

News in Brief

CHINA

Pope John Paul's Message to Chinese Christians

During his visit to the Philippines in February 1981, the Pope made his first open invitation for *rapprochement* with the Catholic Church in China. (The official "Patriotic" Catholic Church in China does not recognize the authority of the Vatican; meanwhile many Chinese Catholics remain loyal to Rome (see RCL Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 268-73).) The Vatican believes that there are between 500,000 and two million baptized Catholics in China, and 580 priests. "I am convinced", said the Pope, "that every Catholic within your frontiers will fully contribute to the building up of China, since a genuine and faithful Christian is also a genuine and good citizen . . .". He said that the Church does not seek any privileges in China, "but only that all those who follow Christ may be able to express their faith freely and publicly and live according to their consciences. It is my sincere and heartfelt hope", he continued, "that someday soon we shall be able to join together praising the Lord and saying 'behold how good and pleasant it is to dwell in unity as brothers.'" (*International Herald Tribune*, 19 February 1981)

Chinese Christians Warned Against Seeking Help from Abroad

The Chinese paper *Red Flag* reports that the Peking government is asking all religious organizations in China not to use the law guaranteeing religious freedom to obtain financial or moral assistance from abroad. This government directive is connected with the attitude of the "Patriotic" (Catholic) bishop of Peking, Michael Fu

Tieshan, who in his answer to the parts of the Pope's speech in Manila directed towards China accused the Vatican of giving support to Chinese Catholics who do not belong to the "Patriotic Association". The article states that no Chinese religious organization has the right to accept financial help from other religious organizations abroad. Religious organizations in China must be "patriotic and free". Believers have the same duty as atheists to "love their country and socialism and support the aims of the Communist Party". (AKSA, 20 March 1981)

Mgr Dominic Tang

During the tour of Pope John Paul to the Far East in early 1981, Cardinal Casaroli, the Vatican Secretary of State, paid a visit to Hong Kong to meet and convey the Papal blessing to Bishop Dominic Tang, 73-year-old apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Canton. Mgr Tang was imprisoned in 1958 by the Chinese authorities for opposing the establishment of a Catholic Church independent of the Vatican. He was released in June 1981 and went to Hong Kong for medical treatment. Mgr Tang was the only Catholic prelate in China to be recognized as such by both the Chinese authorities and the Vatican. On 30 April 1981, Mgr Tang arrived unexpectedly in Rome and was received shortly afterwards by the Pope, who appointed him Archbishop of Canton. The Chinese government, describing this move as "rude and intolerable interference in China's affairs", retaliated by removing Mgr Tang from his post as apostolic administrator of Canton. (*Glas Koncila*, No. 6, 22 March 1981; AKSA, 6 March 1981; 15 May 1981; *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 June 1981)

Chinese Protestants at Hong Kong Christian Conference

As contacts between official Chinese Church leaders and Christians outside China have been almost entirely non-existent since 1949, the fact that eight Protestant leaders from the People's Republic of China attended a consultation in Hong Kong from 23 to 26 March 1981 represents a landmark.

Significant as the participation of these Chinese leaders in the conference is, it is only one of many events in China in recent months which have eased the position of Protestant Christians. Dozens of church buildings have been opened or reopened, bringing the total in current operation to at least one hundred. The Nanking Union Seminary has resumed theological education with the admission of 48 students to its first class, and it has also initiated correspondence courses for pastors in Christian Doctrine. The Bible has been reprinted, and the Christian periodical *Tian Feng* is appearing once more.

Despite the obvious improvement these developments represent for Christians in China, the Chinese Protestant leaders at the Hong Kong conference discouraged contacts with Christians abroad. They stressed the danger that their Church might acquire a "foreign" image, as a Church dominated by Western leaders and manipulated by western funds, a Church whose doctrine and forms of worship are expressed in terms of Western culture.

Another statement discouraging contacts between Chinese Christians and believers from abroad comes from the well-known Chinese Protestant spokesman, Bishop K. H. Ting. In his *Call for Clarity*—a series of fourteen points addressed to Christians abroad, which may well be regarded as authoritative—he states that contacts are desired only with "church groups and individuals overseas who have a friendly attitude towards New China and who respect the Three-Self principle" (self-government, self-support and self-propagation—Ed.). At the same time, Bishop Ting asserts that the "unity which has emerged in the Chinese Church is closer than ever before". The vast majority of Protestants, while not accepting Marxism, is said to approve the present regime and to support Three-Self; he knows of only a "few who disapprove of, or oppose, Three-Self". (*Keston News Service*, No.

124, 21 May 1981)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

New Czech Catholic "Samizdat" Periodicals

Since January 1980 two Czech Catholic *samizdat* periodicals—the quarterly *Teologické texty* (*Theological Texts*) and the monthly *Informace o Církvi* (*Church Information*)—have been appearing regularly in duplicated form. They were later joined by a third journal, *Vzkříšení* (*Resurrection*), aimed primarily at a younger audience. All three journals have a high professional standard of editing and constitute a serious attempt on the part of the Catholic community to break the state monopoly over the Catholic press. It is highly significant that the journals are being duplicated (unlike most of the Czech *samizdat* which is only typewritten). In the first place it will mean that the journals will reach a wider number of believers and strengthen their determination to resist state pressure. Secondly, it is a hopeful sign because it implies that the Czech Catholics have already overcome the adherence to "legalism" of the human rights activists: their scruples prevented them from seeking "illegal" methods of work (such as obtaining a duplicator), while it never prevented the police from seizing the legal home-made books and periodicals whenever they could.

