

# Religion Survives Communism 50 Years

Fifty years ago, in October 1917, the Bolsheviks seemed to be the only one of the more aggressive revolutionary groups in a Russian political scene that was moving toward complete chaos.

A liberal parliamentary government under Alexander Fedorovich Kerensky was in deep trouble — assailed by German armies in the West, unsure of the loyalty of its own military leaders, plotted against by transient royalists and by radical groups of every shade.

At this point, the Bolsheviks, who had the keys to the real power despite Kerensky's position of prominence, decided to take full control. The process by which they achieved this goal took only a few weeks, though several more years were required before they held secure and uncontested rule in all of Russia.

Today, in Moscow and in other capitals oriented toward Moscow, the anniversary of the October Revolution is providing the occasion for the most extravagant celebrations in the history of communism. Elsewhere, the anniversaries are providing an occasion for observers to take a long look at what has happened in the fateful half-century.

Opinions and interpretations vary widely when the subject is communism, but a number of facts are beyond dispute. The basic fact is that fifty years have brought enormous change. The borders of Communist rule have extended far beyond the Soviet Union, new social and economic conditions have developed, and new generations to whom the revolution is a second-hand report have taken control.

In no area has the half-century brought greater changes than in the relations between Communist governments and organized religion. Atheism remains a basic assumption of Communist thought and administration, but observers find significant changes in its forms of expression.

Systematic efforts to exterminate religion began in Russia in 1917, while the revolution was not yet securely established, and continued for decades with slowly lessening vigor. Similar patterns were followed in the East European countries occupied by Russia at the end of World War II. But in recent

years, while there are still reports of persecution (usually in more subtle forms than those used in the past) a new kind of religious news has begun to develop on the relations between religion and communism.

A SAMPLING of recent events, while it gives only part of the more complex overall picture, underlines the point. None of the following stories evoked much surprise as they appeared in today's news contexts. All of them would have been considered amazing as recently as ten years ago.

• In East Germany, commemorating the 49th anniversary of Protestantism, the Communist government published a generally favorable biography of Martin Luther, although West Germany described it as one written from a materialistic and Marxist point of view.

• In Bulgaria, an Orthodox monastery which had been had been transformed into a museum five years ago was reopened as a monastery.

• At the Vatican, Pope Paul spoke briefly to 5,000 pilgrims from Communist Yugoslavia.

• In Maslenbad, Czechoslovakia, the Czech National Academy of Scientists sponsored a five-day international program of dialogue between Christians and Marxists. One of the participants commented that "a line dividing conservative from progressive views cuts right through both the Christian and Marxist ideologies. Marxists and Christians who hold humanistic views can therefore agree on many issues."

The World Council of Churches announced plans to sponsor its first dialogue with communism in 1968.

• A papal encyclical criticizing laissez-faire capitalism was praised by Communist spokesmen in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Red China and Albania mounted a propaganda campaign branding the Pope, the U.S. and the Soviet Union as allies in a campaign against the people of Vietnam.

• In Moscow, the Communist youth paper, Komsomolskaya Pravda, published a long letter praising religion and criticizing atheism. It also published a reply, but the terms in which atheism was defended were philosophical and not abusive.

Such incidents do not add up to a complete change of policy by any of the parties to the long-standing dispute between religion and communism, but they certainly indicate a widespread change of basic attitudes.

The change is by no means complete. There are still many churchmen who see communism as their chief enemy and view dialogue with communism as a betrayal of ideals. In the Communist world, usually, opposition to religion as a matter of principle still has firm exponents. Even when they do not take absolutist positions, churchmen and Communists are often inclined to look on one another with suspicion. And even when hostile action is relatively infrequent, a rhetoric of hostility often continues.

Changes of attitude develop slowly, cautiously and usually without specific statements to the public. They can often be detected only by observing patterns over a long period. Thus, the number of reported anti-Communist statements by churchmen continues to shrink, while a growing proportion of their attention is devoted to such problems as peace, poverty and race relations. On the Communist side, too, militant campaigns of atheism diminish in some (though not all) areas, while time and energy are devoted to more positive concerns.

It would be unrealistic to expect a Communist government to announce that it was reversing a former policy of religious suppression, since such an announcement would imply a confession of former wrongdoing.

Although general trends can be noted, the treatment of various religions by various Communist governments is far from uniform in Russia, for example, available information indicates that Baptists are being subjected to oppression and that a systematic effort is being made to eliminate Judaism as a religion. Other religious groups have not recently reported large-scale persecution efforts, but in some cases this may simply reflect the fact that relatively little church structure is left to be persecuted.

Two major religious bodies of the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church, have had practically no publicly observable difficulty with the government in recent years. It

must be added that the spiritual leaders of these Churches have made no public statements or gestures opposed to Soviet government policies.

