

News in Brief

Bulgarian Patriarch in England. Patriarch Maxim, head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, visited England from 17-22 October. He was a guest of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who went to Sofia, last year. The Patriarch visited London, Canterbury, Oxford and St. Alban's. It is the first time a Bulgarian primate has come to this country.

Dalai Lama visits Britain. The Dalai Lama, spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhists, visited this country from 20-30 October in the course of a six-week tour of a dozen European countries. His tour began in Rome where he was received by the Pope on 30 September. During his visit to England, the Dalai Lama met the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Heenan; he attended a service in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. This European tour is unprecedented for a Dalai Lama – the present one is fourteenth in succession. He left Tibet in 1959 – the Chinese had invaded and annexed the country in 1950 – and he now lives in exile in North India. Some newspaper reports of the visit have hinted at the possibility of a Chinese compromise that would allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet.

Patriarch Pimen and the World Council of Churches. On 7 August, Patriarch Pimen and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed a letter to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Its subject was the WCC conference "Salvation Today" which took place in Bangkok at the beginning of this year. The Patriarch welcomed the positive aspects of the conference (the struggle for social justice), but regretted its neglect of the purely spiritual or "vertical" aspect of salvation. The letter was read in Geneva on 27 August. From 16-19 September, Patriarch Pimen paid a personal visit to Geneva, accompanied by 13 clergy and laymen including Metropolitan Nikodim, Metropolitan Yuvenali and Archbishop Pitirim. The Patriarch had talks with various WCC leaders, and he spoke again of the Russian Orthodox concern for the proclamation of the "gospel of Christ crucified and resurrected". Dr. Potter, General Secretary of the WCC, declared that all churches had a responsibility to support human rights. A continuing and closer cooperation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the WCC was discussed.

WCC discusses human rights in communist lands. In August this year, during the World Council of Churches Central Committee session in Geneva, there was a discussion on "Violence, Non-Violence and the Struggle for Social Justice". Various cases were cited from the first and third worlds. Professor Olle Engstrom (Sweden) suggested that the catalogue of problems be extended to include restrictions of human rights in the "second world" (communist countries). Accordingly a new text was drafted, including reference to discrimination in Eastern European countries on ideological or religious grounds. The new text was laid before the working party, whereupon the East European delegates one after another rose to deny the accusations contained in it. In deference to this unanimous protest the new section was again omitted, but this evoked protest from a number of delegates. The text was finally accepted

without the section on East Europe, but with the admission (the phrase came from the West German representation) that "other situations might have been mentioned, for example, in other parts of Africa and Europe, and in Asia and the Pacific." This is one of the most open confrontations of this nature which the WCC has ever seen (see: Swiss Lutheran Press Service, 28 August 1973).

Ecumenical leaders appeal on behalf of Solzhenitsyn. At the Central Committee meeting of the WCC (see above), participants were unofficially requested to sign a telegram to Mr. Brezhnev. The telegram asked for the cessation of repression against the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and permission for him to live with his wife in Moscow. Twenty delegates signed the telegram, including Bishop Wischmann of the German Lutheran Church, the Bishop of Bristol, Dr. Albert van den Heuvel of the Dutch Reformed Church and Bishop Hines of the US Episcopal Church.

British Council of Churches expresses concern over Soviet discrimination. On 21 September Rev. Harry Morton, General Secretary of the British Council of Churches, wrote to Sir Alec Douglas-Home the British Foreign Secretary on the subject of the Geneva Security Conference and human rights. He said for example that: "Christians believe that there cannot be real peace without respect for human rights . . . In particular, the Council wishes to express deep disquiet at the treatment of certain minority groups and individuals in the Soviet Union and also to record continuing anxiety that both there, as in some other parts of Europe, freedom of religion, though guaranteed by the constitution, is frequently infringed. In the light of recent European history, discrimination against Jews is particularly offensive. Harassment and persecution, no matter who are the victims, are deeply disturbing to the Christian conscience." On 26 September Lord Balniel, Secretary of State, replied that the British Government would "continue to take every opportunity to stress the importance of the issues which you mention in your letter. It is encouraging to know that we will have the support of your Council in this endeavour."