Slovak Bishop Jan Korec Protests to the Federal Assembly

On 4 April 1980 the much harassed Bishop Jan Korec SJ was interrogated again by the police in Bratislava. It was the sixteenth such occurrence since 1974 when he lost his state licence to work as priest. Afterwards he sent a letter of complaint to the Federal Assembly (27 April) questioning the legality of the procedure used during the interrogation. He writes that as he was told neither the reason for his summons nor the subject matter under investigation he refused to answer the questions. The investigators, who failed to reveal their names, then confiscated all of his personal possessions including his papers, money, handkerchief and rosary, and threatened him with imprisonment. "It happened on Good Friday and I found it very

humiliating" says Korec in his letter, and asks whether it is in the interests of the State to treat believers in this way. The constant harassment and persecution of Christians only increases tensions and resentment among people who want to contribute to the common good of the Slovak nation, which was itself formed by a thousand years of Christianity. (*Informace o Církvi*, No. 5, 1980)

The Final Speech of a Slovak Jesuit

Fr Oskár Formánek, sentenced on 25 June 1980 to 18 months' imprisonment by the Court in Presov for celebrating Mass in his flat, disseminating religious literature and incitement, was able to make a long speech before the court. He pointed out that there is no law in Czechoslovakia even implicitly forbidding the saying of Mass privately and in the presence of others, and that the prosecution had failed to quote the relevant article according to which he would have broken the law "protecting the economic viability of the Church", for the simple reason that such an article does not exist. The Mass is regarded even officially as "Eucharistic prayer", and he asked "I would like to ask the court whether or not one needs permission to pray, alone or with others?" As for intention to "incite" (Art. 100) or to "obstruct State supervision of the Church" (Art. 178), it is quite absurd to regard the liturgy in this way; after all, the same words are said in every Church in the country quite openly. The intention of those who pray, rather than the actual words used, is not verifiable.

Pointing out that there is no law forbidding dissemination of literature published abroad, particularly that obtained legally through the customs, Formánek said that the accusation against him should automatically be levelled against the customs officers who passed this literature. From a legal standpoint this problem is further complicated by the non-existence of an official index of banned books and the court was not helped by the subjective opinions of atheist experts Dr Halečka, Dr Sidor and Dr Bilas, who are supposed to be specialists in atheism and not in the political implications of religious literature. How otherwise could they cite the letter of St Peter, written in the first century, as evidence prejudicial to the socialist system of the 20th century? "What did St Peter know about the complex aims of political

clericalism?"

Fr Formánek was born in 1915, one of the nine children of a poor peasant family. He studied for the priesthood aided by charity, and was ordained in 1945. After the dissolution of religious orders in 1950 he was imprisoned, but escaped from the internment camp, to be recaptured in 1955 when he was sentenced with nine other Jesuits to ten years' imprisonment. He was released after the general amnesty in 1960 but was allowed to work only in manual employment until his rehabilitation in 1974. After denunciation by an informer, however, he was soon deprived of permission to work as a priest. (*Informace o Církvi*, No. 5, 1980)

Trial of Fr Labuda

The court of Rimavská Sobota (Slovakia) sentenced Dr Józef Labuda (31) and Emília Kesegová (29), a librarian, to six months' and four months' imprisonment respectively on 30 October 1980. The accused were charged according to Art. 178 of the Penal Code—"obstruction of state supervision of the Church"—for organizing a retreat for seven young people. During the court proceedings the witnesses changed their statements in four cases, earning for themselves a threat from the public prosecutor, who announced in his concluding speech that he would start prosecution against them as soon as the verdict becomes valid. In January 1981 the appeal court quashed the sentence passed on Emília Kesegová.

Reprisals Against Bratislava Seminary Students

The protest fast of 120 seminarians (20–21 October 1980) against the involvement of "Pacem in Terris" (the government-controlled organization for priests) in the work of the theological seminary took the authorities completely by surprise as they are not accustomed to such a show of united resistance. The students have stated in their letter to the bishops "that "Pacem in Terris" is a tool undermining the unity of bishops, priests and believers and that its activities are designed to create the illusion that our Church can lead a perfectly normal life". The authorities set out immediately to select a number of students who would be expelled for organizing the strike, but the majority stood behind them, prepared to resign

from the college if necessary. The Minister for Religious Affairs, Karel Hrůza, furiously demanded a trial but caution prevailed, presumably for fear of the publicity abroad and the protests such action would arouse in Slovakia. On 4 January 1981, during the winter holidays, all the seminarists received telegrams informing them to stay at home until further notice as the college building was now under repair. In the meantime many students were being interrogated about their involvement in the protest fast. Then on 9 February the students were informed they could come back, except for eleven who were to be suspended for one year. It seems that the resolute support given to the students by Bishop Július Gabriš and the Vicar General Stefan Garaj explains the relatively mild nature of this reprisal by the authorities. Many protests have been sent on behalf of the students, among which the letter of Fr Viktor Třstenský is a particularly strong indictment of the seminary's administrators, who by tolerating agents and collaborators among the students and the staff undermine their spiritual formation as priests. (*Informace o Čírkvi*, No. 8, 1980; Nos. 3-4, 1981; *Hlasy z Ríma*, No. 6, June 1981)

The Czech Primate Lashes out at "Pacem in Terris"

On 16 February, the 82-year-old Cardinal František Tomášek, Archbishop of Prague, sent a letter to František Hochman, the editor of *Katolické noviny* (*Catholic News*), expressing concern about the paper's editorial policy, controlled as it is by "Pacem in Terris".

