

Reviews

Valeri Barinov — The Trumpet Call

by Lorna Bourdeaux. London: Marshalls, 1985. 256 pp. £2.50

In writing this book Lorna Bourdeaux has succeeded not only in personalising the individual Christian's fight against the "system" (in this case the Soviet government), but also in giving the reader a broad insight into life in the Soviet Union in the seventies and eighties.

The story of Valeri Barinov's life as a child, an army conscript and then as he is converted and begins his calling to reach young people with his style of rock music is interspersed with, and given perspective by, concise pen-pictures of Soviet life. Topics covered include housing, alcoholism, the rock/pop culture and army conscription, and the author's own research and experiences, alongside her personal friendship with Valeri and his family, give intimacy to a story which seems so far removed from our own existence.

Valeri's life is a powerful testimony to the love and compassion of Christ for the seemingly unreachable in Soviet society, namely the disillusioned young, the drug-users, the alcoholics — in fact those the church itself (let alone the state) does not reach.

† Though not a trained pastor or evangelist, Valeri has been able to teach and lead young people who have shown a hunger for God when they have heard him play and sing, or heard his music broadcast on the radio from the West. He is neither educated nor a well-read theologian, but "truly a man close to God's heart" whose credentials are his gift for bringing young people to the Lord by his musical witness and his compassion for them as individuals.

Valeri the musician has simply taken what he knows, loves and understands in terms of music — that is hard rock — and has redeemed it by God's grace into something which communicates a prophetic message to Soviet youth. However, the conflicts he experienced with his own church in Leningrad because of the medium he chose and the sort of people he was reaching, brought misunderstanding and rejection.

The incredible story of how Valeri and his band recorded "The Trumpet Call" is breathtaking, but underlines the level of danger and self-sacrifice ventured for the sake of the Gospel. How petty the arguments about volume, rhythm or the instruments used now seem when we witness the forces of darkness ranged against Valeri and his colleague Sergei during their persecution, trial and subsequent sentences in labour camps. And who can deny the power of his music to break through barriers when through it, young people are drawn to conversion?

This man and his family need our prayers and our understanding. Lorna Bourdeaux has given us a sympathetic picture of a man who uses what are to many unorthodox tools, yet who burns with the desire to see people brought out of despair into new life.

ADRIAN AND SUSAN SNELL

Shamans, Lamas and Evangelicals.

The English Missionaries in Siberia

by C. R. Bawden. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, 382 pp.
£29.50

In the first quarter of the 19th century a few missionaries went from Britain to evangelise the Buryat people of Siberia under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. This book is an intricate account of their relationships with each other, their aims, disagreements, attempts at evangelism and results, which were thought on the whole to be a failure.

The book gives a traveller's account of Siberia at that time, describing the life of the Buryats and revealing their attitudes and those of Russians and Orthodox clerics to English evangelicals. One historically interesting feature is that the missionaries were there just when the Buryats were being largely converted to Lama Buddhism, having previously been shamanist.

The main subject of the book, however, is the wholly dedicated missionaries. Bawden comments that they could have become outstanding academics in Mongolian studies, but their calling to preach the Gospel came first. The positive side of the missionaries' characters is balanced by the account of their defeats, struggles, personal faults and sins. However, the reader may wonder if the balance is correct, since the Christian's life in God is given scant attention.

Speaking the language, their children fluent in Russian and Mongol as well as English, the missionaries enjoyed close contact with the people. They stayed in Buryat tents when travelling, forgoing the greater comfort of staying with Russians. Of their 13 children, only eight survived. It was hard, cold, forbidding and discouraging, but they carried on. Although the author gives the impression that they forced themselves on the local culture, and that their message appeared incomprehensible and foreign,

they clearly had good relations with the Buryats, and one suspects that the reasons for their lack of impact ran deeper than a failure to identify with them.

Bawden says that the missionaries read about theoretical Lamaism, but only to “shock” people in Britain into concern. However, the book reveals their depth of knowledge of the subject and their desire to understand it.

Interestingly, it was the Orthodox Church, and not the Buryats, which had the missionaries expelled. Before that, the missionaries were permitted to win converts but not to baptise them, that being the exclusive prerogative of the Orthodox.

Although the missionaries saw preaching as their primary task, they translated the whole Bible into Buryat Mongolian and even printed it themselves. At first they concentrated on the Old Testament, since the New Testament was being translated in St Petersburg by the Buryat convert Badma. When Badma died, the missionaries took up the New Testament again. There is a detailed account of how the work was organised, but it does not deal with translation theory or intelligibility.

