

The Hawks of Peace
Notes of the Russian ambassador

Dmitry Rogozin

London: Glagoslav Publications, 2013

www.glagoslav.com

When I was offered this by the publisher I was attracted by the subtitle: Rogozin had been Russian ambassador to NATO and I thought there would be some tales of NATO politics. But there isn't any of that. What the author – who is currently Putin's deputy – gives us is 'insider' accounts of events in the old Soviet Union post-1989 and a kind of political manifesto. Little of his historical stories meant anything to me. I know nothing of the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia and Chechnya and cannot evaluate the significance of this version. The only thing I noticed was the common thread through them that the West was unable to report these events sensibly.

Of much more interest is the author's political concerns; and as deputy prime minister his attitudes may also be those of the rest of the Russian leadership. Centrally they are: an unselfconscious patriotism which is now rare in Western liberal democracies, and shame about the last century of Russian history. With the exception of the Great Patriotic War, everything since 1917 is written off as a series of disastrous wrong turnings. But if everything since 1917 has been a mistake, what is left? The church and Russian culture, chiefly its literature; and the claim that Russia is now a leader of Christianity against the decadence of Western social liberalism (hence the anti-PC stance of the current regime).¹

'Promotion of illegal drugs and of alcoholism, degenerative art, prostitution, propaganda of homosexuality and paedophilia, offences against religious and national feelings are those openly anti-national and anti-social manifestations of the perverse liberalism that should be banned unconditionally.' (p.

¹ This is discussed in a very interesting essay about contemporary Russia, 'Putinism and the Anti-WEIRD Coalition' at <<http://20committee.com/2014/04/07/putinism-and-the-anti-weird-coalition/>>. 'WEIRD' here stands for Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic.

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The author is also greatly concerned about the declining Russian population and the position of Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics. Thus, in part, the recent events in Ukraine and various comments recently attributed to Putin about the Russian military capacity to invade neighbouring states if necessary to protect those minorities.²

What he does *not* discuss is striking: there is almost nothing about the control of the economy by the oligarchs.

Post-Soviet Russia is an odd place (by our standards of what is 'normal') and this book conveys that. The essay I cite in the first footnote, 'Putinism and the Anti-WEIRD Coalition', includes this:

'Simply put, Vladimir Putin is the stuff of Western progressive nightmares because he's what they thought they'd gotten past. He's a traditional male with "outmoded" views on, well, everything: gender relations, race, sexual identity, faith, the use of violence, the whole retrograde package. Putin at some level is the Old White Guy that post-moderns fear and loathe, except this one happens to control the largest country on earth plus several thousand nuclear weapons – and he hates us.'

Mr Rogozin has similar views and, for that reason, despite a truly awful translation job, in those parts I could understand this is an interesting and instructive read.

Robin Ramsay

² See 'Putin "privately threatened to invade Poland, Romania and the Baltic states' *Daily Telegraph* 18 September 2014 at <<http://tinyurl.com/mqInlbu>>. In fact there was no threat, merely a statement that the Russian military could invade those countries.