The paper *Katolické noviny*, which is supposed to be the voice of the whole Czech Catholic community, has become, says Cardinal Tomášek in his letter, "the exclusive mouthpiece of "Pacem in Terris", which represents only a minute interest group compared to the mass of believers for whom the paper is destined". The Cardinal points out that the "Pacem in Terris" organization already has its own journals and goes on to criticize more specifically the content of *Katolické noviny* which—apart from covering the activities of the government-sponsored Catholic grouping—seems exclusively devoted to the problem of disarmament. Instead of lecturing the Czech believers about the dangers of the stockpiling of arms, says Cardinal Tomášek, the paper should rather

address such warnings to the superpowers directly concerned. Similarly, the reports on the Pope's speeches seem to suggest that the Pope, too, has spoken only on issues of peace and disarmament. By omitting the religious substance of the Pope's messages, Cardinal Tomášek goes on, *Katolické noviny* loses its authenticity and its universality. (The Archbishop of Prague himself sent some 18 articles to the paper during the last year, but only two were published, and the papers which included them not properly distributed.) "If this were to continue", concludes the Czech Primate, "we would have to ask ourselves whether the paper still has the right to call itself Catholic."

This strongly worded rebuff to the government-controlled "Pacem in Terris" reveals the continuation of the Vatican policy of no compromise with the corrupt clergy in the service of the regime. (See the Cardinal's first attack in the Italian journal *Il Regno*, (RCL Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 236-7).) Significantly, the letter has appeared in the clandestine press, which is often critical of the Cardinal's weakness in opposing government policies: this shows that the resistance of the believers has some effect on the hierarchy. (*Informace o Čírkvi*, No. 4, 1981)

EAST GERMANY

WCC Central Committee Meets in Dresden

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches held its 1981 conference in Dresden in August. In an interview with the East German church newspaper *Der Sonntag* (12 October 1980), the Bishop of Dresden, Dr Johannes Hempel, said:

"Firstly we want to help the WCC financially. The conference in Dresden will cost considerably less than one in Geneva, which is otherwise the cheapest conference site. Secondly, it will enable us to get to know one another. Printed reports can give some information, but personal meetings are without doubt more effective and make a deeper impression. I hope that our local churches will have the chance to talk face to face with the members of the Central Committee; and that the members of the Central Committee will have the chance to learn how churches in a socialist country

are trying to find their own way of living out their faith."

Bishop Hempel describes the reactions of some Central Committee members to his invitation:

"Many delegates came and asked me if it was true that nothing would happen to them, if they could bring their wives, etc. It seems to me that they are really interested in getting to know our country."

(*Keston News Service*, No. 115, 15 January 1981)

Restrictions on Church Reportage in GDR

The present tense situation in the GDR arises from a combination of factors including economic problems, fear that the "Polish disease" could spread and pressure, actual or potential, from the Soviet Union. The state authorities still appear to be trying to keep the promise they made in 1978 of increased religious freedom, although the Church's continuing outspokenness on government policies is embarrassing to them. They are at present allowing Church members to say what they think, but preventing the publication of their criticisms in the East German church press or the western media. Western press coverage of Church synods, which used to be permitted automatically, is being restricted. The World Council of Churches, which held its 1981 conference in Dresden in August, was told at an early stage to submit a list of conference participants, observers and guests, including journalists, as six months' notice was required for their visa applications. Journalists were also informed that their accreditation would apply only to coverage of "the events and proceedings of the Central Committee" and that anyone wishing to report "more widely on the life of the Church and Society" must negotiate for separate permission for this. (*Keston News Service*, No. 117, 9 February 1981)

HUNGARY

Activity of the Baptists

Three new mission stations have been opened by Baptists in Hungary, in addition to the 200 which already exist. These are mission outreach projects as distinct from the established congregations of Baptists in Hungary, which total over 200.

A second book for church organists has been published by the Baptist Union of Hungary. Like the first, which appeared in 1975, it was compiled by Professor Pal Beharka. The 3,000 copies of the present volume are destined for advanced organists and will be used by musicians in the Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Free Churches as well as by Baptists. A completely new Baptist hymnal also is scheduled for release, containing 500 hymns for congregational singing and an appendix of 150 songs for children. It will be the 11th edition for Hungarian Baptist Churches and it is hoped that some 5,000 copies will be available to churches this summer. (There are approximately 12,000 Baptists in Hungary. *Ed.*)

Dr Joszef Nagy has been re-appointed as director of the theological seminary in Budapest and the seminary administration expects at least 12 more new students for the autumn term. (*European Baptist Press Service*, 18 May 1981)

Statistics on the Roman Catholic Church

According to the Vienna-based Hungarian Institute for Sociology of Religion, the nominal strength of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary is 6,122,314 (about two thirds of the population). Active priests in service total 2,790 and there are 284 seminarians. Thirty years ago the Church had 3,583 active priests. The number of seminaries in 1950 was 13 but seven have been closed down by the State. The remaining six function on an inter-diocesan basis, serving the needs of the 11 dioceses. Besides the diocesan seminaries the three religious orders (Benedictines, Franciscans and Piarists) have a further 48 seminarians. Out of a total of 332 diocesan and religious seminarians, over half—161—came from the country's high schools. (*HIS Press Service*, No. 19, March 1981)

Educational Problems for Hungarian Catholics

The importance of Christian education was stressed in a frank pastoral letter from the Hungarian Episcopate of 2 February 1981. It was read out in all Roman Catholic churches in Hungary.

There are currently eight Catholic secondary schools functioning in Hungary. Six are boys' schools and two girls', with an enrolment of 2,000 students. In post-war

years; more than half of those entering religious vocations have been educated at these schools which are highly regarded for the excellence of their academic record and teaching staff (Benedictines, Franciscans, Piarist priests and nuns). According to the letter from the Hungarian Episcopate, however, there is concern about the overall educational question in Hungary.

