

to the Gospel is the increasing wave of police repressions. These repressions have culminated in the recent State Security operation against the Church.

On 10 September 1979 a number of believers, including priests, were searched; and religious literature, which included among other things your Encyclical, a biography of you and pictures of you inscribed with our prayer for you, was confiscated. This was followed by interrogations and detentions: already eight people are imprisoned. Others are also charged under Article 118 for "illicit trading". By this the authorities mean the selfless work of believers who in this primitive manner tried to satisfy the need for religious literature, which in your own country, for instance, is readily available. We know very little about the contemporary life of the Church, about Christian currents of thought, modern catechesis or pastoral theology. The little which the censors allow to be published is only in order to create the impression of a Church without a future.

All this is happening in a State whose Constitution and international agreements guarantee citizens religious freedom and free exchange of ideas. Persecution of believers for religious activity as opposed to mere faith was never exceptional in our country but is now put into practice even more. Our brethren who are now accused of criminal activities, in order to hide the real point of conflict, are facing harsh sentences; a few years ago, a priest was similarly sentenced to five years' imprison-

ment for making catechetical drawings. The huge contradiction between the constant suppression of religious freedom here and the government's protests against persecution of communists elsewhere is offensive to us. Of course this does not concern Catholics alone. When an ideological war has been declared which, instead of relying on an honest struggle of ideas, is backed up by the full force of the administration and police, this concerns not only believers but all honest men who demand freedom of thought as an integral part of human dignity. We express our solidarity with them. In this way we join you in your fight against every form of oppression in this world and for a true spirit of brotherhood in the family of man. We implore our Lord to grant you success in your efforts. We continue to pray for our enemies according to the Gospel demand, and we ask for divine grace in these difficult times so that we may not fail and may give good witness. We also ask the universal Church for help: may our brothers and sisters throughout the world remember us in their prayers as we suffer for our faith and its works. May they together with us ask that God may grant our prisoners strength and endurance to withstand violence and faithfully to carry their cross, which is also the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are aware that you, Holy Father, feel yourself one with us and will not abandon us; this is our strength and a sign of the love of God who never abandons his faithful.

✓ Czech Theologian Condemns Catholic Hierarchy

At the beginning of 1977, the Czechoslovak state authorities put pressure on leading religious bodies to join in their campaign against the human rights manifesto, Charter 77. On 23 January the Catholic newspaper Katolické Noviny (Catholic News) published a Declaration, signed by the Cardinal Bishop of Prague, František Tomášek, on behalf of all the Czech bishops, which implicitly condemned Charter 77. The bishops stated that life in their country had been disturbed by press reports about the Charter: "We, the bishops of the Czech Socialist Republic, would like to make it unmistakably clear that we are not signatories to this charter . . . As regards the sphere of religious life . . . we alone,

together with the Holy Father, are competent to make a judgement . . . Nobody else among the clergy or the laity is authorized to express the standpoint of the Church in our country."

Among the many letters sent to Cardinal Tomášek in response to this Declaration (see KNS No. 37, 6 April 1977) was one (printed below) from the best-known Catholic theologian in Czechoslovakia, Fr Josef Zvěřina SJ. A survivor of Dachau, he also spent a total of 13 years in communist prisons. During the Prague Spring, he was appointed Professor of Theology at the Catholic seminary of Litoměřice. In 1970, he was dismissed from his post and lost his state licence to exercise his pastoral duties.



Above Pope John Paul II receives Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet foreign minister, on 24 January 1979 (Cardinal Agostino Casaroli stands on the Pope's right). The *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican since Cardinal Wojtyła became Pope is discussed by Hansjakob Stehle in his article pp. 13-21. (© Felici.)



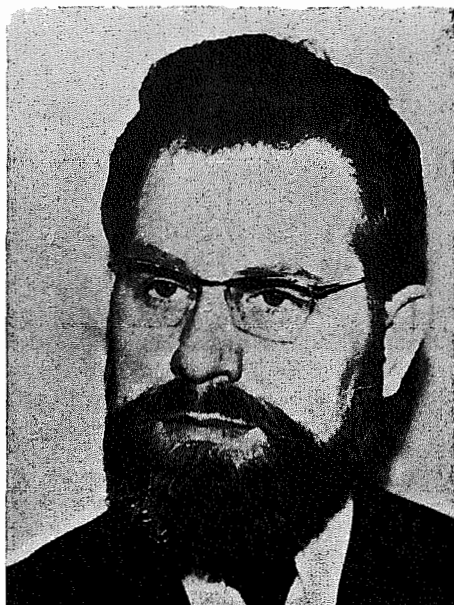
Right The Bulgarian foreign minister, Petar Mladenov, who had a private audience on 14 December 1978, presents an icon of SS Cyril and Methodius to the Pope. (© Felici.)

