Reviews

Mit-Leiden: Russische Christen und Atheisten im Dialog
edited by Eugen Voss. Zollikon: G2W Verlag, 1983.
133 pp., 14DM/14 Fr.

Published letters are sometimes a disappointment when compared with other published material. Petrarch was disillusioned by the contrast, as he thought it, between the Cicero of the philosophical treatises and polished speeches and the Cicero of the letters. It is difficult not to feel the same about the contrast between George Orwell's letters and his articles. When someone is writing an article, he takes greater trouble over the content and style than when he is writing a letter. But, as Orwell says in his essay "Politics and the English Language", the style and content of a piece go closely together; a loose style not only betrays, but also causes, loose thinking. On the other hand, the publication of letters can be defended precisely on the grounds of what might be considered their disadvantages: their directness and spontaneity.

All this applies to this collection of letters from the Soviet Union — and to an amplified extent, as is often the case with any publication from the Communist world. *Mit-Leiden* — "Suffering together" — is a collection of letters written by Russian Christians and atheists to each other and took its origin from an extract written by the Russian poet, Lev Druskin, *"Mein Unglaube ist mein Kummer"* — "my lack of faith is my sorrow". A cycle of letters followed, the first two being written to Druskin and the others ensuing from this correspondence. Druskin was born in Leningrad in 1921 and became a well-known poet. He has been physically handicapped since a severe attack of polio as a child. In 1980 he emigrated with his wife and now lives in Tübingen. The book ends with a German translation of one of his poems — *"Ich werde weinen über meinen Unglauben"* ("I shall weep over my lack of faith"). (The translation is into rhyming German, which, competent though it is, is bound to have distorted the original Russian more than a straightforward prose translation which, I think, would have been preferable.)

It may be unfashionable to think we learn less from this kind of publica-

tion than from a non-epistolary approach to the questions which Christianity and atheism raise, but this may be so for some people, and is certainly so for this reviewer. The contents of the letters themselves are very much what one would expect from intellectual Christians and atheists, and a comparable publication of similar letters written by western people might arouse little interest. This book, however, has a poignancy and tension which derive from the circumstances in which the letters were written. They reflect the kind of debate which was permitted by Lenin in the first years after 1917 but which the State rapidly clamped down on when it realised that people were not reaching the "appropriate" conclusions. Politics are never mentioned, but as one reads these letters one can never forget their political and social setting which made it necessary for them to be written and circulated so clandestinely.

ANDREW LENOX-CONYNGHAM

Sotsialisticheskiy kollektiv i ateisticheskoye vospitaniye (The Socialist Collective and Atheistic Education), by V. A. Saprykin. Moscow: *Politicheskaya literatura*, 1983, 176 pp.

V. A. Saprykin conducted studies on Christians (Russian Orthodox, Lutherans, Baptists, Mennonites and Roman Catholics) and non-believers in Karaganda region in the Kazakh SSR from 1976 to 1980. His book incorporates these studies along with the work of others into a comprehensive assessment of the "religious problem" in the USSR today. Although the author claims that the process of secularisation is firmly established and "irreversible" in the Soviet Union, his work reveals the extent to which agitators, propagandists and party ideologists face a serious challenge from a "new type of believer" and an increasingly militant church. Saprykin's work has nothing in common with the simplistic descriptions of the religious population and the correspondingly simple methods of atheistic propaganda based upon them which one encounters in the Soviet mass media. The religious population, like the Soviet population as a whole, has become more urban, more technically oriented and better educated. People do not continue to believe in God because they are unaware of the "scientific materialistic" alternative but in spite of it. Saprykin's study therefore represents a more serious attempt to come to grips with the religious population as it is rather than the caricature of "old men and women" that Soviet propaganda would like it to be.

