INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN PRESS AND INFORMATION SERVICE

UAL SUBSCRIPTION:
SWISS FRANCS

17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA

TELEPHONE 5.43.33
TELEGR.: " OIKUMENE GENEVA"

under the auspices of
the PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE of the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES

and supported by
the WORLD'S ALLIANCE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

im of the International Christian Press and Information Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 36 Thirteenth Year October 1946

Opening of the Ecumenical Institute

The official opening of the Ecumenical Institute, situated in the château de Bossey not far from Geneva, took place on October 5th, 1946.

A large number of visitors met at this beautiful spot, including representatives of the Church and civic authorities for Switzerland, the Canton of Vaud and the Canton of Geneva, M. Max Huber, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Rectors of the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva.

Refreshments were served in the reception-rooms of the château, where the furniture and old engravings impart a special not to the house. The guests then assembled in the large hall for the ceremony presided over by Pastor Marc Boegner, of Paris, President of the Administrative Committee of the World Council. He greeted the notable persons who were present and expressed the great joy of the World Council in opening this Institute, which has been a cherished project for a long time. Professor Hendrik Kraemer then spoke; he has consented to become Director of the Institute but will not assume his duties there for a year. Professor Kraemer is a specialist in oriental languages, an authority on missionary questions and one of the leaders of the Resistance and of the renewal of the Church in Holland.

Professor Kraemer's speech showed an admirable insight into the present world crisis. He emphasised that the purpose of this Christian training centre is to give vital proof that, in these critical times, the Christian Church is called by God to bear witness again of its special nature and vocation.

"The Christian revelation, the speaker emphasised, does not aim first and foremost at the individual salvation of man, but at the salvation of the world, for the God of the Bible is Lord of earth and heaven, of man and of human history... The pale, individualistic version of the Bible message which was accepted without resistance by the Christian conscience of a liberal epoch, is intolerable today, when the world is plunged in a crisis not only of intellectual

and moral certainties, but of all human relationships - social, national and international. It is high time the Christian Church re-discovered a Biblical vision of the redemption and proceeded to reform its ways of thought and action...

"It is within this setting - this new confrontation by the Church of its own real nature and message - that we must place the opening of the new Ecumenical Institute... The Church must show the world that the present crisis is not primarily a form of sickness, whether temporary or fatal; it is the manifestation of a religious fact. We are living in a world which is lost and completely disillusioned. It shows the failure of man who claimed that he could construct new societies and new worlds, when he was himself without norms and without roots... man who wanted to create ex nihilo. The philosopher, Karl Jaspers, defines the spiritual atmosphere of our age in these biting terms: 'a vacuum created by a vacuum'.

"The relativism which plays such a large rôle in the analytical methods of our age is not a philosophical tendency; it is a fundamental characteristic of contemporary mentality. It is almost as inherent in our spiritual life as the categories of time and space are inherent in human understanding. This relativism, this resigned agnosticism, has penetrated our spiritual life to such an extent that we have to make an effort to perceive that modern man has lost the sense of value which is normally connected with the idea of truth... We must recognise that the recent historical development of the Church makes it partly responsible for the secularisation of the world. The Church should not, therefore, criticise nor condemn this secularisation; it should regard it as God's judgment on its own incapacity to discover the real Christian attitude, and a call to overcome its feeling of self-righteousness.

"Although the Church, regarded empirically, has neither the right nor the capacity to give the world the authoritative directions which it needs so much, the Church has been commanded to do so by its very nature. This dilemma should not discourage us, but on the contrary should strengthen the spirit of repentance in us. Fired with holy zeal, we shall recognise that the Church has been untrue to its own real nature... It is by resolving to reform its own life, by putting its own house in order, that the Church will most effectively accomplish its moral and spiritual duty to the world...

The Ecumenical Institute wants to awaken the men and women of the whole world to realise the urgency of this two-fold duty, so that in their own milieu they may become messengers and pioneers of this ecumenical missionary spirit."

Pastor Ferrari of Lausanne then spoke, representing the Swiss Protestant Church Federation. M. A. Picot, Vice-President of the Council of State of the Canton of Geneva, emphasised the fact that Switzerland welcomes the opening of this Institute, which forms a branch of the World Council of Churches, which they were happy to welcome in Geneva. In conclusion he quoted Psalm 36: "In Thy light shall we see light".

The General Secretary of the World Council, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, then spoke, saying how grateful they were to God for enabling them to found the Institute, and adding that their gratitude was also extended to the man who had given the means of realising the plan - John D. Rockefeller, Jr., whose extreme generosity had enabled them to open the Institute at Bossey today.

Pastor H.L. Henriod, Warden of the Institute, introduced the students for the first term. Thirty-one had already arrived and they were expecting fifteen more, who had been held up owing to the difficulty of obtaining visas. When they all reach Bossey, they will represent fourteen different nationalities and the most varied professions: bank employees, a parish sister, a theological student, a weaver, an officer, a journalist, a farm-worker, etc. Many of the students have been in the Resistance movements during the war and some of them have lived in concentration camps.

To conclude the ceremony, Pastor Boegner offered a prayer of dedication of the Ecumenical Institute. I.C.P.I.S. Geneva

INDONESIA

Christians in Government

Four of the ministers of the new Cabinet formed by Mr. Soetan Sjahrir are Christians, namely Mr. Amir Sjarifoedin, Dr.J. Leimena, Mr. Tan Po Goan and Mr. Putuhena. The first three are active leaders of the Student Christian Movement of Java, which is a "corresponding movement" of the World's Student Christian Federation. The Masjoemi, which is the Central Council of Mohammedan organisations has five ministers in the new Cabinet.

I.C.P.I.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.

Pastoral Letter from the Patriarch to His Exarchate in Western Europe

The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Alexij, has sent a pastoral letter to the archpriests, priests and laymen of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Western European Exarchate. Patriarch Alexij begins by expressing his sympathy with them for the death of Metropolitan Eulogij (see I.C.P.I.S. No. 28), who had been their spiritual adviser for many years and who "was inseparably bound up with the Russian soil and the great Russian people".

"The late Metropolitan, continues the Patriarch, pointed out in unmistakable fashion the way which our Church abroad must take. It is the way of close cooperation with the mother Church in Russia, which the late Metropolitan did not hesitate to take in August 1945. From that time on he accepted all the canonical and administrative measures of the Patriarchal Church in Moscow. We therefore considered it our canonical duty, to appoint a new Exarch in his place after his death (see I.C.P.I.S. No. 30).

"But we are now told that a number of Church leaders, apparently from personal motives and against the wishes of their congregations, are sowing discord among you and refusing to obey our instructions, in flagrant opposition to the wishes of the late Exarch, and contrary to the practice hithero adopted.