

laws, although this is not stated openly in the sermons . . . In the Bible are the words: 'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword', which is an indirect refusal to take an oath of allegiance . . ."

The Procurator asked for five years deprivation of freedom for Fedotov. Moreover, he demanded that criminal proceedings be instituted against the witnesses P. I. Pyzhkov, M. I. Smirnova and A. I. Smirnova for refusal to testify.

In his defence speech, Fedotov repudiated membership of the "Shaker-Pentecostal" group. "When I arrived in Maloyaroslavets, I did not organize an underground group, but came to the prayer-house. Everyone witnessed there that the presbyter set me beside him and I preached the word of God, but later, out of envy and malicious jealousy, he expelled me . . . I am a believing Christian and have never hidden myself; representatives of the authorities came to us and were present at the services. I do not harm the health of citizens. All the children who were present were children of believing parents and they had become believers before they came to me." He also repudiated the charges under other articles. In his final speech also, Ivan Fedotov denied his guilt and asked the court to take into account that his old mother, who did not receive a pension, a sick aunt, his brother, an invalid of the first group, and his wife were dependent on him, and that "as the Procurator asked for five years strict regime under article 227, and as I am not guilty, he should limit my sentence and replace the five years strict regime with five years exile."

The court sentenced Fedotov to three years in a corrective labour colony, strict regime. At the end of May the court of appeal confirmed the sentence.

Georgian Believer Sentenced

On 23 March, 1974 Mrs. Valentina Pailodze, a 50-year-old conductor of church choirs, was arrested. She is a member of the Georgian Orthodox Church and claims that she was arrested because of her active part in the movement against corruption in that branch of the Church. She was tried in June 1974 and sentenced to one and a half years for the anonymous writing of letters which allegedly slandered the Soviet State and also infringed citizens' rights by imposing religion on them. The following extract is taken from an article entitled "Rewarded according to her deserts" which appeared in Molodezh Gruzii of 10 December, 1974 (p. 4). The writer begins by talking to some of those gathered outside the court.

"The accused, Valentina Serapionovna Pailodze, proved to be a completely normal person," began the psychiatrist. "Moreover, she possesses an exceptional memory. 136 letters, and every one with surname, name and patronymic, address . . ."

"To whom were they addressed?" I said, not giving in.

"Well, to all of us - writers, scholars, students, procurators, judges. Surely you don't want to enumerate all of them! There they were as witnesses."

Meanwhile the guilty party in this confusion, Valentina Pailodze, a woman of advanced years, was sitting in the dock and cordially greeting all the people entering the court-room.

"Accused Pailodze! What were you trying to gain by your slanders on our life, science and morals?" questioned the judge.

"I was summoning everyone into the bosom of the Church."

"In your letters you were stirring up nationalist sentiments."

"I was standing up for the Georgian autocephalous Church."

Pailodze wrote to scholars, writers, Party members, members of Soviets, Komsomol workers, teachers, students . . . What was she trying to gain? What was she asking for, demanding? What was she reporting? The court's verdict recorded as follows: "She systematically circulated false information defaming the Soviet State and society, she conducted propaganda against Soviet authority . . ." The charge was more than serious. But Pailodze did not consider herself guilty.

"I believe, and my faith is my justification."

You don't need to simplify it, comrade, you don't need to think condescendingly that Valentina Pailodze is a woman and a profound believer and limit your interpretation of her behaviour to that. I personally have nothing against the law on freedom of conscience, but one must remember that in our country the Church is separated from the State. Therefore freedom of conscience as we understand it means freedom to perform religious rites in one's church or one's community, but in no way does it mean propaganda, whether in verbal or written form.

Appeal for Valentina Pailodze

In 1974 an Initiative Group for the Defence of Human Rights was formed in Tbilisi (Georgia). Some of its members, Z. Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava and O. Tsikolia wrote the following letter to Academician I. R. Shafarevich, member of the Soviet Human Rights Committee (formed in 1970), and asked him to speak out in defence of Valentina Pailodze. This document appeared in Radio Liberty's "Samizdat Archive", series No. A.S. 2105. It is undated but was probably not written before 17 July, 1974.

To Academician I. R. Shafarevich

We want to inform you about certain details of the case of V. S. Pailodze, sentenced for "circulation of knowingly false fabrications which defame the Soviet system" and "religious propaganda with infringement of person and rights of citizens". [Valentina Serapionovna Pailodze was sentenced on 26 June 1974 to one year six months in labour camp, ordinary regime.] To Valentina Pailodze are attributed 136 anonymous letters which were sent to various institutions in Tbilisi over a period of four years (although her authorship was not proved by the court, see *The Chronicle of Current Events* No. 32). These letters are in their own way appeals of a religio-political nature. For the most part they contain a description of the situation of Georgia, which in the opinion of the author is oppressed by Russian great-power chauvinism, masked by communist slogans. The author con-