

# Reports

## News from the Centre

### THE PROJECTED DEVELOPMENT OF CSRC

In arriving at an outline development plan for the Centre, the Council has received guidance from several sources. The first source used to be called "The Church of Silence". Now its message is loud and clear. The Centre listens first and then speaks: it tries to relay the voice of the Church in the East, however persecuted or restricted that Church might be. The extent of the need for the kind of objective and painstaking research that the Centre carries out is almost overwhelming. For three years as a member of the Council of Management I have marvelled at the amount of work that Michael Bourdeaux and his friends accomplish. In my first two weeks as Development Director I have found out how it is done.

A further source of guidance for the Centre's development has been the avalanche of ecumenical interest in the Centre's output on an international scale. Churches, universities and missionary societies have shown interest, and many requests for speakers at conferences have reached the Centre. Some of those interested have expressed the hope that the Centre will extend its output to include radio broadcasting. The journal, *Religion in Communist Lands*, has tried to meet the need for source material and is widely quoted.

At our A.G.M. last year Prof. Bociurkiw emphasised the international aspect of the Centre's work and the importance of developing research facilities for external students. The Rev. John Arnold questioned the need for a large expansion of permanent assets. Every aspect of this advice has been considered by the Council in arriving at an outline development plan – a project which can only become a reality when more people follow the example of the Centre's present members, who have given generously towards the work.

*RCL* No. 6 made public the decision to move our offices out of the Director's house as soon as an alternative can be found. The old Church of England school at Keston, it is hoped, will provide the required accommodation and we are at present studying the contract of sale. This building will provide an adequate area to house research and administrative

staff, a library and facilities for overseas and other students (if the Council decides that it would be right to press on with the project to provide a student hostel). This scheme has been warmly received at home and abroad, but it will of course depend upon the degree of support given at home and overseas to finance it. A visitor at the Centre in January, who travelled widely in Asia and particularly in Tibet, looked at the documentation on the USSR and said, "If only this kind of information were available on China". The international aspect of the Centre's work has a twofold aim: to bring to light facts about the religious situation in communist countries, and to disseminate those facts in a meaningful way to as many countries as possible. The best prayers and the best actions are likely to be based on accurate information. The idea of a student hostel has been enthusiastically received. We plan to set up specific research projects which could be wholly sponsored from sources outside the Centre – sources that are in sympathy with the general aims and objects of the CSRC. There is no doubt that residential capacity at the Centre would advance these aims and objects, whilst spreading a greater understanding of the need for such research among a young and international body of graduates. Our development plans as outlined represent an attempt to look beyond the short-term view.

#### FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

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| Feb. 3         | Director preaches at Finchley Methodist Church, Essex Hall, Ballard's Lane.                              |
| 3              | Kathleen Matchett at Youth Fellowship, St. John's, Welling, Kent.  |
| 17 at 11 a.m.  | Director at St. Stephen's Church, 19, Canonbury Rd., Islington N.1.                                      |
| 19             | Director at Milton Abbey School, Blandford Forum, Dorset.  |
| 25             | Peter Fahy and Xenia Howard-Johnston speak to the National Council of Women of Great Britain, Sevenoaks. |
| Feb. 24-Mar. 1 | Director in Rome – lecture to Consortium Perfectae Caritatis Congress.                                   |
| Feb.-Mar.      | Sir John Lawrence in South Africa.   |
| Mar. 1-4       | Peter Fahy lectures in Lucerne.  |
| 7-10           | CSRC represented at Solzhenitsyn Conference, Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, Butcher Row, London E14. |

- Mar. 7 Kathleen Matchett at Women's Fellowship, Christ Church, Purley, Surrey.
- 20-end of Apr. Director on lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand. Contact : Professor G. Clark, Karvah, Banoon Rd., Eltham 3095, Victoria, Australia.
- 22-24 CSRC represented at Christian Group for East-West Contact Conference, Dartmouth House, Blackheath.

PETER FAHY

## A CSRC Conference

In the task of providing information on the relations between religion and communism – an issue which will be recognized as one of the most far-reaching of the twentieth century – it is difficult to overestimate the significance of the CSRC as spearhead in the West. At the conference in January, a group of us heard about the Centre's work, and, through a series of excellent addresses, were initiated into new aspects of the situation in communist lands. The Centre is still crystallizing, and we were aware of being involved at the beginning of an organization whose significance is becoming apparent to a rapidly widening circle of Christians, many of them overseas and behind the Iron Curtain itself. The Christians of the Roman Empire, once they realized they could no longer assume the world was likely to come to an immediate end and that the perspectives of the future would contain infinite opportunities, must have felt the same. Communists of the nineteenth century, meeting in their small cells, confident that the significance of their movement in the future would be out of all proportion to their numbers in the present, must also have known this awareness. We looked round the proposed new site for the Centre at Keston, bounded by open common and beech trees, and we reviewed the work of the past year. We would continue deliberately to operate with the utmost economy – but not at the risk of reducing our effectiveness. Both feet were now firmly planted on the first step of a staircase of incalculable height – the policy of “hasten slowly” would continue. But our attention was directed also to issues in the communist world : deportation from Albania, the situation of Soviet Mennonites, the work of a Press Attaché in war-time Moscow, the theme of suffering in an Orthodox sermon – were all described from first-hand experience. And there was also time for conversation and strolls along the shelving lawns and by the lake at Foxbury.

ANDREW LENOX-GONYNGHAM