

The translation reads well, but I have not had an opportunity to compare it with the original French. The dust cover is superb with a 14th century Greek icon on the front, and a back cover that reproduces a design from the early years of Soviet power, celebrating the victory of mechanized man. There are far too many misprints, and the use of "evangelism", where the meaning is evangelical truth, obscures the meaning of a whole chapter. In M. Clément's view the Baptist faith is the way into Christianity for many Soviet men and women, but it is not the end of their journey. "The Baptist ferment could mark an overall renewal of Russian Christianity", but the Orthodox faith is always drawing the Baptists on further into the living truth, so that "in the last few years" there have appeared "Baptist communities who celebrate the traditional Orthodox feasts of Mary".

JOHN LAWRENCE

Protestants in Russia

by J. A. Hebly, Christian Journals Ltd., 1976, 192 pp., £1.50.

Dr. Hebly devotes almost half of this book to a study of the historical roots of Protestant sects in the USSR. It is fascinating to discover how varied are those roots. Dutch immigrants played a part as well as the Stundists in the Ukraine, led by Lutheran and Mennonite pastors of German origin. The English evangelist, Lord Radstock, exercised a considerable influence in Russian aristocratic drawing-rooms in the 1870s and made numerous converts. His work was carried on by Colonel Pashkov who spread the movement among the peasantry and working class. The difficulties which faced such sectarians were great indeed and can be compared to some of the problems which now face many religious denominations in the Soviet Union.

Dr. Hebly demonstrates that sectarianism was not imported from abroad. It is a common mistake to suppose that in the 19th century Protestantism was implanted in soil until then free of deviation from the Orthodox faith. In fact, many sectarian groups sprang up actually within the Orthodox Church after the schism with the Old Believers in the 17th century. To unravel the many different types of Old Believer sects is a difficult task; their variety shows how Russia was a rich breeding ground for sectarianism.

In the second part of his book, Dr. Hebly examines the history of the Baptists and Evangelical Christians (ECB) from the Revolution to the present. He uses mainly secondary sources and in particular the work of Michael Bourdeaux on the conflicts of the ECB Church in the '60s and '70s. Unlike the Russian Orthodox Church, sectarian groups at first experienced less hostility from the Communist Party after the Revolution. But with the

adoption of new legislation on religion in 1929 when Stalin was centralizing all power in his hands, all religious denominations had to face the same hardships. Within the labour camps in the '30s many Christians, both Orthodox and Protestant, discovered how close they really were spiritually.

The dilemma which faces many believers today in the USSR – whether to keep silent in the face of discrimination or to protest – is examined by Dr. Hebly in detail. He wisely warns against over-hasty criticism of those church leaders who *have* to conform in order to preserve church structures. It is not for us in the West, he argues, to condemn them; criticism must come from within their own ranks.

Dr. Hebly has pieced together a long and complex story, and he has done it well. Although it is based on secondary sources it is a useful study. Unfortunately, however, the book is badly translated from the Dutch. To sensitive English ears some sentences are painful in the extreme: “The negative attitude of the Union Council . . . strengthened the latter in their suspicions that the Union Council was indeed tied to the apron strings of the State and *solidified* [my italics] the opposition all the more” (p. 140); “the constant attempts to shrink the spiritual living space of the church” (p. 152); “the open letter of December 1967 . . . was sent to the churches abroad with the intent of *snuffing out* [my italics] rumours about a split within the Union” (p. 146). With some efficient editing the text could be improved considerably.

XENIA HOWARD-JOHNSTON

USSR - Democratic Alternatives

(A collection of Essays & Documents)

edited by Vadim Belotserkovsky, Achberger Verlaganstalt, 1976,

335 pp. No price.

This is a series of essays by people who, for the most part have recently left the Soviet Union and who describe themselves as belonging to a “liberal-left” or “democratic socialist” orientation. This is not, the editor Vadim Belotserkovsky claims, a temporary, tactical union of “liberals” and “leftists”, but a new, unique and cohesive movement. It claims to represent the views not only of the contributors to the present volume, but also of such people still working inside the Soviet Union as Academician Sakharov, Yuri Orlov, General Pyotr Grigorenko and Valentin Turchin.

It is an interesting and in many ways encouraging book. Interesting largely because of the names of some of the contributors – Leonid Plyushch, for example, Anatoli Levitin-Krasnov, Mihajlo Mihajlov – names which are better known, perhaps, than the ideas that go

Editor's Note: Lawrence A. Uzzell, president of International Religious Freedom Watch, asked this editor on 20 July 2005 for impressions of Protestant missions in Russia today. As I was in the midst of a move to Southern Wesleyan University, Central, South Carolina, my response was necessarily abbreviated and impressionistic. I decided to share my comments, brief as they were, with a small group of missionaries and educators knowledgeable about church life in Russia, requesting their comments on the subject.