the author's final escape (later described in gripping detail and in its proper context) is so contentious that it could deter some readers from proceeding any further. Raikin's prolixity is often irritating. He publishes his reports to the Greek and American authorities in 1951 (lost and returned to him in 1989) on

the appalling conditions he and thousands of others suffered in labour camp, just as he wrote them, completely unedited (pp. 297–362). His damning indictment of the collapse of Bulgarian culture under communism is briefer.

Some readers may wish to skip judiciously and concentrate on the relatively short sections which focus on the church and Raikin's experiences as a theology student. His memory of the events of his life and times, and of his contacts, is phenomenal. Some contacts still alive today must have found the book uncomfortable reading; others will find life-long gratitude. Raikin brings us face to face with graphic details of the grim realities of a peasant existence of unremitting toil and hunger in his village, Zelenikovo, formerly a frontier zone between Thracians, Turks and Bulgarians. This section, a mine for ethnographers, provides a salutary reminder of how in many European peasant societies midway through the last century people lived on the brink of death from preventable disease and malnutrition. Such was the poverty of Raikin's family that tax collectors could find nothing in their home to take in lieu of money other than his beloved mother's copper buckets and a wooden jug. Referring to Raikin's three dead siblings, his father sighed 'this one also will not make it', but Spas was made of far sterner stuff.

We learn how he missed whole years of schooling through poverty and the unrelenting demands of working a smallholding. A scholarship to Plovdiv seminary in 1939 provided the only way out for a brilliant and largely self-educated 17-year-old.

Raikin's impassioned account of the takeover of his church by the communists provides a most moving testimony to how Bulgarians at first increased their churchgoing in defiance of the government. In the light of this resistance, the subsequent and continuing compromises of the hierarchy – as opposed to many of the lower clergy – appeared to Raikin all the more distressing, and indeed tragic. Significantly, he suspects that the failure of the United Democratic Forces' daily, *Demokratiya*, to publish any of his articles on the present schism in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church suggests that 'some anti-Orthodox and anti-Bulgarian elements may have risen to power there, and from there are directing their campaign against our church' (p. 20). He is not the only Orthodox church member to have encountered such obstruction.

Raikin's inclusion, here crucially uncut, of deputy interior minister Yanko Panov's key report on the state of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in 1949 and his proposals for 'democratising' it provide an invaluable insight into the Holy Synod's resistance (pp. 272–79). The Synod provided shelter for what the Interior Ministry deemed 'fascist elements' by employing key figures from the former government and administration and sacking compromised priests who were survivors of the communist Fatherland Front. Synod members – in contrast to the Synod during later years – kept their distance from their Russian Orthodox brethren and state-promoted peace campaigns. They even handed over documents revealing forced church dismissals which the communist government regarded as 'incriminating' to the 'enemy' (that is, other Orthodox churches abroad).

His account of his years at Plovdiv seminary and Sofia academy furnishes a graphic picture of the defects in theological education and of the odd characters he met – some of whom later rose to high positions in the church under communism. The fact that only three or four of his 29 classmates entered the priesthood is telling testimony to the inefficiency and lack of clear positive moral and spiritual objectives in these institutions. His church should have welcomed his suggestions for reform of theological education, when, after ample opportunities to examine seminaries abroad, he made an impassioned plea in a letter to former classmates in 1999.

He draws a telling comparison between life under the Germans, who behaved in an exemplary fashion and had virtually no contact with local people, and life under the partisans and communists, who divided and decimated village communities so that people lived in dread, not knowing which neighbour would betray them. His village priest knew that he was a marked man and suffered a gruesome death (pp. 156, 186, 188). Raikin himself came very near death in his village but managed to return to Plovdiv seminary, which at that time had been evacuated to Bachkovo Monastery. Paradoxically, the seminary provided an oasis of mutual trust and tranquil study. Its abbot was Pimen, a good teacher, but also an opportunist, soon to become a metropolitan and spokesman for the communists, and eventually leader of the schism and pseudo-patriarch. Later, Raikin was told that after 1989 the Holy Synod was united in condemning communism but it was Pimen who convinced them that the party might still make a comeback and that it was safer to keep quiet. If this is so, Pimen set a precedent which the Holy Synod has still not had the courage to overcome.

