

years in camp for her activities. Though extremely weak she nevertheless resumed her work with the CPR after her release in late 1973, and remained active until her departure for the United States with her family in 1979.

During the early 1970s Lidiya's place as leader of the Council was taken by Galina Rytikova, whose husband Pavel was then serving a prison term. It was during this period that the *Bulletin* was founded; as Secretary, Rytikova collected the documentation, and it was in her home that the members of the CPR compiled the *Bulletin*. During 1978, Galina was forced by threats of psychiatric internment to go into hiding with her three youngest children.

Alexandra Kozorezova was formally elected President of the CPR after the emigration of Lidiya Vins. She too was soon forced to go into hiding with her three-year-old son, but in February 1981 she was discovered and arrested. At her trial in August 1981 she was given a three-year suspended sentence which meant that she could remain at liberty provided that she ceased her involvement with the Council's work. In an appeal to the authorities, Kozorezova made it clear that her conscience would not permit her to turn a blind eye to the sufferings of her fellow-believers. In April 1982 she was re-arrested, together with Galina Rytikova and four other members of the Council during a meeting in the home of A. D. Belkunova. Literature and personal property were confiscated from the women, and Rytikova and Kozorezova were held for a few days. Only one of the detained women was brought to trial, however: Lidiya Bondar, who had been involved in the organisation of summer camps for the children of Baptist prisoners, was sentenced to three years' camp.

The next clampdown on the CPR came in the spring of 1985 at a time when the number of Baptist arrests was running at an extremely high level. On 1 March, Serafima Yudintseva was given a two-year sentence;

this has been deferred for two years but she is required not to leave her place of residence without permission from the militia. Then, between May and July, the homes of several Council activists were searched, including those of the Khorev family in Kishinyov, the Kozorezovs in Voroshilovgrad and the Naprienkos in Moscow. At the home of Vasili and Natasha Dimitriyev (the daughter of Galina Rytikova) the CPR archive was found and confiscated.

Of those affected by the searches, two appeared likely to face prosecution. Ulyana Germanyuk (whose husband Stepan is in prison), an active member of the Council, was arrested on 23 July while visiting her daughter in the Crimea. Since then her children have been unable to obtain any further information about her position. In Barnaul (Siberia) Valentina Firsova has been warned not to leave her home town and this may well be a prelude to prosecution.

Pressure and arrests have never succeeded in thwarting the activities of the Council in the past and it seems unlikely that they will do so now. The members still hold firmly to their 1976 declaration that they would not cease to function until three conditions were met:

1. a complete end to persecution by the authorities of believers because of their faith;
2. the release and rehabilitation of all who have been condemned for the Word of God;
3. it is made possible for their spiritual centre, the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists, to function normally.

Given that present Soviet religious policy shows little sign of meeting these demands, one must assume that the Council will endeavour to continue their work for the foreseeable future.

JOHN ANDERSON

The Beijing-Rome Dialogue

The Holy See has been trying for some twenty years to start dialogue with the Beijing government. A Papal Nuncio in Asia told me twenty years ago that the Nuncios of the region had been instructed to try to

establish contact with the government in Beijing. The Popes have never missed an opportunity for expressing their desire for dialogue. At Epiphany 1967, Pope Paul VI praised the ardent youth of China (not

realising that these were the red guards who had vandalised the churches a few months earlier). The same Pope Paul, visiting Hong Kong in 1970 — carefully avoiding Taiwan so as not to irritate Beijing — addressed kind words to the Chinese people. The Nuncio in Taiwan was recalled in 1971, and for many years a chargé d'affaires has been the senior official there. All these were signals of goodwill. They fell on deaf ears. No signals came from Beijing. Indeed, it has been reliably related that when Beijing's ambassador in Australia entered a restaurant and noticed the presence of the Papal Nuncio, who was attending another function, he promptly turned and left. Obviously he had instructions from Beijing not to have even the slightest contact with the representative of the Holy See. Recently, however, the ambassador of Beijing joined the other ambassadors to receive the Pope in Togo. The North Korean ambassador was also there.

Nonetheless, the situation between Beijing and Rome has not improved. When Mgr Dominic Tang was named Archbishop of Canton in 1981, the Patriotic Association of China organised loud protests throughout the country, ignoring the fact that the title was due to Mgr Tang who, though consecrated bishop in 1951, was only Apostolic Administrator of the Canton diocese. The French archbishop of the diocese was still alive, living abroad. When the French archbishop died, the title was due to Bishop Tang, but he was in prison, confined in an unknown place. After his release in 1980, but before his departure for Hong Kong, the authorities in Canton publicly acknowledged him as Bishop of Canton. The Holy See could not deny him the fuller title. Since 1946, when the hierarchy was established in China, the bishops of the capitals of all provinces have been archbishops. As Canton was the provincial capital of Kwangtung province, the title was due to Bishop Tang. The Holy See could hardly be expected to take into account the fact that in the meantime the communists had abolished the title of archbishop — an act which showed that the so-called Patriotic Catholic Association is not a mere association of priests and bishops but is governing the internal affairs of the church under the direct rule of the Communist Party. When in 1981 the Holy Father, while in Manila, praised the Catholics in China who had remained loyal in spite of hardships, another wave of pro-

test followed from the Patriotics in China. In November 1981, a number of priests were arrested in various parts of the country.

