

Soviets Puzzled as Faith Stays Strong



Text and Symbol, Sunday after Corpus Christi

Moscow—(RNS)—Broadcasts and publications from the Soviet Union which are monitored here reveal that the Communist regime has made little headway in stamping out religious practices among great numbers of the Russian people.

According to the Institute for the Study of the USSR, based here, the best evidence of this fact is the continuing stream of articles in the Soviet press recounting incidents in which the regime is forced to take disciplinary action against persons in responsible positions—even Party officials—for involvement in Christian activities.

Typical is the case of Valya Shurakova, known at her job in Moscow and at the Institute where she studied as an active, effective worker for the Communist Party. But at her home, just outside the city, she was an open believer, an active parishioner, and the wife of a Russian Orthodox priest.

The Communist journal which "exposed" Valya's Communist-Christian life described her two roles:

"She became accustomed to her double life. At work she was esteemed. And . . . in church, respected. And she lived peacefully. In public she is a member of a brigade of Communist labor, but at home a parishioner. During the day she actively agitates for communism; in the evening she prays earnestly and sings praise to the Lord."

Komsomolokaya Zhizn, a Red journal for youth cited the case of Nadya Berezhovskaya, a Komsomol (Communist youth organization) member, and a student at the Onak Music School, who saved the money allotted for movies to buy icons, crosses and candles.

The journal praised Nadya's mother, an atheist, who "wrathfully takes icons away from her very young daughter who is a Komsomol member, a future teacher, and musician. The mother is fighting for her daughter's spiritual welfare, and when she realizes that she cannot succeed by herself, she seeks the help of a Komsomol committee."

On learning from the mother of the daughter's religious "defection," Komsomol leaders expelled her and demanded that she lose her place in the music school. This action drew the editorial ire of the Komsomol journal: "Such is the usual procedure of the whitewasher, the bureaucrat, the lover of form. But to convince a person, to fight for him, to work with him and prevail—this, unfortunately is dull and drawn out."

Soviet publications devote not a little space to speculation on what it is that makes otherwise solid Soviet citizens turn to religion. A long article in Pravda (Oct. 2, 1964) began by asking "where do they come from?" and conceded that the answer is not easy to find. "When the believer is a person in his declining years, it may perhaps be explained. But what if he is a 'slave of the Lord' at seventeen? A Baptist with a graduate certificate? How does this happen?"

Pravda speculated that "More than anything else morality enters into it. . . Baptists do not smoke or drink and they care for one another as brothers."

Then follows the story of Oleg Malov, a young "believer who served in the armed forces.

No matter where Oleg's unit was transferred, he always found "brothers and sisters" around him, among the civilian population, in completely new and unfamiliar places. Pravda reported. It was only after many years of prolonged, painstaking work on the part of command and political liaison personnel in his regiment that Oleg finally renounced his religious beliefs.

Pravda's interpretation of Oleg's fall from faith was that "more sincere heartfelt attention" was ultimately paid him by his Communist associates than by co-religionists.

The newspaper concluded from this example that neglect or unfair treatment provide fertile ground for the cultivation of religious feeling. "Someone was treated unjustly or offended; someone had a misfortune and was not given support in time." Then, the article continued, religious sentiments find ready acceptance.

A book, Morality and Religion, published in 1964 by the USSR Academy of Sciences, came to a similar conclusion about the genesis of religious interest—and incidentally offered an interesting commentary on the extent of Christianity in the Soviet Union.

The book found that "concrete motives for some people's conversion to religion should be sought in the practical relations between peoples in different spheres of life."

Another article interpreted as favorable the fact that of approximately 2,000 persons attending Eastern services in the Mironoskiy Cathedral in 1963—"only" one-third were young people. The article alleged that most of these came out of "curiosity."

The Soviet publication also regarded as favorable the fact that only 30 per cent of the Baptists in a given area were professional, office and industrial workers, and that of 680 Church leaders, 225 were persons who in their active lives had been decorated with high state awards, orders and medals.

Institute researchers agree that while the new Soviet leaders are "as confirmed in their atheism as their predecessors were," every change in leadership tends to weaken, if only temporarily, the power structure.

Public opinion, the researchers believe, is also an ameliorating factor—and Party leaders "are increasingly compelled to take it into account."

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A Reluctant Quest for Ideal

Xavier Rynne have written their third book on the Vatican Council.

And the Council's third session now has few secrets left except for the same one that remained throughout the first two sessions — who is, or are, Xavier Rynne?

The preface of the book indicates the author is actually a team of still anonymous writers.

Certainly Rynne provided a much-needed service by reporting not only the day-to-day progress of the Council during its 1962 session but also by bringing to light the many factors and forces which either favored or blocked Pope John's program of aggiornamento.

His first volume was itself a factor in opening the 1963 and 1964 sessions to press coverage, making the Council undoubtedly the world's most widely reported religious event.

One point that runs like a thread through the Council's three sessions and is sure to continue in its final meetings this autumn is the question of wealth and poverty in the Church.

