Reviews

Eastbound Ecumenism. A Collection of Essays on the World Council of Churches and Eastern Europe.
by Hans Hebly. Lanham, New York: University Press of America, 1986. Paperback, 144 pp., £6.00.

J. A. ("Hans") Hebly, who has recently retired from his position as Director of the Inter-University Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research in Utrecht, has been involved in ecumenical work since the late 1940s. One of his primary concerns has always been that the Western churches should gain a proper understanding of the unique problems facing the churches in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and that they should develop a properly co-ordinated policy in response.

In 1975, the subject of religious liberty in the Soviet Union came unexpectedly onto the agenda of the W.C.C. Assembly in Nairobi as a result of a letter to the Assembly from the Moscow Orthodox priest Father Gleb Yakunin. Certain staff members of the W.C.C. were at that time anxious to see the organisation begin to formulate a proper response; and in 1976, as a result of a request from these individuals, Dr Hebly collaborated with Michael Bourdeaux of Keston College and Eugen Voss of *Glaube in der zweiten Welt* to produce *Religious Liberty in the Soviet Union*, a handbook of reliable documentation and analytical material. This new initiative did not in fact lead to anything concrete, however, and it is Dr Hebly's view that the prevailing policy towards the churches of Eastern Europe adopted by Western ecumenical bodies in general continues to be misconceived and misapplied.

Eastbound Ecumenism is, as the sub-title indicates, a collection of essays (only some of which have been published elsewhere) dealing specifically with the World Council of Churches. The author proceeds from the following argument, which he develops in the first and second of the five chapters of the book. The W.C.C. was formed in

Western Europe and its aims shaped by a Western European concept of Christian universalism. Nowadays, however, the majority of W.C.C. member churches come from the Third World and from communist countries. The idea that the W.C.C. can continue to serve as a forum for collaboration and common witness amongst churches from such widely different and indeed mutually opposed social and political systems must now be called in question. The author's view is that "the search for the wholeness of the church which started with the creation of international organisations and which was pursued in world-perspective should be realised on the local level and from there extend to a wider circle of the communion of all: not the other way round."

In his third chapter, Dr Hebly looks at three models of church-state relations in Eastern Europe and at the implication of these relationships for the world-wide ecumenical movement. He accurately analyses the policy of the Soviet government towards the church, a policy which combines the two apparently contradictory tendencies of integration and marginalisation: briefly, church representatives are expected to promote certain Soviet policies for world consumption, while the church as a whole is systematically denied any role within Soviet society itself. He goes on to examine how the churches in Hungary have become unquestioning supporters of government policy, while the Protestant Church in East Germany has managed with great skill to maintain its independent voice and witness. But, says Dr Hebly, the East German example is unique, and the ecumenical movement as a whole must face up to the fact that political circumstances in Eastern Europe have produced churches which cannot speak with independent voices in the international forum.

In his fourth chapter Dr Hebly goes on to contend that by continuing to act on the assumption that the member churches from Eastern Europe are participating in the W.C.C. on equal terms with Western churches, and that it is possible for churches from East and West to co-operate in establishing practical programmes for joint action on social and political questions, the W.C.C. is actually doing itself harm. The Eastern European churches have a hidden agenda dictated by their political masters and will constantly attempt to ensure that the business of the W.C.C. is slanted towards problems other than those experienced by religious believers in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Thus, in his fifth and final chapter, originally published in *RCL* Vol. 13, No. 2, Dr Hebly examines the failure of the W.C.C. to promote religious liberty in any consistent way, or even to define what constitutes such liberty.

Dr Hebly questions whether under the circumstances just described it can any longer be the role of the W.C.C. to try to organise joint

action by Christians on concrete issues at all. He suggests — and quotes churchmen from East Germany who hold the same view — that churches must tackle and solve the problems which face them within *their own* countries without presuming to do so for other countries, and that the role of a world ecumenical body should be quite different. He sums up this role as follows:

> A universal council should therefore be reticent to identify itself with the concerns of churches in local (i.e. national or regional) situations. A universal fellowship of churches should stimulate the churches to fulfil their mission in their own situation and it should discuss the overall-concepts [sic] and the theological-ethical guiding principles for the social action of the churches. These should then be translated and adapted to the different circumstances, because the form and content of the social action of the churches may be quite different. It might also provide a platform where churches, engaged in their local situation, can exchange experiences and eventually seek the help of the other local churches which are concerned with the same problems or feel committed to their cause.

The energy with which *Eastbound Ecumenism* is written disguises an underlying resignation, even pessimism: the author is clearly seriously disillusioned. Even if one accepts — as I think one must — the basic correctness of Dr Hebly's analysis, there nevertheless have been, and continue to be, positive aspects to the involvement of the churches of Eastern Europe in the ecumenical scene. For instance, while it is obviously in the interests of the Soviet government that the Russian Orthodox Church should continue to be a member of the W.C.C., it is also clearly in the interests of that church itself as far as its internal life is concerned. It gives its leaders international status, they become known to their western co-believers, and however constrained in their official pronouncements, can and do take the opportunities thus provided to pursue informal contacts, to make informal arrangements. Even apparently fruitless criticism can help them: for instance, while in public they have to deny any suggestion that there are restrictions on religious liberty in the Soviet Union, it is to their advantage that these suggestions continue to be made. When they return home they have to report to the secular authorities that these questions have been raised, and this gives them an excuse to discuss these issues with the authorities, so that they continue to be on the domestic agenda. The high profile that the Russian Orthodox Church has achieved on the international ecumenical scene also means that no assault can now easily be launched by the Soviet authorities against the church as an institution in Soviet society.

All these positive factors are important and need to be taken into

account when assessing the overall value of continuing international ecumenical contacts. But they do not alter the fact that there has been a continuing failure by the ecumenical movement to examine the basic assumptions on which East-West ecumenical work proceeds. *Eastbound Ecumenism* is well argued and persuasive, and it is certainly a tragedy that the W.C.C. has apparently still not understood that the questions it raises are of major importance and merit serious discussion.

PHILIP WALTERS

The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History
by Jane Ellis. London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986. 532 pp., £27.50. (Keston Book No. 22.)

Together with the recently published two-volume study by Dimitri Pospielovsky (*The Russian Orthodox Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984)), Jane Ellis's book will undoubtedly serve as the main source of information about contemporary Russian Orthodoxy in the years to come. While Pospielovsky's approach is more historical (he begins by describing in detail the events of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the various internal schisms which occurred during the revolutionary years), Jane Ellis focuses principally on the present state of affairs, using impressive and varied documentation, translating relevant documents, listing the unofficial and imprecise statistical evidence, discussing personalities of church leaders, and giving much attention to the dissidents, whose activities, prominent in the 1970s, are largely suppressed today.

The importance of such research should be evident to anyone concerned with the social make-up of the world's second super-power, and also to all those who are interested in the fate of Christianity in the latter part of the twentieth century. The amazing and well-established fact which is so vividly presented here is that at least fifty million citizens of the Soviet Union are practising Orthodox Christians. This number represents twenty per cent of the entire population, which includes also several million Muslims, and representatives of other religions. If one compares this with the much lower percentage of church-goers in such Western European countries as England or France, one can measure the ineffectiveness of official anti-religious propaganda, of the successive persecution campaigns, and of the still quite effective administrative and social discrimination, which have dogged Russian believers since 1917.

Information about religious life in the Soviet Union, which was

practically unobtainable before Stalin's death in 1953, is today comparatively abundant. Sources include numerous official texts, as well as testimonies by Western visitors, *samizdat*, and personal contacts. Internal documents of the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs have been smuggled to the West, and reveal the views held by the Soviet authorities themselves about the state of the church in the Soviet Union.

Three major facts emerge from the book:

1) The view that the Orthodox Church enjoys a sort of privileged status and is not persecuted in the same way as other religious groups — such as the Baptists or the Jews — is quite incorrect. Being by far the largest religious body, it represents also the largest challenge to the official anti-religious ideology of the party and the state. It is true that the leadership of the church, headed by the Patriarch, has no choice but to adopt an attitude of external subservience to the powers that be (and such an attitude is typical throughout public life in the Soviet Union), but the façade of subservience masks a very complicated reality. Jane Ellis discusses in detail the astonishing variety of views and attitudes which exist among the bishops and other churchmen, and in which courage and cowardice are often intermingled. Such complexity means that the image of the present-day Russian priest as a KGB agent in disguise is very rarely justified.

2) The fallacy of the supposed "separation between church and state", proclaimed by the constitution: the reality is that the law strictly limits religious practice to what is identified as "cult" (no social work, mission, or educational programmes for children under 18 are permitted), and an impressive network of state officials, headed by the Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers, supervises the application of this restrictive law. There is no right of appeal against their decision to "register", or "unregister" (i.e. suppress), a religious community. The church can neither own property, nor have recourse to the courts.* (See the official Statute of the Council, translated on pp. 281-84.)

3) The small, truly heroic group of "dissidents", including Fr Gleb Yakunin and Fr Dimitri Dudko (who renounced his "anti-Soviet" views on TV), has now largely been suppressed. But evidence shows that religious practice has spread significantly among the young, that the number of seminarians has doubled (from 1,160 to over 2,000 since 1971: see pp. 120-21), that a majority of believers consider that open dissidence in a police state can be counter-productive, and that there is a wide spectrum of ideological differences (conservatives,

*It is possible that there has been a change of practice regarding both these latter points: see Michael Rowe, "Speculation on Changes in Soviet Legislation on Religion", *RCL* Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 312-14, which discusses evidence which appeared after the publication of Jane Ellis's book — *Ed.*

liturgical reformers, nationalists, liberals, etc.) among the dissidents themselves.

It is not yet clear whether the new emphasis on public debate (*glasnost'*) encouraged by Gorbachev will have consequences for the church. The celebration of the Millennium of Russian Christianity in 1988 will provide interesting occasions for observing whether any changes have taken place.

Some will probably dispute part of the statistics contained in the book, or deplore some expressions, which might be considered as too "opinionated". For instance, the author writes that the contents of the theological journal published by the Patriarchate (*Bogoslovskiye Trudy*) is "rather dull" (p. 154) — a surprising statement when one remembers that, among other works, the journal has published a new Russian translation of St Augustine's *Confessions* and the writings of the famous theologian Paul Florensky (the Russian "Teilhard"), who died in a concentration camp in 1943.

Be that as it may, information about Russian Orthodoxy is now widely available. It is not possible to understand the Soviet Union without it, and it is to be hoped that Jane Ellis's study will receive the widest possible distribution.

JOHN MEYENDORFF

Sowjetischer Atheismus und Theologie im Gespräch
(Soviet Atheism and Theology in Dialogue)
by Bernd Groth. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Josef Knecht, 1986. 366 pp.

