

something like four Muslims being born for every single Russian. This has implications for both the Soviet economy — with the prospect of extensive labour surpluses in Central Asia — and for the military — with some commentators suggesting that up to a third of the Red Army could be from the Muslim population by the end of the century. Thus it was interesting to find a member of the officially-recognised Muslim establishment noting the occasional opening of mosques in recent years in terms of the growing number of Muslims.

Perhaps more important has been the influence of greater Muslim self-awareness and assertiveness in the wider world, with events in Iran and Afghanistan of particular significance. Of course the differing conditions prevailing in the USSR should caution us against making predictions about the possibility of some sort of Islamic upheaval in that country. Rather events in the *Umma* should be seen as giving Soviet Muslims a greater self confidence in their relations with Russian rulers.

JOHN ANDERSON

## Recantations by Religious Prisoners in the Soviet Union

In November 1985, the Soviet press published reports of recantations by Christian prisoners of conscience Sergei Markus and Harri Mõtsnik, both serving three-year sentences for, respectively, "slandering the Soviet state" and "anti-Soviet propaganda". In January 1986, Markus appeared on Soviet television to back up his renunciation with a public act of penitence which he made in an apparently normal voice and without notes. Also in November 1985, at the trial of Christian rock musicians Valeri Barinov and Sergei Timokhin, Timokhin declared that he had done wrong by playing Christian music and preaching. He too later gave a television interview to Soviet journalists in which he denounced his friend Barinov's contacts abroad.\*

In April 1986, the Soviet news agency TASS reported the recantation of Boris Razveyev, a Russian Orthodox prisoner sentenced to three years in 1984, who had been associated with the unofficial Christian Seminar in the 1970s.\*\* The Seminar had held discussion groups on religion, history and philosophy in Moscow. Razveyev likewise appeared on Soviet television at peak evening viewing time to read out his recantation.

The public act of confession is not new to

Soviet life. In the 1930s, Stalin forced his political opponents to stand up in court and admit that they had conspired with foreign powers to bring down the Soviet system. More recently, the case of Father Dimitri Dudko received widespread attention from the western press. Father Dimitri became well known in the 1970s for his thought-provoking sermons which helped to bring hundreds if not thousands into the church. As a result he came under increasing pressure from the KGB, and in January 1980 he was arrested.

In June 1980 he appeared on television and expressed regret that he had crossed the line between religion and politics. Since then there have been a number of recantations by Orthodox believers. In September 1980, Lev Regelson, who was standing trial for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda", repented of his past actions during his hearing, and vowed henceforth to devote himself to strictly religious activity. He was given a five-year suspended sentence. In October 1980, Viktor Kapitanchuk, a founder-member of the Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR, pleaded guilty to a similar charge and declared that he had supplied foreign contacts with "defamatory fabrications against the Soviet state and social system". He likewise received a suspended sentence of five years. In March 1980, Valeri Repin, a journalist and Orthodox believer from Leningrad, made a televised confession in which he said that he had been manipulated by US Intelligence.

\*For background information, see *RCL* Vol. 13 No. 2, 1985, pp. 211-13 — *Ed.*

\*\*For articles on the Christian Seminar, see *RCL* Vol. 8 No. 2, 1980, pp. 92-112, and Vol. 9 Nos. 3-4, 1981, pp. 111-26 — *Ed.*

Repin was sentenced to two years imprisonment and three years exile, a "minimum sentence", because he had confessed to his crimes.

During 1985, the Soviet authorities appear to have made additional, though not always successful, efforts to persuade political and religious prisoners publicly to confess their earlier misdemeanours. Before Markus and Mõtsnik, two Jewish activists, Dan Shapiro and Yevgeni Koifman, also repented of their past behaviour in a similar way. Two striking features emerge from a survey of these publicised confessions. The first is that Christian recanters tend to be predominantly Orthodox rather than Evangelical or Catholic. The reason for this may be that the Orthodox Christians (and Jews) who have recanted have all been sentenced for "crimes against the state", whereas believers from other denominations have nearly all been sentenced for violation of the laws governing religious life. It is therefore probable that the KGB has put more pressure on the former to recant, since more political capital can be made out of the recantation of a prisoner sentenced for, example, "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" (article 70 of the Criminal Code). This view is reinforced by the fact that the only Baptist who has recanted, Sergei Timokhin, was sentenced for a crime against the state, attempting to leave the Soviet Union illegally. The second feature is that the recanters do not renounce their religious faith. Instead they speak of contacts with foreign organisations and of political activity, thus reinforcing a political point which the Soviet authorities are constantly making. Recanters emerge as victims who have been exposed to undesirable influences through their contacts with the church. Each confession is an implicit warning to the public to be wary of where religious faith and affiliation may lead.