Below The Pope receives the Polish government delegation which came to Rome for his installation (22 October 1978). *Left to right*: Mr Trebczynski, Polish Ambassador to Italy; deputy foreign minister Czyrek; Henryk Jablonski, Poland's head of state; Professor Kakol, Minister for Religious Affairs; Mr Szablewski, Poland's Ambassador to the Vatican; Mr Barszcz, Mayor of Krakow. (© Felici.)





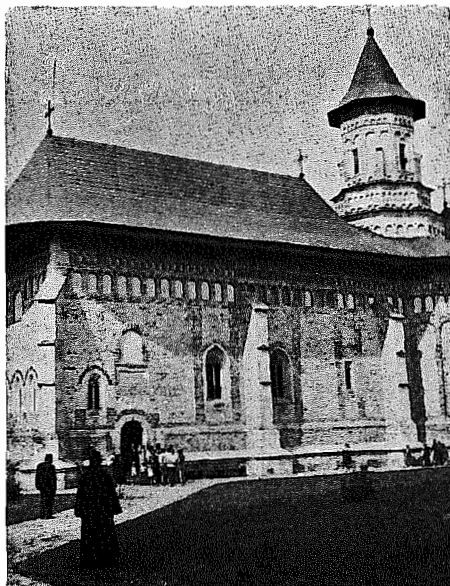
Pastor Georgi Vins, the Reform Baptist leader, who was released from prison in April 1979 and exchanged with four other Soviet dissidents for two Soviet spies. He is photographed here in May 1979 after his arrival in the US. (© *Keston College.*)



Gennadi Kryuchkov, the Reform Baptist leader who was tried with Georgi Vins in 1966. He has spent three years in prison and nine years in hiding from the Soviet authorities. The position of the Reform Baptists today is discussed by Walter Sawatsky pp. 28-38. (Courtesy *Keston College.*)



Mother Eustochia, Abbess of Agapia. See "Orthodox Monasticism in Romania Today" pp. 22-7. (Courtesy *Keston College.*)



The main church at Neamt Monastery. (Courtesy *Keston College.*)

He is the author of numerous important theological works. He himself was a signatory of Charter 77 and since then has written a number of protest letters to the authorities. On 10 September he was detained and charged with "obstructing state supervision of the Church" (Art. 178 of the Penal Code), presumably because of his involvement in clandestine publishing activities. He may soon be tried, together with ten other leading Catholics.

Dear Father,

Thank you for the reply; I had not expected any. I write to you again, basically for three reasons. 1) I think we are again living at a time of great spiritual testing. 2) You have put forward three new arguments based on the Gospel, morality and the distinction between religion and politics. 3) Your declaration is a thing of the past [reference to the bishop's public disavowal of Charter 77], but the matter of keeping to the law, the problem of human, civil and religious liberties is still with us and calls for a decision—for or against.

There is of course a third way: to wait behind a tree while others are pulling the chestnuts out of the fire. This "wisdom" of the little man has nothing to do with Christian prudence; it is worse than openly breaking the law (Rev. 3:14-19).

You reminded me of the Gospel: "Be ye therefore careful* as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:17). Unfortunately this is badly translated and interpreted. The Greek *fronimes* means wise, intelligent, not careful. (The Jerusalem Bible even translates it as "montrez-vous les serpents" but I don't like that.) In the preceding passage Christ speaks about the persecution of his disciples who should not be like wolves but like the sheep of their Shepherd (v. 16). They should not be romantic, naive or foolhardy. As to the application of this verse—no one asks our bishops to be like wolves or behave stupidly . . . But this is only one passage in the Gospel. I would be lacking in tact if I were to quote to you, a bishop of the

Roman Church, the Church of martyrs and great men, the many passages in the Gospel that appeal to courage, steadfastness, trust in God and uncompromising speech. We know so well the appeals to prudence that the very word depresses us. When shall we hear the bishops declare: *non-possumus*? When will you say: "Judge for yourselves when to obey God rather than us"? When shall we see you as fighters for human rights and freedom of the Church? Indeed, sometimes Christ comes also with the sword of radical division, as Matthew describes immediately after your quotation: "Whoever will save his life shall lose it" (Matt. 10:34-39). The spirit of the Gospel demands that the Church should stand up for the despised and rejected, the persecuted and defenceless, the poor and the slandered. Why are we now taking sides with the powerful, those who despise and slander others?

