

# NOTITIAE BIBLIOGRAPHICAE

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## TWO RECENT PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING FATHER VLADIMIR PECHERIN

Since 1973-1974, when this review presented four articles on Father Vladimir Sergeevich Pecherin (1807-1885); not much, to our knowledge, has been published about this curious and to a certain extent even enigmatic person. The articles were intended to furnish reliable material for a long-awaited critical biography of Pecherin. The first three included over fifty documents<sup>1</sup>, most of which are preserved in the general archives of the Redemptorists in Rome (cited hereinafter: AGR). The fourth article included six letters written by Pecherin to Fr. Hieronim Kajsiwicz CR, kept in the general archives of the Resurrectionist Fathers in Rome<sup>2</sup>. All these documents date back to the period 1840(41)-1861, when Pecherin was a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

A German work, written by Dr. Helmut Dahm, edited in 1979, gives Pecherin some attention<sup>3</sup>. A brief paragraph on him is found in the German translation of an essay published by Vasilij Rozanov in 1914. Dr. Dahm adds a note on Pecherin in which he refers to the articles published in this review and to several studies by Dr. Eóin MacWhite and others<sup>4</sup>.

The diligence with which the note on Pecherin is composed<sup>5</sup> leads the reader to believe that all the many notes in Dahm's book are

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<sup>1</sup> *Spic. hist.* 21 (1973) 165-197, 329-363; 22 (1974) 3-52.

<sup>2</sup> *Spic. hist.* 22 (1974) 255-271.

<sup>3</sup> H. DAHM, *Grundzüge russischen Denkens. Persönlichkeiten und Zeugnisse des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*; München, Johannes Berchmans Verlag, [1979]; 8°, 591 SS. - ISBN: 3-87056-012-6. — DM 89. - (clothbound).

<sup>4</sup> The paragraph in Rozanov's text on p. 198. Dahm's note on pp. 210-212.

<sup>5</sup> In a conversation with Dr. Dahm in Bonn on September 12, 1976, we had occasion to inform him of our research on Pecherin carried on in close collaboration with Dr. MacWhite.

compiled with the same care. Lacking, however, the necessary knowledge in this field, this reviewer does not feel qualified to give a critical opinion. Nevertheless, it seems justified to affirm, on the authority of competent scholars, that Dahm's work, both in its carefully selected and accurately translated texts and in its added notes, is a good introduction to the basic ideas of Russian thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Aleksej Chomjakov (1804-1860) to Ivan Il'in (1883-1954). The outline of Russian philosophy from its beginnings to the present in the introductory chapter (pp. 11-71) will certainly prove very helpful. And equally useful is the survey of general literature (pp. 551-556) and of bibliographical tools (pp. 557-560) at the end of the book.

The other study, in English, published on June 20, 1980, is of more direct interest to the readers of this review<sup>6</sup>. The author, the late Dr. Eóin MacWhite, is already known to them from repeated mention of him in the articles referred to above. Some time after getting in touch with Dr. MacWhite in June of 1968, and informing him of the Pecherin documents kept in AGR, we agreed on a joint study which would ultimately lead to a critical biography of Pecherin with a supplement including the most relevant documentary sources. In June 1971 Dr. MacWhite sent for our consideration the study which now has been edited by Dr. Patrick J. O'Meara<sup>7</sup>. We exchanged a number of letters about possible modifications, corrections and additions, and agreed to draft the paper in its final form in a meeting planned for August 1972<sup>8</sup>, according to the style of publication used in the *Spicilegium*, and then to publish it in this review<sup>9</sup>.

As an overall view of the present state of Pecherin research, the planned publication had two purposes: to summarize what had

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<sup>6</sup> E. MACWHITE, *Towards a biography of Father Vladimir S. Pecherin (1807-1885). A progress report and bibliography*. Edited and prepared for publication by P. J. O'Meara, in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. 80, Section C, Nr. 7 (Dublin 1980) 109-158.

