

"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 régime.] 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-

siders the Soviet system and the Communist Party to be the outcome of a Satanic force of evil and calls on people not to labour under any delusions, not to be deceived and not to join the Party, the Komsomol or the Pioneers. She calls on those who are already members to leave their ranks. The author regards Georgia as a colony of Russia and points to these dangers of russification and loss of freedom and originality which are threatening the Georgian people, Georgian culture and the Georgian Church. She holds up to shame the renegades who serve the interests of great-power imperialism in the search for a career and honours.

However, references to Valentina Pailodze in the Georgian Soviet press completely conceal the fact that she is a political prisoner. With the aim of confusing the people, she is declared to be an ordinary anonymous author, a parasite, etc., who has also engaged in political provocations.

Recently a woman investigator from the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) called Julietta (her surname is not known) visited Valentina Pailodze in labour camp and offered to release her from the camp if she would agree to work in Rustavi (a metallurgical town near Tbilisi) and live in Dzhandara. (Dzhandara is a settlement in the Azerbaïdzhani desert, 50 kilometres from Tbilisi, a shady, out-of-the-way place where murders, robberies and various crimes occur frequently.) The authorities' black design is as clear as day: the "accidental murder" of Valentina Pailodze could take place most easily of all precisely in Dzhandara! However, Valentina Pailodze refused such a "favour". She also refused to appeal for a pardon so that her sentence would be reduced by half (she was sentenced to a year and a half).

We appeal to you, as a tireless fighter for the right to profess religion, to defend Valentina Pailodze, a deeply religious person, and a true patriot of her homeland, and to demand for her the status of a political prisoner.

The Action Group for the Defence of Human Rights,
Z. Gamsakhurdia, M. Kostava, O. Tsikolia.

The Roman Catholic Church and Polish Youth

The Soviet anti-religious journal, Nauka i Religia ("Science and Religion") No. 5, 1975 (pp. 85-90) in an article entitled "A Programme of Education", described the achievements of atheist education in Poland. The results from a number of surveys on religious belief and observance among young Poles are given in the following extracts.

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The Catholic Church, which by force of a series of historical conditions has until now preserved its influence over a significant section of the population, is also attempting to exert an influence on Polish young people.

Church ideologues are aware that the strengthening of the educational system, the development of science and the improvement in the organization of popular education will in the last analysis lead to the ousting of religion from the consciousness of the rising generation. The opposition of the Catholic Church to this