You recalled to me the argument "*de duplici effectu*" concerning the morality of action. Obediently I looked up the old Aertnys-Damen manual to make sure that I had not forgotten anything. It is still useful. Let us expound the given *casus*.

a) *Prima specificatio actus est ex obiecto, non ex effecta . . .* The first "*obiectum*" is Charter 77 which is "*ex specie sub bonum*". It appeals to rights and to the law, it addresses the government and the whole people, it calls for reform and offers assistance, all in the spirit of goodwill. No one asked the bishops to sign the Charter. Here indeed they could have taken the prudent attitude.

b) Undoubtedly the signatories include all kinds of people, many of whom some Catholics object to (usually those who have proved incapable of taking action within the law but who are quick to denounce others). But have sinners no right to call for justice, for themselves, for others, or even for the Church?

c) There is another problem: the bishops' Declaration about Charter 77, addressed as it were to the accused, threatened and slandered the signatories. Three attitudes were possible. To defend the truth and the persecuted, as did Pope Paul VI, Mgr Casaroli, Cardinal Alfrink and others, or to refuse to sign the proffered Declaration against the Charter, which was little known and was kept from the public. There were many courageous people who thought it dishonest to speak

*In the King James translation of the Bible this verse (v. 16 not 17) reads: "be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves". The word in the Czech text, however, is best translated into English as *careful*. Ed.

against something they did not know. The third choice was to put together this Declaration and to make it public. Many Party organizations and other institutions made such declarations which varied in tone and content. The Declaration of the bishops belongs to this category. Yet undoubtedly this statement is the worst from a moral point of view. Here it is not even a question of repercussions, but of strictly assessing the act itself from a moral point of view.

d) But let us also consider the Declaration from the point of view of repercussions—“*de effectu*”. You suggested that the consequences could have been twofold. You could have supported what was lawful and just, a fight that was clean and honourable—and so would have brought “a greater harm” on the Church. The other alternative was to give in and sign the Declaration—and so . . .

I do not know how to continue. What could make a situation already so bad any worse? What could you or the Church lose? I implore your Grace, try to understand in your episcopal conscience that in our country all means available, usually those that are evil, are used to liquidate the Church. Any concession on our part means helping in this liquidation. There is only one way, consistent lawful resistance. There is no other way, such is the iron logic of the situation.

e) However, your Declaration has had another effect. By allowing yourselves to be manipulated by the state propaganda department you join with it in stating that human, civil and religious rights are guaranteed and that the Church can develop unhindered. It seems that you did not realize the impact of your words. You have taken up a position against the wishes of your fellow believers and of others who long for justice. In doing this you have brought into disrepute Pope Paul VI and Catholic opinion, and have also weakened world public opinion. You have staked your false certainty against the pastoral concern of Cardinals König, Bengsch and Wyszynski. Finally, what prospects have you opened up by means of your Declaration for the further development of religious freedom, made possible by the international agreements on human rights which are now part of our legal system? You closed the door. For this reason, many priests, in order to undo this shame,

want to add their names to Charter 77. But I would not advise them to do so. Again and again the Gospel words keep returning to me. “Whoever will save his life shall lose it.”

Yet I agree with your words: “As Christians we must try to solve our problems according to the Gospel, not by means of political wisdom”. Your Declaration, however, was not inspired by the Gospel, but by the needs of shameful propaganda and by a hysterical witch-hunt against those who dared to demand that the laws be kept. You quote other documents in your defence—the pastoral letters. In them, we search in vain for the spirit of the Gospel—only the dead letter is to be found. They even contain passages which cannot be read in Church in the spirit of the Gospel, but as you know the priests who refuse to read them lose their state licence. Therefore many priests prefer to read these letters after the Mass is over, otherwise the last of the faithful would slowly desert us. You continue: “Our Declaration was accepted by all who are seriously thinking Christians.” I could ask if Pope Paul VI, Mgr Casaroli, or the cardinals etc., are not “seriously thinking Christians”. How degrading it is that we have to defend religious freedom—irrespective of denomination—not only against the State but even against our own bishops! Your Grace, how can you generalize like this, saying that we all accept this Declaration? Are you not deceiving yourself?

