

national people (John 17:15 and Rom. 9:3).

As we continue along our earthly path, let us value the time and be quick to do good to all people, putting into practice the great commandment of Christ to love one another and to be one (Matt. 5:48).

The great feast of Easter is approaching. With joy and exultation in our hearts we greet all the children of God with the words:

CHRIST IS RISEN. CHRIST IS RISEN.
CHRIST IS RISEN.

March, 1977

Moscow, USSR

Soviet Weekly Attacks Four Churchmen

The Soviet weekly, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, printed an article entitled "Freedom of Religion and the Slanderers" which appeared on 13 and 20 April, 1977. It attacked four well-known members of the Russian Orthodox Church: Alexander Ogorodnikov (see also RCL Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 45-47), Fr. Gleb Yakunin, Lev Regelson (see also RCL Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 9 & No. 4, p. 9) and Fr. Dmitri Dudko (see also RCL Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 21-31). The article was written by Boris Roshchin. We print below an abridged translation of it.

Previously such attacks in the pages of *Literaturnaya gazeta* have heralded the arrest of the individuals referred to, and the threat of arrest is made very clear in this article, particularly in the case of Fr. Gleb Yakunin and Lev Regelson. In the sentence on p. 189, "In every article, in every letter of Yakunin, Regelson and company there are knowingly false fabrications defaming the Soviet system, the Soviet State (our emphasis) and the Soviet people", the words emphasized correspond almost

exactly to Art. 190/1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code, which provides for up to three years' imprisonment.

Roshchin, the author of the article, descends to the level of a bitter personal attack. For example, he states that Fr. Yakunin was dismissed from the Moscow Seminary "for indecent behaviour", but does not offer any substantiation for this accusation. He states that Lev Regelson and his wife have not worked for some years "and do not want to work". In fact Regelson lost his job some years ago because he did not hide his religious convictions, and has been unable to find work since. He therefore has no means of support for his wife and five children. But this does not prevent Roshchin criticizing him for receiving, quite legally, from the West "about a thousand roubles" (£900) a year. Roshchin even reproduces a private letter from Regelson to an American citizen (p. 189) although Art. 128 of the (old) Constitution of the USSR states that "secrecy of correspondence (is) protected by law".

Regularly certain Western newspapers and radio stations loudly publicize "facts about the persecution of religion" which, they say, is taking place in the Soviet Union. [...]

We could probably just laugh at all this, if it were not that in the newspaper articles and radio broadcasts figure the names of specific people, to whom measures of forcible "atheist re-education" have allegedly been applied, names of people who have undergone "repression" solely for their faith in God. [...]

The Western press, as is well known, prides itself on its freedom. In the

present case this has turned out to be a freedom from the norms accepted in the civilized world. One of these norms, by which decent people are usually guided, is formulated by jurists in this way: the burden of proof rests with the prosecution. In other words, it is not Soviet institutions which are obliged to justify themselves and prove that they do not persecute people "for faith in Christ". On the contrary, those circles which are making such accusations, the editors of a series of newspapers and radio stations in the West, must prove the justice of their assertions. There are no exceptions to this rule, neither in this case, when

the absurdity of the facts quoted stares one in the face, nor in cases when the facts seem to be plausible. [...]

"A trusted person"

Obviously there are people ("trusted people" as they are called somewhere in the West), whose word is extremely authoritative for certain information agencies.