<sup>7</sup> I wish to thank Dr. O'Meara for the copies he obligingly sent me.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the planned meeting could not take place because of the tragic death of Dr. MacWhite in a motor accident on July 31, 1972, at Wassenaar, Netherlands. — Our last letters were written that same month. In a letter of June 15, Dr. MacWhite had sent photocopies of several documents concerning Pecherin's activity for the railway workers at Limerick Junction in 1854. These letters were found shortly before in the Cashel diocesan archives, by Fr. Mark Tierney OSB. The idea was to add this aspect of Pecherin's activity to the study.

<sup>9</sup> Publication was announced by Dr. MacWhite in *Studies* (Dublin) 61 (1972) 38. The fact that the study was originally destined for publication in the *Spicilegium* is mentioned by Dr. O'Meara in his editorial preface (p. 109).

been done to date, and to establish a clear point of departure for further studies. Moreover, it intended to serve as an invitation and stimulus to cooperation from other scholars interested in the subject.

For several reasons the publication was postponed, and at one time it seemed feasible to incorporate into the paper more of the vast research materials collected by Dr. MacWhite, and thus bring the study somewhat nearer to the author's ultimate goal: a real biography of Pecherin. Whoever has had experience of working on the scientific bequest of a scholar knows the difficulties and doubts that occur in this sort of work. So it is by no means surprising that Dr. MacWhite's study is now edited practically as he left it in 1972. We are grateful to Dr. Patrick J. O'Meara, of the Department of Russian, Trinity College, University of Dublin, who competently prepared the manuscript for publication, correcting a few slips and condensing the text in some places with the result that the 317 footnotes of the original paper have been reduced to 263 in the publication.

The editor inserted several headings in the paper, according to the different periods of Pecherin's life, and had the longer quotations printed as separate paragraphs. These technical changes, which do not affect the text itself, are helpful, as they give a clearer view of the paper's structure<sup>10</sup>. Perhaps it would have been useful for the researcher if the study had been updated with a few editor's notes, clearly marked as such. The many documents quoted from the originals kept in AGR and other Redemptorist archives (Brussels, Dublin, London) are now easily accessible, as they have been edited in 1973 and 1974 in the *Spicilegium*.

A few other brief remarks:

Page 129, note 111. For clarity's sake: Brussels Redemptorist Archives.

Page 140. The first line of the second paragraph should read: In November 1858 the Order instructed him to come to Rome, etc. See *Spic. hist.* 21 (1973) 344 and 347.

Page 140, at the end of second paragraph. In a quotation from the chronicle of the general house CSSR in Rome: Mezzofanti (not Mezzofante). An allusion to the polyglot Cardinal Giuseppe Mezzofanti. Full text in *Spic hist.* 21 (1973) 351.

Page 141. At the end of the first quotation from the *Memoirs* is a Latin expression taken from Horace. It seems that Kamenev did not read the

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<sup>10</sup> We can have no objection to these changes as we had made similar suggestions for the final draft of the paper, which were accepted by Dr. MacWhite.

manuscript correctly. Pecherin, who was a good Latinist, can hardly have written «tentatis», which makes no sense. See *Spic. hist.* 21 (1973) 357, n. 74.

Page 141, after the quotations from the *Memoirs*. In March 1859 Pecherin preached on Sundays in Rome in the church entitled «Gesù e Maria». Better to give this full title, to avoid confusion with the church generally known as the «Gesù». See *Spic. hist.* 21 (1973) 351.

Page 144, note 192. Read Swinkels', as the father's name is Swinkels, correctly given elsewhere.

But, of course, these are trifles, and in editing a posthumous paper there is always the question of the extent to which the editor can legitimately modify and expand the original. Thanks to Dr. O'Meara's careful editing, everyone now has easy access to Dr. MacWhite's last study, which fully testifies to the vastness of his research and to his ability to comprehend the sources. No doubt, for a long time to come this article will be the indispensable basis for all further study on Fr. Vladimir Pecherin, the course of his life and the development of his thought.