This book is an attempt at dialogue with Soviet atheism. The author approaches Soviet atheism in its own *Selbstverständnis* and tries to identify the positive message in its criticism of religion and Christian anthropology. This constructive attitude should be praised, but it tends to make the author too optimistic. Bernd Groth, a Jesuit and lecturer at the Gregorian University in Rome, sees a basis for dialogue in the "rational argumentation" of both Christian theology and Soviet atheism and believes that "Soviet atheistic propaganda needs authentic dialogue with believers, just as theology needs dialogue with scientific atheism" (pp. 23-24). However, this does not hold true for all Christian theology, and particularly not for Russian Orthodox theology, which neither has the same emphasis on the rationality of faith, nor feels the need for dialogue with Soviet atheism. Nor, surely, can it hold true for Soviet atheism itself.

The book consists of three unequal parts: the first (200 pages) is a reconstruction of the origin of Soviet atheism and of its

anthropological and religious philosophy. The second part (50 pages) is a historical survey of earlier attempts at dialogue, and the last part (also 50 pages) contains the author's own model for dialogue. The book has an extensive bibliography. The first part of the book is the best. It demonstrates a thorough knowledge of contemporary Soviet atheistic literature. It seems, however, that Groth is not familiar with J. Thrower's book, *Marxist-Leninist "Scientific Atheism" and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR* (Berlin, 1983), which also deals with modern Soviet atheistic literature. He is wrong, then, to state that "in researching modern Soviet atheism, no-one has yet arrived at a fruitful understanding of the problem" (p. 23). The last part is an anti-climax after the long preparation. It does not lead to a real dialogue. It appears that the author too eagerly presupposed a need for dialogue on the side of Soviet atheism. Groth realises the difficulties of dialogue — he refers to them several times — but this does not diminish his hope and idealism. Instead of a dialogue, the last part is a detached exposition of Christian views (pp. 274-81 and 310-21). With the repeated question on p. 303, "is there any kind of common basis for dialogue?", we are back to square one.

It seems to me that Groth is not consistent in his approach to Soviet atheism. If one takes this atheism on its own terms, one also has to recognise its philosophical self-satisfaction and its lack of need for *authentic* dialogue. Lenin, who gave Soviet atheism its dogmatic form, always categorically rejected any ideological compromises whatsoever with religious thinking — a viewpoint which professional Soviet atheists have until now echoed. I, at least, heard it repeated by the director of the Moscow Institute for Scientific Atheism at a conference on Marxist-Christian dialogue in Switzerland in September 1986. The only sphere in which Soviet atheists do see a possibility and even a necessity for dialogue with believers is the practical political one: the common struggle for peace. Unless Gorbachev advocates new thinking in the field of religion and atheism, we cannot force upon Soviet atheism any more fundamental dialogue.

Groth rightly states that Soviet atheism's unwillingness to enter into dialogue is not to be explained by lack of press freedom (p. 308), nor is it a consequence of Marxism as such (pp. 254-57) (in this section, incidentally, Angelika Senge's study *Marxismus als atheistische Weltanschauung* (Paderborn, 1983) should have been mentioned), but he is wrong when he thinks that this is "fundamentally" (*im Grunde*) a question of inspiring confidence. Here, the author misses the essential point, and thereby reveals the methodological shortcomings of the book. The book fails to analyse the ideological nature of Soviet atheism and investigate the relation between its epistemological status and political (étatistic) function. The whole atheist education system

and propaganda apparatus in the Soviet Union does not exist as a result of missionary activity on the part of individual atheists, but is created by the state as a means of political socialisation, as instruments to aid the formation of an ideological monoculture. This casts doubt on the assertion on p. 308 that Soviet atheism has nothing to fear from an open discussion and that "it should be glad to be apprised of errors and illusion". Groth does include a section on the "ideologisation of atheism" (pp. 76-80), but this is only a description of the Leninist viewpoint, without critical evaluation. And this applies to the whole book. It is an inventory of the tenets of Soviet atheism, not a new meta-ideological analysis of it.

WILLIAM VAN DEN BERCKEN

The Bear's Hug: Religious Belief and the Soviet State
by Gerald Buss. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987. Paperback, 224 pp., £7.95.

The Bear's Hug is a concise and eminently readable summary of church-state relations in the USSR. It combines a survey of the churches' and believers' legal predicament with many descriptions of individual cases of suffering. This blend of the general and the particular, and the fact that Mr Buss does not assume that the reader has prior knowledge of the subject, makes the book an excellent introduction. Moreover, by concluding with practical suggestions as to what can be done to help persecuted believers, the author avoids being solely academic. Apart from the erroneous description of the Orthodox Church given in the Glossary, I have found it to be a very reliable and accessible source book.

Gerald Buss, who is Senior Chaplain at Hurstpierpoint College in Sussex, received the Airey Neave Memorial Scholarship for his research into freedom under the law. The award enabled him to write this book, and his detailed knowledge of the law constitutes perhaps its main interest for those with some prior knowledge of the USSR. The section on international law is particularly interesting.

The opening chapters examine the life of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1917 until 1986, outlining the key events and major figures which have affected it. Chapter 4 surveys the laws which relate to religious groups as a whole. It clearly shows how these religious groups, as institutions, have no legal identity and are therefore ultimately without rights. The numerous discrepancies between the constitution — which guarantees "freedom of worship" — and actual legislation are also detailed.

Moving next to the particular, the book gives numerous case studies

of individual believers who have been sentenced. Their stories are arranged so as to illustrate not only how each law tends to be applied to believers, but also how vague wording of laws has given ample room for arbitrary convictions. Instances where the authorities themselves have contravened the law are also detailed. These include the recruiting of people to give false evidence at trials and cruelty within penal institutions. Among the descriptions of conditions in such institutions, those concerning the psychiatric "hospitals" are the most chilling. A certain Viktor Davydov is quoted: "I was given two injections for refusing to have my hair cut and my beard shaved. For almost three days I was in a state of complete irresponsibility verging on the insane."

