

For the Record

POLAND

Polish Bishops in Germany

At the invitation of the German Bishops' Conference, a delegation of the Polish Episcopate, led by the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Wyszyński, and Cardinal Karol Wojtyła (now Pope John Paul II) visited West Germany from 20-25 September 1978. The visit, part of the fruitful dialogue initiated at the time of the Second Vatican Council and promoted by the now famous letter sent to the German bishops by the Polish Episcopate in 1965, seeks to heal the wounds between the Polish and German peoples caused by the last war. In the 1960s the Church was attacked by the Polish government for its initiative. Today, the Polish Vice-Foreign Minister saw Cardinal Wyszyński off at the airport. Throughout his visit the Cardinal emphasized the need to work for peace and a Christian future. He never referred to wartime atrocities. His hosts spoke of the sins and guilt of the past, recalling "the letter of forgiveness" (1965 letter). Poland and her Church generated much interest in the German mass media during that week. (*Gazeta Niedzielną*, 12 November 1978; *The Times*, 26 September 1978)

Bishops Issue Declaration

In a declaration issued on the 60th anniversary of Polish independence, 11 November 1978, Polish bishops stressed the Constitution of 3 May and the clandestine work carried out by the Educational Committee prior to 1918, when Poland was divided between foreign powers. They see any attempt to deny peoples

their national culture as leading to moral disorder, which can be rectified only by restoring the right of self-determination. The government is said to be responsible for ensuring freedom and internal moral order, as well as ensuring the nation's sovereignty. After the service in Warsaw Cathedral to commemorate Polish independence, a peaceful demonstration took place at the tomb of the unknown soldier where crowds shouted slogans such as: "Respect human rights". The names of Cardinal Wyszyński and Pope John Paul II were applauded.

KUL's 60th Anniversary

The inauguration of the new academic year and the celebration of the founding of the only Catholic University in the whole of Eastern Europe took place on Sunday, 12 November 1978, at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). Among the guests were diplomats from Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia and most West European countries. Polish bishops, the Minister for Church Affairs, Mr Kakol, and other guests from all parts of Poland were also present. The University's chapel could not accommodate everyone. In his homily Cardinal Wyszyński, the Primate of Poland, emphasized Polish independence and the task of the university for the coming year. KUL's academic discipline must show the dignity of persons through the study of history, theology, literature, education and social science in order to help students understand the link between the theoretical and practical aspects of religious belief. The Cardinal renewed his plea for freedom

of speech and more Catholic publications. He advised the Polish government to pension off its censors. The censor cut this part of his speech from the report published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*. (*Gazeta Niedzielną*, 12 November 1978; *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 19 November 1978)

Pope Receives Gift for "Suffering Church"

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), a Roman Catholic relief organization, gave an initial gift of \$100,000 to Pope John Paul II to be used to help the "suffering Church", either in Eastern Europe or the Third World. The new Pope, said ACN's General Moderator, Fr Werenfried van Straaten, "has of course extensive experience in relations between Church and State, not only in Poland but also in the other countries behind the Iron Curtain. In the crisis of the Post-Conciliar church, he is typically a man of the centre." (Aid to the Church in Need, 18 October and 7 December 1978)

Metropolitan Visits Poland

Archbishop Franjo Kuharic, Metropolitan of Zagreb, visited Poland during the month of May 1978. He was accompanied by the Rev. Ivan Merlak, editor-in-chief of the Catholic weekly *Druzina* and the Rev. Zivko Kustic, editor-in-chief of the fortnightly *Glas Koncila*, published in Zagreb. The guests participated in the Corpus Christi procession in Warsaw; took part in the ceremony marking the end of the peregrination of a replica of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Gniezno, Cracow and Katowice; and participated in the pilgrimage of young men in Piarkary Slaskie. (*Christian Social Association Information Bulletin*, No. 7-8, July-August 1978, p. 21)

Church-State Relations

The 165th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate took place on 3 and 4 October in Warsaw, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Wyszynski. In a communiqué the hierarchy stressed the need for the normalization of church-state relations, particularly as regards

the Church's demand for legal status. "This matter is of vital importance to us because Poland is a Catholic country. The Church is a permanent reality of enormous value in the life of the country and the people. She is a moral force that cannot be ignored. Co-operation between the authorities and the Church in the field of social morality would be in the interest of the whole of society."

