

was pushed into the path of the lorry, and the authors of the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church* claimed that the KGB were responsible for his death (which left only one member of the Lithuanian Helsinki group at large).

*Clipa, Ioan (?-1981)*

Baptist, Romania

Clipa was interrogated in 1980 because he had distributed Bibles. Persecution and pressure by the security police left his nervous health in a ruined state, and after being arrested at the beginning of 1981 he had a breakdown and committed suicide. (*RCL* Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 221.)

*Manzinger, Monsignor (190?-1982)*

Jesuit, USSR

Manzinger, in his seventies, was the parish priest of Soly; with his death the number of Catholic priests in Belorussia, where there are 2.5 million Catholics, dropped to 48.

*Khrapov, Nikolai Petrovich (1914-1982)*

Reform Baptist, USSR

Khrapov died at the age of 68 following a heart attack in a labour camp near Shevchenko in the Mangyshlak region of Kazakhstan. He had been an outspoken evangelist in the unregistered Evangelical Christian and Baptist churches since 1971, and spent a total of 28 years in prison camp and exile. In the camps he brought many fellow-prisoners to faith, the best-known of whom was the former criminal Vasili Kozlov.

*Bárta, Fr Josef (1921-1982)*

Roman Catholic, Czechoslovakia

Fr Barta was arrested in November 1980 and sentenced in April 1982 to 15 months' suspended sentence for "obstructing state supervision of the Church", accused of organising a clandestine theological seminary in Liberec, North Bohemia. Fr Barta had suffered two heart attacks and a third killed him in prison at the age of 61.

*Compiled by Carolyn Burch*

## A Catholic Gain in Lithuania

The consecration and enthronement of two Catholic bishops in Lithuania, the only Soviet republic with a largely Catholic population, in July and August this year is described in the unofficial *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church* (No. 54) and marks a significant gain for the Catholic Church in this part of the Soviet Union.

Both bishops — Antanas Vaičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius — were appointed to their dioceses by Pope John Paul II at the beginning of July, with the consent of the Soviet authorities. Fr Vaičius, administrator of Telsiai diocese since 1975, was consecrated as its bishop on 24 July in Kaunas Cathedral, in the presence of all the other four Lithuanian bishops. Two weeks later Bishop Sladkevičius entered his diocesan cathedral of Kaišiadorys. He did not need to be consecrated — he had already been a bishop for 25 years. Secretly consecrated by Bishop Matulionis of Kaišiadorys in 1957, when the Church feared the Soviet authorities would never permit new Catholic bishops to be appointed, he was exiled to a small village outside his own diocese in 1959. He owes his return, at least in

part, to the campaign of petitions and appeals directed at the secular authorities by Lithuanian priests and believers over the last ten years. These petitions have often been published in the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church* and the editors describe the Bishop's release from exile as "one of the greatest victories" of the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

Early on the morning of 8 August, Bishop Sladkevičius set out for Kaišiadorys, but first had to visit the village church in his place of exile, Pabirže, to bid farewell to the assembled villagers. Along the road to Kaišiadorys hundreds of Catholics from the neighbouring parishes had also gathered to wave good-bye. (The priests of these parishes were later summoned by the local authorities to account for the "demonstrations".)

In Kaišiadorys, the authorities had allowed people to assemble only inside the cathedral precincts, but here a very large crowd had gathered, bearing flowers. At 12.30 the cathedral bells began to ring out and Bishop Sladkevičius's car arrived. The crowd soon covered his car and the ground all around

with flowers.

In the cathedral, Bishop Sladkevičius celebrated Mass together with the new bishop of Telšiai, Antanas Vaičius, Bishop Povilonis of Kaunas and Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, who is still exiled from his diocese of Vilnius. In his address to the congregation, Bishop Sladkevičius read out a telegram from the Pope, expressing his joy. He then referred obliquely to his own exile and to the Church's difficult relationship with the Soviet state. "The Church was not founded to support or destroy systems" he stated. The Church had a different mission in the world — to be the bearer of Christ's goodness.

Should the Church then be feared? Should a bishop be feared? Should a bishop be removed from his duties if he strives only for goodness? . . . It is a good thing that some errors are being rectified, but this is not yet full rectification. Is it right that the Church, as a benefactor, should be confined and restricted in its rights? . . . The Church and the episcopate have not been founded to harm anyone. The Church can and does do much good within any system. We only need the opportunity.

Bishop Sladkevičius thanked the priests of Kaišiadorys for their goodness to him, no doubt recalling the 45 priests of this diocese who in 1974 signed a petition calling for his release.

The Mass was followed by a service of confirmation, in which 600 children and young people were confirmed.

At the reception following the service, Bishop Steponavičius, who had been mentioned together with Bishop Sladkevičius in most petitions to the Soviet authorities and is now the only bishop left in exile, made a speech of thanks for being invited, "despite the fact that I am still regarded as a leper". It is particularly interesting that, although his exile has officially not been lifted, Bishop Steponavičius was able to be present at both the enthronement of Bishop Sladkevičius and the consecration of Bishop Vaičius.

An even more interesting incident took place during the ceremonies welcoming Bishop Vaičius back to his own diocese of Telšiai. One of the priests who made the new bishop a speech of thanks and welcome after the Cathedral Mass was Fr Alfonsas Svarinskas, head of the unofficial Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights. Fr Svarinskas thanked Bishop Vaičius for his enthusiastic support of the campaign

against alcoholism, for which the Vatican itself had commended him, and for his help in reviving the shrine of Žemaičiu Kalvarija.

