

News in Brief

POLAND

Death of Archbishop Baraniak

Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, Metropolitan of Poznan, died on 13 August. Born on New Year's Day 1904, he joined the Salesian Order and was ordained priest in August 1930. In April 1951 he was nominated assistant bishop of the then Metropolitan of Poznan, Archbishop Dymek. This was at the height of the Stalinist period, a time of violent persecution against the Church. In 1953 Bishop Baraniak (as he then was) was arrested and spent the next three years in the Mokotow prison in Warsaw. During this time the Polish Primate, Cardinal Wyszynski, was also kept in detention. The Polish "October" of 1956, which brought Mr. Gomulka to power, led to their release. After a brief "thaw" there followed another period of tension which, with various vicissitudes, has lasted to the present day. In May 1957, after the death of Archbishop Dymek, Archbishop Baraniak became his successor as Metropolitan of Poznan. He was one of the most outstanding leaders of the Polish Church in these difficult times, and served, among other things, as president of the episcopal commission for implementing the decrees of Vatican II. During the Council, Archbishop Baraniak, who was regarded as one of the most influential Polish Catholic advocates of Polish-German reconciliation, was among the signatories of a letter, addressed by the Polish bishops to their German colleagues, in which they asked for mutual forgiveness for the sins committed by each nation against the other; and in

1973 he became the first Polish bishop to visit the Federal Republic of Germany since the Second World War.

His death will inevitably open up a lengthy period of haggling with the communist authorities about a successor. But in the present circumstances, in which the Church plays a vital, though independent part in keeping the socio-economic tensions in the country within limits, the problem should be relatively easy to solve.

Archbishop Baraniak's funeral was held on 18 August, with Cardinal Wyszynski taking part. The coffin was placed in the crypt of the Cathedral on Ostrow Tumski in Poznan. (*The Tablet*, 27 August 1977; *Kierunki*, 28 August 1977)

1977 Czestochowa Pilgrimage

The 226th pilgrimage from Warsaw to Czestochowa started out from Warsaw on 6 August. The Assumption of the Virgin was celebrated at Jasna Gora by crowds of pilgrims from all over Poland and abroad, as well as by several Polish bishops, including Cardinal Wyszynski and Stefan Barela, bishop of Czestochowa. The first pilgrimage to the shrine of the Black Madonna of Jasna Gora took place in 1711. (*Kierunki*, 21 August 1977, and 28 August 1977)

Hunger Strike in Warsaw Church

A seven-day hunger strike was held in a chapel of St. Martin's Church in Warsaw from 26 May 1977 by ten people. These included the editor-in-chief of the Catholic journal *Znak*,

Bohdan Cywinski, and a priest, Fr. Aleksander Hauke-Ligowski. The fast was intended as an act of sympathy with an imprisoned worker, Czeslaw Chomicki. The protesters called for the release of Chomicki and four other workers imprisoned for taking part in the food price riots of June 1976, and for the release of the members and supporters of the Workers' Defence Committee arrested in the previous two weeks. All were in fact released in an amnesty on Poland's national day, 22 July. (*Keston News Service*, 27 May 1977; *The Times*, 27 May 1977; *The Tablet*, 4 June 1977; *The Guardian*, 25 July 1977)

Polish Bishop Appointed

The nomination of Mgr. Alfons Nossol as Bishop of Opole, announced by the Vatican on 30 June, is regarded as the result of Archbishop Luigi Poggi's visit to Poland in the Spring. Episcopal appointments in Poland are always a matter of great delicacy as they are subject to government approval. This appointment was considered particularly delicate because of the additional political factor represented by a large number of Germans in the diocese. Estimated at 90,000, they are not allowed to leave the country because of their valued technical skills. (*The Tablet*, 9 July 1977)

Report on Polish Missionaries

According to a report by the Rome press office of the Polish Bishops' Conference, 993 Polish priests and religious were working overseas as missionaries during 1976. Last year 93 Polish missionaries left for mission stations, a considerable increase over the statistics of previous years. More than half the missionaries went to Africa and the others to Asia and Oceania. The largest single number — 23 nuns and two priests — went to Libya. Four members of the Polish Congregation of Divine Providence have gone to Tokyo to establish their first house outside Poland. It is the first group of missionaries ever to go to Japan from Eastern Europe. (*The Tablet*, 26 March 1977, p. 317; *Catholic Life in Poland*, No. 3, 1977, p. 43)

HUNGARY

Party Leader Sees the Pope

The Hungarian Communist Party leader, Mr. Janos Kadar, was received by the Pope on 9 June 1977. He spent two and a half hours in the Vatican, and had a fifty-minute private conversation with the Pope. During the audience the Pope reminded Mr. Kadar of his hopes for further improvements, and for strict adherence by all States to the Helsinki Declaration on European peace and security — which includes pledges of respect for religious liberty.