In a letter published in the Western press, one of them presents himself to the world briefly and expressively: "Alexander Ogorodnikov, the Russian Orthodox Church". The details follow: he is 26 years old, three years ago he "found God" and soon began, together with "friends who had also come by this path to the Church", to hold "religious-philosophical seminars". Ogorodnikov prepared for these seminars in a suitably scientific way: in his own words he was "expelled from the third year of the scenario-film faculty of the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography" – expelled, naturally, "for his religious convictions", although he was "an excellent student, and because of this was given a higher grant". This is what Ogorodnikov himself asserts, and this "fact" has also figured more than once in articles and broadcasts about "the repression of faith in the USSR". And once again there is no evidence to support this stupid accusation. Indeed where could one get hold of it, this evidence, if the heads of the institute did not have the slightest suspicion of Ogorodnikov's religious convictions! This is the reference found in the Procuracy and signed by Prof. V. N. Zhdan, Doctor of art criticism: the assertion that A. Ogorodnikov was dismissed allegedly for his religious views "bears absolutely no relation to reality. Ogorodnikov's religious convictions did not reveal themselves in any way while he was at the institute. Ogorodnikov's assertion that he allegedly received a Lenin Scholarship is also false. He was an extremely undisciplined student, systematically missed classes without significant reasons and did not take examinations in a number of subjects. In view of the fact that Ogorodnikov not only did not draw the proper conclusions, but also, in essence, curtailed his classes at the institute, the rector was obliged to

dismiss him as a student 'for failing to take examinations within the period established by the dean's office, and missing classes without significant reasons' (order no. 678 of 26 October 1973)".

[...] By what "path" did they "come to the Church", these people whom Ogorodnikov calls his friends? He found various approaches to them: by giving them a slanderous book received illegally from abroad to read ("Do you want to know what it was all really like? Only don't show anyone."), or by pretending to be "your" man, who sympathises from his heart with your adversities and abuses those who don't understand the needs of your soul, or he would begin to praise your lofty qualities, inaccessible to those around you. ... This is how the web is woven, so that you don't notice that you are beginning to speak with his words and look at things around you with his eyes. Some recollected themselves in time, others too late – they had already been drawn into the shady game. "Ogorodnikov is an unscrupulous cheat who entices innocent people into his game", said Sergei Rostuntsev, who had previously considered Ogorodnikov "a true friend".

In the above-mentioned "letter", which was taken up by reactionary propaganda, Ogorodnikov wrote: "Seryozha (familiar form of Sergei – Tr.) Shuvalov, a student at the Bashkir University, underwent persecution for his religious convictions and was forced to abandon his studies."

We give the floor to Sergei Shuvalov himself, who realized, albeit belatedly, into what intrigues "quiet and educated" Ogorodnikov was leading him.

What can I say about Ogorodnikov? I became convinced that he does not believe in God nor the devil and is morally a completely dissolute person. He doesn't work anywhere and leads, I would say, a parasitical way of life. Speaking bluntly, he is a swine, if I can't put it more rudely. Last autumn the Voice of America broadcast a letter of his, in which I heard a reference to myself. He says that I was expelled from the Bashkir University for my "religious convictions". I was outraged at his base action. You know, we haven't seen each other for

more than a year, so where did he get all that from? And the Voice of America is a fine one, allowing itself to do a thing like that. The fact is that I did attend the Geography Faculty of the University from 1973 to 1976, but in May I was forced to leave because of illness, and, to tell the truth, also by my own wish. After recovering I entered another higher educational institute and am now studying further. I wrote a letter about all this to the same address as Ogorodnikov, but I think the Voice of America didn't broadcast it. Perhaps it was because I asked how anyone could persecute me for my faith if I don't have any "religious convictions", if I'm an unbeliever? But this is not just lies on the part of Ogorodnikov and the Voice of America, but some kind of provocation.

Even Ogorodnikov's own brother, Boris, today the "hieromonk Rafael", would not agree to confirm the assertions of reactionary Western propaganda to the effect that he had been "expelled from the Moscow Steel and Alloys Institute" and later dismissed from work, too. In his letter which today is in the Procuracy, he states:

I do not agree with this statement and consider that my brother's assertions are incorrect. In 1973 I studied at the Moscow Steel and Alloys Institute, which I left at my own wish. . . . and did not suffer any kind of persecution in doing so. In 1974 I entered the Moscow Seminary, and, not having finished there through competition, expressed a desire to join the brotherhood of the Pskov Monastery of the Caves as a novice. . . . From what I have said it emerges that my brother's statement is incorrect.

[...] No, the "comrades" won't follow Ogorodnikov.

