

Diversion without Dynamite

(*Diversia bez dinamita*)

by A. V. Belov and A. D. Shilkin,

"Politizdat", Moscow, 1976, 183 pp. No price.

Archbishop John of San Francisco, Anatoli Levitin, Michael Bourdeaux, Gleb Yakunin, Richard Wurmbrand – these are just a few of the names that jostle on the pages of this interesting book. First published in 1972 in an edition of 100,000, it has now been re-published, in up-dated form, in an edition this time of 200,000. In the publisher's own words:

This book is about the activity of intelligence centres of imperialist powers carrying on subversive work against the Soviet Union. It tells how, under cover of religion, and exploiting several church organizations abroad, reactionary Western circles carry out ideological diversions, trying to undermine socialism "from within" . . .

Through almost 200 pages covering religious literature carried or mailed into the USSR, émigré church groups, East European missions, research centres, "prophets of anti-communism" including Billy Graham and Mr. Moon, religious dissent within the Soviet Union as covered in the Western media, and religious broadcasting to the Soviet Union, the writers jumble together a host of amazingly diverse individuals, organizations and Churches under the label "clerical anti-communism".

An example of their simplistic approach (slightly modified in the new edition) is the section on the activity of Ukrainian Uniates (Eastern-Rite Catholics) outside the Soviet Union. In the first edition, this activity is treated simply as an extension of Vatican policy. Thus for example: "The subversive activity of the Vatican is clearly seen in its attempts to propagate Uniatism in our country". The same sentence in the revised edition reads: "The Vatican supports those who try to propagate Uniatism in our country". There is similar re-phrasing at other points in this section. In fact, as far as the outside observer can discern, Uniate activity causes acute embarrassment to the Vatican in its present pursuit of détente with the Eastern bloc. That the Soviet writers have slightly revised their presentation of this issue may mean that they have gained, over the four years since their first edition, a deeper grasp of the real-life complexities of Western approaches to the Soviet religious question. It is difficult to believe that they can really hold such a simplistic view, or that any but the most undiscerning Soviet reader could take this book at face value. That all these matters are treated as ultimately political in nature merely clouds the issue still further.

The book deals with a number of research and information centres,

including the CSRC. When the first edition appeared, the CSRC was still a very young organization, and was mentioned briefly as "the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, recently established in Great Britain". Having had four years to demonstrate its staying power and develop some of its potential, the CSRC receives fuller treatment in the new edition. *RCL* is mentioned (see extract below), in particular the editorial of the first number (1973). The writers quote the reference in this editorial to the "educational" aspect of *RCL* and add that the journal is in fact biased and polemical, not educational. Considerable space is also given to Michael Bourdeaux's regular broadcasts to the Soviet Union (much of this material is the same in both editions).

Most of the material devoted to the East European missions is the same in both editions, but there are new sections on the Christian Mission to the Communist World and Underground Evangelism, and an expanded section on the Russian Student Christian Movement and its Russian-language journal published in Paris.

There are a number of other greater and lesser changes in the new edition; it is difficult to say whether these represent any particular trend. Despite peculiarities of focus and interpretation, this book must surely be a source of encouragement to Soviet believers: it reveals that a diverse collection of people in the West care enough about them to undertake at least something on their behalf.

KATHLEEN MATCHETT

Extracts from *Diversion without Dynamite*

(pp. 37-9) The "Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism" in London recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. It was founded by the Anglican pastor Michael Bourdeaux, about whom we shall have more to say later. The patrons of the "centre", intended as a representative grouping, include such figures as the Catholic Cardinal König, the Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, and some other religious figures representing different religious streams.

One policy statement made by the directors of the "centre" said that they were aiming at a "deeper mutual understanding between peoples of the communist and non-communist world". Later, underlining the fact that the "centre" had no defined "political programme", they tried to present it as some sort of a-political, supra-class organization with objectivity as its main criterion. But the very first actions of

the "centre" showed that there could be no question of objectivity - that this was simply one more anti-communist organization aiming at antagonising Western public opinion towards communism and developing a broad anti-Soviet propaganda.

From January 1973 the new "centre" began publishing a journal, *Religion in Communist Lands*. The first article, from Bourdeaux's pen, expressed the hope that the journal "will be of educative value",¹ and the task that the directors of the "centre" had set themselves was fairly frankly set out - "to promote ... the education of people towards a greater understanding of the religious situation in Eastern Europe".²

And indeed the directors of the "centre" do promote their interpretation of the situation of religion and the Church in the socialist countries, an interpretation far removed from reality. In the journal they repeat the old fic-

tions about the persecution of believers in socialist countries, the loss of rights for citizens who believe in God, the persecution of ministers of religion, etc. ...

Advertising his "centre" on a wide basis, Bourdeaux harbours the notion of occupying the chief place in the system of bourgeois-clerical propaganda, and monopolising information about the religious and church situation in the USSR so as to bargain with it in the Western propaganda market. Of course, for activity on this sort of scale you need funds, and so the pages of the journal *Religion in Communist Lands* carry tearful appeals for financial help. Undoubtedly reactionary circles in the West will not leave the London "centre", which serves them faithfully as a militant anti-communist and anti-Soviet organization, in the lurch.

(pp. 139-140) In 1969 Radio Liberty organized a series of broadcasts by Michael Bourdeaux: "50 Years of Atheism in the USSR". In these broadcasts the Anglican pastor did not even try to paint a true picture of the position of religious organizations in our country. He used the materials of anti-communist organizations and of various "institutes" studying the situation in the Soviet Union, and also forged docu-

ments concocted at other radio stations, in particular "Voice of America" and BBC. He also borrowed a good deal from the reactionary émigré press, thus gaining a name for himself in the anti-Soviet field ...

It might not have been worth mentioning this series of broadcasts, which essentially repeat the usual fabrications of the purveyors of bourgeois-clerical disinformation, were it not for the new accent given them by Michael Bourdeaux. He subjected to sharp criticism those religious organizations which did not adopt openly anti-Soviet positions, but practised "silence" with respect to the "religious policy" of the Soviet State. The main objects of the militant pastor's attacks were the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the World Council of Churches.

Thus Bourdeaux acted as a provocateur, calling on others to condemn the Soviet State, Soviet legislation and Soviet order.

The very fact of pastor Bourdeaux's collaboration with Radio Liberty characterizes his stance fairly eloquently. He actively collaborates with many anti-Soviet centres in the West, and enjoys the favour of persons who have commended themselves as implacable opponents of communism.

¹This is actually a quotation from Xenia Howard-Johnston's editorial in *RCL* Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 6.

²This is a quotation from Michael Bourdeaux's "News from the Centre", *RCL* Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 2.

Heralds of the Kingdom of God

(*Vestniki Tsarstva Bozhia*)

by Emmanuel Svetlov, Brussels, 1972, 647 pp. No price.

Svetlov's book, which was written originally for believers living in the USSR, gives us a lively and interesting picture of that extraordinary phenomenon, the unbroken line of Hebrew prophets from the eighth to the fourth century B.C., who prepared the minds of men before Christ to accept monotheism. The prophets, according to Svetlov, do not just foretell the future and the coming of Christ. They are the voice of God, forerunners called to prepare the ways of the Lord. And yet they are also living, historical people. Their humanity calls forth sympathy and delight, for they were as we are, and in them is revealed the joyful mystery of the