Siberia was a tough mission field. Ordinary people were often not interested in religion, which they left to the lamas, and met evangelism with silence. There were problems in reaching a nomadic society. Drunkenness among the Buryats was a hindrance. Buryats thought of Lamaism as being more indigenous to their culture, and it was therefore relatively successful. Christianity, on the other hand, was seen as Russian in its Orthodox form, and as English in the missionaries' presentation of it. To the Buryats, adopting Christianity meant adopting another nationality. The same applied to their attending mission schools. Often Buryats did not see the relevance of Christianity, which failed to draw them away from Buddhism. A Mongol once commented to me that Christian missionaries “failed to appreciate the depth of Buddhist philosophy, and so the Gospel came across as too simplistic.” This assumes that the Buryats were unwavering in their attachment to Lamaism because of their deep philosophical understanding of it, whereas the book shows that their rejection of Christianity was due rather to their feeling that it was irrelevant. There were, however, a few converts, and one of them was still going strong thirty years later.

Bawden concludes by calling the venture a failure, little having been accomplished in terms of numbers. However, the missionaries' agonising in prayer for the Buryats cannot have been meaningless to God. Also, the mere fact that they went there in pre-revolutionary times with no other motive than saving men's souls indicates that the propagation of Christianity among Mongols has always been spiritually, and not politically, motivated.

From my own studies, I find Mongols under socialism today still retain

many of the attitudes to Christianity that they had in the last century. They see it as another irrelevant religion and remain resistant to the Gospel. However Mongols in ones and twos are now slowly beginning to appreciate the Good News in Jesus Christ. What appeared as a senseless failure then is beginning to bear fruit; though there may be no historical connection between today's developments and the events of 150 years ago, yet the prayers of Christians then are being answered now. In 1980 a trainee Buryat lama begged for a copy of the Bible, and another Buryat professed faith in Christ. Having studied this book, I am convinced that the mission described was no failure. It was merely a beginning.

STANLEY QUENTIN

The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Today

by E. Hark. Tallin: Periodika, 1982. 71 pp.

In this brochure, Archbishop Edgar Hark of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) attempts to present a many-sided picture of the work of this church in Estonia today. The eight chapters cover practically the whole field of the church's life: history, structure, everyday life, participation in the official peace movement and contacts with the churches of other countries and international Christian organisations, theological institutes, various commissions and publishing activities.

The part of the historical survey which deals with the earlier history is, by and large, correct. However, when the author begins to discuss the period of independent Estonia — though the word independent is carefully avoided in this brochure — there are some mistakes. For instance, Hark says that in 1940 there was “a revolution” in Estonia; in fact, the country was occupied by the Red Army. At that time the Estonian Communist Party had 133 members (out of a population of one million), three of whom were in prison for espionage. It is evident that such a small number could not have carried out a revolution of any kind.

I would also dispute some aspects of the description of the war-time period. Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940-41, by Germany in 1944 and from 1944 on again by the Soviet Union. But the brochure fails to mention that it was above all the Soviet Union which caused damage to the country and, in particular, to the churches. During the first Soviet occupation in 1940-41 the Soviet authorities arrested or deported to Siberia or northern Russia four bishops, six deans, 26 pastors and 163 leading laymen of congregations. Three deans, seven pastors, 27 lay-readers and one theology student were murdered.

It is a little surprising that even the basic fact that the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded in 1917 has been omitted. Before that date the Lutheran Church had been organised in accordance with the

then feudal society dominated by the Baltic German barons.

The brochure includes an interesting description of how, especially during the first part of 1945, the life of the congregations revived after the devastation and shocks of the war. Enormous problems, in particular the lack of pastors, destroyed or damaged church buildings and economic difficulties, were overcome. The Soviet authorities ordered that those congregations which had no pastor or other clergyman by 15 August 1945 would not be registered. But at this moment of utmost desperation a miracle occurred: in the many congregations where there was no pastor, lay preachers organised divine services and thus the situation was saved.

Hark goes on to discuss the structure of his church. Although it resembles to some extent the statutes of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile, which were adopted as law in 1935 in independent Estonia, the two churches are in some respects very different. The fact that the Church in Estonia operates today in a communist society has, of course, also influenced its statutes. The same point applies also to the chapter dealing with the everyday life of the church and its congregations. Although the chapter as a whole is interesting, here too the restrictions imposed by the surrounding atheist society on the activities of the church are not mentioned.

One chapter is devoted to the participation of the Estonian Church in the official peace movement and another chapter to its contacts with the churches of other countries and with ecumenical and other international organisations. Archbishop Hark himself has often participated in Soviet and other international ecclesiastical peace conferences in various parts of the world. Here he attacks western countries, in particular the USA and President Reagan, and defends the policy of the Soviet Union. It is evident that these activities are a price the churches must pay for their continued existence in the Soviet Union and other communist countries.