A disgraced prophet, he doesn't give up

[...] One of the names best known to Western guardians of "human rights" in the USSR is that of Gleb Yakunin. It is he who is eulogized by the clamorous "defenders of religious freedom". It is he who circulates abroad articles – sometimes his own, sometimes with two

signatures, his own and Regelson's – which it would be more accurate to call lampoons on Soviet reality. It is he who sends letters with his claims to the organs of the Soviet authorities (with a copy to the West) – not in order to attract attention to actual shortcomings or omissions, but simply to attract attention to himself.

[...]

In contrast to Ogorodnikov, Yakunin was at least able to graduate from an agricultural institute, and even worked for about a year as a huntsman. But after a few months he grew bored with catching wild animals: he thought it more advantageous to catch men's souls. Yakunin threw up his work and got himself fixed up in the Moscow Seminary. However, he was not able to study there for long – he was soon dismissed for indecent behaviour. Yakunin did not lose heart and, mobilising his acquaintances, got himself work in one of the Moscow churches. After a time he was even able to gain the rank of priest.

However, the cassock of a minister preaching only the word of God in time became too tight for Yakunin. He decided to become a prophet at once, all the more so since no special education was needed. Had the first baptists and apostles completed seminary courses? It is true that his first attempts to "lead" and "guide" crowds of disciples were a fiasco. So he began to foretell "the end of the world" and terrible catastrophes as a result of which general anarchy, chaos and the fall of "the godless order", that is, the Soviet system, would begin. As proof he quoted the holy scripture and the testimonies of Christian seers. A few days before the appointed time, Yakunin called all "true Christians" to abandon their work, homes and families and go off to New Athos. Only there, on the holy mountain of Athos, went Yakunin's rhetoric, could salvation be found. Alas, only about a dozen people set off after the "prophet" to New Athos. Having stayed there a few days, until after the "end of the World", they quietly slipped back home . . .¹

[...]

Among Yakunin's close friends was one Krasnov-Levitin, sentenced in 1971 for a crime stipulated in the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. Today Levitin has

found himself a refuge in Switzerland and finds work in émigré publications and in Radio Liberty, where he is considered a "distinguished church figure". This "specialist" has begun to create publicity for Yakunin. The latter has quickly re-qualified as a commentator on current affairs. Now at every excuse, and often without an excuse, he sends to the West his essays, in which he ceaselessly slanders the Soviet system and extols his own merits in the "struggle with the forces of evil", in the "open opposition" to the goddess. And he calls "godless" not only atheists, but also those people who, although they believe in God, do not admit Yakunin and company to be their spiritual apostles. In a word, Yakunin and company consider the overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens to be their enemies. In their letter [see *RCL* Vol. 4, No. 4 *Ed.*] addressed to the World Council of Churches (as usual, this letter found its way beforehand to the editors of certain Western newspapers), Yakunin and the second signatory, Lev Regelson, "a member of the Russian Orthodox Church" without false modesty compared themselves with those who "bore their cross to Golgotha, humiliated and profaned by men". Humiliation rather than pride!

In this letter the authors "analyse" Soviet legislation for 26 pages and demand intervention from outside in order to "change" our laws, our form of law and order and, consequently, our system. To Yakunin and company the present moment seems most appropriate to summon alien forces to intervene in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.

The more you eat, the bigger your appetite grows. Yakunin and Regelson so liked discussing on a global scale what should be and what should not be that they sent a telegram - to all the Catholics of Portugal [sic: the original letter is entitled "To Christians of Portugal"] in which they "implored" (their own phrase) them not to create a revolution, not to change the good old ways. We must suppose that now on every occasion - for example, before elections - Yakunin and company will send their guiding directions to the citizens of other countries.

All this would be simply laughable were it not for one thing. In every article, in every letter of Yakunin,

Regelson and company there are knowingly false fabrications defaming the Soviet system, the Soviet State and the Soviet people. Yakunin and company compose, duplicate and circulate these fabrications by all the means available to them. This goes beyond the concept of civic freedoms and rights (if by human rights we understand exactly what they signify) and is a punishable act.

