

For the Record

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Visit of Dr Potter

At the invitation of the Czech Ecumenical Council of Churches as well as the Czech and Slovak member Churches of the WCC in the CSSR, Dr Philip Potter, General Secretary of the WCC, paid a visit to Czechoslovakia between 12 and 18 November 1978. The main purpose of his visit was to discuss the programmes of the WCC with its member Churches in Czechoslovakia, and to learn more about the life of these Churches.

In the course of his stay, Dr Potter held discussions with leading representatives of the Orthodox and various Protestant Churches, talked to professors of the Protestant theological faculties and met top officials from the Christian Peace Conference. He was also received by Dr Karel Hruza, the Czechoslovak government's Secretary for Church Affairs.

Dr Potter's visit is interesting in the light of the appeal sent to him on 7 August 1978 by the Protestant clergyman Jan Dus, concerning his persecuted colleague Rev. Jan Simsa (See *RCL*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 72, Bibliography, Czechoslovak Religious Samizdat *CZ/1978/CZB* 12 and *Keston News Service* No. 61, 1978). At a press conference towards the end of his stay Dr Potter said, "I am glad that the governments of the socialist countries admit that the Churches need not accept the ideology of scientific atheism, and yet may participate in the construction of a new society on the basis of their faith." The sermon which he preached in a Prague church, however, may have been intended to reassure Czech and Slovak

Christians that he is aware of their problems - his text was Romans 8:31-39, which reads in part, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? ..." (*Czech Ecumenical News*, November 1978; *Kostnicke Jiskry*, 29 November 1978)

YUGOSLAVIA

Ecumenical Symposium

The third inter-faculty ecumenical symposium sponsored by the theological faculties of Ljubljana, Belgrade and Zagreb was held at Arandjelovac (Serbia) from 12 to 15 October with the theme "The Church in the Modern World". About a hundred people took part including representatives from the Macedonian Orthodox faculty in Skopje, the Protestant theological faculty in Zagreb and other theological schools. Organized by the Belgrade (Orthodox) theological faculty, students and professors from all three sponsoring faculties participated, as well as many people engaged in ecumenical and pastoral work. Dr Ahmed Smailovic of the Muslim theological faculty was among the guests. A reception was given by Dr Aleksandar Fira, member of the Executive Council and President of the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities of the Vojvodina.

The next symposium should be held in Ljubljana in two years' time on the theme "Spiritual Life in Our Country". The second was held in Dovran, near Rijeka in September 1976. (AKSA, 20 October 1978)

Children's Bible

An illustrated Albanian translation of the Croat Young People's Bible has been published by a Catholic press in Zagreb. On sale last summer for 150 dinars in Albanian Catholic churches in southern Yugoslavia, it is half the price of the Croatian edition. Apart from the recently published translation of St Matthew's Gospel, this is the only version of the Bible in Albanian which is officially obtainable in Yugoslavia.

Response to the New Pope

The daily press carried reports from Rome and Warsaw on the election of Pope John Paul II. *Vjesnik* of Zagreb described the new Pope as representative of that part of the Polish Church which stands for peaceful co-existence with socialist realities. The paper also discussed his possible successors and a papal visit to Poland. *Večernji List* (Zagreb) described the Pope as direct in his relations with both crowds and individuals but not a demagogue. He was also said to be contradictory, conservative or traditional in some things but progressive in others. The paper concludes that the organization and running of the Church will be democratized, but there is no reason to expect any important change in relations with Poland or other socialist States. Ivo Mihovilovic, well-known commentator on religious affairs, agreed that the new Pope is both traditionalist and progressive in an article "More John than Paul?" which appeared in *Nin*.

BULGARIA

State Council's Directives on Civil Ceremonies

On 23 May 1978 the State Council published a document entitled "Basic Directives on Developing and Perfecting the Holiday and Ceremonial System in the People's Republic of Bulgaria".