Sergei Markus, a young Russian Orthodox layman tried in July 1984 in Moscow, confessed to passing information which "distorted the true situation of the church and believers in the Soviet Union" to western political groups, including the Russian émigré religious-literary journal *Vestnik RKhD*, the French religious journal *Logos*, the Taizé community, Campus Crusade for Christ, Slaviska Missionen in

Sweden, and Keston College. Harri Mõtsnik, an Estonian Lutheran pastor tried in Tallinn in October 1985, declared that he had been influenced by foreign visitors to his congregation to write down his sermons, many of which denounced Soviet peace policy as hypocritical. He had then sent them abroad for publication. Later, his recantation asserts, he realised that use of his work by the western media had been not "an act of charity", but political in motivation" with "clearly subversive aims". Like Markus, he expressed regret at having relied on foreign radio stations for news, instead of the Soviet media, and stated that he now saw his actions in a different light: "I have stooped to libellous and offending pronouncements . . . ." he said. "I can see now how, under the guise of my work as a clergyman, I developed subversive views and fully understand their harmfulness." Mõtsnik also spoke of his activities as having been contrary to the traditions of the church, while Markus described his rejection of political activity as "a new positive path, a return to the bosom of the Orthodox Church".

Boris Razveyev, originally sentenced on charges of "slandering the Soviet state and social system", made a recantation containing surprisingly virulent attacks on some of his former associates in the Christian Seminar movement, including its founder, Alexander Ogorodnikov. His allegations effectively repeated the rumours circulated by the KGB before Ogorodnikov's arrest, suggesting that he was a sexual pervert and a rapist. They are in fact likely to have been inspired by Ogorodnikov's passing interest in Eastern mysticism and the hippy movement, before he became converted to Russian Orthodoxy. Razveyev's recantation served, therefore, not only to present an example of a penitent Christian activist, but perhaps also to justify no change or clemency toward Ogorodnikov in the foreseeable future.

It is evidently intended that recantations by religious believers should lend support to the Soviet claim that no-one is arrested for religious beliefs in the USSR, and that the prisoners hailed as "martyrs" by the west are no more than criminals. In point of fact, however, the nearly four hundred known religious prisoners in the Soviet Union have been mostly involved in activities connected with the defence of human rights, or simply in asserting their right to practise as well as

preach their faith in daily life.

Recantations also serve to show other prisoners that the Soviet state is merciful to those who see the error of their ways. In the case of Markus this has meant conditional release from his prison sentence, although he was not at first permitted to return from Siberia to his family in Moscow. Sergei Timokhin was likewise released early, in February 1986.

The reasons for recantations are difficult to identify, and very little documentation is available relating to the recent confessions. Past instances indicate, however, that the KGB is free in its use of physical and psychological pressure to wean confessions from its victims. Mõtsnik was 57 years old and in poor health, with the prospect of three years in camp ahead of him; Markus was half way through his sentence, with a wife and four young children upon whom considerable pressure could be exerted. Razveyev was in a similar position, having a

wife and two children; while Sergei Timokhin — who apparently resisted for several months before breaking — may also have been motivated by concern for his family as he made his confession and denunciation of Valeri Barinov. Barinov's own reaction to his friend's statement is perhaps indicative of the perspective in which such recantations should be understood. "I was surprised that Sergei did this," he said, "but it seems to me that he was simply tricked by the KGB." He even went on to give credit to his friend for not giving others away. "Sergei did not say anything about our group, about its members, about the equipment we used . . . ."

There can be no doubt that, as Barinov's words imply, resistance to KGB pressure is an agonisingly tough and demanding stance to maintain. For some it is unbearably so.

IRENA KORBA

## The Return of the Danilov Monastery to the Russian Orthodox Church

In June 1983, the Danilov Monastery in Moscow was handed back to the Moscow Patriarchate by the Soviet government, according to an announcement by the Soviet news agency TASS. Subsequent reports in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate (JMP)* have provided more details about the history and architecture of the monastery, and the uses to which it would be put. The monastery, the oldest in Moscow, was founded in the thirteenth century by a son of Alexander Nevsky, Grand Prince Daniil Alexandrovich, who is buried in the monastery. He was also the founder of the Moscow Kremlin. The monastery is situated on the River Moscow, just over three miles from the Kremlin. Restoration and rebuilding at the monastery is clearly going to be very extensive, but the church hopes that it will be completed by 1988, in time for the celebration of the millennium of the church.

The restoration of the monastery is the responsibility of the Executive Committee for the Reception and Restoration of the Danilov Monastery, headed by Metropolitan Alexi of Tallinn, the chancellor (business manager) of the Moscow Patriarchate.

In September 1983, he reported to the Holy Synod that restoration had commenced, a group of architects had been convened for the purpose, and a new bank account had been opened to receive donations to finance the work. He said that donations were already being received from "diocesan bishops, superiors of monasteries and convents, priests, church councils and lay people". Subsequently, *JMP* published the name and number of the bank account, and invited foreigners to send donations in any currency.

It is intended that the monastery will become the new spiritual and administrative centre for the church. At present it has offices scattered in several parts of Moscow. The monastery complex will accommodate the official residence of the patriarch, some institutions of the Holy Synod, and, on an adjacent plot of land, a conference hall for "religious and peace-making conferences".

The superior of the monastery, Archimandrite Yevlogi, was born in 1937. He has spent much of his life at the Moscow Theological Academy at Zagorsk, where he was awarded a master's degree in 1979 for a dissertation on Orthodox monasticism, and