Things are difficult not only for the more vocal and active dissidents who may end up in confinement. Mr Buss explains how the scarcity of churches and literature, the atheistic propaganda and job discrimination affect all believers.

A point of particular interest is that the author concludes that certain of the international treaties on human rights signed by the USSR are actually legally binding, and not mere statements of intention. Without means of enforcement, this point remains largely academic, but it does offer reason for the West to work more boldly on behalf of suffering believers.

Last, but not least, is the chapter "What Can We Do?", which asserts with ample reason that prayer and letter-writing have great effect. Should not fasting be added?

As long as Soviet laws concerning religious freedom remain unchanged, this book's description and analysis of legislation will remain relevant. However, its witness to the spiritual courage of the confessors of our time will remain forever relevant — their crowns are imperishable.

ATHANASIUS HART

The New Russian Nationalism

by John B. Dunlop. The Washington Papers/116. New York: Praeger with The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1985. Paperback, 106 pp.

This little volume is an up-date to Dunlop's earlier *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*. The volume contains much information, is well written, and is easy to read. The author shows considerable sympathy and empathy towards Russian nationalism, particularly those nationalist trends which are Russian culture- and church-oriented, as viable and more desirable alternatives to

aggressive Marxist internationalism.

The book adds nothing substantial to the basic concepts or to Dunlop's classification of the different trends of nationalism discussed and analysed in his earlier study. But it is a welcome addition because of the time factor: *The Faces* ended with the Brezhnev era. This new book takes us through the reigns of Andropov and Chernenko, which were brief but important for Dunlop's subject. Several left-leaning authors who have surfaced in the third emigration from the Soviet Union and their sympathisers among Western Sovietologists have threatened the West with the spectre of a Russian nationalism which would come to power after Brezhnev and which, allegedly, would be more dangerous than Brezhnev's "internationalism". However, Dunlop convincingly demonstrates that although both Brezhnev's immediate successors were active enemies of nationalism, their reigns were if anything more aggressive than Brezhnev's, both internally and externally.

The problem with topical books, particularly up-dates, is that their publication may lag behind the events they seek to explain. Since the book appeared we have seen the dawning of the Gorbachev era, with its clear signs of flirtation with the nationalists, and a considerable rise in importance of the two main nationalistic movements: the national Bolsheviks and the *vozrozhdentsy* or "regenerationists", a movement headed by such outstanding scholars and champions of Russian culture as the Academician Dmitri Likhachev, and the Byzantologist Averintsev — both of whom are practising Christians. The movement's adherents have recently been dubbed "national liberals" (as opposed to "national Bolsheviks"), but this term was apparently unknown to Dunlop when his book was written.

The New Russian Nationalism once again demonstrates the danger of ascribing definite ideological positions to Soviet functionaries. Thus (quite accurately for the time discussed) Dunlop labels Felix Kuznetsov, the official Soviet literary critic, a "proven anti-nationalist". But at the June 1986 Eighth Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, where discussion of cultural nationalism, and the preservation of national monuments and the national ecology occupied the better part of the Congress (with, if we are to believe a *samizdat* transcript of Gorbachev's meeting with leading Soviet writers and literary functionaries before the Congress, the direct encouragement of Gorbachev), Kuznetsov strongly supported both areas of concern, trying hard to appear a moderate nationalist. The fact is that he and his like are opportunists, not men of ideological principles. This is true of the whole Soviet establishment, which raises the question of whether the Western concept of factions and conceptual pressure groups as permanent features of the political

scene is at all applicable to Soviet politics.

The main lesson of both Dunlop's books on Russian nationalism in the Soviet Union today is that we should not be dogmatic in our attitudes to the internal currents of thought in that country, always preferring those which appear superficially to be more akin to Western democratic ideas, and rejecting or viewing with suspicion the more nationalist or "neo-Slavophile" schools of thought as smacking of authoritarianism. In fact, the latter may be sceptical of the West's secularism and pluralism because of the ease with which we have thrown overboard the fundamental Christian moral concepts and values on which our democracies are based and without which they are reduced to an anarchic, irresponsible free-for-all. By seeking to retain elements of authoritarianism in society, the Christian nationalists aim to restore and retain that hierarchy of spiritual values which gave birth to Western democracies and by virtue of whose fragmentary survival those democracies cling precariously to life.

"Enriched" by the Soviet experience, the Christian nationalists have reason to be sceptical of written constitutions and declarations. They see the human person, and his or her morals and spiritual values, as the basis of the health of society and of its rehumanisation — a dimension which we, in our post-Rousseau traditions of social determinism, have largely lost. In this sense, Christian nationalists in the Soviet Union may be viewed as the closest allies of those who are alarmed by the moral decline of our own consumer societies.

The Christian and/or liberal nationalists may be driven to join forces with the national Bolsheviks because of hostility towards them in the non-communist world. Only our support and understanding can prevent this.

DIMITRI POSPIELOVSKY

The Harvest of Sorrow
by Robert Conquest. London: Hutchinson, 1986.
412 pp., £16.95.