When one speaks of an improving climate for religion behind the Iron Curtain, it is with a continuing assumption that no Communist country would tolerate significant gestures of religious opposition. A Russian or Polish equivalent of the kind of anti-Vietnam-war activity seen in many American Churches remains unthinkable.

In Communist countries, of course, opposition to the Vietnam fighting is a highly acceptable position, and statements on this subject are the religious news items most frequently received from behind the Iron Curtain. Opposition to Israel's victory over the Arabs in June is a secondary but prominent public concern of religious leaders in these countries. Although they obviously harmonize with the foreign policy of Communist countries, these positions are shared by many Christian leaders in the West.

One reason for improving relations between religion and government in Communist countries is unquestionably the growing realization by political leaders that they sometimes share interests and objectives with religious leaders and that the moral influence of the Churches can reinforce government attitudes on some issues.

Other significant factors are related to the desires of many Communist governments to improve their "image" among nations. Although they do not say so explicitly, it is easy to read between the lines of government statements the implication that a desire for trade and tourists is related to policies on religion. This phenomenon may not be restricted to Communist nations. More than one observer has said that similar motives are among the reasons for the passage of a religious freedom law in Spain earlier this year.

While the overall attitude toward religion in Communist countries seems to be moving toward greater tolerance, a fairly large number of special cases and exceptions remain.

In Hungary, all religious leaders must take an oath of allegiance to the government and the continuing presence of



Religion stands in the background in Communist Russia as this ancient cathedral looms in the shadows behind a Leningrad skating rink.

the nation's Roman Catholic primate, Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, is a source of difficulty. Cardinal Mindszenty has been living in asylum at the American legation in Budapest for more than ten years.

In Poland, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski remains a focus of opposition to the government and church-state difficulties have risen over the control of non-pastoral subject-matter in seminaries. Even in conditions of friction, however, Poland provides an index of how things have improved. Cardinal Wyszynski, who spent years as a

prisoner of the government is now apparently free to travel and speak as he wishes within Poland. His latest difficulty with the government has been over an exit visa to attend the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

In East Germany, unlike most of the Communist countries, Protestants continue to have as much difficulty with the government as Catholics. The chief source of trouble is the division of the country, which East Germany wishes to have recognized as permanent while West Germany hopes for eventual reunification.

In contrast to the spotty but improving situation in Europe, communism in China and Albania remains as virulently and uncompromisingly anti-religious as European communism was at an earlier stage. Reports that a Christian was recently crucified by Red Guards in Shanghai remain unconfirmed, but in Macao Communist youth groups have been waging a bitter campaign against Catholic schools. Albania began a thorough anti-religious campaign earlier this year. Very little information on this has been received, but the silence is ominous.

# Focus of Episcopalian Convention on Canterbury Prelate, Pope's Friend

(Following is a Catholic priest's eyewitness account of the 62nd General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Seattle from Sept. 17 to 27. The author was an official Catholic observer at the sessions.)

By FATHER EDMOND BLIVEN

Seattle (NC)—The spotlight during the 62nd General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church focused upon an aging, white haired, genial and accommodating man—Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury, Primate of the Church of England.

Shortly after his arrival here Archbishop Ramsey held center of the stage at one of the largest press conferences ever held in Seattle. In an address to the convention, the archbishop spoke at length of church unity.

And at a showcase religious feature of the convention—an interfaith ecumenical service—the top Roman Catholic prelate of the area, Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly of Seattle, was one of 10 dignitaries of Christian churches who participated.

There were four official Catholic observers at the convention sessions — George Jeanett, of Jesuit-operated Seattle University's theology faculty; Father William Treacy of the Seattle archdiocese; Father Albert Bauman, O.S.B., of the Benedictines' Mount Angel (Ore.) Abbey; and Father Edmond Bliven of the Portland, Ore., archdiocese.

The convention heard its presiding bishop call for a massive effort to help the urban poor, particularly Negroes; participated in a new provisional liturgy of the Lord's Supper; voted to allow women to participate as members in the House of Deputies (the convention is composed of the House of Bishops to which all active bishops belong and the House of Deputies composed of elected clergy and laity); and passed resolutions ranging from church union to sexuality.

At the press conference, Archbishop Ramsey withstood a heavy barrage of questions — all the way from church union to his opinion on American woman. The questions were propounded by more than 100 newsmen, radio and TV reporters, while flashlights flashed, spotlights shone and cameras clicked.

The accommodating archbishop's voice was strong, his accents decidedly British and his words, at times, carefully chosen. Among the views he expressed were:

• On Vietnam: "I understand United States motives and I respect those who have given their lives for something they believe in, but I fear the more

this war escalates, the more impossible it will be to achieve any goal."

