Czars, Soviets and Mennonites by John B. Toews. Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1982, 221 pp. \$14.95

The Russian Empire before, and the USSR after 1917, included numerous non-Slavic peoples. To date, however, the treatment of these peoples has been uneven at best. Scholars have tended either to give them marginal consideration or, conversely, have focussed on them to the exclusion of either context or perspective. John B. Toews has sought to challenge this "ethnocentric historiography of the past" (p. 214) as it pertains to the Mennonites, who first entered the Russian Empire during the reign of Catherine II. His study covers, in broad form, the period from 1789 to shortly after the Second World War.

A professor of history at the University of Calgary in western Canada, Toews is no stranger to the subject at hand. His personal kinship, as well as numerous articles, a source collection and two monographs, most notably Lost Fatherland (1967), reflect a long-standing interest. In addition, he has had a wide range of sources available to him, as indicated in the end-notes (there is no bibliography). Unfortunately an author's longstanding interest and the availability of significant sources do not guarantee a good study. Despite bold intentions and several strengths, Toews has produced a disappointing and ultimately frustrating work.

One problem lies in the book's lack of focus. Toews has not chosen to work around a central theme or cohesive set of issues. With chronological limits of 1789 and 1964, the author has done little more than "pick and choose" those topics of special interest to him. Other important issues are not even raised, for example, the manner in which Mennonites related to other Germans in the Black Sea region. Also, instead of identifying how the Mennonite settlements adjusted to the New Economic Policy (NEP) after 1921, Toews has instead decided to focus on three separate attempts at emigration during the 1920s. He deals with these large historical gaps through simplistic and often unsupported generalisations. A chrono-

logically limited and thematic approach would have yielded the author far better results.

Another major problem is the book's lack of historical context, making Toews guilty of the very ethnocentric writing that he sought to correct. He has incorrectly assumed that the Mennonites can be understood in isolation, with only cursory references to events beyond their colonies. The resulting pattern is all too characteristic of studies in this field. Thus Catherine II and her important policies in first expanding the Empire and then encouraging settlement are dealt with on one page (p. 1); the Russo-Japanese war, the crisis of 1905, and the creation of a national *Duma* are mentioned on page 47; and the period from the death of Lenin to 1936 is allotted three paragraphs on pages 151-52. The problems raised by this approach are substantial. On one level, inaccuracies occur, for example the claim that the early 1920s were characterised by a militant atheism and a total rejection of capitalistic notions (p. 118). Why has he not considered NEP, or the pragmatic policies of Lunacharsky?

On another level, Toews has failed to portray the Mennonites as they saw themselves. For example, a careful reading of the Mennonite press from 1904 to 1914 would refute the charge that Mennonites knew little of their history or the contemporary situation (pp. 35 and 46). These widely-read papers contained detailed historical articles, as well as reports on the current crisis in the Empire, especially as it concerned the Russian peasantry. The issue of direct participation in the *Duma* was also hotly debated. The Mennonites clearly did not have to be awakened by the events of 1914 as has been claimed (p. 77).

This seriously flawed work is not, however, without some merit. Toews provides the reader with several well-written and informative sections dealing with education, and the development of a correspondingly active press in the period before 1917. His chapter on the formation of self-defense units (the *Selbstschutz*) during the revolution clearly identifies the moral dilemmas confronting pacifists threatened with unbridled violence. Also worthy of note is the chapter dealing with the flights out of Russia to Batumi in 1922, and to Moscow in 1929.

On balance, however, the weaknesses of this study far outweigh its strengths. In his preface, Toews frankly identifies the problems that confronted him in the writing of this book. Not listed here are the far greater difficulties that have resulted from an absence of both focus and historical context. At present the task of redressing "the ethnocentric historiography of the past" remains as important as ever.

LEONARD FRIESEN

History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917) by A. I., Klibanov, translated by Ethel Dunn. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982, 450 pp.