For years relations between Hungary and the Vatican have been disrupted by the imprisonment of the late Cardinal Mindszenty and by his 15-year stay in the American Embassy in Budapest. There are still restrictions upon the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary. Mr. Kadar told reporters, after the audience, that he felt satisfied with his meeting with the Pontiff, and thought that it would lead to further efforts to stabilize Church-State relations. (*Daily Telegraph*, 10 June 1977, p. 5)

Cardinal König Visits Hungary

Cardinal König of Vienna visited Esztergom and Budapest at the invitation of the Hungarian primate from 27 to 29 April. He said that the Church could only perform its functions under the leadership of bishops who were close to the people. Secret bishops could not perform the tasks of the Church, nor could bishops "in golden cages". He emphasized the bishops' responsibility to see that the Church had freedom to proclaim the Gospel clearly. He hoped that the political leadership would at last recognize Christians as loyal citizens. (*Glaube in der 2. Welt, Informationsdienst*, No. 6, 15 May 1977, p. 6)

Groups of Young Catholics Disbanded

Young Catholics in Hungary had begun forming "basis-groups" in the search for a new form of spirituality. A number of young priests helped them. Although they were not officially part of the parishes, they held meditation services in churches as part of parish worship. Cardinal Lekai condemned

these as uncanonical last February. The state security police kept these groups under observation for a while, and several students were expelled from the university. There were rumours of a pending trial, in particular against 22 young priests. Possibly in response to these pressures, the bishops' conference condemned the groups last December. This forestalled any attempts to crush the groups by the authorities. But Catholic circles are disappointed at the Episcopate's action and believe that the cardinal was wrongly informed about these youth groups. (*Glaube in der Welt, Informationsdienst*, No. 6, 15 May 1977, p. 6)

Pope Paul Receives Hungarian Bishops and Archbishops

Pope Paul received the bishops and archbishops of the Hungarian Catholic Church on 14 April 1977. The Pope emphasized that, despite its difficulties the position of the Church in Hungary was clearly hopeful. Every diocese now has a bishop. The bishops' reports about their dioceses revealed the unity of the Hungarian bishops with the Apostolic See. The Pope was overjoyed to receive clear signs that the religious situation in Hungary had improved. But some problems still existed, for example the obstacles to vocations for religious orders and the limitations placed on religious instruction for the young. Movements which attacked episcopal authority or underrated the importance of norms in the Eucharist were dangerous, since they lead to breaks in Church unity.

During his visit to Rome the Hungarian Primate, Cardinal Lekai, was interviewed by Radio Vatican and disagreed with the pessimistic assessment of the vitality of the Catholic Church in Hungary which was often made abroad. He drew attention to the great pilgrimage in which 50,000 faithful participated, the 30,000 faithful who, last year, attended the celebration of First Masses, to the great interest in the religious press and in the planning of theological courses, to the reading of the Bible and "living" religious education. He also mentioned the spontaneous financial response of the faithful to the needs of the dioceses. He concluded that, although the Church in Hungary

has its problems like churches elsewhere, Catholic life in Hungary has an "élan of joyfulness". (*AKSA*, 23 April 1977)

Cooperation between Believers and Non-believers

The public discussion in Hungary about cooperation between believers and non-believing citizens in the building up of the homeland and the participation of Christians in responsible tasks in Hungarian society reached a climax at last year's Sixth Congress of the Patriotic National Front. The preparatory documents had already called for the creation of assemblies of citizens with differing outlooks. The Hungarian bishops' conference in their proclamation early in June 1975 welcomed these aims and said that the clergy and Catholic laity were prepared to cooperate in the development of social, economic and educational institutions in the spirit of Pope Paul's encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. Many priests and laymen have already taken part in such gatherings.

