

The Catholic religious press has flowered. There are 67 publications of various sorts, including a number of official diocesan gazettes. Although some have a small circulation and appear irregularly there are others such as *Glas Koncila* (118,000) which is a fortnightly newspaper, *Kana* (53,000) a family colour magazine, published in Croatia, as well as *Druzina* (125,000) and *Ognjisce* (83,000) their Slovene equivalents. Finally there is AKSA, a Catholic weekly news service in Croatian and German, which has a small but important circulation. Not included in this number are the journals of the various government approved Priests' Associations, one or two of which, such as *Nova Pot*, are serious and respected.

The historical events of the last 35 years are only hinted at. Every diocese has its complement of priests living and working abroad; some names are followed by the laconic comment "living in Argentine". The ecumenical, cultural and educational work of the great 19th century Bishop Strossmayer of Djakovo is mentioned in the history of that diocese, but the events of the war are mostly passed over in silence, and the name of Cardinal Stepinac appears only in the list of Archbishops of Zagreb.

Both volumes include accounts of their overseas dioceses and the European parishes which have grown up as Yugoslav emigrant workers spread out over Western Europe. While the Catholic Church maintains abroad many parish priests attached to dioceses within Yugoslavia, the Serbian Orthodox Church has four dioceses in North America and another one which includes Western Europe and Australasia, all with resident bishops who are members of the Serbian Bishops' Assembly. The Macedonian Orthodox Church has one inclusive overseas diocese.

The Serbian volume, printed in Cyrillic script, makes no linguistic concessions, but the *General Survey* has translations in English, French and German of its introduction, of the table of abbreviations and of the statistical tables, making these accessible to anyone interested in the subject. It also includes a complete index of names and places. Lastly, and happily, there is a brief account of the life and work of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the most famous living Yugoslav Catholic, born in 1910 of Albanian parents in Skopje, where she lived until 1928.

STELLA ALEXANDER

Kontinent 1: The Alternative Voice of Russia and Eastern Europe

edited by Vladimir Maximov, Andre Deutsch, 1976, 180 pp., £3.95.

Kontinent is the English version of a Russian quarterly magazine launched in 1974 by recent Soviet émigré intellectuals. *Kontinent*, as the original subtitle states, is intended to be "a literary, social-political and religious

journal". It is to appear in German, French, Italian and English so as to reach the widest possible readership and open a dialogue between the Western and East European intelligentsia. The first issue of the journal states its aims and principles:

1. Absolute religious idealism, that is, with a dominant Christian tendency, a constant spiritual union with representatives of other faiths.
2. Absolute anti-totalitarianism, that is, a struggle against any variety of totalitarianism – Marxist, nationalist or religious.
3. Absolute democratism, that is, consistent support of all democratic institutions and tendencies in contemporary society.
4. Absolute non-partisanship, that is, a categorical refusal to express the interests of any existing political group.

The English version of *Kontinent* is composed of articles selected from Nos. 1 and 2 of the Russian edition. For example, the Solzhenitsyn-Sakharov controversy is included, as well as a revealing essay by Alexander Pyatigorsky, "Remarks on the Metaphysical Situation". Alexander Pyatigorsky is a Russian specialist in Buddhism who is lecturing at London University. He gives us an inside view of the current Russian interest in metaphysics which of course is never mentioned in lectures, debates or in any Soviet state organization. However, metaphysical subjects are discussed in private homes by people who at the same time carry on working in official state institutions. Mr. Pyatigorsky briefly outlines the historical development of the "metaphysical situation". He starts at the beginning of the 19th century when the religious and secular elements within Russian philosophy were treated separately. The fascination with metaphysics during the 1890s and 1910s linked philosophy again with its religious roots. And it is Mr. Pyatigorsky's belief that any serious philosophical thinking is by nature religious. Today, Orthodox believers and others concerned with religious questions in the USSR are deeply influenced by the ideas of Russian religious thinkers at the turn of the century.

Two other distinctive essays are "Unofficial Soviet Art" by Igor Golomshtok and "The Literary Process in Russia" by Andrei Sinyavsky. Both these writers are experts in their subject and reach a similar conclusion: to be an artist under the Soviet regime is no longer a profession but a way of life. To paint or write about belief in God may lead to persecution or imprisonment; yet this adds authority to the voice of those demanding liberty.

MILENA KALINOVSKA

Theology and Prayer: Essays on Monastic Themes

presented at the Orthodox-Cistercian Conference, Oxford, 1973
(Studies Supplementary to *Sobornost* No 3), edited by A. M. Allchin,
Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1975, 107 pp., 50p.

St. Seraphim of Sarov

by Valentine Zander, SPCK, London, 1975, 150 pp., £2.50.

The Christian West has for long regarded the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church with diffident reverence, an attitude for which these two books provide further justification. Both publications are marked by subtle unities, within and between themselves. It is astonishing how often in *Theology and Prayer* the same themes – Merton's approach to "dread", the influence of Gregory of Nyssa on St. Bernard, the themes of *excessus* and *kenosis* – occur in papers dealing outwardly with widely disparate subjects. Thomas Merton is the explicit subject of two of the six papers, and most of the others find it difficult not to mention him somewhere. And Merton is the link between these two books, for as John Eudes Bamberger says in his paper on Thomas Merton and the Christian East, Merton was greatly dependent on that spiritual tradition at the centre of which stood St. Seraphim of Sarov. Of the other papers, Kallistos Ware points out in his succinctly definitive account of *Hesychia* how often it is the men of activity, and not only the contemplatives, who have practised this form of spirituality. John Saward in a masterly paper on "The Fool for Christ's Sake in Monasticism East and West" makes brief but excellent use of that unjustly neglected master of 17th century spirituality, Jean Surin, whose Catechism still disgracefully awaits translation into English. Gueric of Igny turns out to be the main subject of Aelred Squire's paper and A. M. Allchin discusses monastic life and unity in Christ. Rowan Williams, who deals with Merton and Yevdokimov, has interesting paragraphs on the monks' flight into the desert, the purpose of which was mainly "to face the demons", "to confront the diabolical" – a highly dubious motive, surely, if it was their primary one.

Valentine Zander's biography of St. Seraphim of Sarov is in the best tradition of rigorously disciplined hagiography. Her treatment of the miracles with which St. Seraphim is credited shows this clearly. They are simply stated as facts but the evidence, or the places where the evidence can be found, is scrupulously given. The description of Motovilov's conversation with St. Seraphim on the Holy Spirit equals anything to be found in any of the writings of Christian mystics.

ANDREW LENOX-CONYNGHAM