

Reviews

Zhizni zhitiye Voino-Yasenetskogo, arkhiepiskopa i khirurga
(*The Life of Voino-Yasenetsky, Archbishop and Surgeon*)

by Mark Popovsky

Paris, YMCA Press, 1979, 489 pp., n.p.

The secret of this wonderful book has already been partially unlocked for those *RCL* readers who do not read Russian by Mark Popovsky's article published three years ago (*RCL* Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 97-105). But we live in a sad world if the economics of publishing prevent the appearance in English of one of the spiritual classics of our century. There is indeed a library of such works, just one or two now published in translation, a few more available in the Russian original through the sterling work of the YMCA Press in Paris, but the great majority languish in manuscript in the archives of Keston College and elsewhere. Will there sometime be a wealthy individual or an enlightened Christian literature agency which will commit itself to the substantial investment which it would take to present this corpus of work to the world? Meanwhile, Keston College preserves its treasures and awaits the day when it may be privileged to continue this work it has begun in a very small way.

This biography, one of the greatest books of them all, is at least published. A gravestone in Simferopol says it all: "Archbishop Luka Voino-Yasenetsky, 18 April 1877 - 19 June 1961. Doctor of Medical Science, Professor of Surgery, Laureate." Mark Popovsky closes his work with that stark inscription, having opened it nearly five hundred pages and four and a half years of labour earlier by asking the question, half-murmured by people in the Soviet Union today: "Is it really true that there was a great Soviet surgeon who was also a pastor of the Russian Orthodox Church?"

This book answers the strange question in more detail and with greater insight than anyone could ever have the right to expect, given the difficulty of research and the negligible chance of ever having the work published in the Soviet Union. So Mark Popovsky's work was a labour of love and of the deepest devotion. But it is not pietistic. Its narrative is memorable, the writ-

ing entrancing. Mark Popovsky, a journalist and writer on various subjects now living in the USA, has raised a memorial to a great man more permanent than that gravestone and which will exist as long as the Christian faith continues to motivate the human race.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

Catholic Poland

by Alexander Tomský, Keston, Kent, Keston College
in association with Aid to the Church in Need, 1982, 20 pp., 60 p.
(Keston Book No. 18)

The title of the booklet *Catholic Poland* published by Keston College must be taken literally. It is a history of the rise and endurance of the thousand-year-old Roman Catholic faith in Poland told by a deeply committed Roman Catholic to whom—and according to him to the Polish people—Nazism and Marxism are not simply political forces but “heresies”.

This fast-driving account which goes on to describe the struggle of the Roman Catholic Church within an atheist state inspires while it informs. Dates, facts and figures are meticulously recorded but they do not obtrude on the narrative. In a booklet of twenty pages it is impossible to probe deeply into all aspects of the subject, much less to discuss the problems of other religions and denominations, and Alexander Tomský does not attempt to do so. He is telling a story about spiritual heroism, the “hope of the half-defeated”, and his passionate conviction carries the sympathetic reader with him. Quotations are effectively and economically selected: “No handcuffs,” says Archbishop Glemp, “no regulations, no repressions, no enforced emigration can destroy the ideals of the nation. They exist in the soul.” After all the publicity surrounding Pope John Paul II, after the barrage of media coverage and even as the criticisms steal in in the wake of adulation one is perhaps most moved by the simple, momentous statement: “Then, while rumours were circulating that a large-scale offensive was being prepared against the dissidents, an event took place which entirely altered the balance of power between Church and State. On 16 October 1978 Cardinal Karol Wojtyła of Kraków was elected Pope.” The author has a very personal approach and some of his opinions are controversial. It is nonetheless to be hoped that Keston College will continue to give its blessing to publications of this kind as an invaluable way of helping its readers glimpse the vision of those intimately involved in the destinies of particular creeds and countries.

