

## Reviews

*Biblia: Válogatás a Vizsolyi Bibliából*

(Bible: Selections from the Vizsoly Bible)

compiled by István Vas. Budapest: Európa könyvkiadó, 1986.  
933 pp. 125 Ft.

An abridged edition of the Bible appeared last year in Hungary's secular bookshops, where Bibles had been rarely seen for the past forty years. It was the Vizsoly Bible, named after the village where it was printed in 1590, which was the first complete Bible in Hungarian. Its 2,414 pages included the Apocrypha and were largely the work of one scholar, Gáspár Károlyi. With his considerable linguistic and theological talents he produced a robust yet fluent translation, adding marginal notes and annotations. It is remarkable that such a huge enterprise was ever completed, for Vizsoly was exposed to Turkish raids from the south and Catholic reprisals from almost anywhere. Although there are signs of haste in its production, the volume was an immediate success. It also drew criticism from other scholars, and was continually revised, though Károlyi's name continued to appear on the title-page of succeeding editions. His original version has reappeared in its entirety only once, in a facsimile edition of 1981; selections from it have been published at various times. Rightly regarded as the most important prose work in 16th century Hungarian, the Vizsoly Bible has exercised a greater influence on Hungarian language and culture than the Authorised Version on the English-speaking world. It has crossed denominational boundaries and provided a constant source of inspiration. Despite the publication in 1975 of an admirable modern version, it still maintains its power.

The present selection, in an edition of 82,500 copies, appears in a series entitled "Classics of World Literature", and this gives a key to its contents. The editor, István Vas, is an established poet of Jewish extraction; his introduction declares that knowledge of the Bible is essential for the true appreciation of European, and hence Hungarian,

culture. His approach is avowedly secular and aimed at a secular readership: the selection is guided by the dictum he once read,

Whatever in the Bible is poetry is divine revelation; the rest is interpretation by priests. That kind of viewpoint, maybe a frivolous one, has guided me through my reading of the Bible. I have chosen what I found to be fine and interesting. I wanted to create a book which would be worth reading for all who love literature, independently of their convictions and ideas (p. 27).

He adds that he has not included several accounts of the same event, except for the Crucifixion, "which is worth reading more than once, just for the slightest variation" (*ibid.*). He hopes that his selection will encourage folk to delve into the Bible. His choice fell on the original Károlyi version because of its influence on Hungarian literature. The orthography has been carefully standardised; obsolete forms and vocabulary have been retained, but these should prove no more difficult than the Authorised Version to the English reader. Vas concludes his stimulating preface by admitting that his selection is "a kind of secularisation on a par with the expropriation of church estates, except that in this case both expropriator and expropriated can see the profit" (p. 29).

The text is divided into paragraphs, with occasional headings; the original chapters are indicated. The extremely rare notes are confined to textual issues. Károlyi's annotations have gone, as has his dedication, which was not only a splendid piece of prose, but also a justification of his labours, with reference to his sources. Gone too is his note to the reader, offering his work to the church and apologising for its faults; he asks to be advised of any mistakes so that they may be corrected.

From the Old Testament, Leviticus, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and most of the minor prophets have been omitted. Four books are complete: Esther, The Song of Songs, Lamentations and Jonah — this last undoubtedly because of the superb verse translation by Mihály Babits. Judith and part of the Song of the Three Holy Children have been included from the Apocrypha. Other books are subject to various excisions, some of which make nonsense of the remaining passages, e.g. Deuteronomy 4:25 and Proverbs 30:15. Important omissions include the Covenant (Exodus 34), the building of the Temple (1 Kings 5-9) and its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25), and the story of Naaman. It is odd that Deuteronomy 28 has been excised, since this is the source of the most satisfying poetic curse in Hungarian. Only 31 psalms are included, doubtless because the very beautiful metrical psalter is widely appreciated. Of the minor prophets, Amos emerges relatively unscathed, while Hosea is severely

mangled. Some of the most poetic portions of Isaiah are absent, notably chapters 52 and 54:14 to 55:13. The book of Job, oddly curtailed so that its balance is upset, comes at the end of the Old Testament section since, according to Vas, it offers a good transition to the New Testament.

There are 545 pages devoted to the Old Testament, 276 to the New. The gospels of Matthew and John are comparatively intact, though with strange excisions, like that of Matthew 15:3-9, which leaves the preceding question unanswered. It would be interesting to know why the feeding of the five thousand has been totally excluded. Sermons tend to be omitted, like those of Peter in Acts 3 and Stephen in Acts 7. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian has disappeared, as has the dramatic escape of Peter from prison in Acts 12. Of the epistles, only Romans (minus some of the best-known passages), Corinthians, the second letter to Timothy, James (complete) and the first letter of John are retained. But a surprising amount of Revelation has survived, though here again the reader who expects to find messages to the seven churches discovers that Ephesus, Sardis, and Philadelphia are missing. The editing seems capricious.

