

series of articles by the novelist Vladimir Tendryakov, originally written in the 1970s, but now made available to the public for the first time. Tendryakov argues fluently against the view that religion and morality are inseparably linked. While acknowledging any historical contribution which religious culture may have made to the maintenance of social order and to social development, he insists that in the end religious faith interferes with man's intellectual independence and his capacity for personal growth (*Nauka i religiya*, February-July 1987).

Writing in the prestigious literary journal *Novy mir* (4/87), Andrei Nuikin asserts that it is a poor kind of atheism which rejects religion out of hand or tackles it in a superficial and biased way, and fiercely attacks two of the more hard-line and intellectually crude atheist articles published in recent months. He contends that it is essential for any writer who tackles religion to be well versed in his subject. True atheism, he says, must have a sound philosophical basis; and unless mature creative thinking is encouraged and crude indoctrination avoided, Soviet society will produce not atheists, but "mere godless men".

Nuikin's article is a good example of Soviet atheism's new broad-minded and well-read approach to religion. In the end, however, this does little more than lend a new philosophical and cultural gloss to the traditional ideological framework. The new ploy is to tackle religious phenomena from within — as is shown by another recent article in *Nauka i religiya* (4/87 and 5/87). Written by a Soviet Christian, it gives an insider's view of life in Pentecostal communities. For the first time in this journal, and in recognition of the author's convictions, the word "God" appears with an initial capital, but the article actually serves to expose the corruption of sectarian life — a phenomenon which the Soviet press has previously sought to publicise by more straightforward and didactic means.

The atheist propaganda which *glasnost*' has brought with it is more subtle, intelligent, and far-reaching perhaps than ever before. Its purpose is to expose flaws and weaknesses in religious life and thought convincingly while at the same time making use of their strengths in the drive to consolidate the moral and spiritual power of the Soviet collective.

IRENA KORBA

Warsaw and the Vatican

There has been considerable speculation in the first half of 1987 that the Polish government is on the verge of establishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Since April there has been a succession of meetings involving dignitaries from the Vatican, the Polish government and the Polish hierarchy. A special commission was set up in May to examine Vatican-Polish government relations. The

220th Plenary Conference of the Polish episcopate (1-2 May) dealt with the matter at length. The Pope, addressing the episcopate on the last day of his Polish tour, stressed that "in the case of a so-called Catholic country, the Holy See considers relations with the given state as a normal and right thing", and called upon the Polish episcopate for their "collective co-operation on this

issue". So what are the stumbling blocks?

The Polish government is anxious to establish formal relations with the Vatican. Ever since the Polish-German treaty of 1970 and the consequent apostolic constitution of 1972 (*Episcoporum Poloniae*), which confirmed the diocesan divisions of Poland's Western Territories, the Polish government has maintained regular contacts with the Holy See at delegation level. By negotiating directly with Rome, the Polish government hoped to undermine the influence of church leaders at home. The establishment of full diplomatic relations between Warsaw and Rome will serve to further that process. Many argue that full relations between Poland and the Vatican would be acceptable only as long as there is a Polish Pope. Assuming that John-Paul II will be succeeded by a non-Pole, the chances are that Papal representatives appointed to Warsaw would be even further removed from the thinking of ordinary Polish believers. The Polish episcopate is thus treading very cautiously in the present round of negotiations. As a prerequisite to any agreement on the Warsaw-Vatican issue, the Polish hierarchy is demanding a return to the pre-1945 position, when the church's status was legally recognised within the system of government.

The church was stripped of its "legal" status in September 1945 when the government unilaterally renounced the pre-war concordat with the Vatican. This was ostensibly due to the Vatican's refusal to recognise Poland's post-war western frontier, but it is doubtful whether the new leadership would in any case have continued relations with a church which was so closely identified with the "old guard". Attempts to put church-state relations on some kind of legal footing were made in March 1950 and December

1956. Both these agreements guaranteed freedom of worship in return for expressions of loyalty to the state. In each instance an uneasy truce survived for not more than two years.

The question over the church's legal status was not officially raised again until the early 1980s when it emerged in talks initiated by the Joint Church-State Commission. In 1983, the church proposed a bill ending the government's right to veto appointments of parish priests and the building of churches, and establishing the right to found Catholic schools and hospitals. Although it was approved by government experts, the bill was rejected by the party leadership. The government, no doubt, intended to draw up its own terms concerning the church's legal status. The subject then lay dormant again until this year, when it hit the headlines after the Pope's "historic" meeting with General Jaruzelski in Rome in January. Rumours that some sort of agreement on church-state relations might be knocked into shape in time for the Pope's visit in June were fuelled by a week of talks between the Vatican envoy, Archbishop Achille Silvestrini, and the "highest state authorities" in April. But nothing happened.

The Polish bishops remain cautious. Answering questions at a press conference in Sweden at the beginning of June, Cardinal Glemp contended that the church does not need an acknowledged legal status because it can function quite satisfactorily in the present set-up:

Of course, moves in this direction would have some advantages — but we are in no hurry . . . The same applies to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Warsaw. We have almost reached agreement on this issue — but we don't want to speed things along.

The Primate is simply stalling. The episcopate reasserted its long-standing position in a communiqué on 2 May:

The settlement of basic problems between the state and the church will create conditions for resuming diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Polish state.

In other words, the bishops want to see the church's relations with the state put on a clear legal foundation before they will accept any direct agreement between Rome and Warsaw.

There are fears in some circles that the establishment of a legal status for the church may further divide the hierarchy from the ordinary believers. On the one hand, it would entitle priests to state benefits, medical treatment, insurance and so on — but it would also make it more difficult for the church to support the "illegal" activities of underground groups such as Solidarity and (more

topically) Freedom and Peace. Both these groups enjoy popular sympathy. In the past, the church has afforded active opponents of the government both encouragement and protection — this role would have to be whittled down if church-state relations were given a legal grounding.

The hierarchy will not accept official links between the Holy See and Warsaw unless the church's status is legally recognised within the system of government (even if this is not popular with the church at grass-roots level). The Pope understands the dilemma, but regards the establishment of Vatican-Warsaw relations as in the best interests of Poland's believers. The Polish government makes no secret of its wish to enjoy full diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The situation holds the ingredients of a stalemate.

GARETH DAVIES

Major Church Events in the GDR (Summer 1987)

Twenty-five thousand in a football stadium in the Berlin suburb of Köpenick, 80,000 attending an open-air gathering on the banks of the River Elbe at Dresden: the summer of 1987 saw two major events which amply demonstrated the strength of the East German churches, and their determination to make a major impact on society. These were the Berlin *Kirchentag* organised by the Protestant Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, and the Dresden "Meeting of Catholics", which was intended to bring together Catholics from all parts of the GDR.

Long and painstaking negotiations

with the civil authorities preceded both events. The Protestant Church, in planning this independent commemoration of Berlin's 750th birthday, had no wish to have it submerged in the state-run festivities. The Catholics, in their bid to hold what was to be the first Catholic meeting of this kind in the GDR, did not find negotiations easy either.

The main focus of the *Kirchentag* was the 11 "working groups", which tackled a range of topics, including "The search for security in one's community", "Men and women in church and society", "Work and leisure", and "Reconciliation be-