VICTORIA WATTS

They Call Me The Bacon Priest

by Fr Werenfried van Straaten, O. Praem.,

Chumleigh, Devon, Augustine Publishing Co. in association with Aid to the Church in Need, 160 pp., illustrated, 3rd edition, £1.50, U.S. \$3.50

Iron Curtain Church Relief began when Fr Werenfried van Straaten saw the horrors of the German cities bombed in World War II. Thousands camped together for years in concrete bunkers amid the ruins. Fr Werenfried, the "Bacon Priest" of the title, has just relinquished command of Aid to the Church in Need, remaining its spiritual director. The change of the organization's name in the meantime is significant. This book is a testimony to the first challenge of the partition of Europe—when millions of refugees worn to death by the terrible migrations forced on them in 1945 were left spiritually desolate. Fr Werenfried saw that Christ could not be real to them in these conditions. The future of Christianity would live or die with the witness Christians showed them. He did not change this conviction from the postwar days when he used tinned Argentine horse meat as German sausage, with 52% fat content, to feed starving refugees, not even when he later saw the two hundred thousand lepers of South Vietnam, the four million refugees of South Korea or the babies taken from the dustbins of Calcutta by Mother Teresa.

After the War, the seminary at Königstein trained ragged priests for ragged people. One Silesian priest of 64 was then caring for 31 villages, saying four Masses on Sunday and walking 70 miles a week. The Communist régimes of Eastern Europe split the Church with their peace priests, and imprisoned thousands of bishops, priests and Christian people, throwing up martyrs such as Cardinals Slipyj, Stepinac and Mindszenty.

Of course, Fr Werenfried was soon accused of politicking. He still is. That is due to his conviction that Providence is at work in the world and that it should be given as free a path as possible if the will of God for the nations is not to be thwarted. Some political systems have institutionalized resistance to God's plans. Fr Werenfried spread his work in politically sensitive areas—such as the Arab refugee camps. (In Galilee, he points out, the 35,000 Catholic Arabs in 1948 had fallen to 18,000 by 1957.)

A quotation from an Eastern European bishop points up the darker side of Fr Werenfried's struggle: "For the Church behind the Iron Curtain, no *modus vivendi* with communism is possible, only a *modus moriendi*." That remains to be resolved. It depends on whether others follow in the footsteps of the Bacon Priest.

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union

Edited by Archie Brown, John Fennell, Michael Kaser, H. T. Willetts,
Cambridge University Press, 1982, 492 pp., n.p.

This encyclopedia aims to cover all aspects of the Russian past and the Soviet present. The editors have assembled a team of over a hundred experts who between them cover the geography, history, religion, art, music, language, literature and sciences of the Russian Empire and all aspects of the Soviet political, economic, social, cultural and military scene. There is a detailed index and a useful selected bibliography.

It is inevitable that in a work of such comprehensive scope each article will present the bare facts. The editors have succeeded in presenting these facts in a lively and readable way, and the lack of analysis in most cases is compensated for by the fact that the details chosen by each author simply provide the essential information required. Although only ten pages deal with the history of religion in Russia and the USSR, the articles here, all by Father Sergei Hackel, present the essential facts and give due weight to them relative to their importance. There are only two pages on the history of dissent, contributed by Peter Reddaway, but these are lucid and informative. There is also one page on emigré and dissident literature.

The Encyclopedia is attractively presented with hundreds of interesting photographs, both black and white and in colour. It is a source book in which one can feel confidence and it affords pleasure to the reader.

PHILIP WALTERS

Dictionnaire Russe-Français des Termes en Usage dans l'Eglise Russe

by Martine Roty

Paris, Institut d'Etudes Slaves, 1980, 160 pp., n.p.

The advent of this small book contributes greatly to the filling of a long-standing need for a concise, up to date dictionary of Russian Orthodox terminology. It can only be hoped that such a work will appear in Russian-English, as a knowledge of Russian religious terms is necessary not only to the student of church affairs, but of Russian history and literature as well. Martine Roty has produced that rare phenomenon, a reference work which is not put down after a brief consultation, but which entices one to read on out of sheer interest.

Although the amount of material is necessarily limited by the modest size

of the dictionary it manages to embrace, comprehensively, the most necessary terms. Going beyond bare definition, the work includes historical and linguistic notes and cross-references. The inclusion of a number of illustrations and diagrams is an extremely useful feature and the concise bibliography of French, Russian and English works used in the compilation of the dictionary serves as a guide to further reading.