• On the Anglican role in promoting church unity: "The Anglican church tries to be a bridge, next to both sides. It must touch the Protestant world and the Catholic world. At the same time it must maintain its own unity and stability."

• On American women: "Lots of English women do their job magnificently. If I got to know more women in the United States, I would be able to comment more effectively."

• On whether he expects to meet atheists in heaven as he was quoted by the London Daily Mail as having said in 1961: "I believe that I was somewhat loosely quoted. My vision of heaven is a place where all people will know and worship God. Now I can conceive that there are people in this life, who through no fault of their own, perhaps through the fault of Christians, have not known God. I am sure that God will welcome them in heaven."

Asked whether this made him a universalist (one who believes that everybody will be saved), he said: "By no means. All people are free. If a man deliberately rejects the love of God and cuts himself off from God and does not repent, he makes hell for himself. Hell is a state a person makes for himself if he resists God. I don't know how many people are there or what it's like."

Commenting on the books of controversial Bishop James Pike, the archbishop said that the writings of two other Episcopalian authors, the Rev. John Knox and the Rev. John Marquardt are "just as readable and far deeper."

Later in the day Archbishop Ramsey addressed the House of Bishops, the House of Deputies and the triennial meeting of the women of the church. He told his fellow Anglicans that the most important event in the ecumenical movement was the Second Vatican Council.

Acknowledging the existence of some "very stubborn matters"—notably mixed marriages and the place of the pope in the ecumenical movement—the reported a growing positive attitude toward the reunion of Christians.

He also spoke of his visit to Pope Paul VI in 1965. He said he had tried to "leave my English accent at home and serve as a representative of the entire Anglican Communion." He said the Pope received him as the spokesman of a great community of Christian people.

Then, assuming a confidential tone, he said: "I'll tell you a little secret. When our conversations were concluded, we

issued a joint statement, saying that future conversations between our churches should be based on the Gospel and our ancient common tradition. The Holy Father put those words in, not I. That is language we Anglicans can understand."

He urged his listeners to read the documents of the Second Vatican Council, particularly those on divine revelation and the Church. The archbishop said

attached" for the presiding bishop's urban crisis program.

The new provisional liturgy of the Lord's Supper (Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion) was celebrated officially for the first time in the Seattle Coliseum. The occasion was the presentation of the united thank offering to the presiding bishop by the representatives of the churchwomen.

The presiding bishop was



Episcopal Bishop John E. Hines leads opening hymn at Convention of U.S. Episcopalian Church in Seattle. Left of him in photo is controversial prelate Bishop James A. Pike. Rochester's Bishop George W. Barrett is at Bishop Hines' right in photo.

that the language of the council was Biblical and not scholastic.

He also spoke of Anglican conversations with other churches and said they need not fear that such a dialogue would hinder better relations with Rome.

"Rome is speaking with them, also," he said.

In his opening address to the convention, Bishop John E. Hines, presiding bishop, had called upon the Episcopal church to donate \$1 million a year to be administered by the poor themselves to help solve the problem of urban poverty.

In response delegates to the triennial meeting of Episcopalian churchwomen, meeting concurrently with the general convention, voted \$2,265,917.48 as "free money, now, with no strings

attached" for the presiding bishop's urban crisis program.

The new provisional liturgy of the Lord's Supper (Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion) was celebrated officially for the first time in the Seattle Coliseum. The occasion was the presentation of the united thank offering to the presiding bishop by the representatives of the churchwomen.

The presiding bishop was

attached" for the presiding bishop's urban crisis program.

The new provisional liturgy of the Lord's Supper (Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion) was celebrated officially for the first time in the Seattle Coliseum. The occasion was the presentation of the united thank offering to the presiding bishop by the representatives of the churchwomen.

The presiding bishop was



Episcopal Bishop John E. Hines leads opening hymn at Convention of U.S. Episcopalian Church in Seattle. Left of him in photo is controversial prelate Bishop James A. Pike. Rochester's Bishop George W. Barrett is at Bishop Hines' right in photo.

chief celebrant. Celebrating with him were Bishops Stephen Fielding Bayne, director of the overseas department; Daniel Corrigan, director of the home department; and Ivor Ira Curtis of Olympia, Wash., host bishop to the convention. To the 6,000 Episcopals present, the service was something new, even radical for a few.

The Rev. Massey H. Shepherd Jr., professor of liturgics at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, Calif., and a member of the committee which revised the service, outlined major aspects in which the new liturgy differs from the Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer:

1. The structure of the service is altered. "Once at the Holy table, there is no interruption.

edge and meaning. We have made many minor changes in the wording, and added new intercessions related to our life and the contemporary world."