Saprykin writes that the number of "active and convinced supporters of religion may be estimated in the several tens of millions" (pp. 66-67). Certain denominations — especially the Baptists — are growing younger: "Certain religious organisations have been successful in halting the trend

of the 1950s and 1960s toward congregations which were primarily old and primarily female" (p. 67). The anti-religious apparatus is faced with a "new type of believer: a relatively young person who has, as a rule, good vocational training and an education to match" (p. 350). (The average age of believers in Saprykin's study of various industrial enterprises in Alma-Ata is 34.) The new type of believer is interested in domestic and international politics, science and technology. He seeks to discover "a rational foundation for his faith" and is interested in "the aesthetic and philosophical aspects" of his creed (p. 67). Saprykin suggests that this new audience requires a new kind of anti-religious propaganda.

Saprykin also turns his attention to those denominations who have organised their religious life into a kind of counter-collective which usurps the time and dedication an individual might give to the labour collective. It is precisely these congregations which are making inroads among the young. Members of these congregations — again, Saprykin's examples are drawn primarily from the Baptists — consider themselves "members of a church and not of a labour collective" (p. 107). In one survey, the author discovers that almost twenty percent of the believers attend church three or four times a week; another forty percent attend once or twice a month (p. 139). These believers participate almost exclusively in religious activities. Saprykin's study offers testimony to the effectiveness of these congregations in obtaining and keeping converts through the use of "illegal" youth choirs, Sunday schools, taped sermons and Bible studies. Some congregations hold services designed to counter the influence of Soviet holidays; others urge their parishioners to become good workers in order to demonstrate "the superiority of the Christian faith".

These congregations have been particularly successful in attracting adherents willing to put their faith and its precepts above Soviet social norms. In one survey thirty percent of all believers said that they conduct themselves according to the precepts of God's Word alone and not according to Soviet social norms. Among Baptists this figure was forty-two percent; among Mennonites sixty percent (pp. 144-45). While Saprykin admits that certain sects such as the Baptists are growing, they are doing so at the expense of older, more traditional denominations and not at the expense of the non-believing population.

Nevertheless, Saprykin's own book provides evidence that many of those considered by the authorities to be safely in the non-believing camp are far from the "indifference to religion" confidently ascribed to them. For example, in one study, Saprykin found that thirty to forty percent of those classified as "indifferent to religion" continued to observe religious holidays and participate in religious rites. And in the survey of students attending a technical school in the Mordovian ASSR, thirty percent of the "indifferent to religion" category reacted negatively to atheistic propaganda (p. 68). Saprykin's findings confirm what many in the West have

suspected all along; that those classed as "indifferent to religion" are not atheists going about their business but are in many cases believers who for one reason or another have chosen to conceal their religious practices behind the mask of indifference. Saprykin and others argue that anti-religious propaganda should be continued and made more effective among these "indifferent" souls (pp. 67-68).

Saprykin also discusses problems of the anti-religious apparatus itself: unqualified lecturers, lecturers who consider believers "their enemies" and thereby generate hostility, lecturers who speak on "unconstitutional" themes (p. 85). Saprykin discusses a case where Baptist young people attended an atheistic lecture and attempted to disrupt it by asking provocative questions: in this instance the lecturer was prepared, but not every lecturer is as well qualified as he should be. In certain areas, the percentage of anti-religious lectures among the total given has fallen, demonstrating neglect and complacency. Saprykin urges propagandists and ideological workers to increase their efforts, heighten their qualifications, and pursue more effective methods (for example, individually tailored approaches to certain sects or even a single believer, use of films or question-and-answer forums).

Saprykin's discussion of "methodological problems" encountered during the study, problems which he claims are common to all studies of religion in the USSR, demonstrates the inextricable link between scholarship and party policy in the USSR. Certain "fanatics" refused to participate at all. Other believers displayed a "distrust and groundless fear" of the possible consequences of their answers. Others wondered about "the origin of the questionnaire", a reasonable question in a country where not all surveys are conducted by academic institutes (pp. 9-10). While denying that the survey results were improperly used, Saprykin admits that the local party committee revised its atheist plan on the basis of his findings and that individual interviews, in addition to their scientific value, were also useful in locating "the objects of education", that is, individuals who should be targeted by the anti-religious apparatus for special attention (p. 66).