Overall, this little dictionary is a very welcome publication, and one the present reviewer has no hesitation in recommending as an excellent reference work.

ALYONA KOJEVNIKOV

May One Believe—in Russia?

Violations of Religious Liberty in the Soviet Union

Edited by Michael Bordeaux and Michael Rowe in collaboration with the International Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in the USSR,
Brussels,

London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980, 113 pp., £3.45
(Keston Book No. 19)

Here is a readable and well-documented paperback which is an excellent introduction to religion in Russia for someone who has just started to examine the subject, and is the perfect answer to those who say "Of course people are free to practise their religion there. I went on holiday to Moscow and saw an open church. . . ."

As a beginner myself, I found the very clear outlining of Soviet law and procedures most illuminating and helpful, while the accounts of the particular religious groups are really fascinating. Some strange tales emerge, the most poignant being that of the Orthodox church which, because parishioners still came there after it had been officially closed, was eventually razed to the ground. Then, because the local people still met to pray beneath the tall pines, these too were destroyed. Now only stumps remain, to which the faithful still tie ribbons and tiny mementoes of honour and respect.

It is useful to have information about some of the less well known groups within the USSR such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, and Buddhists, and even when writing about these the authors succeed in making the subject seem not remote and academic but vivid and human. A note of urgency sounds throughout the writing: there is much injustice going on and we who have learned about it must protest, if only ineffectually via the United Nations and conferences such as Helsinki and Madrid.

I like the unpretentious style, the use of direct quotes and plenty of annotations and footnotes rather than vague generalizations and wild accusa-

tions: this is no dramatic outburst but a calm and reasoned account of something cruel and terrible which has been too long ignored by those professing concern about "human rights". The only criticism I have is of the title, which seems to be unnecessarily long and laborious—and is the pun intentional? I would have opted for something simpler like "Faith and Freedom in Russia"—but it's an unimportant point. This is a thoroughly good read and a "must" for those seriously interested in discovering what is really going on in the USSR.

JOANNA BOGLE

Within the Whirlwind

by Eugenia Ginzburg,

London, Collins and Harvill Press, 1981, 423 pp., hardback £9.95

This account of Stalin's terror introduced me into a world I had simply never bothered to think about. One shrinks from reading of husbands and wives being wrenched apart and sent to opposite ends of Siberia, of starvation diets and torture, of haggard faces and abscessed limbs. But here the crisp, forthright and deeply personal descriptions bring home not only the vicious cruelty of the oppressors but also the raw courage of their victims. Eugenia Ginzburg is equally good at detailing the life of an "ex-zek", a prisoner released on completion of sentence into compulsory exile in the remote regions.

Perhaps the most moving description is of Eugenia's meeting with her younger son who is allowed to join her in exile: she was taken from him when he was not much more than a toddler and now we see her being greeted by a tall young man who puts his hand on her shoulder and with his gesture rolls back the years of separation. But there is merriment, too, and Eugenia's endurance of children singing official propaganda songs in praise of Stalin and her training at the Preschool Methodology Centre are described with relish. Much of the sloganizing at the latter, incidentally, is horribly similar to that currently being inflicted on us by "educational experts" here in the West, which is an uncomfortable realization.

The tender unfolding of the author's love for a prison doctor is told with dignity and restraint. A Catholic, he introduces her to the possibilities of faith, but we are not told the extent to which she feels able to accept them. We can share the drama, however, when the fragile creation of a home together in the thaw of the post-war period is disrupted as they see their friends being rounded up again, the secret police working steadily through an alphabetical list—and they know their own turn must come. The whole of the era is summed up in the scene of a husband leaving his wife for work

every morning with the words, "My dearest, forgive me if I have ever hurt you in any way", both knowing that these words may be the last they can ever share together.

To read this book is a useful spiritual experience: it reminds you to be grateful for all the ordinary things we too often take for granted: for food and sleep, and warmth and hope and being safe at home. Much recommended.

