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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition* by George Saunders

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surveys in summary fashion the main laws on religion and their varying degrees of application from 1918 to the mid-1960s and then describes the situation of religious groups in the post-Khrushchev era. These are very compact treatments, the latter probably the more valuable, impressively documented, detailed, and up-to-date. The case of the Baptists—especially the break-away “Initsiativniki”—has been closely chronicled since 1967 by British scholars Peter Reddaway and Michael Bordeaux. It is treated here in a chapter on “State Pressure and Church Resistance.” The final, brief chapter, “The Underground Church,” promises more than it delivers. It is, in fact, highly topical, dealing largely with the controversial case of Richard Wurmbrand, self-appointed spokesman for the underground church in Communist countries, against whose simplistic, highly emotional version of the situation Simon clearly—and quite properly—wants to raise an alarm.

The nine samizdat documents of the book's final section were obviously chosen both for intrinsic importance and for their representative nature, coming as they do from sources in various denominations and from figures ranging in visibility from Solzhenitsyn (Letter to the Patriarch Pimen, 1972) and Levitin-Krasnov (to Pope Paul, December 1967) to 1,453 Baptist mothers (to Brezhnev, 1969) and a group of Lithuanian Catholics (to Kurt Waldheim, February 1972).

Simon's book is then of very considerable value to those interested in the dissident movement, in religion in the USSR, and more broadly to those following Soviet internal affairs and those interested in religion and religious resurgence in the contemporary world. While his point of view is clear, he avoids the evangelical ring which

occasionally infringes on the scholarly tone of books in this genre. This is not yet “the complete history” of the topic (in this regard its German title is more accurate than the English. But as long as great gaps of knowledge still exist in this very new field of specialization, books like Gerhard Simon's must be considered significant contributions. Happily, it is a very readable one.

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SAUNDERS, GEORGE, ed. *Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition*. New York: Monad Press, 1974. 464 pp. \$13.00, cloth; \$3.95, paper. Distributed by Pathfinder Press, New York.

During the past decade organized dissent appeared in Soviet Russia for the first time since the 1920s. In this collection of samizdat materials, editor George Saunders has endeavored to uncover the linkages between opposition movements in the first decade of Soviet rule and in the post-Stalin era. He has assembled documents which “hark back to the revolutionary tradition, documents which protest and expose the decades of Stalin's rule, and which indicate some of the directions the struggle for *socialist* [author's italics] democracy is taking in the USSR. [The book's] stress is on the survivals of early Bolshevism and subsequent manifestations which various authors have called neo-Bolshevism or neo-Leninism.” Mr. Saunders is an ardent follower of Trotsky, and his selections for this volume as well as his own lengthy introduction and commentaries reflect this point of view.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part, “From the Old Opposition to the New,” includes memoir accounts by former members

of the Left Opposition who survived Stalinist camps. The principal selection is the anonymous "Memoirs of a Bolshevik-Leninist," appearing here in English for the first time. (A more complete edition appeared in French in 1970.) This rambling memoir, which is marred by numerous factual errors, contributes little that is new to our knowledge of the Trotskyist opposition or Soviet concentration camp life.

The second section of the book focuses on P. Grigorenko and his close associates A. Kosterin and I. Yakhimovich. In assembling materials by and about this group of dissenters, Mr. Saunders has created an insightful portrait. All three men, former Party members, had achieved uncommon success within Soviet society until they began "an uncompromising struggle against totalitarianism" on behalf of "a genuine Leninist democracy." For his outspoken defense of the Crimean Tatars and other nationality groups, Grigorenko has twice endured prolonged internments in Soviet prison mental hospitals. His release in June 1974 ended five years of incarceration.

The final section of this anthology is devoted to samizdat documents which appeared between 1969 and 1972. As with the preceding section, many of these writings have previously been published in translation elsewhere. Nevertheless, the editor has brought together some important documents illustrating the evolution of the democratic movement among Russian, Ukrainian, and Latvian dissenters.

Mr. Saunders has contributed an introductory essay and prefaces to each section and document. These portions of the book, intended to provide the general reader with background information and commentary, exhibit a tendentious approach. There are various unfounded and undocu-

mented assertions (e.g., dissenting intellectuals and students in the 1960s "drew inspiration and courage from the mood of the workers and the knowledge that they have the support of the workers") and a misleading application of terminology (A. Sakharov is on the "right wing of the democratic movement"; elsewhere, he and R. Medvedev are said to be representatives of "a moderate opposition tendency within Soviet society"; P. Grigorenko heads "a group of radical democratic protestors"). Occasional polemics creep into the prefaces, as when Mr. Saunders comments that a petition directed to the United Nations in May 1969 from the Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights "would have been better directed to workers' and radical organizations abroad."

It is unfortunate that the editor did not include references to the Russian language sources for many of the documents translated in this volume. The book would also have profited from the inclusion of a bibliography of works concerning Soviet dissent as well as an appendix of biographical notes on persons mentioned in the texts.

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ZHUKOV, DM., and PUSHKAREV, L. *Russkie pisateli XVII veka* [Russian writers of the seventeenth century]. Moscow: "Molodaia gvardiia," 1972. 336 pp. 84 k.

The two biographical essays which make up this volume are devoted to two outstanding figures of seventeenth-century Russia, Avvakum Petrovich and Simeon Polotsky, who were opponents in the theological and cultural disputes which resulted from growing Western influence. Each essay makes