"Education is made more difficult by the many contradictory ideological and moral influences ... Our teachers are overburdened ... The equipment in our institutions causes constant worry ... We should support them financially as well."

Though the Catholic secondary schools have support from the State and also from many Catholic organizations abroad they cannot compete with schools in the state-run educational system, according to the Bishops' letter. The letter claims that the state-run schools are not neutral educational agencies but rather servants of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The Bishops point out that Marxism-Leninism is compulsory and that it is therefore less effective as an ideological agent as the students consider it merely another subject to be endured; but nevertheless, this use of educational facilities for propaganda purposes results in

"contradictory ideological and moral influences affecting young people, [and these] leave deep impressions ... even at a very early age."

The problem of religion, education and the family was raised at the 7th Congress of the People's Front in mid-March 1981 where Cardinal Lekai made an important speech. "Religious believers in Hungary today", he said,

"join in the building of a socialist Hungary with their intellectual capacities and with the strength of their working hands and they do this peacefully in company with the non-believers among their compatriots. People with different world views are carrying out equally valuable work in the interests of the Hungarian people and so far this has been done with good results. For this reason we, believers, wish to see all teachers—and not just a great many teachers—think in terms of the entire reality of Hungarian education and that they should act in the noble spirit of the Hungarian Constitu-

tion, which guarantees freedom of religion. They should do this in small settlements and villages, in old towns and new ones. By doing this, new sources of strength would become available on the basis of complete spiritual harmony between the different religions and our beloved Hungarian homeland may be built on the solid foundations of strong unity."

(*Keston News Service*, No. 120, 26 March 1981)

KAMPUCHEA

Protestant House-Churches Closed Down

When the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975, the closure of Protestant churches began and eventually all religious activity was driven underground. Pol Pot was overthrown by the Vietnamese Army in 1979, and it now seems that the Heng Samrin regime is pursuing a comparably harsh line towards Christianity. By early 1980 as many as six Protestant house-groups were meeting in and around the capital, Phnom Penh, and despite harassment by the authorities attendance exceeded 500, with new members coming each week. The last known public house-meeting took place on the morning of Sunday 25 January 1981 in the Phnom Penh suburb of Takhmau: it was interrupted by authorities from the Ministry of Cults who read out to the 80 believers present an official document forbidding such meetings.

The number of Christians in the country in 1975 is variously estimated as between 5,000 and 20,000; today there are between 200 and 300. Of the 15 to 25 pastors ministering in 1975, only two or three are left alive. (*Christianity Today*, 27 March 1981; *Keston News Service*, No. 121, 9 April 1981)

Other Religious Groups in Kampuchea

There are no known Roman Catholic meetings being held in Kampuchea. Most Catholics in Kampuchea were Vietnamese and fled back to their homeland after a massacre in 1970.

Buddhism is apparently being practised again to a limited extent, and more and more monks are seen in public.

Many of the country's Muslims fled after 1975 and have settled in Malaysia. At least two mosques have been reopened by the

Heng Samrin government, however—one on the outskirts of Phnom Penh and the other in Kompong Cham. (*Christianity Today*, 27 March 1981)

(see RCL Vol. 9, Nos. 1-2, p. 35). A seventh book, *The Polish Form of Dialogue* by Fr Tischner, has just appeared. (An extract from this book is printed in this issue of RCL, pp 139-46.)

POLAND

Police Action Against "Spotkania" and Religious "Samizdat"

A surprisingly strong move against Catholic dissent in Poland has come at a time when censorship seemed to have been relaxed and official promises to allow more cultural freedom were being made.

In a concerted action just before Christmas, 1980, Polish security police raided a number of flats in Lublin where *Spotkania* (*Encounters*) is published and produced. The police confiscated thousands of *samizdat* publications, several reams of paper and an electric duplicating machine. Several people were held for questioning at the Lublin Catholic University (KUL). On 24 February another raid took place, this time in the Krakow flat belonging to the editor of *The Cross of Nowa Huta*, a *samizdat* publication. Over 5,000 copies of books were confiscated and hundreds of *samizdat* documents.

Spotkania began to circulate in October 1977. It was published by a small group of students in Lublin anxious that Catholic opinion should be represented amongst opposition *samizdat*. By 1978 it had grown into a movement which strove to develop a consciously Catholic attitude towards the world and to foster understanding and co-operation with all democratic opposition groups existing in Poland.

Fifteen issues of *Spotkania* have appeared, and the first eight have been reprinted in the West. The high calibre of the journal has been maintained continually and a number of prominent intellectuals have become contributors, including Fr J. Tischner, the renowned professor of philosophy at the Catholic Theological Seminary in Krakow, and members of the Polish hierarchy (a lecture delivered at KUL on the "Future of the Church in Poland" by Bishop I. Tokarczuk was published in *Spotkania* No. 5). Since 1979 "*Spotkania*" has also published six books. One of these, by Fr A. Boniecki, the present editor of the Polish edition of *Osservatore Romano*, concerns the unofficial building of churches in one Polish diocese

Catholic Social Teaching and the Free Trade Union

On 9 December 1980 Cardinal Wyszyński set up a working group attached to the Secretariat of the Polish Episcopate to deal with problems related to Catholic social teaching and the needs of the Free Trade Union movement. It takes into account the process of renewal of social life and the need for moral renewal in Poland as well as the emergence of a new trade union which is interested in the social teaching of the Church. Bishop B. Dąbrowski, the secretary to the Episcopate, was entrusted with the sole right of appointing and dismissing members of the group. Among the 11 members appointed by Bishop Dąbrowski on 28 January are eight priests, and three laymen: Dr R. Kukołowicz, Cardinal Wyszyński's delegate, and Prof. A. Święcicki and A. Wielowiejski who are both closely involved in Catholic Intellectuals' Club (KIK).