Alexsandr II'ich Klibanov has been for over fifty years the most productive and penetrating Soviet researcher dealing with the religious movements to which Russian writers have given the name "sectarianism". Speaking generally, a "sect" in this literature is a Christian group which is not within the Catholic, Lutheran, Old Believer or patriarchal Orthodox Churches. Klibanov began studying sects in the 1920s and his scholarly publications continued to appear into the late 1970s, well after his retirement from his posts of senior researcher at the USSR Academy of Sciences' Institute of History and superintendent of the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. The present book is a translation of one which was published in 1965 in Russian. In it, Klibanov applies the principles of doctrinaire historical materialism to the development of most of the principal sects arising in Russia from the mid-seventeenth century to the Revolution.

Klibanov takes up, in chronological order of their appearance, the sects of the Khlysty, Dukhobors, Molokans, Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Pentecostals, and Adventists. His principal aim is to demonstrate the Marxist premise that religious notions are fantastic, distorted reflections of actually existing socio-economic relations; that is, that existence determines consciousness. To do this, he establishes the characteristics of the economic situations of the people among whom each sect spread and then shows how the distinctive teachings of that sect derived naturally from those characteristics.

Thus, for example, the sect of the Khlysty (more properly called "Khristovoverie") arose among peasants of the seventeenth century who paid rent to landowners. Their religion was one of mysticism and strict asceticism whereby each believer sought to be indwelt by the spirit of Christ, becoming himself a "Christ" (hence the proper name). Klibanov argues that such a religion was a democratic protest against the hierarchical world of the landowner and the Church which sanctified it.

The original Dukhobors of the eighteenth century were freeholders, who had to seek markets for the produce of their small farms. Their greater economic independence, in contrast to the Khlysty, produced a religion in which the believer strove to give expression to the spiritual spark believed to reside within each human, created by God in his image.

Molokanism arose later among persons who had become owners of large farms or merchants. In their religion, they declared the priority of the authority of the Bible, interpreted spiritually, reflecting their perception of the orderly, contractual forces operating in the market.

The Baptists appeared, following the abolition of serfdom, among

participants in the capitalist economic sector, both owners and workers. Klibanov concludes that the distinctive Baptist doctrine of the conversion experience, celebrated by the rite of believer's baptism, arose from an awareness of the inscrutable forces operating in the capitalist market economy. The apparent helplessness of the individual vis-à-vis those forces was echoed by the religious notion that man naturally is a helpless sinner before God, in need of salvation through sovereign divine intervention. The Evangelical Christians moderated the Baptists' emphasis upon divine sovereignty to pacify more efficiently the inarticulate revolutionary quests of the urban proletariat.

Klibanov views Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century as an approximate repetition of the phenomenon of the Khlysty, this time as a sectarian revolt against the bourgeois church of the Baptists.

This brief summary of Klibanov's theses is a considerable simplification of his detailed and complex analyses, intended merely to illustrate what he attempts to do in making a Marxist exposition of sectarian history. This reviewer does not acknowledge the validity of the ideological premises of the study. But it must be recognised that Klibanov has performed a masterful work of applying those premises to historical data. This is Marxist scholarship at its best, whatever may be its inherent short-comings. In the process, Klibanov has recorded an enormous quantity of material pertaining to the history of Russian sects. Therein lies the chief value of the book for a western researcher. As long as our access to archives continues to be restricted, we must depend on the citations which writers like Klibanov and his students provide in their publications.

In his conclusion, Klibanov addresses a problem which has exercised investigators of Russian sectarianism: how to classify the varieties of sects. Early writers distinguished between sects of purely local, or eastern, origin and those of western inspiration. Later scholars divided them into the categories of mystical and rationalistic sects, a classification which Pavel Milyukov refined by employing "spiritual" and "evangelical" labels. No classification works perfectly. Klibanov rejects these choices, not only because they cannot be applied with consistency, but also, and primarily, because they focus on ideas rather than upon the materialistic origins of sectarian notions. Klibanov proposes to separate the sects into those which arose as a protest against feudal relations, and were therefore progressive, and those which served to consolidate and defend capitalist relations, and were therefore essentially reactionary. The first group includes the Khlysty, Dukhobors, and Molokans; the second includes Baptists and Adventists. Klibanov does not make explicit where he places the Pentecostals. (I might suggest that he could find them to be proletarian progressives, but a Leninist would not admit to that.)

