

and editing produced somewhat of an anti-*Kontinent* journal. A new publishing house, "Il Giornale," will take over with the fourth issue. Because of diffident management and uninspired editorship, the American edition will also change publishers with the fourth volume.

The second volume of the American edition contains a wide assortment of pieces based on volumes 2–5 of the original Russian edition: V. Voinovich's "Incident at the Metropole," and works by Gojko Broič, Alexander Bakhrakh, Abdurakhman Avtor-khanov, Mihajlo Mihajlov, Jaroslav Seifert, Alexander Piatigorskii, Alexander Sukonik, Ignazio Silone, and "A Document from the Archives of Alexander Solzhe-nitsyn." An excerpt from the three-volume "History of Marxism," by Leszek Kołakowski (published by Oxford University Press), is the most substantial selection in volume 2. On page 167, Kołakowski asserts that "the whole of Marx's thought can be interpreted in terms of these three motifs of Marxism and their interrelation": (1) the romantic motif, (2) the Faustian-Promethean motif, and (3) the rational-deterministic motif. When one reads the text in its entirety, however, one discovers that Kołakowski concentrates on the second motif and fails to develop his argument convincingly.

Of the seven pieces in volume 3, those worth mentioning include the now dated documentary account by Joseph Smrkovský, the first English translation of Joseph Brodsky's "Posviashchaetsia Ialte," and three poems by V. Kornilov. The selections for this issue are surprisingly poor, considering the wealth of stimulating writing available in the Russian volumes 3–7, which this edition is based on. Nevertheless, there is one gem in the collection—G. Pomerants's brilliant essay, "'Euclidean' and 'Non-Euclidean' Reason in the Works of Dostoevsky," ably translated and annotated by Martin Dewhirst. Pomerants, a Moscow Orientalist and literary scholar, approaches Dostoevsky's later novels from a Zen-Buddhist standpoint. He discusses Dostoevsky's Alogistic credo about Christ and Truth in terms of a koan: Truth is Euclidean consciousness, whereas Christ is a symbol of the integral consciousness and the clash between these two forces is the "hidden law" to which every important Dostoevsky character submits.

The new publisher of further issues of *Kontinent* would be well advised to bring out at least two issues of the American edition per year, preferably on a subscription basis. In any case, it is hoped that the American edition will fare better in the future, for surely there is a place for an English-language edition of a journal which, even in the face of increasing competition from new émigré journals, is still the most important organ of Soviet and East European free thought.

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VLADIMIR SOLOV'EV AND THE KNIGHTHOOD OF THE DIVINE SOPHIA. By *Samuel D. Cioran*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977. viii, 280 pp. Illus. \$7.00, cloth. \$4.50, paper.

Most students of modern Russian literature would joyfully greet a competent study of Vladimir Solov'ev's doctrine of Sophia the Divine Wisdom, one which both illuminates Solov'ev's thought and evaluates its importance for the Symbolist movement. Although this is admittedly no simple task, Samuel D. Cioran's book aspires to do just that. Unfortunately, the author does not even come close to achieving his goal. The plan is ambitious: the first and most important section deals with Solov'ev, the second and third parts ostensibly describe the impact of the Divine Sophia on Symbolism, but really deal almost exclusively with Belyi and Blok, the fourth and shortest section (25 pages) summarizes the Orthodox controversy centering around Father Sergei Bulgakov's conception of Sophiology. At the end of all this, there is a one-page conclusion.

Although something could be said about the chapters on Belyi and Blok, the tendency to quote, summarize, and gloss relatively familiar and accessible material—the Belyi-Blok correspondence, Belyi's memoir of Blok, the poems themselves—invites little comment. Generally, the Symbolist debates are oversimplified, and there are startling errors. For example, in an attempt to illustrate the rivalry of Moscow-Petersburg journals, Cioran states that Blok was invited by Briusov “to publish in *Scorpion*”; “*Scorpion*” was, of course, the leading Symbolist publishing house, never the name of a Symbolist journal.

The book's major shortcomings lie elsewhere, however. Just as its major contribution might have come in the chapters on Solov'ev, its greatest weakness is also there. The two major chapters in part I are “The Public Solov'ev,” which expounds the philosophical and theological reasoning concerning Sophia, and “The Private Solov'ev,” which offers an interpretation of Solov'ev's mystical experience of Sophia as revealed in his poetry. In the first chapter, Cioran fails to make clear that Solov'ev's teaching was not a stable doctrine but, rather, the fruit of tortuous thought which underwent considerable change over twenty-five years. He lists the principal works dealing with Sophia—*Chteniia o Bogochelovechestve* (1877–81), *La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle* (1889), and *Smysl liubvi* (1892–94)—and refers to earlier and later phases. Yet his practice of compounding explanations from two or three of these sources at once is confusing.

Worse is to come, however. What confidence can the reader gain from the author's pronouncements—correct or not—upon learning that Dr. Cioran has based his proof on an outdated and unreliable edition of Solov'ev's poetry (not even listed in his bibliography)? The 1974 *Biblioteka poeta* edition, presumably easily available at the time, would have saved him from all his errors. “The Private Solov'ev” (30 pages) quotes at least thirty poems, in whole or in part, to illustrate the development of the Sophia theme in Solov'ev's inspiration and its fluctuations over time. Obviously, then, dating of supporting poems is of primary importance, and earlier editions can err by fifteen years on this point. Still, Dr. Cioran sometimes compounds the error, as when he cites the lyric “Vostorg dushi raschetlivym obmanom” (1885, not 1884) as evidence of Solov'ev's dejected state of mind. That the poem refers to a third person might have urged caution, even without knowing that the subject is the poet Nekrasov (see the *Biblioteka poeta* edition, p. 297).

Dr. Cioran has read his Solov'ev, his Belyi, and his Blok. It is unfortunate that he failed to carry his research a few steps further.

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IZBRANNYE STIKHOTVORENIIA I POEMY [AUSGEWÄHLTE VERS-DICHTUNGEN]. By K. D. Bal'mont. Selected, annotated, and with a foreword by Vladimir Markov. Introduction by Rodney L. Patterson. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975. 764 pp. DM 120.

There are books better known for their titles than for their substance; *La Trahison des clercs* is a ready example. And there are writers better known for the clichés of received opinion that encrust them than for their works; Bal'mont is such a figure. Early in the 1890s, Merezhkovskii called for a revival of Russian verse. Bal'mont sparked it, and for some ten years he shone as the very image of the “Poet.” Soon after 1905, however, critics and fellow poets announced his “death” as a writer. Generations of readers accepted this view without bothering to read any but a few anthology pieces or tendentiously chosen examples of his alleged “excesses.” Only recently, a popular history (Harrison Salisbury's *Black Night, White Snow*) identified him in its list of “principal personages” contained in the account as “a decadent poet