

from pre-Revolutionary times to the present day. The two philosophical influences on Levitin were Lev Tolstoy and Vladimir Solovyov, who helped develop different sides of Levitin's complex character. Tolstoy attracted him by his honesty and his anarchic view of the illusory nature of all phenomena save the ultimates: love, death and God. Solovyov, by contrast, showed Levitin that the material world can be saved from sin and redeemed by God as a result of man's efforts to improve it and himself as well. It was under the influence of Solovyov that Levitin became a Christian Socialist, and in the 1920s moved from his devotion to the ritualistic side of Orthodoxy to a commitment to politics and to "Renovation".

Levitin is opposed to political doctrines which are divisive and exclusive. He feels himself to be a cosmopolitan. He begins his book by imagining how his two great-grandfathers might in all ignorance have passed each other on a Moscow street in the 19th century – one an Orthodox bishop, riding in his regalia in a carriage, and the other a thin Jew, pausing in his search for a night's lodging to watch the carriage pass. Believing that men are essentially the same the world over, Levitin is explicitly opposed to nationalism: "National culture has value", he writes, "only when it opens the door to what is universally human". Levitin feels that he himself is neither fish nor fowl. However, this dualism is fruitful and enables him to be tolerant of human frailty.

Though diverse in content, the book is a pleasure to read largely because of Levitin's style which is clear and frequently witty. Dreadful events are related in a drily restrained manner which paradoxically increases the impression of enormity which they leave on the reader. This positive and invigorating book shows how an individual can survive and develop as a moral being in a climate of hypocrisy, self-seeking, and arbitrary exercise of power.

PHILIP WALTERS

Atheism and Religion in the Contemporary Struggle of Ideas
(*Ateizm i religiya v sovremennoi borbe idei*)

Kiev, 1975, 491 pp. No price.

The articles in this collection are basically revised versions of the reports given at a conference held in Kiev in 1973. The title of the conference was "Atheism and Religion and their Place in the Contemporary Struggle of Ideas". This book was not published, however, until 1975, by which time the policy of détente had been announced. This explains the duality in the book's basic ideological line, which is visible in the preface. The

conference was militantly atheistic, but the preface – a perfect illustration of the famous Russian expression “to tack a tail on to a mare” – sets out to “tack on” to militant atheism the idea of peaceful coexistence.

Soviet ideologists have always considered religion in the USSR to be a survival of bourgeois ideology and to be directly, or at least indirectly, linked with the contemporary bourgeois ideology of the West. In the preface, however, this latter idea receives less emphasis. The preface also virtually admits that instead of a revolutionary process – the disappearance (in practice, eradication) of religion in the USSR – an evolutionary process – a “natural” dying out of religion – is taking place. In this sense the following somewhat careful formulation is interesting :

Although in fact in the USSR religious associations do still exist and churches are still active, yet there are no grounds for a sceptical appraisal of the results of atheist propaganda. If before the Great October (Revolution) belief in God was a widespread phenomenon, now it has become a survival preserved solely by a certain section of the population. The sphere of its influence is shrinking continually (p. 11).

The theoretical recommendations and general approach to the problem are contained in the introductory article by Professor Iovchuk, who skilfully links “the change from cold war to a relaxation of tension” with those propositions which every teacher of scientific atheism must know. Brezhnev is quoted several times on each page, and Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov are censured, but comparatively discreetly. Perhaps most strongly criticized of all are the schismatics of the western communist movement and the ecclesiastical hierarchs of Czechoslovakia and Poland, for taking part in the social movements of the late 1960s. And only at the end of the article is the following clear formulation given : “The struggle against religion is a struggle for social progress”.

In the second section of the book – “Religion in the Plans of Anti-communism” – the most typical article is by A. F. Akulov, director of the Institute of Scientific Atheism, and it is entitled “Clerical Anti-communism and its Place in the Contemporary Struggle of Ideas”. While criticizing any religion as a socially and culturally reactionary phenomenon, Akulov at the same time tries to demonstrate, if not to prove, that believers in the USSR are in sympathy with, or at least are not hostile towards the government and official ideology. At this point Akulov severely criticizes “the writings of such anti-communist clerics” as, for instance, Nikita Struve and Michael Bourdeaux.

Of the articles which are devoted to particular denominations, the following deserve attention : “Religion and Nationalism” by Minkevičius; “Ukrainian Bourgeois Nationalism and Religion” by Rimarenko; and “Anti-communist Interpretation by the Uniate Church of the National Question” by Voznyak. In the first article a simple point is made : that

the unification of national consciousness with religious consciousness reveals the immaturity of a particular nation's national consciousness. Beginning with Dostoevsky and Solovyov, the author moves from the union of clericalism and nationalism in bourgeois Lithuania to the contemporary situation in the Third World countries, where, according to the author, western imperialist circles encourage religious divisions. The second article is without question remarkable: while discussing religion in the Ukraine, the author places particular emphasis on Catholicism and the Uniate Church, but omits to mention that a large proportion of Ukrainians are Orthodox. This applies also to the third article, from which a naive reader would infer that all religious life in the western Ukraine resulted from the export of Uniate ideas from the West. In one small collection of articles, which deals with general religious questions, three whole articles are devoted to the Uniate Church alone. Relatively little attention is given to Orthodoxy.

ALEXANDER PYATIGORSKY

Russia's Political Hospitals: The Abuse of Psychiatry in the Soviet Union
by Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, Gollancz, 1977, 510 pp., £6.99.

This is a detailed and extensively documented book which manages to be readable in style although alarming in content. What happens in the USSR now could so easily happen imperceptibly elsewhere.

The authors are a South African doctor who studied psychiatry in Australia and worked in the USA before becoming Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at Oxford, and a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the London School of Economics who has specialized in Soviet politics. To produce this book they drew upon their own special interests – the vulnerability of psychiatry to misuse, and Soviet methods of combating dissent.

To read and digest such a large volume of official material, and unofficial although validated typescripts smuggled out of the USSR, must have been a daunting task. In addition the authors interviewed people in the USSR as well as Russian émigrés (mostly psychiatrists who became victims of their own system) now living in Britain, Canada, France, Israel and the USA. There are 35 pages of references, an index of people and organizations, and numerous explanatory footnotes throughout the text. One of the ten appendices is a useful tabulated register of 210 dissenters forcibly detained in hospital because of their beliefs: the cause of the internment, source of information and a brief summary of the case are given; 35 were held for religious reasons.

Since Soviet citizens are brought up as atheists, conversion to religious faith as an adult is seen as maladaptive behaviour, considered pathological