In this voluminous work, Michail Babkin summarises and develops his two preceding books: the scholarly monograph *The Clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Overthrowing of the Monarchy (early 20th century — end of 1917)* (2007) and the collection of previously unpublished or little known documents *The Russian Clergymen and the Overthrowing of the Monarchy in 1917 (Materials and Archival Documents Concerning the History of the Russian Orthodox Church)* (2006; 2nd ed. 2008). Since the first of these publications, in 2006, Babkin has received particular attention from a broad segment of Russian society for his “deconstruction” of the widely acknowledged myth of the alleged monarchism of the Russian clergy. This myth was cultivated throughout the Soviet epoch by two sides, the Soviet anti-religious authorities together with the anti-Soviet emigrants (especially by those who joined the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad). However, not only the documents of 1917 and 1918 but even the pre-Revolutionary sources are not particularly favourable to this myth; Babkin reinforces his previous emphasis on the tacit, but unwavering, opposition of high Church officials to the monarchy in the pre-Revolutionary period.

About 95% of Babkin’s new work is a historical study and about 5% is a theological essay, although these historical and theological components are never mingled. As a historian, Babkin concludes that Church officials at almost all levels used the opportunity of the February Revolution to take revenge on their main competitor, the Russian Tsar and the monarchy as a whole. Such an attitude was shared not only by the so-called “red priests” but also by the Russian Local Council of 1917–1918 and by Patriarch Tikhon. As a theologian, Babkin takes at face value the Russian State Church’s official teachings about the sacral nature of the power of the Emperor (Tsar), which appeared in Muscovite Russia and throughout the St Petersburg Empire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Therefore, he considers the whole catastrophe of the Russian Church after 1917 as a natural result of the apostasy from this faith committed by the Local Council and the hierarchy headed by Patriarch Tikhon.

B. L.