

themselves in their own languages. It is probable that this source of information would give a different slant to the interpretation of various aspects of the history of the non-Russian peoples. Perhaps something could have been said about certain other features of Soviet nationality policy; for example, it appears that while the Russians have been assigned a superior historical role in relation to non-Russian nationalities, the latter have been given a similar role in relation to their foreign neighbors. The Soviet explanation of the origins of Soviet peoples and their cultural heritage and the problem of ethnogenesis are essential to an understanding of the nationality policy. Finally, it seems to this reviewer that a discussion of only the negative side of Soviet historiography distorts the picture of the overall quality of Soviet historical scholarship on the non-Russian peoples. A voluminous amount of documentary material and some very good monographs have been published. The multivolume surveys of histories of many non-Russian peoples include not only slants and twists to conform to preconceived theoretical and ideological formulas but also a great quantity of new material presented in a more or less objective fashion.

Tillett thinks that the historiographical controversies in the Soviet Union have subsided in recent years even though the "ideological fires" which they ignited have not yet been completely extinguished. He is uncertain whether the emphasis on "the friendship of Soviet peoples in the past" will contribute to the reduction of nationalist tensions among the various Soviet peoples. The new approach to history, he says, has enabled Soviet historians to standardize the interpretation of various periods of history and to provide for "a more orderly synthesis of the history of Soviet peoples." But is this the main purpose of historical scholarship?

The author has given us a superior study of some major trends in Soviet historical writing, and the value of his book is further enhanced by an extensive bibliography (the proceedings of conferences, historical syntheses, monographs, articles). It is hoped that he will continue to provide us with periodic assessments of Soviet historiography on the non-Russian peoples.

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RELIGION IN THE U.S.S.R. Edited by *Robert Conquest*. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1968. 135 pp. \$5.00.

DESCENT INTO DARKNESS: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN RUSSIA, 1917-1923. By *James J. Zatko*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965. ix, 232 pp. \$6.95.

NIKOLAI: PORTRAIT OF A DILEMMA. By *William C. Fletcher*. New York: Macmillan, 1968. ix, 230 pp. \$6.95.

RELIGIOUS FERMENT IN RUSSIA: PROTESTANT OPPOSITION TO SOVIET RELIGIOUS POLICY. By *Michael Bourdeaux*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968. xi, 255 pp. \$8.95.

DOCUMENTS OF MOSCOW 1966 ALL-UNION CONFERENCE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN-BAPTISTS. Moscow, 1968. 104 pp. 25 kopeks.

The purpose of the book edited by Robert Conquest apparently is to demonstrate once more what has been known for the past fifty years—the irreconcilable hostility

of Communist ideology to any manifestation of religion. Conquest has listed many acts of the Soviet government regarding religion without any attempt to interpret or discuss their meaning. One may wonder why he organized the book as he did. The first three parts, dealing mainly with the Orthodox Church, seem to be a theoretical treatment of religion and communism. Part 4 deals with the non-Orthodox churches and religion by discussing their religious life and activity. What is missing is a section devoted to the religious life and activity of the Orthodox Church.

The book by Father Zatko deals with the Polish Catholic Church in Russia until its destruction in 1923. The author assumes that the Roman Catholic Church in Russia was a persecuted church, using such emotionally colored expressions as "unhappy church" or "long-suffering church." No doubt the Catholic Church in Russia was restricted, but so was the Orthodox Church, whose members were mainly Russians and Ukrainians. The author fails to see the close relations between religion and nationalism in the Russian Empire. The Russian government's policy was based on the premise that all its Eastern Slavic subjects ought to be Orthodox, while other ethnic groups were free to choose and to change their faith. Hence the notion arose that the non-Orthodox in Russia were to be looked upon as alien elements, whose loyalty was questionable. A comparable attitude prevailed toward non-Catholics in the dominions of the Polish crown prior to 1773.

The Soviet period is treated from the point of view of Polish national interests to the utter neglect of Ukrainian interests. Thus the author writes of how the Polish army marched to liberate the Ukrainian "provinces" (p. 91), but refers to the Ukrainians as armed bands (p. 93).

