

Nevertheless, an overall assessment of the wearers of the symbol is at odds with the purpose of the state decision. The State Secretary confirmed that the Churches should make direct contact with the appropriate state authorities in the event of transgressions. He promised that he himself would pursue the clarification of serious cases.

Making a report to the eastern region of the Berlin-Brandenburg Church on 16 April, Bishop Gottfried Forck added some further comments. He believed that the basic reason for the State's banning of the "swords into ploughshares" symbol was a suspicion that the wearing of it showed support for the recently published "Berlin Appeal" of Pastor Eppelmann. Some who had not heeded the request to remove the badge had often been detained for hours at police stations. From time to time the badge, banned in schools, colleges and universities, had been slandered. The State was obviously of the opinion that the badge was being worn by many who had nothing to do with the Church. Bishop Forck repeated his thanks to all those who had worn the badge and despite all difficulties had maintained peaceful views. It was obvious, he said, that the responsibility for peace goes further than the wearing of badges. (Bishop Forck is himself in the habit of wearing the symbol on his jacket.) He added that it had not proved possible to persuade the State authorities to introduce "social peace-service". On the other hand, there remained the possibility of employing "construction soldiers" on social projects more widely than hitherto.

During this period the state campaign against unofficial peace initiatives was maintained and intensified. A common slogan was: peace must be defended—peace must be armed! (*Der Friede muss verteidigt werden—Der Friede muss bewaffnet sein!*) The official viewpoint can be summed up in the words of

Werner Walde, Party chief in the town of Cottbus:

The slogans of the peace movement serve only to undermine the essential military strength of the socialist world. Those who call for "social peace-service" are opponents of peace, socialism, and our very Constitution. It must not be forgotten that our whole Republic is peace-service.

Although the main drive of the peace initiative has come from Evangelical Christians, the witness of the Roman Catholic Church must not be left out of account. A recent statement of the "Halle Action Group" (*Aktionskreis Halle*, an association of priests and lay people in the Magdeburg area, founded in 1969) attacked what it alleged to be the intolerable silence of the Roman Catholic Church in face of threats to peace. A West Berlin church spokesman, Wolfgang Knauff, agreed that Roman Catholics did their best to keep clear of direct political involvement; he pointed, however, to official statements made in 1975 and 1978, in which the view of the Church on such themes as military service and infringements of freedom were made unmistakably clear.

The principal indications therefore during the Easter season were that Church-State relationships were moving into a more difficult phase. Further friction seemed almost inevitable. Yet there were causes for optimism. During the last days of April Karl Mau, the General Secretary of the World Union of Lutherans, had an interview with Klaus Gysi during which the latter said, "The concern of young people for peace all over the world is a sign of hope". Mau replied that the young GDR citizens' activity on behalf of peace strengthened the world-wide peace effort. Peace could be preserved, he added, only if all nations strove for it decisively. Such efforts could be in line with a government's policy, or against it.

ARVAN GORDON

Pressure on Czech Catholics Continues

The Trial of Fr Lízna

The trial of Fr František Lízna S.J. took place on 21 January 1982 in a small district court in Prague (Dejvice) without official publicity, and away from the public gaze. Nevertheless, early in the morning, a small group of friends, including a band of Charter 77 supporters

headed by the new spokesman, the Catholic philosopher Dr Radim Palouš, and some foreign journalists began to converge on the court. However, they were soon outnumbered by the police, who after taking their photographs told them menacingly to go home. After a long delay the priest's mother

and a friend were led through the maze of corridors to a small dark room on the fourth floor surrounded by seven plainclothes militia officers, mainly women.

After reading the indictment, accusing Fr Lízna of "damaging state interests abroad" by sending a letter to his sister in England together with copies of *Informace o Církvi* (*Church Information*), a clandestine Catholic monthly, the presiding judge asked the defendant whether he was prepared to answer questions now, which he had refused to do during interrogations. On receiving an affirmative reply, he asked him whether he had met two German priests, Fr Grill and Fr Englisch, and whether this meeting had been planned or not. Fr Lízna said that his meeting with the priests was pure coincidence. They had met for the first time at a friend's birthday party. It was then that he decided to write a letter to his sister in England which the priests would take. The judge then began to look through his papers, picked up a copy of *Informace o Církvi*, and read out a detailed report on the death of Přemysl Coufal, a secretly ordained priest, presumed to have been killed by the security police (see *RCL* Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 48-9—Ed.). A strange silence descended on the hearers, and one of the two jury members representing the Catholic People's Party, subservient to the régime, visibly turned pale. The judge proceeded to read out another article about harassment of children who attend religious classes. He then quoted from the testimony of the German priests, who admitted giving Fr Lízna one hundred German Marks. The woman procurator who spoke afterwards said that Fr Grill had said in his testimony that he had been given documents for Keston College, "a centre for the study of the Church in the countries where it is persecuted", and that this proved that Fr Lízna was guilty of damaging state interests abroad. The defence counsel retorted that Fr Lízna does not speak German and that the court had not allowed his interpreter, Miss Anna Schwarzova, to be a witness. His client's intention to send anything apart from the letter to his sister therefore could not be proved.

Fr Lízna was asked to comment. He said that he was a Catholic priest whose only duty was to serve the Church and preach the Gospel. "This is why I cannot accept the charge of guilty. The reports read out by the judge were true, and I would like to thank him for reading them out. I will always defend the truth and justice. I cannot do otherwise."

