

Chronicle

New Chronicle Section

With this volume of RCL we have begun a new Chronicle section which combines the old Chronicle and Sources sections. Sources has, of necessity, become increasingly selective in recent years, as we are now including summaries of the samizdat, secular and religious press of other countries besides the Soviet Union. We continue to provide surveys of press and samizdat as part of the Chronicle section's coverage of events and background information. In this issue we feature surveys of Soviet press articles about the preservation of historical monuments, and Bulgarian press articles concerning that country's Turkish Muslim minority.

Samizdat Bibliographies and Documents

Keston College continues to publish a comprehensive listing of Soviet religious samizdat, which is updated periodically as new documents are received. Readers may request bibliographical summaries of all Soviet religious samizdat, or of specified denominations only. Photocopies of complete documents are also available. Summaries and texts ordered from Keston College cost 10p per page (plus VAT, UK only), plus postage.

Information about samizdat documents from other countries is available from the respective researchers at Keston College.

“A Humane Act”

Entitled “A Humane Act”, the following brief news item appeared in *Izvestiya* on 14 February 1987:

A group of about 140 people, sentenced under Articles 70 (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda)

and 190-1 (circulation of deliberately false concoctions slandering the Soviet state and social order) of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, has approached the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet with

declarations stating that they will not in future engage in illegal activities.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is examining these declarations and making decisions as to releases. This humane act is in full accord with the process of democratisation and responds to the spirit of the *perestroika* taking place in our country. Those freed from punishment are given the opportunity to take an active part in socially useful work.

Keston College had earlier heard that on 2 February two decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet were signed (nos. 6462-XI and 6463-XI), one concerning "clemency" and the other "curtailment of sentence term". The decrees reportedly contained the names of almost fifty people who were to be released, mostly from the Perm complex of camps. A further decree was signed on 9 February, freeing prisoners from Siberian camps. *Izvestiya* published no names of individuals who had been released, although on 18 February the foreign service of TASS did carry a list of ten names. No complete official list of those freed, or about to be freed, has been given, but the total of released political prisoners known by name to Keston College, stands at 144 (May 1987). Among them are 43 Christians and ten Jews. The Christians are Pavel Akhtyorov (Pentecostal), Vladimir Albrekht (Catholic), Mikhail Azarov (Baptist), Galina and Vasili Barats (Pentecostal), Zofia Bielak (Catholic), Mikhail Bombin (Orthodox), Nikolai Danilchenko (Baptist), Lidiya Doronina-Lasmane (Baptist), Adam Dubitsky (Baptist), Evald Friman (Baptist — due to be released on 17 April 1987 anyway), Ulyana Germanyuk (Baptist), Pyotr and Valentina Golikov (Pentecostal), Tengiz and Eduard Gudava (Catholic), Mykhola Ihnatenko (Orthodox),

Vladimir Khailo (Baptist), Sergej Khodorovich (Orthodox), Merab Kostava (Georgian Orthodox), Kornei Kreker (Baptist), Veniamin Markevich (Baptist), Mikhail Meilakh (Orthodox), Nikolai Minayev (Baptist), Alexander Mukhin (Baptist), Alexander Ogorodnikov (Orthodox), Vasili Peredereyev (Baptist), Kirill Popov (Catholic), Janis Rožkalns (Baptist), Pyotr Rumachik (Baptist), Valeri Senderov (Orthodox), Vytautas Skuodis (Catholic), Algirdas Statkevicius (Catholic), Ivan Steffen (Baptist), Iosyp Terelya (Ukrainian Catholic), Ion Toluyanu (*Innokentievets*), Andrei and Yegor Wolf (Baptist), Father Gleb Yakunin (Orthodox), Gennadi and Veniamin Yefremov (Baptist), Rostislav Yevdokimov (Orthodox), and Pavel Zinchenko (Baptist). The religious Jews released are Iosif Berenshtein, Iosif Begun, Yulian Edelshtein, Yakov Levin, Vladimir Lifshits, Mark Nepomnyashchy, Mikhail Rivkin, Emmanuil Tvaladze, Leonid Volvovsky and Roald Zelichonok.

As was stated in *Izvestiya*, almost all the religious believers released had been sentenced under Articles 70 or 190-1 (or their equivalents in the other republics). Several, however, including Iosif Berenshtein and Pavel Zinchenko, were not sentenced under either. Berenshtein and Zinchenko were both charged under the Ukrainian Criminal Code Article 188-1 part 2, equivalent of the Russian 191-1 part 2 (resisting with violence or the threat of violence a militiaman or people's guard). Prominent Jewish prisoner Yulian Edelshtein was sentenced for alleged possession of drugs (under Article 224). He had been in poor health in labour camp following an operation, and this may have contributed to his being granted early release.

Some prisoners were sentenced under other Articles as well as either 70 or 190-1, notably Pyotr

Rumachik, vice-president of the Council of Evangelical Christian-Baptists, and Veniamin Markevich, a member of the Council, who were both sentenced under Articles 190-1, 142 part 2 (violation of the laws on separation of church and state and school and church), and 227 (infringement of the person and rights of citizens under the guise of performing religious rituals). Rumachik had, however, been re-sentenced in camp in 1985 under Article 70 and given a further five years' strict regime. Of those religious prisoners who have not been affected by the decrees of the Supreme Soviet, many were sentenced under either Articles 142 or 227. This group includes many of the Baptist prisoners who belong to the Evangelical Christian-Baptist group.

Two religious prisoners, Vladimir Khailo and Algirdas Statkevičius, were released from psychiatric hospital. Both had been in Special Psychiatric Hospital, but Khailo was transferred to an ordinary hospital before his release. It is not clear whether these two cases are related to the releases brought about by the action of the Supreme Soviet.

According to the *Izvestiya* report, those released declared that "they would not in future engage in illegal activities". Dissident sources in the Soviet Union give a rather fuller version of this statement, claiming that the prisoners had to declare that they "had never engaged in anti-Soviet activities, are not currently

engaged in such activity, and do not intend to be in the future". *Izvestiya* implied that it was the prisoners who turned to the authorities with this declaration, whereas from accounts given by individuals released it seems that it was usually the authorities who first approached the prisoners. The declarations seem to be a convenient device, allowing the authorities to provide a basis for the releases, while many prisoners are happy to sign the declarations as they do not amount to a full recantation. Some of the released prisoners had signed their own amended versions of the declaration. Some refused to sign and were released nevertheless, whilst others refused to sign were not. The latter category includes Zoya Krakhmalnikova, Felix Svetov, Lev Lukyanenko, Deacon Vladimir Rusak, Yelena Sannikova and Oksana Popovich.

In several cases, as a preliminary to their release, prisoners were transferred from labour camp to KGB investigation prison in their home town, where they were put under pressure to sign the declaration. Some prisoners at present still in KGB prison may yet be freed. Taking into account this category of possible future releases, and the fact that news of all those freed may not yet have reached the West, the number of releases may increase for some time to come.

*Compiled by members of
Keston College staff*

Preparations for the Official Celebrations in 1988 of the Millennium of the Baptism of Kievan Rus'

Preparations for the official celebrations of the millennium by the

Moscow Patriarchate commenced in October 1980, when a 34-strong