# Editorial

No-one is against peace. Political and religious leaders of every conceivable shade of opinion constantly reiterate their desire for peace, and never more so than when their countries are engaged in, or moving towards, warlike actions. We cannot, therefore, take at face value the desire for peace expressed by opposing nations, states or superpowers. We must ask what each party's view of peace consists of, on what terms it seeks it, and to whose advantage it will operate. The concept of peace must be invested with a specific content, not used as an empty slogan. Peace, after all, is more than the absence of war. In Poland, thus far, war and large-scale bloodshed have been averted, but no-one could claim that the nation is at peace. Our chronicle of events in Poland since the declaration of martial law on 12 December 1981 (pp. 209-15) shows that the Roman Catholic Church has been at the forefront of efforts to make peace, but nonetheless the situation continues tense and uncertain, because one section of society is using force against another.

The peace movement which has mushroomed in Western Europe recently has also spread into parts of Eastern Europe, particularly East Germany and Hungary, and Christians have been among its most active members. However, their respective governments treat them with hostility, although they continue to encourage official church participation in state-sponsored peace campaigns. In the DDR, young Christian peacemakers have had shoulder badges bearing the peace emblem "Swords into Ploughshares" forcibly removed by security guards — even though the emblem is based on a statue by a Soviet artist which was presented by the Soviet government to the United Nations headquarters in New York! (See *Chronicle* pp. 202-4.) Some Roman Catholic priests in Hungary have clashed with both their church hierarchy and the State over their attitude to military service (see p. 127): they are members of the so-called "Basis Communities", who criticize the Roman Catholic hierarchy for its overly compliant attitude to the State. There is nothing new in the emergence in Eastern Europe of a group or movement critical of a church leadership's submission to the state; but these Hungarian Catholics also advocate positive peacemaking. Their leader, Fr Gyoergy Bulanyi, said: "We favour an alternative form of service having the same length as military service; we want a peaceful form of service". The Basis Communities evidently do not oppose service for their State, but

they do wish to exercise independent Christian judgement concerning the form that service should take. Thus far, they have not been allowed to do so.

Peace was the theme of an international conference in Moscow in May, under the title "Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe", which has been widely reported. Patriarch Pimen, announcing preparations for it, said that increased international tension was mainly due to "the immoral assertion that there exists 'A Soviet military threat' " (see p. 192). Although Soviet religious representatives heard the views of believers from many countries on this occasion, both the religious and secular Soviet press continue vigorously to maintain that the Communist Party has a kind of ideological monopoly on peace. This is hardly conducive to constructive dialogue. No-one doubts that the western churchmen who participated are sincere in their desire for world peace, but have they chosen the most effective way of attaining it? As noted above, no-one is against peace — so why accept a free trip to Moscow just to say so? Certainly western churches need to keep open the lines of communication with Soviet church representatives, but church diplomats should be more sensitive than anyone to the interpretation which will be put upon venue and sponsorship. One wonders how many western church leaders would have declined an invitation to a similar conference in Washington DC, on the grounds that it was inappropriate for one of the two nuclear superpowers to host such an event, and proposed a venue in Finland or Switzerland instead.

It is one thing to adopt a clear-cut approach to specific events, but quite another to formulate a comprehensive peacemaking policy for the churches. Religious believers are divided in their attitudes to pacifism, as they are in the lengths to which they are prepared to go to accommodate those of differing ideologies. In this issue of *RCL,* the subject is raised with particular reference to the *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican (see *Comment* pp. 188-9). Dennis Dunn, taking issue with Hansjakob Stehle, argues that the Church must not separate morality from politics. It cannot afford to abdicate from the creation of just societies in the hope of avoiding confrontation with opposing political powers: "There can be no peace with the unrighteous". Both on this theoretical level, and in the current situation in Poland mentioned above, we find that there can be no peace without justice.

J.E.