Scandinavian appeal for Soviet Christians. On 10 December this year the United Nations will mark the 25th anniversary of its Declaration of Human Rights. This unique document has been the focus of appeal to many individuals and groups all over the world who are denied the liberties set out in it, not least Christians in the USSR. For this reason three Scandinavian missionary organizations have chosen this occasion to present a petition to the governments of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The petition asks these governments, through their UN representation, to intervene on behalf of Soviet Christians. Signatures are now being collected. The text of the petition is available in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and English.

Ecumenical meeting in Yugoslavia. From 3-10 September the International Ecumenical Fellowship held its fifth conference at Vodice on the Dalmatian coast near Sibenik, Yugoslavia. The meeting was held there at the invitation of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic bishops of Sibenik. The theme of the conference was "The Fullness of Christ".

Orthodox and Lutheran Christians share a church. In the town of Kiviili, in the Soviet republic of Estonia, the Orthodox church of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God is shared by the local Russian Orthodox and Lutheran congregations. "Every Sunday Lutherans worship in the church after the Orthodox service, and a Lutheran altar, which on weekdays is kept on the left of the iconostasis, is set in the nave for the purpose", reports the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* No. 1, 1973. The church was recently damaged by fire, and after restoration through the efforts of both congregations, it was reconsecrated on 21 September 1972. Participating in the service of re-dedication were the Orthodox Metropolitan Alexi of Estonia and the Lutheran Archbishop of Estonia, Alfred Tooming.

Anatoli Levitin was released from labour camp on 8 June this year. After his sentence for uncompromising writings on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church, friends feared that he might not survive this third prison term. However, news has reached the West that, after his release, Levitin was married and has been trying to obtain permission to live in Moscow. A book of his selected writings is being prepared by CSRC in English (to be published by SPCK/Sheldon Press early next year). Levitin has been invited to lecture at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York and at the University of Utrecht. On 23 October Amnesty International headquarters in London received from Moscow two copies of their petition against torture. One copy was signed by Levitin, the other by Podyapolsky, Sakharov, Maximov and Turchin.

Fr. Pavel Adelheim was released this spring. A priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, he had been arrested in December 1969 and sentenced in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) to three years for allegedly beating his wife and children, and two other girls. He was also accused of spreading 'anti-Soviet slander' (e.g. the writings of Anatoli Levitin). Lengthy documentation on this case was published by the Soviet civil rights leader Valery Chalidze (now in the West) in his unofficial journal *Social Problems*. A Western visitor who met Fr. Adelheim in 1968 described him as "gentle, kind, patient, tolerant" and said that he spoke of the authorities who persecuted him "not with hatred, but with sadness". He had been sent to Kagan, a small, poor town in Soviet Central Asia, because he was known to have independent views. The *Chronicle of Current Events* in April 1970 reported that "Adelheim was widely known in church circles. Thanks to his initiative and energy, the faithful of Kagan were successful in erecting a new place of worship built of stone in place of the shed which served as the local church. The young educated priest was a good preacher and was greatly loved and respected by his parishioners." While in labour camp, Fr. Adelheim was run over by a lorry (some say it was not an accident) and had to have one leg amputated. He is now said to be continuing pastoral work in the Fergana region of Uzbekistan (see *Vestnik RSKhD* No. 107, p. 169).

Boris Zdorovets sentenced again. Last year Boris Zdorovets returned to his family in the Ukraine. He had served seven years in labour camp and three years in exile for his activity as a reform Baptist leader. He had been arrested in 1961; a Soviet press article described him as right-hand man to Prokofiev, one of the