The first of the document's four sections is introductory. It explains that while the Communist Party is in favour of what is valuable and progressive in the national heritage, it nevertheless wages a struggle against the "reactionary and decadent" (presumably "religious") aspects. Socialist holidays, cere-

monies and symbols are seen as a way of educating the nation and its youth in "the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, socialist ideology, patriotism and internationalism". Individual state and public organs are criticized for underestimating their significance. The aim of the holiday and ceremonial system is to "strengthen the moral and political unity of the people" and to "endorse the socialist way of life".

The second section begins by stating the general tasks of the system. These include developing a materialist understanding of nature, society and man; inspiring love for and devotion to socialist Bulgaria; encouraging brotherly friendship with and loyalty to the USSR and other socialist countries; and showing forth the advantages of socialist humanism. Then, after discussing the importance of various categories of holidays, including national and international ones (e.g. New Year, May Day), the section deals with ceremonies (weddings, naming of children, funerals etc.). It emphasizes the visual and emotional aspects, and urges special care for funerals, where the ceremonies "must warm and reassure close friends and relatives". On the question of symbols to be used in the ceremonies, the main emphasis is on the national flag and coat of arms as well as communist symbols such as the red flag, five-pointed star, hammer and sickle etc. There is still a place for some of the symbols inherited from "the old culture" (though it is not specified which) once they have been "freed from mysticism and ambiguity".

Tasks are set for the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences which is to prepare: a "national classifier for the more important events in the life of society, collectives and families"; a national calendar of holidays; and a list of first names for new-born babies. Likewise, the Committee on Culture is to organize a selection of suitable words, music, symbols and other requisites; encourage well-known authors, artists and composers to contribute materials; and see that the media popularize the system.

The third section deals with the financial and material needs of the new system. The Council of Ministers is to adopt a national programme to run until 1990, involving among other things the development of a network of special

buildings for ceremonies and paying particular attention to the lay-out of cemeteries.

The final section deals with the management of the system, which is to be under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Culture and the Council of Ministers. The former is also to set up a "National Commission on Socialist Holidays and Ceremonies," whose membership is to include "leading Party, state and public figures". Similar commissions will be set up at local levels. Weddings, name-giving ceremonies, funerals, etc. will be organized by special "Ceremonial Centres", and officials who conduct such ceremonies will have to undergo special training.

The State Council, the document concludes, is confident that the directives will meet a "fully developed need", and will be "welcomed with satisfaction and understanding by the whole population". (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, 23 May 1978)

Criticism of Holiday and Ceremonial System

Two days after the State Council's directives on civil ceremonies were published in *Rabotnichesko Delo* on 23 May 1979, the paper printed the following two articles. The first was by Boris Tumangelov, a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Ethnographic Institute. He was especially critical of those officiating at civil ceremonies, describing them as "functionaries" instead of being creative "organizers" and claiming that their training was inadequate. He contrasted Bulgaria with Ukraine, where special bureaux exist which provide 22 kinds of service (e.g. transport and music) for civil ceremonies. In Bulgaria, he said, the "contemporary holidays and ceremonies" did not have enough "festive spirit" to "create a suitable sense of occasion . . ."

The second article was by Danka Ivanova, Head of the Ideology and Education Department of the National Council of the Fatherland Front. She claimed that her organization was studying the problems of the system, and that they were trying to give the basic civil ceremonies - name-givings, weddings and funerals - "a richer ideological and emotional content". She saw

this as "a sure way to overcome certain conservative traditions and religious anachronisms". (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, 25 May 1978)

HUNGARY

Professor of Theology Appointed

Mrs Klára Lenkey (née Semsey) is the first woman in Hungary to become professor of theology. The Presidium of the Reformed Synod, acting on the proposal of the faculty of the Debrecan Theological Academy and the recommendation of Bishop Dr Tibor Bartha, chairman of the special board of directors, appointed her to the Chair of New Testament of the Academy. Mrs Lenkey was formerly a lecturer of the Academy and on the staff of the Study Department of the Synodal Office.