The Budapest paper *Magyar Nemzet*, analysing the elections for local committees of the National Front wrote: "According to still incomplete returns about a hundred prominent church people are members of various National Front committees". A few days before the Congress an article appeared in the Party newspaper *Nepszabadsag* clarifying the attitude of the Communist Party towards the Church and believers: "... differences of general outlook must not be a hindrance to political gatherings of workers"; these are an essential element in creating cooperation between believers and atheists. The newspaper went on to say that relations between Church and State have never since the liberation been so settled and unhampered as they are today. Once some outstanding questions with the Catholic Church have been settled, there is the prospect of a further improvement in these relations and further association and joint activities of atheists and believers at the local level. Nevertheless the Party has always held "that the ordering of relations cannot in any circumstance mean the denial of the spreading of scientific socialism".

In an interview the Archbishop of

Kolaca, Mgr. Jozsef Ilyas, referred to the principle of the separation of Church and State in Hungary and the legally established freedom of religion and conscience and underlined that "absolute adherence to this constitutional measure upholds the unity and well-being of the country". Representatives of the Church take part in the Patriotic National Front and are treated with great respect. The aim of the clergy's cooperation in social life is to contribute to the well-being of the people, he said.

The Hungarian primate, Cardinal Lekai also spoke at the Congress. The Cardinal spoke of the harmonious development of relations between Church and State in Hungary, in particular between Hungary and the Vatican. "It is in the interests both of the Hungarian Church and of the State that good relations should exist in future. Believers may be assured that they will be able to adhere to their religious faith without feeling menaced, and may join, together with their leaders, with those who do not believe in responsible activities in the development of the country. It goes without saying that believers will respect the beliefs of their Marxist fellow-citizens. The Church, at any rate, is ready for dialogue," said the Primate. (AKSA, 1 October 1976)

BULGARIA

Muslims in Bulgaria Repressed

The Society of Muslim Students from Eastern Europe has appealed to the governments of Muslim States, and the Human Rights Commission of the United States, to care for the affairs of Muslims in Bulgaria. According to the appeal, the Bulgarian Security Service has arrested a great number of Islamic clergy. Muslim villages are reported to have been pillaged, mosques and Koran schools demolished, and countless copies of the Koran burned. Men and women trying to remain loyal to their beliefs have been detained in camps. (*Digest des Ostens* No. 3/4, 1977, p. 92)

Bulgarian Clergy Visit Rome

May 24 - the day of St. Cyril and St. Methodius - is celebrated in Bulgaria as Slav Literacy Day (St. Cyril created the

Cyrillic alphabet). To mark the occasion this year, a 20-strong Bulgarian delegation visited Rome and held a service around the tomb of St. Cyril-Constantine, the Philosopher, in the basilica of San Clemente, Rome. The delegation consisted of ten representatives of education and the arts, and ten clergy. Leading the clergy was Metropolitan Filaret. It is interesting to note that the clergy included a Catholic priest, Petur Yosifov, from Sofia and a Uniate priest, Ignat Ignatov, from Plovdiv. The Vatican was represented at the service by Mgr. Angelo Montola, head of the Vatican's department which deals with relations with Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The following day the Bulgarian clergy attended a general audience of the Pope but did not meet him personally. Later a Vatican representative, Fr. Dupre, expressed his regret, but said that they had only just learnt of the Bulgarian delegation's arrival, and asked that in future the Vatican should be given advance notice by letter. (*Tsurkoven Vestnik*, 24 June 1977)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Frantisek Tomašek Named Cardinal

After a lapse of three years, Czechoslovakia again has a Cardinal. On 2 June 1977 Pope Paul announced that Mgr. Frantisek Tomašek, the Apostolic Administrator of Prague, had been made a cardinal at the May 1976 papal Consistory. His appointment had been kept *in pectore* so as not to harm the prelate or the Church in Czechoslovakia. Cardinal Tomašek's predecessor, Cardinal Stepan Trochta, died on 6 April 1974 and Tomašek's predecessor in Prague, Cardinal Beran, died in Rome on 17 May 1969 where he had lived since being promoted to the Vatican in 1965. Tomašek is not the residential Bishop of Prague but its Apostolic Administrator.

In personality he is different from Cardinal Beran. Although not a militant priest, he nevertheless draws the line between conciliation and collaboration. For example, he is not a member of Pacem in Terris, the regime-sponsored organization for Catholic clergy in Czechoslovakia. The majority of his bishops are members.

Tomašek became a priest in 1922 at the age of 23. He was ordained in Olomouc, the city where he studied for a theology doctorate at the university. In 1949 he was consecrated Bishop of Olomouc. He stayed there until 1951 when he was interned in a labour camp during the period of ruthless religious persecution in the early '50s. In 1954 he was released but confined to a small parish in the village of Moravska, Huzova, for the next ten years. In 1965, after Cardinal Beran was forced to leave Czechoslovakia for the Vatican, Tomašek was appointed Apostolic Administrator in Prague.

