

† *In Memoriam*

Dr. Nikolai E. Khokhlov

On September 4, 2007 (Old Style), Dr. Nikolai Evgenievich Khokhlov, 84, a founding member of the Board of Advisors of the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies and close friend and supporter of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery, died of a heart attack. Archimandrite Akakios, Abbot of the monastery, was able to Commune him just before his repose. Funeral services for Professor Khokhlov were held at the monastery on September 6 (os) in Etna, with Archbishop Chrysostomos and Bishop Auxentios presiding. He was buried on September 9 (os)—next to the grave of his son—in Southern California, with Father Yakov Ferens, from our Exarchate parish in San Diego, officiating.



A former officer of the Soviet NKVD (KGB), Professor Khokhlov defected to the West in 1954, after refusing to carry out the assassination of a prominent anti-communist leader in West Germany. He was one of the first high-ranking Soviet intelligence agents to defect to the West, and his story was splashed, at the time, across major American magazines: *Newsweek* (31 May 1954), *Time* (3 May 1954), etc.

In the atmosphere of the Cold War, Professor Khokhlov was at once a hero *and* the subject of suspicion among anti-communist Russian exiles and in Western press reports. This fact and the disappearance (at KGB orders, as he later learned) of his wife, who was pregnant with a son—now a prominent Russian academic—whom he did not know about until after the USSR's collapse, caused him great bitterness throughout his life. The story of his escape to the West is the subject of the book *In the Name of Conscience* (New York: David McKay, 1959) and a documentary, by the BBC and Russian Public Television, entitled “A Matter of Conscience.”

Following his defection, Dr. Khokhlov collaborated and worked with Western intelligence services, the US government, and various anti-communist activists. As a result, in 1957, in Frankfurt, Germany, he was the

victim of an assassination attempt by the KGB, which poisoned him with radioactive thallium (see a recent account of this in the *London Times*, December 1, 2006). He quite fortunately survived the attempt, despite a long period of difficult recuperation and rehabilitation.

A brilliant statistician and computer engineer, on settling in the US Khokhlov pursued graduate schooling in psychology, completing a doctoral degree (in two years) in clinical and experimental psychology at Duke University. He also did extensive work in the field of parapsychology. In 1968, he began a teaching career in psychology at the California State University. An intensely private man, he eventually remarried and had two daughters and a son. (His son died of kidney failure in his youth, and there have long been largely quiet and unconfirmed suspicions, in intelligence circles, that his illness was also initiated by some sort of poisoning—revenge for the failed attempt to poison his father.)

Almost forty years ago, Archbishop Chrysostomos, who had already completed his graduate studies in Byzantine history, became a student of Professor Khokhlov, with whom His Eminence's biological father had worked briefly several decades before. Dr. Khokhlov became the Archbishop's close confidant and subsequently guided much of his academic career in psychology. His Eminence, when he was ordained a clergyman, also became Professor Khokhlov's confessor and spiritual Father.

When he was named an emeritus professor at the California State University, Dr. Khokhlov was given the following accolade, which perfectly summarizes him: "That so few people are aware of the scope of his international reputation and his intensely personal life struggle, following his defection from the Soviet Union in 1954, is a testimony to his quiet humility...[and] his 'old world' European Russian gentility."

Вечная Память! May his memory be eternal!