The Chair of New Testament became vacant at the beginning of the academic year when Professor Dr Zsigmond Varga was transferred to the post of research professor. The transfer was made at his request because of his health and because he wanted to concentrate on scholarly projects, including the editing of a Greek-Hungarian dictionary of the New Testament. (*Hungarian Church Press*, v. 31/3, 1 February 1979)

POLAND

Bishops' Plenary Conference

The 166th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate took place on 28 and 29 November 1978 in Warsaw, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Wyszyński. Opening the conference, the Cardinal expressed his joy at the election of Cardinal Wojtyła as the new Pope John Paul II. A letter from the Pope was read out. Handing over officially his responsibilities as chairman of the committees for the lay apostolate and for Catholic education, the Pope stressed the "enormous importance" of this work, so "central in the spiritual battle that the Church is waging in Poland".

The conference agreed that 2 February should be a special day of prayer for the Pope and for his coming visit which, it was hoped, would coincide with the celebrations of St Stanislaus, the martyr bishop and patron of Poland.

"The 900th anniversary is of particular importance to the Church in Poland as St Stanislaus, through his contribution to social harmony, became a symbol of Polish unity." The conference also appealed to the Catholic press in Poland to devote special attention to the work of the Holy Father and to make available the full texts of his speeches. It appealed to the government to limit censorship and to allow Catholic periodicals to print an increased number of copies. The conference pointed out that over the years the allocation of paper for Catholic publications had decreased considerably and the quality of the paper had deteriorated. The bishops were particularly worried about the lack of catechisms for the young, not to mention the difficulties in publishing prayer books. "This has to be taken as limiting the rights of believers, and the argument that there is not enough paper cannot be taken seriously when so many books of doubtful value are published."

A pastoral programme for the Year of the Child has been worked out by the Episcopate, who expressed concern about the practice of abortion. The difficult working conditions of those employed in the mines, steelworks and state farms were also discussed. The bishops emphasized that workers must be allowed sufficient leisure time, particularly on Sundays and feast days. "The physical and moral health of the workers must on no account be endangered – not even to increase production – as healthy working conditions constitute a basic human right." (*Gazeta Niedzielną*, 14 January 1979)

State Dilemma after Papal Election

Since the statement issued by the Polish bishops after their November (1978) Plenary Conference, government policy towards the Church has not changed and the allocation of paper for the Catholic periodicals and publications has remained the same. The tension between the State and Church has increased as a result of the election of the Pope. On 20 December *Tygodnik Powszechny* was to have published the Pope's letter to the Diocese of Cracow, but the editors decided not to publish it because the local censors insisted on substantial cuts. The authorities were annoyed by

the reference to St Stanislaus as the "defender of human rights who did not hesitate if it were for the common good to risk conflict with the powers that be". In his letter, the Pope urged the Poles "not to be deterred by their daily preoccupations, faint-heartedness and self-interest from following the martyr's great example of concern for public morality". After the world-wide publicity given to the case, the authorities allowed the letter to be read in full in the churches of the diocese saying that the whole affair arose out of a misunderstanding on the local level.

Encouraged by the bishops, the editors of the Catholic monthlies *Znak* and *Wież* prepared entire issues devoted to the Pope. The censors, however, made so many cuts that the December issue of *Wież* could only appear in a mutilated form in February. *Znak* has also been delayed for three months. It seems that the censors were particularly worried about the interviews with prominent non-Catholic intellectuals, such as the film director Andrzej Wajda and the socialist Edward Lipinski. Lipinski sees the election of the Pope as a turning point in the world's present moral crisis, caused primarily by faith in "the omnipotence of scientific man to determine his future".

The Pope has made public so many times his wish to visit Poland in May that the mass media all over the world took a keen interest in speculating about whether and when he would be able to go. The Church in Poland sent an official invitation to the Pope last November, which was followed by numerous references to his visit in May made by the bishops and the Cardinal. On 24 January Cardinal Wyszyński had four hours of discussions with the Party leader, Mr Gierek, primarily about the visit. Yet no communiqué or invitation was issued by the government. It was not until a special day of prayer was held on 2 February in all the churches in Poland and the Plenary Conference met on 7-8 February, which expressed gratitude for "the Holy Father's unyielding resolve to come to Poland", that the government started to feel the pressure. A special delegation was sent to the Vatican on 22 February with a letter in which Cardinal Wyszyński asked the Pope to make the visit in May.

In the meantime, ROPCiO (the Movement for Human and Civil Rights) had begun to collect signatures for a petition to the State Council, stating that "the Pope had the right to come to his own country whenever he liked" and that "people should be given time off work to take part in the celebrations". The Party's opposition to a Papal visit which would coincide with the festivities on 8 May, however, could not be retracted as St Stanislaus was described in the Party weekly as "a very controversial person who undermined the lawful authority of the State".

Eventually on 2 March the government announced that the Pope's visit to Poland "had been fixed" for 2-10 June, almost a whole month after the 8 May anniversary. The Episcopate replied, however, by announcing that the national celebrations to mark the 900th anniversary of the death of St Stanislaus would be postponed to coincide with the Pope's visit.

Polish Mass Transmitted by Radio Vatican

Pope John Paul II inaugurated the transmission of the Mass in Polish by Radio Vatican on Sunday, 7 January 1979. The Mass will be broadcast in Polish every Sunday and feast-day at 4.30 p.m. This can be seen as the culmination of the Polish hierarchy's struggle to end discrimination against Catholics in the mass media. Following the pastoral letter of 17 September 1978, the government received a wave of petitions: on 22 September, 222 invalids sent an appeal for the Mass to be transmitted, and similar appeals were sent on 17 October by the Committee for the Self-Defence of Believers. Several people representing peasant Self-Defence Committees, were interrogated about the collection of signatures for the appeals in December (Stanisław Sudol on 20 December, Piotr Rusnarczyk on 22 December). Over 100,000 people have already signed similar protests.

In his sermon during the Mass on Vatican Radio the Pope expressed the hope that people of other countries would soon have the opportunity to hear the Mass broadcast in their native languages.

In the communiqué issued by the

166th Plenary Conference, the Polish bishops referred yet again to censorship and Radio Vatican broadcasts. Since a demand was made at the Conference in June 1975 for the Mass on the radio, not a year has passed without the hierarchy making an official statement about this need. (*Dziennik Polski*, 18 January 1978)

New Archbishop of Cracow

On 6 January 1979 Pope John Paul II consecrated Mgr Franciszek Macharski as Archbishop of Cracow. The 51-year-old priest, until then Rector of the Cracow Theological Seminary, fills the position recently vacated by the Pope himself.

Franciszek Macharski, born on 20 May 1927, attended an "underground" grammar school during the Nazi occupation of Poland. In 1945 he entered the Higher Theological Seminary in Cracow. Concurrently with his theological training he studied philosophy and theology at the Jagiellonian University, completing his MD in 1950. After his ordination he spent six years in a parish before studying for a doctorate in pastoral theology at the Catholic University of Freiburg in Switzerland. He obtained his PhD in 1960, and in 1961 started teaching at the Cracow Seminary where he became Rector in 1970.

The new archbishop is said to enjoy the complete trust of the Polish Episcopate, to be a capable administrator and to have good relations with students. He speaks fluent German, French, English and Italian and has travelled widely to various international conferences, including the Bishops' Synod in Rome in September-October 1977. He has served on many of the Polish Episcopate's committees, most notably as secretary to the Commission for the Apostleship of Laymen, which was headed by Cardinal Wojtyła.

Evangelical Synod Meets

The Ninth Synod of the United Evangelical Church took place in Warsaw on 11 November 1978. The Synod discussed the work of the Church and elected a new Church Council to be in office until 1981. The Council then proceeded to the election of a seven-man presidium. The president of the Church continues

to be Pastor Kostanty Sacewicz. (*Chrzescijanin*, January 1979, p. 17)

Baptist Anniversary

Baptists celebrated their 120th anniversary in November 1978 with a conference on evangelism for the benefit of their own church workers. Guests from Western and Eastern Europe and North America attended. The three Bulgarian visitors were the first since before the Second World War. A telegram of congratulations was received from Billy Graham. (*Słowo Prawdy*, No. 1, 1979 p. 22)

SOVIET UNION

New Abbess Appointed

By decision of Patriarch Pimen, Sister Margarita was consecrated Abbess of the Pokrovsky [Protective Veil] Convent (Kiev) by Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Galicia, Patriarchal Exarch of Ukraine, at a service of the Divine Liturgy on 9 April 1978. She succeeds Abbess Yelikonida who died on 11 February 1978.