JOANNA BOGLE

Współrządzić czy nie klamać? Pax i Znak w Polsce 1945-1976
(Power-sharing or Compromise?)

The Pax and Znak movements in Poland 1945-1976)

by Andrzej Micewski,

Paris, Libella, 1978, 269 pp., n.p.

Pax and Znak are two tips of the submerged iceberg of Catholic public opinion in postwar Poland. If their existence proves anything at all, then it is perhaps the obvious fact that Catholics in Poland differ in their attitude toward communist rule. The leaders of the Pax movement accepted the imposed communist system as a historical necessity, while the founders of the Znak (Sign) group treated it as another episode in Polish history. Consequently, the former aimed at sharing power, believing that it was the only way to modify the system and make it acceptable to Polish society, while the latter tried to only preserve what they considered the basic values of Polish culture and Polish political philosophy.

Micewski's book is the first comprehensive attempt to present the history of the two socio-political outlets granted by the communists to Catholics who, either seduced by political ambition or purely from a sense of duty, decided to accept a place in the controlled official spectrum of public opinion. The title of the book, literally "To share power or refrain from lying", makes the author's view clear, but the reader is left feeling that things are not quite so simple as the title suggests.

Pax was conceived and created by Boleslaw Piasecki, who started his political career before the war as a leader of a notorious semi-fascist youth movement and during the German occupation of Poland commanded a rabidly anti-communist resistance organization. Arrested by the Russians in the last months of the war, he faced the death sentence or even execution without trial, but managed to convince General Serov, the NKVD (secret police) representative in Poland, of his usefulness, and was handed over to the Polish communist authorities. On his release he was permitted to publish a weekly paper, which eventually became the nucleus of the movement. Pax soon developed into a relatively strong organization which had the official

blessing of the Party and the more discreet support of the Soviet and Polish secret police. Pax owns several industrial and commercial enterprises, a newspaper and a few magazines, and a vigorous and enterprising publishing house. It is represented in Parliament, has a seat in the council of state, and recently even a minister in General Jaruzelski's cabinet. Nevertheless, it never achieved the status of a political party. This was Piasecki's unfulfilled dream and the temptation which led him astray into servile collaboration. Distrusted by the Catholic hierarchy, discredited in the eyes of the public, Pax became in the end a useless and embarrassing encumbrance to the régime.

Znak chose a better, or at least, safer, course. It evolved from a group of Catholic intellectuals connected with *Tygodnik Powszechny* (*The Universal Weekly*), a paper founded in 1945 by the Archbishop of Kraków, Prince Sapieha. From the start, the paper emphasized its aloofness from politics, while conscientiously opposing Marxist encroachments on culture, history, philosophy and a Christian world-view. It became the only independent journal in the whole Soviet bloc and was considered by the authorities as the voice of a moderate and reasonable intellectual opposition. After Gomułka's comeback in 1956, when the shortlived honeymoon in State-Church relations began, some members of the Znak group accepted seats in Parliament. The parliamentary Znak group was under constant pressures and attacks and finally expired when the only surviving Znak deputy courageously abstained during a vote on amendments to the constitution.

Micewski tells the story of Pax and Znak in great detail and this makes his book valuable and indispensable to everybody associated in Polish affairs, but, perhaps inadvertently, he places both groups on the same political plane. Piasecki's ambitions were consistent with his totalitarian outlook and contempt for democracy, while the presence of Znak deputies in Parliament was only an attempt (perhaps an unfortunate attempt) to enter the political stage as an independent force.

Micewski's book is significant because the author was deeply involved in the events he describes. He started his political career in Pax and became a close and trusted associate of its leader. After splitting with Pax, Micewski drew closer to Znak, and is now a regular contributor to *Tygodnik Powszechny*. His book is written with a candour which some of his previous friends might consider as verging on treachery and libel, while the praises poured on Znak will probably embarrass some of his new associates.

