

men refuse to do military service, as becomes clear from another article which appears in a later issue of *The Crime Review*. The article also implicitly regrets the lack of success in curbing the growth of

the sect, which even if small seems to be the best organised clandestine religious group in Czechoslovakia.

ALEXANDER TOMSKÝ

## Obituary: Archbishop Vasili of Brussels

One of the oldest hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Vasili (Krivoshein) of Brussels, died on the night of 20-21 September 1985 at the age of 85. He was on a visit to Leningrad, his native city, at the time of his death.

Archbishop Vasili was born in St Petersburg on 30 June 1900. After completing secondary education he studied in the history and philosophy faculties of Petersburg and Moscow universities, completing his higher education as an émigré in Paris in 1921. He entered the church in 1924, and the following year he joined the monastery of St Panteleimon on Mount Athos. He was tonsured a monk in 1927 and remained on Mount Athos until 1947, devoting himself to studies of the works of the Church Fathers. From 1951 until mid-1960 he was in England, doing research work in Oxford and serving in the local Russian Orthodox church. In these years he published extensively, spoke on his field of study (patristics) at conferences and participated in congresses on Byzantology. He was raised to the rank of archimandrite in May 1959, and a month later was consecrated bishop. He was appointed Bishop of Volokolamsk, second vicar to the Patriarchal Exarch in western Europe. He was appointed Bishop of Brussels and Belgium in May 1960 and elevated to the rank of archbishop two months later. Alongside his duties in the church, Archbishop Vasili continued his researches and writings on patristics, which led to the award of a doctorate by the Leningrad Theological Academy. In 1972 he began to take part in the work of the "Faith and Justice" committee of the World Council of Churches.

Archbishop Vasili was by no means blind to the shortcomings and the difficulties of the situation of believers in the Soviet Union. For example, at the 1971 Council (*Sobor*) of the Russian Orthodox Church, he put forward a suggestion that Patriarchs ought to be elected by secret ballot (thereby

making it more difficult for the Soviet authorities to "push through" a candidate of their choice). When the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Russian Orthodox Christian, was facing arrest, Archbishop Vasili held a public service of intercession (*moleben*) for him, as did Archbishop Anthony (Bloom) in London. Archbishop Vasili went to Moscow, where he was confronted by the then Metropolitan of Leningrad (Nikodim) and taken to task for his support of Solzhenitsyn, but he refused to alter his stance in the matter. After Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the USSR in 1974 Archbishops Vasili and Anthony protested vigorously about a statement issued by Metropolitan Serafim of Krutitsy approving the expulsion.

When in 1974 Archbishop Pitirim of Volokolamsk (Moscow diocese) said in an interview to the Soviet press agency *Novosti* that teaching religion to children is a violation of their freedom of conscience and that charity is unnecessary because of the excellence of the Soviet welfare system, Archbishop Vasili bitterly criticised him in a Russian-language BBC broadcast.

On his visits to Russia, Archbishop Vasili was able to have frank private conversations with Orthodox hierarchs. What they told him often added a great deal to what they were able to say publicly about church affairs. Sometimes they directly contradicted what they were obliged to say in public. For example, Metropolitan Nikolai (Yarushevich) of Krutitsy gave Archbishop Vasili a graphic account of how churches were being closed and destroyed wholesale throughout the Soviet Union during the anti-religious campaign of 1959-64. Publicly, however, Nikolai and other hierarchs were obliged to conceal the fact of persecution.

In another conversation, Metropolitan Iosif of Alma-Ata (d. 1975) thanked Archbishop Vasili for speaking out at the 1971 *Sobor* when he and other bishops resident in the Soviet Union felt obliged to keep

silent: "We are cowed. We cannot speak, but you spoke for us all. Thank you." Archbishop Vasili reported these conversations only after the deaths of the hierarchs concerned, when they were safe from reprisals. He was thus a very significant witness to an aspect of the life of the Russian Orthodox Church that might otherwise have remained unknown outside the Soviet Union.

Despite all this, on 25 July 1985 Patriarch Pimen sent Archbishop Vasili a telegram of congratulation for his 85th birthday, with the wish, "May the all-Merciful Lord

strengthen your spiritual and bodily strength, and may your devoted service to Holy Orthodoxy continue for many years." This is published in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate (JMP)* No. 10, 1985 (p. 3), the latest issue to reach Keston College. An obituary has not yet appeared in *JMP*.

Archbishop Vasili's funeral service took place in the Spaso-Preobrazhensky cathedral in Leningrad and he was buried at the Serafim cemetery. Thus his stated wish to be buried in his native city was fulfilled.

ALYONA KOJEVNIKOV

## The Orthodox Theological Seminary in Prešov, Czechoslovakia

On 26 July 1950 the government of Czechoslovakia issued a permit for the opening of an Orthodox seminary with a faculty of Orthodox Theology in the city of Prešov in eastern Slovakia. The seminary was housed in the former Greek Catholic Seminary, founded in 1881, which had been taken over after the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia earlier in 1950. The Orthodox Theological Seminary was opened on 15 October 1950. The seminarians resided in the former orphanage attached to the seminary. In the academic year 1951-52 it had 52 students; six years later there were 119 seminarians and 15 students taking a special one-year preparatory course for persons lacking a humanistic educational background. Special courses were also organised to train village priests. (Michael Lacko, "The Forced Liquidation of the Union of Uzhorod," *Slovak Studies I* (Rome: 1961), pp. 145-85, p. 179, fn. 49.) The Faculty of Theology now has approximately twenty students, about a quarter of whom come from abroad (the USSR, Ethiopia). (*Service Orthodoxe de presse*, No. 104, January 1986, p. 16.)

In 1980 Filaret, the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia and Exarch for Ukraine, was awarded an honorary degree in theology from the Prešov

seminary Faculty of Orthodox Theology (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate (JMP)* No. 10, 1980, pp. 40-41). In 1984 *JMP* referred to an exchange of students between the Prešov and Moscow seminaries (*JMP* No. 4, 1984, p. 7).

Orthodoxy had early roots in Subcarpathia, but after the Union of Uzhorod (1646), the Eastern-rite (Uniate) Greek Catholic Church came to predominate, encompassing many Slovaks as well as Rusyns. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Prešov was an important cultural centre of the Subcarpathian Rusyns (also variously known as Ruthenians, Transcarpathian Ukrainians, Carpatho-Rusyns, Carpatho-Russians, etc.). With the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus' (to the east of Prešov) to the Ukrainian SSR in June 1945, the Rusyns of that area came to be regarded as Ukrainians, while their brethren remaining in Czechoslovakia underwent phases of officially sponsored Russification, Ukrainianisation, and Rusynisation. In practice, however, many were assimilated into the Slovak nationality. The government-sponsored Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia took over Greek Catholic parishes upon the liquidation of the latter church in 1950. The Greek Catholic Church enjoyed a limited revival after it was legalised in 1968.

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