The major cause of irritation for Beijing was, however, something different. It was that a large majority of Catholics had not joined the Patriotics and, more important still, that the still surviving old legitimate bishops had ordained priests and successors to the bishops. The newly-ordained bishops and priests are persecuted and when caught are given heavy prison sentences. Not a word appears about this in the press. For the communists the idea that any citizen, in any aspect of his private life, should not be under the command of the party, is inconceivable. Foreign visitors are unable to meet the "non-Patriotics". They hear only of "freedom of religion".

Meanwhile, the world can see that not one but three Cardinals, Cardinal Etchegeray of Marseilles, Cardinal König of Vienna and Cardinal Sin of Manila, have visited China and been courteously received. Inside China these visits are regarded as homage and as quasi-acknowledgement of the status of the Patriotic Church. The official doctrine is that the Patriotic Church is independent from Rome — newly-ordained Patriotic bishops have to take an oath to that effect — but keeps friendly relations, on equal footing, with all the churches of the world, the Roman Church included. This was put in a classic formula by the newly-ordained auxiliary bishop of the Patriotic Church in Shanghai, Louis Jin Luxian. In an interview given to the magazine *Asian Focus*, he went so far as to say that the churches — the Patriotics and Rome — are equal, equal like the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

Auxiliary Bishop Jin is an important card in the hands of the Patriotics. He is a Jesuit-trained theologian who studied in Europe, knows western languages, and in the early 1950s was head of the Shanghai seminary. He is intelligent, smart and smooth, as only a Shanghainese can be. In his public speeches he repeats the official party line, accusing the Holy See of crimes committed against the Chinese nation, and saying that his own Bishop, Ignatius Gong, committed crimes against the state and therefore was justly condemned for life. Bishop Gong, after thirty years in prison, was released in July 1985, just before Jin's visit to Hong Kong. During the past few years hundreds

and thousands of "counter-revolutionaries" condemned during Mao's time have been rehabilitated, but not Bishop Gong. He is still a "counter-revolutionary criminal". A court decision placed him in the custody of the Shanghai Patriotics, and there he remains, isolated from the world. He is, therefore, in some ways in a worse position than he was when in prison, where he was highly respected and received privileged treatment. [See *RCL* Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 332-33 — *Ed.*]

In private conversations auxiliary Bishop Jin presents himself as a bridge, as someone who wants to work for conciliation between the Patriotics and Rome. If the Communist Party's United Front Department — which controls all religions in China — were looking for a "bridge" between Beijing and Rome, it could find one easily. There are

bishops in China who in the confusion of the early days turned Patriotic and are still formally in the Association, but now, realising that they were misled, are faithful to Rome. There are even some newly-ordained bishops in the Patriotic church — not in the big cities but in remote areas — who at their ordination omitted the oath against Rome. Unlike the auxiliary bishop of Shanghai, they never say a word against Rome. And there is of course the Archbishop of Canton, Dominic Tang, who lives in Hong Kong — a great patriot, totally loyal to Rome.

If the leaders in Beijing really wanted to commence a dialogue with Rome, they would not have far to go. Hitherto Beijing has shown no interest in negotiations.

L. LADANY

Jehovah's Witnesses in Czechoslovakia

"Clericalism and religious sectarianism are the main impediments to the successful implementation of ideological and political education (in our country). They represent a serious anti-social phenomenon, which has to be carefully monitored . . ." These are the words of Jaromir Obzina, Minister of the Interior, quoted in *The Crime Review*, a Czech journal of limited circulation — not available to the general public — in an article about the Jehovah's Witnesses. "This sect is the most anti-communist, anti-progressive and anti-scientific church denomination we have, despite the Witnesses' claim that they are totally apolitical," state the two authors of the article, security sergeants Gehringer and Lanc. They go on to argue that "it is precisely because they refuse to support any government that they do not acknowledge our state symbols, refuse to take oaths, to take part in elections or the voluntary brigades of socialist work. Their passivity has only one aim, which is the disintegration of the mobilisation of the masses and the defence-readiness of the country" (a reference to the Witnesses' refusal to be conscripted into the army). As an instance of the sect's anti-communism, the authors refer to the statement of the Witnesses' world congress (1950) which said that "communism is a red religion which could flood the world if barriers against it are not

erected.' Gehringer and Lanc go on to describe the incompatibility of the Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs with commonsense, rather than with Marxism-Leninism. What seems most to concern them, however, is not any theoretical point, but the Witnesses' ability to avoid detection. We learn that they have an iron discipline, that they are organised at district and at regional level, that the typical basic cell is composed of only six members, that throughout the hierarchical structure they communicate in coded messages and that they are absolutely intransigent when interrogated or tried. They refuse to answer any questions, and when they do respond they only quote from Lenin or party documents on religious liberty. They seem to be particularly successful in producing and distributing illegal literature such as the fortnightly *Watchtower* and the monthly *Serving the Kingdom*, as well as a host of other *samizdat* publications. The sergeants give an account, in a breezy and optimistic style, of their detection of a group of Witnesses in the provincial town of Valašské Meziříčí (Moravia) where seven active members were sentenced to terms of up to one year's imprisonment. One can infer, however, as some of these imprisoned elders had been active since 1970, that their work had gone undetected for 11 years. In fact, the groups are usually discovered only when young