

such a way as to present the Church and its leaders in an unfavourable light. We ourselves have come up against this attitude when *The Times* refused my request to publish a certain document. Likewise, when the new Exarch of Western Europe, Metropolitan Nikodim, asked the newspaper *Russkaya Mysl* to publish his pastoral letter addressed to his flock in Western Europe, the paper refused to do so. We also hear that in the religious broadcasts of the BBC to the Soviet Union, events in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church are either not fully reported, or distorted. This deprives the Christians and the broad public circles in those countries, where they listen to your broadcasts and read your papers, of the possibility of having a complete picture of Church life, of the spiritual and devotional life which brings blessing to our believers.

This would be understandable if Church events in the West and in the Soviet Union were treated alike. Unfortunately, this is not what we see. Let me quote one instance: in his letter to the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Solzhenitsyn stated that it was strange how Church organizations and Church institutions could allow such a degree of hostility as to forbid fellowship between the representatives of the Church Abroad and the Russian Orthodox Church (or, as we are often called, "the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate"); to this Metropolitan Filaret (of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) replied that such things do not happen, even though we know that written instructions to this effect have been published. Nevertheless, this sad state of things was not mentioned by any newspapers, nor broadcast over the BBC.

In one broadcast there was a discussion in which various views were expressed as to what would be the policies of the new Exarch of Western Europe. I feel that his two pastoral letters – the first published on the Feast of the Icon of Our Lady of the Sign, 10 December, 1974, and the second last Christmas – speak for themselves in testifying to the spirit in which he began his term of office. I would like to answer these questioning remarks with the words of that first letter in which Metropolitan Nikodim says: "In addressing myself to those who at this time find themselves separated from us in the homeland, I wish to say that I regard with love the faithful children of the Mother Church, and that I look with love also on those who may not wish to receive my blessing or my brotherly kiss in Christ, for I believe and hope that the hardness of heart, which still persists, will pass away sooner or later."

People are often perplexed: why do we not answer every accusation, every harsh word? To that we can only say that our basic aim, as we see it, is to lead our faithful children in the ways of salvation: that our Church was, is, and will remain with her people, blessing their labours, working out their salvation. And I would like everyone everywhere to remember that what today exists in the Russian Orthodox Church – what our friends and brothers in the West rejoice over, what even those who are perhaps unsympathetic to us must mention when speaking of religious life – is a spiritual revival; and that this has been the priceless achievement of the humble and unknown pastors of the Church who have devoted their whole lives to the service of Christ and His Church.

## Harassment of Pentecostals

*Michael Rowe's article (pp. 16-18) gives some background to the following Pentecostal documents from the USSR. Like other denominations, the Pentecostals suffered in the 1920s and 1930s. But in 1945 when they accepted the AUCECB*

*(All Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists) as their governing body, they were able to obtain registration as part of the ECB congregations and so meet legally. However, many Pentecostals wish to be recognized as a separate body from the ECB Church. Many, like the Initiativniki, also feel that they cannot, as Christians, accept the State's demand for registration. The authorities are clearly treating some Pentecostal groups with extreme severity.*

*From the Information Service of the Pentecostal Movement (ISPM)*

URGENT COMMUNICATION

(Concerning events in the town of Kaluga on 4 August 1974. Drawn up on the basis of declarations by fellow-believers; photos appended.)

The *Information Service of the Pentecostal Movement in the USSR (ISPM)* has received several declarations from fellow-believers about the crude actions of the authorities on 4 August 1974 in Kaluga at ul. Stepnaya 5, where a Christian wedding was to be held that Sunday. On the basis of the declarations sent to us we will try to describe what happened as fully and logically as possible. (We also append the photographs given to us.)

The wedding was due to take place at a private house, the address indicated above. About 9 a.m. a policeman (sergeant) appeared at the gates and stood there by the entrance. After some time some more police appeared, led by a (divisional) captain, and four men in plainclothes, acting in an aggressive and provocative manner. The local pastor, Ivan Petrovich Fedotov, was forced to stand by the gates to prevent the guests being mistreated as they arrived. By this time these guardians of law and order had surrounded the house. Three policemen sat down in the garden, while two plainclothes men asked guests for their identity papers and wrote down details. They only allowed the believers through into the yard, no one was allowed back on to the street.

To avoid confronting the police, having their papers copied and being threatened, the Christian guests (mostly young people) began to move into the house. But the two plainclothes men, who acted like KGB workers (see photo), came into the house and declared the service that was about to be held on the occasion of the wedding, to be illegal. With mocking laughter, one of them said that anyway believers had to have the permission of the Soviet authorities every time they wanted to pray. We should add that during the conversation in the house where the Christians were, one of them pointedly omitted to remove his hat, which may be seen as a deliberate insult to the believers feelings. The guests replied that their service was in order both according to the Holy Scriptures and according to the Constitution. Despite the threats and the attempt on the part of the "guardians of law and order" (what a paradox) to disrupt order, all the believers began to pray, upon which the plainclothes men went outside. During all this, the policeman continued to stand at the gates (see photo). Going outside, the plainclothes men began to threaten the guests who had not yet managed to get in or had only just arrived and to write down their names (see photo from the window). Then they asked them to disperse.

The service began at about noon. At the same time, to frighten the believers, pointed "reinforcements" began to arrive for the KGB men: a police van GAZ-59

drove up, also a police bus and four large police cars. More police and plainclothes men got out. Police side-cars drove up from the other end of the street and parked some distance away behind some bushes.