Pope Paul obviously sensed this theme and gave it dramatic expression by giving up his triple crown, the tiara, as a symbolic gift to the poor and then announcing his trip to India where he visited the poor without distinction of caste or creed.

Cardinal Leger of Montreal suggested to the bishops at the Council that they divest themselves of "the insignia, ornaments and titles" which, he said, were "out of tune" with life in the world today. Proposals were also made to pass a basket to the Council to collect the bishops' rings and gold crosses to be sold to raise funds to be a gift to the world's poor.

Cardinal Lienart of Lille, France, said, "The Church must find again an aspect that has become a little blurred through the centuries: the look of poverty."

This week, a Chicago Jesuit, biblical scholar Father John L. McKenzie posed some uncomfortable questions as he tried to translate these ideals of the Council into practical action for U.S. Catholics.

He said a "creeping secularism" infects Catholics — clergy and lay people alike — who nod assent to our Lord's repeated statements about "blessed are the poor" and His warning against riches but, Father McKenzie then says, "I can only ask how much the church as a society and her individual members really believe this. That the church as a society is convinced that she cannot do her work without the resources of wealth appears obvious; and this is said with no imputation of motives."

"The annals of the church abound with anecdotes, some legendary and some historical, of prelates who have suddenly become aware that their churches had too much and who sold off sacred vessels and vestments and gave away what these things brought."

"No doubt it is less easy to do this with several acres of land on Fifth Avenue or Michigan Avenue or a portfolio of shares of General Motors and Bell Telephone."

"The techniques of fund-raising used by ecclesiastical institutions seem to differ in no way from secular techniques; nor does the use of the funds raised by these means seem to differ much either. There is scarcely an educational institution in the church which was not founded to educate the poor; but the poor who wish an education now will get it only in state-supported schools . . ."

"Once one accepts dependence on wealth for anything, no matter how high our purpose, the dependence becomes an enslavement, and no point is ever reached at which we can afford to think of renunciation. We are too poor to practice renunciation."

Bishop Juan Jose Iriarte, an Argentine prelate, realizing the difficulty of translating any ideal into reality wistfully commented at the Council, "It is not easy to struggle free of all this weight of history and tradition." Father McKenzie has confirmed that statement.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

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Liturgy Weeks to Explain Changes

BY REV. ROBERT W. HOVDA

"Jesus Christ Reforms His Church" is the theme of three Liturgical Weeks to be conducted by the Liturgical Conference in cities spanning the continent this summer: Baltimore, Md., June 21-24; Portland, Ore., Aug. 16-19; Chicago, Ill., Aug. 30-Sept. 2.

Programs of the three four-day sessions are identical in eucharistic celebrations, titles of general session addresses

and study group and introductory session topics. There will be some variations in the list of speakers from city to city.

A quarter of a century of Liturgical Weeks has helped to prepare the Church in the United States and Canada for the total reform in public worship launched by the Second Vatican Council.

Until this year, there has been one such Week each summer, attended by rapidly grow-

ing number of laymen, religious and clergy. Last year's Week at Kiel auditorium in St. Louis drew some 13,000 persons to the general sessions and the daily Mass.

Since last year Catholics have experienced great changes in their religious life and habits. The first Sunday in Advent, 1964, saw the introduction of English in the celebration of Mass, breaking a centuries-old tradition of Latin and making Catholics aware that the words of public worship are meant to be understood.

The dialog character of liturgical services became apparent with the use of the mother tongue, and the custom of employing the liturgical rites simply as an occasion for private devotions began to die.

This year brought us another major step along the road toward a thoroughly renewed worship life for the Church. On the first Sunday of Lent, the structure of the Mass was clarified by separating the liturgy into two parts: the eucharist and the Word.

Only after the prayer of the faithful, when bread and wine are presented, does the celebrant now take his place at the altar.

In addition to these changes, which implement its 1963 constitution on the sacred liturgy, the Council addressed to the people of God, in November, 1964, its solemn teaching on the meaning of the Church. The importance of this document, too, has been recognized in the theme and direction of the 1965 Liturgical Week program. Both conciliar constitutions—the 1963 one on public worship and the one on the Church—open Catholic life to the world we live in and thrust it toward that world.

Public worship, then, becomes the dynamic, the heart, the "source," in the Council's words, of Christian witness to and mission in the world. It is the sacred place where the person finds not escape but profound formation and inspiration. This is basically the reason for the Council's restoration of liturgy's community character, its intelligibility, its requirement of participation by all.

And the Church itself exists for the sake of the world God loves. The recent constitution on that subject affirms. So the Church must be open to the

world, sensitive to its spiritual hunger, to its cultural situation. Collectively, an attack on parochialism, closed doors, isolationism, defensiveness.

The major address at all three Liturgical Weeks will build from the opening night's talk on the universality of the Christian mission and its meaning for mankind, "Jesus the Man for All Men," toward the final talks on Thursday morning, "The Witness Only the Layman Can Give," and, in a phrase from the constitution on the Church, "The Deepest Meaning and Value of all Creation."