The bishops then expressed their concern about sanctions which had been brought against farmers who allowed youngsters to camp on their land during vacations as part of their "Oasis" retreats. Many people had been called before the authorities for taking part in preparations for the Visitation of the Mother of God (in the image of Jasna Gora) in the parishes. The bishops were particularly concerned that in the archdiocese of Gniezno people had been threatened with loss of their jobs for taking part.

Another problem discussed at the conference was the government's policy of ignoring the church-state agreement of 14 April 1950 which stated that seminarians would not be conscripted before they had completed their theological studies. This agreement had not been honoured for years. The bishops were particularly concerned that the seminarians had been organized into special units and subjected to special treatment. The authorities hoped thereby to reduce the number of those resolved to continue their studies.

In paragraph 6 of the communiqué of 5 October, the bishops made it clear that lay Catholics are part of the Church and actively involved in her mission. The state authorities, therefore, have no right either to stop them founding their own associations and publishing houses when they act in union with the Church hierarchy, or to interfere in their work and attempt to subjugate one organization to another for political ends. The special committee for dialogue with non-believers, Bishops Majdanski and Bejze, also gave their reports. (*Gazeta Niedzielną*, 12 November 1978)

Seventh Day Adventists Hold Congress

Some 150 delegates, the entire clergy of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and numerous guests attended the 13th

Synodal Congress of the Adventist Church on 2 June 1978 in Warsaw. Among the foreign guests were Dr W. R. Scragg, Head of the North European Department of the Adventist Church; Dr B. B. Beach, Secretary of the Department; the Rev. N. A. Zhukhaluk, Adventist pastor from the Soviet Union; and J. Frey, the church historian from Switzerland.

The Rev. Dr Stanislaw Dabrowski was re-elected for another five-year term as President of the Central Board, while the Rev. Dr Zachariasz Lyko was re-elected Secretary General. Jan Cichocki was elected treasurer. Section secretaries elected were the Revs. Jan Jankiewicz and Wladyslaw Kosowski. The Congress resolution emphasizes peace and disarmament. (*Christian Social Association Information Bulletin*, No. 7-8, July-August 1978, pp. 27-8)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Death of Former Editor

Emil Korba, a Slovak eastern-rite Catholic priest and former editor-in-chief of the official Slovak Catholic newspaper *Katolicke Noviny*, died suddenly on 27 October at the age of 49. A short time before his death, Korba had been dismissed from his post as editor for refusing to publish an article written by Karol Homola, the Secretary for Church Affairs in Slovakia. The Czech religious newspaper of the same name printed a short obituary on 12 November, but did not mention Fr Korba's dismissal. (*Katolicke Noviny*, 12 November 1978, p. 6; *Christian World*, 9 November 1978)

Roman Catholic Ordinations

Twenty-six seminarists from Litomerice were ordained priest in June 1978: six are to serve in the Prague diocese, six in Olomouc, nine in Brno, two in Hradec Kralove, two in Ceske Budejovice and one in Cesky Tesin. Also ordained in June were 21 seminarists from Bratislava, and four others who completed their theological studies last year may have been ordained as well. In a country where about 1,600 parishes are without priests, these 47 or 51 priests ordained in 1978 are not sufficient to satisfy the needs of the Church. There are

only two seminaries in the country and a strict *numerus clausus* is imposed on them. Most of the 3,500 or so priests in Czechoslovakia are middle-aged or elderly; many have spent years in prison or camp and as a result their health has suffered. Since 1971 the slightest sign of non-conformity amongst the clergy has provoked strong repressive measures from the government, and more than 500 priests have been barred by the state authorities from exercising their ministry. (*Novy Zivot*, September-October 1978, p. 195)

ROMANIA

Demand for Reform

The Romanian Christian Committee for the Defence of Freedom of Religion and Conscience issued a 24-point programme of demands for the fundamental reform of church-state relations in Romania. Signed by 27 members of various denominations, the demands cover legal guarantees of religious freedom: the right of churches to publish religious literature, uncensored and in sufficient quantities to meet demands, and to organize religious education for children and adults. The signatories demand an end to discrimination against believers and to interference by the state authorities in pastoral appointments.