The selection is followed, somewhat oddly, by a "Brief Introduction to the Bible" by József Poór, who offers a Marxist approach to the dating and composition of the Bible. He states that there is no unified view among New Testament scholars as to whether Jesus was a historical person "apart from those myths which are to be found concerning Jesus in the books of the New Testament" (p. 871). This contradicts Vas, who somewhat ironically recalls a textbook of the 1950s which stated that historians had proved that a person called Jesus Christ never existed. Vas declares that such a character could never have been invented, even by writers of fiction — "Are we to believe that Galilean fishermen, artisans and customs officials succeeded in doing so?" (p. 24). A brief essay on the language, a short vocabulary and an index of names conclude the volume.

Some fifty years ago there appeared in Britain a book entitled "The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature". This is its Hungarian equivalent. We may hope that its readers will be stimulated to read further and more deeply.

G. F. CUSHING

*Vallási kisközösségek Magyarországon*  
(Small Religious Communities in Hungary)

by József Fodor. Budapest: Magyar Média, n.d. Paperback, 168 pp.

Since the Reformation the Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran Churches have dominated religious life in Hungary. The privileges they received in return for alliances forged with the state enabled these "historic churches" to play a prominent role in national life before the communist takeover. Today over eighty per cent of the population belong at least nominally to one of them. But they do not enjoy anything like a monopoly among believing Hungarians. Next to the Jewish community the largest religious grouping is made up of small, mostly evangelical Protestant communities, which until quite recently have been generally characterised as sects by Hungarian churchmen, scholars and the public alike. Among the better known internationally are the Baptists, Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals and Brethren. Less widely known outside Hungary are the Nazarenes, the Congregation of Faith, and the Free Christian Congregation. An estimated 100,000 Hungarians worship in these communities at least three times a year. The largest quasi-Christian group is the Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Since the mid-19th century, when these small churches and fellowships first appeared on the scene in Hungary, they have all experienced discrimination and, from time to time, persecution. They have generally been regarded by the public as alien bodies within Hungarian society because virtually all were founded as a result of western mission activity, and some, such as the Baptists, found their first converts among the country's German minority. These factors left them vulnerable to the charge of being agents of western imperialism in the 1950s. The fact that these few religious communities were made up almost exclusively of peasants and workers gave rise to suspicions before 1945 that they might have some sort of socially destructive socialist or communist orientation. Today there continues to be deep resentment within the historic churches that these "sects" are growing at their expense.

The present legal standing of these groups is not uniform. Nine are recognised by the state and belong to the Free Church Council, which represents their interests to the supervisory State Office for Church Affairs. In 1977 the pacifist Nazarenes and in 1981 the unofficial Methodist Community of Evangelical Brethren were recognised by the state, but they stand outside the framework of the Free Church Council. The tiny Congregation of Latter Rain, which is of South African origin, has not received state recognition but is represented in the Free Church Council by the Pentecostals. Some small,

independent Pentecostal communities are not legally recognised, though their ministers have been granted preaching licences. Other groups are regarded as illegal, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, whom the state finds particularly objectionable for their refusal to take oaths and perform military service. One of the legal anomalies touching these communities is that the regulations governing state recognition are a relic of the Hapsburg era — Law XLIII of 1895.

The Marxist literature of the 1950s and '60s on religion tended to portray the "sects" as reactionary forces in society, and anticipated their decline and eventual disappearance as socialist Hungary approached its more advanced stages of development. But while they have not maintained the rapid level of growth achieved before the Second World War, they show no sign of vanishing. Moreover, the Hungarian communist party has come to the conclusion that these small churches, like their historic counterparts, can play a useful and long term role in fulfilling its plans for the country. It is for these reasons that Dr József Fodor, lecturer in Marxism-Leninism at the Agricultural University in Debrecen, has deemed the "small religious communities", as he prefers to call them, a worthy subject for his book.

The main theme of *Vallási kisközösségek Magyarországon* is the evolution of a political alliance between the communist party and the small communities. In Fodor's scheme of things, before 1945 the small communities were "apolitical" and on the "periphery of life". After the war, some groups, the Jehovah's Witnesses in particular, actively worked against the "socialist revolution". But Fodor claims that the Marxists can now "count completely" on the leaders of the Free Church Council "to relay the economic, cultural and educational tasks connected with the building of the developed socialist society to the believers." Going beyond the thin layer of the Council's leaders, Fodor states that "the small Protestant churches of Hungary have comprehended that they should accept the Marxist socialist programme for the building of society", and that "this cooperation does not call into question the leading role of Marxism." As evidence he points to a Free Church Council declaration which calls the building of socialism a "noble task", and an obligation that gives proof of the "faithfulness" of believers.

Fodor appears to have made the fundamental mistake of confusing the leaders of the small communities with the communities themselves. In a society where the appointment of church leaders depends on state approval, and in which the churches are understood to have a legal obligation to support government policy, misleading conclusions are likely to be reached if the political statements of church leaders are taken to represent majority views within their

communities. The author also fails to consider to what extent the apparent enthusiasm of small church leaders for government policy is the result of tactical decisions in the interest of defending their communities from the enormous arbitrary power of the state.

