

Embassy, Emigrants and Englishmen: The Three Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London

Christopher Birchall

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This is the unlikely history of a centuries old church located at the heart of England's capital city. Founded in the early-18th century by a Greek Archbishop from Alexandria in Egypt, the church was aided by the nascent Russian Empire of Tsar Peter the Great and joined by Englishmen finding in it the Apostolic faith. The church later became a spiritual home for those who escaped the upheavals following World War II or who sought economic opportunities in the West after the fall of communism in Russia. For much of this time the parish was a focal point for Anglican-Orthodox relations and Orthodox missionary endeavors from Japan to the Americas. This is a history of the Orthodox Church in the West, of the Russian emigration to Europe, and of major world events through the prism of a particular local community. The book calls on stories from an array of persons, from archbishops to members of Parliament and imperial diplomats to post-war refugees. Their lives and the constantly changing mosaic of global political and economic realities provide the background for the struggle to create and sustain the London church through time.

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