

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

author's central argument is that the policies of Peter the Great and his successors transformed this lay clergy from a relatively open social group, whose members shared the manners, dress, and general cultural outlook of the parishioners who elected them, into a closed "caste-estate" which was both impoverished and culturally removed from the rest of society. The clergy's actual power and moral authority with peasant and noble alike diminished correspondingly, and the Orthodox church was left without the kinds of local priests who could make the church a vital part of public life.

Beginning with Peter the Great, the state placed increasing—and qualitatively new—demands upon the clergy. Priests became part of Peter's all-encompassing state service and swore loyalty to the secular ruler. Limits were placed on the number of priests needed, and those churchmen (sacristans) and clerical children deemed superfluous were conscripted into the army or the poll tax population. While exempting ordained priests, the state's increased taxation of churchmen and a variety of church properties rendered the local clergy's financial position desperate and damaged their prestige in the community from which they had to extort funds. Finally, the state during the eighteenth century imposed a number of new and strictly secular duties upon the clergy which further demeaned their status in the community. They were required to compile parish registers, inform on poll tax evaders, keep lists of Old Believers, quarter troops, and perform various police duties. The most notorious of these demands, of course, was Peter the Great's insistence that the clergy should report any "evil intentions" toward the ruler which might be revealed in confession.

The state's desire to control the clergy was motivated by considerations beyond those of strengthening the church and impressing malingering priests into service. Parish priests were a direct channel of communication to the population, and their influence in the rural community was at least a potential aid in implementing secular reforms. Conversely, any widespread opposition on the clergy's part could prove a hindrance. Thus the state, through a reformed synodal administration, placed clergy members under the strict control of bishops and ended the seventeenth-century priest's relative autonomy. The Synod also insisted upon ever higher levels of preparation in newly created seminaries as a prerequisite to ordination. Members of the clergy were able to populate these seminaries almost exclusively with their own children, making the requirement of seminary training a major factor in the clergy's increasingly hereditary character. Outsiders simply ceased to be eligible.

The seminary itself had an enormous if essentially debilitating effect upon the clergy, and Professor Freeze's discussion of its role forms one of the most interesting chapters in his book. Its curriculum was essentially secular, and did little to prepare students for pastoral service. The Latin emphasis actually impaired the clergy's potential as ministers by culturally alienating them from those they served. As an institution intended to strengthen the Orthodox church's position, therefore, the seminary was a disaster. Since it trained far more students than were needed for the priesthood, it quickly became a major recruiting ground for the bureaucracy and, later, for the intelligentsia. The harshness of its environment and its emphasis upon rote learning thus have a significance which transcends the bounds of church history per se.

While imposing costly new burdens such as seminary training on the clerical *soslovie*, the state did little to alleviate its real economic distress. The clergy remained dependent upon the parish for its financial needs, without outside support for the new demands being placed upon its members. Perhaps the chief cause of the clergy's impoverishment during the eighteenth century, however, was the conflict between their increasing numbers and the newly fixed quota, or *shtat*, for priests. As Freeze notes, "the pressure between the *shtat* and social reality worked like a vise on the clergy, forcing them into a desperate struggle for money and positions. Such endemic strife took a heavy toll in social respect, consistory bribes, and the group's internal cohesiveness" (p. 219). This, along with the irrelevant character of seminary education, was a

prescription for the clergy's decline. The decline is all the more ironic in view of the state's original aim to "modernize" the church at all levels, to strengthen it while simultaneously integrating it into the framework of the new, secular state.

No brief review can do justice to the subtlety and comprehensiveness of Professor Freeze's efforts. His book is based on a phenomenal amount of research, much of it archival, and his lucid writing is a model of historical and sociological analysis. He has succeeded in making the maximum use of his research material without burdening the reader with excessive or irrelevant examples. More extensive reflection on what it means to "modernize" a clergy would have been desirable, but to insist would be to cavil. Professor Freeze's portrait of the clerical *soslovie* ranks with the best histories we have of other social groups of this period, whether nobility, townsmen, or the peasantry. It is a major contribution to our understanding of Russia's social and cultural history.

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THE RUSSIAN ECCLESIASTICAL MISSION IN PEKING DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By *Eric Widmer*. Foreword by *John K. Fairbank*. Harvard East Asian Monographs, 69. Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1976. xii, 262 pp. Map. \$15.00. Distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

A religious missionary enterprise ordinarily is sent across international boundaries as part of an outreach by religious zealots who sense some obligation to convert foreigners who are perceived to stand in need of spiritual enlightenment and salvation. The missionaries' arrival in the foreign society is seldom welcomed. The "Russian ecclesiastical mission in Peking" exhibited an ironic reversal of the usual roles in such an endeavor. The initiatives for the mission came from Peking and the Chinese emperor himself provided the resources to sustain the mission station for over a century. The "missionaries" made few converts, but manifested little concern about their poor showing. They even experienced what Widmer calls a "substantial fear of converting Chinese" (p. 150).

The truth is that the Russian ecclesiastical mission was no mission at all, but an ad hoc surrogate for regular diplomatic relations which, under the circumstances, were impossible even though they were imperative. What was called an "ecclesiastical mission" was in fact an impromptu creation which allowed China and Russia to resolve the problems surrounding the first contacts of the two expanding empires in a way which permitted both to maintain satisfactorily, for the time, their mutually incompatible views of relations between sovereignties. China, holding to its hierarchical view of such relations, accepted and even nurtured the Russian mission as a symbol of its "tributary" suzerainty over the peoples of the interior of the Asian continent; Russia, representing the Western view of the essential equality of sovereigns in international relations, considered the religious institution to be the equivalent of a diplomatic mission. Russia could thereby claim to have outdone the other Western powers in the attempt to establish orderly relations with the giant of the East. Widmer's argument is quite plausible, although considerable speculation is necessary to compensate for the lack of definitive documentation, from either Russian or Chinese sources, demonstrating precisely how the two governments viewed the arrangement.

In a narrative which is occasionally unchronological and confusing, Widmer painstakingly recounts the story of the mission from its remote beginnings in the capture of Russian adventurers in 1683 to the end of the eighteenth century. Widmer's major contribution lies in his discussion of events prior to 1728. There he ably documents the thesis that China treated Russia as an Inner Asian tributary rather than a