Abbess Margarita was born Maria Stepanova Zyukina in the village of Begoshcha (Kursk region) on 22 June 1928. After primary school she worked in various factories, and in 1950 entered the Pokrovsky Convent as a novice. On 2 January 1969, under the blessing of Metropolitan Filaret, she was tonsured as a nun and received the name of Margarita. (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 11, 1978, pp. 22-3)

New Lutheran Archbishop for Estonia

Edgar Hark was consecrated Archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church during a ceremony in Tallin's Dom Cathedral on 31 October 1978. In attendance for the ceremony were Carl Mau and P. Hansen, General Secretary and European Secretary respectively, of the Lutheran World Federation. Also present were Archbishop M. Juva of the Finnish Lutheran Church, Bishop Z. Kaldy of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, Bishop A. Kastlund of the Swedish Lutheran Church, Metropolitan Alexi of Tallin and Estonia of the Russian Orthodox Church and L. Piip, the

Plenipotentiary of the Estonian Council for Religious Affairs.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Archbishop Hark was awarded by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR the Order of the Friendship of Nations for his activities in defence of peace. (*Sovetskaya Estoniya*, 1 November 1978, p. 3; *Molodyozh Estonii*, 10 October 1978, p. 13)

Priest Appointed to Patriarchal Cathedral

His Holiness, Patriarch Pimen has appointed (9 June 1978) Archpriest Matfei Stadnyuk, until now priest-in-charge of the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Lefortovo, priest-in-charge of the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany in Moscow. This position was formerly held by Fr Vitali Borovoi who is now at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. Ten days after the issuing of this decree, Archpriest Matfei was made proto-presbyter.

Matfei Savvich Stadnyuk was born on 22 September 1925 in the village of Zalestsy in Ternopol district. He was ordained deacon in 1945 by the late Archbishop Iov (Kresovich). One year later Fr Matfei was ordained priest. Completing the Moscow Theological Academy in 1955 he received the degree of Candidate of Theology. He has been very active in church life, serving on the Curriculum Committee since 1955 as well as in the Department of External Church Relations. In 1973 he was appointed secretary to the Patriarch. (*The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 9/78, p. 14)

Obituary of Archbishop Yermogen

The official obituary of Archbishop Yermogen (Golubev) was published in the November 1978 issue of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, p. 21. It gives a detailed account of most of his monastic and episcopal life, from his birth in Kiev in 1896 until his death on 7 April 1978 in retirement in the Monastery of the Dormition in Zhirovitsy, Belorussia. The obituary quotes an excerpt from his speech on the occasion of his consecration as bishop in 1953:

"I am glad that I can testify, not only before you, but also before the whole Church, that my past has been in

God. Even in the days of my youth I renounced many things for the Lord . . . I gave him my heart, my thoughts worked for him and my will served him. And even though I have sinned as a man, yet I never departed from him, my Lord, and I have always been faithful to His Holy Church."

There are, however, two significant gaps in the official biography. The first is from 1931-1945. During this period the then Archimandrite Yermogen was, like many other priests, bishops and laymen of the time, sentenced to a term in labour camp. The second gap is from 1963-1977. The obituary does not mention that he was forcibly retired in 1965 for his role in organizing a delegation of eight bishops to the Patriarch, demanding that the decisions of the 1961 Synod of Bishops be rescinded because they were uncanonical. Archbishop Yermogen was made to serve his retirement in Belorussia. He has been buried in Kiev near his relatives.

Theological Students

The GDR newspaper *Der Sonntag* (19 November 1978) reports an increase in the number of theological students studying at the Theological Seminaries of Zagorsk, Leningrad and Odessa. Four hundred and forty new students were admitted in 1978. In addition there are 820 correspondence students. Approximately 300 students are studying at the Leningrad Seminary and Theological Academy and about 200 in Odessa. In all, more than 1,700 future priests are being trained for the Russian Orthodox Church.