On 30 May 1977 Tomašek was received by Mayej Lucan, federal Deputy Prime Minister. Tomašek allegedly declared his readiness to contribute towards good relations between the State and the Roman Catholic Church. This meeting may have been connected with his impending elevation to the rank of Cardinal and also with the problem of filling the vacant post of Archbishop of Prague. On 2 June Radio Prague announced his appointment to the rank of Cardinal.

Broadcast Asserts Religious Freedom

Statistics about religious life in Czechoslovakia were broadcast by the Prague home service on 17 May 1977. According to the report there are 18 Churches and religious societies in Czechoslovakia, including the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches, the Orthodox Church, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, the Jewish community and the Union of Brethren. Twenty-seven bishops are in office. All the 4,860 clergymen active in Czechoslovakia have university education, and their sole professional duty is to work among believers. (Czech Press Agency, in English, 1736 gmt, 18 May 1977)

Religious Orders Protest

Kathpress (Vienna) reports that the leaders of the Catholic religious orders in Czechoslovakia have sent a memorandum to the state authorities for Church Affairs, through the bishops, protesting against the threatened "factual liquidation" of religious orders. The memorandum points out that this

discrimination against religious orders is a clear violation of UN international agreements and the resolutions of the Helsinki conference, signed by the Czechoslovak government. Religious orders are not asking for the return of confiscated property. They only ask for the right, already guaranteed by law, "to live the life of religious in the changing circumstances of our socialist society". They point to the example of other socialist States where the problems of religious orders have been resolved in a just and humane manner. The memorandum mentions the illegal treatment of members of religious orders – for example the refusal to allow them to receive new members, or to live a common life. They are refused higher or vocational education, although they need these qualifications to make a contribution to society. They are forced into retirement, or their work contracts are broken. In conclusion, the memorandum points out that it is against clause 29 of the Constitution of Czechoslovakia to restrict the civil rights of members of religious orders. This has been happening for the last 27 years. (AKSA, 25 May 1977)

SOVIET UNION

Group to Defend Believers' Rights Formed

On 27 December 1976 three Orthodox believers announced the formation of the Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR. The three are Fr. Gleb Yakunin, Hiero-deacon Varsonofi Khaibulin and Viktor Kapitanchuk, the Committee's secretary.

In a "Declaration" on the formation of the Committee, the three state that, although the Soviet Constitution proclaims freedom of conscience, its implementation is thwarted because of the attitude to religion of a State which wants to construct an a-religious society. This is exacerbated by administrative violation of even those rights guaranteed to believers by law. Believers form a large proportion of the population of the USSR, and the normalization of their position is important for the State itself.

The Committee has five aims: to

study and provide information on the position of believers in the USSR; to advise believers whose rights have been violated; to appeal to state institutions when rights are violated; to study and shed light on the legal and actual situation of religion in the USSR; and to promote the reform of Soviet legislation on religion.

The Committee declares that it has no political aims, that it is loyal to Soviet law, and ready to co-operate with public and state organizations. The three feel a special responsibility to take a lead on the defence of the rights of *all* believers because they are members of the Orthodox Church which over centuries was the state Church, some of whose leaders persecuted members of other denominations.

The Committee has already published several reports on specific violations of believers' rights: for example, on the refusal to grant visas to members of the Georgian Orthodox Church, who wished to travel to Geneva in November 1976 for a pan-Orthodox conference; on the breaking-up of a young people's Christian seminar organised by Alexander Ogorodnikov, and the forcible detention of some of its members in psychiatric hospitals (they have since been released - *Ed.*); on the strong, critical reaction of those attacked in a *Literaturnaya Gazeta* article, "Freedom of Religion and the Slanderers" (see *RCL* Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 186-191) and on an appeal defending two arrested Georgian Christians, Dr. Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava.

Another report, dated 27 December 1976, describes how believers in the Georgian SSR have been prevented from visiting shrines on holy days, in violation of Article 145 of the (pre-June 1977) Constitution. On 9 August 1976, in the village of Novy Afon in Abkhazia, the local militia under Captain Kvitsiniya prevented thousands of pilgrims from reaching the cave of St. Simeon the Canaanite, the most revered shrine of the former monastery of St. Panteleimon. The Committee alleges that militia officers and civilian volunteers surrounded the cave from early morning, and that eye-witnesses reported that those who tried to enter it were taken to militia headquarters, where they were questioned and threatened by

Captain Kvitsiniya. Access to the shrine for believers has been restricted on 9 August, the patron saint's day, for over ten years, the Committee reports.