At Bachkovo Metropolitan Kiril, later patriarch, congratulated Raikin on the rousing sermon he gave to a packed church, a crushing denunciation of communism. 'Never let this light within you be extinguished', he exhorted him, and ensured him an award to study theology in Sofia.

The final section, Raikin's impressions of Bulgaria on his return after 40 years in 1991 and his sorrow at finding it 'on a death bed with no prospects of revival', provides a damning indictment of communism. Village life in particular was only a shadow; children had all but vanished; reading rooms which had provided the basis of self-education and intense local debates had gone and community spirit had disappeared. The prospects for his beloved church looked very bleak.

His meetings with leading protagonists of the schism, which had not yet at that time come out into the open, make revealing reading, as do his speculations on future political events, including the possibility of an upsurge of support for the return of Tsar Simeon. He is scathing about Simeon's lack of concern for Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church during his exile in Spain. 'Opportunism, apathy and ignorance . . . stand as an impenetrable curtain between past and present in Bulgarian political life and augur nothing good for the future' (p. 452).

Rebel with a Just Cause, despite problems with style and length, is invaluable, and should be required reading for anyone studying Bulgaria and its church life in an area and period for which records are very scarce. Raikin comes over as a tremendously impressive character. He had to flee his native land, risking death, rather than 'act hypocritically forever', because 'he could not any more tolerate the pain' deep in his soul (p. 36). It is a tragedy for Bulgaria that such indomitable individuals were prevented from playing any part in shaping its emergence as a modern state.

JANICE BROWN

Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Mitja Velikonja (translated from the Slovenian by Rang'ichi Ng'inja) (Eastern European Studies No. 20). College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2003. 365 pp., including 7 maps and 23 tables.

The messy collapse of the Yugoslav project has instigated a large number of scholarly attempts at unravelling the historical, political, economic, cultural and sometimes religious roots of the associated outbursts of intolerance, violence and armed

confrontation. Understandably so, as the events in former Yugoslavia evolved with a relentless and seemingly unfathomable logic, particularly given the context of the more or less peaceful dissolution of the communist system in Eastern Europe. While the overwhelming majority of explorations have come from western academia, the book by the Slovenian sociologist Mitja Velikonja presents an example of a balanced study by a local author, seeking to trace in a historical perspective the complex set of processes which prompted the warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The book explores 'the history of the religions and national mythologies of Bosnia-Herzegovina' (p. 4) while also referring to religious and national developments in neighbouring Serbia and Croatia. Velikonja addresses the interaction of religion, culture and politics within a chronological space encompassing medieval Bosnia, four centuries of Ottoman rule, four decades of Austro-Hungarian rule, the Karađorđević monarchy, the Second World War (when Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by Croatia), socialist Yugoslavia (when it became a 'socialist republic'), and, finally, 'the independent, internationally recognized but internally divided country that was established in 1992' (p. 5).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina four major religious traditions – Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Islam and Judaism – have been existing side by side for centuries. This coexistence has created certain peaceful modes of mediating religious differences, oftentimes by way of developing syncretistic and heterodox religious practices and norms. Velikonja considers the religious history of Bosnia to be 'a history of religious division as well as religious coexistence' (p. 15). An ambivalent sway 'between the extremes of tolerance and hatreds' was reinforced by the *millet* system of the Ottoman empire (p. 60). Later, the intertwining of religious and national identities during the age of nationalism fostered divisions between the Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and Muslim Slavs. Politically manipulated ethno-religious separation proved to be a powerful source of conflict, which culminated in fratricidal interethnic strife during the Second World War and the war of 1992–95.

