the unification of national consciousness with religious consciousness reveals the immaturity of a particular nation's national consciousness. Beginning with Dostoevsky and Solovyov, the author moves from the union of clericalism and nationalism in bourgeois Lithuania to the contemporary situation in the Third World countries, where, according to the author, western imperialist circles encourage religious divisions. The second article is without question remarkable: while discussing religion in the Ukraine, the author places particular emphasis on Catholicism and the Uniate Church, but omits to mention that a large proportion of Ukrainians are Orthodox. This applies also to the third article, from which a naive reader would infer that all religious life in the western Ukraine resulted from the export of Uniate ideas from the West. In one small collection of articles, which deals with general religious questions, three whole articles are devoted to the Uniate Church alone. Relatively little attention is given to Orthodoxy.

ALEXANDER PYATIGORSKY

Russia's Political Hospitals: The Abuse of Psychiatry in the Soviet Union by Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, Gollancz, 1977, 510 pp., £6.99.

This is a detailed and extensively documented book which manages to be readable in style although alarming in content. What happens in the USSR now could so easily happen imperceptibly elsewhere.

The authors are a South African doctor who studied psychiatry in Australia and worked in the USA before becoming Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at Oxford, and a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the London School of Economics who has specialized in Soviet politics. To produce this book they drew upon their own special interests – the vulnerability of psychiatry to misuse, and Soviet methods of combating dissent.

To read and digest such a large volume of official material, and unofficial although validated typescripts smuggled out of the USSR, must have been a daunting task. In addition the authors interviewed people in the USSR as well as Russian émigrés (mostly psychiatrists who became victims of their own system) now living in Britain, Canada, France, Israel and the USA. There are 35 pages of references, an index of people and organizations, and numerous explanatory footnotes throughout the text. One of the ten appendices is a useful tabulated register of 210 dissenters forcibly detained in hospital because of their beliefs: the cause of the internment, source of information and a brief summary of the case are given; 35 were held for religious reasons.

Since Soviet citizens are brought up as atheists, conversion to religious faith as an adult is seen as maladaptive behaviour, considered pathological

and in need of compulsory hospitalization. Of the four cases chosen for detailed description in the chapter on the theory and practice of criminal and civil commitment to mental institutions, the case of Gennadi Shimanov is given to illustrate the treatment of a religious believer. This chapter includes a section on religion and the law, and on how religious belief is seen and dealt with under the broad category "a danger to society".

The book opens with a brief appraisal of differing views on the nature of psychiatry, the ethical problems which arise and the opportunities for misuse. The evolution of Soviet psychiatry is then outlined, revealing how it has been moulded by communist ideology bolstered by Pavlovian doctrine.

Descriptions of life in these hospitals are harrowing: the conditions are totally degrading; in some cases there is no medical treatment and in others there is excessive use of medication with the familiar (but untreated) uncomfortable side effects which lead to a worsening of the patient's health. In the "special hospitals" there is a regime of oppressive, punitive brutality and neglect of elementary basic human needs.

The section on the psychiatrist and his diagnoses shows how psychiatry is used as a state instrument. Refusal to comply with official requests or suggestions is professional suicide. Independent thought and action are seen as deviance and can lead to the doctor being certified himself, and endangering his family too. Instances are given of diagnoses which were altered to comply with the changing requirements of the secret police.

Publicity, especially in the West, and group solidarity (that of Germans and Jews are two examples cited) appear to help impede unfettered abuse. Two chapters recount how this abuse arose and then became an issue within the Soviet Union, slowly winning international recognition. There is a last, long chapter on the organization and effect of external opposition to this abuse. The varying reactions and actions of eminent western psychiatrists are painstakingly traced, and their effect discussed, raising serious issues for further thought.

RUTH FOWKE