The Harvest of Sorrow reveals that in 1932-33 some seven million Soviet citizens perished in a famine which was deliberately organised by their government for political purposes. Yet this was only the third and final act in a greater tragedy which, quite separately from the well-documented purges and shootings of the 1930s, claimed some fourteen and a half million lives. For the "terror-famine" had been preceded in 1929-32 by the liquidation of the *kulaks* and the forced collectivisation of agriculture — actions which together took some four million lives, with a further three and a half million arrestees

meeting their death later in the labour camps. While "de-kulakisation" and collectivisation cut right across the USSR, the "terror-famine" was concentrated in the Ukraine, the heavily Ukrainian-populated North Caucasus and Kuban regions, and adjoining areas.

What motives lay behind these seemingly self-destructive acts, and why should those particular areas have been chosen? Apart from economic motives, which at most explain only the collectivisation, the Bolsheviks had to subdue and control the peasantry, for the peasants (who still formed the vast majority of the Soviet population) bitterly resented a regime which had promised them land only to take it back again. The Ukrainians were overwhelmingly a peasant nation, and it was in their republic that resistance to Bolshevik rule was strongest. Stalin, aware of this perilous combination, accordingly centred the man-made famine on the Ukraine.

The peasants, however, were not alone in their resistance. As Dr Conquest shows in Chapter 10, the church, too, was an obstacle to Soviet control, and was therefore singled out for attack along with the peasantry. Not only the dominant Russian Orthodox Church, but all churches — and, indeed, all religions — suffered in the assault. Only one church, however, was actually made illegal. In the general attack on the Ukrainians and their cultural and political institutions — an attack which Dr Conquest characterises as genocidal — the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), which had been formed in 1917-21 as the national church of the Ukrainian people, was totally destroyed. The scope of this book does not permit the author to examine why the Soviet regime had found the UAOC so particularly troublesome, but amongst the reasons must figure its democratic organisation, its popular character, and its revival of ancient Ukrainian church traditions.

While *The Harvest of Sorrow* is not primarily concerned with Soviet religious policy, it performs a valuable service in relating this policy to Soviet political and socio-economic aims. In addition, the book's disturbing account of Western complicity in concealing the tragedy of 1932-33 may serve as a warning to those who prefer to ignore the darker corners of Soviet reality.

ANDREW SOROKOWSKI

Scenes From Soviet Life: Soviet Life Through Official Literature by Mary Seton-Watson. London: Ariel Books, BBC Publications, 1986. Paperback, 160 pp., £2.95.

The purpose of this book is not to survey the Soviet literary scene, nor to make judgements as to literary merit, but to see how problematic aspects of Soviet life are treated in officially-published works of fiction. The author makes it plain that the literary merit of many of the works she discusses is in fact far from high. Each chapter of the book is devoted to a particular area of Soviet life about which there has been frank discussion in fiction. A number of highly unsatisfactory situations are described in some depth, and subjected to strong criticism, for example: the exhausting lives of working mothers; the impossibility of avoiding bribery and corruption in industry; the pressures which make it difficult for intellectuals to maintain their integrity. The fiction discussed dates mostly from the 1960s and 1970s, with a few works from the early 1980s. It therefore reflects mainly Brezhnev's Soviet Union, and is unaffected by the recent call for *glasnost'*. Clearly, even during those stagnant years, fiction was a more effective outlet for some aspects of social criticism than is generally recognised.

The chapter on religion is, unfortunately, one of the least interesting in the book. This is not the author's fault. What has been written about religion in Soviet fiction is rather pallid compared with the treatment of the other subjects under review. In any case, religion is a notoriously difficult subject to treat positively in fiction, particularly as regards the sympathetic portrayal of religious believers.

Despite all this, it is significant that religion is not a completely taboo subject. Ms Seton-Watson describes several works which deal in some depth with religion. For the most part, these focus on the attraction which religion exerts on a given character. Evidently the fact that Soviet citizens may have aspirations towards religion is a fact that may acceptably be discussed in fiction — although probably as an exception rather than as a rule. Of especial interest is the apparent development of this theme in the fiction of Vladimir Tendryakov, who for many years has contributed to the atheist monthly *Science and Religion*. The author discusses three of his works, beginning with an openly anti-religious story published in 1958 and going on to a 1977 story in which the young and beautiful heroine abandons her husband and their materialistic way of life to live with a religious drop-out. Tendryakov does not seem to have become personally more attracted to religion, but he does seem to have become more honest in describing the attraction which it may have for others. Generally

speaking, these works of fiction regard religion as a prop for the lonely, the unloved, and the backward. There are, however, one or two characters who are genuinely seeking answers to the great problems and questions of life, and who investigate religion as a possible source of such answers. None, however, finds exactly what he is looking for, and certainly none becomes a church-goer. It seems that while a quest for religion may be described in Soviet fiction, the fulfilment of that quest may not. Religion may be portrayed as an element in life, but not as one which ultimately offers real meaning or satisfaction.

That this is so is shown by the controversy which erupts when, occasionally, a leading writer has managed to have a more positive assessment of religion published. The author gives the example of Vladimir Soloukhin (one of whose novels has been translated into English as *Searching for Icons in Russia*). In 1981 he published literary jottings which included the following reflections:

> In this twentieth century, no sensible man can possibly have any doubt that there exists in this world, in the Universe, in the variety of life on earth, a higher, reasonable element . . . The main question today is not, does a higher form of reason exist? but — does this higher reason know about me, and does it care about me at all?

Letters were published in the party journal *Kommunist* complaining that Soloukhin was "clearly playing around with the idea of the existence of God"; he was officially reproved by a branch of the Writers' Union; and he found it necessary to state that he was and had always been a convinced atheist and regretted that he had included "careless phrases" in his writings which had given rise to criticism.