Velikonja believes that the most recent war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was 'not an isolated anomaly in the modern world', related to local specificity (p. 288). It was 'more a classical war of aggression with clear geopolitical goals rather than a civil or religious war' (p. 292). However, the role of religious and cultural factors cannot be overlooked, because of the cynical and overwhelming (mis)use of religious differences, symbols and discourses. At the same time, taking religion seriously also means hope for the reconstruction of a multinational and multireligious Bosnia-Herzegovina, because of the country's 'predominantly tolerant and plural history' (p. 294). The major condition for this Velikonja sees in the clear separation of religion from politics.

The book provides an extensive survey of the history of religious diversity and political developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and can be usefully consulted both by academics and by a wider audience.

INA MERDJANOVA

The Christian-Muslim Frontier: a Zone of Contact, Conflict or Cooperation by Mario Apostolov. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. 208 pp., including 5 maps and 10 tables.

The end of the Cold War meant the end of political bipolarisation on a global scale and the consequent resurgence of various nationalisms and localisms. The new situation has raised important questions about the new world order. One important question concerns the renewed role of religion in political developments and

international relations. This issue has received various scholarly treatments, ranging from the exploration of religion as 'the missing dimension of statecraft' (Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson), to an overt (and frequently unnuanced) onslaught on the secularisation thesis, to the notorious 'clash of civilisations' thesis advanced by Samuel Huntington.

In the book under review Mario Apostolov appropriates Huntington's idea of the division of the world into civilisations, but contests his understanding of the civilisational frontier as a faultline of confrontation. He promotes the concept of the Christian-Muslim frontier as a 'zone of contact, in which the alternative between accommodation and confrontation is open' (p. 1). He seeks to focus on interaction and cooperation rather than opposition and confrontation in Christian-Muslim relations, construing the civilisational frontier as a socially constructed 'element of order in world society' (p. 6). Relying on Glassner, the author defines the concept of 'frontier' as a potentially shifting politico-geographical area 'into which expansion could take place', as opposed to the concept of 'boundary', understood as a clear demarcation of state sovereignty (p. 12).

The book has eight chapters, dealing with an elaboration of the concept of the Christian-Muslim frontier as a zone of contact (chapter 1), the history of this concept (chapter 2), the issue of modern nation-states and the frontier (chapter 3), the question of 'interspersing communities' and the postmodern functional frontier (chapter 4), the geopolitics of the frontier (chapter 5) and the frontier in its psychological, security and economic dimensions (chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively).

In developing his arguments, Apostolov undertakes the ambitious and complex task of analysing various cases of Muslim-Christian encounter in an immense geographical space (the Middle East, the Balkans, Eurasia and southern Asia) within a time-span from the emergence of Islam in the seventh century to the present day. He pays particular attention to the impact on Christian-Muslim relations in different parts of the world of important historical developments such as the advance of modernisation, the dissolution of the great empires and nation-state building.

In his study Apostolov draws heavily on the views of some western scholars (Gottmann, Braudel, Halliday, Said and Wallerstein, among others), and it is often difficult to distinguish his arguments from those of other authors. Sometimes the reader is left with the impression that the illustrative examples are selectively chosen to promote one or another claim, while in other cases there are factual inaccuracies: for example, his statement that there are no regional initiatives for cooperation among Balkan countries or between Balkan countries and the eastern Mediterranean (p. 13) does not seem to take into account important steps in this direction such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Moreover, his re-endorsement of the 'frontier' concept (related to the dominant centre-periphery model in academic literature) as a generally applicable explanatory category does not seem to take account of recent scholarly attempts to substitute for this overexploited model an examination of both global and local political/economic/social/cultural interaction within a network of multiple core areas.

The book comprises an impressive review of a number of cases of Christian-Muslim encounter in historical and geopolitical perspective. Employing the 'frontier' concept, it seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for the understanding of Muslim-Christian relations on the one hand, and for tracing order and structure in what Apostolov prefers to call 'world society' on the other hand. The study joins topical discussions on the renewed salience of religious identities.

Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror by Mahmood Mamdani. New York: Pantheon, 2004. 320 pp.

Some American intellectuals, including Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, argue that Islam and its followers must be understood within the framework of the unfolding of a civilisational confrontation between western modernity and Islamic theology, which at some levels are essentially incompatible. While there are nuanced positions on how incompatible Islam may be with modernity and western democratic ideals, the basic position of such thinkers is that Islam is a political and ideological threat to western societies and the western way of life.

Within the framework of a 'culture talk' analysis, Mamdani attempts to counter such arguments by denying that the terrorism being attributed to 'extremist' Muslims today is in any way located within any cultural or religious beliefs arising out of Islam. Instead, he argues, it should be seen as rooted within the legacy of the Cold War, and as nurtured by a series of 'proxy wars' fought by the United States as part of a highly manipulative foreign policy agenda. In particular he refers to the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s as being a pivotal space within which the phenomenon of contemporary political terror currently being attributed to Muslims can be contextualised and understood. 'Terrorism', he argues,

is not a necessary effect of religious tendencies, whether fundamentalist or secular. Rather, terrorism is born of a political encounter. When it harnesses one or another aspect of tradition and culture, terrorism needs to be understood as a modern political movement at the service of modern power. As such, the genesis of the form of political terrorism responsible for 9/11 can be traced to the late Cold War. (pp. 61–62)

This analysis clearly challenges one to reconsider the question why virtually all acts of political terrorism today seem to be emanating from within the ranks of the global Muslim community. Mamdani identifies terrorism as a phenomenon with a specific historic trajectory, which can be traced to a specific set of historical events.

Mamdani expands on the relationship between religious ideology and political mobilisation. He reflects, for example, on the structure of the madrassahs set up in Pakistan and elsewhere to train and recruit guerrillas (mujaheddin) to fight against the Soviet troops which had occupied Afghanistan in the 1980s. He points out that prominent themes on the curriculum of these madrassahs included the contention that Islam was being violated by atheistic Soviet troops and that the Islamic people of Afghanistan should reassert their independence by overthrowing the leftist Afghan regime propped up by Moscow (p. 136). No doubt this was an effective mobilising tool to recruit young Pakistani and Afghani men to fight the Soviet troops. Mamdani argues that madrassahs like this were financed and equipped by the US government in order to sustain the latter's proxy war against the Soviet regime.

Mamdani's basic argument continues to be relevant in the context of the aggressive foreign policy of the United States and its coalition partners who have illegally occupied and invaded sovereign Muslim countries, provoking the rise of political terror as a response to such infringements of international law. Clearly if the United Nations or any other regional military organisations are unable to protect Muslim nations from such occupation, then it seems only natural that Muslim militants will rise to the occasion, using whatever methods they might see fit, including the capture and killing of innocent civilians and acts of terror and suicide bombing.

Mamdani raises the fascinating question of why it was that after '9/11' Americans rushed out to buy copies of the Quran, as if they could perhaps find answers to why this had happened to them within the verses of the holy book. He goes on to ask, somewhat cynically, whether Iraqis and Afghans were supposed to go out and buy copies of the Bible to understand why their fellow citizens were killed and bombed by western (Christian) armies with much greater loss of life than on 9/11.

I would argue, however, that Mamdani's locating of 'Islamic' political militancy and terrorism within the context of the late Cold War goes only part of the way towards explaining why this phenomenon has emerged with such ferocity in the contemporary world. In a twenty-first-century context the same kind of ideological rhetoric heard in the madrassahs during the Afghan war is arguably being repackaged within a similar institutional framework, but this time in order to fight a war of a very different kind, and certainly outside the Cold War context. This is a war is being waged against western imperialism, immorality and exploitation within the framework of radical Islamic political thought of the likes of Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Abdul A'la Mawdudi. The struggle has moreover been extended to encompass certain essentially politically progressive phenomena such as the issue of human rights and the advancement of intellectual scholarship around religious texts. Let us take, for example, the issue of women's hijab and dress. This issue has become politicised today: from a modernist standpoint women are supposed to have become liberated at all levels, and to the modern western mind the wearing of headscarves seems an imposition; while for the Islamic traditionalist it is a compulsory requirement of the faith.