first leaders of the reform Baptists. The German magazine *Dein Reich Komme* (September 1973 p. 11) describes him thus: "Zdorovets is well known among Ukrainian Christians. He has impressed many by his courageous work in God's service. Even in difficult years he never lost his humour or his infinite trust in God's faithfulness. Zdorovets is also notable for his intellect. He has studied legal matters. He speaks English fluently and also understands German. Musically very gifted, he was a choirleader and baritone soloist. Zdorovets suffers from severe physical handicaps. As a child he was playing with a weapon from the First World War and lost his right hand and part of the lower arm. His left eye was seriously damaged. But this courageous preacher abandoned his right to an invalid pension; his missionary work prevented him from receiving this normal social benefit. Zdorovets also acted as an instructor to young preachers in biblical and theological studies . . . he recognised the importance of a systematic theological training." On 2 May this year Zdorovets arranged a large meeting in the woods near Kharkov in the Ukraine. About 2,000 people attended. When he returned to the city, Zdorovets was arrested at the railway station. As a result of his harsh treatment in prison, he declared a hunger-strike on 14 May. In a letter to friends he declared: "Perhaps I shall not be returned to you alive; I may be crippled or dead . . . But my only guilt lies in the fact that I don't know and have never learned how to lie or pretend." In August he was sentenced, at a closed trial in Kharkov lasting eleven days, to another three years in strict regime labour camps and seven years exile. In an interview given to two Western journalists on 23 August, Solzhenitsyn said: "Now, without the *Chronicle (of Current Events)* perhaps we won't be informed of the latest victims of a prison-camp regime . . . and how, because of his faith, Boris Zdorovets was sentenced for a third time."

A hunger-strike pays off. An interesting case occurred earlier this year when the Soviet authorities refused a newly-married young couple permission to live together. The husband was Daniels Bruvers, organist and piano-tuner at a registered Baptist church in Riga, Latvia. His wife is Rudite (née Klavins), daughter of a Latvian émigré living in West Germany. They met when Rudite paid her first visit to the Soviet Union in 1970. After her return home they corresponded and in the summer of 1972 they became engaged. They were married in Riga in January this year, but Daniels was then refused permission to go to live with his wife in West Germany. Rudite was likewise unable to live with her husband in the U.S.S.R. On 21 July Daniels began a hunger-strike in protest against his treatment – the anniversary of the day 33 years ago when Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Petitions were also sent from the West on behalf of the young couple. As a result Daniels was permitted to emigrate to Germany to join his wife.

Islam worries the authorities in Soviet Central Asia. On 22 June this year the Communist Party Secretary for Soviet Turkmenistan, Mukhamed Gapurov, made a speech revealing the serious concern felt by the Party about various aspects of life in this republic. One of these was religious vitality: "We cannot fail to be disturbed by the Muslim cult, by virtue of its special nature and specific features. Islam, like any religion, frequently acts as the preserver of reactionary national customs and traditions." Gapurov spoke out against "incorrect attitudes to women" and the custom of bride-money, but the main

cause for concern is that communist dogma and festivals can offer no alternative to distract the population from its traditional faith. "The number of people taking part in religious rites is not diminishing in our republic. The number of pilgrims to the so-called holy places is decreasing only slowly in the republic, and to this day many unofficial ministers of religion are operating, preaching reactionary ideas and distracting believers from socially useful work." (*Turkmen Spark*, 24 June 1973; quoted here from *Soviet Analyst* (London) 2 August 1973).

The former Apostolic Administrator of Panevezys diocese, Lithuania, died during an operation in Kaunas on 21 May this year. Canon Povilas Sidlauskas was born in 1890 and studied theology and philosophy at Kaunas University. He then served the Lithuanian Catholic Church in the diocese of Panevezys. After the second Soviet occupation of Lithuania he was deported to Siberia, returning in 1956. When Bishop Steponavicius was deported from Panevezys in January 1961 (see *RCL* 4/5 pp. 47-9), Rev. Sidlauskas was appointed Apostolic Administrator in his place, but was again arrested in April 1962. From this time on he was confined outside his diocese and unable to exercise his office. An English-language book published in Vilnius in 1971, *Religion in Lithuania*, remarked that: "Naturally, the Lithuanian Government, like any other self-respecting government, could not tolerate it when Pope Pius XII started consecrating bishops and appointing apostolic administrators of dioceses without the Government's knowledge. Besides, he used to choose candidates from priests disloyal to the present State system. For instance, in 1956 the Rev. V. Slatkevicius was consecrated bishop without the knowledge of the Lithuanian Government, likewise the Rev. P. Sidlauskas was appointed apostolic administrator without any notification. There were some more similar cases. The Government was compelled to react accordingly, and the newly-appointed priests were not allowed to enter upon their duties. However, they could carry on their pastoral work unimpeded. By the way, lately the Vatican has refrained from actions that might give rise to conflicts." Canon Sidlauskas' funeral, held in Panevezys, was attended by a large crowd of clergy and laity (see *ELTA-Press* No. 6, 1973, p. 19).

