

assimilation" and "tutelage", but without referring to Romania by name. A few days later the Hungarian government supported a Canadian proposal calling on the signatories to the Helsinki accords to respect the right of all national minorities to preserve their national identities by allowing the free development of their cultures, languages and literature, and freedom to preserve their cultural monuments. The Romanian government took umbrage. In the first months of 1987, Hungarian foreign policy was accused in official Romanian forums of being motivated by "reactionary", "revanchist" and "Horthyist" sentiments. Hungarian statesmen could not resist being drawn into the war of words. They began to refer directly to Romania when speaking about violations of the rights of national minorities.

Hungary's church leaders now show signs of following their government's lead by working to get the question of the rights of national minorities onto the agendas of international church organisations. If they achieve this, they will risk undermining Soviet bloc unity in the

Protestant ecumenical movement. The Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan Antonie of Transylvania has already responded to the pressure coming from Hungary in an Ecumenical Press Service interview in which he denied any discrimination against the Hungarian community in Romania and accused those who make such charges of seeking to create "tension and destabilisation". The Vatican may also have to face the difficult choice of defending the national rights of Hungarians in Romania or remaining silent because of the likelihood of a hostile reaction from the Romanian authorities. It remains to be seen whether Christian public opinion in Hungary will be mollified by the action taken recently by its religious and political leaders, or whether it will oblige them to take firmer action. It will be interesting also to see whether Christian public opinion in Hungary can consistently combine the demand for firm action with encouragement of reconciliation based on the common Christian heritage shared by Hungarians and Romanians.

JOHN V. EIBNER

"Learning from the Past": Historical Monuments in the USSR

We are entering a period in history when mistakes cease to be permissible. There is nothing more harmful in today's world of great possibilities than the assertion, "we learn by our mistakes". Whose mistakes do we mean? Our own? There must be no mistakes. Their cost is too great.

These words appeared in the Soviet newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* eight days before the nuclear accident

at Chernobyl on the night of 25-26 April 1986. The specific subject under consideration by their author, Academician Dmitri Likhachev, a senior and respected authority on Russian history and culture, was not, however, the disastrous consequences of a nuclear catastrophe but the importance of preserving the cultural heritage. Likhachev's article, "A Legacy to Protect", was published to mark Unesco's Interna-

tional Day of Monuments of History and Culture on 18 April, and it calls on readers to put their wholehearted effort into the listing and protection of all the historical monuments of the Russian Federal Republic.

The theme of preserving the cultural heritage is an interesting one to read about in the media of communist countries because many of the historic buildings which make up the cultural heritage were or still are places of worship. According to figures given in *Grani naslediya* by V. G. Furov,¹ there are more than 20,000 architectural monuments under the protection of the state in the Soviet Union and of these, 13,000 were or still are used for religious purposes. In the case of Albania, where no churches or mosques are allowed to function, the fact that a new concern for preserving the architectural heritage has emerged in the last few years has been interpreted as a sign of hope, while in Romania President Ceausescu's wanton destruction of historic buildings and churches in Bucharest in the 1980s has led to despair in some quarters and provoked urgent protests in others.

In the Soviet Union, 1986 was the twentieth anniversary year of the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments (known by its Russian acronym, VOPIK). The Society was established by a decree of the RSFSR in 1966 — two years after the removal from office of Nikita Khrushchev, whose anti-religious policy had led to the destruction of a great many church buildings. It is a non-governmental organisation to which any Soviet citizen may belong on payment of a small annual subscription, and the steady growth

in its membership over the years demonstrates the very considerable concern among Russians for their historical and cultural monuments. V. G. Furov states that the combined memberships of VOPIK and its equivalent organisations in the other Union republics exceeds thirty million.²

On 11 April 1986 the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* carried a report of the plenary session of the Central Council of VOPIK, which had taken place on the previous day. E. M. Chekharin, chairman of the Central Council and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, announced that the government planned to spend two hundred million roubles per annum on the restoration of historic buildings during the next ten-year period but he added that, despite the fact that there were many urgent projects to fund, current expenditure on restoration work was falling far short of budget targets. In particular, Chekharin drew attention to the neglected state of the Simonov Monastery in Moscow and to serious damage done to the Iosif-Volokolamsky Monastery in the Solovetsky complex as a result of unqualified restorers working there over a long period of time. He also referred to the lack of progress in restoring the monuments of wooden architecture in the Karelian ASSR. Out of 202 such monuments, only 18 had been satisfactorily restored at the time of the meeting.

One of the functions of VOPIK is to campaign for the aims of the society through public lectures and the writing of articles for publication in the press. One such article appeared in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on 25 May 1986. It was written by A. Tarunov, a member of the council of the Moscow regional section of

¹ *Grani naslediya* (Aspects of Heritage) (Sovetskaya Rossiya: Moskva, 1985, p. 35).