Fodor does not take up such thorny questions as how the political role and legal standing of the small churches corresponds with the view of church-state relations traditionally held by denominations such as the Baptists and Adventists; or how the legal guarantee of equality of religious denominations (Law XXXIII of 1947) can be reconciled with the existence of three classes of religious communities — recognised, unrecognised and illegal. In Fodor's work the account of the forced dissolution of the Salvation Army is reduced to a short footnote, which merely states that after 1945 it lost its adherents because of the "changed social and political situation". We learn nothing at all from Fodor about the unofficial Adventist community, which numbers an estimated 1,000 members. Such omissions strongly support Fodor's acknowledgement that his book was written in the context of the extension of "our [Marxist] views and atheist education". It is disappointing that the spirit of critical analysis and objectivity which is characteristic of so much contemporary Hungarian scholarship has not been applied to this interesting and long-neglected subject.

Fodor has organised his book to include sections giving basic historical, doctrinal and organisational information about the Free Church Council and 13 religious communities. Thus it can serve as a useful handbook for facts, figures and names, especially as there are few printed sources on the subject. However, as a rapid reference tool for current information, it has been largely superseded by the more up to date *Tájékoztató a Magyarországon működő egyházakról és felekezeteikről*, published by the State Office for Church Affairs in 1987, which covers all the country's recognised churches.

JOHN EIBNER

### *The Struggles for Poland*

by Neal Ascherson. London: Michael Joseph, 1987. 242 pp, £14.95.

A nine-part television series cannot fully do justice to six years' scrupulous research involving hundreds of interviews and the examination of material from some 47 archives. Neal Ascherson, as chief consultant for the Channel Four series "The Struggles for Poland", was able to make fuller use of the material gathered by those who prepared the documentary and has come up with a highly accessible yet authoritative account of Poland in the 20th century. The

text is brought to life with rare photographs, some of which have never been seen in the West before.

Ascherson's straightforward chronological approach dealing with Poland's turbulent history works better than the thematic-chronological mix presented in the television series. When faced with a muddle of events it is easy to make order out of chaos and invent trends which can conveniently be placed in boxes under a variety of "-isms". Ascherson does not fall into that trap. The book was written to accompany the series. For the uninformed viewer, however, it is a guidebook essential for a proper appreciation of the series.

Ascherson knows Poland, and, more importantly, he understands the Polish mind. His discussion of *Polskość* — "the Polishness of Poland" — is good; the author's deep fascination with the subject involves the reader too. His insights are sympathetic. An émigré has commented that not even the most patriotic Pole could write in more glowing and enthusiastic terms. Yet Ascherson's interpretation of events and his examination of trends and motives remain original and objective.

Ascherson has been accused of emphasising the problems and ignoring the achievements of independent Poland between the Wars. But it would take more than twenty-odd pages to give a proper account of the unification of three alien administrative systems, of the binding together of Poland into a single political system, of the creation of new educational and social services and of the period's economic and industrial development. Commenting on the emergence of some 92 political parties at the 1922 elections, Ascherson states that under the Partitions compromise had existed — but compromise with the authorities of the partitioning powers and not amongst Poles. On the delicate issue of the rise of anti-Semitism between the Wars, he writes that this phenomenon was not part of the Polish tradition — a tradition in which Jews, in spite of all animosities, were recognised as a permanent feature of Polish society. The intense nationalistic fervour which gripped Poland in 1936 and 1937 affected all Poland's minorities. Ascherson claims that the Jews were never exposed to the state-sponsored violence and repression used against the Slav minorities.

Ascherson accepts that, while no nation suffered as much as Poland, none gained as little as a result of the Second World War. He does, however, highlight the Allies' predicament: the Western Powers could not afford to alienate Stalin in the war against Hitler. Polish issues could not stand in the way. On the subject of the Warsaw uprising in 1944, the author comments that, in the circumstances, the Allies could not have done more than they did to help the insurgents. He pays tribute to the Polish, British and South African pilots who, without

the use of Soviet airfields, were compelled to fly "suicide" missions from southern Italy to supply the Rising. Ascherson asserts also that at Yalta the Western Powers merely ratified decisions taken earlier, especially at Tehran. In any case, he writes, there was little that Churchill and Roosevelt could have done to prevent the Soviet domination of the areas liberated by the Red Army, short of threatening a fresh war. In 1945, the Polish Second Corps based in Italy under General Anders was accused of plotting just that.

