

Popiełuszko abroad for an unspecified period of study leave had also been put to the church hierarchy.

In September, the magazine *Tu i Teraz* (Here and Now) published an article signed by Jan Rem (the pen-name of the official Communist Party spokesman Jerzy Urban), denouncing Fr Popiełuszko as an "organiser of political sessions" whose Masses were symptomatic of his "fanaticism and hatred towards communist Poland". A month before his death he was clearly attracting more attention in high places than was good for him.

Those who knew Fr Popiełuszko reported that he had of late seemed tense,

tired and very overworked. He freely admitted that he had reason to fear for his life; he had received a number of threats indicating that he was saying and doing too much. "We always live with this risk," he observed once, "and if we must die suddenly, it is surely better to meet death defending a worthwhile cause than sitting back and letting injustice win." His persistence cost him his life — as he well knew it might — but this is small consolation to a nation for whom he had become a symbol of non-violent resistance to an alien ideology in the name of personal liberty and conscience.

IRENA KORBA

Renewed Campaign against Hebrew in the Soviet Union

The second half of 1984 saw a systematic clamp-down on Jewish activists, and in particular on those teaching or studying Hebrew, in the USSR. The trial and sentencing (to 13 years) of Josef Begun in autumn 1983 had seemed to mark a fatal blow to the older generation of Hebrew teachers; it was the culmination of a series of repressive measures against Begun himself and other teachers. These included Pavel Abramovich, who after almost ten years of threats, interrogations and house-searches, had been forced by the threats made against his young son to close his Hebrew classes in 1982.

Following the imprisonment of Josef Begun young Hebrew students were beginning to teach others. In reaction the authorities turned their attention to the younger generation of students and teachers, and within three months — August to October 1984 — there were four arrests of Jews in their twenties and thirties, as well as one older Hebrew teacher and activist.

In May, following Purim celebrations, the homes of seven Jews in Odessa were searched and large amounts of religious literature confiscated. One of the seven Jews whose homes were raided was Yakov Levin, 26, who had been studying Hebrew for several years. Two months later, Hebrew literature was confiscated from his flat, and on 12 August, immediately after this house search, Levin was arrested and charged under Art. 187 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code (equivalent to Art. 190-1 of

the RSFSR Code, "circulation of deliberately false fabrications slandering the Soviet state and social system").

Leonid Volvovsky, a 42-year-old leading religious Jew from Gor'ky, was warned in July that he would face "serious consequences" if he continued with the Bible-reading sessions which he had been holding in his flat attended by a few friends. This "warning" from the police followed several interrogations and house-searches which involved the confiscation of Hebrew literature.

A young Hebrew student from Moscow, Alexander Kholmyansky, 34, was arrested in July, originally on charges of petty hooliganism. He was given ten days "administrative detention" but was then not released; instead, following the alleged discovery of a gun and bullets during a search of his flat, which took place in early September, he was charged with "possession of a weapon". (Under very similar circumstances another Jew, Stanislav Zubko, was sentenced to four years labour camp in 1981; see *RCL* Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 194-95). Also in Moscow, a third young Hebrew student and devout Orthodox Jew, Yuli Edel'shtein, was arrested and detained on a spurious charge of possessing cannabis. His home was searched on 24 August, and the police claimed they had found a matchbox containing a narcotic substance. They also found, and confiscated, Edel'shtein's Hebrew books. Edel'shtein is awaiting trial under Art. 224 of the Criminal Code.

House-searches in connection with three arrests took place during July and August in the home of Yakov Mesh, a Hebrew teacher from Odessa, and two other young *refuseniks*, Valeri Pevzner and Alexander Kushnir. A month later Mesh was badly beaten up by the militia, an incident which led to his immediate arrest on charges of "resisting the authorities". Mesh, 33 and married with an eight-year-old son, had been subjected to regular pressure in the form of threats, house-searches, and denunciations in the press, and he had been warned of imminent arrest if he continued his "Zionist activities", i.e. teaching Hebrew and defending the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate. Mesh was arrested on 16 October in Odessa. Four days earlier another Jewish activist from Odessa, Mark Niepomniashchy, who at 53 was one of the few remaining active representatives under threat of arrest and had therefore gone into hiding for a short period, was arrested on 12 October while he was in the capital visiting friends. At the same time a search was being conducted in the home of the Niepomniashchy family in Odessa (Mark's daughter Yudit is the fiancée of Yakov Levin, arrested in August). Niepomniashchy faces charges under Art. 190-1 which could mean a sentence of up to three years, but there is the additional threat of internment in a psychiatric hospital, as he has previously been given psychiatric treatment following a mental breakdown in 1959. His family were told shortly after his arrest that he might have to undergo examination in a psychiatric hospital during the course of the investigation, but at present Niepomniashchy is being held in Odessa prison.

Both Niepomniashchy and Mesh had been attacked in an article by A. Svidnitsky which appeared in a Kiev paper, *Robitnycha gazeta* (Workers' Gazette) on 14 June 1984. The article, entitled "Saboteurs", made the accusation that

Yakov Mesh, Mark Niepomniashchy and V. Boguslavsky have "special merit" for the Zionists and "special

rights" to their moral and material support . . . in their apartments they organised group gatherings where, under the guise of studying Hebrew and Judaism, they openly indoctrinated those present with a Zionist, pro-Israeli spirit.

The accusation of "Zionist" links levelled at the *ulpanim* (Hebrew and Judaic study groups) has also been used to attack Alexander Kholmyansky. During one of the house searches conducted in connection with the investigation of his case, his friend Alexander Kogan was asked about Kholmyansky's alleged organisation of an "all-Union *alpan*". This line of questioning, and the fact that Kholmyansky's trial — due to take place on 25 October — was indefinitely postponed, have given rise to fears that the judicial authorities are collecting "evidence" against him which is unrelated to the "discovery" of a gun in his flat, and which may be used in a show-trial similar to that of Josef Begun in 1983.

Additional house-searches following the arrests of these five Hebrew teachers have included two at the homes of Dan Shapiro (a friend of Yuli Edel'shtein) and Inna Brukhina (one of Edel'shtein's former Hebrew students). Several Hebrew books, including a Bible and Talmud, were confiscated from Brukhina's flat; during the search at Shapiro's home a *mezuzah* was wrenched from the lintel and his *tefillin* (phylacteries) were confiscated as possible hiding places for drugs. Shapiro, Brukhina and her husband Dmitri Khazankin were all summoned by the police for questioning by the investigator in charge of Edel'shtein's case, but they refused to go and instead sent a joint statement that they had no knowledge of the drugs "found" at his flat.

More than fifty Jews in the major Soviet cities have organised a rota of week-long hunger strikes in protest at the arrests and the increase in pressure on Hebrew teachers and students.

CAROLYN BURCH

Cardinal Slipyj: The Man and his Church

Cardinal Iosyf Slipyj died in Rome on 7 September 1984 at the age of 92. The spiritual leader of the world's six million Ukrainian Eastern-Rite Catholics (or Uni-

ates), he had lived in Rome, exiled from his native Ukraine, since 1963, where he tirelessly represented the interests of his church, banned in the USSR, and fought