While I was writing to your Grace I received news that you had forced Fr Kohlíček, under obedience, to dismiss Milan Machovec—a philosopher renowned throughout the world—from his post as a church organist. I can hardly overcome my feelings of bitterness and despair. This is a clear example of political discrimination and injustice. Can you not see how far this goes? Can you not see where you are being led, first in your Declaration, then by the official statement in *Catholic News*, and now by this dismissal? And what a dismissal! Shameful, ungrateful, unlawful and slanderous . . . You see where your concessions lead you? All these sins are coming to the surface. You have paid a forfeit to buy peace, but now you are not able to defend a deserving old man from dismissal, or your priest from losing his state licence. How could

we have descended to this? Where are you leading us? To what trial of obedience are you exposing your priests and believers? Who is your counsellor? Is this also according to the Gospel? Your Grace, I charge you not to listen to anybody—not even to me—except Jesus Christ! Have the strength to live according to truth! Take the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, and the preparedness of the Gospel (Eph.6). Take

into your care those who are helpless to whom you gave a bad example, those half-broken characters who have given in to false promises, threats, pressure, weakness and cowardice! Take into your care the slandered and persecuted, take the last opportunity given to you by our Constitution and international obligations to save the Church from shame and slow disintegration.

We are praying fervently *pro episcopo nostro Francisco!*
JOSEF ZVĚŘINA, SJ

Religious Values and Czechoslovak Society

In the following extract from a longer document (entitled "Diagnosis 301.7") about psychiatric repression in Czechoslovakia, Jan Tesař tries to analyse the effect of totalitarianism on Czechoslovak society. Manipulation of children's minds in schools, "education" of the population, and the destruction of religious values which have been replaced by cynicism and materialism, have all contributed to the creation of a subservient society composed of people who have been persuaded that they should not, and are unable to have any influence over their rulers and the development of their society.

Augustin Navratil, a 45-year-old Catholic from Kroměříž in Moravia (who is mentioned in this document), was interned in a psychiatric hospital after being charged in January 1978 with "incitement against the socialist order" (see RCL Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 197). He had received from Prague a petition calling for religious freedom. After revising the petition and adding some stronger demands, he with Jan Pavlíček collected 11 signatures. They then sent the petition to Cardinal Tomášek, who forwarded it to the authorities as requested.

Jan Tesař is a prominent Czech historian and Charter 77 signatory. He is one of the members of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted.

There is one more equally significant practical precondition for psychiatric methods of repression, which is common to all the "fraternal countries", but which, it seems, carries especial weight in our particular circumstances. This is the general state of the society's morals. In order to illustrate this point accurately and convincingly, I should like to cite the

concrete facts of a case recently publicized by our friend Pachman.* I must just say, however, that when I talk either about the "demented" Navratil, or, more generally, about the situation of the Church and believers in our country, I shall in both cases consider what I say to be only *pars pro toto*. I shall be describing a few fragments in order to give some idea of the whole.

Luděk Pachman (to judge from the radio reports) said nothing about the fact that the persecution of Augustin Navratil began only when the latter wanted to manifest his faith publicly and actually live according to Christian standards. Nor did he mention that the Catholic hierarchy kept quiet about this repression, and so much so that it could even be said that some of the hierarchy's members co-operated indirectly with the persecutors. I think this was also true of certain believers and it is even possible that some Catholic psychiatrists were secretly involved. Finally, Navratil was expelled from the People's Party, which is supposedly a Catholic party, for getting into trouble with the state security forces.

It would indeed be one-sided and untrue to say that the Church or believers are persecuted in our country. On the contrary, I think that some priests and bishops have a better life here than the *rentier*-priests had before the Council of Trent, and that they are telling the truth

*Luděk Pachman is a former communist, recently converted to Catholicism, who was exiled in 1974 and whose reports are often broadcast on Radio Free Europe (Munich).