Hark devotes a chapter to the Theological Institute of the EELC. Since the Soviet authorities had closed the theological faculty of Tartu University in 1940, a theological school of some kind was needed after the war. The present Theological Institute was founded in 1946 and it now has more than fifty students. Many more are needed since there is a great lack of pastors throughout Estonia.

Archbishop Hark expresses in the brochure his regret that there have been no official contacts between his church and the EELC in exile. He also accuses the latter of spreading "tendentious information on the position of the church in Estonia". As secretary-general of this church, I dispute this statement.

In some respects this brochure gives an interesting and matter-of-fact picture of various aspects of the life and activities of the EELC under Soviet rule in Estonia today. On the other hand, there is perhaps too much propaganda. The greatest weakness is the author's silence on many

important questions. But we understand that Archbishop Hark could not, under present circumstances, present a different case.

ESMO RIDALA

Galina

by Galina Vishnevskaya. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985. 519 pp.
£14.95

Now there are six. This book joins my pantheon of the most riveting to come out of the Soviet system. Pasternak, Nadezhda Mandelshtam, Solzhenitsyn (three titles) now joined by a singer! It is hardly credible that the bastion of literary genius should be breached by someone whose training was elsewhere. Where Galina Vishnevskaya, *prima donna assoluta* of the Bolshoi, learned her second art is not revealed. Like her singing, it must have come naturally. Although written in the West, this book is confined to Vishnevskaya's Soviet period and should not therefore be disqualified from my "six".

Galina has a very special appeal for me as a music-lover. Nonetheless, there are several good reasons why my praise for this book is so unstinting.

First, the book tells the truth about the Soviet system. So have many others. This one goes into a very special area, the hinterland of the world of music. The revelation of the webs of intrigue and corruption found there is total. She praises integrity where it was to be found (Melik-Pashayev, the great Bolshoi conductor) and condemns duplicity (Yelena Obraztsova, the fine Soviet singer, whose personal reputation can scarcely survive this book).

Second, there are dozens of portraits of individuals, many of them non-musicians, which leap life-size out of the pages. Some are of worms (Vladimir Semyonov, head of the Soviet disarmament delegation in Vienna), others of time-servers (Yekaterina Furtseva, Minister of Culture), yet others are of geniuses (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, harboured by the author and her husband, Mstislav Rostropovich, during his most creative period; and Rostropovich himself, virtually broken by the system before enforced emigration gave him a new life in 1975). Not even the geniuses are idealised and one enjoys reading about her husband's foibles as much as his nobility.

Third, the construction of *Galina* is strong and adds much to its power. After the chronological narrative of her childhood in Kronstadt, with an evocation of the famine no reader will forget, she follows themes which give the book a solid bone-structure, upon which she can securely put the flesh of her portraits.

Fourth, the style is as simple, direct and powerful as a line of melody from her beloved Verdi. Gentle irony, farce, passionate denunciations, aphorisms tumble over one another throughout these pages, giving the book a sensational lift to its marvellous climax of the emigration itself. Try Slava (Rostropovich), Lenin and the rabbits (pp. 440-42) as a sampler. During his period of humiliation as Russia's greatest living musician who was now virtually barred from playing in public because of his selfless support for Solzhenitsyn, Slava was finally billed in 1973 to play in Lenin's birthplace of Ulyanovsk. When the local Party Secretary saw the announcement of the concert, he dreamed up a rival event, an exhibition of pets and put the word "rabbits" right across "Rostropovich". However, the new word was not long enough, so people could still see "Ros. . ich" on the billboards. Galina reflects that "rabbits" could have obscured the briefer "Lenin" more effectively.

Finally, music rings from these pages as from few books about the art. Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Verdi, Prokofiev, even Puccini, galvanised this singer to greatness. But when she recounts her friendship with Benjamin Britten and Dmitri Shostakovich, we are in a world on its own. What she writes about the latter must be among the most revealing and sensational words ever written about a great composer. Communist Party member, darling of the Soviets, signatory of denunciatory letters, he is now revealed as a man who got his own back through music: "If music can be anti-communist, I think Shostakovich's music should be called by that name" (p. 400). Deep down, he was even a Russian Orthodox Christian.

Galina contains little in depth, though many revealing asides, about Christianity. Her faith came to her naturally, without a struggle, it seems, as it did to her husband. As with Solzhenitsyn, this forms the moral basis, the motivation of their lives, rendering deep analysis unnecessary.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

Book Note

Ukrainian Churches Under Soviet Rule: Two Case Studies

by Bohdan R. Bociurkiw. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Millennium Series. 1984

This booklet is part of the Ukrainian Studies Fund's series issued in connection with the forthcoming millennium of the acceptance of Christianity by the State of Kievan Rus' in 988. It contains reprints of two articles by Professor Bohdan Bociurkiw: "The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, 1920-1930: A Study in Religious Modernization",

which appeared originally in *Religion and Modernization in the Soviet Union*, edited by Dennis Dunn (Boulder, Colorado: 1977); and "The Uniate Church in the Soviet Ukraine: A Case Study in Soviet Church Policy", first published in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* VII (Toronto: 1965).

The first essay describes how the Ukrainian Orthodox movement arose in 1919-1920 in reaction to the russification, centralisation and bureaucratisation of the Russian Orthodox Church, which had annexed the Kievan metropolitanate in 1686. Formed in 1920-1921, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was based on principles of separation of church and state, autocephaly, conciliarism, ukrainianisation, and the Christianisation of life. It was dissolved under pressure in January 1930.

Professor Bociurkiw's second essay shows how Soviet religious and nationality policies combined in the liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church in 1945-46. It examines the government's motives and techniques in this carefully orchestrated process, which bore a marked resemblance to anti-Uniate actions of 1839 and 1875. The Russian Orthodox Church was compelled to play a prominent role in the destruction of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, only to fall victim to later persecutions.

Books Received

Listing of a book here neither implies nor precludes review in a subsequent issue of RCL.

Borodin, L., *Rasstavanie*. Frankfurt-am-Main: Possev Verlag, 1984. 216 pp.

Havel, Václav, *The Power of the Powerless. Citizens against the state in central-eastern Europe*. London: Hutchinson, 1985. 448 pp.

Hvat', Ivan, *The Catacomb Ukrainian Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Ukrainian Studies Fund, 1984. 36 pp.

Keraly, Hugues, *S.O.S. Nicaragua. Voyage au pays du communisme à langage chrétien*. Grez-en-Bouère: Dominique Martin Morin, 1985. 130 pp.

Levitin-Krasnov, A., *V chas rassveta*. Paris: Poiski, 1984. 137 pp.

Popiełuszko, Fr Jerzy, *The Price of Love. The Sermons of Fr Jerzy Popiełuszko*. London: Catholic Truth Society, 1985. 63 pp.

Ro'i, Yaacov, editor, *The USSR and the Muslim World. Issues in Domestic Policy*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984. 298 pp.

Urban, Detlef and Weitzen, Hans Willi, *Jugend ohne Bekenntnis? 30 Jahre Konfirmation und Jugendweihe im anderen Deutschland 1954-1984*. Berlin: Wichern-Verlag, 1984. 209 pp.

Wierzbicki, Piotr, *Mysli staroswieckiego Polaka*. London: PULS Publications, 1985. 99 pp.

Contributors

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John V. Eibner is a member of the research staff at Keston College, specialising in the religious situation in Hungary.

Mark Elliott is Associate Professor of History at Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky.

Eli Goldin was active in the unofficial Jewish cultural movement in the Soviet Union, organising seminars on Jewish history, until his emigration to Israel in 1979. He has been engaged for several years in the study of religion and ethnic minorities in the USSR.

Karel Kaplan is a writer and historian who worked in the ideological department of the Czechoslovak Communist Party from 1960 to 1964 when he was dismissed for political reasons. He returned to the party apparatus during the "Prague Spring" but was dismissed again on political grounds in 1970. His posts in the 1960s gave him access to archives which have remained closed to other researchers. He has been living in Munich since 1976, and has been working on the post-war history of Czechoslovakia for over thirty years.

Lawrence Klippenstein has recently completed two years as a member of Keston College's research staff, seconded by the Mennonite Central Committee, and is now researching on the subject of Mennonites in the Soviet Union.

Alyona Kojevnikov is the Information Director of Keston College.

Ireneusz Krzeminski conducted a series of investigations during 1980 into the activities of independent trade unions in the Warsaw area, and is currently working on the methodology of sociology and social theory at the University of Warsaw. He was a visiting scholar at Oxford during 1985.

Fr L. Ladany was editor of *China News Analysis* for thirty years, before which he spent nine years in China studying theology, the Chinese language and Chinese legal history.

Stanley Quentin has been studying the cultural life and religious beliefs of the Mongolian people since the 1960s.

Andrew Sorokowski is a member of the research staff at Keston College, specialising in the religious situation in Ukraine.

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J. A. Emerson Vermaat studied international law at the Dutch State University of Leyden and now works as a television journalist and freelance writer for European and American newspapers and academic journals. He paid an extensive visit to Grenada in 1984.