

Although the new Pope continued to refuse to create the post of Patriarch for Slipyj, he has convinced Eastern-rite Catholics worldwide of his sympathy with their plight. The increase in Soviet propaganda against the

Vatican and the Eastern-rite Catholics shows that the Soviet authorities, too, understand that he intends to seek a long-overdue solution to this serious problem.

PHILIP WALTERS

## Catholic Poetry in Czechoslovakia

The *samizdat* authors of Czechoslovakia form a fairly large community (over two hundred) created by the actions of the post-1968 regime, which, fearing the authors' liberal influence, sacked the entire Writers' Union and imposed strict censorship. At first the authorities were prepared to tolerate only the hack writers of the worst category, joined later by a few who had recanted their past activities, and a handful who were re-admitted into the official literary world, partly because of their fame and partly because their writings did not pose any direct threat to the regime. The unofficial Czech writing community publish in *samizdat* and abroad, and although their homemade books are seized by the police whenever they are found, and the writers themselves, often without jobs or income, are periodically summoned for interrogation, they are very rarely actually imprisoned for their writings. For one thing, there are too many of them and for another, it gives a bad impression to put people on trial for putting pen to paper. Instead, the regime persecutes those who reproduce the *samizdat* (when they can find them) and those who attempt to bring the manuscripts across the border.

The case of Iva Kotrlá, a 37-year-old Catholic poet and novelist, is not untypical in contemporary Czechoslovakia. She had been "publishing" her books with impunity for 15 years in various unofficial series of typewritten manuscripts such as the well-known *Padlock Edition*, or the *Moravian Reader*. In addition, two collections of her poems had been published abroad. Then on 24 September 1984, the police intercepted Petr Kozánek of Kyjov in a routine road check and found a number of *samizdat* books in the boot of his car, including Kotrlá's poems and a novel. The police used this as a pretext for a raid on her flat the fol-

lowing day, while Kotrlá was in hospital giving birth to her fifth child. They intimidated her children and invalid husband and took away her *samizdat* books together with a large amount of personal manuscripts and papers. However, they did not charge Kotrlá herself, but have kept Petr Kozánek in custody; he is charged with attempting to take the books to Austria (where he was to travel at a later date). Kotrlá's husband, Zdeněk, is charged with intention to do likewise. Both men are indicted under Art. 112 of the penal code, "defamation of the republic abroad", and face sentences of up to three years.

In a letter to the Minister of the Interior, dated 11 October, Iva Kotrlá asks whether it is an offence to lend one's poetry to one's friends. As one would expect, she has received no reply.

ALEXANDER TOMSKÝ

*Growing up*  
In the years  
When secret police took our faces  
On the way out of church . . .

We too trespassed —  
Into our own dreams,  
Every night,  
Adulthood approached the bed with a lamp,  
Quietly pulled aside the curtain,  
And, tenderly as a mother,  
Spoke to us.

IVA KOTRLÁ

*The Church Underground*  
The dust of walls!  
Ever cementing a fresh reality.  
Now a new dawn  
Closes over the worn-out steps  
Leading onward.

IVA KOTRLÁ