Ascherson adheres to the "cyclical" theory of Poland's post-war history. Each cycle, he says, has lasted between ten and fourteen years. A new leadership promises more democracy and economic reform. Gradually the authorities drift off course. Power again becomes the monopoly of a clique. People rebel. A new team arrives with new promises — and the cycle begins again. The first cycle ended when Gomulka was returned to power in 1956. In 1970, Gierek marked the start of a third cycle which was to last until 1981. Poland's struggles, writes Ascherson, "are no longer struggles for national existence, but struggles to establish the truth". It was not until the mid-seventies that the political opposition joined ranks with the Roman Catholic Church in this struggle. Leading members of the opposition began to argue that the failure of the intellectuals to co-operate with the church had been a fatal weakness of all opposition since 1944. This informal alliance was consolidated during the Solidarity period and cemented throughout martial law. Ascherson's study concludes with a moving photograph of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, murdered by secret policemen in 1984, comforting the mother of a student who died of injuries received in police custody in 1983.

Neal Ascherson's *The Struggles for Poland* is essential reading for all those who were left confused by the Channel Four television series.

GARETH DAVIES

### *Human Rights in Yugoslavia*

edited by Oskar Gruenwald and Karen Rosenblum-Cale. Los Angeles: Institute for Interdisciplinary Research; New York: Irvington Publishers, 1986. 673 pp.

### *Žrtve Drugog Svetskog Rata u Jugoslaviji*

(Victims of the Second World War in Yugoslavia)

by Bogoljub Kočović. London: Biblioteka Naše Delo, 1985. 205 pp.

Includes English and French summaries.

The rewriting of the history of events in Yugoslavia during the Second World War is proceeding painfully on both sides of the Atlantic

wherever there are emigrant communities of Yugoslavs; non-Yugoslav historians are occasionally involved too. Yugoslav historians are partially shackled; there are some things they may still not say. Of the others some start with their minds made up, but some are prepared to look objectively at the evidence, as Dr Kočović, who lives in France, has done in his scrupulously careful examination of Yugoslav official statistics.

Dr Gruenwald and Dr Rosenblum-Cale have edited a symposium of articles of uneven weight written by Yugoslavs now living outside their own country. Mihajlo Mihajlov, after Djilas the best-known Yugoslav dissident, has contributed a foreword and an assessment of Djilas's role as an internationally known critic of the regime who has remained in the country. There are chapters on Yugoslavia's Gulag Archipelago and human rights, political persecutions and prosecutions, national self-determination and human rights, nationalism and pluralism, the Albanians and human rights, human rights in self-management socialism, women and human rights, dissent and human rights, and a concluding section containing the texts of numerous protests and petitions. All this is useful, but it needs to be read with a critical eye.

There are some glaring verbal lapses. One writer refers to Tito's "genocide" (p. 4) followed immediately by a reference to Tito's "pogrom" against the Hungarian and German minorities after the War. "Pogrom" is accurate; but to say that Tito was responsible for "genocide", meaning the effort to exterminate a whole nation or race, is simply untrue. What nation, what race? It was the Croatian *ustaše* who tried to exterminate the Jews and nearly succeeded in doing so. There are numerous careless mistakes. For example, Bishop Rožman of Ljubljana was not slaughtered (p. 14) but joined the Slovene Domobrans in a retreat across the frontier in 1945 and was reported to be living in a monastery in Menzingen near Zug. He was later tried *in absentia* and the trial was reported in an official publication (*Proces protiv vojnim zločinem in izdaljem Rupniku, Roseneru, Rožmanu, Kreku, Vizjaku in Hacinu* (The Trial of the War Criminals and Traitors Rupnik etc.) (Ljubljana, 1946). Moreover his name does not appear in *Matica mrtvih* (List of the Dead) published by Slovenes in 1970 in Cleveland, Ohio. Conditions in the prison camp on Goli Otok (Naked Island) where Čominformists were sent after the break with Stalin in 1948 are described in all their horror, but the writer says that prisoners are still sent there without adding that it is now an ordinary prison camp, as I was told in 1972 by a young Christian pacifist who had spent five years there for refusal to bear arms. Another contributor repeats the canard that Stepinac never publicly condemned the *ustaša* massacres during the War (p. 69). It is quite true, as he adds in a footnote, that Bishop Pichler of Banja Luka was

the first to acknowledge publicly what happened and ask the forgiveness of Serbs for what was done to them by "men who called themselves Catholics and carried Catholic baptismal certificates", saying "we acknowledge with anguish the terrible crimes of these misguided men and we beg our Orthodox brothers to forgive us as Christ on the Cross forgave all men." Stepinac was never so specific, but already in May 1942, after a number of private protests, he began in his sermons to denounce in increasingly precise terms the *ustaša* ideology and misdeeds, its racism, forcible conversions and the shooting of hostages. But Pichler made his statement when it was in tune with the policy of the post-war government, while Stepinac was protesting at the time against the proclaimed policy and acts of the *ustaša* regime. An earlier section, "A man called Stepinac" (p. 12), gives a much more favourable account of the Archbishop. It is perhaps worth remarking that this article was written by a Croat, while the article mentioned above was written by a Serb.