The reasons for the emergence of political terror from within the Islamic context should not, then, be sought only within the framework of the legacy of a bi-polar political world order, or even by extension within a response to imperial foreign policy agendas imposed by western nations on Islamic and Arab countries. The emergence of terrorism also needs to be seen as a manifestation of a resistance by certain kinds of militant Muslim extremists to any progressive transformation of the Islamic faith which might be regarded as a 'westernised imposition' on 'pure' Islam. (I refrain from using the term Muslim fundamentalist, as I agree with Mamdani that it is not appropriate to conflate religious fundamentalism with political Islam.) Muslims living in western societies are urged by Muslim extremists not be seduced by critical modes of thought that raise questions about the religious texts or sharia law, or for example to write for western publications. In this context, incidentally, we should bear in mind that the concept 'extremist' encompasses a range of attitudes. A distinction must be made between those 'purists' within Islam who advocate a rejection of western modes of thinking on the basis that Islam has its own critical discourse which can be harnessed to embark on a project of resistance against imperialism and those who reject critical engagement altogether in favour of autocratic and violent modes of resistance.

While this explanation might fall into the category of 'culture talk', which Mamdani argues should not overwhelmingly inform our understanding of why political terror exists, I would posit that one cannot ignore the role that this explanation plays in shaping the discourse of terror. What is required, however, is a more nuanced unpacking of culture talk. While culture talk may assume that every culture, in this case Islam, has a particular essence, the essence itself is arguably not what defines the emerging modes of contestation; rather it is conflicting interpretations of what that essence may be. Various scholars argue that Islam is not a singular monolithic belief system; rather it encompasses a multiplicity of 'understandings' of the faith, each rooted in a particular context, be it theological, cultural, political or social.

As the fastest-growing faith in the world today Islam has effectively developed various forms of practice and implementation that have actually been competing with each other, not just from a theological but also from an ideological, political and cultural perspective. There has been extensive debate on 'acceptable' forms of Islamic practice and so-called 'modifications', and this debate has impacted on the question of whether living within predominantly western or 'secular' societies inevitably means resisting those features of these societies that are 'prohibited' within the core teachings of the Islamic faith. One specific area of debate concerns the status of sharia law and its relation to the legal system of the host country.

Mamdani notes that after 9/11 the US president George Bush claimed that Muslims could be labelled as 'good' or 'bad'. Clearly bad Muslims were responsible for terrorism and good Muslims would want to dissociate themselves with anything to do with terror. However, as Mamdani and others have pointed out, such a categorisation is highly problematic, because it makes no space for legitimate dissent by 'good' Muslims who generally do not advocate terror and violence but do not approve of imperialist and neo-liberal agendas either.

For a long time, such Muslims found refuge in the tradition of the political left, and while eschewing hardcore Marxism that rejected religion and theology, they adopted socialist principles without abandoning Islam. It is certainly the case that since the end of the Cold War the categories 'right-wing' and 'left-wing' have become increasingly problematic. Can we argue that the Muslim left is being increasingly compromised by the growth of 'Islamic' political terrorism? Is the legitimate project of political dissent through mass mobilisation, a traditional instrument of the left, falling victim to the complex interactions between those Muslims who do not see violence as the answer and those who are intent on engaging in it? Mamdani does not really go into these debates in detail, nor does he claim that that is the purpose of the book. However, these questions do to my mind arise from the analysis that he engages in.

