
REVIEWS

THE RELIGION OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE. By *P. Pascal*. Translated by *Rowan Williams*. Foreword by *Alexander Schmemmann*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976. x, 130 pp. \$4.50, paper.

SAINT SERGIUS AND RUSSIAN SPIRITUALITY. By *Pierre Kovalevsky*. Translated by *W. Elias Jones*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976 [Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1958]. 190 pp. Illus. \$5.95, paper.

ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV. By *Valentine Zander*. Translated by *Sister Gabriel Anne S.S.C.* Introduction by *Father Boris Bobrinskoy*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975. xvi, 150 pp. \$5.50, paper.

OUR HOPE. By *Fr. Dmitrii Dudko*. Translated by *Paul D. Garrett*. Foreword by *John Meyendorff*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977 [Paris: YMCA-Press, 1975]. 292 pp. Paper.

The four books under review represent part of an effort by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press to bring to the English-reading public, in this country and elsewhere, readily accessible knowledge of the Orthodox church in Russia. Together they constitute an unintended unit of sorts: Pascal's tripartite work dealing with Russian religion past and present; Kovalevsky's history of Russian spirituality of which his sketch of the life of the fourteenth-century saint, Sergius of Radonezh, "the greatest saint of Russia," forms the centerpiece; Zander's hagiographical treatment of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, the foremost modern Russian saint; and the record of the closest thing to a saint we may expect to find in the Orthodox church of the USSR in the 1970s, perhaps, which is Fr. Dudko's *O nashem upovanii*.

All four works are translated—Kovalevsky and Pascal from French, Dudko from Russian; I assume Zander was translated from the French original rather than from the earlier German version, but the reader is not told. The translator of Kovalevsky makes the most mistakes: the correct reading is not "the combat was unequal" but instead "unfair" (p. 111); not "I never had an awesome vision" but "I have had an extraordinary vision" (p. 117); not "Russia no longer had legal power" but "a legitimate government no longer existed in Russia" (p. 159). Sometimes the French form is carried over into English (Sloutzk); in general transliteration is unpredictable (once, correctly, Zyrian, twice, wrongly, Zirian); "les Yasses" (whom I cannot identify) is rendered as "Yasaks"—converting the Tatar tribute into an ethnic group and making it plural. The translator of Pascal has "observance of facts" instead of "fasts" (p. 29); "he has brothers when [that is, whom] he is not ashamed to call . . ."; the Latin phrase appears as "*locun tenents*," "precepts" as "percepts," and so forth. In Dudko, Hobbes becomes "Hobbs" and Nietzsche "Nietzsche," "antinomy" is twice rendered as "antimony," which will amuse chemists but baffle others; the right word is not "confirm" but affirm (p. 119), not "condescension" but concession (p. 240); a footnote to describe Evgenii Trubetskoi treats instead *Sergei* Trubetskoi, twice (pp. 147 and 203). In Zander a comma makes nonsense of the prayer, "Lord, Jesus Christ have mercy . . .," and 1880 is given as the year of Alexander II's death. A careful editor could have removed all these and other errors and infelicities, which will annoy the serious student and confuse the public. Zander rightly notes that authoritative biographical work on Seraphim must await critical editions; but the fact that the author is not supported by modern scholars in identifying Fedor Kuzmich with

Alexander I (p. 26) should have been noted. These minor problems, however, do not seriously hinder the reader from profiting from any of the four volumes.

Pascal's book consists of three parts. The first part is an essay of about fifty pages on Russian popular religion, which originally appeared in a slightly shorter form in *Revue de psychologie des peuples* (1947, pp. 138–54, 262–84), of which a German translation appeared in *Kyrios* in 1962. It is an eloquent and yet closely argued defense of Russian popular faith, but at the same time Pascal disclaims any intent to distinguish qualities peculiar to Russians. Every Western student of Russia could read the essay with profit. The second part is a commentary and translation of the apocryphon "The Pilgrimage of the Mother of God Among the Torments" which is of Byzantine origin but appeared in Slavonic versions as early as the twelfth century. Pascal presents it here as an early Russian answer to the "problem of evil." The third part is a short essay on Russian Orthodox reactions to Soviet religious persecution. References in the first part to the "Christian inspiration of the Revolution"—not necessarily wrong, but rather incautiously phrased—are not repeated in the final section.

Little need be said here about the contents of the stories of Saints Sergius and Seraphim. Although separated by five centuries, their lives and personalities were not strikingly different; material on the nineteenth-century saint of course is more plentiful. Both men sought for a time to escape the world, then at a certain point were ready to meet it again on their own terms; each produced all sorts of wonders, befriended a great bear, and was recognized as saintly by the highborn and the lowly of his own time. The differences were rather in the historical setting, not commented on by Pascal, Kovalevsky, or Zander; Sergius lived in a Russia of a unified culture, Seraphim represented an old Russia so alien to the new Westernized upper class that, it is said, he and his great contemporary Pushkin did not know of each other's existence.

Did this impressive thousand-year-long story then end in 1917 or a few years later? Dudko's remarkable record of discussions in 1973–74 with his parish and growing numbers of religious and nonreligious visitors shows that it did not. He reads lengthy passages from theological textbooks, but he unhesitatingly offers his own answers to questions about the Orthodox Christian position, and they are for the most part extraordinarily effective. He insists that the church can contribute better morality and work habits to the Communist state; he does not scorn atheists but declares that "you can understand yourself better by listening to your opponent's voice." His most shocking and yet persuasive answer—to the question, when is the best time for the church?—is, now, when the church is on the Cross. It has been argued that he could not have continued his discussions as long as he did without there being some inclination to tolerate them in high KGB circles. They were finally stopped, and he was penalized in several different ways, but apparently continues as a priest in a parish not far from Moscow. If a simple parish priest in the USSR today can muster knowledge and wisdom of Dudko's kind, and the courage to do what he did, the Orthodox church may retain more life and "hope" than many Western scholars have thought.

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THE RUSSIAN LEVITES: PARISH CLERGY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By Gregory L. Freeze. Russian Research Center Studies, 78. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1977. xvi, 325 pp.

Professor Gregory Freeze's book *The Russian Levites* is a brilliantly researched and equally thoughtful study of the ways in which the Russian parish clergy fared, as a group, in the increasingly secular environment of eighteenth-century Russia. The