Vatican makes new Lithuanian appointments. On 7 July the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano* announced two new appointments in the Lithuanian Catholic Church. Mgr. Liudvikas Povilonis, formerly bishop auxiliary of the diocese of Telsiai and Klaipeda, was made coadjutor to Mgr. Juozapas Matulaitis-Labukas (who became Apostolic Administrator of this see in 1966). Mgr. Povilonis has the right of succession as Apostolic Administrator. Mgr. Romualdas Kriksciunas, formerly auxiliary of Kaunas and Vilkauskis, became Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Panevezys. This diocese (see the last item) has had a difficult history in recent years. In 1961 it lost its Apostolic Administrator Mgr. Steponavicius and, in the following year, his successor Mgr. Sidlauskas. The local church authorities then provisionally elected one of their own members to govern the diocese as vicar capitular, but the state instead imposed their own choice, Canon Povilas Baksys. Mgr. Baksys already administered the diocese of Kaisedorys, but now also took responsibility for Panevezys with the title of vicar capitular, until his death on 1 July this year. He has been described as "an exemplary priest" working in difficult times. His death gave the Vatican the opportunity again to appoint an Apostolic Administrator -

Mgr. Kriksciunas. The recent moves leave the two sees of Vilnius and Kaisedorys without proper administrative leadership (see *ELTA-Press* July 1973, pp. 15-16 and *The Tablet*, 15 September 1973, p. 872).

Difficulties for Czechoslovak Catholics. Severe difficulties over the training of priests have been reported in Czechoslovakia. Of the 90 theological students in the seminary at Presov, who are in their final year and due to be ordained next year, 41 were called up for their military service on 1 October. Until now, the right of students in the country to complete their studies before doing their military service applied also to theological students. This new move means that all those in their final year of study who have not yet done their military service have been called up, and will not now be able to complete their theology until after the two years spent in the armed forces. Similar problems are being encountered with entrants to the seminary at Presov; and with this move the country is back to the *numerus clausus* for priestly training which was the pattern during the Stalinist era. Lastly, a significant number of the priests ordained this year have so far received no appointment. The state-run Church office in Presov explained that there are not enough vacancies for the new priests, although information from the Church itself indicates that in the Slovakian diocese alone there are about 70 parishes or mass centres without priests, and there must also be many chaplaincy posts unfilled. The new priests who have so far received no appointments are strictly forbidden to exercise any priestly activity, including the celebration of mass, although an exception has been made for them to say mass once after their ordination (reprinted from *The Tablet*, 13 October 1973, p. 976).

Directory of Polish Catholic parishes. The Institute of Historical Geography at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, has published a work by Lidia Muler on the present network of Catholic parishes in this country (reports the English-language publication *Catholic Life in Poland* No. 4, 1973, p. 55). The work was published in "Materials for the Atlas of Christianity in Poland". The map (still in its initial stage) shows over 6,500 towns and villages.

Missionaries from Poland. During the year 1972, 54 Catholic missionaries left Poland for work abroad – the majority to South America and Africa. Over the same period, 7 missionaries died and 8 had to return to Poland mostly for health reasons (*Catholic Life in Poland* No. 4, 1973, p. 48).

Polish bishops' concern on religious education. Church-state relations in Poland are beset by recurring tensions. A present source of disharmony is the resolution on educational reform approved by the Polish parliament on 13 October. The report on which this resolution was based was drawn up by a leading Polish sociologist, Dr. Jan Sczypanski, and published this spring. This immediately led to reactions from the Catholic Church (see *RCL* 4/5 p. 64), which saw in these proposals a threat to religious education of youth in Poland. The resolution of 13 October called forth further protest. In a statement of 24 October the bishops expressed anxiety over "limitations on religious freedom imposed by local administrative authorities" and said attempts had been made to prevent the teaching of the catechism (see *Financial Times*, 7 August 1973 and *Guardian*, 25 October 1973).