Soon the atheists disturbed the orderly course of the service (to put it plainly: committed sacrilege) by coming into the yard and the first room of the house shouting crudely: "Stop the sermons! We're fed up waiting! Let the elder come out quick!" In face of this, the man who was preaching just then had to stop his sermon and call everyone to prayer. The believers began to pray. During this the plainclothes men (the ones on the photo) pushed through the believers and came up almost to the table at the front shouting: "Stop praying!" But the Christians continued to pray until they had finished of their own accord. Afterwards the plainclothes man at the front (on the photo: the one with the badge, obviously the senior one) told them loudly: "in the name of the Soviet authorities" to stop the service and to disperse, after an official statement had been drawn up. The preachers and the local pastor replied that actions like this by the atheists contradicted the constitution and that it would have repercussions for them. Seeing the unity and unshakeable determination of the guests (more than 250 people), the persecutors were forced to go out again, not knowing what to do.

Some time later a car drew up and a police colonel got out. He was holding a camera, with which the plainclothes men tried to photograph the believers outside the house. When one Christian pointed a camera at them, they covered their faces (see photo). Then four of the plainclothes men demanded that the brother who was taking photographs should expose his film and come out to the street with them. Only the assistance of other believers prevented them doing this, although physical force was used on him: two plainclothes men pulled him by the arms, another pushed a red identity card in his face (without opening it of course) and another tried to take his camera.

The atheists succeeded in disturbing and stopping the service five times in all. Believers asked them repeatedly to give their names, but the anonymous "representatives of authority" – police and plainclothes men – refused. Some people who had gone into a neighbour's house to listen at the open windows were diligently chased away by the "guardians of law and order". A policeman with a megaphone walked up and down past the windows. He was "helped" by other police and plainclothes men . . . Nevertheless one passer-by not only heard the sermon and the singing, but began to sob and said that he now believed in God. He asked them to let him into the yard. But the police immediately put him in a car and drove him away. Seeing the lamentable results of their "confrontation" with the believers, the atheists sent in a drunken hooligan, who swore using unprintable words, even in front of children, and flew at the guests with his fists. But the atheists forgot one thing, that a drunk lets everything out. From his half-witted sentences it was at least obvious that he had not come deliberately to "disperse" them.

After a necessarily shortened service of prayer, the wedding began, during which time the official for religious cults for Kaluga Region arrived. He entered the house with two plainclothes men. This time they watched in silence. Incidentally, his was the only name that wasn't concealed. After the wedding, outside the house, he tried to act "benevolent" towards the believers. What he said boiled down to the fact that permission for the wedding should have been obtained from the authorities two weeks in advance. They asked him whether non-believers had to get permission for weddings; he answered: "It's different with you". He went on to say:

"You'll be persecuted as long as you hide . . . We'll punish you for not registering" . . . "Conditions" of the famous "state registration" — that was what he called the demands of atheists which *directly and openly* contradict the New Testament, and to which not a single sincere Christian of the Evangelical Faith could deliberately give assent. (We will come back to these points and demands several times and in more detail later; they are sufficiently widely known through the materials of the ECB *Initsiativniki* movement.) Then there followed another warning from the "benefactor": "if you don't comply, we will punish you even more" to which one brother replied: "That's nothing new." Yes, to the Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) in the USSR, this is nothing new! If the ECB *Initsiativniki* movement, stepping out on the gospel path of truth and spiritual struggle against all flouting of Christian freedom of confession, has experienced the persecution of the atheists for 13 years, the out-and-out persecution against Pentecostals in the USSR has not ceased since the 30s. As a movement and as a Church we have been declared by the godless wholly "outside the law".

These events in Kaluga took place in the presence of Christian guests from 11 large towns of the USSR. For this reason alone believers all over the country are getting to know what has happened. We too, working in the ISPM, cannot be silent about this event which has been referred to in several declarations by our fellow-believers. This event *must* be given adequate coverage in international circles for the defence of human rights. Joining our voices to those of our fellow-believers, the ISPM declares that the events in Kaluga are *no more than one episode* in a chain of unceasing persecutions and repressions against sincere Christians in general, and Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) in particular. The Stalinist policy of eradicating "pernicious sectarianism" is being actively pursued by the atheists of today.

While speaking of the recent events in Kaluga, we want to mention a few other things too. The lawless actions of the atheists on 4 August are far from an isolated instance even in that region. The local pastor, Ivan Petrovich Fedotov, who has already served ten years in the camps on an absurd charge of "trying to make a human sacrifice" as anti-Soviet propaganda, is still being insulted and persecuted. In the last two years alone his family (he, his wife and mother-in-law) has paid 450 roubles in fines for taking part in "illegal services". A legal reprisal is again being prepared against this brave preacher and noble soul.

When the atheists take down names at prayer meetings, they spare neither old nor young, and levy a "standard" 50 rouble fine per person for being present at such meetings in a private house. They regard the lowering of the fine for some believers to 30 roubles as a special "favour". One old woman, who received such a miserable pension that already she only just managed to feed herself, and that with the help of the believers, was fined what amounted to more than two months' pension. One of the atheists said with a laugh: "Don't worry, granny. America will pay for you anyhow . . .!"

The mockery of the atheists goes on. Pentecostal believers experience continual discrimination. Preachers are under constant threat of legal reprisals. May this report sound one more alarm, calling international public opinion to take at least some action against the out-and-out persecution in the USSR against the Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals).