

# News in Brief

## BULGARIA

### *Commissions for Socialist Holidays and Rituals*

Decree No. 53 of the Council of Ministers of 20 October 1978 makes provision for the setting up of commissions for socialist holidays and rituals, and lays down the rules by which they are to operate. A national commission is to be formed attached to the Committee for Culture, as well as regional commissions attached to regional councils, and municipal commissions attached to town and village municipal councils. They are to direct, co-ordinate and control all activities connected with the holiday-ceremonial system in state organs and social organizations, scientific and cultural institutes and economic organizations. The commissions are also to be responsible for systematically checking and improving the ideological, political, moral and aesthetic content of socialist holidays and rituals. (*Durzhaven Vestnik*, 27 October 1978; *Rabotnichesko Delo*, 28 October 1978)

### *Patriarch Maxim Visits USA and Canada*

Patriarch Maxim visited the USA and Canada in September 1978 at the invitation of the Bulgarian Orthodox dioceses in these countries. While in the USA he met Bulgarian Orthodox and other Orthodox clergy and consecrated the newly built cathedral in Akron, Ohio. Patriarch Maxim also met various political figures, including Dr Kurt Waldheim, the UN General Secretary, and the Chairman of the 33rd session of the UN. After his return from America Patriarch Maxim gave a report of his visit to Todor Zhivkov, the Bulgarian head of State, on 19 January

1979. Lyubomir Popov, the new minister for questions relating to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and religious cults, was also present at this meeting. (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, 7 September 1978; *Tsurkoven Vestnik*, 1 February 1979)

### *Orthodox Clergy Visit the Pope*

A group of Bulgarian Orthodox clergy, headed by Metropolitan Pankratii of Stara Zagora, visited the Pope in May 1979. The group also paid the traditional visit to the tomb of St Cyril in Rome, presumably on St Cyril's Day (24 May). In a speech to the Pope on 25 May, Metropolitan Pankratii conveyed greetings to John Paul II from Patriarch Maxim, expressed appreciation that the Pope was a fellow Slav, and made a general statement of friendship between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. (*Tsurkoven Vestnik*, 11 July 1979)

### *Local Paper Attacks Evangelistic Activity*

In an article entitled "No one has given you such rights" the Burgas local paper published an attack on the proselytizing activities of believers in general and of three in particular. The three named in the article are Yulia Yaneva Dolchinkova and Yanko Hristo Zlatev, both Eastern-rite Orthodox believers, and Dinyo Rusev Mitev whose denomination is not given but who is referred to as an "evangelist". Dolchinkova is middle aged, works as a nurse at the 4th Polyclinic in Burgas, and attends the church of SS Cyril and Methodius with her child. She shares her faith, it is reported, with all those with whom she comes into contact. Zlatev is in his 50s, works as a planner at a Burgas cable combine, and is a member of the

choir at the same church. The paper alleges that he used to take pornographic photographs, but now copies out passages from religious books and distributes them. Mitev, who retired early due to illness, now has a small private workshop which is full of religious pictures and "looks like an art gallery". He shares his faith with all who come to the workshop. When questioned, all three asserted that the Constitution gives them the right to act in this way. But the writer of the article emphatically denies this, saying that the Constitution only gives them the right to hold their own personal belief, and that they have no right whatsoever to share their beliefs with others. (*Chernomorški Front*, 12 December 1978)

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

##### *Priests Condemn Pacem in Terris*

On 8 October 1979 a group of Catholic priests sent a letter to the second National Conference of Pacem in Terris, the government-sponsored association for priests, which was meeting in Hradec Králové. The priests accused members of the organization of collaborating with the regime, of fostering the growth of atheism in Czechoslovakia and falsifying the pronouncements of Pope John Paul II. They also protested at the "peace priests'" claim that they were the only ones struggling for peace. "A peaceful world", they argued, "is the goal of all Christians."

##### *Party's View of Pope*

The latest manual of instructions for the training of new Party activists described the Pope as "the greatest anti-communist ever to occupy such a position in the Vatican" and "the last hope of capitalists and imperialists, who had long realized that they could not defeat socialism with political, military and economic means". It is suggested that "it will be necessary to renew jamming of Radio Vatican". Most of Radio Vatican's broadcasts are in fact already inaudible since the stronger transmitters of Radio Hvezda broadcast on the same wavelength. (*Nový Život*, No. 11, October 1979)

##### *Catholics Arrested*

On 10 September 1979, in a concerted action in many parts of the country, the

State Security police searched the homes of and interrogated many Catholics, including several priests. This action was connected with the case of Jan Krumpholc from Olomouc. A printing press and a stock of clandestinely printed books were discovered in his home on 10 September. Eleven people were arrested, at least eight of whom have been remanded in custody. Those known to be in prison are Fr František Lizna SJ (38) from Olomouc, Josef Adámek (65), a former printer from Brno, Jan Krumpholc from Olomouc, Fr Rudolf Smahel SJ from Uherský Brod, Josef Vlček and Jiří Kaplan (54) from Prague. Five of them have been accused of "duplicating and disseminating unofficial religious literature" and charged under Art. 118 of the Penal Code with "illicit trading". This charge carries a prison term of six months to three years.

Among the many publications confiscated were Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, writings of the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, and a book on the Taizé community by its Prior, Roger Schutz. Two titles already set up in print were a collection of letters by Ladislav Hejdiánek, the Protestant philosopher and Charter 77 spokesman, and a short history of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, which was very critical of Pacem in Terris, the pro-regime association of priests re-established in the wake of the Soviet invasion in 1968.

Fr Josef Zvěřina SJ, a prominent theologian, has also been charged, but under Art. 178 of the Penal Code ("obstructing state supervision of the Church"), presumably because he contributed articles to the clandestine publications. It is expected that charges will also be brought against Měčišlav Razík from Brno, Josef Brtník from Všivice, Svatopluk Krumpholc (son of Jan Krumpholc), and Dr Silvestr Krčméry, a prominent layman from Bratislava.

The trial of eleven Catholics is the largest trial of believers in Czechoslovakia since the mid-'50s. It is a result of the increasing persecution of the Church and the growing tension between non-conformist Catholics and their hierarchy.

##### *Comment on the Vatican's Ostpolitik*

A leading article entitled "What direction will the Vatican take?" appeared in the third issue of *Ateismus*, a quarterly journal

published in Bratislava. Jan Milota, the author, analyses the pontificate of John Paul II and his visit to Poland, and contrasts "the positive period" of Vatican *Ostpolitik* to the situation created since the election of the Polish Cardinal as Pope. Milota argues that rejection of political activity by the Church in Latin America on the grounds that "the Church primarily mediates between God and man . . . undoubtedly aids the reactionary forces in the intense class struggle in Latin America". However, the same attitude towards socialist Poland has encouraged anti-socialist speculation by the western press. There were many ambiguities in the Pope's pronouncements in Poland, claimed Milota. It was incomprehensible to him that the Pope should raise the issue of human rights, the right to employment and land ownership in a socialist country which had already liberated men from the conditions created by the capitalist "right to exploit". St Stanislaus had been used as an example of "struggle with the State" to encourage the episcopate in non-conformist behaviour—and that in a socialist country instead of in Latin America. Milota is alarmed, for he cannot see how this attitude can be reconciled with the Vatican's *Ostpolitik*.

He then proceeds to show how "judicious" it is for the Church to appeal to the thousand year tradition of the Church in Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, for example, the appeal to "positive historical traditions" always led to conflicts with the Vatican, as illustrated by the departure of the papal nuncio from Prague [in 1925] after Masaryk's open support for the revival of the Hussite tradition. On his return to Rome the Pope had summed up his visit to Poland by saying: "It strengthened the Church and her hope and optimism". "What hopes and what optimism?" asks Milota, for "real socialism" cannot be destroyed since it is based on the "people's will" and will spread throughout the world. Even the "holy church" cannot stop its progress.

#### EAST GERMANY

##### *Church Finances*

Gerald Götting, leader of the East German CDU Party, has reported that the State provides the Church with more than 200 million marks (£52 million) each year. This

breaks down as follows:

12 million marks (£3 million) are a direct grant to the Church—a memento of bygone church-state agreements from Prussian times. This figure has remained constant for more than 20 years.

2.2 million marks (£0.6 million) are allocated for the restoration and preservation of church buildings of cultural or historical value. This is a small sum when one considers that the restoration of the Berlin Cathedral, which was required by the State, has so far cost over 40 million marks. The funds were not provided by East Germany's church budget but by western churches.

4 million marks (£1 million) are allocated to theological departments at the six old East German state universities. This sum cannot be regarded as a grant to the Church, since the Church has no direct influence over the syllabus.

The major areas of expenditure are 90 million marks (£23 million) for homes run by the Church and 100 million marks (£26 million) for medical care in hospitals run by the Church. This money cannot be considered as state support for church charitable work since it only covers the expenses involved in caring for the patients (who are on the register of state social insurance), but does not include investment in new buildings or expensive equipment. Money for these purposes has to be raised by the churches, often with the assistance of churches in West Germany. It thus becomes evident on closer examination that the Church is helping the State to make considerable savings on its general social welfare budget. Church charitable works are taken into account in state medical and social planning. Where there are suitable church hospitals, old people's homes and homes for the handicapped, no provision is made for state facilities. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 14 August 1979, p. 6)

##### *East German Involvement in Ethiopia*

According to Pastor Uwe Hollm, Director of the West German Berlin Mission, East Germany's involvement in Ethiopia is leading to massive religious persecution of Christians and Muslims. Addressing the Protestant synod of West Berlin on 22 June, Hollm called for prayer for the persecuted Christians as well as diplomatic action by the West German govern-

ment. The synod responded by suggesting that Bishop Kruse from West Berlin and Bishop Schönherr from East Berlin should try to visit Ethiopia together in order to express the Berlin-Brandenburg church's solidarity with the oppressed.

According to Hollm, reports from Ethiopia showed that East Germany had undertaken the organization and supervision of the secret police and of ideological training centres. At least 6,000 young people have already been trained in the political school in Addis Ababa and are now active particularly in the interior of the country, forcing the peasant communities and local towns to close churches, arrest church leaders and put them on trial, and throw hundreds of church members into prison. Hollm cited the case of Gudina Tumsa, General Secretary of the Lutheran Mekane-Yesus Church, who was kidnapped on 1 June 1979 (*Berliner Kirchenreport*); but a later statement by the Federation of Protestant Churches gives the date of his abduction as 1 August). He added that all the church leaders of Nekemt diocese and several hundred Christians from this area had been arrested. On 11 September 1979 the secretariat of the Federation of Protestant Churches in East Germany issued an appeal on behalf of Tumsa, his family and the Lutheran Mekane-Yesus Church. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 26 June 1979, p. 2; appeal from the Federation of Protestant Churches in East Germany)

#### *Visit of Ethiopian Delegation*

From 11 to 25 June four representatives of the Lutheran Mekane-Yesus Church of Ethiopia visited numerous churches and church institutions in East Germany. They had previously been in Hungary and went on to visit Poland. The delegation spent part of its time in Wittenburg and Leipzig where it visited the mission house and the theological seminary. Ethiopia has been ruled by a Marxist revolutionary council for the last five years. The Mekane-Yesus Church has half a million members in over 1,200 congregations and maintains numerous educational institutes and health centres. One of its most pressing problems is the lack of pastors and church workers. The delegation was very interested to see how the Church functioned in other socialist countries. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 26 June 1979, p. 4)

#### HUNGARY

#### *Protestant Museum Opened in Budapest*

A small Protestant museum has been opened in Budapest with over 400 valuable exhibits. The exhibits reflect the 450 years' history of the Protestant Church in Hungary and bear witness to the Church's important role in Hungary's cultural history and the history of church art. The most valuable documents in the museum are exhibits from the time of the German Reformation, including Martin Luther's theses (original handwritten manuscript, 1542), his translation of the Bible (Doctor Martinus Luther, Wittemberg, 1567), first editions of his works and of works by Erasmus, Calvin and Melancthon. There are also exhibits from the time of the Hungarian Reformation, including the first translation of the New Testament by János Sylvester, the oldest handwritten poem by Petöfi, and even the poet's baptismal font. The various items were gathered from churches throughout Hungary. Dr Zoltán Káldy, bishop and president of the Protestant Church in Hungary, pointed out in his address at the opening of the museum that it is the first and only Protestant national museum in the whole world. (*Berliner Kirchenreport*, 28 August 1979, p. 7)

#### *New President of the Council of Free Churches*

Dr Josef Nagy has been appointed president of the Council of Free Churches in Hungary, succeeding Sandor Palotay who died in August 1979. An alumnus of the European Baptist Seminary at Rüsçhlikon, Dr Nagy has held several responsible church positions. He was editor of *Bekehrnök* (*Peace Messenger*) for almost 20 years. He taught at the Baptist Theological Seminary for more than 30 years and at the Theological Institute of the Council of Free Churches since its foundation. (*European Baptist Press Service*, 9 October 1979; p. 3)

#### *Cardinal Lékai Visits USSR*

Cardinal Lékai visited the Soviet Union from 6 to 17 October 1979 at the invitation of the Moscow Patriarchate. This makes him the third head of an East European Catholic Church to visit the USSR. In January 1978 the Moscow Patriarchate invited Cardinal František Tomášek, the

primate of Czechoslovakia, and in August 1975 Cardinal Alfred Bengsch (d. 13 December 1979) of East Berlin visited Lithuania.

Undoubtedly acting as an envoy of Pope John Paul II to Catholics in the USSR, Cardinal Lékai is said to have met representatives of the proscribed Eastern Rite Catholic Church in Kiev and Zhitomir. He was received in Moscow by V. A. Kuroyedov, chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs. In Lithuania, a crowd of over 10,000 people were present for Mass in Kaunas, while an estimated 25,000 were present in Vilnius, and some 60,000 greeted him in Panevėžys, the diocesan centre. (*Le Monde*, 20 October 1979; *Dieziennik Polski*, 17 October 1979; *Izvestiya*, 18 October 1979)

#### POLAND

##### *170th Conference of the Polish Episcopate*

The 170th Conference of the Polish Episcopate took place in Warsaw 5-6 September 1979 under the chairmanship of Cardinal Wyszynski. On 5 September the bishops (ordinaries) discussed many obstacles still hindering the Church from carrying out its essential pastoral work. More churches needed to be built for the densely populated city areas and for scattered rural communities. The Church was not free to form lay associations. The Church was denied access to the mass media. There was a need for a Catholic daily newspaper as well as for the publication of more Catholic books and journals. [By referring to the need for a Catholic daily, the bishops implicitly disregarded *Slowo Powszechne*, published as a Catholic daily by Pax.] "The Church cannot fulfil its mission", the bishops stated, "when its development depends on a state administration unwilling to consider the needs of believers." The bishops referred to the Pope's address of 2 June 1979, given at a meeting with the authorities in Belweder Palace, and emphasized his point that "the Church does not demand privileges, but only what is necessary to fulfil its mission in a country where the vast majority of people are Catholics". They expressed their hope that following the Pope's visit a greater understanding of the Church's needs by the authorities would further the normalization of church-state relations.

On the following day, the plenary conference of bishops began its discussion of the implications of the Pope's pilgrimage to Poland, its effect on the people and on the State. They agreed that the tour had had unprecedented significance for the religious life of the people with their one thousand year tradition of Polish Christianity. Millions had had the chance to come into closer contact with the Church's teaching through the mass media and through their personal contact with the Pope. The Apostolic See had become a reality in the life of the Polish Church and future generations would be strengthened in their moral resolve to lead Christian lives by remembering the Pope's visit. It was decided to make 16 October a national day of prayer for the Pope and a day of personal devotion to the Mother of God for all believers. In addition, special Masses for the Pope and the universal Church would be said on the 16th day of each month in every church throughout the country. This was to be done during the entire pontificate of John Paul II, as a thanksgiving to God for the Polish Pope and for his pilgrimage to his native land.

The question of the Church's historical role in preserving the Christian heritage of Poland was also discussed. The bishops expressed concern about working conditions in Poland, strongly supporting demands that miners should not be obliged to work on Sundays.

##### *Appeal for VONS Members*

An appeal on behalf of ten arrested members of the Czechoslovak Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) signed by 317 Polish Catholic intellectuals, students and priests, was sent to Cardinal František Tomášek, the Czechoslovak primate, on 14 July 1979. The appeal argues that the imprisoned Chartists "have acted in the spirit of the Church's social teaching". The Second Vatican Council calls on "those who possess a talent for political activity . . . to oppose oppression whether it be inflicted by an individual, an autocracy, or a political party" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Art. 75).

##### *Fast of Solidarity*

On 3 October 1979, once it became known that the Czechoslovak authorities had decided to go ahead with the trial of the imprisoned members of the Committee for

the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS), a group of eleven people (not only Catholics), including members of both major dissident organizations, the Committee for the Public's Self-Defence and the Movement for Human and Civil Rights, began a seven-day protest fast in the Holy Cross Church, Warsaw. In their communiqué they appealed to "all people of good will in Poland and throughout the world to defend the arrested VONS members, to defend the priests in Czechoslovakia who have been arrested for carrying out their pastoral duties, and to defend the Czechs and Slovaks arrested for participating in the Polish pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II". Four more people joined in "this fast of solidarity with the imprisoned Czech and Slovak brethren" during the first half of the week, and a parallel fast was organized in the parish church of Zbroza Duza on 7 October. In the final part of their statement the protesters explain why they had chosen a Catholic place of worship: "It is because in the Polish People's Republic, only the Church can provide refuge for people of different beliefs, who act in defence of human rights."

#### *Subscription Warning to Readers of Catholic Weekly*

Subscribers to the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* received a stern warning on 4 November 1979 that unless they renewed their subscription in exactly the same manner as the previous year, and not later than 25 November, they would be crossed off the list of subscribers. If subscriptions which had previously been paid over the post office counter were now paid to the postman or vice versa, this would result in the loss of one's subscription. "Remittances from new subscribers will be returned at the sender's cost", continued the warning. However, the editors of this excellent weekly were not in a position to state the reasons for these absurdly Draconian measures against their readers. In spite of numerous protests by the Polish bishops, *Tygodnik Powszechny* has not been allowed to increase its print order (40,000 copies) to 50,000 (which had been permitted under the previous government until Gomulka decided to punish the editors by cutting the paper's circulation). It is widely believed in Poland that over half a million copies could easily be sold

even though the quality of the paper and print has deteriorated considerably in recent years.

#### ROMANIA

##### *Religious Prisoners*

While most of the Baptist and Pentecostal prisoners arrested in Romania during the past 12 months were released early, there are still at least 17 believers imprisoned according to the latest documentation. The Orthodox believers Fr Gheorghe Calciu, Dr Ionel Cana and Mr Gheorghe Brasoveanu are facing long sentences of 10, 7, and 5½ years' imprisonment respectively. Cana and Brasoveanu are being held in psychiatric hospitals. However, the largest group of prisoners are Seventh-Day Adventists. Four young men, Mircea Dragomir, Gheorghe Anghelus, Viorel Ardelean and Lucian Bistriceanu, are serving sentences of three to four years for refusing to perform military duties on the Sabbath. Eight other Adventists were arrested during the summer for printing and distributing religious literature. The group had printed 10,000 copies each of 14 different titles, mainly on state printing presses, according to police statements. There were 18 house searches in connection with the case.

Among those released at the end of last summer were Ionel Prejban, Nicolae Bogdan and Ioan Samu, as well as those arrested with him. Both Nicolae Radoi and Dimitrie Ianculovici were due for release on 21 August 1979. Simion Holbura and Paramon Gagea, two Pentecostals from Bistrita arrested for applying to emigrate, were also released, but reports continue to reach the West of their continued harassment by police authorities.

##### *Religious Delegations Visit USA*

Patriarch Justin of the Romanian Orthodox Church led a delegation of Romanian Orthodox hierarchs on a tour of the USA from 25 April to 15 May 1979. The visit marked the 50th anniversary of the Romanian Orthodox Church Missionary Archdiocese in North America. Apart from attending the festivities and touring Romanian Orthodox parishes in the USA and Canada, the delegation also paid several top-level visits to members of the US and Canadian governments. Patriarch Justin was received by President Carter

and by Albert Schleger, Governor General of Canada. The delegation also held discussions with members of the US Congress on the religious situation in Romania. They also spoke with representatives of the State Department. In New York they were received by Mayor Koch, Mgr Thurston Davis, the Vatican representative at the UN, and Rabbi Arthur Schneider, President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. The delegation also met Alf Lohne and Howard Burbank of the World Seventh-Day Adventist Association.

From 3 to 7 June an inter-faith delegation of representatives of all the legally recognized denominations and faiths in Romania visited the USA. Their visit was sponsored by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. Delegates held discussions with the US leaders of their respective denominations. They also held talks with members of the US State Department Bureau for human rights and the US Congress Helsinki Commission. (*Romanian Orthodox Church News*, April-June 1979)

#### *Theological Dialogue between Romanian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Church in West Germany*

The preparatory committee for the theological dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church in West Germany met in Bucharest 22-24 May 1979. It was agreed that there was a sufficient basis for a dialogue, and plans were made for the first session to be held in Gossler, West Germany, 19-23 November. The themes were to be "Holy Scripture, tradition and witness". Two representatives of Romanian Protestant churches were to be invited. (*Romanian Orthodox Church News*, April-June 1979)

#### *Interconfessional Theological Conference*

The 34th Interconfessional Theological Conference took place 29-30 May 1979 at the unique Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca. The theme of the Conference was: "By the work of the Holy Spirit, we are free to serve the world". Among the participants were the professors of the University Theological Institutes in Romania, diocesan bishops and assistant bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Presidium of the Conference included Bishop Antonie

Ploiesteanul, assistant bishop to the Patriarch, the rectors of the University Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca, the dean of the German Section of the same Institute, the rector of the Roman Catholic Theological Institute in Alba Iulia, and the pro-rector of the Romanian Section of the Roman Catholic Theological Institute in Iasi. Representatives of the religious press were also present. (*Romanian Orthodox Church News*, April-June 1979)

#### *Ordinations in the Orthodox Church*

Forty-five graduates of the Institutes and Seminaries of the Romanian Orthodox Church were ordained between 15 February and 5 April 1979. (*Romanian Orthodox Church News*, April-June 1979)

#### SOVIET UNION

#### *Amnesty Announced*

On 19 October 1979 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR announced an amnesty for mothers and children in specific categories, in connection with the International Year of the Child. However, the amnesty did not apply to those convicted of "especially dangerous crimes against the State", a category which covers most political offences. Nor did it apply to those sentenced under certain other articles of the Criminal Code, including Art. 190-1 ("dissemination of deliberately false fabrications slandering the Soviet State and social system") and Art. 227 ("infringement of the rights and person of citizens under the appearance of conducting religious rites"), both frequently applied to religious believers. No religious juveniles are known to be imprisoned, and women prisoners known to Keston College are either unmarried or excluded from the amnesty because they were sentenced for political offences. Only one Baptist woman may be eligible: Raisa Goncharova, who was sentenced in 1978 to two years in labour camp for giving religious education to children. She is known to have at least one son whose age is not known. (*Izvestiya*, 20 October 1979)

#### *AUCECB Re-organized*

The structure of the AUCECB underwent a major re-organization at a special

meeting held in Moscow on 30 May 1979. The 120 participants, plus 15 guests from autonomous Pentecostal and Mennonite Brethren Churches, voted to become more decentralized and to recognize their leadership responsibilities in the Russian Federation by organizing a special church administration for the RSFSR. Andrei Klimenko was elected senior presbyter. The three deputy senior presbyters elected were Jacob Fast representing Mennonites, Pyotr Shatrov representing Pentecostals, and V. Ye. Logvinenko representing Evangelical Christians. The five-member advisory council of presbyters consists of N. I. Dolmatov (Rostov), M. M. Konshin (Volga region), V. A. Mitskevich (Kaluga and Smolensk regions), B. F. Fedichkin (Moscow region) and P. P. Ens (Orenburg region). Candidate members are V. D. Yerisov (Stavropol region), Yu. A. Maximchuk (Eastern Siberia and the Far East), and Presbyter S. V. Yashin of Surazh (Bryansk region).

The AUCECB General Secretary, Bychkov, explained that "Through creating a spiritual leadership for the RSFSR, our brotherhood is enabled to care for the churches more efficiently, and the churches receive more spiritual help on questions of purity of evangelical teaching and spiritual nurture of church members". (*Bratsky Vestnik*, No. 4, 1979; Walter Sawatsky, MCC Research Scholar, Neuwied, W. Germany)

#### *Ministers under Pressure to Retain Registration*

The Khartsyzsk registered Baptist church (Donezsk region, Ukraine) renounced its registration on 17 June 1979 because of illegal state interference in church affairs. The church's presbyter and two ministers were harassed, threatened and eventually arrested by the authorities in attempts to rescind the decision to renounce registration. Yevgeny Nikiforovich Pushkov was called in for questioning by the KGB on 12 June. He was asked about a declaration which was sent to the unregistered Council of Churches and stated the congregation's intention to renounce registration. He refused to sign a warning about his activities in the church. Fellow minister Vasily Ivanovich Yuditsev was also questioned and accused of reactionary activities, distributing slanderous material, organizing and leading youth meetings,

and disturbing the peace. He and his wife were threatened with imprisonment and with having their children sent to state boarding schools. Yuditsev was called in again on 15 June and told not to allow the church to renounce its registration. Mikhail Timofeyevich Shaptala, the presbyter (also a member of the unregistered Council of Churches), was arrested on 16 June and sentenced to ten days in prison. (*CPR Bulletin*, No. 65, 1979, pp. 32-7)