Pastoral Care for Striking Students

On 22 January a sit-in strike began in 17 departments of Łódź University, at the Polytechnics and at the Medical and Musical Academies after the authorities refused to register an Independent Student Union (ISU) formed in September 1980 in the wake of the summer events. The registration was only one of 49 demands put forward by the students. Between 7,000 and 10,000 students from the Łódź region participated. Sympathy strikes were held by students in Wrocław, Warsaw, Poznań, and Bielsko Biala.

During the strike students received special pastoral care from the university chaplaincies. The diocesan chaplain coordinated all the work. Every day Masses were said, with the majority of the students participating. A special "room for prayer" was designated in each university building where students gathered to pray together. Religious literature, Bibles and Catholic papers were distributed, a number of

religious films were shown and discussions organized. Every Saturday all the chaplains met the students' representatives to discuss the current situation and to draw up plans of action for the following days. On 2 February Bishop J. Rozwadowski, the ordinary of Łódź diocese, issued a special pastoral letter to the people of Łódź asking them to pray for a speedy solution to the conflict. On the day after the settlement was reached on 18 February, solemn masses were said in many of the university buildings and other colleges. On 8 March, Bishop J. Rozwadowski himself celebrated a thanksgiving mass for the students, professors and people of Łódź.

Episcopal-Government Commission Meets for the Fifth Time

A joint episcopal-government commission met for its fifth session on 2 March 1981. A brief joint communiqué issued after the session reveals that "representatives of the authorities emphasized once again the positive role the Catholic Church has played in the process of social and political stabilization in the country." Both sides agreed that Polish society should give full support to the initiatives of the authorities which attempt to solve the existing crisis, but added also that all initiatives should be introduced in co-operation and dialogue with "organized social groups". According to the communiqué, a number of important issues concerning church-state relations were discussed, but no details were given. These issues included church access to the mass media, changes in the law on censorship especially with regard to religious publications, the laws controlling church property, pastoral work in hospitals and penitentiary institutes, the organization of the Catholic University of Lublin, and the controversial subject of a new motorway next to the Jasna Góra monastery (see KNS, Nos. 89, 91, 118; RCL Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 149-150). There is, however, some indication that the talks between the Episcopate and the authorities have had some practical consequences. On 6 April the head office of the Catholic University of Lublin issued a statement that "following the agreement between the Polish Episcopate and the Ministry of Education, the Department of Social Sciences is to be re-established in 1981. The new Department will have three sections: sociology, psychology and

pedagogics." The Department was abolished in 1952 and its skeleton staff was incorporated into the Law Department.

The 178th Conference of the Polish Episcopate

The 178th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate took place from 11 to 12 March in Warsaw under the chairmanship of Cardinal Wyszyński. In the communiqué issued at the end of the conference the bishops called on all citizens, irrespective of their political or religious persuasions, to strive earnestly in a spirit of prudence and dignity to maintain the freedoms won in the summer of 1980.

The new trade union, if it is to fulfil great expectations, should concentrate on matters that are strictly within its competence: the defence of workers' rights and the safeguarding of their working, living and cultural conditions. The bishops warned "Solidarity" against any attempt to exploit the present trend towards social renewal for "purposes alien to the nation". They added, however, that "great self-discipline and patience are required not only from the trade union, but also from the government". The bishops stated that "hasty decisions produce tensions and thus weaken the process of stabilization". They pleaded with Polish citizens not to allow Poland to become a country of chaos or a country of political prisoners.

The hierarchy gave their full support to the new free Farmers' Union:

"Our farmers must have the same rights as other workers to form free and independent unions without any restrictions. The Church declares its unequivocal support for this right which is a part of its social teaching. A farmers' union would not only represent the interest of farmers, but would also restore the economic balance between industry and agriculture. Only then will the existing tensions subside, and the farmers regain their confidence in the government and be able to concentrate their efforts on feeding the nation."

In a discussion of the role of the clergy in the "moral renewal of society" the bishops stressed that "the clergy must ensure that they always stand above politics, above any particular pressure groups, in order that they remain the servants of the Gospel and

peace". The Conference issued a special pastoral letter to the clergy "outlining their tasks in the present situation".

The hierarchy was informed about the progress of work of the joint government-episcopal commission and learned that the commission recognized catechetical centres as a "permanent reality" in Poland. An undertaking was given that the creation of such centres would not be restricted in the future. The bishops expressed their hope that a suitable decree would be issued shortly. (In 1960 religious instruction was abolished in schools, creating an enormous demand for such centres. The authorities were very reluctant not only to grant building permission for new centres, but also to allow existing ones to be registered.) Finally, the bishops expressed their special gratitude for gifts of food and medicine sent to them from abroad and gave an assurance that this would be distributed among those in need.