Klibanov must be criticised at those points where his premises cause him to ignore phenomena which will not fit his ideological scheme. He

gives too little attention to the significant sect of the Skoptsy, he neglects the less noteworthy Masonry, and he passes off the old Subbotniki as not properly sectarian simply because they did not adequately (in his view) challenge feudalism. We thus must conclude that probably not all of the existing archival data have been fully represented in this work and due account of this must be taken in evaluating those data which Klibanov has selected.

This book is for the specialist, in particular the social historian, whether of Russia or elsewhere. One would not ordinarily recommend it to the reader seeking an introduction to the topic announced by the title. However, as a source of data, it would be of use to researchers who cannot consult the Russian edition, such as university students.

PAUL D. STEEVES

The Rites of Rulers. Ritual in industrial society — the Soviet case by Christel Lane. Cambridge University Press, 1981. Paperback, 309 pp.

What are we to make of the extraordinary Soviet claim, often seen on billboards and elsewhere that: "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin shall live"? Christel Lane's book is perhaps the first serious attempt to study this and other elements of secular ritual in Soviet society and for this she must receive due credit.

The study of Soviet secular ritual by western scholars has been virtually non-existent. They have either failed to notice it, ignored it or simply discounted it, with the result that the West is still largely unaware of an allpervasive dimension of quasi-religious symbolism running throughout Soviet society. This symbolism and the associated rituals are run by the Party in a way that would make the most determined inquisitor appear like an amateur. We thus find any attempt to de-throne the God-like Lenin met by violent condemnations: "To what a bottomless morass of abomination must a so-called man of letters sink to desecrate . . . this name which is sacred to us . . . These blasphemous lines alone suffice for the diagnosis that the authors place themselves outside Soviet society" (p. 213). No doubt some scholars might have argued the incompatibility of a militantly atheistic leadership, together with its aim of building a secular society of "new men", with any form of quasi-religious or, indeed, other ritual. The superficial plausibility of such an argument is strengthened by Lenin himself who, in a similar vein, condemned the "element of mysticism" in slogans such as the one giving him immortality (p. 215) — perhaps his reputed foresight led him to believe that eternal life in the Soviet Union would be a most disturbing prospect . . .

Despite Lenin's plea we find Dr Lane documenting a vast range of

Soviet secular ritual most of which has more than just "an element" of mysticism. She describes rituals ranging from the rite of Oktyabriny — a secular baptism — through to a secular funeral and the final laying to rest of the Soviet citizen in a "Park of Good Memories". Between these two rituals we find the Soviet citizen educated, encouraged, cajoled, bribed and bullied into a whole variety of rituals — all presided over by the immortal Lenin — connected with communist organisations, education, coming of age, the armed forces, labour and, of course, marriage. Newlyweds in the area of Moscow are encouraged to visit the embalmed Lenin in the mausoleum in Red Square immediately after the ceremony. This section of the book is excellently researched by Dr Lane who meticulously records all the relevant detail.

The central reference point of Dr Lane's book is the utilisation of ideology and ritual in order to maintain and perpetuate power relations between rulers and ruled. The character of the Soviet political system ensures that its surrounding ritual is very different from that of western pluralist societies; the only other society with any similarities of note was, not surprisingly perhaps, Nazi Germany. One of the main objects of this "centrally planned" secular ritual and ceremony is to act as an instrument of secularisation by replacing religious belief and practice with secular equivalents or alternatives. One Soviet intellectual is quoted as saving that secular ritual is an attempt to "buy the people's souls". It is a serious shortcoming that Dr Lane does not stop to consider at any length the impact of secular ritual on religious belief and practice: both students of ritual and of religion would wish to know whether this form of antireligious policy is having the desired effect. Despite this and other related problems this study will certainly be of interest to readers wishing to know more about the lengths to which Soviet leaders will go in order to impose a secular Weltanschauung on their population.