The author seems not to have noticed the two important factors decisive to the destruction of the Catholic Church in Russia. The Vatican assigned Polish Catholics once more to play the role of missionaries to the East. The result was to alarm not only the sensitive Bolshevik government but also the Orthodox hierarchy in Moscow. The second factor lay in the Catholic Church's hierarchical structure. The Catholic hierarchy was bound by the Vatican's decisions, or sometimes its indecision. Monsignor Budkewicz warned the Roman Curia as early as September 1922 that unless the pope came to some agreement with the Bolsheviks, the Catholic churches in Russia would be closed. But nothing happened on Rome's side; the pope did not want to negotiate, and he did not give the local hierarchy permission to act on their own. When that permission finally arrived, it was too late. The Bolshevik government had made its own decision and was no longer willing to reconsider.

Fletcher's book presents a portrait of Metropolitan Nikolai of Krutitsy, who managed all the foreign and domestic affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1943 to his mysterious death in 1960 and played a decisive role in that crucial period. The author poses a dilemma: how to reconcile Christian duty and service to the church with secular obligations (that is, service to the state), a problem encountered everywhere not only by the clergy and the hierarchy but by every Christian. The author appears to be aware that the Christian church as well as the ordinary Christian has had to make compromises with secular powers everywhere while serving the interests of the state.

In the Soviet Union the problem of relations between church and state took on different dimensions. After the church had made the long stride from violent opposition to reconciliation with the established system, the service of the church appeared to be no different from the service of any church anywhere—to educate good, loyal citizens and to support the establishment. But the Bolshevik government's attitude toward religion was very different from any other government's attitude. The

Bolshevik government had never considered the church's desire for reconciliation and was never interested in real coexistence or cooperation with the church. Such was the dilemma of the church and her ranking hierarch. Fletcher clearly recognizes this dilemma and does not cast any doubt upon the sincerity of Nikolai's devotion to his church, even though Nikolai had to make compromises with the atheistic Communist state to preserve a minimum of church organization.

Nikolai fell victim when the government started new persecutions of religion. His death brings to mind two distinct thoughts. First, it illustrated the complete absurdity and senselessness of persecution at a time when the church was reconciled to the established order, and when nobody expected persecution. It brutalized loyal citizens and offended national feelings. Second, the success or failure of Nikolai's life and career cannot be judged by citing statistics on the activity of his church before and after his death, as Fletcher tries to do (p. 9).

Because many documents are not available, the author was very limited in his research materials. To avoid gaps in his conclusions he had to work with many vulnerable assumptions and presuppositions. He is aware that his statement about Nikolai's capitulation to the demands of the state and becoming an agent of the secret police (p. 25) cannot be proved. For some reason he takes for granted that the secret police were in need of Nikolai's services (p. 35). Another of Fletcher's contestable opinions is that in 1945 Stalin, together with the Orthodox leadership, devised a plan to conquer the world (pp. 55 ff.).

Michael Bourdeaux's book deals with the so-called Initiators' Movement which began around 1962 among the Baptist communities in opposition to the government's attempts to gain control over the internal affairs of religious organizations. The book is a unique and profound study. It brings to the fore problems hardly touched by scholars previously, and poignantly stresses the problem of the Christian conscience in Russia. Because the Communist mode of thinking and living gives no place to dissenters, all declarations of the Soviet government and press sound like models of tolerance. Yet, though there is no law that discriminates against religious minorities, all religious people have to hide their faith. Theoretically and practically they have no voice in public issues which do not have the approval of the government. The book deals with the organized opposition of a small group of Baptists who dared to protest governmental pressure upon their personal lives and their organizations. With good reason the author makes us believe that the violent opposition of this indeed insignificant group of people, with their readiness to be martyrs for their convictions, caused the government to back down in its attempts to control the internal affairs of the Baptist communities.

Even after hundreds of Baptists had disappeared into labor camps, the movement did not fail. First, it had an impact on the Orthodox Church; second, the government has found it necessary to ease the pressure, at least for the time being—as is reflected in the *Documents* of the 1966 Baptist conference. The most important part of the booklet is the statutes of the Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists in the USSR, as they were accepted by the conference of this body in Moscow in October 4–7, 1966. Even a superficial perusal of the documents convinces one that they are much more liberal than those of 1960, which were imposed on the Baptist organization by the Council for Religious Affairs, the official government body. The new statutes seem to have been widely discussed and adopted by the elected conference representatives.

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