It would be most interesting if Ms Seton-Watson were to produce an updated version of her book in a couple of years' time, to see what difference, if any, *glasnost'* has made to middle-of-the-road Soviet fiction. It is to be hoped that she may have some more interesting material on religion to write about by then, but for the present that can be only a matter of speculation.

JANE ELLIS

Önéletrajzi irások
(Autobiographical Writings)
by Lajos Ordass. Edited by István Szépfalusi, 2 Vols. Bern: Az Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, 1985-87. 1040 pp.

Ordass Lajos püspöksége törvényességének kérdéséhez
by László D. Csengődy. Budapest, 1985. 94 pp.

Bishop Gyula Nagy of the Hungarian Lutheran Church broke a long-standing taboo last April. He honoured the late Bishop Lajos Ordass in his church's weekly *Evangélikus élet*. "We remember with esteem and reverence," Nagy stated, "his believing personality, his love of the church and the homeland, and his respected service in the world-wide Lutheran fellowship." In a parallel move, the Hungarian Lutheran Church has agreed to provide material support for Ordass's widow as partial compensation for the "injustices" and "wounds" suffered by the entire Ordass family. Bishop Nagy's conciliatory words and actions contrast sharply with the rough treatment meted out to Ordass by representatives of the Hungarian state and their political allies within the Lutheran leadership.

Ordass earned the distinction of being twice barred from fulfilling the responsibilities of his episcopal office. In 1948 he was convicted on false charges of violating currency regulations and was imprisoned for two years. Just before his release, a church tribunal stripped him of his office. In 1956, the de-Stalinisation process meant that Ordass's star was in the ascendant. He was fully rehabilitated in October by both the state and the church, and was subsequently recognised as the head of his church. The second removal from office came in 1958, when the state withdrew its recognition on the grounds of retrospective legislation designed to invalidate senior church appointments made after 1 October 1956. In both cases, Ordass was removed from office for essentially the same reason: he steadfastly refused to co-operate with the state's determined and sometimes violent efforts to destroy the autonomy of the church, to undermine its constitution, to render it politically subservient, and to diminish its witness in society.

What Bishop Nagy referred to in *Evangélikus élet* as the "injustices" and "wounds" endured by Ordass did not end in 1958. He was threatened with "administrative measures" by state officials; Lutheran clergymen were forbidden by church leaders to have any contact with him; he was accused by the authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical, of being a counter-revolutionary, propagating a false theology of martyrdom, showing a lack of love towards the church, attacking the socialist motherland and the Hungarian people, and

returning to office in 1956 on his own initiative. Ordass was also prevented from playing a role in the work of the Lutheran World Federation, of which he was a Vice-President and Executive Committee member until 1963.

Some will recall that Ordass's successor and long-standing adversary, the late Bishop Zoltán Káldy, expressed his esteem for his predecessor at a private grave-side service which preceded the opening of the 1984 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Budapest. Káldy's repectful words, which were uttered during the closing days of his successful candidacy for the Presidency of the Lutheran World Federation, were never fully reported in the Hungarian media. Thus, as far as the Lutheran Church in Hungary is concerned, prior to Bishop Nagy's *Evangélikus élet* statement, the old accusations had remained unchallenged by church leaders.

The two works under review have played a significant role in bringing about the recent change in the attitude of the Lutheran leadership towards Bishop Ordass. They have helped to increase interest in and respect for the principles of the late bishop amongst a significant portion of Hungarian clergymen and active lay people. The accusations of the past can no longer be sustained amongst a better-informed Lutheran community, and the number of those leaders who have had an interest in maintaining them is now dwindling on account of retirement and death. The church leadership no longer has the option of simply ignoring the "Ordass question" and hoping that time will heal the wounds.

The two-volume *Önéletrajzi irások* is a companion to *Válogatott irások* (Selected Writings), which was also edited by István Szépfalusi, and was the subject of a review article published in *RCL*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1983. As the title indicates, *Önéletrajzi irások* is composed of the autobiographical writings of Bishop Ordass. It covers over sixty years, from his youth to his last major confrontation with the State Office for Church Affairs and Bishop Káldy in 1970. The text is based primarily on the detailed diary and personal records which Ordass kept throughout his adult life. *Önéletrajzi irások* is an essential source for anyone wishing to seriously study Hungarian church-state relations or the history of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. Particularly valuable are his detailed accounts of conversations with state officials and church leaders, and of discussions at official church meetings. Much is revealed about the role played by Ordass's contemporaries, such as the former Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs János Horváth, the late Bishops László Dezséry and Zoltán Túróczy, the former Presiding Bishop and President of the Lutheran World Federation Zoltán Káldy, and leading figures in the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation.

Ordass's writings have been enriched by Szépfalusi's masterly editing. A historian's treasure trove of notes, references and documents enhances the value of the work.

László Csengődy's *samizdat* study of the legality of Ordass's episcopal service is rather more polemical than the autobiography. Csengődy, who was the pastor of the Budapest congregation where Ordass regularly worshipped, undertook his research in response to the charge that Ordass returned to office in 1956 "on his own initiative". This statement, which casts doubt on the legitimacy of Ordass's position as bishop, appeared in Dr Tibor Fabiny's history of the Hungarian Lutheran Church entitled *Hope Preserved*. The book was published to coincide with the Budapest Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, and was distributed to all the delegates. Using material found in Ordass's writings and documents held in the archives of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, Csengődy has been able convincingly to sustain his view that Ordass's resumption of his service as bishop was legal, and was recognised as such both by his church and by the state. The evidence he musters to support his view that Ordass was never removed from office according to the laws of the church — which must cast doubt on the legitimacy of his successor's election — is strong if not conclusive. Csengődy's investigation leads him to conclude that the offending statement in Fabiny's book was not in the original manuscript but was pencilled in on the instructions of Bishop Káldy!

