

# For the Record

## POLAND

### *Press Coverage of Papal Visit*

A draft of proposed instructions on press coverage of Pope John Paul II's visit to Poland was drawn up in May by the PUWP (Polish United Workers' Party) Central Committee's Department of the Press, Radio and Television. The draft proposals, intended for internal use only within the Department, gave a broad outline of the allocation of tasks among the Polish journalists, assigned to cover the Pope's visit, and of the principles to be followed by the media in their coverage of the event. The document named the various groups of secular and Catholic press from which journalists would be accredited to cover the papal visit. It emphasized that the standard practice of censorship was to be observed for all material connected directly or indirectly with the Pope's visit, and proposed the appointment of a group of journalists who were experts in religious affairs to act as advisers to the various editorial offices. Apart from the Catholic press, the Polish Press Agency was to have exclusive rights to provide information about the Pope's visit. (Radio Free Europe Background Report/151 [Poland], 6 July 1979)

### *Corpus Christi Processions*

For the first time in 40 years, the Corpus Christi procession in Krakow took the royal route from Wawel Castle to St Mary's Church in the market place. The Archbishop of Krakow, Franciszek Macharski, thanked the municipal authorities for permission to use the route. Some 25,000 people took part.

Cardinal Wyszynski led the procession in Warsaw in which 30,000 people took part. Polish radio and television reported on the celebrations throughout Poland. (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 19 June 1979)

## YUGOSLAVIA

### *Comments on the Pope's Visit to Poland*

Comments on the Pope's visit to Poland appeared in many Yugoslav papers. *Vjesnik* (Zagreb, 10 June), under the headline "The Pope's Vision of the Spiritual Unity of Europe", said that his vision had opened to include the whole world, and outlined more clearly than ever before the programme for his pastoral mission. The report commented that the visit to Auschwitz had been the most important event in his pilgrimage. *Vjesnik* (11 June) commented that the Pope's visit had strengthened the Polish Church, while Polish socialist society now had a partner with which it must reckon. While there are increasing differences, both sides have a common language for the things which concern the progress of Poland and its development. "By proclaiming the idea of the unity of all Christendom, West and East, the Pope has undertaken a new struggle for the future of the Catholic Church in general." The report ends: "One of the youngest Popes in the history of Catholicism, in his 59th year and in excellent physical and mental condition, is making a new strategy, a new platform which will enable the Church in the coming age not only to exist but also to expand."

*Borba* (Zagreb, 13 June) said that the Pope disappointed those who saw in his

pilgrimage a barrel of gunpowder which would explode somewhere. The dialogue between Polish Marxists and the Catholics would be strengthened. *Politika* (Belgrade, 11 June) reported that at least eight million people came out onto the streets of the cities. The Pope knows Polish realities well and has formulated his strategy for the next decades, so that the expansion of the Catholic Church in the Third World should be focused towards the countries of Eastern Europe. *Delo* (Ljubljana, 9, 11, 13 June) carried three articles from its Warsaw correspondent under the heading "The Pope Conquers Europe" and "An Event without Precedent". The last article spoke of the favourable judgement of the Polish government and press on the Pope's visit. *NIN* (Belgrade, 10 June) headlined its report "Under the Sign of the Cross" and wrote that the Pope's visit had shown the strength of the Church and the inevitability of normal relations with the State. The Pope's journey was likened as much to a pilgrimage as to a crusade. (AKSA, 15 June 1979)

#### *Approval for Pope*

General approval for Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptor hominis* was expressed in an article by Sime Pierotti (pseudonym of a Croat who is a member of the Federal Executive Council) which appeared in *Vjesnik* on 26 May 1979. He pointed out the similarities between the thinking of the Pope and that of the late Edward Kardelj on policy towards alleviating the poverty of three-quarters of mankind. (AKSA, 1 June 1979)

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

#### *Blackout on Pope's Visit*

The Czech press had very little to say about the Pope's visit to Poland earlier this year. The Catholic weekly, *Katolicke noviny* of 10 June, published a ten-line report on the pontiff's arrival in Warsaw on 2 June. Readers learned that Pope John Paul II was greeted at the airport by Henryk Jablonski, President of the Polish People's Republic, and that he then went to Belvedere Palace for a meeting with Party leader Edward Gierk and President Jablonski. Reports of similar length and content were carried on 4 June by the national dailies *Rude pravo*

and *Lidova demokracie*. There was no mention whatsoever of the open-air Mass celebrated by the Pope that same afternoon before a vast crowd of Polish faithful. On 17 June *Katolicke noviny* carried a six-line account of the Pope's departure, reporting that he was seen off at Krakow airport by President Jablonski on 10 June. It appeared that the communist authorities, fearful lest the upsurge of religious feeling in Poland should spread to their own country, were attempting to keep Czechoslovak citizens in almost total ignorance of the historic event. No further information about the papal visit reached the pages of the Czech newspapers until 24 June, when *Katolicke noviny* published a day-by-day summary of the Pope's movements. Although it conveyed to some extent the religious nature of the visit, the article was couched in very neutral terms and avoided any reference to the large crowds, or to those passages of the Pope's homilies which were specifically religious, or in some way "controversial". (*Katolicke noviny*, 10, 17, 24 June 1979; *Novy zivot*, July-August 1979)

#### *Czech Ecumenical Bible*

The printing of the new Czech ecumenical translation of the Bible is to commence on 20 September 1979. The paper will be purchased in Austria with financial assistance from the United Bible Societies, but the actual printing will be carried out in Prague. Owing to the limited storage space available for the paper, the new Bible will be published in two stages - 60,000 copies this year and a further 60,000 copies next spring. The Bibles will be distributed among the member churches of the Czech Ecumenical Council of Churches, i.e. among the various Protestant churches, the Orthodox Church and the Old Catholic Church.

This year Czech Christians are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of the first part of a translation of the Bible, later known as the Kralice Bible. This translation has much the same significance for Czech speakers as the Authorized Version has in the English language. (*Kostnicke jiskry*, 8 August 1979, p. 1; *Czech Ecumenical News*, June 1979, p. 1)

*Pope's Letter Censored*

On 2 March Pope John Paul II sent a letter to Cardinal Tomášek, Archbishop of Prague, to mark the 250th anniversary of the canonization of St John Nepomucene, the patron saint of Bohemia. It reads in part: "since he (St John Nepomucene), more than others, defended the rights and the legitimate freedom of the Church in opposition to the wishes of King Wenceslas IV, more than others he drew upon himself the anger of the monarch." The Pope's letter did not appear in any form in Czechoslovakia. Evidently, the censors did not allow it to be published. However, a number of articles attacking the saint appeared in the Czech press. For example, *Rude pravo* of 2 June published an article entitled "Legenda a politikum" in which the author claimed that to fight against John Nepomucene was to fight for freedom from obscurantism; and *Tribuna*, May 1979, published an article entitled "Saint of Jesuit Darkness". The text of the letter was eventually published in the Vatican weekly, *L'Osservatore Romano*, on 25 June.

## ROMANIA

*New Ruling for Hungarian Reformed Church Prevented*

On 1 January 1979 Gyula Nagy, Bishop of Cluj, replaced Laszlo Pap, Bishop of Oradea, as President of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania. The office is held for four years at a time.

The Synod rejected resolutions, proposed by Bishop Pap before he left office, which called for a new code of discipline for priests, and authorized the administrative transfer of priests. If the resolutions had been passed the autonomy of the Hungarian Reformed parishes would have been further reduced, and the priests further hindered in carrying out their duties. The six deaneries of the bishopric of Oradea voted in favour of the resolutions while the six deaneries of the bishopric of Cluj voted against them. A majority of 51 per cent was needed. The proposal will appear again this year on the Synod's agenda. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 18 April 1979, p. 7)

*Patriarch Visits USA and Canada*

His Holiness the Romanian Patriarch Justin Moisescu visited the USA and Canada from 25 April to 5 May 1979. It was the first visit to these countries by a reigning Romanian Patriarch and it had two purposes. The first was to facilitate the renewal of the Most Favoured Nation status for Romania, and the second presumed aim was to attempt reconciliation between the two Romanian Orthodox Churches in America.