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

VOOPIK, and it was entitled "A Monastery Holiday: The Best Way to Use Historic Buildings". When it is not possible for former monasteries to be used as museums or for other cultural purposes, Tarunov thinks they should be adapted for use as hotels, tourist centres, rest homes or sanatoria. Part of the Pokrovsky Monastery in Suzdal' is used for exhibitions, but other buildings in the complex have recently been fitted out to make a comfortable hotel. According to Tarunov, new buildings ought not to be put up for cultural purposes or for tourists when existing, unrestored monuments such as monastery complexes could be adapted for the same purposes. Tarunov cites the Uspensky Monastery in Kalinin and the Boris and Gleb Monastery at Torzhka as examples of monastery complexes which are being used inappropriately. The former is a market and the latter a "sobering-up" centre. Tarunov concludes his article by naming monasteries which he thinks would serve well as tourist centres. These are the Bogolyubsky Monastery (Vladimir), the Tolgsky Monastery (Yaroslavl), Nilov Pustyn' Monastery (Seliger), the Elizarov and Krypetsky monasteries (Pskov) and the Khutynsky Monastery (Novgorod).

Another VOOPIK article appeared in *Pravda* on 14 July 1986. Its author was V. Orfinsky, the deputy chairman of the council of the Karelian section of VOOPIK, and its subject was the fate of the wooden churches of the Russian north. According to Orfinsky, bureaucratic inefficiency is posing a major threat to the survival of these remarkable monuments. Particularly serious in its consequences is the lack of understanding between the Moscow restoration institute, "Spetsproyektrestavratsiya", the Ministry of Culture, and local party officials. A plan for strengthening the Church of the Dormition at

Kondopoga was commissioned from "Spetsproyektrestavratsiya" in 1979. (This church is unanimously regarded by specialists as the best surviving example of a hipped roof church in Russia.) Work on the plan was delayed for three years and then all sorts of trivial problems kept holding up progress. There was a long correspondence between the institute, the Kondopoga district party committee, and the Minister of Culture for the Karelian ASSR concerning the removal of rubbish from the site. In the end it was only thanks to the voluntary contribution of two working days by enthusiasts belonging to VOOPIK and led by V. Anisimov, the chief laboratory technician at the Karelian Pedagogical Institute, that the rubbish was cleared and the inspection of the site could go ahead.

Orfinsky recently visited the Nikol'sky church at Pinega. A hole in the roof has left the interior of the church exposed to the rain and the snow. The Ministry of Culture in Moscow knew about the situation a long time ago but no action has been taken. In the field of preserving historic monuments much seems to depend on the enthusiasm of volunteers. A group of enthusiasts from the Karelian section of VOOPIK has formed itself into a special repair and restoration brigade to operate during holiday periods. The brigade is led by V. Anisimov, who constantly brings forward new and constructive ideas, cutting out bureaucracy and overcoming the indifference of people in positions of authority.

Returning to the article "A Legacy to Protect" by Academician Likhachev, we read that

to solve the problem of preserving monuments of culture and reshaping our historic towns we must give more attention to the introduction of the principle of democracy — there must be discussion of

plans for the renovation of historic sites involving artists, writers and historians both in public meetings and in the press. Tourists, local historians, local people, schoolchildren and their teachers can all be a great help in the discovery, registration, and study

of monuments of history and culture. It is time to use to good purpose the genuine interest in the history and culture of the Motherland which is shared by hundreds of thousands of our compatriots today.

MALCOLM WALKER

Turkish Muslims in Bulgaria*

In October 1986, Keston College received a press release (addressed to *Religion in Communist Lands*) from First Secretary Plamen Voynovsky, Press Officer at the Embassy of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in London. The substance of this release was the visit to Bulgaria of Ahmed Zabara, Mufti of the Yemen Arab Republic, his impressions of the country and of the current situation of the Muslim population in particular. Sheikh Zabara visited Sofia, Plovdiv, Kardzhali and Smolyan, and his views are quoted from an interview which he gave to the Bulgarian newspaper *Nova Svetlina* (New Light) on 21 October 1986.

He was full of praise for his Bulgarian hosts, and impressed by "the fruitful amity and friendship existing between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union". "Bulgarian Muslims," he affirmed,

enjoy the rights of total freedom.

They are citizens with equal rights.

Their children go to present-day schools. Traditions and new way of living [*sic*] are well co-ordinated and this is really wonderful.

Questioned on the reports in "some foreign newspapers" concerning the

murder of Muslims, the destruction of mosques, and the persecution of imams, the Mufti declared these to be untrue. Referring to the "lies" emanating from Turkey and other neighbouring countries, he said that he personally had met many of the imams "declared killed" and prayed in mosques reported "razed to the ground". Speaking of the "ordinary Muslims" in the Kardzhali district, he said: "They are undisturbed and assured in their future. This is another proof of the groundlessness of the falsification being disseminated against your country."

The remarks attributed to Sheikh Zabara bear a clear resemblance to those made by the Syrian Grand Mufti during his visit earlier in 1986 and closely reflect the standard line taken by various official bodies and spokesmen in Bulgaria, both before and since the publication of the carefully documented Amnesty International report on the forced assimilation of the ethnic Turkish (mainly Islamic) minority, published in 1986. This gave details of many reported serious abuses of human rights in the course of the coercive "Bulgarisation" campaign which began (or was renewed) in late 1984 and was at its height during 1985. A main feature of this campaign was the enforced renunciation by this minority of their Muslim names

*This is an update to the *Sources* item on Bulgarian Press Articles which appeared in *RCL* Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 82-84.