

Christen im Schatten der Macht by Hans Brandenburg, Brockhaus, Wuppertal, 1974, 206 pp. English translation : to be published by Mowbrays in 1976.

Christen unter Hammer und Sichel by Winrich Scheffbuch, Brockhaus, Wuppertal, 1972, 200 pp. English translation : **Christians under the Hammer and Sickle**, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1974, 220 pp., \$2.95.

Both these books are directed at a wider audience, with the laudable aim of bringing the history and present situation of the Baptists and other evangelical revival movements in Russia to the attention of as many people as possible. I believe that Scheffbuch has been more successful here : from the outset he made no claim to be writing an academic book.

Brandenburg on the other hand set out to write, as the sub-title says, a history of the revival movements in Russia. His book is therefore chiefly dedicated to the last century. With great love of detail, the author describes the birth of the first "Stunde" (Bible study hour) in the village of Osnova near Odessa after 1860, and the spread of this pietistic revival movement in the neighbouring villages and later in other south Russian provinces. Brandenburg has a predilection for biographical details and the often strange turns in the lives of great missionaries; this is also evident in his presentation of the second source of evangelicalism in Russia, as he sets before the reader vivid pictures of the Bible circles in the highest society of St. Petersburg, gathering around Col. Pashkov and the princely Lieven family.

The author rightly emphasizes the supra-confessional nature of the revival meetings and of their social activities. In particular, the "stundists" in south Russia were in the beginning by no means anti-Orthodox and thought of themselves as a movement within the State Church. It was through police action and a bureaucratic missionary zeal on the part of the Orthodox clergy that they were forced out of the Church. Towards the end of his book, Brandenburg looks at the considerable publishing activity of the Baptists and Evangelical Christians between 1905 and World War I, also after the Revolution in the years 1922-28. This makes it painfully clear how much greater were the possibilities for distributing religious literature in the 1920s than today. The hunger for Bibles and religious literature has grown considerably since then.

The great weakness of Brandenburg's book consists in the fact that in his historical study, he does not use either the considerable Russian literature on the subject before the Revolution, or recent Soviet research, or up-to-date Western works. This is therefore not so much a history of

the Russian revival movements, as a detailed description of German and English influences upon emerging Russian evangelicalism. These influences were certainly important and fruitful, but less significant than the specifically Russian and Ukrainian foundations of the bible-based movements which today – rightly – consider themselves part of *Russian* history. That is why today the date of origin of the evangelical movement is considered to be, not the beginning of the “Stunde” in Osnova village under the influence of German colonists, as the author says (pp. 67, 188), but rather the baptism of Nikita Voronin in Tbilisi in 1867.

The “stundists” were severely persecuted at the end of the nineteenth century; the legal basis for this was a decree of 4 July 1894. There has never been any such legal text as that cited by Brandenburg (pp. 120–1). The persecutions before 1917 never assumed such cruel forms as stated by Brandenburg. Likewise he considers the religious persecutions under Pobedonostsev comparable with those under Stalin. Arbitrary actions by Russian provincial governors and village pogroms against the “stundists” before 1905 cannot, however, be named in the same breath as the systematic physical extermination of tens of thousands of believers between 1929 and 1938.

Scheffbuch in describing the tragic controversy among the Evangelical Christians and Baptists since 1960 deliberately attempts to be fair to both sides and not to pass premature judgment on Christian brethren. The book is a selection of Baptist *samizdat* texts (unfortunately without source annotation) together with more or less full introductions by the author. In my opinion, the documentation is more successful in those places where it gives preference to longer texts in full, rather than a series of brief extracts without linking commentary. In this way we get a picture of individual lives or specific events (Aida Skripnikova, the first and second conferences of prisoners’ relatives, Maria Braun, the Sloboda family, etc.) which are more impressive and moving than statistics or prisoner lists.

However, Scheffbuch does not aim only to inform. He has written a book which is involved and emotional; he wants also to arouse emotion in the reader and make him sensitive to the martyrdom of the persecuted Church. This is not simply a book about the persecuted Baptists in the Soviet Union, but also an appeal to Christians in the West to recognize that in martyrdom emerges the central theme of Christian proclamation: giving testimony, where necessary even at the cost of one’s own life. Scheffbuch calls on Christians in the West to learn from the persecuted Church, and to reflect on the essential ministry of the Christian community.

Although the writer warns against seeking martyrdom, he sometimes falls into the trap of seeing in suffering the true solution for Churches in contemporary Western pluralist society too, where they are not persecuted, but silenced by indifference from without, and oppressed by frenetic activity within. At the same time it must be made clear that the Churches in Western industrial society find themselves at a completely different starting point to Christians in the communist world. Certainly they must recognize and learn from the confessing courage of the Churches in Eastern Europe, but to overcome their inward and outward problems they need other ways than in Eastern Europe. BERNHARD PIERAU

Confucius, Mao and Christ, by Paul E. Kauffman, Asian Outreach, Hong Kong, 1975, 248 pp.

This American pastor, born of missionary parents in North China, founded "Asian Outreach" as a research and communication centre in Hong Kong in 1969. He offers us a popular, not a scholarly, presentation of his theme. It is very readable, basically sound, but unfortunately somewhat careless. The concerned general reader will be edified, and not seriously misled. This is obviously a testimony of faith.

The scholar, however, would learn little, though he might be grateful for the testimonies of Christians in the People's Republic today (near the end of the book). He would probably be highly irritated by offhand statements such as "today's communist leaders are really just the mandarins of yesterday" and by the comparison of the Cultural Revolution of 1966-69 to the T'ai P'ing Rebellion (erroneously dated within the present century - p. 9); by the very inadequate dismissal of the Emperor K'ang Hsi's controversy with the Vatican in a few sentences (p. 53); by the errors of translating Peiping as "city of Peace" (p. 133), of mis-spelling the Nationalist Party as the "Kuomintang" (repeatedly), and of saying that "in 1935 [Mao] assumed the chairmanship of the Politburo fully 15 years after his open espousal of Marxism" (a sentence on p. 144 in which there are three inaccuracies). He would be irritated by the confusion of the sentence that speaks of "the public whipping boy who sees that proper punishment is administered where necessary" (p. 145); by the gross exaggeration of the report which is quoted to give the figure of approaching 50 millions as a reasonable estimate of communist killings in China; and, finally, by the carelessness of writing "Now that a wedge had been driven into a weak, disorganized China, the West was determined to milk it for all it was worth" (p. 70) and "Thou shalt have no other God's before me" (p. 176).