Dr Kočović's book with its statistical tables is in contrast a bracing cold shower. He was trained as a lawyer and later studied economics and statistics in France; he knows how to deal with evidence and understands what statistics are saying. His sources are all official: the censuses of 1921, 1931 and 1948; the official yearly statistics from 1931 to 1940; and other publications of the Federal Institute of Statistics. He gives the statistics by republic and province and by nationality and compares them with wartime losses among other Slavic countries and among neighbouring non-Slav countries. He examines among other things the problem of nationalism in a multi-national society where nationality is identified with religion. This is always a potentially lethal combination, and became actually lethal during the Second World War when the nations of Europe had other preoccupations. According to his calculations, the number of war victims in Yugoslavia was one million, a shockingly high figure out of a population at the time of 16 million; they were victims not only of the invaders but of each other. By their nature it is impossible to check the facts; no statistics, or only partial ones, exist for 1940-47. Moreover, among Yugoslavs today statistics are political statements and, as Kočović points out, provoke strong mutually antagonistic reactions from Serbs, Croats and the Yugoslav regime.

In a series of statistical tables (pp. 123-25) the author compares speculative figures of actual losses with demographic losses (the loss of potential population) and expresses these as percentages of the various national groups. He also gives the possible limits of error, plus and minus, both in figures and in percentages. For example he estimates the real loss among Serbs as 487,000 (6·9 per cent), with 528,000 (7·5 per cent) and 452,000 (6·4 per cent) as the limits of error;

that among the Croats as 207,000 (5·4 per cent), with 240,000 (6·3 per cent) and 190,000 (5 per cent) as the limits of error. It is when he lists the percentages of each nationality or racial group that perished that one is brought up with a jolt. He estimates that while the Serbs lost 6·9 per cent and the Croats 5·4 per cent of their populations, the Montenegrins lost 10·4 per cent of their numbers, the Gypsies 41·4 per cent and the Jews 77·9 per cent. No wonder Yugoslav Jews flocked to join the Partisans and after the War were treated like an endangered species.

This is a valuable and honest piece of research into a particularly difficult field, and it is heartening to hear that it is circulating widely in Yugoslavia and has not been banned. It should be translated into English as soon as possible by a translator who can follow the complexities of Kovačić's presentation.

STELLA ALEXANDER

*The Churches of China*

by Britt E. Towery, Jr. Revised and enlarged second edition.

Waco, Texas: Long Dragon Books, 1987. 300 pp.

The uninformed reader who turns to this book about Christianity in China may well conclude that all the "Churches of China" are Protestant ones. The only mention of Chinese Catholicism in the book (p. 39) gives the impression that the Catholic faith faded out entirely during the 18th century; thereafter, it appears, the field was the Protestants' alone. Clearly, the author is an Evangelical, but his failure to consider the Roman Catholic Church in any way means the exclusion of a vital aspect of China's religious situation: the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association's severance of the tie with the Papacy has not been greeted with sighs of relief by grass-roots believers. Indeed it seems that a majority (some would say an overwhelming majority) of Catholics remain loyal to the Pope as the representative of Jesus Christ.

The CCPA has, it may be said, a great deal in common with the outlook of the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement. The leaders of both organisations stress the virtue of patriotism and loyalty to various national campaigns, including the Four Modernisations; both are deeply involved in social projects; both are studiously loyal to the 1982 Chinese Constitution, which excludes religion from specific areas of national life. Could it be that a sizeable group of Protestants look upon their leadership with great suspicion?

Mr Towery thinks not. He strenuously defends the TSPM and — if not all, at least most of — its works. He is convinced that the

movement has the overwhelming support of Chinese Protestant believers, and that it should therefore enjoy the confidence of foreign Christians. His view should not be lightly dismissed, for he has travelled quite widely, and has come into contact with a good many congregations and individual believers. He is doubtless over-modest about his command of Chinese. He has met Christians whose experiences are impressive, indeed moving: the young man who asked forgiveness of the teacher whose books he had helped to burn; New Testament Professor Zhao Shien, and others. However, it is a fact that Mr Towery's perception of the TSPM (as an organisation which genuinely represents the great mass of Protestants) is not shared by a number of vastly experienced observers.

It is very unwise to attempt to assess the Chinese Church in isolation; its situation today must be related to the whole background of Chinese history, society and culture. A survey such as this must be brief and superficial; how can it be made objective and accurate? It is an exceedingly difficult problem, and Mr Towery is in good company in failing to solve it.

Nevertheless, many people may benefit from this book — and particularly from Part II, which gives facts about the various Chinese provinces. The idea of giving Protestant Church addresses is helpful. The book includes a bibliography, even if it is a rather one-sided one.

ARVAN GORDON

*Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*

by Olivier Roy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.  
Paperback, 254 pp.