New Publishing Project

A project to publish 90 volumes of patristic texts, covering the first eight centuries of Christian history, has been launched by Patriarch Justin of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In addition, a new *Handbook of Dogmatics* in three volumes is already well advanced. It is being prepared by the Romanian theologian, Professor Dumitru Staniloae. Once the third volume is published, "it will be one of the milestones in the whole of Orthodox modern literature". (*Ecumenical Press Service*, No. 25, 21 September 1978)

BULGARIA

Christian Peace Conference Session in Sofia

A session of the international commission of the Christian Peace Conference

took place in March (1978) under the auspices of Patriarch Maxim. The theme of the session and the title of the main report was: "For one world of peace and justice – Christians and churches support the growing consciousness of the need for disarmament". The session, attended by 60 representatives of church and religious groups from four continents (Europe, America, Asia, Africa), lasted three days during which "the most immediate problems of the contemporary world" were discussed. Concern was expressed about neo-fascist tendencies in West Germany and Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia. The support given to Somalia by "certain NATO countries" was condemned as were Puerto Rico's dictatorship and the terror in Chile, Argentina, Nicaragua and Salvador. The delegates expressed solidarity with those fighting for freedom against the South African and Rhodesian regimes. In addition the international commission composed a message to the International Forum which was due to meet in Amsterdam on 18 June to discuss the neutron bomb and fully supported the plan to make 17 June International Disarmament Day. The commission supports the forthcoming UN Session on this question as well as the convocation of a World Conference on Disarmament. (*Otechestven Front*, 6 and 10 March 1978)

Establishment of Bulgarian Patriarchate Commemorated

Celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Bulgarian Patriarchate were held in Sofia on 10 May 1978. A Deputy Foreign Minister, Zhivko Popov, and a member of the State Council, Ivan Mihailov, were present as well as delegations from the Patriarchates of Istanbul, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Romania and Moscow; the Archiepiscopate of Cyprus; the Polish, Czech, Finnish and American Orthodox Churches; and Bulgarian parishes abroad.

The celebrations were opened by Patriarch Maxim and a report was given by Metropolitan Pankraty of Stara Zagora, who said that in the last quarter of a century the Church had been true to its centuries-old patriotic traditions

and had received understanding and co-operation from the State.

Ivan Mihailov brought greetings on behalf of the State Council and underlined the centuries-old patriotic activity of the Church, its active participation in the struggle for peace and especially its fruitful links with the Russian Orthodox Church which contributed to the development and strengthening of Bulgarian-Soviet friendship. The foreign guests also brought greetings and the choir gave a concert in the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. (*Otechestven Front*, 11 May 1978)

Todor Zhivkov Receives Patriarch Maxim

Mr Todor Zhivkov received Patriarch Maxim on 8 May 1978 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. In the name of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Maxim thanked Zhivkov for the State's care of the Church and for the opportunities granted it both to officiate in Bulgaria and to participate in the struggle for world peace. Zhivkov expressed thanks for the patriotic activity of the Church, its participation in the struggle for peace and for its links with the Russian Orthodox Church which contributed to Bulgarian-Soviet friendship. Deputy Foreign Minister N. Minchev was present at the meeting as were Nikodim, Metropolitan of Sliven, and Pankraty, Metropolitan of Stara Zagora. (*Otechestven Front*, 9 May 1978)

SOVIET UNION

Press Attacks Jews

"The Face of the Class Enemy" (*Obliche klassovogo vraga*), an article published in *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, 14 June 1978, seriously attacks Judaism. A. Fedkin, the author, reviews V. Begun's book *Invasion Without Arms (Vtorzhenie bez oruzhiya)* which deals with, in its terminology, the Zionist hatred of socialism, the Judeo-clerical nature of Zionist ideology and its anti-humanist essence. Fedkin states that Zionist charges of lack of religious freedom and persecution are lies since freedom of conscience is guaranteed in the Soviet Union. How-

ever, the author continues, scientifically-based criticism of Jews will continue as will atheist work among them since Judaism isolates Jews and teaches them to despise the non-Jewish world.