Cardinal Wyszyński Meets Polish Prime Minister

On 26 March Poland's Prime Minister, General W. Jaruzelski, and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński met in Warsaw to discuss the country's current urgent problems. There was however little doubt that the main reason for the meeting was to try to avert the threat of a general strike which was to begin on 31 March. The threatened strike was prompted by the incidents in Bydgoszcz on 19 March when more than 20 "Solidarity" members and organizers of the Farmers' Union were beaten up and evicted from a government meeting hall by the police in Bydgoszcz. The authorities chose to ignore the demands of "Solidarity" to punish those responsible and accused "Solidarity" of "overreacting". Cardinal Wyszyński's stand on the matter was made clear on 23 March when he openly condemned the police brutality in his message during the broadcast of Sunday Mass. He warned the government not to allow irresponsible behaviour on the part of the security forces. It is difficult to assess the success of the meeting between the two leaders. A brief communiqué, issued by the church, stated only that both sides agreed that "it is essential to overcome existing tensions within society in order to avoid the threat of strikes." Further, it was acknowledged that there should be as a matter of urgency a full and objective in-

vestigation of the events in Bydgoszcz. However, it was only on the eve of the strike that "Solidarity" and the government reached a compromise and it was called off.

The Church and "Rural Solidarity"

The Catholic Church in Poland has given strong and unequivocal support to the Farmers' Free Trade Union in its struggle with the authorities to obtain formal registration. According to remarks made by Kukołowicz, one of the Primate's advisors, at a meeting of the Parliamentary Commission on 7 April, Cardinal Wyszyński himself played a prominent role in helping to bring "Rural Solidarity" into being. The Primate has not only repeatedly stressed the need to allow farmers to set up their own independent labour unions, but has also raised the issue during meetings with the Party leader Mr S. Kania and the Prime Minister Gen. W. Jaruzelski. He also sent Kukołowicz as his personal delegate to assist the farmers in negotiations with the government.

The degree of the Church's active involvement on behalf of "Rural Solidarity" can best be illustrated by listing a series of events over the past months. On 2 February Cardinal Wyszyński, in a sermon delivered in Gniezno, stated: "Further delay in giving the rural population the right to organize itself independently seems not only unreasonable, but a violation of the basic rights of those who provide the nation's food." Eight days later, on 10 February, the Main Council of the Polish Episcopate stated in their communiqué: "the existence of labour organizations for farmers is, according to Pope John XXIII's teachings expounded in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, an absolute necessity." The question of the Farmers' Union was raised again at the 178th Plenary Conference of the Episcopate and the Polish bishops gave it their full support in a joint statement issued on 13 March (see above, *The 178th Conference of the Polish Episcopate*). The bishops' stand was restated only three days later on 16 March when they stressed the "urgent need" for the union to be granted the necessary legal status. The statement followed a meeting of representatives of the Farmers' Union with the Secretary of the Episcopate, Mgr B. Dąbrowski, during which farmers informed Dąbrowski about the outcome of

their Congress (which took place in Poznań from 8 to 9 March) and about the current situation in the countryside. On 2 April representatives of "Rural Solidarity" were received in Warsaw by Cardinal Wyszyński himself. He gave them his pastoral blessing for their work and stated that "recognition of the independent Farmers' Union would help to overcome not only the current agrarian crisis, but also the confidence crisis between the authorities and society as a whole." With regard to the Union's relations with the Church, the Cardinal emphasized that the Church does not wish to confer any particular religious character on the Farmers' Union, but rather bases its confidence in and support for the movement on the hope that its activity will "help to reverse the process of depopulation of rural areas and promote their moral, cultural and economic advancement". The Bydgoszcz agreement, signed on 17 April, made it possible for "Rural Solidarity" to grant farmers labour rights equal to those enjoyed by the workers. (*Radio Free Europe, Situation Report*, No. 7, 24 April 1981; *Keston News Service*, No. 120, 26 March 1981; No. 121, 9 April 1981)

Billy Graham Visits Poland

In January 1981 Billy Graham paid a four-day visit to Poland to receive an honorary doctorate from the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw. During his visit he was received by Cardinal Wyszyński. He also had private meetings with Poland's Foreign Minister, J. Czyrek, and the Minister for Religious Affairs, J. Kuberski. (*European Baptist Press Service*, 8 January 1981)

ROMANIA

Harassment, Arrests and Trials of Romanian Baptists

The Romanian Baptist preacher Pavel Crisan and his wife Viorica have been undergoing repeated interrogation by the secret police since June 1980 and have decided that they have no choice but to try to emigrate. Six Baptists from Constanta gathered in the flat of Emil Dumitru, one of their number, on 25 March in order to begin a hunger strike in support of emigration applications for their families. They were arrested, quickly tried and sentenced

to five and six months under Art. 153 ("hooliganism"). On the same day the Baptist Ionel Prejban, one of the few known members of the Romanian Christian Committee for the Defence of Religious Freedom (ALRC) still in Romania, was also arrested while travelling through Transylvanian villages speaking in churches. He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. (*Keston News Service*, No. 121, 9 April 1981; No. 122, 24 April 1981)

SOVIET UNION

One-Fifth of the Soviet Adult Population Still Religious

To the question of how many religious believers there are in the Soviet Union, the standard reply is that no reliable estimates can be made, as religious allegiance is not recorded on any documents. Church leaders—including Patriarch Pimen—have frequently asserted that there is no distinction made between Soviet citizens on religious grounds. The Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, Vladimir Kuroyedov, told an American journalist that "we never ask people whether they are believers or not" and added that he has not the faintest idea of the total number of believers in the Soviet Union. A careful monitoring of Soviet publications nevertheless reveals occasional mention of statistics concerning believers, although discrepancies in the figures given make reliable estimates difficult. The author of a report by Radio Liberty (Russian language research bulletin, No. 42, 1981) studies estimates given in recent years by specialists from the Moscow House of Scientific Atheism, the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Party's Academy of Social Sciences, the propaganda department of the Central Committee and so on. These estimates vary from between eight and ten per cent to between 25 and 30 per cent of the adult population. The majority of experts seem to agree on a figure of 15 to 20 per cent. (*Keston News Service*, No. 120, 26 March 1981)