MACIEJ POMIAN-SRZEDNICKI

Central Asian Survey, Vol. 1, No. 1 July 1982, the Journal of The Society for Central Asian Studies, Oxford: 154 pp.*

The peoples and cultures of Islamic Central Asia, mainly Turkic-speaking, have been singularly ignored until recently by the main stream of western oriental scholarship. It has taken the reassertion of Islamic political identity and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to confirm the growing interest beginning to manifest itself in academic circles. This new journal is to be welcomed as a much-needed addition to such an underrated area of study.

^{*}Four annual issues: £12.50 for individuals, £15.00 for institutions; available from Oxford Microform Publications, 19A Paradise Street, Oxford OX1 1LD.

The ground to be covered in the journal is indicated by the catholic selection of articles in this first issue. Azade-Ayse Rorlich's article on the Volga-Ural Muslims is a useful historical survey of the Volga Tatars' and Bashkirs' relations with the Russian State both before and after the 1917 revolution. Lemercier-Quelquejay, in a rather disappointing contribution, considers three "faces" of Soviet policy towards the Middle East. She concludes that in comparison with the Russian and communist "faces" the Muslim one has the greatest potential. She may be an expert on Soviet Islam, but she underestimates Arab Muslim ability to see through Soviet foreign policy use of official Soviet Islam — they are longtime adepts at turning Soviet advances to their own advantage. Two studies deal with Afghanistan. One by Richard Newell considers the government of Muhammad Shafiq, a seven-month experiment which was ended by the Daoud coup of July 1973. The other, by an anonymous "B.M.", considers the effects of the Soviet invasion on the ethnic group of the Hazarajat in central Afghanistan. Alexandre Bennigsen deals with Soviet Islam in the years after the invasion, paying particular attention to the increased anti-religious propaganda in the Muslim areas. Two especially interesting items are a survey of recent Chinese research in Turkic studies and an annotated bibliography on non-Russian education in Central Asia.

In general, this first issue of *Central Asian Survey* promises well, and the Introduction indicates an intention to include what is missing in this issue, namely good Soviet studies on the subject — although one wonders whether Soviet scholars can afford to appear within the same covers as some of the writers who have contributed here. One cannot help being intrigued about the provenance of the journal. There is no introduction to or explanation of the Society for Central Asian Studies, whose journal this is. And surely it must be unusual that the copyright is vested in the editor of the journal rather than in the Society.

JØRGEN S. NIELSEN

Missioners and Modern China by Gu Chang-Sheng. Shanghai: 1981, 455 pp.

For four hundred years, since the time of Matteo Ricci, Christianity in China has had a continuous history. Under prolonged persecution in the eighteenth century the number of Christians dwindled considerably. Then in the middle of the nineteenth century, western powers opened the gates of China by military force and imposed the humiliating treaties known to China as the "unequal treaties", which included the right of entry for Christian missioners. Obviously this way of entering China was

very different from the way of the early Jesuit missionaries, who entered as humble messengers from foreign countries, bringing a religion which, though new to China, was, as they said, in accordance with ancient Chinese wisdom.

Throughout history, Christian messengers have travelled with any companions that could bring them to new lands. They went to Britain with Roman officials, to Latin America with Portuguese and Spanish conquistadores, to the Far East with Portuguese and Dutch merchant-adventurers, and in the nineteenth century to many countries with colonising powers. Their companions disappeared, but the message of Christ remained deeply planted. When there were no longer any imperial Roman officials, no conquistadores, no more colonies, the faith in Christ remained and grew, identified with the soil it was planted in.