They describe such behaviour on the part of the authorities as "typical for the whole territory of the Georgian SSR", and mention similar occurrences on religious festivals at the shrine of the martyr Vasilisk in the village of Komani (? name unclear) near Sukhumi, and in the village of Kala in Svanetia on St. Kvirike's Day, 29 July (see document in this issue pp. 261-3).

Christians Arrested in Georgia

Dr. Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Mr. Merab Kostava were arrested by the Georgian KGB in Tbilisi on 7 April. They have since been held incommunicado in the KGB prison in Tbilisi, though there have been rumours that they may have been taken to Moscow. As far as is known they have not yet been charged, though Dr. Gamsakhurdia's family believe he may be charged with circulating anti-Soviet propaganda.

Both men are members of the Georgian Orthodox Church and have been active in working for reform and in defending those whose rights have been infringed. Dr. Gamsakhurdia is a member of the Georgian branch of the Moscow-based Public Group to Promote Observance of the Helsinki Agreements in the USSR, and Mr. Kostava is a member of the Initiative Group for the Defence of Human Rights.

Mr. Viktor Rtskhiladze, also arrested on 7 April, was later released, but had to report daily to the police for questioning. He is also a member of the Helsinki Group. Searches were carried out by the KGB in the homes of all three men, lasting in Rtskhiladze's case for a week, and also in the homes of four other Georgians.

Relatives of the three men are also under pressure. Dr. Gamsakhurdia's wife, Manana Archvadze, is under surveillance and was evicted from her home for a few days with her young son while it was searched by the KGB. Merab Kostava's mother is said to be ill with worry, and Rtskhiladze and his mother are financially hard-pressed; it is feared that he may face a charge of parasitism.

Mr. Kostava, 38, a writer and musicologist, holds a post as a teacher of music in Tbilisi. Dr. Gamsakhurdia was formerly a lecturer in English language and American literature at Tbilisi University. He was also a member of the Georgian Writer's Union, but on 1 April, a week before his arrest, he was informed that he had been dismissed.

During the two weeks before the arrests a number of articles, published in the Georgian press, criticized Dr. Gamsakhurdia at length. One was a letter to *Literaturului Sakartvelo* (*Literary Georgia*) on 1 April, signed by Patriarch David V, Metropolitan Gaioz, Bishop Georgi of Mangleli and Bishop Grigori of Alaverdi. They blamed Dr. Gamsakhurdia for helping to stir up a controversy about the Georgian Orthodox Church in *The Times* (see *RCL*, Vol. 3, Nos. 4-5, p. 14 and No. 6, p. 45). This appears to be the first time that the hierarchy of the Georgian Orthodox Church has referred publicly to the controversy.

Appeal from Imprisoned Ukrainian Priest

New appeals to Western leaders from the imprisoned Ukrainian priest, Fr. Vasilii Romanyuk, have reached Keston College (see also *RCL* Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 48). There are three separate appeals, all undated but probably written towards the end of 1976: one is addressed to the WCC, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists; a second to the Congress, Government and People of the USA; and a third to Ukrainian Church leaders abroad. Fr. Romanyuk complains that the labour camp authorities will not let him have a Bible, though there is no law against this. His constant appeals to various Soviet bodies, and a hunger-strike which he declared in August 1975, have had no effect. He also complains that he is not allowed to receive Christmas and Easter cards which Western sympathizers have sent him. Fr. Romanyuk says that he has not heard whether or not his previous appeals, sent in 1975 to the Pope and the WCC, reached their destination. He fears that he may be faced with even more severe repression for having sent them (the addressees did in fact receive them - *Ed.*). Fr. Romanyuk, aged

51, is now serving his fifth year in labour camp and has been sentenced to a total of ten years in prison, camp and exile.