An excellent capacity for business

We have already mentioned Lev Lvovich Regelson. This name is not altogether unfamiliar to the Soviet reader. *Uchitelskaya gazeta* (*Teachers' Newspaper*) reported several years ago the profound tragedy which ruined the life of Lidia K. The cause of the tragedy was the meeting of this inexperienced girl,² who had come to the capital to enter an institute and failed her examinations, with the ingratiating, well-mannered and "sensitive" engineer Regelson. Within a short time he was able to make her into his obedient slave. This was the aim of his "education in Christ".

Today Lev Regelson advertises himself in the West in the capacity of a most principled Christian, a convinced fighter for "freedom of religion", a bearer of Christian ideas. But no, his thoughts are not of religion ...

[...]

One day the following unpleasant incident took place, we were told in the Procuracy, with Ogorodnikov, whom we have already discussed. Since he and two or three others were on official premises late one evening, militia officers asked them to show their documents. Fumbling through his pockets, Ogorodnikov dropped a letter onto the floor. A militia man noticed this.

"Is that yours?"

"No it's not mine," Orogodnikov replied rather fearfully.

It turned out that it really was not his. In the letter were written the following words:

USA, San Francisco, Jackson Street
3456, H. S. Dakin.

Dear Mr. Dakin!

I was very glad to receive letter No. 13 from you. Once again I can mention with pleasure that I am deeply

moved by your attention to all my suggestions and wishes. The thoroughness and precision of your actions speaks of the sincerity of your interest and of your excellent capacity for business. I received the letter from Peter Barchuk, the Director of Standard Parcel Services – I hope that we can win this game, making use of the negligence of the Soviet financial organs.³ At the present moment I am quite ready for the publication of the first section of my essays, on current affairs (together with Fr. Gleb Yakunin). The appearance of such a collection in English in the shortest possible time is highly desirable. I give you full powers to conduct all negotiations and sign contracts in my name, in accordance with the practice accepted in the West for such publications. I append to this letter an official request to you, signed also by Fr. Yakunin and myself, to conduct negotiations with publishers and subsequent matters to do with publishing contracts.

Yours sincerely,

LEV REGELSON

These “martyrs, bearing their Cross to Golgotha” have turned out to be arch wheeler-dealers! The hero of the fable who could squeeze water out of a stone is a mere infant compared to them! There is naturally no information in the Moscow Procuracy as to whether these wheeler-dealers were able to “squeeze” much money out of “religious dissidence”. Mr. Dakin, a businessman who owns a large American firm, is scarcely burning with desire to inform the Soviet financial organs of the income of his “client”. We do know, however, that for two years now neither Regelson nor his wife have worked anywhere (and do not want to work), that they have five children and that they live in a four-roomed flat. All this demands financial outlay, and no small one. However, they cannot live only on gifts from beyond the ocean, although many parcels are sent to them from there. It is true that Regelson once said in a conversation that in a year he received about a thousand roubles (about £900 – Tr.) in foreign currency. Whether this is enough for him or whether he has other sources of income is not clear; we know only that

he has no shortage of money (or of free time) for occupying himself with something “for the soul”. However, his favourite occupation, as we have already said, is “educating young people”.

A voice “from the cellar”

But the fundamental burden of “educating young people” was taken up by Dmitri Dudko. He is also called “Fr. Dmitri”. Dudko was in fact ordained priest 20 years ago and began to preach in the churches of Moscow. Soon his name began to appear fleetingly in the broadcasts of Radio Liberty and other Western radio stations, people began to write about him in émigré “religious” publications and his “life” and “activity” became the subject of discussion for Western anti-Soviets. If everything written and said about Dudko in the West was gathered together, you would have a substantial volume. From this “volume” we are taking the examples quoted below. It is not difficult to imagine that if the name of this priest is pronounced so often in the West, it means that he is a “victim of persecution”. Persecution on the part of the “godless authorities”. [...]

[...]