Two months earlier (14 April 1978) the Ukrainian-language newspaper, *Literaturna Ukraina*, viciously attacked Jews for allegedly collaborating with the enemy in the Second World War, for being linked with "Uniate traitors" and for participating in the destruction of peaceful Arab villages.

Changes in Orthodox Church Hierarchy

By decision of the Holy Synod (10 October 1978), Metropolitan Antoni of Minsk and Belorussia has been transferred to the diocese of Leningrad and Novgorod, formerly held by Metropolitan Nikodim who died on 5 September 1978. Metropolitan Antoni leaves his diocese after 13 years of service. He has been involved in the political and religious activities of the Moscow Patriarchate and has travelled extensively throughout the world.

Metropolitan Filaret of Berlin, Exarch of Central Europe, has been transferred to the Minsk and Belorussian diocese. Well-known for his activities in defence of peace and his involvement in external church affairs, he has been appointed Exarch of Western Europe.

The vacancies left by Metropolitan Filaret's transfer have been filled by Archbishop Melkhisedek, formerly of Penza and Saransk. Consecrated bishop in 1965, Metropolitan Melkhisedek served in three dioceses including the diocese of Vienna and Austria. He was once the priest at Peredelkino (the famous writers' colony outside Moscow). (*G2W Informationsdienst*, 24 October 1978, pp. 12-15)

Deaths of Abbess and Abbot

Igumenya Yelikonida, abbess of the Convent of the Protective Veil, in Kiev, died on 11 February 1978. Born in 1890, she entered the convent at the age of 18 as a nurse in their hospital. After taking vows in 1947, she served for 23 years (1942-65) as housekeeper and for nine years as treasurer. In 1974 she was elected abbess. Igumenya Yelikonida was known to all as a cheerful, energetic, and affectionate person.

Skhimarkhimandrit Gavriil of the St Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos died on 9 July 1977. He went there in 1924 when he was 23 years old and was tonsured two years later. Fr Gavriil served as abbot from 1971 until 1975, and then requested that he be relieved of that responsibility. He was known for his constant prayer. (*Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, 6/78, pp. 28-30)

Developments in the Orthodox Church

The church of the Prophet Elijah in the village of Vasknarva is being rebuilt. The three-altar stone church in the diocese of Tallin (Estonia) destroyed during World War II, was replaced by a smaller, temporary wooden one. Work on the new church is intensive with the parishioners taking the most active part. They have the blessing of their bishop, Metropolitan Alexei of Tallin and Estonia. According to the Metropolitan, new parishes have been established in Siberia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, with new churches nearing completion in Vladivostok, the Novgorod region and other dioceses. Two churches have been consecrated in Suzdal after restoration. Priests who graduated from seminaries and theological academies in 1977 have been assigned to 34 dioceses. More than 200 young men were to be admitted to seminaries in 1978. (*Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, 6/78, p. 25; TASS, 8 August 1978)

VIETNAM

Buddhist Leader Dies

The Ven. Thich Thien Minh, one of the leaders of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, died in prison in Ho Chi Minh City at the age of 57. He was first imprisoned in 1963 under President Ngo Dinh Diem's government. He narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in 1966. In 1969, under the presidency of Nguyen Van Thieu, he was sentenced to ten years' hard labour but was released after nine months following an international campaign on his behalf. The Ven. Thich Thien Minh was arrested and imprisoned for a third time in April 1977 following the communist take-over of South Vietnam. (*The Times*, 26 October 1978)