Information from another source states that included in the Leningrad total are about ten foreign students. In addition two or three students, who are resident abroad, come to Leningrad approximately every six months to take their exams, and will eventually graduate.

AUCECB Meets

A plenary meeting of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (AUCECB) took place on 11-12 May 1978 in Moscow. The meeting reviewed the work of the Union during the previous year, and issued appeals for

unity to the unregistered Council of Churches and to Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) who do not belong to the Union. Since 1970, 174 churches had been registered, 62 of them in 1977 alone. Seven thousand five hundred members were baptised in 1977, and over the previous 15 years almost 100,000 new members were received. Christian literature had been imported from abroad and printed in the USSR, and the Union would continue to try to meet the needs of the churches for literature. Addressing the Pentecostals, the AUCECB welcomed their good relations with registered Pentecostal churches outside the Union, and pointed out that ten Pentecostals from autonomous churches were enrolled on the Union's Bible correspondence course, and that Bibles and hymn-books in Russian and German had been supplied to autonomous Pentecostal churches. (*Bratsky Vestnik*, No. 4, 1978, pp. 26-50)

New Church for Baptists

The newly registered Baptist congregation in the town of Mytishchi, 19 kilometres from the centre of Moscow, has a new church building. It seats 450 people and is easy to reach by public transport. The Baptist World Alliance has offered \$50,000 for the construction of a second Baptist church within the city of Moscow to provide much needed extra facilities, particularly a theological seminary. The new building offers no scope for development along these lines. (*Keston News Service*, No. 59, 25 October 1978)

Appeals from Adventists

During 1978 the All-Union Church of True and Free Seventh-Day Adventists issued a number of important *samizdat* documents appealing to world public opinion on behalf of their 83-year-old leader, V. A. Shelkov, arrested on 14 March, and other persecuted Adventists. One of these documents is a copy of the official police record of the search carried out at Shelkov's home in Tashkent prior to his arrest. It includes Shelkov's written refusal to sign the search record, as only one of the searchers was mentioned on the warrant, and all religious literature was automatically classified as libellous although it was directed not

against the Soviet system but against the state atheist dictatorship. In April 1978 an Adventist Group for Legal Struggle and Investigation of Facts concerning Persecution of Believers in the USSR was established. It has issued four appeals to world public opinion, human rights organizations and world leaders. The Group for Legal Struggle aims to provide facts about the persecution of citizens for their religious beliefs, and to unmask the "criminal despotism" of atheist ideology, which is unlawfully identified with the State. The Adventist Council appeals to defenders of justice throughout the world to support V. A. Shelkov and to reject the untrue charges against him, as his activity is purely religious and concerned with legality and human rights. The Adventist Group for Legal Struggle asks all foreign press agencies and radio stations to translate and publicize their material, to enlighten those who are deceived and used by state atheism.

Proposed International Pact on Religious Rights

The Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR, based in Moscow, and the newly-formed Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights, based in Lithuania, have asked that the United Nations adopt a "Pact on Religious Rights" or a "Convention on the Struggle with Discrimination in the Field of Religion" in a letter dated 22 November 1978. This letter is addressed to the Pope, the heads of Orthodox autocephalous churches, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the World Council of Churches, public committees to defend the rights of believers and President Carter.

They propose that if such a pact or convention were adopted by the United Nations it would put pressure on countries, like the Soviet Union, which proclaim freedom of conscience and enshrine it in law, but at the same time persecute religious believers.

The two Committees feel that oppression of freedom of conscience is a relatively recent and deeply disturbing phenomenon, symptomatic of the rise of totalitarian regimes which aim to control a man's entire life. They believe that, following Christ's teaching, we

should guard against oppression of the soul even more than against oppression of the body.

Believers in Psychiatric Hospitals

Anatoli Ponomaryov, aged 46, an Orthodox Christian, was released from Leningrad Psychiatric Hospital No. 3 in 1978 after being forcibly hospitalized several times since 1970. He was arrested and recommitted to the same hospital on 14 December 1978.

