

fer and activity of priests.

25. We demand the immediate and complete rehabilitation of illegally sentenced priests, members of orders and active members of the laity.

26. We demand an end to discrimination against believers in employment, particularly in education.

27. We demand that believers be allowed to address particular problems which concern them, i.e. the right of petition.

28. We demand that laws which regard religious activity as criminal be dropped.

29. We demand that certain legal articles be amended.

30. We demand that all existing laws be brought into line with international pacts on human rights.

31. We demand that a committee composed of State and Church representatives be formed to discuss and make appropriate decisions.

The Slovak Catholic Movement in the Fourth Year of *Perestroika*

Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* programme is in its fourth year. Czecho-Slovak politicians have expressed their support for it and have even announced their own version of *perestroika*. This cannot have been easy for them as in the late seventies they had described their administration as the most successful period in the history of socialist construction in Czecho-Slovakia. What then is to be restructured? For from its outset there have been doubts as to whether restructuring is being seriously undertaken.

A change in the attitude of the Communist Party and the state machinery towards Catholics would be evidence that it is being undertaken seriously. This would affect broad sections of Slovak society and the party would not have to relinquish much of its power. But what changes has *perestroika* brought so far?

Since 1949 the so-called Church Laws have been in force in Czecho-Slovakia. These were adopted at the height of the Stalinist period and were to form the framework for

complete state control of the churches. According to these laws, all religious activity requires the prior permission of the state. The state administration operates a system of church secretaries from regional through to district level. Church secretaries alone have the right to decide what to permit and what not to permit. In this they are not guided by the law; in no case are the church and believers legally entitled to state permission to operate. Neither the church nor believers has any say in the selection of church secretaries. The Communist Party fills these posts with its people and they make decisions in keeping with the party's general political guidelines. They do not need to provide reasons for their decisions. In this respect nothing has changed and there are no changes planned. Political guidelines on the activity of church secretaries are now perhaps even more cautious, yet breaking these rulings is now more tolerated since the Catholic Church has never fully submitted to them.

The Communist Party's current religious policy was fixed at the

beginning of the 1970s. In the outmoded language of our propaganda, 'the socialist state values the participation of believers in the construction of socialism while continuing with the atheistic upbringing of young people in particular, but also other groups of society.' Recently it has been said that the party and state will not allow religion to be misused against socialism. In practice this has meant that from the ranks of less committed priests the state set up the association *Pacem in Terris* to support state propaganda and considers this organisation representative of the Catholic Church and believers. Priests faithful to the church have had their state licence to public ministry withdrawn, and in more serious cases priests have been attacked in the press or sentenced to prison terms. State officials refuse to negotiate with genuine representatives of the episcopate. Children are, by various means, prevented from attending religious instruction and employees in middle and top management are obliged to attend classes in politics, including lectures on atheism. This is another area where nothing has changed, with the possible exception of religious instruction which has become slightly more accessible.

Church policy documents consistent with those of the 1970s, can be found amongst the material of the last Communist Party Congress in 1986 and have not been since changed. In the Czecho-Slovak state's attitude towards believers there is no evidence of restructuring going on.

The communist regime's destructive measures have not destroyed, but rather strengthened, the Catholic Church. Pressure from the regime has always met with an appropriate response from the church. What priests in public service could not do was done by priests working in secret, and what they could not do

was done by the laity. The church has drawn her strength from a firm faith in God shared by broad sections of the Slovak people, from still-strong Catholic traditions and from the Slovak Catholics' unshakeable allegiance to Rome.

The ability of the Catholic Church to defend herself has increased by stages. After the severity of the 1950s came the recognition of new conditions. The 1970s were a period of growth for the secret religious circles and the 1980s are witnessing a growth in pilgrimages, *samizdat* publication, improved organisation and public discussion of political issues. The transition from one stage to the next has occurred despite the regime's resistance. In the early eighties criminal proceedings were brought against the known organisers of religious circles. During the trials the prosecution and sentence passed were based on the Church Laws. These trials did not, however, serve to intimidate activists whose increasing numbers the regime could not tolerate and the police eased up its investigation into these circles. Religious *samizdat* journals were begun in the utmost secrecy. They are still clandestinely produced, but at recent interrogations of religious activists the secret police has said that such journals may be produced as long as they do not include articles on political themes. In Slovakia almost a dozen Catholic *samizdat* journals are produced.

Between 1983 and 1986 the police tried by means of harassment and intimidation to reduce participation in pilgrimages. Since 1987 there have been fewer such attempts as they have failed to curb the rapid growth in attendance at pilgrimages. In 1988 around 700,000 people took part in pilgrimages in Slovakia. However, in the same year attacks on the pilgrimages appeared for the first time in the communist press. These were not

attacks on the pilgrimages as such, but on the part played in them by young people, and in particular their chants in support of the Pope and religious freedom. A demonstration for religious freedom and human rights held in Bratislava on 25 March marked the beginning of another new stage. This peaceful demonstration, organised by Catholics, was brutally broken up by police. Criminal proceedings were begun against some of the participants, but in October the participants were amnestied.