As with most Soviet anti-religious studies, the reader is left in awe of the enormous time, energy and resources devoted to a problem officially described as a minor one fast disappearing. While the Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, V. A. Kuroyedov, continues to insist that the government does not keep — and has no interest in keeping — statistics on the number of believers in the USSR, Saprykin's book is replete with statistical information which reflects a fanatical devotion to record-keeping and observation. Saprykin states, not merely that some communists and *Komsomol* members have been attending baptisms, but that in three districts of the Mordovian ASSR in 1977 ten Communists and 69 *Komsomol* members were found in attendance at baptisms (infor-

mation which could not be collected without planning and a certain amount of zeal).

Saprykin's study provides a Soviet view of what is widely referred to as the religious renaissance in the USSR. He provides grudging confirmation of unofficial and western sources which have claimed all along that churches are growing, that the young are returning to the services, and that effective Christian resistance is being mounted against the atheist state and its minions.

SHERMAN GARNETT

Candles in the Dark
by Mary Craig. London: Hodder, 1984. 271 pp., £4.95

We are quickly made aware that the title of this fascinating book gives a grossly inaccurate indication of its contents. Instead of dealing with flickering candles soon to burn out and leave the darkness even more profound, we discover beacons illuminating (surely for all time) the heights of nobility which man is capable of achieving in the face of even the most appalling circumstances. In one respect it gives the lie to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's assertion that in this century "men have forgotten God". No — not all men!

Candles in the Dark tells the story of six modern martyrs (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Maximilian Kolbe, Janani Luwum, Maria Skobtsova and Oscar Romero). Each one faced a different form of evil. Each one showed the frailties and weaknesses the rest of us know so well. But each one was fired by the Spirit of God. Therein lies the hope for us lesser mortals and for the future of mankind. Yet *Candles in the Dark* is not really about these six at all, but about the countless number of men and women who have stood out against those regimes of both the Left and the Right that deny human freedoms, human rights and human dignities to so many human beings. The last chapter ("The Unknown Martyrs of the Twentieth Century") is both the key and the climax to the whole book. The famous six are simply those beacons who, through the accidents of history, have achieved world renown.

The book makes easy and compulsive reading. It is a joyful tribute to all those who must surely hear the words "well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". We come away from it with an unexpected feeling of optimism. Certainly a book not just to recommend to our friends — but to give them!

TED BAINES

Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm
by Caroline Humphrey. Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'homme, 1982. 522 pp.

This is a very serious and solid socio-anthropological study of the present-day mode of life in an agrarian "micro-society" in the Barguzin region of Buryatia. The study comprises "economy, society and religion", and it is to the last section (and the smallest one) that I want to draw the attention of our readers in this brief review.

The author's main thesis on ritual — which in point of fact could equally well be applied to any form or manifestation of the Buryat religion — is that just as Buryat "shamanist" ritual was to a great extent fused with Buddhist lamaism in the past, so the complex of Buryat culture, which contains "shamanism", Buddhism and syncretic fusions of both elements, is now, in a fragmentary way, being linked with "Soviet ritual". (Just as any ethnic form of religious ideology in the USSR — and lamaism undoubtedly *is* ethnic in that country — is being fragmentarily linked with Soviet ideology.) After a detailed description of wedding ritual where a specifically religious (i.e. "ritually active") element does not play, nowadays at any rate, a particularly important role, the author passes to "ritual site" and shamans whom she aptly calls *"bricoleurs"* [multi-functional religious artisans] of the Soviet world. Here she makes a significant observation (previously made by Sanjeyev and D. Banzharov) that functionally (as well as symbolically) speaking, the present division of "sacred spots" into lamaist and shamanist reflects the old division between "black" and "white" shamans. To the author, however, the whole Buryat religion, syncretic as it is today, represents a succession of layers that supersede each other diachronically, and it is that supersession that manifests itself in numerous individual genealogies, real and imaginary. Here, and the author shows this with the utmost clarity, is the point where shamanism is taking revenge, for the very idea of genealogy as a form and means of personal identification is alien to Buddhism by definition. In calling lamaism "a kind of floating ideology" the author opposes it to shamanism as a kind of background religion that has, so far, persisted through all periods of religious and sociological changes and innovations. In spite of the fact that lamaism's "institutional support has been reduced to almost nothing" it may still figure side by side with official ideology, as "institutional" whereas shamanism steadfastly remains *natural* and in a way, neutral, for in the author's words, "it demands nothing". The brief description of a Buryat lamaism and its concept of the future is succinct, though not always soundly critical concerning the local sources of information.