MIKOLAJ SAVOULAK

Lettere di Cristiani dalla Cina

edited by Piero Ghedde, Bologna, Editrice Missionaria Italiana,
1981, 89 pp., L. 3,000

So much that is published about contemporary Chinese religion represents an elaborate guessing game, based on insufficient sources. To write a book based on first-hand reports from all parts of the country, giving reliable information not only from the cities and coastal areas but also from the far corners of the Republic, is not at present a practicable task. Small books, then, do well to avoid making big claims. The volume under review is modest in scope, but has considerable value. It is in the main a collection of letters and personal reports from the People's Republic of China, all giving some testimony about religious conditions. The editor evidently follows the well-established proposition that, of all forms of written evidence, private letters are likely to be the most reliable witnesses to fact.

The book consists of an editor's preface and four sections. The first is a chronological survey of the years since 1949—brief, but useful for the reader who knows little of the subject. Chinese Roman Catholicism is set against a background of current events. The second section is an interview with an Italian priest, Fr Domenico Maringelli, to whom most of the letters are addressed. Fr Maringelli worked in China from 1936 until his expulsion in 1952, and has an excellent knowledge of the Chinese language. The letters written to Fr Maringelli make up the third section. All come from the same small geographical area (unnamed, of course), and give a fairly consistent picture. All were written at a time when the policy of religious toleration, initiated after 1976, was relatively new. Tribute is paid to the wisdom and statesmanship of the great leader Hua; the towering crimes of the Gang of Four are condemned; there is delight that Fr Maringelli is a friend of New China. The possibility of postal censorship may to some extent have influenced the words of the writers, but there seems little doubt that on the whole the feelings expressed are genuine. The reader gains an impression of a community that has emerged from a period of terrible suffering; there are practically no younger priests; vestments, missals and Bibles are in desperately short supply. The atmosphere of genuineness is enhanced by the very fact that the reader has to wade through much personal detail in order to isolate a few nuggets of relevant information.

The last section consists of a collection of letters and reports addressed to different people. Many are written by Chinese Christians who have visited relatives in the People's Republic, and they cover quite a wide area. None have come through the Chinese post, and the reader is able to gain a much clearer and fuller picture of the Chinese Church from this section. There is plenty of detail about the experiences of priests and sisters who spent years in re-education camps, their faithful work after returning home, the quiet constancy of those who were not arrested, closed churches, lack of books,

relationship with Protestant communities, and so forth. The theme of loyalty to the Vatican is not in evidence on every page; nevertheless the nature of that loyalty does emerge very clearly, as does the determined, even bitter, hostility to the "Patriotic Catholics".

This is a good introduction to the present state of the Roman Catholic Church in China, to be preferred to more pretentious works which in so many cases consist largely of their authors' subjective judgments.

ARVAN GORDON

Book Notes

Poiski: Svobodni Moskovsky Zhurnal (Quests: A Free Moscow Journal)
No. 1, 1978, Long Island City, N.Y., republished by
Detinetz Publishing Corp., 1979, 380 pp., n.p.

This is a well produced reprint of the first issue of a *samizdat* journal, which sought to provide an open forum for efforts at mutual understanding by representatives of the various wings of the dissident movement in the USSR. A comprehensive critique of the new (1977) Soviet Constitution by Pyotr Pryzhov and an account by Yuliya Vozesenskaya (Okulova) of her 1976-79 Gulag sojourn are particularly worthwhile.

A Voice in the Wilderness
Letters, Appeals, Essays

by Vasyl Romanyuk, translated and edited by Jurij Dobczansky,
Wheaton, Illinois, Society for the Study of Religion under
Communism, 1980, 126 pp., n.p.

It is valuable to have collected together the *samizdat* writings of this Ukrainian Orthodox priest, who recently completed a twelve-year sentence in prison, labour camp and internal exile. The letters he wrote to many Soviet and international statesmen and institutions grimly catalogue the all too familiar life of Soviet penal institutions: unremitting physical hardship, spiritual deprivation, and above all a towering sense of injustice. Added to this is Fr Vasyl's pain on behalf of his beloved but repressed homeland, Ukraine. Nonetheless, he describes Christians as "sons of joy and happiness". With them "... there can be no room for sorrow, tears and grumbling because Christ Himself has entered the dwelling of their heart . . ." (p. 78).