Matters were not confined to baptisms and the performance of other services at home. Dudko began to pay attention to any young man or girl who glanced into the church. He began to talk to them, inviting them to drop in again, and promising to give them “very interesting poems”. If the bait was swallowed, “Fr. Dmitri”, as these young people recounted later, would talk to them in the offices of the church premises, privately. This was least of all an explanation of the essence of religion, since “Fr. Dmitri” immediately broke off the conversation if a person of ecclesiastical rank entered the room. After such conversations Dudko invited the young people to his flat. This happened, for example, with Olya (familiar form of Olga – Tr.) F., who had just left school. As her mother wrote at the Procuracy, she was naturally disturbed when she learned of this and demanded an explanation from “Fr. Dmitri”. He responded that there was “nothing special” about it, that “very respectable” people gathered at his home, and that

for "spiritual refinement" he attached a "father or mentor" to every girl ... Fortunately, Olya's mother was an energetic woman and put a stop to her daughter's "spiritual refinement".

[...]

The inhabitants of the town of Klinty in Bryansk region still remember that during the Hitlerite occupation in 1941-43 the Nazis issued there a little rag called *The New Way*. It was they whom 12-year-old Dmitri Dudko, son of a *kulak*,⁴ attempted to see in 1942 with his flagrantly anti-Soviet "poem", and it was with their blessing that his "Song from a Cellar" was published in *The New Way*. The Hitlerites didn't give a damn about the literary form, but the content was to their liking, and was entirely consistent with the spirit of Goebbels' propaganda.

The question may arise: surely all this has not become known only now? Of course not. As long ago as 1948 Dudko was tried, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to deprivation of freedom. Six years later, the editorial board in the Procuracy informed us that Dudko had asked the Procurator-General of the USSR to review his case, to release him from imprisonment and grant him "the possibility of being a full citizen of my Motherland". However, Dudko, being free, as we can see, has once more begun to slander his Motherland.

The Helsinki Final Act defines quite precisely what is understood by freedom of religion:

Within this framework the participating States will recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.

Reactionary Western propaganda centres are making use of the fact that, for the most part, inhabitants of the West are poorly acquainted with the corresponding tenet of the Final Act and arbitrarily inflate the concept of freedom to profess faith, to freedom to do everything you want under the mask of religion.

However, the "activity" of Yakunin and company has nothing in common with religious activity, with profession

of faith and performance of cults. It is clear from the letter to Mr. Dakin what God Lev Regelson and Gleb Yakunin worship. "Fr. Dmitri" does not so much preach the Ten Commandments as transgress them, and at the same time the laws of his country. "Alexander Ogorodnikov, the Russian Orthodox Church" has no relation whatever to the existing Russian Orthodox Church, which, by the way, he underlines in his "letters". Therefore to say that they are "under the protection of the Helsinki Declaration" is consciously to distort the spirit and the letter of the Final Act. This is just the same as asserting that forgers and card-sharppers are under the protection of constitutional statutes on freedom to choose one's profession.

Both in letters and conversations, people who have come into contact with Dudko, Ogorodnikov and those with them, are saying: "Protect those close to us from the pernicious influence of these swindlers, tell the truth about these people. Let everyone know what is hidden behind their masks."

That is what we are doing. Only we cannot guarantee that everyone will learn of it, because probably neither the Voice of America nor Deutsche Welle will broadcast this article.

¹ This story about Fr. Yakunin was circulated some years ago, and was strongly denied by him at the time. *Ed.*

² Roshchin fails to mention that this girl, whose name is Lyudmila, not Lidia, is now Regelson's wife and mother of his five children. *Ed.*

³ In a copy of this letter sent to Keston College by Mr. Dakin, this sentence reads: "I hope that we can win this game, which is bound up with the negligence or abuses of the Soviet financial organs". *Ed.*

⁴ In a reply to this article written on 21 April, Fr. Dudko strongly denied that his father was a *kulak* (rich peasant) and described a vivid childhood memory: in 1933 his family were starving, with no food at all except for grain for next year's sowing. Officials came and took this grain by force from Fr. Dudko's father, beating him and tearing out his beard until he yielded. (See *Russkaya Mysl*, 12 May 1977, p. 5, DS/1977/0/13) *Ed.*