In 1950 the communists closed all monasteries. Yet the male religious orders did not disappear. From the beginning of 1950 onwards nuns were placed in special institutions. After spending many years in camps, the male orders continued their work in secret in small communities. Both male and female orders gained novice members. In 1988 the authorities took the first steps towards legalising some of the secret female orders and allowing them to work openly as nuns. Yet the majority of nuns and all monks must continue their work in secret.

A great support to the Slovak Catholic movement in the past has been the solidarity shown by the western public and governments. It is particularly due to this solidarity that the authorities have not been able to punish Catholics more severely and have allowed them to carry on their activity.

The Slovak Catholic movement was also indirectly aided by the federalisation of Czecho-Slovakia in 1968. Before federalisation Catholics had to contend with the Czecho-Slovak authorities. After federalisation church policy has, to a large extent, come under the jurisdiction of the Slovak and Czech governments. Now Slovak Catholics have to contend 'only' with the Slovak communists, who are few in number. Of course the fundamental issues of the

authorities' attitude towards Catholics are always decided nationally.

The growth of any large movement, such as the Catholic movement in Slovakia, under conditions of semi-legality entails the risk of breeding suspicion, of dogmatism and even disintegration. To counter these risks the movement must develop a unifying strength.

Bishop Jan Korec has become the unifying force behind the Slovak Catholic movement. This Jesuit was secretly consecrated a bishop in 1951 on the authorisation given by Popes, most recently Pius XII, to bishops in communist countries. He was 27 at the time. In 1960 he was sentenced to 12 years' detention for his activity as a secret bishop. He was released in 1968 by the Dubček government.

For most of his life Korec has worked as a labourer, and now is a pensioner in Bratislava. The state has never recognised him as a bishop and has barred him from public service, but this has not stopped hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Catholic activists from maintaining contact with him.

The Slovak Catholic movement works closely with Czech Catholics and, as far as circumstances allow, with Polish and Hungarian Catholics. The older generation of Slovak and Czech Catholics were imprisoned together in the 1950s. Today activists exchange information and *samizdat* publications, and organise joint initiatives. Three hundred thousand Slovaks signed the Moravian Catholics' petition in early 1988. Cardinal Tomášek of Prague enjoys great respect in Slovakia, although according to church law his authority does not extend to Slovakia. He is constantly receiving letters of greeting from Slovak pilgrims, and when he visited Slovakia in 1987 the Cardinal was received with great enthusiasm.

The Catholic movement in Slovakia is not the product of *pere-*

stroika. It has a long tradition and broad base in society. It has built up a network of activists and has tried and tested working methods. But it relies above all on Christian teaching, the truth of which history reveals over and over again. Communism has nothing to set against this. Forty years of communist rule for Slovak Catholics represent a challenge to which Catholicism has risen.

The communists are still unaware of this fact. From time to time they wage a press campaign against Bishop Korec. Yet if ever they wish to begin dialogue with the Catholics of Slovakia they will have to talk first of all to Bishop Korec. By their attacks in the press, the communists are themselves hindering this dialogue. Without dialogue with the Catholics it will again prove impossible to overcome society's passivity, even in the economic sense. Yet the communists assure us that the activation of citizens is a feature of

restructuring. How then do they wish to achieve this?

In Poland there is no difficulty in General Jaruzelski meeting with Cardinal Glemp and discussing with him the key issues of nation and state. In Czecho-Slovakia in May 1988 the government turned down Cardinal Tomášek's suggestion of dialogue and the communists have nothing but criticism for Bishop Korec. Must the communists allow the state to enter an economic crisis of Polish dimensions before they are willing to negotiate, for example, with the Catholics?

The Catholic movement in Slovakia is experiencing natural growth. It is ready at any time to hold dialogue with the communist government, but cannot force the government to negotiate. Neither does it need to. Time is on the Catholics' side.

JÁN ČARNOGURSKÝ

The Catholic Church in Lithuania

*The following interview by the Polish journalist Andrzej Chodkiewicz with a senior member of the Lithuanian Catholic clergy, Fr Vaclovas Aliulis, was published on 31 July last year in the Polish newspaper Lad. Fr Aliulis is head of the Episcopal Liturgical Commission in Lithuania and a member of the Marian Order.**

Religious Observance in Lithuania

Q: How would you describe the religious faith of the Lithuanians?

A: I would rather speak of the Catholics of Lithuania than single

out the Lithuanians in particular, as we believe that about ten per cent of Catholics in Lithuania are Poles or people who pray in Polish, although their everyday language is Belorussian. There is a difference between these two groups. I would like to say that Polish piety is more traditional, which shows itself, for example, in the way a member of the Polish-speaking group will go to Mass every Sunday, but to Confession and Communion only once a year. On the

*For a review of recent developments in Lithuanian Catholic life, see *Chronicle* item on pp. 150-52.