The jury deliberated for an unusually long time in such cases—over an hour. The result: seven months were added to Fr Lízna's previous sentence of twenty months' imprisonment. At the request of his mother, he was allowed to give her a blessing. Silence fell on the courtroom for the second time. The people's party representative was visibly shaken.

On 2 April, Fr Lízna's appeal against his sentence was rejected. This time no-one was allowed into the courtroom. (Based on the report in *Informace o Církvi*, No. 2, February 1982)

Trials of Other Catholic Priests

On 30 March the district court in Litoměřice sentenced Fr Radim Hložánka, to twenty months' imprisonment for "obstructing state supervision of the Church" (Art. 178 of the Penal Code). Moreover he is to be barred from exercising his ministry for five years after his release. Fr Hložánka was arrested on 29 October 1981 when the police found a duplicator in his presbytery in Hošíka (North Bohemia). The prosecution accused Fr Hložánka of using the parish funds for illegally printing religious literature such as prayer books and breviaries and of failing to enter the expenses into the parish accounts. The accused admitted the charge that he duplicated religious literature but denied the charge of expropriating parish funds. However, the prosecution regarded his activity as constituting a breach of the loyalty oath which priests in Czechoslovakia must take after ordination. Fr Hložánka has appealed against his sentence. He has already spent eleven years in labour camps.

Two Czech Franciscans, Fr Josef (Jan) Bárta, 61, and Fr Ladislav Trojan, 70, were sentenced by the Regional Court in Liberec on 15 April to eighteen months' imprisonment and fifteen months' suspended sentence respectively for "obstructing state supervision of the Church". The authorities accused Fr Bárta of organizing a clandestine theological seminary in Liberec while Fr Trojan, who is probably a secretly ordained priest, was accused of helping him run the courses. Since the first search of his flat in September 1979, Fr Bárta has been under close police surveillance and spent three months in prison between 18 November 1980 and 18 February 1981. He spent eighteen years in prison between 1948 and 1966. In 1976 his licence to work as a priest was revoked. Both men are

seriously ill and appealed against their sentences. (For further information on Fr Bárta see *RCL* Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 46.)

Charter 77 Supports Catholics

On 10 March the Czech human rights movement, Charter 77, issued its second strong condemnation of the violations of religious liberty in Czechoslovakia in an open letter to the president and other state officials. (The first Charter 77 document on religious liberty, dated 22 April 1977, was published in *RCL* Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 158-61.)

In the opening paragraph, the spokesmen note that in spite of numerous official declarations creating the impression that religious freedom is being respected, the persecution of believers, particularly members of the Catholic Church, has recently been stepped up. Details of these restrictions are listed. The publishing of religious literature has been greatly reduced. In 1981 the only Catholic publisher "Charita" issued one theological book and one hymnbook. In the seminary at Litoměřice the staff are not properly qualified and professors are appointed by the Office for Religious Affairs. Last year just over half of sixty candidates for the priesthood were accepted. Priests are under increasing pressure to join *Pacem in Terris*, a pro-régime organization not recognized by the Church (see *RCL* Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 43). Matěj Lůčan, the deputy prime minister, said in Banská Bystrica on 12 November 1981 that any criticism of *Pacem in Terris* is an indirect attack on the socialist coexistence between Church and State.

The imprisonment of Catholic priests and laymen is noted (see *RCL* Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 44-8). In connection with the case of Jaroslav Duša, a priest imprisoned for fifteen months for saying a Mass without state approval, police raided a Dominican house for retired nuns on 27 October and a house for retired

priests in Moravec. All religious literature, typewriters and duplicators were taken away and rumours were spread about Poles hiding there, about the hoarding of jewels and even that a radio transmitter was being kept in the "monastery". More and more young people and their alleged leaders are being interrogated for being present at religious gatherings. New and more violent police methods are being used against some young people. Stanislav Adámek, the twenty-year-old son of the imprisoned Josef Adámek was severely beaten by four "unknown" men after being taken from his place of work and driven to woods near Tišnov. Still unresolved are the cases of two alleged suicides, that of Přemysl Coufal, a secret priest and monk (see *RCL* Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 48-9) and Pavel Švanda, a student architect from Brno.

The letter speaks of an increasing mistrust of the official proclamation concerning the creation of a new society in which all are equal irrespective of origin and conviction. It explains that distortions between the spirit and the letter of the law do not come from a discrepancy between the Czechoslovak Penal Code and international human rights' agreements signed by Czechoslovakia, but rather from an arbitrary interpretation of the former. The judiciary is not guided by the overall meaning of the law but by particular legal explanations of every article. Examples are then cited from the *Commentary on the Penal Code*, Prague, 1980.

The letter ends with a demand that the law be interpreted in accordance with the principle of human rights, so that the true spirit of the law would not be nullified, but fulfilled. The letter is signed by Charter 77 spokesmen: Dr Radim Palouš, Anna Marvanová, Ladislav Lis and Fr Vaclav Malý. (A translation of the document appears in *Keston News Service* No. 148, pp. 15-17.)

ALEXANDER TOMSKY

The Soviet Press on Religion and Youth

Over the last ten years, *RCL* and other publications of Keston College have frequently referred to the increasing interest shown by Soviet young people and intellectuals in

religion. It has been claimed that a genuine revival of Christian faith is occurring among these groups, based on evidence from such varied sources as the Soviet press, the Mos-