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The bibliography on Pecherin, listed by Dr. MacWhite at the beginning of his study<sup>11</sup>, can be completed with a few items that appeared in the magazine *Search* published for private circulation by the Redemptorists of the Irish Province<sup>12</sup>. As Pecherin worked as a Redemptorist in Ireland for over seven years (1854-1861), and remained in Dublin till his death in 1885 as chaplain of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, it is easily understandable that there is a special interest in him among the Irish Redemptorists. In 1978 Fathers Patrick O'Donnell<sup>13</sup> and Seán O'Riordan<sup>14</sup> compiled a short note on him. Noteworthy is Fr. O'Riordan's well balanced judgement on Pecherin whom he rightly sees as one of the Founding Fathers of the Congregation in Ireland. «Petcherine had his faults — impulsiveness, combativeness and a lot of hurt feelings which he never got over regarding the way he was treated by the Congregation — but

<sup>11</sup> «Published work on Pecherin», pp. 112-116.

<sup>12</sup> *Search*. A Magazine for and about Redemptorists of the Irish Province. First issue, December 1977.

<sup>13</sup> P. O'DONNELL, *Foundation in Limerick*, in *Search*, nr. 2 (Easter 1978) 10-12.

<sup>14</sup> S. O'RIORDAN, *Our Cultural Tradition*, in *Search*, nr. 4 (December 1978) 65-66.

he was a very great man and a loyal Redemptorist at heart to the day of his death ». In 1979 Br. Ciaran O'Callaghan<sup>15</sup> published a short article on Pecherin which makes good reading but has no scholarly pretensions (no footnotes). It seems to lean heavily on Dr. MacWhite's studies published in 1971-1972<sup>16</sup>. A somewhat shortened version of O'Callaghan's article was inserted in the Redemptorist magazine *Reality* (Dublin) 44 (1980) Nr. 2 (February) 28-31.

There is also to be mentioned an article by Mr. François Patrimonio, which appeared in October 1977 (Nr. 48) in the review *Plamia* (Meudon, France) under the title *Le Père Vladimir Serguéievitch Petchérine, 1807-1885. Une vie tumultueuse et une pensée non conformiste* (pp. 105-113). The author tries to explain the apparent contradictions in Pecherin's thought concerning the Catholic Church and its teaching in the sense that as time went on he opposed certain manifestations of religious doctrine and practice which are, however, by no means essential to the faith. Nowadays, such a critical attitude would not raise the eyebrows that it did last century. And so Mr. Patrimonio concludes: « Petchérine reste donc pour nous un signe d'Espérance ».

Dr. MacWhite mentions, of course, the famous trial of Pecherin for 'Bible burning' in December 1855, and gives some of the newspaper and pamphlet literature to which the case gave rise in Ireland, in England, and « even in Australia »<sup>17</sup>. He does not mention, however, anything printed in Australia. Recently, the Pecherin collection in AGR was enriched with a pamphlet printed in Australia, acquired there by Fr. Samuel J. Boland, a member of the Historical Institute CSSR<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> C. O'CALLAGHAN, *Vladimir Petcherine*, in *Search*, nr. 5 (Easter 1979) 28-34. On p. 32 a drawing of the tombstone in Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin.

<sup>16</sup> E. MacWHITE, *Vladimir Pecherin, 1807-1885*, in *Studies* (Dublin) 60 (1971) 295-310 and 61 (1972) 23-40.

<sup>17</sup> Pp. 138-139. Bibliography listed in note 158.

<sup>18</sup> *Address of Thomas O'Hagan, Esq., Q.C., at the Trial of a Catholic Priest, on the alleged charge of Bible burning, before the Judges of Assize, in Dublin, 7th and 8th December 1855*. Hobart Town, printed by William Fletcher, Elisabeth-street, 1856. In-16° (17.5 x 11 cm), XI-32 pp. On pp. III-XI an unsigned introduction about Pecherin's trial and his acquittal, with some extracts from an article in *The Civil Service Gazette* (London) and another in the *Cork Examiner*. On pp. 1-29 O'Hagan's Address, followed by an extract from the *Dublin Evening Post*, « a paper entirely in the hands of Protestants » (pp. 29-30). On pp. 30-32 an appendix in which, with reference to the Rev. S. R. Maitland's « incomparable work on the Middle Ages » (the author being quoted by O'Hagan in his *Address*), the reader is assured that many editions of the Bible, in Latin and in the vernacular, were printed before Luther was born.