#### *Fr Gainov Replaces Fr Yakunin on Christian Committee*

Fr Nikolai Gainov has replaced Fr Gleb Yakunin on the Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR. As early as 29 December 1977 the Committee had issued a statement saying that in the event of any of the existing members being arrested, other people were ready to succeed them. Fr Yakunin was arrested on 1 November 1979 and is being charged, it is reported, under Art. 70 of the RSFSR Criminal Code ("anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"). Fr Gainov is currently a priest in Tsaryevo, Moscow region. He signed the appeal to the *Sobor* of the Russian Orthodox Church in April 1971, along with Felix Karelin, Lev Regelson and Viktor Kapitanchuk (secretary of the Christian Committee). (*Le Monde*, 7 November 1979)

#### *New Member of Christian Committee*

The Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR has been strengthened by the inclusion of a fourth member, Fr Vasily Fonchenkov, a lecturer at the Moscow Theological Academy at Zagorsk. Fr Fonchenkov, 47, is the son of an old Bolshevik who was converted to Christianity on his death-bed. A historian by training, Fr Fonchenkov worked for a time in state museums before training for the priesthood. He graduated from the Moscow Theological Academy in 1972 and was then appointed a lecturer there. From 1976-77 he served at the Church of St Sergius in Berlin and edited the journal *Stimme der Orthodoxie* (*The Voice of Orthodoxy*). In his statement of 16 May announcing his membership of the Christian Committee, Fr Fonchenkov points out that the Moscow Patriarchate has not condemned its activities. He therefore hopes that his membership will not



be condemned either. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 10, pp. 1077-9)

#### *Christian Committee's Warning to the Pope*

A letter to Pope John Paul II, dated 2 April, from the Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR, contains a warning about the conduct of the Vatican's *Ostpolitik*. The authors believe that the Soviet authorities are using it for their own ends. They quote as evidence the sudden withdrawal from circulation in 1976 of a book on the Catholic Church by I. Bonchkovsky, a former specialist on Catholicism of the CRA. The reason was that a priest visiting Moscow from Rome complained that the book quoted extracts from his personal correspondence to the late Metropolitan Nikodim. The Christian Committee points out that this correspondence, which would have been on file at the Department of External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, had evidently been made available to the CRA by the Department, and was evidence of the close co-operation between the Moscow Patriarchate and Soviet government agencies. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 10, pp. 1007-10)

#### *Appeal to Dismiss Priests*

The Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR appealed to Patriarch Pimen on 16 December 1978 asking him to take action against two priests whose activities are undermining the Russian Orthodox Church. Archimandrite Gavriil, superior of the Monastery of the Caves at Pskov who was appointed against the will of the monks, is allegedly making the spiritual life of the monks difficult by his strictness and is also actively discouraging pilgrims. A letter from a pilgrim, Anastasiya Kleimenova, describes how Archimandrite Gavriil chased her out of the monastery while she was praying with the monks. The second priest is Fr Leonid Alexenko whose parish is in the town of Osh, in the Central Asian republic of Kirgiziya. The Committee forwarded a letter from his parishioners stating that he is often drunken and

disorderly, beats his wife, has attacked worshippers physically and blasphemed in church, and has two illegitimate children. They ask that he be unfrocked. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 7, pp. 831 and 935-44)

#### *Intimidation of Fr Dudko (now arrested)*

Harassment of the well-known Moscow preacher, Fr Dimitri Dudko, continues. At the end of 1978 people dressed in militia uniforms repeatedly came to his church in Grebnevo to check the documents of visitors who came from all over Russia, kept watch on worshippers at church services, and made baptisms difficult. They threatened to harm Fr Dudko physically, it is reported, and to send him as well as his wife and children to prison. On 11 November 1978 a group of people burst into Fr Dudko's house and dragged out Vladimir Sedov, one of Fr Dudko's spiritual children. On 20 October 1979, at the end of vespers, about 20 militia entered the church premises and without showing a warrant proceeded to carry out an identity check. During this operation Fr Dudko and some other people were threatened. The policemen and their accomplices had come in a coach and had brought two more empty coaches with them. They were apparently expecting to find a large number of people assembled and were intending to arrest everyone present. After lengthy explanations and having checked the identity of the ten or so members of Fr Dudko's congregation who were there, they left, promising to return. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 7; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse et d'Information*, Press Release, 11 November 1979)