Baptist Church Opened in Alma-Ata

A new house of worship was dedicated by the 1,200-member Central Baptist Church in Alma-Ata in late October 1980. The former building was in an area marked for

redevelopment. Baptist Superintendent for Kazakhstan, Nikolai Kolesnikov, the pastor of the church, stated that the new building was erected with state funds and labour in recompense for the old property. The new church is closer to the centre of the city, and has a seating capacity of 700. Members of the congregation offered their labour as well in order to speed completion of the building. The Alma-Ata church numbers 40 preachers among its members. Opening services were also conducted in October 1980 in the new Baptist church at Kuibyshev in the Volga region. (*Keston News Service*, No. 115, 15 January 1981)

Arrests and Trials of Unregistered Baptists Continue Apace

Two more leaders of the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (CCECB), the executive body of the unregistered Baptists, were arrested in December 1980 and January 1981. These are, respectively, Alexei Timofeyevich Kozorezov and Dimitri Vasilyevich Minyakov, both of whom had been living in hiding for some time. There are now only three members of the Council of Churches left at liberty in the USSR: the chairman Gennadi Kryuchkov, Kornei Kreker, and Mikhail Shaptala. Kryuchkov has been in hiding for over ten years. Pyotr Rumachik, a vice-president of the Council of Churches, who was arrested in August 1980, was sentenced on 21 March 1981 to five years' strict regime labour camp, and on 14 April Alexei Kozorezov to three years. Nine other unregistered Baptists already under arrest were sentenced in March and early April to between two and four years' labour camp.

Thirteen arrests of unregistered Baptists were reported in March and April 1981, and four more in May, bringing to 43 the number arrested since the end of the Olympic Games. In April 1981 the total number of Baptist prisoners in the USSR exceeded 100 for the first time since 1976.

This year the May Day celebrations in the USSR gave a long weekend (1-3 May), and the occasion was used in many parts of the country to hold extended youth meetings. As a result many young people were detained and sentenced to 15 days' "administrative arrest". (*Keston News Service*, No. 117, 9 February 1981; No. 121, 9 April 1981; No. 124, 21 May 1981; No. 126, 18 June 1981)

Metropolitan Yuvenali Resigns as Head of Orthodox External Church Relations Department

The resignation of Metropolitan Yuvenali of Krutitsy and Kolomna on 14 April 1981 at the age of 46 as head of the External Church Relations Department of the Russian Orthodox Church came as a great surprise to western churchmen. The Russian edition of the Department's *Information Bulletin* of 15 April published the text of Metropolitan Yuvenali's letter of resignation, dated 9 April, in which he asks to be relieved of his duties on the grounds of ill health.

Born Vladimir Kirillovich Poyarkov in the town of Yaroslavl in 1935, he entered the Leningrad Theological Academy and became a monk in 1959. In 1963 he was appointed head of the Patriarchal Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem and in 1964 made a deputy chairman of the External Church Relations Department. The chairman at that time was Metropolitan Nikodim. Archimandrite Yuvenali was made a bishop in 1965, an archbishop in 1971 and a metropolitan in 1972, in which year he succeeded Metropolitan Nikodim as chairman.

Metropolitan Yuvenali was active in the ecumenical sphere. He was a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, was an observer at the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, and played an active role in dialogue with the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.

He is succeeded by Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Belorussia, who will retain his present post of Patriarchal Exarch in Western Europe along with his new duties. He is also 46. (*Keston News Service*, No. 122, 24 April 1981; No. 123, 7 May 1981; No. 124, 21 May 1981)

Brailovsky Exiled

Viktor Brailovsky, 45, a cyberneticist and leading Jewish activist who was arrested on 13 November 1980, went on trial in Moscow on 17 June 1981 charged with slandering the Soviet State (Art. 190-1 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR). Brailovsky refused to accept a court-appointed lawyer or take part in cross-examination. The charge carries a maximum sentence of three years in a labour camp. On 18 June Brailovsky was sentenced to five years' internal exile in western Siberia. His wife

Irina is allowed to join him there. He was told that he need spend only three years and three months in exile because he has been in prison since last November, and under Soviet law a month in prison is the equivalent of three months in exile. The authorities may have decided on a degree of leniency because of publicity in the West and the activities of Jewish and other western pressure groups. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 18 and 19 June 1981)

Youth, Religion and Atheist Work

There have been various indications recently that the Soviet authorities are worried by the interest in religion being shown by young people. In the issue of the journal *Molodoi kommunist* for April 1981 the deputy chairman of the KGB, V. M. Chebrikov, admits in an article entitled "Vigilance is a tested weapon" not only that many Soviet young people are disaffected with communist ideology, but that they are receptive to alternative ideologies. These include "revisionism", "nationalism", and "clericalism"—that is, religion. It is certainly unusual for a writer at Mr Chebrikov's level of eminence to admit that interest in religion is a problem among young people—in his words, that "a certain portion of young people in our country (are) still susceptible to religious prejudices".

