

*Patriarchate* when he meets its editor in his 'spacious suite of offices'. But he does not point out, or is not told, that the *Journal* is published in numbers that can hardly work out at more than one copy a parish, and that its contents are limited mainly to formal announcements, congratulatory messages and endless diatribes on peace. There is never a breath of criticism of any aspect of the Soviet government, and rarely anything that could be called a serious discussion on a question of topical interest, or anything that could be taken as an answer to the vast spate of anti-religious literature that is on sale everywhere in the Soviet Union.

It is possible for a serious student to take a hopeful view of the future of religion in the Soviet Union. Mr Kolarz is particularly sane in a field where others leave fancy and optimism to run wild. He looks to the survival of religion among the young and the consequent pressure upon communists to revise their view of religion as an off-shoot of class. The nearer Russia approaches to a society free from class in the traditional sense, the more obvious will be the danger of there appearing a new suppressed class of citizens, and even nations, whose disqualification is their religious belief. Mr Kolarz hopes that communists will relax their insistence on atheist uniformity for the sake of the other half of their ideal, a society of equal human beings.

The trouble is that Russians have drawn ideas from the West in plenty, but never the liberalism needed to prevent these ideas taking on a stiff, dogmatic form. The very idea of revision would need a real effort. The other tragedy is that the Church in Russia has never been much concerned to apply the Christian faith to the values of this world, and she has scarcely the opportunity, or the force within herself, to do so now. We should be prepared therefore to face the other side of Mr Kolarz's coin. The more successful communists are in achieving maximum economic efficiency, the more energy they may find for pursuing their less practical aims.

DENIS O'BRIEN

COMMON SENSE ABOUT RACE, by Philip Mason.

COMMON SENSE ABOUT CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, by C. H. Rolph;  
Gollancz; 12s. 6d. each.

The subject-matter of these two books has, we may think, been discussed more than enough in the last few years. But they are subjects of continuing importance, and much of the discussion in newspapers and periodicals is superficial or confined to a single aspect. We need a brief but balanced exposition of the fundamental issues, written by an expert for the ordinary reader.

Philip Mason has fulfilled this need admirably. He speaks from expert knowledge and experience; he is concerned not just with this country but with a world-wide problem, and he writes very well indeed. In the first half of the

book he examines the biological facts about racial groups, and shows that the differences are not clear-cut, but between the *average* of quantitative characteristics (such as tallness or intelligence) or the *frequency* of qualitative characteristics (such as blood-groups). There is a great deal of overlapping, and the differences between individuals in one race are greater than the differences between the averages of races. There are no special biological dangers to be anticipated from inter-racial marriage, though there will almost certainly be psychological and social difficulties. The question of inter-marriage ('Would you like your daughter to marry a black man?') is in fact generally introduced to justify and buttress prejudice. From the biological point of view it would be more intelligent to ask, 'Would you like your son to marry a Rhesus negative woman?' The fundamental differences between different races are not biological but social in origin. And prejudice is not something innate: small children of different races play together happily. A number of causes, social, cultural, economic and psychological, contribute to prejudice-formation, but the psychological factors are probably the most important. Most people need the reassurance and support of living in familiar groups, and the more immature and irrational project their own uncertainties on to strangers, whom they usually see as stereotypes. Hostility to another group has little to do with personal aversion, and builds up into myth. Mr Mason then surveys the inter-racial situation in several countries. Finally he considers what we should do in this country: first, reduce prejudice as much as possible, by the education of public opinion; and secondly, prevent its finding an outlet in discrimination. This would require Government action, and he suggests two measures: first, that statistical records should be kept now of immigration from Commonwealth countries, in case some restriction should ever be necessary; and secondly, that discrimination in hotels and restaurants, and in selling and leasing houses, on the sole grounds of race, should be made illegal. When prejudice is not too deep, legislation can turn the scale, since the person who is insecure and liable to prejudice is also anxious to conform, either with a prejudice-group or with lawful authority. 'Legislation cannot create goodwill; its springs lie elsewhere. But legislation can help goodwill to flow as surely as it can choke its course'. This is an excellent book, calm, balanced and succinct.

C. H. Rolph was formerly a senior police officer; he is now on the editorial staff of the *New Statesman*, and plays an important part in the Howard League and in work for discharged prisoners. He is at once experienced, compassionate and unsentimental. The first part of his book deals with crime: its incidence, different kinds, possible causal factors, and prevention. The second part, covering punishment, lays particular emphasis on the anomalies of the Homicide Act of 1957, on the need for new and well-designed prisons, for giving prisoners useful work to do, for strengthening the badly under-staffed and under-paid probation service, and for better after-care. None of this is new, but it needs saying, and Mr Rolph says it vigorously. He is sometimes rather careless: for example, his statement on page 104 that a defence of 'diminished responsibility'

is only available to those accused of murder appears to be contradicted on page III. A more serious defect is that he does not discuss the principles of punishment, or (to be more concrete) of sentencing policy. This is surely a crucial issue. Speaking of capital punishment, Mr Rolph remarks sardonically that a common sense view 'starting from the assumption that the death-penalty had its uses, would require that it be used on the kind of criminal who was thought to be beyond all help'; and this would mean putting to death many petty thieves, sex offenders, and habitual drunkards, but not murderers, since few of them are beyond help. But such a policy, he says, 'would involve the abandoning of any pretence that punishments are made to fit criminals and not their crimes'. Would it? Both these theories are utilitarian. The former claims to be for the good of society, the latter for the good of the individual criminal. But if once we say, 'to fit criminals and *not* their crimes', we are abandoning the only objective criterion of guilt, desert and punishment, and giving those in authority a free hand in deciding what will 'fit the criminal'. They may be genuinely concerned with his best interests: Mr Rolph certainly would be. But what of an unpopular authority—in South Africa or Algeria, say—which has to deal with those it regards as trouble-makers? The theory that punishments should 'fit criminals and not their crimes' is open to misuse—it might have been invoked by the Gestapo to justify 're-education' in concentration camps. And if once we start talking about the 'uses of the death-penalty', instead of whether it is morally justifiable, we are surely well on the way to regarding it simply as an instrument of social hygiene. Mr Rolph never really discusses principles: he seems to have taken the 'common sense' of his title as implying that the treatment of the subject should be practical, down to earth, and strictly pragmatic. And his conception of Christianity is very odd indeed: he speaks of the 'innate contradiction between English law and the Christian faith on which it was supposed to have been founded, namely that the law presumed every man innocent until he was found guilty, while Christianity presumed him sinful and damned until he redeemed himself by his own efforts'. This is an informative, humane and compassionate book, but it needs to be supplemented by (say) Lord Longford's *The Idea of Punishment*, or by the more rigorous philosophical analysis by K. G. Armstrong in the October 1961 number of *Mind*.

AUSTIN GASKELL, O.P.

RILKE'S DUINO ELEGIES : an interpretation by Romano Guardini, translated by K. G. Knight; Darwen Finlayson; 30s.

There are some writers who embody in their work not only their own personal problems and conflicts but also the tensions of the particular time in which they lived; it is as if the mood, the atmosphere of their age were not only part of their most intimate experience but also moulded into the very fabric of their work. Rilke is such a writer. As a man, he was a bundle of contradictions—