In this connection I would like to point out that the author's statement that "the present church professes Buddhism of the 'Reform' movement" is highly questionable. It is enough to say that both in the Aginsk and Ivolginsk monasteries practically all leading lamas were Tantrists (in 1966 in Ivolginsk alone there were at least 12 Tantrist lamas out of 35 or 36). The author's assertion that "virtually no-one understands the Tibetan text (of *Oboo** ritual)" is also not quite accurate. I happened to know quite a number of laymen from the Barguzin area (and many more in Kizhinga) who learned them by heart. (This of course did not mean that they knew Tibetan.) The author's assertion that "belief in the imminent arrival of the future Buddha, Maitreya (Maidari), is widely and sincerely held" is based on the indisputable fact that Maidari Khural (the major annual festival celebrating the Future Buddha) has become the most important religious event. This however, as well as the spread of the cult of Maidari on the whole, does not mean that Buryat Buddhism is eschatologically oriented. The church remains today as consistently and essentially Tsonkhavist† and Tantrist as it was at the beginning of the century, and considerably more so than it was in the 1920s and 1930s.

The book is extremely useful and laudably full of material obtained at first hand.

ALEXANDER PYATIGORSKY

Russia's Catacomb Saints
by Ivan M. Andreyev. Saint Herman of Alaska Press, 1982. 648 pp., $25 ($20 paper).

The term "catacomb Church" comes from the early days of the Church when, in order to be able to pray out of sight and reach of their Roman persecutors, the saints of that time held services underground, in the catacombs where the dead were buried. Today we use the term to describe those Orthodox Christians conducting clandestine services in the USSR who refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the Soviet government or of its official Church, the Moscow Patriarchate. Professor Andreyev's book traces the history and martyrology of the catacomb Church from the initial persecution of Christians in 1917, through the intensified, systematic arrest of those who refused to accept Metropolitan Sergi's Declaration of 1927 in which he allied the Orthodox Church with the Soviet government and its goals, up to the present day.

Russia's Catacomb Saints is divided into six parts, the first by the late Professor Andreyev himself. A member of the intelligentsia with doc-

**Oboo* is a sacred spot devoted to a local "spirit-master" (*sadak*).

†Tsonkhava was a great Buddhist reformer in Tibet in the 15th century.

toral degrees in medicine, psychology and literature, he was imprisoned in Solovki along with the leading hierarchs of the catacomb Church. The other five parts were compiled by the late Fr Seraphim Rose, a convert to the Orthodox faith and co-founder of St Herman's Monastery. Fr Seraphim died of a sudden illness just weeks before the book was published. He compiled historical documents and accounts of the lives of the New Martyrs from those who lived and suffered with them.

Fr Seraphim and Professor Andreyev discuss the rise of Sergianism, or compliance with the Soviet government, and the consequent formation of the catacomb Church; the lives of the catacomb Saints; Sergianism as seen from within the Moscow Patriarchate; the catacomb Church in recent years; and the relationship between the catacomb Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Their research is extensive, drawing on *samizdat* documents as well as on books and articles by those with sympathetic, neutral or hostile attitudes towards the catacomb Church and Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. These documents present a vivid picture of the tormented decisions and painful separations made by members of the catacomb Church. Particularly poignant are the lives of the Saints themselves, men and women of all classes and degrees of education who endured intense and frequently prolonged suffering for Christ's sake at the hands of their countrymen.