Intervening days will feature papers on the relation between the sinfulness of God's people and the holiness of the Church, the character of authority and hierarchy in the Church, the outgoing nature of both community and individual believer, scripture and the eucharist in worship, and the specific contributions of architecture and community song.

Study groups on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon at each location focus on the specific areas of interest and concern—art and architecture, schools, Christian education, music, social action, parish life, liturgical celebration and the relationship and responsibilities of parents, teachers and children.

Those new to the movement for reform in worship have the option of choosing introductory sessions which meet at the same time as the study groups. These will deal with the background of current changes and the tensions which those changes have brought to the surface in the Church.

Concelebration at the Mass each day, as well as communion under both kinds for selected religious and lay persons present who are observing anniversaries, will demonstrate the effectiveness with which the Council's mandate for worship revision is being carried out. Twelve priests will concelebrate with the presiding bishop or priest each day.

Purpose of the 1965 Weeks, then, is to help situate the American Catholic happily and knowledgeably in a worship life that is undergoing profound transformation and to help him see the relationship between his new activity around the altar and his vocational and family life in the world. This involves recognition of the fact that Christian renewal is not an intra-mural sport, but a new fresh view affecting every aspect of human life.



Summertime, a time for sun and water and fun.

Greece-Turkey Union Said Only Key to Peace

By GARY McEON

Should Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras withdraw from his see of his own accord? Or will he be forced into exile, even if he wants to hold on in Istanbul?

The continuing failure to find an agreed solution to the conflict of Greeks and Turks in Cyprus makes these questions steadily more pertinent. In April, the Turkish government ordered the expulsion "without any exception" of the 3,000 Greeks still living in Turkey. This is very close to the final chapter of a history of expulsions that goes back to 1923 and was conducted with ferocious efficiency by Ataturk, the maker of modern Turkey. The only Orthodox now remaining in Turkey are 35,000 Greek citizens born there.

"In the light of the continuing Turkish pressures, would it not be logical to move the patriarchate from Istanbul to the friendly atmosphere of Athens?" Early last year I had the honor of being received by the Patriarch, and I asked him this question.

His answer was the most determined and decisive I received from a man who is the essence of gentleness. "It is absolutely unthinkable," he said.

The reason is, of course, very simple. Early Church councils solemnly declared that the see of Constantinople is the second in dignity after Rome. During the centuries of Byzantine splendor in the late days of the Roman Empire, it outshone Rome itself.

The material splendor has now shrunk to the simple poverty of the Phanar, but for orthodoxy the exile of the Patriarch would be a blow as crushing as for us as exile of the Pope from Rome.

The Turkish government accused the Patriarch of being in league with Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus, and of stirring up the Greeks in Cyprus against the Turks and giving them financial aid. The Turkish ambassador in Paris has said that the Patriarch will be allowed to remain only if the patriarchate becomes a national religious institution, limiting its activities strictly to Turkey and keeping them on a modest scale. And if it "seems to oppose the causes and interests of Turkey."

The charges of partisanship brought by Turkey are not new. They are as baseless now as they were before. Athenagoras, born in a region not far from Istanbul that was then part of the Turkish Empire and is now in Greece, is a Turkish citizen.

He has many times exposed himself to the anger of the Greeks who acknowledge him as ecumenical patriarch by his appeals to end the age-old conflict, a conflict that presents many of the ambiguities which characterize the relations between England and Ireland.

"I keep telling my Greek friends," the Patriarch said to me, "that they must abandon their impossible dream of recovering Istanbul." It was this pretension which involved Greece in a disastrous war with Turkey in 1921 and started the series of expulsions that still continues.

"How then do you project the future relationship between the two countries?" I asked the Patriarch. His answer was forthright. "It has long been my conviction, and I have stated it already many times, that only one solution is possible, and that is a union of Greece and Turkey. That would be not only a practical solution, but one in keeping with our history and common interests."

The Patriarch's proposed union may seem visionary in today's climate. Yet this extraordinary man. Few listened for many years to his insistent declarations that reunion of Christians is inevitable. Yet history must give him a unique credit for

his part in today's worldwide ecumenical coming together.

As for the Patriarch's views about Archbishop Makarios, they are also clearly on the record. "I know the Archbishop very well," he told me. "He was one of my priests in the United States when I worked there as Archbishop of the Americas. He was a very fine and devoted priest. What I do not understand is what has caused him to play the role he has since played. In our times, a priest has no business as a political leader."

If the position of the Patriarch is so clear, and so clearly impartial, why is Turkey singling him out for punishment? The reason, I believe, is simply that the Turks see this as a way of bringing pressure on Greece. In the eyes and hearts of all Greeks, the presence of the patriarch in Istanbul remains a symbol and a promise of the eventual recovery of the city, which they regard as their true capital and great glory.

While that attitude continues, the patriarch will always be under pressure, no matter what office the Patriarch may make to disassociate himself. It is in this light that one can see the practicality of the solution he proposes, a political union of the two states.