Meanwhile there is another aspect to the ideological debate taking place in Islam today. While Mamdani does reflect significantly on the development of political thought in Islam, referring to the likes of Qutb, Mawdudi, Iqbal and Jinnah, he does not explore sufficiently the debates emerging from the school of thought commonly known as 'Progressive Islam', including such figures as Farid Esack, Khaled Abou El Fadl, Ebrahim Moosa, Tariq Ramadan and Amina Wadud, whose thinking about 'modern' Islam is radically different from that of Islamic intellectuals hitherto. (A collection of essays by most of these writers is O. Safi (ed.), *Progressive Muslims* (Oneworld Publications, 2003).) The issue is precisely whether Islamic teachings are essentially incompatible with modernity and western ideals or not, and if so, whether some form of struggle needs to be engaged in to address this fact, and what kind of struggle this should be.

Mamdani touches briefly on the debate around modernity and its relationship to Islam, and on the ideological struggles that emanate from this. He does so within the discourse of 'culture talk', which presumes that Islam and the Middle East have effectively displaced Africa as the hard premodern core in a rapidly globalising world: whereas Africa is seen as incapable of modernity, hardcore Islam is seen as not only incapable of but also resistant to modernity (p. 19). It would also be fruitful, however, to look at the arguments on this subject emerging within the scholarship of 'Progressive Islam'. Much of this discourse does acknowledge that there are problems with modernity, because of its disempowering and alienating effects in a colonial and post-colonial context, but also suggests that modernity has provided a context for progress and scientific and intellectual advancement (see for example Abou El Fadl,

'The ugly modern and the modern ugly' in the collection noted above, pp. 33–77). The tragedy is that the Muslim intellectual space and tradition did not really sustain itself during the colonial period, and the effects of resistance to colonialism, of the development of the Cold War and of globalisation detracted from the project of developing a strong and overwhelming intellectual and theological framework that could counter the effects of what we now see manifesting itself as 'Islamic' terrorism. Hence modernity was not sufficiently or effectively harnessed by Muslim intellectuals, and gave way to the emergence of rigid and non-interpretive approaches to engaging with Islamic religious texts partly through the structure of religious education located within the madrassah system.

Arguing for active engagement with the text of the Quran, Ebrahim Moosa notes that 'Something has happened in the reading of the Quran in modern Islam that goes in the opposite direction . . . Instead of having readers being in awe of God, fierce warrior readers of the Quran these days scare the wits out of believers and non-believers alike' ('The debts and burdens of critical Islam' in the collection noted above, p. 124). He thus reminds us that there can be various interpretations of the Quran, and that those who use the Quran to advance a certain political agenda may come up against Muslims who do not view the text in the same way as those 'warrior readers' do. In my view we need to revive and energise the radical discourse within 'Progressive Islam' as a political strategy to address the growth of 'Islamic' terrorism.

Mamdani concludes with the idea that the USA needs to understand that what it is fighting is not terrorism but nationalism. I would concur with this view, but would go further, to argue that a distinction must be made between religious nationalism and political nationalism. Religious nationalism has harnessed political terrorism as an effective means to advance its peculiar agenda. The question remains, are these developments a direct result of the proxy Cold War scenario, as Mamdani eloquently argues, or are they also a manifestation of naturally evolving ideological contestations; and if the latter, are they contestations between Islam and the West, part of what Huntington and Lewis refer to as a clash of civilisations, or are they, as I would argue, predominantly contestations within the Islamic faith itself?

What is unfortunate about the 'clash of civilisations' thesis is that it posits an essentialist paradigm as an answer to why political terrorism is emerging. The thesis presumes that there is something intrinsic to Islam which turns some of its followers into terrorists. Mamdani exposes the weakness of this position by tracing the roots of this phenomenon to the US policy of engaging in proxy wars. He produces a powerful and compelling argument, which provides a much needed alternative intellectual treatise to that of Huntington and Lewis. In my view, though, Mamdani has not adequately addressed the growing internal political ferment within Islam itself. Nevertheless, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* is essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary politics since it not only addresses the issue of the evolution of political terrorism but also provides a context for understanding the dangers inherent in today's neo-imperialist agenda.

LUBNA NADVI