This superb book, originally published in French by Editions du Seuil (Paris 1985) under the title *L'Afghanistan: Islam et modernité politique*, has instantly become the standard reference work on this subject. It is a welcome and necessary addition to the burgeoning literature on the war in Afghanistan, most of which has treated the importance of Islam to the structure, organisation and motivation of the Afghan *mujahideen* superficially. Roy, who brings his skills as philosopher and social anthropologist to the task, and who has conducted extensive research inside Afghanistan from the first years of the Soviet invasion until the present day, is ideally qualified to present this subject in all its complexity of texture without losing the battle against pretentious theory or heavy-handed academese.

The book is divided into 13 concise chapters, each of which can stand on its own as among the best analyses to date. Chapters 1-4 treat

the history of the Afghan Islamist movement. Chapters 5-12 recount the progress of the war, its social, political and ethnic implications, and Islam's unique contribution, to the present day. These eight chapters may in fact be the best single account of the war in print. They alone are worth the price of the book.

The book contains an appendix of the main resistance parties; an excellent glossary of terms; a model bibliography; and a perhaps slightly too abbreviated index.

In his introduction, Roy adeptly locates the struggle of the Afghan resistance "at the intersection of . . . two histories": the evolution of the Soviet colonial empire and that of the contemporary world of Islam. The Afghan resistance, he insists, is not a "spontaneous revolt, it has its roots in the popular Muslim uprisings of the past and also in the current of Islamic reformism . . .". Indeed, throughout the work, Roy constantly reminds the reader of the larger Islamic context and of the broader political and historical tapestry.

Roy insists on the use of the term "Islamism", which he contrasts to Islamic "fundamentalism" and "traditionalism", as they are popularly understood. Usually, Islamists do not come from the traditional or clerical classes, but originate from a more "modern" environment, for example, from the cities, universities, and — frequently — from technological professions. One need think only of Ahmad Shah Massud, the legendary young leader of forces in the Panjshir Valley, to illustrate Roy's point. Massud, most of the commanders under him, and many resistance leaders elsewhere in Afghanistan are technologists with university training and pre-war political experience in an urban setting.

Roy argues that "Islamists speak of Islamist ideology rather than of religion in the strict sense of the term"; that is, they see the necessity of discovering in Islam "a political model capable of competing with the great ideologies of the Western world". Islamism, according to this view, is a progressive, modern, and even radical approach to politics in the Muslim world. It does not seek a return to *shari'at* law, to which politics is subordinated, as has happened in Iran. Rather, the Islamists take the state as their ultimate point of reference. These distinctions are critical to an understanding of what is happening in Afghanistan today. To the observer who fails to take them on board — as has too often been the case among Westerners already repelled by the excesses of the Islamic revolution in Iran — the Afghan resistance fighters can appear to be nothing more than another bunch of Muslim fanatics who happen, for a change, to be directing their aggression in more positive directions. Roy's analysis, for those who take the time to follow it to the end, dispels this simple and largely groundless notion and lays the foundations for sensible policy

considerations in respect of the *mujahideen*. In addition, it provides a much-needed framework for injecting some intellectual rigour into our analyses of the wider Islamic political scene.

Olivier Roy has written what will assuredly come to be seen as a classic. No other words adequately describe *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*.

S. ENDERS WIMBUSH

*Ioann XXIII - Pobornik edinstva khristian*

(John XXIII: Bringer of Christian Unity)

by Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) of Leningrad and Novgorod  
Vienna: Pro Oriente, 1984. 656 pp.

Cardinal Koenig of Vienna in his introduction to the late Metropolitan Nikodim's biography of Pope John XXIII writes that, of all the published works on the subject, this is perhaps the most thorough. But the Austrian Archbishop goes on to warn the reader that the author "was a Christian who had lived in an atheistic state . . . in conditions which often precluded him from saying all that he wanted to say". Keeping that warning in mind when reading this huge tome is vital if the reader is to appreciate its merits and to look with tolerance on its demerits, not the least of which is the form of the book — a rather tedious and over-detailed narrative which spreads over four huge chapters, with some analysis only in the fifth and final chapter.

The book is broken up according to topic, with a chronological sequence within each subject-chapter. Chapter I is a biography of Pope John XXIII prior to his enthronement in the Vatican. Chapter II is a descriptive account of his pontificate. Chapter III, the only brief one (of just over forty pages), deals with the Pope's social activities and policies. Chapter IV deals with the Second Vatican Council. It contains some interesting details on the background to its convocation and on the attitude of Pope John's predecessors to Councils. Chapter V deals with that part of Pope John's work which specifically dealt with world peace, particularly his last encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. Here, as mentioned above, the Soviet-Russian Bishop allows himself some analytical discussion, assessments, and comparisons. He feels himself on safer ground with the subject of peace, which is the only social activity open to the Russian Church — provided it does not include any criticism of Soviet policies. In fact, Nikodim even allows himself to apportion some blame for the arms race to the Soviet Union: "Watching as the two blocs, the Western and the Eastern, accumulated their nuclear potential while purporting to do so only for self-defence, the Pope noted: 'I cannot blame either side for

insincerity . . . ' ” (p. 537).