Csengődy concludes his work by acknowledging that the injustice suffered by Ordass remains an "irredeemable event" in the history of the church. But he maintains that the church still has an obligation to provide the Ordass family with full "moral and material" compensation. Bishop Nagy has now made a step in this direction. It remains to be seen to what extent his action will lay the seemingly eternal "Ordass question" to rest and facilitate reconciliation in a deeply divided church.

JOHN V. EIBNER

Stalin and the Shaping of the Soviet Union
by Alex de Jonge. London: Collins, 1986, 560 pp., £17.50.

Assessments of Iosif Djugashvili, better known as Stalin, vary widely. Late in life Lenin came to see how "that wonderful Georgian" might abuse power; Trotsky dismissed him as beneath contempt and paid the price. One sycophant was to suggest that "together with Socrates" Stalin represented the "peak of human intelligence"; the millions who died as a result of his actions might well have expressed the hope that

"intellectuals" of this type would never again be placed in charge of the state. Although Stalin's crimes were later denounced by Khrushchev and although mass terror was abandoned, the basic features of the system created by the dictator remain firmly entrenched in the Soviet Union today.

This new biography offers little not already known to the well-informed reader. Indeed, it is difficult to see where new material is likely to come from, at least until the Soviet archives are opened. What de Jonge does attempt is an interpretation, and in doing so he provides perhaps the most readable account of Stalin's life available.

The account given of the major events in the life of the dictator is fairly standard. His often dubious role in the revolutionary movement is examined; his relatively minor role during 1917 is noted, as is his increasing control over the bureaucratic apparatus from that time onwards. More controversially, de Jonge takes up some of the ideas of those younger scholars who have moved away from more "personalist" or "totalitarian" interpretations of Stalinism. The major thesis of these writers — amongst whom might be included Jerry Hough, Sheila Fitzpatrick and, a more extreme advocate, J. A. Getty — is that Stalin could not have achieved what he did without the support of considerable sectors of society. De Jonge suggests that the party followed him because he was "a winner", whilst the people saw him as a leader who could overcome the nation's inferiority complex. Hence the support for the building of "socialism in one country", a modern equivalent of Moscow as the "Third Rome". For these reasons, de Jonge feels able to describe Stalin as a "dictator of the people".

Nevertheless, de Jonge does not fall into the trap of reducing Stalin to little more than a victim of circumstances. Historical traditions and ideological imperatives may have conspired in the late 1920s to make the emergence of a leader such as Stalin possible, but our biographer makes us fully aware of the General Secretary's personal culpability. Quite rightly he reminds us that this strange combination of Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible used twentieth century means to bring about the destruction of millions of human lives. The legacy of those years is still with us, and surely a precondition for any true democratisation of Soviet society under Gorbachev must be that Soviet scholars are permitted to explore the Stalin years with the same degree of ruthless honesty as is shown by de Jonge.

JOHN ANDERSON

Religion and Politics in Communist States
edited by R. F. Miller and T. H. Rigby.
Canberra: 1986. Paperback, 142 pp.

This collection of conference papers brings together information on political and organisational aspects of church-state relations in countries under communist rule. Its publication follows a conference on problems of "Religion in Communist Countries" held at the Australian University, Canberra, in July 1985.

The philosophical incompatibility between religious belief and Marxist ideology and dialectical materialism, and the roots of communist policy towards the churches, are covered in an introductory paper by Eugene Kamenka. The remaining papers deal with relations between the state and various religious groups in specific countries, including the USSR, Poland, Yugoslavia, the GDR, China, and Vietnam. They focus on the experience of communities of religious believers under communism compared with their previous position in a non-communist environment. Particular attention is given to the interplay of religion and ethnic identity, and the degree to which this has influenced the policy of governments towards different religious denominations. J. H. Miller devotes an entire paper to this issue with special reference to the Soviet Union, and it also emerges as an important aspect of the subject in the contributions on Poland, Yugoslavia, and the GDR.

T. H. Rigby gives a concluding assessment of the factors which appear to influence religious policy in communist states, and remarks on the recent revival of interest in religion among the best-educated members of communist societies. The editors emphasise that the moral impact and theological dimensions of the experience of religion under communism fall outside the scope of the conference.

IRENA KORBA

Books Received

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

Bell, John D., *The Bulgarian Communist Party from Blagoev to Zhivkov*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1986. 202 pp.

Borcke, Astrid von, *KGB, die Macht im Untergrund*. Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänsler, 1987. 206 pp.

Die Lage der Kirchen in der DDR. Miesbach: Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, 1985. 130 pp.

Famine in the Soviet Ukraine 1932-33. A Memorial Exhibition: Widener Library, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 1986. 84 pp.

Gruenwald, Oskar and **Karen Rosenblum-Cale** (editors), *Human Rights in Yugoslavia*. New York: Irvington Pulishers, Inc., 1986. 674 pp.

Grulich, Rudolf (Hrsg.), *Bürger zweiter Klasse. Katholiken in Osteuropa*. München, Luzern, Wien: Kirche in Not, 1986. 132 pp.

Grulich, Rudolf, *Verfolgte Kirche — heute. 3 überarbeitete Auflage*. München, Luzern, Wien: Kirche in Not, 1986. 120 pp.