While at first the reader may be confused by inconsistencies in the spelling of names (Sergius and Sergei, Alexis and Alexei), the non-Orthodox will be delighted to find a glossary of liturgical terminology at the back of the book. The fact that the book is almost 650 pages long allows the authors to explain more clearly than has ever been done before in English the difficult decisions made by the clergy and laity of Russia in 1927, and the consequent division between the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate, while creating a living portrait of the suffering of the faithful in Russia today. This is not a book to be read lightly.

ANN McLELLAN

Die Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR: Beiträge zu einer Bestandsaufnahme
(The Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Contributions towards an Assessment) edited by Reinhard Henkys.
Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1982, 483 pp.

Thirty-five years ago the German Democratic Republic was founded within the boundaries of the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany and in the former heartlands both of Brandenburg-Prussia and of the Reformation. In this admirably fair and thorough work about the Protestant

churches in the GDR, Reinhard Henkys and his colleagues tell two fascinating and unfinished stories. The first is about the church coming to terms with the situation "in, but neither of nor against socialism". The second is about the state coming to terms with its heritage of history, culture *and* religion.

Both church and state are now in their sub-apostolic age. It is not just that the heroic figures of the 1940s and 1950s have passed from the stage. More importantly the *parousia* has been delayed — for both sides. In 1949 the overwhelming majority of church people believed that the GDR would be an impermanent political phenomenon and that Germany would within their lifetime be reunited as a western state. Members of the SED (the ruling Socialist Unity Party) believed meanwhile that religion would wither away "by 1980". Now both sides are adjusting with difficulty to the realisation that they have to live together for the forseeable future. A viable if uneasy *modus vivendi* has been achieved.

In characterising the relationship between church and society and between church and state, Henkys sets out nine theses, which the rest of the book illustrates and substantiates:

1) The churches are the only organisation in the country to have maintained their autonomy. The SED has had, in this respect, to limit its totalitarian claims.

2) The SED no longer regards the situation as abnormal ("remnants of bourgeois society"), but concedes to the churches the unique status of an independent organisation which is "socially relevant" without being socialist.

3) A condition of this recognition is the independence of the churches from the churches of the Federal Republic.

4) Both sides approve in theory the principle of separation of church and state. This separation, however, is not total. It contains elements of partnership.

5) Areas of conflict remain, but the church has more scope for action than it can in fact use.

6) The Protestant churches do not claim any further privileges. Instead they are concerned to find scope within the socialist system for social activity, without giving up their own Christian identity.

7) Protestant churches neither form a political opposition in state and society nor are they the agents of the party in communicating and dealing with the Christian population.

8) The ideological antagonism between party and church remains insuperable. There is no room for compromise. Both church and party, therefore, are having to learn how to cooperate for the benefit of the people, without attempting to solve fundamental problems of principle.

9) What is decisive for the respect in which the church is held is not size,

financial power or legal guarantees but the "real presence" of Christians in society.

The last thesis is the most important. Despite continuous restrictions and the sporadic harassment at local level especially of young people, the churches of the GDR enjoy astonishing freedoms compared with other communist lands — not because they have inherited them or been given them on a plate, but because enough believers have cared enough about the Christian faith to stand their ground, not only doggedly and loyally but also with intelligence and imagination.

There is, however, no question of the SED sharing power with the church. On two occasions in the 1950s the church engaged in a classic church-state power struggle. The issues were separation from the West German Protestant Church and the incompatibility of the socialist youth dedication rite (*Jugendweihe*) with church confirmation. It lost both times quickly and decisively, because it had chosen the wrong battle-grounds.