Political Change and Social Development—The Case of the Soviet Union
by A. Shtromas, Frankfurt-am-Main and Bern, Verlag Peter Lang,
1981, 173 pp., Sfr. 40

The author of this useful analysis of political change in the Soviet Union differentiates between dissent, defined as “refusal to assent” and resistance, and consequently views the USSR as a country of “total dissent”. He asserts that the official ideology renders religious believers “automatically dissident”, and notes that “although politically the régime is in effective control of almost all the churches (except those outlawed), it seems unable to stem the growing independent impact of religion on the people” (p. 82). Shtromas thinks that the immediate successor to the present Soviet régime is likely to be a benevolent authoritarianism which will seek to dismantle the machinery of totalitarianism, and believes that the West should therefore support all manifestations of dissent in the Soviet Union.

Kosciol w sluzbie narodu (The Church in the Service of the Nation)
by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Rome, Centre “Corda Cordi” and
Press Office of the Polish Episcopate in Rome, 1981, 402 pp., n.p.

This is a selection of addresses and pastoral letters by Cardinal Wyszyński from August 1980 to May 1981—a period of great “Polish renewal”. As during his entire “reign”, the Primate of Poland strongly defends both the human rights of individuals and of the Christian nation. The theme which emerges most clearly is Cardinal Wyszyński’s ultimate desire to form a new generation of Poles, who would not hesitate to take upon themselves the responsibility for transforming Poland into a truly Christian country and who would do so in a spirit of humility and love.

Books Received

Listing of a book here does not necessarily preclude review in a subsequent issue of RCL.

The Ukrainians and Georgians, Bohdan Nahaylo and C. J. Peters, Minority Rights Group, Report No. 50, London, 1981, 20 pp., n.p.
Kolyma Tales, Varlam Tikhonovich Shalamov, Translated by John Glad, London/New York, W. W. Norton and Co., 1980, 222 pp., \$9.95.

Soviet Dissidents: their Struggle for Human Rights, Joshua Rubenstein, Boston, Beacon Press, 1980, 304 pp., \$6.95.

God's Playground: a History of Poland, Norman Davies, 2 Volumes, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981, 605 and 725 pp., £55.00.

Witnesses to Jesus, Mieczyslaw Malinski, Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates, 1982, 307 pp., £6.95.

Religious Change in Contemporary Poland: Secularization and Politics, Maciej Pomian-Srzednicki, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, xii and 228 pp., £12.50.

Wszystko postawiłem na Maryje (I Staked my all on Mary), Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Paris, Editions du Dialogue, 1980, 376 pp., n.p.

Oto Matka Twoja (Behold Thy Mother), Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Jasna Góra-Rzym, Pauline Press, 1979, 408 pp., n.p.

Spotkania (Encounters) Nos. 7-8, ed. Piotr Jegliński, Paris, *Spotkania* Editions, 302 pp., n.p.

Religion, Leszek Kolakowski, Glasgow, Fontana Paperback, 1982, 235 pp., £2.50.

Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism, Lowell Dittmer, Berkeley/London, University of California Press, 1974, 386 pp., \$4.95.

China and Christianity: Historical and Future Encounters, ed. James D. Whitehead, Yu-ming Shaw, N. J. Girardot, Indiana, the University of Notre Dame Press, 1979, xvi and 294 pp., \$8.95.

The Challenge of Marxism: A Christian Response, Klaus Bockmuehl, Illinois, Inter-Varsity Press, 1980, 190 pp., \$4.95.

Christian-Marxist Dialogue in Eastern Europe, Paul Mojzes, Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1981, 336 pp., n.p.

World Christian Encyclopedia: A comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world, Edited by David B. Barrett, Oxford/London, Oxford University Press, 1982, 1010 pp., n.p.

Religiöns-und Glaubensfreiheit als Menschenrechte: Helsinki, Belgrad, Madrid, Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Rudolf Grulich (Schriftenreihe der Ackermann-Gemeinde, Heft 30), München, Ackermann-Gemeinde, 1980, 190 pp., n.p.