This is not the way this book looks at events. In China, well before communism, anti-Christian Chinese writers were expressing resentment against the way Christian missioners acted in the last century under gunboat protection of western powers — a view certainly not shared by Chinese Christians.

The book makes a sharp attack on the missioners and regards the entry of missioners, even in the happier years of the seventeenth century, as a "hundred-odd years of penetration of colonial powers". It admits that the nineteenth century missioners founded many schools, but it says that they did so "to help the enterprises of foreign invaders". It admits that a number of hospitals, orphanages and charitable institutions were founded by foreign missioners, but all this was "an imperialist cultural invasion". It then gives a long list of violent conflicts with local Christian churches in which angry Chinese crowds burnt the churches and killed the missioners. There is a special chapter on Timothy Richard, a great Protestant missioner, and his role in the effort to modernise China at the turn of the century. Its explanation is that foreign invaders, having witnessed for thirty years the hatred of the Chinese people, wanted to introduce reforms to prevent a major catastrophe.

There is nothing particularly new in this presentation of missioners' activities in the last century. Similar views have been expressed in articles in Chinese newspapers and reviews. Recently the May 1983 issue of the learned magazine *Xue Shu Yue Kan* (Study Monthly), Shanghai, contained a ferocious attack on the missioners at the time of the Boxer rising in 1900, when many Christians were massacred. It puts the blame on the missioners.

A very different interpretation of this event is given in a modern history of China by a professor in Taiwan, who admits the many mistakes of foreign missioners, particularly their lack of knowledge of Chinese culture, but puts much of the blame on the backwardness and ignorance of the Chinese public and on the Empress, who had turned against

foreigners and let the Boxers enter Peking, where they not only burnt churches and killed Christians but destroyed everything western — telephone lines, railways, western buildings.

Remarkably, in China proper too a voice has been raised in criticism of Missioners and Modern China. On 3 December 1982, well over a year after this book was published, an article in the People's Daily (the Communist Party paper), revealed that inside China there are two views about the missioners of the last century. "Missioners opened a great number of hospitals and schools. What was their purpose? There are people who say that this was a spiritual and cultural invasion supporting the political and economic invasion of imperialism; but there are also people who say that they brought progressive science and culture." "The activities of missioners had a double effect: on one hand, many people blindly worshipped the West and became its slaves, serving the foreign invaders; on the other hand, they brought a fresh breeze of science and technology and ideas of democratic government into a society sunk in feudal ideology and culture."

Missioners and Modern China, according to the People's Daily, fails to emphasise the positive aspects of missionary work; missionaries were the bridge between Chinese and western culture, they brought in new ideas, compiled dictionaries, translated books and introduced modern science.

L. LADANY

Schwerter zu Pflugscharen: Friedensbewegung in der DDR (Swords into Ploughshares: The Peace Movement in the GDR), by Klaus Ehring and Martin Dallwitz.

Reinbek, Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1982, 280 pp. DM 8.80

One should have more faith, but nonetheless it is surprising when one finds the words of the Bible playing an important role in the hardest political discussions of our day. In 1982, in West Germany, the Sermon on the Mount was discussed by most politicians, from ex-Chancellor Schmidt down. In the German Democratic Republic, the promise of the prophet Micah "swords into ploughshares" caused a confrontation between Church and State. This documentation is an important source for part of that debate. The emphasis in this collection is on the more radical peace movement in the GDR, the pacifist wing, those involved in various initiatives on the borderline of and beyond what is allowed by the State. The more cautious, and more significant activity of the Protestant Churches is not so well documented in this book, but that material can be found elsewhere.

From this book, one gets a fascinating picture of various groups and initiatives — the rock scene, the conscientious objectors, young Christian pacifists.

The peace movement in this country is often challenged — where are your counterparts in Eastern Europe? This book contains the answer, but an answer which requires interpretation. Mass demonstrations are impossible for independent groups, but under the wing of the Church, peace meetings of a very different complexion to those which are officially sanctioned are happening (e.g. five thousand people in the Kreuzkirche in Dresden in 1982).