On another occasion, faced with the painful subject of the Ukrainian Uniate Metropolitan Slipyi, who, after 18 years of concentration camps and internal exile in the USSR, arrived in the Vatican towards the end of John XXIII's life, Nikodim merely quotes a page and a half from a French newspaper article setting out all the main facts about Slipyi's imprisonment and eventual release at the Pope's personal insistence, and then adds: "We shall not launch into an investigation of what is accurate or inaccurate in *La Croix's* report. Let us limit ourselves to the above citation." (p. 588).

The main interest of this book lies in the personality of its author and how his writing reflects the limits to freedom experienced by a churchman in the Soviet Union, some illustrations of which have just been cited. The other interesting aspect is Nikodim's almost uncritical admiration for Pope John XXIII and the expression of what is, for an Orthodox bishop, a rather extreme pro-Romanism.

Coming from a family of Communist Party functionaries — his father was the Ryazan' Provincial Party First Secretary — Nikodim was no doubt raised in the tradition of respect for power and authority. His own church, especially after decades of persecution, possessed neither — at least in the visible worldly sense of the terms. He found both in the Roman Catholic Church, and admired her for it. In her centralisation and in the international authority of the Pope Nikodim doubtless saw an effective counter-force to Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism.

This explains the almost total absence of criticism of the Papacy as an institution. A few critical remarks are made about the absolutism of Papal authority and its assertion by individuals such as Piuses IX, XI and XII. But even here the criticisms are largely by implication alone. It is obvious, however, whom Nikodim approved and admired. The views and behaviour of John's predecessors are stated for the most part uncritically; then follow eulogies of John XXIII.

Nikodim, a teenage convert to Christianity, had a rare combination of gifts: a piercingly sharp intellect coupled with total dedication to the spiritual and mystical aspects of the church, and complete emotional immersion in the sacraments of the liturgy. Yet his role as the church's top politician during the most testing times of Khrushchev's wholesale persecutions took a heavy toll. The inner conflict between the roles of official apologist for Soviet foreign and internal policies — which Nikodim had to undertake at numerous international encounters — and that of pastor must have been too great even for a man of his outstanding intellectual and physical stamina. He died in 1978, less than fifty years of age.

The book he left is of little use to a Western reader. It is too

descriptive and contains too much unnecessary detail. It gives a day-to-day chronicle of Pope John's life and work, making it boring to read. But the author's emphases rule out his hope that the book might be read in the Soviet Union. I have in mind, for example, his stress on the importance of Christian education for the moral health of the nation — presented, as most such “forbidden” topics, through the mouth of the Pope. If he did have access to it, the Soviet reader would contrast the power, authority and social work of the Roman Catholic Church, so dear to Metropolitan Nikodim and described in detail in the book, with the enforced absence of these activities in the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union; this would bring home the anomalous nature of the situation of religion under the Soviets. Unfortunately, the book, published in the West, remains unavailable to the audience for which it was written. This was, no doubt, another tragedy for its author.

D. POSPIELOVSKY

*A Radiance in the Gulag*

by Nijole Sadunaite. Translated by Rev. Casimir Pugevičius and Marian Skabeikis. Manassas, Virginia: Trinity Communications, 1987. Paperback, 148 pp. English printing planned for January 1988.

Nijole Sadunaite is one of the most notable dissidents in the Soviet Union today. *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* of 30 July 1980, reporting her triumphal return from Siberia, voiced the feelings of Lithuanians for their national heroine: “Thank you, Nijole, for your love and sacrifice. For six years you were a shining star for the nation and the world; you gave everyone the courage not to bow to lies or force, to be faithful to God and the nation”. She in her turn spoke for her people on 23 August 1987, at the Vilnius demonstrations demanding freedom for Lithuania and repudiation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Those who read her defence speech, published in 1975 as *No Greater Love: the Trial of a Christian in Soviet-Occupied Lithuania*, knew that in Nijole the Lithuanian Church and people had an ardent spirit who loved her enemies from the heart, but who was not afraid to name the evils or defy the threats about her. Further items appeared in *CCCL* over the years giving vivid glimpses of her love and courage, whetting the appetite for a fuller account of her; but life on the run does not favour the writing of such a work.

Here at last are Nijole's memoirs, smuggled piecemeal to New York, where they have been translated and edited into a single

narrative, supplemented by excerpts from her letters. Nijole writes all too modestly of her work: "In view of our continuing struggle, my account has been written very hastily, and I beg the reader to forgive my mistakes and handwriting. The style can be edited and abridged where necessary." (p. 147).

