

attempt to put into practice the resolution of the Georgian government to "fight against detrimental traditions", to "fight against survivals of the past", etc. One needs no great perspicacity to see what is the target of this battle. *Under the pretext of a war against harmful traditions, they have begun to attack religion with renewed strength, that religion which has protected us until this day.* They have begun a battle with a creed which has penetrated the worthy sons of Georgia to the very marrow of their bones; they have begun a battle against Christ and Christianity, in whose name the Georgian warriors defended their national identity, their culture and fatherland. Surely they were not superstitious, those who created Svetitskhoveli, Dzshvari, Alaverdi, Kintsvisi, Nikortsminda, the

unique frescoes of Vardzi and David-Garedzhi, and our rich hagiographical literature and magnificent choral tradition?

Surely Rustaveli, author of "Vityazya of the Tigerskin", was not superstitious? If this is not so, then why is this same creed now called superstition, and opposed? Why such a struggle to uproot from man that which helped create such a unique culture?

The war against religion is also a war against the culture which embodies it; it is also a war against the past, since the sources of culture lie in past ages. Without the past there is no present and no future.

TEIMURAZ DZHANALIDZE

(teacher)

## Prison Thoughts of Nijole Sadunaite

*Nijole Sadunaite, a young Lithuanian woman, was sentenced (under Art. 68 of the Lithuanian Criminal Code) on 17 June 1975, to three years in a labour camp for helping to produce and distribute the samizdat journal, the Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church (CLCC). She is 39. The CLCC began to appear in 1972 and Nijole Sadunaite was involved from the beginning. In November 1973 the KGB decided to track down those who were producing it. Nijole Sadunaite was arrested on 27 August 1974. According to the transcript of her trial (16-17 June 1975) in CLCC No. 17, she stated in her final speech: "I am being tried for the Chronicle, which is a protest against the physical and spiritual tyranny to which my people are being subjected. This means I am being tried because I love the people and want the truth." The following extracts from her letters, written in prison, appeared in CLCC No. 23.*

[...] I am grateful to those by whose efforts I find myself here. I have learned much, experienced much and all of it is to my benefit. The Good Lord truly knows best what I need.

[...]

In six days it will be half a year since I was transported from Vilnius, but it all seems so recent, as though it were yesterday. And everything stands before my eyes – my guard of "honour", my fellow victims of fate, of whom there were many (all being criminals) and only I was a political prisoner; the final farewell glance at the town or, more accurately, the platform, and all the romance of the journey which is indescribable, for one has to experience it oneself to be able to experience life and understand the need and value of love. I have the opportunity to live through that romantic journey a second time – when I'm taken to be deported. This you can only envy me although it is not necessary – all this is not for people with your health.

And how good it is that the small craft of my life is being steered by the hand of the good Father. When He is at the tiller – nothing is to be feared. Then, no matter how difficult life may be, you will know how to resist and love. And I can say that the year 1975 has flown by like a flash but that year is my joy. I thank the good Lord for it.

[...]

There is not a great deal of dust in our section although the material from

which we sew the gloves is dusty with glass powder. The work is oppressive with its monotony, and frequent mechanical defects add to this – patience is needed. The mechanic does not come every day and one often has to wait until he does his repairs, but the norm does not wait for us ... [It is necessary to produce 70 pairs of gloves in a day. *Ed.*]

[..]

I came back from hospital on 3 March. Finally, it seems, I shall be well and on my feet again. Your diagnosis is the most accurate – a great loss of strength. My “holiday” lasted a longish time: from 18 October when I began it. I only worked six days in November, spent the whole of December in the hospital and only at its end did I sew for four days. I divided January into two – I worked one half and not the other. For February and the first three days of March, I was in hospital. I now sew a little, at intervals; whenever I feel weak, I go into the yard to enjoy the fresh air and sun. I complete my norm because we work a single shift. I can begin sewing at 6 a.m. and finish at 10 p.m. In this way everything is going excellently at present. Everyone likes me

and I try to return this. I am fortunate and content.

[..]

We have a lot of old women and sick people and I, therefore, rejoice that I have been brought here in accordance with my calling – to nurse and love. And although I long greatly to see you all, it will be hard for me to leave here. It will be distressing to leave people who have become so near and dear to me, but the good Lord does indeed care for us most of all [..]

[..]

I receive letters not only from acquaintances but also from those whom I have never met. I am so moved by people's desire to help in any way possible. How much feeling and sincerity there is in people's hearts. How encouraging this all is, how it raises one's spirit and stimulates one to be better, to be worthy of that great love.

[..]

Ten girls from Kaunas write: “We are with you and intercede for you with God. Do not give way! All that is earthly can be borne by people of great spirit. Best wishes from our nation!”

## Russian Orthodox Prisoners: Camp Conditions

*Many samizdat documents describing the treatment of Russian Baptists in prison have been received in the West. It is unusual to receive a document dealing with some of the problems facing Russian Orthodox believers in the camps. Below we print extracts from such a document entitled, “The story of Ye. I. Pashnin-Speransky”.*

I find it very painful to write about what has been the theme of my earthly life, but seeing how those of my faith suffer torment in prisons and camps, I cannot remain silent. Between 1972 and 1975 officials of the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) in camp No. ZhKh 385/19, in the Mordovian Republic, repeatedly confiscated from me a prayer-book, an Orthodox Calendar, the four Gospels (according to John, Luke,

Matthew and Mark), and Metropolitan Makari's *Extracts from Orthodox Dogma*. When I asked why they continually confiscated the above-mentioned religious literature, and forbade the holding of services, an official at camp No. ZhKh 385/19, Vorobyev, replied at the end of May 1975, “Prisoners are forbidden to possess literature of this type, even if it is handwritten”. He made no reference to any article of the law to substantiate his prohibition. On 10 June 1975 I felt compelled to begin a hunger-strike to demand the return of a handwritten prayer-book, so that I could say prayers at the appropriate times. On 12 June 1975, the second day of the hunger-strike, a senior official of the camp, Kiselev, gave me back my prayer-book and I broke off the fast. [..]