

- 26 Xenia Howard-Johnston speaks to the Christian Union, Bangor University.
- 27 at 8.00 p.m. Xenia Howard-Johnston speaks at St. Martin's, Trafalgar Square, London.
- 27 at 11.00 a.m. Director at Farringtons School, Chislehurst, Kent.
- 28 at 5.45 p.m. Walter Sawatsky at Trinity College, Stoke Hill, Bristol.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

Conferences

A number of conferences of interest to CSRC were held in Europe this summer. Two of particular importance, at which Rev. Michael Bourdeaux was present, took place in Italy and Switzerland respectively. The first, at the end of August, called together a number of people involved in work on behalf of Christians in Russia. Among those present were Professor Nikita Struve of Paris, author of *Christians in Contemporary Russia*; Mrs. Irina Poznova, director of the publishing-house "La Vie avec Dieu" in Brussels; Dr. Nadezhda Teodorovich of Munich, editor of the monthly publication in Russian and German, *Religion and Atheism in the USSR*. The conference benefited from the participation of Mikhail Meerson-Aksenov, a recent émigré from the Soviet Union and a close friend and disciple of Anatoli Levitin. Meerson-Aksenov was able to share a great many fascinating and often amusing experiences and insights about Christian life in Russia today. Himself a Russian Orthodox Christian, he had friends among Baptists and Pentecostals in Moscow. Participants considered the present state of the churches in the USSR and practical ways of communicating with Christians in that country.

The discussions were continued at the second conference, which took place a week later in the beautiful old Swiss town of Chur thanks to the invitation of the Roman Catholic bishop of Chur. This conference was called by our Swiss colleague, Rev. Eugen Voss (see *RCL* 4/5, p. 61) and brought together a wide range of individuals involved in publishing, mission, research, etc. Among those present were Dr. Alexander Steininger, editor of the learned journal *Osteuropa*; Ingemar Martinson, head of the Slavic Mission in Stockholm; Valery Tarsis, exiled Soviet writer now working at the Swiss East Institute in Bern; Dmitri Panin, Soviet émigré and friend of Solzhenitsyn; Dr. Hans Heibly of the Inter-University Institute for Missiology and Ecumenism in Utrecht; Rev. Blaho Hruby, editor of the New York publication *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*; Dr. Albert Boiter, head of research at Radio Liberty, Munich.

The second conference also discussed various aspects of the present situation of religion in Eastern Europe, and underlined the need for greater communication and cooperation between groups working in this field. Some concrete proposals were made to further such cooperation. The conference included a public meeting in Chur, which was well attended. It is hoped that a single conference next year—possibly in Holland—will draw together all the groups represented here, and others not present on these occasions.

Abolition of Torture

Amnesty International, a non-aligned organization working for the release of prisoners of conscience all over the world, has launched a campaign for the abolition of torture. Signatures are being collected for a petition to be presented to the United Nations. The climax of the present stage of the campaign will be an international congress in Paris on 10 December. One of the photographs featured on the cover of the campaign brochure "Epidemic: Torture" is that of Ivan Moiseyev, the young Baptist who was tortured and killed while serving in the Soviet Army in the Crimea last summer. One of the signatures already received for the petition is that of Anatoli Levitin, Russian Orthodox publicist and defender of human rights.



Letters to the Editor

L. La Dany from Hong Kong writes:

I have just received No. 3 of *Religion in Communist Lands*, containing a very good article on China by Victor Hayward. I would like, however, to add one point.

One has to distinguish between what visitors to China see and what they are told by church dignitaries whom they are allowed to meet. In the article Bishop Ting is quoted as having said that "he knew of churches where religious services were well attended". Also, words of Dr. John Fleming are quoted: "The Catholics still had a seminary with about twenty students and six full-time teachers".