The Romanian media gave little coverage to the visit. The Patriarch was accompanied by Teochtist Arapas, the Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava, and Nicolae Corneanu, the Metropolitan of the Banat. (Radio Free Europe, Romanian Situation Report /10, 29 May 1979, pp. 6-7)

## EAST GERMANY

*Improvement in Church-State Relations*

The Lutheran regional church of Mecklenburg presented a review of church-state relations since 6 March 1978 to the regional synod's conference which was held in mid March 1979. Since the founding of the GDR, Marxism-Leninism - and with it atheism - had challenged the Church and brought it to a more conscious faith and Christian lifestyle. The report highlighted that provision had been made for church services and pastoral work to take place in state nursing homes and old people's homes and in some prisons. Of particular significance for the rural regional church of Mecklenburg were the negotiations which had begun with the appropriate state organs for payment for church acreage being used for state farming. Thus far the church had received only partial payment for the use of its land. (*Potsdamer Kirche*, 15 April 1979, p. 8)

*TV Documentary on Church*

For the first time ever, a documentary film on church life was shown on the first channel of East German television on Tuesday, 15 May. The camera crew spent a year compiling the documentary, filming various churches and charitable institutions "in order to show the variety of church life in East Germany". The

film included scenes of the Evangelical Church Conference held in Erfurt in 1978, a Catholic pilgrimage in Eichsfeld, a Jewish Sabbath celebration, and a church of Seventh-Day Adventists. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 22 May 1979, p. 5)

#### *Lutherans Publish Statements on Church*

Shortly before the meeting of the general synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Plauen from 7 to 10 June, the church leadership published 35 statements entitled "Reflections on our understanding of the Church" formulating the Lutheran viewpoint. This theological document is likely to acquire particular significance in view of the proposed plan to bring all the Protestant Churches in East Germany together in a United Evangelical Church. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 6 June 1979, p. 1, and 12 June 1979, p. 1)

#### CHINA

#### *New Policy on Religion*

At a joint gathering of representatives of Buddhism and Islam as well as Catholics and Protestants attending the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress, the Chinese government announced a policy of freedom of religion. Xiao Xianfa, Director of the Chinese Religious Affairs Bureau, said that the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government had long accepted religious freedom but the policy had been sabotaged by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. In 1978 President Hua had announced that the Chinese government wished to promote the policy of freedom of religion in accordance with the Constitution. (*AKSA*, 13 July 1979)

#### TIBET

#### *Unrest in Tibet*

Tibetans loyal to the Dalai Lama, who now lives in exile in India, put up wall posters throughout Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and on the walls of Potala Palace, the former residence of the Dalai Lama. The posters declared independence from Chinese rule and demanded the return of Tibet's spiritual and temporal leader. A few weeks later, in mid-June, the Dalai Lama's supporters staged a march

demanding his return and independence for Tibet. Four demonstrators were subsequently shot by the Chinese Army in Ghanot Town.

There are many Chinese civilians and soldiers in Tibet. Some estimates in Peking put the number of Chinese settlers as high as 700,000, while officials in Lhasa give a figure of 120,000, insisting that the Chinese settlers were introduced to help the Tibetan people advance into the modern age. However, it was evident to a group of foreign correspondents visiting Tibet in June that relations between the Chinese and Tibetan communities were somewhat strained.

Although some of the people who made public statements in Peking and Shanghai, asking the Dalai Lama to return, were Chinese government officials, a group of Indian journalists, who recently visited Lhasa, were told by officials there that if the Dalai Lama ever returned to Tibet, his status would be that of a Buddhist monk, not ruler of the Himalayan Kingdom of Tibet.

Tsultrim Tersey, a Tibetan refugee and graduate of the University of Florence, was able to visit Tibet in May. He interviewed some 1,300 Tibetans while staying with his parents in Lhasa and recorded that the majority wanted to be independent of China and revere the Dalai Lama. However, Losang Pingcuo, 61, head of the lama monks at Jokhang temple (Lhasa's main Buddhist temple), told foreign correspondents that he no longer regarded the exiled Dalai Lama as the spiritual leader of Tibet.

The Lama-Buddhist Church in Tibet is now administered by the Chinese Office for the Preservation of Cultural Relics, which pays for the upkeep of the few remaining monasteries and the wages of the old lamas who are fast dying out. There are now officially said to be only ten monasteries still functioning in Tibet, compared with 2,469 in 1960 (the year after the Chinese invasion and the subsequent flight of the Dalai Lama to India). According to official figures published recently in Peking, there were more than 110,000 lamas and nuns in Tibet in 1960. Today however, only about 2,000 practising lamas remain, and in the past 20 years no young men have entered any Tibetan monastery. (*Daily Telegraph*, 2, 19 June; 5, 19, 20, 26 July 1979)