#### *Patriarch Pimen Accused of Reviving "Cult of Personality"*

Fr Gleb Yakunin of the Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR wrote to Patriarch Pimen complaining that he used excessively flattering terms in a letter to President Brezhnev. The words to which Fr Yakunin objected were printed in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 2, 1979, p. 2: "Your radiant image, your high humanitarian ideals and your personal charm leave an unforgettable

impression on all those who are so fortunate as to come into contact with you". Fr Yakunin considered that such statements should not be made in the name of all members of the Russian Orthodox Church, and commented that the phrase "your radiant image" is customarily applied only to saints and the dead. Fr Yakunin pointed out that the communists themselves have condemned the Stalin "personality cult", and he objected to what he sees as its continuation by the Russian Orthodox Church. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 10, p. 1071)

#### *The Trial of Alexander Ogorodnikov*

Further details about Ogorodnikov's arrest and trial state that he was arrested on a charge of "parasitism" (being without gainful employment) while on his way to complete the necessary documentation at a place which had agreed to employ him. On a previous occasion he had tried to reach this destination but had been detained in a militia station all day. At the trial, Ogorodnikov's lawyer stated that he was partially incapacitated as a result of a serious blood disease which had led to the removal of his spleen in 1964. She asked that a qualified haematologist be called in to give evidence on Ogorodnikov's present capacity for work, but the court refused this request. A detailed account of the trial is given by Vladimir Belozarov, a member of the Christian Seminar led by Ogorodnikov. He describes how friends, and initially Ogorodnikov's wife and parents, were not admitted to the court, and how the evidence of witnesses for the defence was disregarded. (*Documents of the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR*, Vol. 7, p. 855; Vol. 9, pp. 975-82)

#### *The Mordovian Camps*

Conditions of prisoners in the special regime labour camp in Mordovia are described in a document by Tatyana Khodorovich and Viktor Nekipelov entitled "Oprichnina-77". (The *oprichnina* was a notorious personal militia and bodyguard created by Ivan the Terrible.) The report details the terrible physical and psychological suffering endured by prisoners in the camp. It states that physical annihilation is "merciful" compared to the

murder of the soul which is the result of conditions there. Among the prisoners are the Orthodox believer Lev Lukyanenko and the Lithuanian Catholic Balys Gajauskas. The Ukrainian Orthodox priest Fr Vasyly Romanyuk was also held in this camp until he went into exile early in 1979, as were three of the five prisoners recently released to the USA, Alexander Ginzburg, Valentyn Moroz and Eduard Kuznetsov.

#### YUGOSLAVIA

##### *Mother Teresa*

The news that Mother Teresa, who was born in Skopje, had received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize was widely reported in the Yugoslav press. *Nova Makedonija* (Skopje, 18 October) carried a long account of her work and published the statement which she made in Calcutta after hearing that she had received the prize. (*AKSA*, 19 October 1979)

##### *Patriarch's Birthday*

Patriarch German of the Serbian Orthodox Church celebrated his 80th birthday in 1979. He received telegrams of congratulation from the president of the Federal Commission for Relations with Religious Communities, and from a number of senior leaders of the Serbian republic and the autonomous region of Vojvodina (immediately north of the Danube from Serbia), where the majority of the population is Serbian, and from the city of Belgrade. (*AKSA*, 24 August 1979)

##### *Archbishop Writes on the Church and Human Rights*

Archbishop Pogacnik of Ljubljana wrote in the church weekly *Druzina* (24 July 1979) that the Church has a duty to fight for human rights in accordance with clause 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights. He emphasized that in Yugoslavia these rights are often very far from being established, and he regretted that efforts to secure them are sometimes labelled "clericalism". The Catholic Church in Slovenia had clearly shown that it co-operates in the development of Yugoslav society and strives for good relations with the authorities.