3. There is an attempt in the treatment of penitential sections to bring a better balance of devotion into the service. "It is important to prepare ourselves for the privilege and grace of the Eucharist by sincere repentance, but we should come to the holy table in joy and hope and thanksgiving." (In the Episcopal Church private confession of sins and absolution is optional. For many Episcopals, the confession, corresponding to the Confiteor, in the communion service, followed by absolution pronounced by the celebrant, takes the place of private confession.)

The general impression of the

members of the House of Deputies.

This opens the way for a second reading and vote by the next convention three years from now to change the constitution finally. Thus the first women to be seated in the House of Deputies will be any who may be elected to the 1973 convention.

The convention also authorized Episcopalian representatives to proceed with the work of the Consultation on Church Union (CCU), a plan for eventual union of the Episcopal, Methodist, United Presbyterian, United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ churches. The next step in the plan is the actual drafting of a plan for such union.

When the CCU proposal came before the House of Bishops, there was some opposition

from bishops who feared that such negotiations might stand in the way of conversations with the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Lutheran churches. The opposition secured the insertion of a resolution stressing the fact that the church union commission is authorized "to represent this church not only with the consultation, but also with the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox communions and all other separated Christian bodies not yet represented on the consultation."

Concurring in the action taken earlier by the House of Deputies, the House of Bishops passed on to its second reading a change in the preamble to the constitution of the church which will allow the name "Episcopal Church" to be used as an official, legal, alternative to "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A." This change is now final and will go into effect on Jan. 1, 1968.

The House of Bishops approved a resolution calling for support of abortion law reform along lines recommended by the American Law Institute. Speaking in favor of the bill was retired Bishop James Pike, who was allowed to address the House of Bishops, but not permitted to vote. Suffragan Bishop Hal R. Gross of Oregon spoke against the resolution, saying that "it ignores the rights of the unborn." (Bishop Gross was a practicing lawyer before he entered the ministry.)

Although the resolution was passed, the following restrictive statement was inserted: "We condemn abortions of convenience requested for the following reasons: because birth of child would be inconvenient or socially difficult; because the child is conceived out of wedlock; because the mother is under 15 years of age; because the pregnancy might be difficult; and because the family cannot afford a baby."

Both houses of the convention adopted a resolution proposed by their committee on Christian social relations dealing with the matter of human sexuality. The resolution begins with the assertion that "man, having been created a sexual being, sexuality is of the very nature of life and is good."

The statement says that attitudes about sexuality "should be focused less on specific sexual acts and more upon the development of human personality and relationships in the context of social responsibility."

On the matter of civil laws which govern social conduct, the convention declared that it believes that "a distinction should be made between those laws which are necessary for the protection of society and those which attempt to regulate private formal choice."

St. John the Baptist, along the historic shore of the old Erie Canal, will mark this Sunday, Oct. 8.

Father Francis J. Kelly will celebrate Mass of Thanksgiving.

Bishop Kearney, speaker at theenary dinner at the afternoon at the parish.

The centenary Mass and dance of the parish. You celebrated the birthday of a parish on a Sunday, Sept. 30, with Mass at 5:30 p.m.

A Mass for performers was offered last evening. The Mass was offered for the parish in honor of those who are celebrating this year divisible by five.

A centennial celebration of the jubilee. Mr. and Mrs. James following couples William Ryan, Alf George Wegan, Randall, Richard I. Pavoni and Sheldon.

ST. JOHN'S church in 1851 when Michael Welch celebrated Mass in the shop in Ogden. While, the services in the church until 1857 a chapel was erected on Avenue. Shortly 1863, Rev. Richard

(Special to The

Ithaca — Catholic Cornell University College have no exposure to priests as they are getting classrooms and offices here.

A Jesuit is economics at Cornell St. Joseph is a mathematics at Ithaca. Father William chaplain, is teaching on family five priests and nine fives degree pro pell and the cha at both schools first time receive assistants to help (trative and counts

Most significant this college-town employment of Berrigan, control to be associate d University's oldest student organization United Religious

As university-p for service" in t department of t dent school, Fe will be responsible organization of soci acts involving 70 many denominati

The Catholic m pus and the cha other religions. As university-p ployee is Rev. M from St. Joseph's transfer Jesuit university pines. The Ateneu teach economics freshmen and so expert in the South-east Asia, l lin will also con for grad student

On the South I Ithaca College, t Ann. of the Ro of St. Joseph and ber of the facult College, is teach tions of freshm a BA from N PhiD from Notre sity, she has be an "asset to the ty." She is the Sister ever to there.

Her primary re the Catholic stu as assistant to chaplain for the of the Ithaca C She will counsel moderate meetin sions of the New

Sister Mary J Sister who has for 10 years at High School, El ed the campus Cornell, as assis Richard Tormey David Connor. many of their and counselling Cornell Catholic 2,500 students at families. She is l uate students' campus.

Presently hold History, Sister J Cornell grad co relations