

A Mother has her Child Taken Away

Aida Khmeleva (née Topeshkina) was called as a witness at the trial of "the four" (Galanskov, Ginsburg, Dobrovolsky and Lashkova) in January 1968. She was a friend of Galanskov and tried to protect him in the evidence she gave. Eventually she was forcibly removed from the court. She sent parcels to him in prison, protested when his physical condition worsened, attended a requiem said for him in Moscow after his death in the camp on 4 November 1973 and visited his grave in Mordovia. She also appeared as witness at the trial of Amalrik and tried to help him when exiled. She is now under pressure from the Soviet authorities. The youngest of her five children has been taken from her. The following appeal was printed in Russkaya Mysl, 10 April 1975.

TO ALL MOTHERS OF THE WORLD

I request your help and defence.

My child has been taken away from me—a small three-year-old child has lost his mother, sisters and brother, and been made an orphan.

It will soon be a year since I was deprived not only of the possibility of bringing up my son, but also of seeing him and knowing a little about him. In all the official departments—judicial, governmental and Party—to which I have turned, entreating, requesting and demanding that my legal rights as a mother be restored and my son returned, I have received either silence or a coarse refusal as my answer, thereby humiliating and insulting my maternal feelings.

From the mouths of KGB workers—to whom my former husband, Evgeny Iosifovich Khmelev, a man mentally ill and a convicted hooligan, has been of doubtful service in view of his delirious denunciations of his former friends—from their mouths, I was informed that I would never see my son again (in this way anticipating and defining all the court decisions with regard to my case). Since I was a defence witness in several trials in 1968 and a close friend of Yuri Galanskov, who died 18 months ago in a camp for political prisoners, this means that I am "anti-Soviet" and unable to bring up my son as a genuine Soviet citizen; I am a Christian, I had my children baptised—this means that I will not give my son a communist upbringing.

Under secret, and overt pressure from the KGB, the whole might of the State apparatus has come down upon me, with every official pathetically proving that only a mentally ill man, a hooligan and informer moreover, educates his son in a genuinely Soviet spirit.

My children also have been deprived of the possibility of seeing their young brother—it is not only I who am suffering in this respect. A criminal case was nearly brought against my 14-year-old daughter Katya by the organs of the militia and the Department of People's Education for attempting to see Timofei. Now that she knows such cruel injustice, a young girl's heart is ready to become hardened in the future. Every day young Nastya torments me with the question—where is Timoshka?

One by one my relatives and friends are summoned to the KGB and, threatened with having anti-Soviet sympathies and intimidated with blackmail and menacing threats, they are forced to make a written renunciation of me and my family.

I have shed all my tears. I have appealed to all the princes of this world and

they have pushed me away. Only prayer is left, but my mouth is dumb with grief.

All mothers of the World, and Christians, I request your prayers, your defence and help; young Timofei, an orphan yet with a living mother, stretches out his child's hands to you.

The Holy Trinity in Russian Spirituality

The deep stream of Russian spirituality continues to inspire the faithful in the USSR. A channel into this stream was provided by a recent article (and particularly by its footnotes) in the official Church publication, The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate No. 1, 1975 (pp. 63-80). Written by Archbishop Pitirim of Volokolamsk and entitled "The Church as the Realization of the Trinitarian Oikonomy", this article was originally presented as a report to the Uppsala conference, "Church Days - 74", held from 30 August-3 September, 1974. The extract printed below consists chiefly of footnotes, but these offer the reader many riches.

A live perception of the Triune God was natural to the Russian religious consciousness from the very beginning. It is reflected not only in the rich liturgical inheritance of the Russian Orthodox Church, common to all Eastern Orthodoxy, but in the characteristic national features of the Russian ecclesiastical consciousness. In ancient *Lives of Saints*, which was the favourite reading matter and practically the only means of spiritually educating the people, an important place is occupied by theological talks on the triune nature of God. Despite their abstractness they penetrated deeply the consciousness of the Russian Christian and moulded him. One of the oldest Russian sayings claims that "without the Trinity even a house cannot be built".

The Life-Giving Trinity and Its revelation in the life of the Church and the world is a perpetual theme referred to by Russian hierarchs and ascetics in their homilies and meditations. Right at the origin of Russian Orthodoxy, St. Olga, Equal to the Apostles (†969) "illuminated by the Triune light", was deemed worthy of seeing the Holy Trinity. In the territory of Pskov, closely bound at the time with the Scandinavian countries, the first Russian church in honour of the Triune God was built.¹ Four centuries later, at the turning point in the history of Russia, when she was suffering under the Tartar-Mongolian yoke as well as internal strife, and was gathering strength for the struggle against them, St. Sergii of Radonezh († 1392) founded the monastery of the Life-Giving Trinity to serve "as a mirror for those gathered by him to live together as one", and for all Russia "that by contemplating the Holy Trinity the fear of the hateful strife in the world be overcome".² The spiritual and patriotic activities of St. Sergii and his monastery constituted the turning point in the political and spiritual life of Russia. Another great saint of Russia, through whose zeal and labour "the Orthodox advocates of the Holy Trinity made comprehensible the Orthodox Christian faith" to the people threatened by the swiftly spreading aggressive