

to suffer harassment. In mid-January 1986 he was called in for questioning in connection with the arrest of Leningrad *refusenik* Vladimir Lifshitz; Martynov had signed an

appeal, a copy of which was confiscated at the time of Lifshitz's arrest.

CAROLYN BURCH

Renewed Harassment of the Council of Baptist Prisoners' Relatives

The spring and summer of 1985 witnessed a renewed onslaught on members of the reform Baptists' Council of Prisoners' Relatives, with house-searches taking place in many parts of the country.

Formed in 1964, the CPR quickly became significant as public defender and material supporter of the families of those imprisoned for their role in the reform Baptist movement. Soon after the launching of the group it was realised that without western awareness and support, their activities were likely to make little impression on the Soviet authorities, so considerable effort was made to ensure that documents issued by the CPR would reach individuals and organisations in the West who knew how to make use of them. In particular the Council members sought to provide detailed evidence of the ill-treatment by the Soviet authorities of those imprisoned for their faith.

Their central aim, however, has always been the support of families who have lost their breadwinner. Many of these families are large — CPR members Galina Rytikova and Serafima Yuditseva have ten and 13 children respectively — and consequently the wives and mothers are generally not in a position to go out and earn a living. The Soviet state provides no aid to the families of prisoners and the situation for such families is made still worse when the sentence includes confiscation of property. Thus the CPR often has to provide for even the most basic needs such as food and clothing.

In addition to practical help the Council attaches equal importance to spiritual support through prayer and meeting together with other Baptist believers. To this end the regular *Bulletin of the Council of Prisoners' Relatives* contains devotional material in the form of prayers, poems and Biblical quotations, whilst appeals directed to the West often contain pleas for other Christians

throughout the world to pray for the persecuted.

The public face of the Council is this *Bulletin*, which started to appear in 1970, initially on a quarterly basis but later becoming almost a monthly — ten issues appeared in 1981. The pages of this publication contain information the general situation of believers; details of arrests, trials and sentences; accounts of harassment — from beatings to the discrimination experienced by believing schoolchildren; prisoners' letters; also defence of young Baptist conscripts who suffer persecution while in the Red Army, or those who are imprisoned for refusing to take the military oath.

Because of its strident criticism of Soviet religious policy, the CPR has been rebuked by the officially recognised All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) for being too negative in its presentation of the believers' situation and for making it appear that official Baptist spokesmen are lying when they speak of the amount of religious freedom existing in the USSR. In defence of the CPR, however, it should be pointed out that they claim only to speak for the reform Baptists who incidentally, at the time of writing, have 168 of their adherents in camps and prisons throughout the Soviet Union.

Over the last twenty years the membership of the Council has fluctuated, but the three women who stand out as leaders are Lidiya Vins, Galina Rytikova and Alexandra Kozorezova. Lidiya Vins, who died on 19 May 1985, emerged as the leader of the CPR after the arrest in 1966 of her son Georgi, one of the most prominent figures in the reform Baptist movement. Under her leadership, the CPR held their first Congress in November 1969, but by the time the second Congress met in December the following year, Lidiya Vins was already under arrest. Despite her being 63 years old and in poor health, she was sentenced to three

years in camp for her activities. Though extremely weak she nevertheless resumed her work with the CPR after her release in late 1973, and remained active until her departure for the United States with her family in 1979.

During the early 1970s Lidiya's place as leader of the Council was taken by Galina Rytikova, whose husband Pavel was then serving a prison term. It was during this period that the *Bulletin* was founded; as Secretary, Rytikova collected the documentation, and it was in her home that the members of the CPR compiled the *Bulletin*. During 1978, Galina was forced by threats of psychiatric internment to go into hiding with her three youngest children.

Alexandra Kozorezova was formally elected President of the CPR after the emigration of Lidiya Vins. She too was soon forced to go into hiding with her three-year-old son, but in February 1981 she was discovered and arrested. At her trial in August 1981 she was given a three-year suspended sentence which meant that she could remain at liberty provided that she ceased her involvement with the Council's work. In an appeal to the authorities, Kozorezova made it clear that her conscience would not permit her to turn a blind eye to the sufferings of her fellow-believers. In April 1982 she was re-arrested, together with Galina Rytikova and four other members of the Council during a meeting in the home of A. D. Belkunova. Literature and personal property were confiscated from the women, and Rytikova and Kozorezova were held for a few days. Only one of the detained women was brought to trial, however: Lidiya Bondar, who had been involved in the organisation of summer camps for the children of Baptist prisoners, was sentenced to three years' camp.

The next clampdown on the CPR came in the spring of 1985 at a time when the number of Baptist arrests was running at an extremely high level. On 1 March, Serafima Yudintseva was given a two-year sentence;

this has been deferred for two years but she is required not to leave her place of residence without permission from the militia. Then, between May and July, the homes of several Council activists were searched, including those of the Khorev family in Kishinyov, the Kozorezovs in Voroshilovgrad and the Naprienkos in Moscow. At the home of Vasili and Natasha Dimitriyev (the daughter of Galina Rytikova) the CPR archive was found and confiscated.

Of those affected by the searches, two appeared likely to face prosecution. Ulyana Germanyuk (whose husband Stepan is in prison), an active member of the Council, was arrested on 23 July while visiting her daughter in the Crimea. Since then her children have been unable to obtain any further information about her position. In Barnaul (Siberia) Valentina Firsova has been warned not to leave her home town and this may well be a prelude to prosecution.

Pressure and arrests have never succeeded in thwarting the activities of the Council in the past and it seems unlikely that they will do so now. The members still hold firmly to their 1976 declaration that they would not cease to function until three conditions were met:

1. a complete end to persecution by the authorities of believers because of their faith;
2. the release and rehabilitation of all who have been condemned for the Word of God;
3. it is made possible for their spiritual centre, the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists, to function normally.

Given that present Soviet religious policy shows little sign of meeting these demands, one must assume that the Council will endeavour to continue their work for the foreseeable future.

JOHN ANDERSON

The Beijing-Rome Dialogue

The Holy See has been trying for some twenty years to start dialogue with the Beijing government. A Papal Nuncio in Asia told me twenty years ago that the Nuncios of the region had been instructed to try to

establish contact with the government in Beijing. The Popes have never missed an opportunity for expressing their desire for dialogue. At Epiphany 1967, Pope Paul VI praised the ardent youth of China (not