There is some truth in Nijole's disclaimer, and it is true that she is not one of the dissident intellectuals in Moscow. Unlike her religious contemporaries in the West (Nijole is now openly described as a nun) she did not have the advantages of a liberal education or theological training, nor access to libraries or touring lecturers. The books in which she read her theology, the experts she heard on following Christ, were her parents; or the men who baptised and confirmed her, both martyrs for the faith; or the saintly Canon Tauda whom she nursed from his return from Siberia, an invalid until he died; or Fr Šeškevičius, for whom she secured a defence attorney, which earned her dismissal from her post at the university; or the Orthodox women prisoners and Baptists of whom she writes with sisterly love and admiration.

Nijole's memoirs, then, are best taken as a spiritual journal, recording those moments in her life when God's love, truth and joy have met hatred, lies and despair. The spirit with which she confronts evil is astounding: the seed of the gospel certainly fell on rich soil in her soul, which refused to be choked by the thorns and the cares of the communist world. Injustice and degradation abound, but the dominant tone is that proclaimed by the title — radiance. On one occasion only was she "undone". She was in exile working as a maternity nurse when the staff callously abandoned a newborn baby. Nijole's protests were met with contempt and derision. Heartbroken, she was compelled to listen to the infant's cries growing feebler through the night. It was Christmas Eve.

I know of no other dissident still in the Baltic states whose memoirs have been made available in this way. Nijole's individual story, which began in 1938 when Lithuania still enjoyed independence, and ends on the eve of *glasnost*, admirably complements Fr Michael Bourdeaux's general history of those years, *Land of Crosses*, with its solid and scholarly documentation. The Soviet occupation and the Nazi period which he describes she survived as a little girl, in spite of flight, starvation and the threat of deportation. "Whenever we heard a car coming in the early morning we would run out into the grain fields to hide lest they take us to Siberia. This is how most Lithuanians lived, as if on the rim of a volcano." (p. 15). She grew to maturity as the returning communists struck at the leadership of Lithuania and pursued a divide-and-conquer policy to break the church, a process described by Bourdeaux. They were foiled because the church could

rely on people of the quality of Nijole.

No wonder she was chief spokeswoman at the demonstrations on 23 August. No wonder the KGB, unable in the present climate to proceed against her as they would like, seized her on a country road and detained her for thirty hours as they drove her all over Lithuania and Belorussia. If this book is a true account of Nijole Sadunaite, then the KGB will have failed yet again to break her.

GREGORY JORDAN, S.J.

## Book Note

*Der Geistliche und seine Gemeinde in Osteuropa*

(The Priest and his Parish in Eastern Europe)

edited by Wolfgang Kasack. Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1986.

Paperback, 160 pp.

This is a collection of papers from a conference held in 1984 at Himmerod Monastery in West Germany. Many of the contributors are specialists in their field, but — perhaps inevitably, given the length of each item — many of their analyses remain on a relatively superficial level. The focus is on Catholic and Orthodox priests (their numbers and provision for training) and their parishes (largely statistical data). Such emphasis is a little disappointing — a look at pastoral work and community life would have been welcome.

Of particular note are Nikolaj Artemoff's piece on the place of the Orthodox priest in the Soviet Union, Diethild Treffert's examination of the Oasis Movement in Poland, and a brief description of a German Catholic childhood in Central Asia, where the rare visit of a priest to isolated communities had to remain a closely-guarded secret. A number of interesting facts are also brought to light: half the seminarians in Poland are members of the Oasis Movement; Pauline monks from Czestochowa have a monastery in Croatia; all 17 Catholic priests working in Ukraine come from Latvia.

Although much of the information is drawn from readily accessible sources and there are no remarkable insights into the situation, the book is a sound introduction to priest and parish in Eastern Europe.

GEORGE HARRISON

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

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# MILLENNIUM CONFERENCE

11-15 July 1988

To mark the Millennium of the Baptism of Kievan Rus' in 988, Keston College and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at London University are jointly organising an academic conference.

## “Christianity in the Eastern Slav Lands (16th-20th centuries)”

Over thirty leading academic specialists from several countries will present papers on different aspects of Christianity in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia.

The sessions will cover the following topics:

- \* The Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet State
- \* Ukrainian Christianity, 16th-19th centuries
- \* Monasticism
- \* Religion and Politics in Imperial Russia
- \* The Orthodox Church and 19th-century culture
- \* Russian Nationalism and the Orthodox Church
- \* The Church and the Social Question
- \* The Sectarians
- \* Poland, Ukraine and Belorussia in the 20th century
- \* The Religious Situation in the USSR Today

The conference begins in the evening of Monday 11 July and ends at tea-time on Friday 15 July. It will be held at London University. There will be an optional visit to Keston College on the afternoon of Wednesday 13 July.

There is a charge for attendance, to include the cost of morning coffee, afternoon tea and photocopies of summaries of conference papers:

£25 (excluding lunch) or £40 (including lunch) for the entire conference.

Visitors are welcome on a daily basis, at a cost of £7.50 (excluding lunch) or £10 per day (including lunch).

*If you wish to attend all or part of the conference, please write at once to:*

*Millennium Conference, Keston College, Heathfield Road, Keston, Kent, BR2 6BA.*