"The Catholic Committee," he said, "has followed with interest the efforts of all our shepherds to free themselves from the shackles of the atheists — including your own efforts. We are grateful to you for conducting a commemoration service for Bishop and martyr Pranciškus Ramanauskas."\*

This clearly demonstrates the strength of the movement for religious rights among the Lithuanian clergy and also shows that the gap between the "official" and "unofficial" Catholic church in Lithuania is smaller than had previously been thought.

There have been a number of other concessions to Lithuanian Catholics in the last couple of years. The number of students accepted at the seminary every year has almost doubled and in June 1982, eighteen seminarians were ordained — more than in any year since 1963. This is probably due to the fact that unofficial theological courses were being conducted outside the seminary. Graduates of such courses have not only been secretly ordained in recent years but accepted by parish committees for work, despite the opposition of the secular authorities. The authorities were threatening to prosecute such priests for "impersonating the clergy" but were no doubt aware how ridiculous this would make them look. In addition, the Council for Religious Affairs in Lithuania has given the Catholic Church permission to publish 160,000 prayer-books and has promised to reduce the price of electricity to churches.

The Soviet authorities have not objected to priests' electing their own diocesan councils. Although they cannot be pleased at the fact that members of the Catholic Committee have been elected to these councils, they may hope that this kind of responsibility will make the priests concerned less outspoken.

Reports of a "thaw" in church-state relations in Lithuania should not be exaggerated, however. Fr Svarinskas was fined in July for organising a children's gathering in his home and has been warned that he may be confined to his place of residence.

The Soviet authorities are also reported to be offering the Catholic Church an official church journal, but only if the church authori-

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\*Bishop of Telšiai, deported to Siberia in 1946. His health broken by ten years in labour camps, he died soon after his return to Lithuania, in 1959.

ties agree to put an end to the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*. The publicity given to Soviet harassment of religious believers, pilgrims and schoolchildren in Lithuania by the *Chronicle* has obviously embarrassed the Soviet authorities. The trials and long sentences passed on its producers and helpers have not put an end to its publication, but have rather increased its popularity and

made heroes of those tried. The authorities would like to replace the offending journal with an uncritical journal on the same lines as the official Orthodox and Baptist journals. However, many Catholic priests no longer want an official journal, as it could not criticise state religious policies in the way the *Chronicle* does.

MARITE SAPIETS

## Jewish Religious Revival in Moscow

*This report by a British Jewish visitor to Moscow in spring 1981 is based on an interview with one of the leading Jewish activists there.*

In Moscow during the 1960s there were only a handful of religious Jews and some other Jews who were interested in Judaism only as a philosophy. Hebrew studies, mostly self-taught, began in 1968, with the practical purpose of using the language in Israel, where Jews wanted to go. Although Jewish emigration began in 1971, the Soviet authorities refused permission to many Jews who applied to emigrate, including intellectuals with considerable knowledge of Hebrew. Nevertheless the study of Hebrew continued, even though access to the country where Hebrew is a living language was denied.

When the first Hebrew speaker and teacher left for Israel in 1971 there were no pupils remaining, but between 1971 and 1976 several young Jews began to study Judaism and to observe Jewish religious law on their own. By 1977 religious seminars and lessons were taking place on a regular basis. The group was composed of about fifteen men, aged between 18 and 35, who knew Hebrew fairly well, and who began studying and practising the Jewish religion. Within a year some of these students started their own groups. In 1979 there were ten regular seminars, consisting of about 55 men, and by 1981 the number had increased to a hundred, all of whom were observant Jews.

A religious Jew in Moscow nowadays is thought of as an intellectual, deep-thinking and cultured person. Whereas religious Jews used to risk being cut off from society, a "refusenik" (one who has applied to emigrate and been refused) can practise his religion openly; he has already been excluded from society and thus has nothing to lose.

All aspects of religious life can be practised in Moscow, but it is difficult to observe certain religious laws. For example, it is possible, but difficult, to observe the laws of *Kashrut*, governing diet. The ritual slaughterer, a state employee, is permitted to kill one cow once a fortnight in the ritual manner, but sometimes this is not done satisfactorily according to Jewish law, so meat is a rarity. The slaughterer may also kill chickens brought live to him on Sundays. No other specifically kosher produce is available in the Soviet Union, but with close examination of ingredients it is possible to have a fairly healthy diet. At Passover it is even more difficult to observe the laws of *Kashrut*, but not impossible. Matzo (unleavened bread) is baked in adequate quantities at the Moscow synagogue.

All religious rites may take place in Moscow. Circumcision is legal according to Soviet law, but because parents who have their babies circumcised are harassed, the ceremony is kept quiet. About thirty circumcisions have been carried out annually in recent years. Due to the youthfulness of the new religious community, no boy has yet reached thirteen, the age of *Bar Mitzvah*. However, parents are now able adequately to teach their children the laws of Judaism. The western idea of a ceremony in the synagogue is not compulsory, but an honour. About three weddings occur annually, under the traditional canopy. These are held secretly, though in theory they are allowed in the synagogue.

The Jewish cemetery in Moscow is full, but with bribes, and therefore risks, it is possible to be buried in the Jewish regional cemetery.

In 1967 about two hundred people attended the Moscow synagogue at festivals. In the last two years five thousand Jews have