Hartfeld, Hermann, *Heimkehr in ein fremdes Land. Ein Stuck Wirklichkeit*. Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1986. 160 pp.

Heinrich, Hans-Georg, *Hungary: Politics, Economics and Society*. London: Frances Pinter, 1986. 198 pp.

Ismael, Tareq Y., and **Jacqueline S. Ismael,** *The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Politics, Economics and Society*. (Marxist regimes series.) London: Frances Pinter, 1986. 184 pp.

Klepikova, Elena, and **Vladimir Solovyov,** *Behind the High Kremlin Walls*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1986. 248 pp.

Meerson-Aksenov, Mikhail, *Pravoslavie i svoboda. Sbornik statei*. Benson, Vermont: Chalidze Publications, 1986. 180 pp.

Michnik, Adam, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. 354 pp.

Owen, Richard, *Crisis in the Kremlin. Soviet Succession and the Rise of Gorbachev*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1986. 254 pp.

Prvulovich, Zika Rad., *Serbia Between the Swastika and the Red Star*. Birmingham: Žika Rad. Prvulovich, 1986. 240 pp.

Russkie pravoslavnye ierarkhi. Ispovedniki i mucheniki. Fotoal'bom. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1986.

Seidel, J. Jürgen, *Christen in der DDR. Zur Lage der evangelischen Kirche*. Bern: Verlag SOI, 1986. 182 pp.

Stajka, Nika, *The Last Days of Freedom*. New York: Vantage Press, 1980. 372 pp.

Stuart-Fox, Martin, *Laos: Politics, Economics and Society*. (Marxist regimes series.) London: Frances Pinter, 1986. 220 pp.

Vickery, Michael, *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics and Society*. (Marxist regimes series.) London: Frances Pinter, 1986. 212 pp.

Voren, Robert van (editor), *Koryagin. A Man Struggling for Human Dignity*. Amsterdam: Second World Press, 1987. 112 pp.

Walker, Martin, *The Waking Giant*. London: Michael Joseph, 1986. 282 pp.

Contributors

John Anderson is a member of the research staff of Keston College, specialising in the religious situation in the Soviet Union.

Dr William van den Bercken is a staff member of the Interuniversity Institute for Ecumenical Research in Utrecht, and a senior lecturer in Soviet studies at the University of Utrecht.

Rev. Michael Bourdeaux is the Founder and General Director of Keston College.

John V. Eibner is a member of the research staff of Keston College, specialising in the religious situation in Hungary.

Jane Ellis is a member of the research staff of Keston College, specialising in the situation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Athanasius Hart studied English literature at Auckland University. He is a sculptor and freelance writer.

Irena Korba is a freelance writer and translator.

Jonathan Luxmoore is a research student at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a member of the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies.

John Meyendorff is Dean of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, New York. He has served in many academic and ecumenical capacities, and is a corresponding Fellow of the British Academy.

Dimitri Pospielovsky is Professor of Russian and Modern European History in the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. At present he is a visiting Fellow at Keston College and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

Marite Sapiets is a member of the research staff of Keston College, specialising in the religious situation in the Baltic States.

Andrew Sorokowski is a member of the research staff of Keston College, specialising in the religious situation in the Ukraine.

Malcolm Walker is Librarian of Keston College.

Philip Walters is Research Director of Keston College.

Keston College

Religion in Communist Lands is published by Keston College, an educational charity which specialises in the study of religious communities in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Patrons

The Archbishop of Canterbury
The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster
The Chief Rabbi of Great Britain
The Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain
Cardinal König
Lord Macleod of Fuinary
The Right Rev. Dr J.F. McLuskey, MC
The Archbishop of Glasgow
Professor John Meyendorff

General Director
Rev. Michael Bourdeaux

Research Director
Dr Philip Walters

Information Director
Alyona Kojevnikov

Administration Director
Roland Bryan

Council of Management

Sir John Lawrence (President)
Christopher Cviic (Chairman)
Rev. Gavin Ashenden
Rev. W.E.L. Broad
Fr G.F.L. Chamberlain
Leonid Finkelstein
Kevin Grant
Rev. Roger Hayden
Xenia Howard-Johnston
P.G. Bartlett Lang
Rev. Dr Andrew Lenox-Conyngham
G.F.N. Reddaway
Peter Reddaway
Sir Sigmund Sternberg
G. R. Urban
Victoria Watts
David Wright

Readers of *RCL* are invited to support and to make use of the work of Keston College, which is carried on in the following departments:

The Library and Archives Department is open to academics and other researchers who are members of Keston College and wish to make use of Keston College's unique documentary records. Enquiries about current rates and hours should be directed to the Librarian.

The Research Department consists at present of resident specialists on the USSR, Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and the GDR. They maintain basic research, provide material for Keston College's publications, and are available for lectures, broadcasts and private consultations. The college is also in contact with consultants on other countries. Enquiries should be made to the Research Director.

The Information Department produces the fortnightly *Keston News Service* and a Telex service and provides information on current events. Enquiries should be directed to the Information Director.

The Administration Department deals with enquiries about all Keston College's publications, including *The Right to Believe* newsletter; sells Keston Books (booklist available on request); liaises with Keston College Support Groups around the world; and provides speakers and preachers on religion in communist countries and the work of Keston College.

Registered Office: Heathfield Road, Keston, Kent BR2 6BA.
Telephone: 0689 50116. Telex: 897684 KESCOL G.
Company registered in England and Wales No. 991413 by Guarantee.
Registered as a Charity No. 314103. *Company Secretary:* Roland Bryan.