

Eastern Europe; and it may therefore be difficult to believe that Dr. Bonino and his like can be serious, or if serious, can be sensible. It is important therefore that what Dr. Bonino has to say be absorbed and critically evaluated by those whose experience of Marxism has been bitter and whose church situation hardly encourages convinced and eager co-operation.

Equally, the Western reader in the North Atlantic culture and its cultural colonies elsewhere needs to make sure that when he describes some social phenomenon as "Christian" he does not merely mean "the liberal democratic capitalist affluent semi-Christian society that I have got used to in the last hundred years". And since, to be frank, in the West the unconscious idolatry of our own ideology is even commoner among Evangelicals than among other types of thoughtful Christian, it is of great and welcome significance that *Christians and Marxists* is based on the first series of London Lectures on Contemporary Christianity, chaired by the Rev. John Stott, designed to stimulate Christian thinking on burning issues of the day. I hope that the great authority of Dr. Stott will secure for Dr. Bonino's book the careful examination that may be needed by a thesis that requires so much change not only in theory (which is hard enough) but in *praxis* (which is much harder).

DAVID M. PATON

Our Hope (*O nashem upovanii*)

by Father Dmitri Dudko. YMCA Press, Paris 1974, 274 pp., 36f.

Father Dmitri Dudko organized question and answer sessions in his church in Moscow. This book is an account of those sessions. The questions and answers seem to be extremely unsophisticated, sometimes even primitive. Let us look at some of them briefly. One questioner asks: "We have only one God. Why then are there so many religions? . . . Which is closest to the truth?" Father Dmitri replies: "Yes, we all have only one God, but we believe in Him in many different ways because of our sins and errors . . ." (p. 14). Again, "What is confession? - Confession reveals what is happening in your soul." (p. 37). But behind the apparent simplicity an expert eye can perceive a complicated and intricate picture of religious life in Moscow, not only *as it is or as it has become*, but I would dare state, *as predicted* in the later writings of Vladimir Solovev. Father Dmitri's book is in fact devoted to one problem: how to escape the all-pervading and destructive influence of a soulless and cynical society? How to survive spiritually? Canonical and dogmatic questions are not the subject of this book.

The authorities reacted strongly to Father Dmitri Dudko's talks. Did they in fact see in them a real threat to the ruling materialistic and atheist ideology? I doubt it because the authorities' pretended ideological purism disappeared long ago. The authorities in fact fear the *ethical and social reformism* of his talks because their own atheistic State, built initially on the basis of *materialistic idealism* (called "Dialectical Materialism") was changed almost immediately into a stronghold of social conservatism and political pragmatism.

But Father Dmitri Dudko is not a political reformer. He is a good priest, and so cannot help acting, speaking and even thinking in the spirit of a new religious situation. For example, one of his parishioners said to him: "You are too rigid and strict Father Dmitri. If you go on like this, people will stop listening to you. Remember, we live in the twentieth century and some concessions are needed." But Father Dmitri objected: "We are afraid of austerity, of a hard life. We consider an easy life to be the height of blessedness. But let us be, as they say, more critical towards ourselves. We have already made concessions, we have broken with the Church. As a result there is crime, corruption, libertinism, dissatisfaction with life, the disintegration of family relationships. No, in order to restore all this, we must become ascetic. . . . Step by step we shall come to an ascetic consciousness in all things." (pp. 121-122). Such a conclusion is not unexpected.

Much has changed since the end of the nineteenth century when Vladimir Solovev blamed Tolstoy's moralism for not being *truly* Christian. Now Father Dmitri accuses the atheistic state of immorality, which prevents it being Christian. Yet it can never become moral until it ceases being atheistic: ". . . we cannot continue to live like this. There is not only no conscience left in us, but not even honesty. We have lost the capacity to distinguish not only between good and evil but also between decency and indecency." (p. 130). This is a warning, not a condemnation. It is a true statement about the situation as it is and will continue to be unless Russia turns to its Hope – Christianity.

ALEXANDER PYATIGORSKY

Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union

by David E. Powell

MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1975, 206 pp., £13.75.

In a totalitarian State, a propaganda campaign can be conducted in many areas of public life simultaneously. Dr. Powell's examination of Soviet atheist propaganda analyses its techniques and effectiveness in each area. He considers first the disseminating of anti-religious ideas by atheist