

modified on the intervention of several East Germans to include *all* youth organisations and Christian young people rather than specifically theology students. East Germans also proposed that stronger churches should help weaker ones with supplies of books, material aid and technical equipment. Because legislation in socialist countries gives more opportunity for Christian witness than most Christians realise, the churches in socialist countries were urged by East German youth to be exhorted to be bolder in standing up for their rights.

It is not clear whether any of these recommendations were discussed at the Assem-

bly. The main business of the Assembly was already clearly laid down in a detailed timetable, and one of the main themes was the question of apartheid in South Africa. It was obvious that Third World delegates felt soul-searching by citizens of wealthy European nations to be a self-indulgent irrelevance and that the Assembly would do better to turn its mind to economic exploitation of the Third World by the wealthy nations, whether of East or West. In general, at both gatherings, issues of economic and social injustice in the Third World loomed much larger than any questions of East-West relations.

PHILIP WALTERS

Positive Coverage of Christianity in the Hungarian Media

The relaxation of restrictions on cultural and religious life which has been characteristic of the Hungarian government's policy in recent years has produced a flurry of television, stage and film productions dealing positively with religious themes. In Budapest and in the central provincial town of Kecskemet a play entitled "Jesus Christ, Son of Man" has been performed to enthusiastic audiences. The script is based on St Luke's Gospel. The reviewer of the Catholic weekly *Uj Ember* wrote that "the audience justly felt with joy that the stage play did not wound religious feelings." (*Uj Ember*, 11 March 1984.) In 1983 Hungarian Television broadcast a series of lectures about the mediaeval Church, in which Christian scholars participated. This series is to be followed by one dealing with the cultural history of mediaeval Europe, which will focus largely on the Church. The Reformed Church historian László Makkai, one of the programme's lecturers, stated that the new series "will document the role which the living faith and serving obedience of Christianity, and, above all, of individual Christians have played in Europe in the interest of human progress." (*Hungarian Church Press*, 1 November 1983.) The State has produced a 90-minute colour documentary in cooperation with the Christian Churches and the Jewish community. According to a review published in *Informationsdienst für Lutherische Minderheitskirchen in Europa* (29 February 1984), the

film, "A Better Way", "has emphasised positive phenomena and developments, and has passed over hitches in the relationship between the Churches and the Party." "A Better Way" was produced to coincide with the 7th Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, which was held in July-August in Budapest. The film features leading figures from the Churches, the State and the Party. A film of the rock opera "Stephen the King" has been released. This musical is based on the life of St Stephen, the first Christian king of Hungary. One of its main themes is the tension between the responsibilities of the exercise of political power and those of the Christian life.

Anniversaries of the Bolshevik Revolution customarily inspire the Hungarian religious weeklies to expound their view of the significance of the "Great October Revolution". Its 66th anniversary was no exception. In an article appearing in *Reformatusok Lapja* of 6 November 1983 entitled "Historical Lessons", Reformed readers were informed that the past has produced individuals and organisations which have "struggled for the happiness and the continuous progress of the community." However, the paper continued, "we must see that in truth their efforts have been condemned in advance to failure, and that their victories have signified merely 'moral triumphs'." But in contrast to all previous endeavours — presumably these include those of Christ and his Church — *Refor-*

matusok Lapja assures its subscribers that "the Great October Socialist Revolution has brought about a change of decisive significance in the history of the human family." The Lutheran weekly *Evangélikus Élet* (6 November 1983) propounds the thesis that the application of the principles of the Bolshevik seizure of power provide the only solution to the problems of peace and justice: "The revolutionaries fought for peace and justice in one of the greatest countries in the world. They chose peace and

justice as the rule with regard to their relations with other people and with humanity. Subsequently generations adopted these principles for themselves, and to the present day they remain the sole viable way for the whole world." *Evangélikus Élet* also notes that "the voice echoes ever more strongly of those Churches and Christians who are today prepared to collaborate with anyone who recognises the sole viable way to the future."

Measures Against Catholics in Southern Vietnam

The following report on the circumstances surrounding the arrest of thirteen Catholics in southern Vietnam is taken from information provided in late 1983 by Mr Dominic Nguyen Duy Cuong, a former Jesuit novice who was living in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) until March 1981. Mr Cuong witnessed the arrest of seven Jesuits and the confiscation of the Dac Lo Centre and the Jesuit Regional Residence.

At the end of June 1983, sentences ranging from life imprisonment to an "admonishment" were imposed on thirteen Catholics in Vietnam. All thirteen had been involved in, or associated with, the work at the Jesuit Dac Lo Centre in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). The Jesuits receiving the harshest sentences were Fr Doan SJ, the Regional Superior in Vietnam. Fr Chinh SJ, his assistant, Fr Que SJ, the editor of a religious magazine, and Professor Lai SJ, a linguistics expert; the Catholic sentenced to life imprisonment was Nguyen Van Hien, an ex-Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army of South Vietnam and a lay helper at the Dac Lo Centre.

Before the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, the Dac Lo Centre at 161 Ly Chinh Thang, Ho Chi Minh City, housed extensive Jesuit activities. It comprised a television centre, a student centre, a library with 30,000 books, a chapel (seating 200) and a four-storey residential building. After 1975, the TV centre was confiscated and the student centre closed, and Fr Joseph Nguyen Cong Doan was forced to hand over his Regional Residence (at 105 Nguyen Dinh Chieu) to the government. In exchange he was given a small house, located next door to a police station. His assistant, Fr Joseph Do Quang Chinh,

also moved to this new residence, at 142 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, Phu Nhuan, Ho Chi Minh City.

The steps taken to curtail the activities at the Dac Lo Centre, however, appeared to have quite the opposite effect. The parish began to attract large numbers of people, especially among the young, and its activities expanded to the extent that even with seven masses each weekday and twelve on Sundays the chapel could not accommodate all who wished to attend, and some had to stand outside. There were eight choirs for holy services. The Centre also produced a religious magazine, *Dao Nhap The* (Incarnate Religion) which was published at irregular intervals and distributed free of charge to parishioners.

The first arrests at the Jesuit Centre took place at the end of 1980. On 8 December, at about 9.30 a.m., police appeared and arrested Fr Joseph Le Than Que SJ and Mr Nguyen Van Hien, who were later taken to Chi Hoa Prison. The Centre was blockaded and searched; the Jesuits and some 38 parishioners who were staying at the Centre making preparations for Christmas were all questioned. The lay people were then released, as was the Regional Superior, Fr Doan, who had been staying at Dac Lo. Four Jesuits, Frs Linh, Quy, Trung and Lai, were however confined in a small room in the Centre for two weeks, after which they were taken to the Police HQ where they were to be held until June 1983 when they were tried and sentenced. At the time of the arrests in December 1980, the remaining premises at Dac Lo — the chapel, library and residential building — were confiscated by the authorities.