

News in Brief

Galanskov dies. On 4 November 1972 Yuri Timofeyevich Galanskov died in a Soviet labour camp. His death followed an inept operation for stomach ulcers. Galanskov was a Christian poet and pacifist. A memorial service was held in the Russian church of the Moscow Patriarchate in London on 12 November.

Death of Fr. Sokolovsky. Archpriest Pavel Sokolovsky, well known as a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad, died in the air crash over Prague on 19 February, 1973.

Soviet press attacks religion. After a lull in anti-religious articles during the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the USSR, there was a renewed attack at the beginning of 1973. On 5 January the newspaper *Soviet Kirgizia* attacked the reform Baptists and denounced Western organizations who had publicized the death of Ivan Moiseyev (see *Religion in Communist Lands*, No. 1). On 13 February the Belorussian Komsomol paper, *Banner of Youth*, wrote about the trial of the reform Baptists, Sotnichenko and Dernovich. These men were leaders of the unregistered congregation in Osipovichi, where the Baptists have already experienced considerable persecution. On 12 January the newspaper *Turkmenistan Spark* (*Turkmeneskaya Iskra*) gave a detailed account of the trial of the Pentecostal pastor, Fastovets, who was sentenced to five years. On 4 January the paper *Labour* (*Trud*) attacked religious broadcasting to the USSR.

New Lithuanian Bishop. News has been received of the consecration of a new bishop for the Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania. This Church has six dioceses, four of which have been vacant in recent years. TASS also reports (according to *The Times* of 28 February) that a Soviet publishing house in Vilnius, Lithuania, has brought out a new edition of the New Testament in Lithuanian. Hitherto the Lithuanian Catholic Church has had virtually no publications since Lithuania became part of the Soviet Union.

Four new Czechoslovak bishops. Reuter reported (according to *Guardian* of 8 March) that four new bishops had been consecrated in the Czechoslovak Catholic Church.

Pope speaks on Albania. In a December address, the Pope spoke of his "affectionate respect" for Albania and his grief at the "peace of death" in the Church there. He stated that his previous silence on the Albanian Church was because he was anxious not to aggravate the situation, and added "we are always ready and eager to renew good and friendly relations".

New East Berlin bishop. On 11 February the Lutheran Church of East Germany installed Bishop Albrecht Schoenherr in East Berlin. Previously Bishop Kurt Scharf had been nominal bishop of both East and West Berlin. Bishop

Scharf was prevented by the East German authorities from attending the ceremony.

The Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the strongest religious bodies in the Soviet Union, has taken the initiative to establish relations with churches abroad. It has approached churches in South Africa, which find such contacts difficult, owing to the restrictions the government of the Republic puts on visits by churchmen from the communist countries.

Soviet press admits failure. The Estonian newspaper *Molodyozh Estonii* has published an article admitting that the Soviet government's massive atheist campaign has failed to touch the majority of people. Although most would not call themselves believers, they are not atheists either. A recent survey amongst young people shows that the younger generation has simply not thought about these things.

New arrests of Baptists. Two trials have recently been reported in the Soviet press. *Molodyozh Estonii* of 29 March tells of the trial of three Baptists in Sverdlovsk for spreading information about the death of Ivan Moiseyev, the young Baptist soldier killed in July 1972. On 27 April *Sovetskaya Belorussia* reports on the trial of four Baptists, two of them women, in Soligorsk near Minsk, for teaching children.

Albanian priest shot. An Austrian Catholic news service reported in March that a priest in Albania had been executed for secretly baptising a child.

Buddhist scholars arrested. Several authorities on Buddhist religion and culture have recently been arrested in Ulan-Ude in the Buryat Autonomous Republic, along with others in Leningrad and Vilnius. They are accused of forming a Buddhist sect and forcing others to join it, and of fanatical activities quite unrelated to their academic work.