

criticism on the fringes of the establishment, Praxis challenged the Party's political viability.

The essays in Part II are well-documented and use official Soviet literature, *samizdat*, and Vatican sources. The contributions by B. Bociurkiw and V. Markus on Lithuanian Catholics and Ukrainian Uniates respectively show that in these areas, where religion and nationalism are intertwined, religious dissent brings together religious and national hopes and enjoys considerable support among the population. The relative "laicization" of these religious protest movements may endanger the regime since religious dissent could bring with it national, political, and social discontent. E. Wynot's study of the Roman Catholic Church and the Polish State during the inter-war period stresses the way in which the Catholic bishops differentiated between the Pilsudski and later governments as, on the one hand, a political movement which they despised, and on the other, as a ruling force in Poland which guaranteed stability and independence. This helps us understand Catholicism's pragmatic policy towards Polish communists and its present role as a decisive balancing factor which ensures stability in Poland and at least relative independence from the USSR.

VLADIMIR N. PAVLOFF

*The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement:
Documents and statements 1902-1975*

edited by Constantin G. Patelos,

World Council of Churches, Geneva, 360 pp., £8.25.

The Russians and the World Council of Churches

by J. A. Hebly, Christian Journals Limited, Belfast, 181 pp., £1.50.

In 1961, as a result of the ecumenical relationship which had grown up with non-Orthodox churches since 1945, the Russian Orthodox Church finally submitted an application to join the World Council of Churches (WCC). This was accepted at the New Delhi Assembly by an overwhelming majority. Some of the formal documents covering the important period when the Cold War was at its height, are contained in *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement*, an official Geneva publication, though earlier and later years are given far greater attention. In the section dealing with actual membership Constantin Patelos is most informative. A mere perusal of these formal official exchanges in themselves will not yield much information, but anyone prepared to subject the texts to patient analysis will find plenty of cut and thrust, especially in the Russian Orthodox theological approach to ecumenism. There is no

evidence here that the WCC has become a communist front organization, dominated by Soviet churchmen who are really KGB colonels, as some would claim, though of course it is behind the scenes that any Soviet pressure would have been applied. Something essential, however, is missing from Patelos's compilation. The Russian Church is by far the largest Orthodox Church in the world, its distinctive mark is suffering and it has preserved its spiritual authority after 60 years of persecution. Yet there is no hint of this in the book, any more than there has been in 20 years of WCC conferences (the 1975 discussion on religious freedom in Eastern Europe at Nairobi was completely unscheduled). The witness of Orthodox Christians like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Anatoli Levitin, Yevgeni Barabanov and a score of others is deliberately excluded from WCC discussion at every level. There is not even a hint of the Romanian Orthodox experience which – more than any other Church perhaps – should be showing us the meaning of monasticism in the world of 1979. Many of us will not be able to take the Orthodox presence in the ecumenical movement as seriously as we should until such voices are heard.

Dr Hebly gives a Protestant view of the developing links between the Russian Orthodox Church and Geneva. A Dutch theologian at the University of Utrecht, he is the author of *Protestants in Russia* and an essay in the compilation, *Religious Liberty in the Soviet Union*, a report prepared in 1975 for WCC churches after the Nairobi Assembly debate on the subject. His research for *The Russians and the World Council of Churches* is based on the original documents in the Geneva archives. In spite of his impeccable groundwork, giving for the first time a detailed account of the period as reflected in the documents quoted by Patelos, his book is too brief to answer adequately contentious questions about the period of Russian WCC membership. For example, why did the WCC never publicize the terrible persecution of the early 1960s? Dr Hebly shows that the staff of the WCC raised private questions about it. Did the Russian Orthodox Church play any significant role in pushing the WCC towards a biased attitude to international affairs (for example, in its consistent criticism of the USA for its involvement in Vietnam, compared with its mild and brief criticism of the Soviet Union over the invasion of Czechoslovakia)? We need a full-length study of the later period from Dr Hebly, highlighting the uneasy contradictions in WCC policy towards the violation of human rights in the Third World and in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, the author and publisher deserve commendation for what they have given us.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX