

MITROPOLIT FILOFEI, V SKHIME FEODOR, PROSVETITEL' SIBIRI (1650–1727). By *G. M. Soldatov*. Minneapolis: George Soldatow, 1977. 147 pp. \$6.00, paper.

Soldatov's book deals with an important and interesting subject: the Russian colonization of western Siberia in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. More specifically, the book deals with the church's role in the colonizing process and, in particular, with the missionary career of Filofei Leshchinskii (in religion, after 1709, Feodor), metropolitan of Tobol'sk from 1706 to 1709 and again from 1715 to 1720. It appears that, by Filofei's time, Russian settlers had overtaken in numbers (as in every other respect) the indigenous peoples of the area—by a factor of as much as three to one. Also, by this time, the Orthodox mission in Siberia had become a matter of personal concern to Tsar Peter I, who continued his father's policy of discrimination against, and even persecution of, "the heathen tribes" of the area in favor of land-hungry Russians. At the same time, however, he sought to promote the conversion to Orthodoxy of these peoples by means not just of bribery or force but of persuasion as well. To accomplish this, missionaries were to be trained in the local languages and the "necessary books" translated. Peter's policy was inspired to some degree by Leibniz and other Europeans who had impressed on him the civilizing as well as the religious aspects of missionary work, and by a desire to keep out the Jesuits. Like his predecessors, he also regarded conversion as an appropriate instrument of pacification and of social and political integration.

The appointment of the learned and zealous (and healthy) Filofei to the Tobol'sk see, where he discovered his true vocation, was one result of Peter's concern. But unlike the author, readers might wonder about the genuineness of the conversions of the thirty thousand *inozemtsy* Filofei reported to have baptized in the space of just five years (1715–20). This total was increased to forty thousand by the official *St. Petersburg Gazette* in 1721 (out of a total aboriginal male population in Russian Siberia, to judge from the census of 1719, of some seventy-two thousand). Before reaching a conclusion about the nature and significance of Russian missionary activity at this time, readers might also want to investigate further the reports by Filofei and others that, in compliance with the tsar's orders, they had destroyed hundreds of "pagan idols" and "temples" and had handed out shirts, tax exemptions, and cash to the newly baptized populace. Nor can readers ignore such collateral evidence as that provided by the contemporary British ambassador, who observed that of the "oppressions" [*sic*] inflicted on the Tatars of Kazan' province "the most material has been the forceable baptizing near twelve thousand of them into the moscovite religion" [*sic*]. Such "oppression" was undoubtedly one root cause of the sporadic rebellions against the Russian regime in the tsar's eastern dominions.

Indeed, the complexities and ambiguities—one might even say the realities—of the Orthodox Siberian mission during the Petrine era, like the wider European movement of which it was a part, are neglected in this book. The account consists of equal measures of straightforward hagiography, Russian nationalist apology, and pertinent information drawn from some of the more obvious as well as more obscure sources. It is an amateur work in both the positive and negative senses of the term.

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