Protestant Church Active in Siberia

"Hundreds of Protestant congregations in the Asian Soviet republics and in Siberia, lead an active church life without 'explicit dogmatic theology, definite church order, clergy and outward organization'", reported Dr. Paul Hansen, European Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, after a visit to the Soviet Union. These congregations seemed very like the early Church, he said, as he described a six hour service attended by more than 600 people in Alma-Ata, the capital city of the Kazak Soviet Republic. He remarked that in hundreds of places in Kazakhstan, Siberia and other republics on the fringes of the Soviet Union Lutherans gather with other evangelical denominations for prayer, Bible study and services. He added that only a few (about 30) Lutheran congregations are, in fact, registered and that to his knowledge, no Lutherans of any of the Eastern European churches have been imprisoned, tortured or put into psychiatric hospitals because of their faith. Dr. Hansen also hoped that in the future it would be possible to send literature to Lutheran pastors, many of them laymen, as had been promised him by the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow. Dr. Hansen had been trying for 12 years to obtain a permit to visit the German speaking Lutherans in various parts of the Soviet Union. He had previously been allowed to visit Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and now for the first time this year had visited Lutherans in Central Asia and Siberia. (*Ecumenical Press Service*, 25 November 1976).

Anniversary of Theological Institute in Estonia

The Tallinn Theological Institute, Estonia, recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. Ninety-three pastors and about 60 students of theology attended the festivities. Among the guests were Dean Teinonen and Prof. Parvio from the University of Helsinki, Archbishop Janis Matulis of Latvia and Bishop Jonas Kalvanas from Lithuania. The Institute's

Rector is Ago Viljandi, and the teachers are pastors who also serve local congregations. The Institute was established in 1946 after the Soviet regime closed down the Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu. There are 26 residential students at the moment and 20 students attending as non-residents. (*Vaba Eesti Sona*, 2 December 1976)

ROMANIA

Romanian Earthquake and the Churches

An estimated \$25 million worth of damage was inflicted on the Romanian Orthodox Church by the earthquake on 4 March 1977. It was thought that the amount could well double once a complete technical assessment is made. A large proportion of the dead and injured belong to the Orthodox Church, which has a membership of over 14 million baptised. Among the church leaders, the loss of the former rector of the Institute in Bucharest, Professor Fr. Nicolaescu, will be particularly felt. Several students were also killed at the seminary in Bucharest. Two walls collapsed completely, burying students. Teams of workers were formed to salvage what they could. This was also done in parishes where churches and parish houses had been damaged.

In all, over 500 churches were affected, 39 of them utterly destroyed. Two hundred clergy houses, 85 bell towers were also damaged beyond repair. The Orthodox Church faces a heavy task of restoration, which will be costly, not only in financial terms, but also in the personal sacrifice of the parishioners. The State has promised to assist the Church, placing churches beside hospitals and schools in its reconstruction plans. The Orthodox faithful too are providing financial support for their Church. They are being assisted with help from abroad, most notably from the Lutheran World Federation and the East German Churches, which were among the first to offer aid.

As the Church helps the state reconstruction programme, it will in turn receive assistance for its own rebuilding plans. Once again the Romanian Orthodox Church, it is said, has been able to show its unifying role among the Romanian people in the present crisis.

The effect of the earthquake upon the personal faith of the Romanians has been phenomenal, said Orthodox Church officials. It has brought many of the lapsed back into the Orthodox Church. Similar remarks about the numbers of new faces crowding into the church buildings were made by leaders of other churches. Pentecostals, Baptist and Brethren all agreed that they were not able to cope with the increased interest in the faith since the earthquake, even amongst their own children.

Other denominations suffered material damage. The Pentecostal Church in Iasi collapsed, and many other Pentecostal buildings were affected. Relief for them was organized by the European Pentecostal Mission, directed by J. P. Wildrienne of Burgess Hall, Sussex. The Baptists, too, suffered material damage. Among their dead were two promising students from the seminary in Bucharest, and also the whole family of a retired seminary teacher, Petru Belicov. The European Baptist Federation launched an appeal to raise £120,000 for the rebuilding programme. The Baptists will use their gift to aid three projects: the rebuilding of a hospital in Bucharest, the reconstruction of the Baptist church in Brasov and the repairing of the extensively damaged seminary in Bucharest. (*Keston News Service*, No. 37, 6 April 1977, p. 3)

EAST GERMANY

Death of Bishop Mitzenheim

Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim, former President of the Council of Evangelical Churches of East Germany, died on 4 August at Mitzenheim, aged 85. Bishop Mitzenheim headed the Evangelical Churches of East Germany from 1945-70. His concern for maintaining good relations between Church and State since the Second World War, gave rise to the criticism that he was too tolerant towards the communist regime. He had been a declared adversary of the Nazis before the war. In 1966 he met the former leader of State, Walter Ulbricht, and he also issued the declaration that the Evangelical Churches of East Germany recognized the division of two Germanies. (*Le Monde*, 6 August 1977, p. 5)