Organisational unity with other "*Landeskirchen*" is not a theological necessity in German Protestantism: and in the course of time the wider ecumenical fellowship of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, as well bilateral relationships with the Russian Orthodox Church, minority Protestant churches in Eastern Europe, French Protestantism and the British churches, has come to be more significant. The East German churches have been admirably loyal and constructive ecumenical partners. Nevertheless, at least one third of their budget still comes from West Germany with the tacit approval of the SED, which could turn off the tap but which needs hard currency.

As far as the *Jugendweihe* was concerned, most lay people came to feel that participation in this secular rite of identification was not radically different from any other lawful civic obligation. This sheds interesting light on the fact that when the church leadership is criticised for getting too close to the state (and conniving in a restoration of the old alliance of throne and altar) opposition comes mainly from clergy and full-time church workers, rather than from the laity who earn their living in the world. Suspicion of the new and more accommodating church policy of the state, since the historic meeting of 6 March 1978 between leaders of church and party, remains widespread. It goes back to the brutal attack on church youth work in 1953, which was so similar to Nazi tactics and which aroused the spirit of the Confessing Church.

Experience gained and lessons learnt in the Confessing Church's struggle have helped the church in the GDR to maintain its own integrity and resist internal take-over. Alone of the major non-Roman Catholic churches in Eastern Europe it is not a corporate member of the Christian Peace Conference; the socialist "*Pfarrerbund*" (Clergy Association) never recruited more than two hundred members, even including widows and lay employees; and, most significantly of all, the unique Christian

Democratic Union (the Christian party in the National Front government) has not succeeded either in controlling the church or even in speaking for it. The CDU was a notable absentee from the conference table on 6 March 1978. The SED has a short way with unsatisfactory allies.

There is much to be hoped and much to be learnt from the brave, skilful, intelligent and above all faithful Protestantism of these churches, which have kept not only their doctrine but also their entire administration free from Marxist penetration. The symposiasts tell us all that needs to be known with a rare and praiseworthy combination of academic thoroughness and journalistic verve — German "*Publizistik*" at its inimitable best. The standard of presentation is first-rate throughout — with a running list of contents in the margin, footnotes and references at the end of each chapter, a select bibliography and useful indices. This will be a standard work for specialists for years to come.

The symposium form makes the work too heavy and repetitive for the general reader, who needs something like Henkys' introductory and concluding essays with an abrégé by the same deft hand of the other material. It is good to know that he has recently produced a small paperback: and it is greatly to be hoped that this will soon appear in an English translation.

JOHN ARNOLD

Notes de Prison
by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1983.
304 pp., 75 F

In September 1953 the Polish Primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, was arrested and imprisoned without trial or explanation. *Notes de Prison* is a record of his three-year internment, presented in diary form, interspersed with private letters and official memoranda sent to the authorities, as well as private prayers and reflections.

Imprisonment must have had a considerable effect on the Cardinal's subsequent policies, and on his method of conducting negotiations with the State while maintaining a firm stand against the principles of Communism and the sovietisation of Polish culture. If there was any political naivety in his dialogue with the authorities before his arrest, there was certainly none by the time he returned to office in October 1956. He is now remembered as the man whose shrewd policies and remarkable diplomatic abilities guided the Polish Church through the difficult years between 1949 and 1981, and protected its institutional autonomy in a way unique in the Eastern bloc, where the Churches are generally paralysed by subservience to the atheist State.

Early in his notes, the Cardinal recalls that in April 1950, just over a year after taking office, he signed an agreement with the Party intended to guarantee conditions in which the Church and State in Poland could exist side by side with impunity. The settlement undermined the tradi-

tional refusal of the Catholic Church to conduct any negotiations with a Communist regime, and caused considerable furore both in Poland and abroad. Its aim, Cardinal Wyszyński explained, was to give the Polish Church legal status as an independent institution with a right to its own policies, given that it would not challenge the endeavours of the authorities to build a Polish State on Communist principles and in cooperation with the Soviet Union. The understanding was essentially that both sides would meddle as little as possible in one another's affairs. After a brief lull, the outcome of this tentative expression of trust was a state clampdown on religious institutions, harassment of the clergy and, ultimately, Wyszyński's arrest.