Alexander Kuzkin, 29, a member of the Christian seminar led by Alexander Ogorodnikov, was detained at work on 11 November 1978 and taken to Moscow Regional Central Psychiatric Hospital. Mr Kuzkin was later transferred to the psychiatric hospital nearest his home in Abramtsevo, Moscow region, where he is reported to be undergoing "intensive treatment".

In 1972 Vladimir Veretennikov, who was forcibly hospitalized in Leningrad Psychiatric Hospital No. 5 after distributing leaflets of a religious nature in support of Alexander Ginzburg, was temporarily detained and, it is reported, given a course of electric shock therapy as well as treatment with the drugs haloperidol, aminazin and sulphazin. Released in July, he was detained temporarily in a psychiatric hospital near Gatchina during the period of the October holiday (anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution). (*Continuing Psychiatric Abuses in the Soviet Union*, Amnesty International, 22 January 1979)

Psychiatric Abuse

Eastern-rite Catholic Iosif (Yosyp) Mikhailovich Terelya, in Dnepropetrovsk Special Psychiatric Hospital since September 1977, has reportedly been treated with the depressant drugs stelazine and benzhexol. (*Amnesty International Newsletter*, No. 11, 11/78, p. 2)

Parishioners Excommunicated

Five parishioners of the Church of the Assumption, Pavlograd, were excommunicated by an Edict from Archbishop Leonti of Simferopol and Crimea, read on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul apparently in 1978. These five, plus nine others, had written two (undated) letters

to Patriarch Pimen stating that their church was in disrepair and that parish life was falling into disorder. Their priest, Fr Sergi, appealed to the parishioners to put matters in order. As the churchwarden and parish council refused to do anything, the letter-writers decided to join the parish council but met with opposition principally from officials of the government's Council for Religious Affairs. Some parishioners went to Archbishop Leonti who gave them advice and encouragement. They were greatly shocked therefore by the Edict of Excommunication, and feel that pressure may have been put on the Archbishop to do this. They asked Patriarch Pimen to intervene in the matter.

A letter from one of the five excommunicated parishioners, Anastasia Bochkareva, dated 18 August 1978, indicates that her excommunication has been revoked. It is not known whether or not this applies to the other four.

The Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR takes up the case in a letter to the Patriarch, dated 5 August 1978, asking him to examine the case and, if possible, restore the excommunicated parishioners. They state that if this is not done, and if no bishop in Russia will receive them, they could appeal to a bishop of one of the autocephalous Russian Orthodox Churches abroad to receive them. Precedents for this exist: in the USA there are parishes which remained under the Moscow Patriarchate after the American Church became autocephalous. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 4, pp. 434-7 and Vol. 5, Part 1, pp. 689-96, published in Russian by Washington Research Center, 3101 Washington Street, San Francisco, CA 94115, USA)

Campaign Against Young Believers

In late September 1978 Fr Dmitri Dudko was summoned to the local authorities. They demanded that he stop trying to interest young people in religion and the Church. Calling him one of the Black Hundreds, they portrayed him as an arch-reactionary and monarchist. Fr Dudko refused to give in to their demands. In the city of Izhevsk (Udmurtskaya ASSR), the clergy have

been warned by Shmalnov, representative of the Council for Religious Affairs, not to hear the confessions of young people. Young pilgrims (under 40 years of age) are regularly detained and fined at the Pochaev Monastery and the St Sergius-Holy Trinity Monastery at Zagorsk. (*G2W Informationsdienst*, 24 October 1978, pp. 8-9)

Growth of Georgian Orthodox Church

On 24 December 1978 the Georgian Orthodox Church celebrated the first anniversary of the election of Catholicos Patriarch Ilya II. During his first year a record number of seven diocesan bishops were appointed while three retired. (One of the three was Metropolitan Gaioz, accused in Georgian *samizdat* of corruption and immorality, who is reported to be in prison for misappropriation of nationalized church property.) Priests have been assigned to several churches which previously had no pastor; a department of foreign relations has been set up under Archbishop Nikolai of Sukhumi; a journal was founded; a modern Georgian translation of the Bible is in progress; and the number of seminarians has grown. There is a growing search for spiritual values among young people, and increasing interest in the Church on the part of the intelligentsia. (*Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, No. 35, February 1979, p. 3)