A number of articles have appeared recently in the Soviet press calling for improved atheist work, especially among young people. An article by D. Tabakaru called "School of the Young Atheist" appeared in the newspaper *Molodyozh Moldavii* on 28 March 1981. Mr. Tabakaru is head of the Philosophy and Scientific Atheism section of the department of Philosophy and Law at the Moldavian Academy of Social Sciences, and he calls on all organizations, but particularly the *Komsomol*, to make a "concerted effort" in the atheist nurturing of youth. An article by T. Pandzhikidze called "The atheist is produced in the VUZ" ("VUZ" = Institution of Higher Education) appeared in the Georgian newspaper *Zarya vostoka* on 24 April 1981. Improvements in the compulsory scientific atheism course are necessary, says the author, in order to counter the "increased attention which religious organizations have been paying in recent years to the young." (*Keston News Service*, No. 122, 24 April 1981; No. 126, 18 June 1981)

Fr Yakunin in Labour Camp

After being sentenced in August 1980 to five years' strict regime labour camp followed by five years' internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda", Fr Gleb Yakunin asked for an appeal, which was apparently heard and rejected in March 1981. It is not clear why there was such a long delay. While waiting for the appeal to be heard, Fr Yakunin was apparently held in Moscow's Lefortovo Prison. He has now been moved to Camp No. 37 in Perm. On 4 May 1981 he joined ten other prisoners in a one-day protest fast led by Dr Yuri Orlov, founder of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, to coincide with the reopening of the proceedings of the Madrid Conference reviewing implementation of the Helsinki Agreement. (*Keston News Service*, No. 120, 20 March 1981; No. 124, 21 May 1981)

Samizdat Journal "37" Stopped

KGB pressure has brought about the demise of the religio-philosophical *samizdat* journal 37, long one of the most respected dissident periodicals. According to the journal's Leningrad editor, 37-year-old poet Viktor Krivulin, the decision to cease publication was forced on him by the KGB. Krivulin was warned that if he did not cease publication of 37 he would either be expelled from the USSR or arrested. Krivulin, who is a paraplegic with a wife and child, reluctantly signed an undertaking to refrain from publishing any further issues of the journal.

The first issue of 37 appeared in January 1976 as a natural extension of an informal philosophical and cultural seminar which met in a private Leningrad flat numbered 37. Under the guidance of Krivulin and his first wife, Tatyana Goricheva (who was forced to emigrate in June 1980 under threat of arrest), the seminar and its journal became known as outstanding forums for serious religious and cultural thought and for the expression of divergent opinions.

Many of the early participants in 37 have since emerged as leading figures in various streams of dissident activity in Leningrad, such as the "Women and Russia" and "Maria" feminist groups, non-conformist art exhibitions and *samizdat* or literary activity.

Although the editors of 37 have all been harassed and threatened by the authorities since the first issue appeared, a telling blow

was struck with the expulsion abroad of Tatyana Goricheva, who had been co-editor and leading contributor. However, the journal continued to appear and it was in response to a recent issue, sharply critical of the *status quo* in the Soviet Union, that the remaining editor, Krivulin, was brought in for questioning by the KGB. (*Keston News Service*, No. 120, 26 March 1981)

VIETNAM

Vietnamese Priests Report Pressure Against Catholics

According to two Catholic priests who arrived recently as refugees in Thailand, the authorities in Vietnam have been putting increased pressure on the Church. Communist officials have apparently acknowledged that their present policy towards the Church is linked to events in Poland. While the Vietnamese authorities do not regard the Church as an immediate challenge to their own power, the two priests said that the communists look upon the Church as a potentially "destabilizing" element. The Rev. Alphonse Tran Duc Phuong, 58, a former South Vietnamese army chaplain, said that while people are free to worship, there is pressure on the Church at village level and in the priesthood. He said that the authority of the Church has been broken down in order to prevent any large-scale action. Only a handful of priests have been ordained since 1975 and only one seminary, in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), is still operating. Priests who have died or who have been arrested have not been replaced. (*International Herald Tribune*, 23 February 1981)

YUGOSLAVIA

Archbishop Speaks on Rights of Believers in Prison

In his 1980 Christmas sermon Archbishop Kuharić of Zagreb revealed that he had written to the Yugoslav government about the religious rights of believers serving terms of imprisonment: the right to be visited by a priest, receive the sacraments, see the religious press and in case of a death sentence be accompanied by a priest during the last moments. He also asked whether the authorities were taking suffi-

cient care to protect prisoners against illegal and inhumane punishments, such as being put into unheated concrete cells in solitary confinement. He had done this as a matter of conscience, in a spirit of constructive goodwill, on the grounds of the universal recognition today of the concept of the worth of the human person, and of human rights. (AKSA, 19 January 1981)

Award for Late Archbishop Pogačnik

The late Archbishop Pogačnik of Ljubljana has been posthumously awarded the Order of the Republic with Silver Star in recognition of his special interest and services in settling relations between the self-management socialist state and the Catholic Church. (Dr Pogačnik was often attacked during his lifetime for 'clericalism' and interfering in public affairs—Ed.) (AKSA, 30 December 1980)

Archbishop Franic' Speaks on Atheization in Yugoslavia

Ziva zajednica (*Living Communities*), the bulletin of the Croatian Catholic missions abroad (Nos. 1-2, January-February 1981), reports an interview with Archbishop Franic' of Split on Radio Cologne at Christmas 1980. Franic' spoke of the atheization brought about by the rapid urbanization of a peasant population torn away from its village church and religious organizations. The peasant finds himself isolated in a society where he is caught in a net of atheization, where the primary and secondary schools and universities and all public life are organized to create the new Marxist civilization with atheism as an essential element. Marxism is taught as a movement of liberation which believes that religion is an unreal and illusory view of the world and that men will be free when they are liberated from these illusions and can order their own lives, rather than taking orders from on high. In this atmosphere the spontaneous civil atheism which comes from the West flourishes. Since Yugoslavia is the socialist country most open to the West, and believers have freedoms which they do not have in other socialist countries—to publish, to travel to the West—they are in danger from both kinds of atheism: the practical atheism from the West which Franic' thinks much the more dangerous and the theoretical atheism taught in Yugoslav society. (AKSA, 27 February 1981)