Imprisonment was not an unusual feature of life for clergy at the time, and Cardinal Wyszyński came to see his own internment as an opportunity to share the common burden, and to undertake self-assessment and spiritual exploration: "Most priests and bishops I have worked with have been in prison," he observes; "I would be almost immature without it."

He spent the first month in solitary confinement in a monastery near Lidzbark in northern Poland. Later, he was transferred to another disused monastery about 100 kilometres away where he was held under house arrest with two other prisoners, a priest and a nun. They remained with him throughout his detention, and together they had to learn to live with the daily facts of internment: the fear, indignity and suspicion, the aimlessness which creeps into a constricted life with no imposed pattern, and the sheer physical deterioration which loss of personal liberty carries with it. The Cardinal's strong physical constitution and self-discipline helped him to withstand the test moderately well; his deepest sources of distress appear to have been isolation from his immediate family, and the frustration of being unable to do his job. In October 1954, he was moved to a Franciscan monastery in Silesia, and a year later to Komancza, an isolated convent in the Bieszczady mountains in south-eastern Poland where the conditions of his internment were somewhat eased.

The Cardinal's attitude towards the officials and guards he had to deal with is commendably restrained, particularly in view of their lack of sympathetic response to the slightest request. They emerge as distant and disinterested products of the system, with little individuality or intelligence. Understandably the Party leader, Bolesław Bierut, receives harsher treatment. Here was the man who had signed the agreement and then flagrantly abused it. In addition to the persecution and harassment of active representatives of the Church, the Party had meanwhile set up its own Catholic organisation — "Pax". With justification, Wyszyński saw this as a tactical move by the authorities intended to infiltrate Catholic circles and undermine the independence of the Church and its institutions.

Bierut died in March 1956, and his death coincided with a major shift in policy in Moscow, following Khrushchev's attack on Stalinism at the 20th Party Congress in February 1956. Bierut was succeeded by Władysław Gomułka, who had himself previously served a prison sentence for "nationalist deviations". Cardinal Wyszyński and all other imprisoned members of the clergy were released, and a new church-state agreement was duly negotiated and signed, once again defending the Church's right to autonomous administration within the bounds of existing laws.

The agreement was broken within six months, and the restrictions and harasssment began all over again. It was left to Cardinal Wyszyński to try to protect the church institution against state pressure as best he might. Remarkably, he succeeded in creating a prodigious religious revival within the country, and with the support of about 90% of the population managed to negotiate with the State on his own terms, without ever slipping into the trap of weak compromise. Until his death in 1981, Wyszyński's authority as leader of the Church and spokesman for a huge majority of the Polish population remained indisputable. He was little short of a cult figure, and indeed only this year a proposal for his beatification was submitted to the Vatican.

"I am not a mystic . . . I am a realist", he remarks in *Notes de Prison.* "My sin is the sin of sober realism, which does not allow for the intervention of that impossible word which God alone can speak." He was undoubtedly a realist, and a man whose admirable courage during his Primacy preserved an autonomous Church to which the people of Poland could look for the expression of views which reflected their religious, and often political, aspirations without paying standard lip-service to the Communist creed.

IRENA KORBA

Books Received

Listing of a book here neither implies nor precludes review in a subsequent issue of RCL.

Kmiecik, Jerzy, *A Boy in the Gulag.* London: Quartet Books, 1983. 248 pp.

Ouspensky, Leonid, *The Meaning of Icons.* Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983. 222 pp.

Thubron, Colin, *Among the Russians.* London: Heinemann, 1983. 212 pp.

Voslensky, Michael, *Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1984. 455 pp.

Wiles, Peter (editor), *The New Communist Third World: An Essay on Political Economy.* London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1982. 392 pp.

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