

especially when one considers that the archival collections of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are currently unavailable for this time period. The book's central argument will none the less raise eyebrows. McAndrews argues that the bishops ultimately thwarted, or at least obstructed, political progress on immigration reform by remaining 'doggedly dogmatic' in their insistence on legalisation or amnesty, neglecting public (and popular Catholic) opinion that demanded tighter border control as an essential condition of any reform (p. 214). Overall the bishops come off as aloof to both the concerns of their flock and the politics of pragmatic compromise. To be fair, the book attempts to present the theological and pastoral reasons behind the bishops' insistence on legalisation and family reunification (especially for Latino Catholics). However, papal pressure on the USCCB remains underdeveloped, and one finds no trace of Pope John Paul II's post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America* (1999). This document set the framework for a more 'hemispheric' and transnational vision of Catholicism and migration in the Americas, a template informing both conservative and liberal US bishops in their joint push for family justice in immigration reform. Nevertheless, the author masterfully pinpoints continuities and shifts in immigration reform between the 1980s and today, and the reader discovers how campaign rhetoric has often clouded the consistent immigration policy of presidents from both sides of the political spectrum (particularly regarding deportation). Scholars of Catholic theology, US history or political theory would be remiss to overlook this book, and college professors should consider this work for courses on immigration or American Catholicism. An index is included.

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Russia's uncommon prophet. Father Aleksandr Men and his times. By Wallace L. Daniel.

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Early in the morning of Sunday 9 September 1990 Fr Aleksandr Men was murdered on his way to catch the train to the parish church, which he had served for twenty years, at Novaia Derevnia north-east of Moscow. The crime remains unsolved; the weapon and the lack of other clues point to the KGB (Committee for State Security), which alone had the motive, the means and the ability to manage a cover-up. The relevant archives are still closed.

Fortunately, Wallace Daniel has had access to plentiful material for the life, if not for the death, of this remarkable priest, mainly from the indispensable Keston Archive at Baylor University, but also from interviews with people who knew him personally, including his brother and son as well as former colleagues and supporters. This is not only a chronological biography; it also illuminates the story of the Russian Orthodox Church in the last decades of Soviet power, especially during the period of renewed persecution under Khrushchev. The specialist will find new sources, fresh insights and an extensive bibliography, while the general reader will enjoy the easy narrative flow together with ample background history and helpful introductions to persons and explanations of concepts, whether in the text or in the footnotes.

Born in 1935 into a Christianised Jewish family, Men grew up in two worlds – the official Marxist-Leninist public world and school system, and an unofficial private world of religion and the arts, which opened his eyes to ‘something else, some other kind of reality’ (p. 60) and convinced him that he had to be ordained. First, though, he studied biology in Moscow and in Irkutsk, where he encountered other peoples and other faiths. From then on he remained open to every influence, to the arts, to science, to the full range of human thought and experience, at a time when Church and State were mired in narrow-minded immobility, notably during the overlapping eras of General Secretary Brezhnev (1964–82) and the similarly stolid Patriarch Pimen (1971–90). Deprived of a degree because of his non-conformity, Men taught himself theology and much else by wide reading and conversation with other free spirits. With no formal qualifications, this autodidact became one of the most learned and cultured Russians of his time. He was not an original thinker or theologian. His gift was to absorb and synthesise a wide range of material, easily available in western countries and Churches but practically unknown in the Soviet Union and the Russian Orthodox Church, and to share it generously in conversation, publications and particularly in small groups with people hungry for something fresh, free, trustworthy and alive, compared with the dull conformity, the constant mendacity and compulsory optimism of official Sovspeak at a time when society was run by apparatchiki, who no longer believed in their own ideology, and the voice of the Church was confined to the performance of the liturgy.

Men was a superb communicator because his message was integrated with his character, free, loving and creative in the image of the social Trinity of Orthodox thought and icons. He spoke and wrote in clear, vivid and contemporary Russian, devoid of jargon; and he never imposed opinions, but let his hearers draw their own conclusions. He attracted members of the Moscow intelligentsia, rebelling against force-fed dialectical materialism, just as, a hundred years previously, intellectuals had rebelled against tsarism by choosing atheism. He drew deeply upon classical Russian literature (Pushkin, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky), Solov’ev and the contributors to *Vekhi* (Landmarks, 1906), especially Florensky for the relationship between science and theology, and Bulgakov and Berd’aev for *sobornost’*, for fellowship or communion in place of the Marxist collective. He was constantly in touch with scientists, artists and poets; and he particularly appreciated the Christian content of the Lara poems in Boris Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago*. They in turn were entranced by the combination of his engaging personality and his ability to make connections between a wide range of subjects within an all-embracing Christian vision of truth, freedom and love in a totally different vocabulary and thought-world from that of the prevailing culture.

Men encountered opposition at local level, where he had the misfortune to serve under mean-spirited and jealous fellow priests (he never had a parish of his own). Unable or unwilling to support him openly during his life, members of the hierarchy, notably Patriarchs Aleksii II and Kirill, spoke appreciatively at his death; and he enjoyed the quiet friendship and encouragement of his diocesan, Metropolitan Iuvenali, who suggested that he might stand as a people’s deputy in 1990. He replied: ‘My Superior! When do we have time to engage in politics? Today we have the opportunity to preach the word of God, and I give myself fully to it’ (p. 300). Still, sinister forces of religious and political fundamentalism

conspired against him with agencies of the state just at the moment when, in the wake of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, he was poised to help the Russian Orthodox Church find an independent, creative and open-minded place in the new Russia. His legacy is needed as much now as ever.

In a country in which antisemitism is endemic, Men's Jewishness made him vulnerable; in a theological culture which had scarcely been touched by the Enlightenment, his critical approach to the Bible was anathema; in a Church which was so deeply identified with the Russian past and entangled in the Soviet present, his openness to other Churches and sources of inspiration was widely suspect. In fact, he, unlike the hierarchs, had no contact with the structures of the modern Ecumenical Movement; the Communist Party at its most paranoid exaggerated the supposed machinations of the Vatican; and Men spent his life trying to re-acquaint Russians with their own best traditions in religious thought and literature, which he loved.

Daniel vindicates Men against his detractors, but this is no hagiography. Rather it is a portrait of a uniquely gifted man and a paean of praise to the possibility, even in the most difficult of circumstances, of a truly human life, lived to the full and crowned with martyrdom.

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