What does not emerge from this book is how widely felt the concern for peace is throughout the Church in the GDR — and beyond. Many non-Christians in the GDR feel deeply pessimistic — not just because of the positions of the Warsaw Pact governments, but probably even more because of the seeming determination of President Reagan to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe.

This is an excellent West German documentation of the GDR counter-culture. The young people's peace movement is just the tip of the iceberg. Many others do not articulate their support for the courage of those who feature in the book, or say "there's no point protesting and getting into trouble". In addition, much solid and unspectacular educational work and advocacy work behind the scenes is performed by the Churches. The Churches do not want their work to be understood as an attempt to establish an opposition or an independent peace movement — and therefore come under fire (metaphorically, of course) from both government and the radical peace movement. This is a very valuable book — but not the whole, exciting story.

ROGER WILLIAMSON

Zwischen Kanzel und Kamera:
Anfänge kirchlicher Fernseharbeit in der DDR
(Between pulpit and camera: the beginning of church television work in the GDR) by Lutz Borgmann. Berlin, GDR:
Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982, 80 pp. DM 4.00

First, I must declare an interest — in both the technical and the more obvious sense. The British Council of Churches helped to arrange for Lutz Borgmann to take part in a course at the Roman Catholic TV Centre in Hatch End, London in 1980. He had already had two years' experience of TV work but needed additional training. Prior to that, he had worked as Press Secretary for the Protestant Churches in the GDR.

His new field of work came as a result of the State-Church talks in March 1978, at which the Church was given permission to produce a TV programme to coincide with major church festivals. Borgmann's report covers the first seventeen programmes recorded over three years (1978-81).

In his characteristically probing style, he addresses important issues for church communication anywhere. Should one go for honesty — portraying the church as it really is? Or for culture — Bach's music? Or for an ideal presentation? Is it to be understood as an evangelistic opportunity? Is the audience the church congregation whilst at home or the outsiders?

In the GDR, I have heard different opinions about the merits of church television in general and these programmes in particular. It is a great merit of Borgmann's book that he raises such questions himself with integrity and a self-critical professional distance. One has a strong impression of the ability to learn and an awareness of the limitations, both of TV, and of presentation.

In spite of the limitations, the opportunity given to the Church, that of self-presentation, is important. The people of the GDR are not informed about the purpose and work of the Church only from state-run media.

ROGER WILLIAMSON

Christians and Churches in Socialist Countries by James S. Udy. Delhi: Indian SPCK, 1982, 30 rupees in India only

This small book is basically the report of what seven greatly respected Asian church leaders, with one Australian, saw and thought on a month's visit to the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Soviet Union. I wonder what they would think of a similar book about Asia written by a group of Europeans or Americans most of whom had never been in Asia before.

Their report is written by Dr Udy, the Australian member of the team, and has not been discussed in detail with most of the others, but there is no reason to think that they would dissent from its main conclusions. They travelled under the auspices of the Prague Christian Peace Conference and it is a pity that they did not know this movement in its better days before the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. They quote Dr Hromadka, the founder of this Conference, but do not seem to be aware that he died of a broken heart when its ideals foundered after the invasion. When it was suggested that God put up the Berlin wall they did not ask why the division of Germany entailed the prevention of almost all communication between the two parts. In such matters they were credulous.

Yet these churchmen have good critical minds and sometimes they asked some searching questions. But the evidence they were fed was more carefully filtered than they realised. They saw that the Church is alive in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe but they failed to see that there are very many in these countries who suffer cruelly for their faith and for nothing but their faith.

I would have been glad to see the typescript of this report of what must have been an interesting journey, but printed without further comment it will mislead rather than enlighten.

JOHN LAWRENCE

Books Received

Listing of a book here neither implies or precludes review in a subsequent issue of RCL.

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