

for his views on Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*' and replied with the following words:

It seems to me that thinking is either right or wrong. If it is wrong then it assesses reality incorrectly, and if it is right, it understands what reality actually is . . . When one people is dealing with another it must know the whole truth about

the other people. Yet propaganda expounds only one truth. This is detrimental to the cause. I therefore believe that full and truthful information is very important. Through truth we reach mutual understanding. From there it is not so far to universal peace.

MALCOLM WALKER

## Religious Believers and the New Soviet Emigration

The figures for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union are widely regarded, especially among the important Jewish lobby in the United States, as a yardstick of current Soviet attitudes to human rights questions. Jewish emigration in 1987 has been higher than in any year since the late 1970s. But almost unnoticed, emigration of ethnic Germans to West Germany has jumped, and has now for the first time overtaken the Jewish figure. Even Armenian emigration has recently increased, passing the 6,000 mark last year. What of the religious aspects of this increased emigration? There are several interesting points which come to light on an analysis of these figures.

The official number for Jews emigrating on Israeli visas in 1987 has reached over 5,400. With a few exceptions, they fly to Vienna and then choose to go to Israel or to a third country, usually the United States. The proportion choosing Israel as a destination has been low — little more than a quarter on average — indicating that only a small number of those emigrating would consider themselves religious Jews, wishing to settle in the Holy Land.

The moving sight of Anatoli Shcharansky kissing the Western Wall in Jerusalem is not repeated by every Jewish emigrant. However, last year there were a number of Hebrew teachers and religious activists among the emigrants, some of them, such as Yulian Edelshtein, formerly imprisoned for their religious activity, for whom the dream of being allowed to go to the Promised Land has been fulfilled after years of campaigning. There was universal joy among the Moscow Jewish community when Iosif Begun, also a recently released prisoner, was among a further group of refuseniks finally given permission to leave.

The figures published for the number of Jewish emigrants are, to a certain extent, a fiction. The Soviet authorities allow many non-Jews to emigrate to Israel, although they know they are not Jewish and are unlikely to want to settle there. This is a convenient face-saving device in two ways: the authorities can rid themselves of troublesome dissidents without conceding that non-Jews too have the right to leave; and a higher than otherwise total improves Jewish-American perceptions of the Soviet human rights record. One group

of religious believers who have recently been able to take advantage of this are Pentecostals, most of them in unregistered congregations, who have been running a campaign for the right to emigrate for many years. Unregistered Pentecostals are unhappy about the state's tight restrictions on the activity of their churches, the ban on evangelism and religious instruction for children, and the discrimination against believers in jobs and homes. Many of those involved in the Pentecostal emigration campaign have been imprisoned, among them leading activists Vasili and Galina Barats from Moscow, both of whom were released after the February 1987 review of sentences for those imprisoned on charges of "anti-Soviet activity". They estimate that there are currently 20,000 Pentecostals who are actively seeking to leave. The Barats wish to establish the principle that anyone may emigrate freely from the Soviet Union, and have turned down invitations from abroad. However, other Pentecostals have emigrated on Israeli visas, thus appearing in the totals given for Jewish emigrants. After many years of footdragging by the Soviet authorities, emigration of Pentecostals is significantly increasing, and many leading members of unregistered congregations are among those receiving permission to emigrate. Former prisoner Eduard Bulakh from Vilnius was allowed to emigrate with his family in March, while Mikhail Kopot' from L'vov, an active member of an unofficial peace movement in the Soviet Union, the Group to Establish Trust Between East and West, emigrated with his family in July. The Bulakh family had written an emigration appeal specifically requesting permission to leave for Israel, comparing the plight of Pentecostals in the Soviet Union to that of the Jewish people in slavery in Egypt under the Pharaohs, and noting the

mutual sympathy between the two groups.

Another group of Pentecostals, the church in the Far Eastern Siberian town of Chuguyevka which has suffered continuous persecution from the authorities for many years, has been trying to emigrate since 1983. After numerous fines, loss of wages, physical assaults and attacks on their property, the authorities finally arrested and imprisoned ten of their members, including the pastor, Viktor Walter. Six remain in detention, but last year the first hopeful sign of progress in their battle to leave came when the Soviets finally allowed the first family to leave for West Germany. Johann Vins and family arrived in the West in April, and have been followed by six other families from the church.

The emigration of Soviet Germans to West Germany — and on occasion to the GDR — has fluctuated widely over the past few years, reaching a low point of 429 in 1985. A total of 14,262 Soviet Germans emigrated to West Germany in 1987, a higher figure than that of Jews and already approaching the peak years for German emigration of 1976 to 1978. The Mennonite immigration aid office has collected statistics of the religious affiliation of new arrivals in the West German government's refugee camp at Friedland. Just over 40 per cent declared themselves to be Lutheran, 25 per cent Roman Catholic, 18 per cent Baptists and ten per cent Mennonites. Fewer than seven per cent declared themselves to be non-religious or of other religious groups. This is a remarkably high proportion of new arrivals declaring themselves to have a religious affiliation, all the more remarkable in view of the severe restraints imposed on all denominations of German church life since the deportation of the Soviet Germans to the East in the 1930s and 1940s. (It should, however,

be noted that religious believers are more likely to wish to emigrate to West Germany than other Soviet Germans since they remain closer to their German heritage, and have religious reasons for wanting to leave the Soviet Union.) The number of Mennonites is high, and many of those declaring themselves to be Baptists come from a Mennonite background. Those emigrating include a number of Mennonite pastors. Due to the emigration of most of their membership, some Mennonite communities (mainly in Central Asia) are likely to die out in the next few years.

The Soviet authorities have also allowed a number of religious activists and former prisoners to emigrate. After many years of campaigning Vladimir Khailo, a leading member of an unregistered Baptist congregation in the Ukrainian town of Krasny Luch, was released in March after more than six years in psychiatric hospital. In August he left the Soviet Union with some of his family for Holland. Ukrainian Catholic activist Iosyp Terelya, who spent more than twenty years in labour camps and psychiatric hospitals for campaigning for the relegalisation of the banned Ukrainian Catholic Church, was

released from labour camp in February and emigrated to Holland in September. The Baptist former prisoner and Latvian nationalist Janis Rožkalns arrived in Vienna with his family on 15 October. With the release in 1987 under amnesty of many religious prisoners of conscience from labour camps, the Soviet authorities may have decided that it is better to allow them to emigrate — or to exile them forcibly if necessary — than to allow them to continue the unauthorised religious activity for which they were originally imprisoned. The return of many religious activists from camps has already resulted in an upsurge of unofficial religious activity: the Ukrainian Catholic Church, illegal since 1946, is gradually coming into the open; the Lutheran Church in Latvia has stood up strongly to state pressure to remove active pastors; and the number of unofficial religious and human rights journals has increased. While not all of this may be attributed to the return home of former imprisoned activists, the authorities have probably decided that they will have a quieter time without them.

*Compiled by members of  
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## The Catholic Church in Vietnam

1987 has been a significant year for the fortunes of the Catholic Church in communist Vietnam. There are signs that the turning point in church-state relations may have been reached: the state finally seems to recognise that the church will not be destroyed by persecution, and the church, for its part, has come to realise that it must learn to exist in a communist society, with all the

restrictions that this entails. The severe restraints on the church, which have existed in the north of the country since 1954 and in the south since the communist victory and reunification in 1975, curtailed the church's activity, but did not succeed in reducing the allegiance of the Catholic population in Vietnam to the church. Indeed, since 1975 the number of Catholics in the country is