

Arrest of Ivan Fedotov

The events of 4 August, 1974, described in the previous document affected a group of Pentecostals under the care of Pastor Fedotov. Eleven days after these events Ivan Fedotov himself was arrested. The following document describes how this happened and states the accusations directed against him by the authorities.

From the Information Service of the Pentecostal Movement (ISPM)

URGENT COMMUNICATION

Ivan Petrovich Fedotov was arrested by the KGB and police on 15 August 1974, while at work in the town of Maloyaroslavets, Kaluga region. He is a leader of the Pentecostal Church ("Christians of the Evangelical Faith").

After his arrest, on the very same day the investigator and divisional inspector of police carried out a search of his house in the presence of witnesses, during which all his tapes on religious subjects were confiscated. They also made an inventory of his personal belongings, including the bed and settee, owned jointly with his wife. (Incidentally, she has also done a spell in the camps for her religious convictions.) According to information received, Fedotov is being charged with "insubordination to the authorities" and "enticing minors to services".

On 21 August members of the Maloyaroslavets Pentecostal congregation received summonses to appear before the investigator "about the I. P. Fedotov matter".

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

I. P. Fedotov was born at Staro-Alexandrovsky, Staro-Yurievsky district, Tambov region.

In 1954, while serving in the navy he came to believe in Jesus Christ and began to serve Him. After demobilization he returned to his mother's house (3 Donbass St., Biryulevo-Tovarnoye, Moscow region). As he had the Christian conviction that he must help people, he began to preach repentance and did so successfully. His irreproachable and pure life, both as a Christian and as a Soviet citizen and an honest worker, were evident to all. This went on from 1955 to 1960.

On 29 July 1960 Fedotov was arrested at a Pentecostal meeting. After a pre-trial investigation lasting a year and a forensic examination in a mental hospital, he was sentenced to ten years in the camps on a fabricated charge of "attempting to make a human sacrifice". His lawyer, S. L. Ariya, remarked in his appeal that the verdict against Fedotov was an example of "punishment without crime". However, in the absence of a *corpus delicti* he was not only not given a free pardon, but the persecutions against him as a believer were increased even after his imprisonment. So he could not obtain a residence permit after returning to his mother's house, where he had been living at the time of his arrest. He addressed a request to A. N. Kosygin, but the answer was negative. He was forced to register for residence at Svinskaya, Tula region, but the chief of police of the Zaokskoye district cancelled his permit without the slightest reason. This forced him to move to Maloyaroslavets, where he was fined 50 roubles for attending an act of worship in the house of his mother-in-law, M. N. Agapova, where he was living. After this a second case was brought against him when he was among a group of believers who

went to visit S. K. Merkusheva, a sister in faith who had just come out of hospital. For this he was similarly fined 50 roubles. On this occasion, Lovkov, the divisional inspector of police, was drunk and, together with the witnesses wanted to use physical force. However, after the believers had pointed out his condition and had threatened to complain, the intruders withdrew.

A third case was brought, falsely, in the house where he has been living. Some officials crawled through the fence (the gate was locked) and tried to catch the believers unawares; they broke into the front room without permission, at which Fedotov accused them in these words: "You're breaking into the houses of peaceful citizens like Gestapo . . ." At the time, Mrs. Agapova had been sewing gloves, Fedotov had been repairing the cellar and his wife (Mrs. Agapova's daughter) was talking to the believers who had come to their house. But the case was compiled to state that a service of worship was going on and for this yet a third fine of 50 roubles was imposed.

A fourth case concerned Olga Loseva's house, where Fedotov had been invited for a house-warming: for this, a fourth fine of 50 roubles. After this Fedotov was arrested at work at 3 p.m. on 15 August. He was accused under the following articles of the penal code: 227 (*Section I*) – under which, as the investigator of the Kharkov regional procuracy said when Fedotov's wife was called in, "there is no case as yet"; 131, 190 and 192 (*I*) – accusing Fedotov of "defamation of character" (referring to the fact that he greeted the intrusion of those atheists with the words, "You're breaking in like Gestapo"; he is further accused of "disobedience to the authorities", because he asked them not to contravene the Constitution and interfere with believers while they were worshipping on the occasion of the wedding in Kaluga on 4 August.

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