Faked Confession

At their trials (15-19 May 1978) Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava, both Georgian Orthodox Christians and members of the Georgian Helsinki Monitoring Group, were each sentenced to three years' imprisonment and two years' exile. At the same time, a "confession", allegedly made by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was broadcast on Soviet television. Two American correspondents, Craig Whitney of the *New York Times* and Hal Piper of the *Baltimore Sun*, reported that the "confession" bore marks of possible fabrication. As a result they were taken to court by the Soviet television company. The case caused concern among foreign correspondents in Moscow, who thought it might mean that any reports sent out by them would be censored.

A statement by Fr Gleb Yakunin,

dated 2 July, reported that Gamsakhurdia's wife had been permitted to see her husband after the trial. Her husband told her that he had no knowledge of any television broadcast being recorded, and did not know when it could have been recorded secretly. According to the latest information, Gamsakhurdia's sentence has been commuted to a term of internal exile, which he is serving somewhere in Georgia.

Church Re-opened

An Armenian Catholic church which was being used as a fertiliser warehouse in Tshalbili, Georgian Republic, was re-opened as a church by a group of believers at the end of December 1977. The believers were evicted by the militia. On 29 March 1978 all of the villagers entered the church to pray. The authorities later offered to repair the church and to convert it into a museum, saying that it could still be used for church services, but the believers declined the offer. They asked that the church be left as a church, and said that they would collect money for its restoration themselves. (*Chronicle of Current Events*, No. 49)

MALAGASY

Bishops' Statement

The Roman Catholic bishops, under the leadership of Cardinal Victor Razafimahatratra, issued a joint statement at their annual meeting about the anti-religious policy of President Didier Ratsiraka's Marxist government. The three-part statement was issued at Tananarive on 23 November 1977.

Entitled "Joy and Hope, Fear and Pain" the first section points out that insecurity, corruption, tribalism and the bad supply system are obstacles in the path leading to a more just society for the Malagasian people.

The second part, "Becoming aware of the hope which is in you" (1 Peter 3:15) deals with the government's anti-religious policy and the rights of freedom of religion and opinion. Through the use of revolutionary slogans, songs and plays, the revival of ancient practices like the "tangena" and other tools, the State attempts to undermine the family

and community in order to eliminate religion.

According to the third section, "The Truth will set you free" (John 8:32), Marxism turns "man into a simple cog in collective production". For Christians "there can be only one passion: man respected in his entire truth, in his entire dignity". Any form of revolution which aims to "curtail any of man's dimensions" is rejected.

The bishops conclude with an appeal to Catholic Christians that they build up their nation, and propagate the values of the human person. (*Informationsdienst, Kirche in Not/Ostpriesterhilfe e.V.*, 78/114/2, 1979-01-29)

MOZAMBIQUE

Churches Closed

Increased tension between the Marxist regime and the Christian Churches led to the closure of the Anglican cathedral at Maciene, as well as a number of other churches in the province of Gaza in the south of Mozambique. The Roman Catholics with about 1,500,000 adherents, have had 15 of their churches closed, and missionaries in the northernmost province, Cabo Delgado, are confined to the coastal town of Pemba.

The government is opposed to all religions, viewing them as enemies of its own doctrines. President Machel has attacked Islam as well as Christianity, but does not appear to have ordered the closure of mosques. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 22 February 1979)

CHINA

Tibetans Released

The Dalai Lama, 43-year-old Tibetan Buddhist leader who led the 1959 rebellion against Tibet's integration with China, was apparently included in China's call to all Tibetan exiles to return home. The appeal was coupled with an announcement on 15 November of the release of all "important prisoners" from the former Tibetan ruling group. On 4 November the *New China News Agency* reported the release of 24 "criminals" by the Tibet autonomous region security organs as a gesture of leniency. (*The Times*, 16 November 1978)