

Muslims and today's Muslim establishment is in no way a threat to the Soviet authorities. But with increasing foreign contacts some of Sultan Galiev's ideas may paradoxically penetrate the USSR from the outside, and with the present rapid growth of the Muslim population such ideas would be extremely dangerous for the stability of the Soviet polity.

XENIA HOWARD-JOHNSTON

The Unknown Homeland

translated by Marite Sapiets,

Mowbrays, London and Oxford, 1978, vii + 247 pp., £4.95

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The Unknown Homeland is an example of a particular type of *samizdat* literature which is little known in the West. Spiritually edifying books are known to circulate in typescript among Orthodox believers in the Soviet Union: they are a source of sustenance, in many cases describing the lives of men and women who some would say are the saints of this century. *Father Zacharia*, also published by Mowbrays, and *The Catacombs of the Twentieth Century*, as yet neither translated nor published, are further examples of this type of *samizdat*.

The Unknown Homeland, beautifully translated by Marite Sapiets, is both simply a good story and a profound study of the workings of Divine Providence. The story of Fr Pavel's life is presented vividly with Tolstoyan concrete detail: the reader smells, hears, touches the characters and their physical environment. Fr Pavel, originally intent on becoming a monk, falls in love with a charming girl at a ball, marries and becomes a parish priest. The consequences for his marriage of the October Revolution give the reader some insight into the effect of the Revolution on believers and into the pressure to conform which Nina, Fr Pavel's wife, experiences. As a teacher she joins the "anti-religious movement" and her husband, to protect her, decides on divorce. The icons and religious books in their flat are hidden away and Fr Pavel hides in the kitchen whenever Nina entertains her pupils at home.

But the powerful impact of this book stems from its portrayal of a human life which fulfils a prophecy. Fr Pavel, it appears, was ordained to suffer and find his fulfilment in death as a Siberian exile. At the Novodevichy Convent, long before Fr Pavel's arrest, the Sister Superior, Sister Anisya, while serving her guests, had given Fr Pavel only a piece of cabbage-pie and no knife, fork or plate. She had said: "You'll be glad of such a piece, when you travel down the wide river. . . Take it in your hands, eat it, get used to it!" (p. 174). And so when, on his way by steamer to his place of exile in Siberia, he was given a piece of

pie, the direction of his life was suddenly illumined: "All that was earthly had become as nothing. Through the alms he had received he had ceased to be a prisoner and a slave. The steamer's paddle-wheel was going round, gurgling, parting the crested waves. . . 'Inconceivable are Thy ways, O God!'—and he crossed himself expansively, gazing into the distance. 'Thy path is in the great waters.' . . ." (p. 175).

Fr. Pavel was a kenotic figure, a man whose sanctity was hidden, unknown and apparently insignificant. It seems as though his life was wasted and led to nothing; and yet, in the end, within his humiliation, both on his way to and once he had attained his "homeland" in Siberia, he became a source of light and a powerful spiritual guide.

XENIA HOWARD-JOHNSTON

*Détente and Papal-Communist Relations,
1962-1978*

by Dennis J. Dunn,

Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1979, 216 pp., £12.15.

The Vatican itself has never described as "*Ostpolitik*" its attempts to secure a certain degree of freedom for the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe. This term was first used in Germany, the most sensitive point in East-West relations. The term can be applied just as well to papal pastoral diplomacy since the latter's chances of success—like those of all *Ostpolitik*—are linked with the general political climate and the fate of *détente*. The Roman Catholic Church is *a priori* in a weaker position because it has neither any secular power interests nor any political or military means to gain such power. From the Church's point of view, the causes of friction with communist dictatorships are spiritual and administrative and not political, but because of the Church's claim to bear responsibility for men's souls the Church becomes an internal security risk for communist dictatorships which claim total ideological commitment from their citizens. This risk, however, can be calculated and controlled by the regime's security forces.

As a result of this obvious "disparity" between the partners of papal-communist relations there is, on the eastern side, only a limited interest (which may vary from country to country) in a *modus vivendi* with the Catholic Church, whereas the Vatican's interest is much more pressing. To understand *détente* realistically one must realize that this policy does not aim to eliminate the conflict altogether, but to alleviate its consequences. This limitation affects the Vatican's pastoral policies.

Dennis Dunn's study, which is interesting and useful as a collection of material, must be considered in the light of such fundamental