

Workers Defence Committee," as the editors say (p. 80), "serves as an example of what individuals committed to a belief in basic human rights can do". These are considerable achievements by a solidly united population, but of course they fall far short of what the writers demand. The question is, what more can popular opinion, articulated by the intellectuals and bishops, achieve? Will the present increase in anti-government confidence win real freedoms? J. Kuron (in an interview for *Le Monde*, 29 January 1977, quoted p. 170) believes that pressure for reforms need not lead to a suicidal clash with Soviet military power if Polish "social movements" are prudent in what they demand, and perhaps this optimism will be justified.

Meanwhile the struggle resembles the classical class conflict which the system is meant to have remedied. The struggle is for workers' rights against a so-called workers' government, an irony the Primate underlined in a sermon on 26 September 1977 (quoted p. 156); censorship, ex-party member Bienkowski remarks (p. 40), reflects the policies of the Tsars themselves; industrial management is positively feudal, Jan Litynski reports at Radom (p. 65 and p. 67); and the Party élite are the new aristocrats, as "The Manifesto of the 59" complains (p. 13). The police handling of the Radom riot would have been ludicrous if it had not also been tragic, and their harassment of individuals would look petty were it not at the same time brutal.

But throughout this absorbing book the most serious, and eventually the most important, arena of conflict is in the minds of the people: as the *Programme of the Polish League for Independence*, Item 4, put it (p. 167): "We are drowning in lies, 'Sovereignty' signifies obedience to the USSR, 'security' means the ubiquitous secret police, while 'freedom' is the absence of choice." These writers, ably introduced with just the right amount of comment, make it clear that hope is far from lost. Socialism in their eyes has not lost all credibility yet, and one day they believe the words "sovereignty, security and freedom" will be redeemed.

ROGER SYMON

*A Song in Siberia*

by Anita and Peter Deyneka, Jr, David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1977,  
235 pp., \$6.95.

This book is the product of careful research by Peter and Anita Deyneka (Peter Deyneka, Jr, is executive director of the Slavic Gospel Association, Wheaton, Illinois). In compiling it, they have made excellent use of a unique and, for this purpose, very timely source: the many Russian German Christians who in recent years have succeeded in emigrating from the USSR and settling in West Germany. "By 1976," write the

authors, "almost all the German-Russians in the Barnaul congregation had emigrated to the West. They consider themselves a voice for the church that continues in Barnaul." Some of these believers had played an important role in the life of the church before their exit from the USSR. Thus they themselves formed part of the story contained in this book: the story of the unregistered Baptist congregation in Barnaul, a city of Siberian Russia.

"The severe persecution of the Barnaul church," write the Deynekas "does not make it possible to generalize that all Christians in the Soviet Union are treated identically. The Soviet government has seemed particularly hostile to the Barnaul CCECB congregation, which besides being unregistered has also boldly insisted on civil rights for religious persons. Further, the Barnaul congregation contained many German-Russians – an ethnic group that the Soviets have discriminated against since World War II." Indeed, the Barnaul story is not unique, but it stands out as an intense and conscious testimony to the suffering and endurance of many Christian congregations in the Soviet Union.

By concentrating their story on one congregation in one town, the writers have gained a number of advantages. The general situation of Soviet Christians is becoming gradually better known in the West. But the sometimes unfamiliar details and often strange-sounding names of people and places inevitably confuse the non-specialist reader. With this barrier, it is difficult to make the mass of available information warm and personal. *A Song in Siberia* holds the reader's attention in one place long enough for at least a few important names to be grasped and quickly recognized whenever they appear. At the same time, the book-length treatment allows the writers to portray many day-to-day aspects of personal and church life, including a wedding, the varied and sometimes ingenious methods of witnessing used by the Barnaul believers, and even translations of many hymns and songs used by the church – a special evocation of the slow, steadfast rhythm of Russian evangelical church life.<sup>4</sup> A section of photographs also helps to bring the names alive. It is clear that the Deynekas, like Myrna Grant in her book *Vanya*, have used a measure of permissible poetic licence in order to bring the facts to life. All these things combine to make a book that is readable, informative and moving, a worthy addition to the small but growing library of valuable books on the Christian Church in the Soviet Union today.

KATHLEEN MATCHETT