

pie, the direction of his life was suddenly illumined: "All that was earthly had become as nothing. Through the alms he had received he had ceased to be a prisoner and a slave. The steamer's paddle-wheel was going round, gurgling, parting the crested waves. . . 'Inconceivable are Thy ways, O God!'—and he crossed himself expansively, gazing into the distance. 'Thy path is in the great waters.' . . ." (p. 175).

Fr. Pavel was a kenotic figure, a man whose sanctity was hidden, unknown and apparently insignificant. It seems as though his life was wasted and led to nothing; and yet, in the end, within his humiliation, both on his way to and once he had attained his "homeland" in Siberia, he became a source of light and a powerful spiritual guide.

XENIA HOWARD-JOHNSTON

*Détente and Papal-Communist Relations,  
1962-1978*

by Dennis J. Dunn,

Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1979, 216 pp., £12.15.

The Vatican itself has never described as "*Ostpolitik*" its attempts to secure a certain degree of freedom for the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe. This term was first used in Germany, the most sensitive point in East-West relations. The term can be applied just as well to papal pastoral diplomacy since the latter's chances of success—like those of all *Ostpolitik*—are linked with the general political climate and the fate of *détente*. The Roman Catholic Church is *a priori* in a weaker position because it has neither any secular power interests nor any political or military means to gain such power. From the Church's point of view, the causes of friction with communist dictatorships are spiritual and administrative and not political, but because of the Church's claim to bear responsibility for men's souls the Church becomes an internal security risk for communist dictatorships which claim total ideological commitment from their citizens. This risk, however, can be calculated and controlled by the regime's security forces.

As a result of this obvious "disparity" between the partners of papal-communist relations there is, on the eastern side, only a limited interest (which may vary from country to country) in a *modus vivendi* with the Catholic Church, whereas the Vatican's interest is much more pressing. To understand *détente* realistically one must realize that this policy does not aim to eliminate the conflict altogether, but to alleviate its consequences. This limitation affects the Vatican's pastoral policies.

Dennis Dunn's study, which is interesting and useful as a collection of material, must be considered in the light of such fundamental

statements as these, for his book is based on a false premise: he seems to think that communist policy on the Church and the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* can be judged by the same criterion—that of secular power politics—as though the two sides were equal partners, as in the case of the political rivalry between East and West. From this false premise Dunn concludes that the Vatican “has conceded more than it has received” and he consequently misses the “reciprocity” time and again.

Only in the case of Yugoslavia does Dunn see that the Vatican achieved any “success”, and he even describes Vatican-Yugoslav relations as a “model” when, in fact, this is an *exception*. For it was not, as Dunn seems to think, “the Vatican’s coldness” and “the Church’s hostility” which caused Tito’s regime to make a number of concessions: these only became possible because the non-alignment of Yugoslavia’s communists with regard to foreign policy was also accompanied by ideological revisions (“Atheism is not our religion”, said Kardelj in 1953) and because the Vatican responded to this situation in the 1960s. Even Pius XII prided himself on his “infinite patience” in the face of Yugoslavia’s repressive church policies during the post-war years; and when Tito broke off relations with the Vatican in 1953 over the case of Stepinac, Pius XII described this as “quite unnecessary” and stated with “great sorrow” that an opportunity for achieving a “*modus vivendi*” had been missed. Hostility? During the years of the Cold War, it is true, Pius XII reacted strongly against the States of the Soviet bloc, refusing to enter into any dialogue, but this did not avoid the ruins on which all the following popes tried to reconstruct relations.

This example shows the factual and analytical weaknesses of the book. The quantity of the material, which Dunn has assiduously brought together and arranged geographically and chronologically, often does not correspond with the quality. One wonders, for example, whether the BBC’s *Summary of World Broadcasts*, which Dunn uses extensively, can ever replace the original publications quoted (such as *Osservatore Romano*) and whether newspapers suffice as the main historical source. Admittedly the archives are for the most part still closed to contemporary history; but Dunn does not seem to have interviewed any of the living main protagonists of his book from the Vatican or Eastern Europe. Thus absurdities arise, such as the insinuation that “the belief in the compatibility of Marxism and Christianity” is at the root of papal diplomacy. The only piece of evidence Dunn supplies for this thesis is an allegedly verbatim quotation of Archbishop Casaroli—from the communist newspaper *Unità* of 6 April 1974. If the author had himself read this paper in which he has so much confidence, he would at least have noticed that the quotation marks were in quite different places.

Mistakes of this kind could also have been avoided if Dunn had not

neglected the theological and pastoral dimension of his theme, and if he had not, by and large, refrained from cross-analyses (between the various countries, and between general and ecclesiastical East-West relations). Although there are some attempts in the book at objective, thoughtful differentiation, Dunn's criteria of evaluation can really be reduced to one single point: whether papal policies make East European Catholics fit enough for the "fight against communism and Soviet power"—as if this were the task of a Church which is seeking to protect its faithful from discrimination and persecution. Entrenched in such a narrow perspective, Dunn denies the positive significance of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, in the drafting of which the Vatican actively—and, in Dunn's opinion, naively—participated.

However, there have never been any illusions in the Vatican—either about the possibilities of a change in Soviet communism or about its own chances of influencing Moscow. The Christians who are now using the Helsinki document as a legal means of defending their civil rights are not overestimating their chances of success either. But unlike politicians, who only think and calculate in categories of power, Christians, in the Vatican too, dare to put more trust in God than in the balance of power and deterrence—*sperare contra spem*, to hope against hope.

HANSJAKOB STEHLE

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