

⁵ Documents DS/1975/F/12-158 (listed in RCL Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 66) and DS/1975/F/170-230 (listed in RCL Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 68-9).

⁶ See photo opposite p. 176.

⁷ See UPI report on 24 March 1977.

⁸ DS/1974/F/18-21 & 24 (listed in RCL Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 65-6). Daniil was released early, at the end of 1976. The family has now emigrated.

⁹ The letter was published by the US Congress Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: *Reports of Helsinki Accord Monitors in the Soviet Union. Documents of the Public Groups to Promote Observance of the Helsinki Agreements in the USSR. A Partial Compilation, edited and prepared by the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.* 24 February 1977, ii + 123 pp., pp. 65-7.

¹⁰ "Report on a Trip to the Pentecostal Congregations of Staro-Titarovskaya, Krasnodar Territory, and Nakhodka, 5-23 December 1976", AS 2872, 12 January 1977.

¹¹ Most of the issues discussed below are mentioned in the documents selected: see pp. 174-179.

¹² F. Myachin, *Ne po puti (On the Wrong Path)*, Moscow, "Gospolitizdat", 1959. *Pravda o sektantakh (The Truth about the Sectarians)*, Vladivostok, "Primorskoe knizhnoe izdatelstvo", 1958.

Pentecostal Dossier: Extracts

The following documents written by a number of Pentecostal believers in the USSR, form part of the dossier, "Come out of Babylon, my people" (see preceding article). Nikolai Bobarykin is a deacon of the Pentecostal Church in Staro-Titarovskaya, Northern Caucasus, and Valentin Burlachenko a deacon of the church in Nakhodka, Far Eastern Maritime Province. The authors of the other three appeals are ordinary members: Vera Shchukina is from Staro-Titarovskaya, Andrei Kovalenko from Karer, Northern Caucasus and Stanislav Babichenko from Batumi, Soviet Georgia. Between them they illustrate all the main issues raised in the dossier: persecution of Pentecostals from the 1930s onwards; discrimination against Christians and against children from Christian families; and pressure on Pentecostal congregations to register and their reasons for objecting to registration.

NIKOLAI GRIGORIEVICH BOBARYKIN
(BORN 1932)

I, Nikolai Grigorievich Bobarykin, and my wife Ella Kirillovna, have been believers since 1949. We have ten children, also believers. We are members of the Christian denomination of Pentecostals. I

am a deacon in my local church, elected in 1954. From the day of my conversion I have been a witness of the violence employed by the Soviet authorities against believers. In 1949 we were living in Frunze in the Kirghiz Republic, where I began to confess the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately I began to suffer persecution for my faith, along with my fellow-believers. We, at that time still young people, longed to meet together to study the Bible. Because of the intense persecution we were forced to hide in places a long way outside the city. One Easter we walked in twos and threes, no more, to the hills ten kilometres away so that our persecutors might not see where the believers were going to hold their service to the Lord. Old men and women followed us to the hills to hear the Word of God and to praise Him for His glorious resurrection. Around us were only bare cliffs without a single small tree. The sun was scorching hot and our supply of water grew very warm. But we, meeting in those hills, were happy to be in a gathering where we felt ourselves free. God alone saw and heard us as we sought Him in prayer with our praise and our laments at our persecutions. The silent hills witnessed our service. We returned very tired, but inwardly renewed. In the city it was impossible for us to hold meet-

ings. The officers of the KGB and their helpers shone searchlights in at the believers' windows at night without the slightest provocation. Small children hid their heads in terror under their worn blankets. In this way the KGB made sure we were not meeting for prayer, and if they did catch someone they would take him to the police station and draw up statements, threaten him with trial or sometimes beat him. These threats were soon to be carried out. After two years, in 1951, many believers were forced to move away from Frunze to Siberia on account of the severe persecution. We too moved to Kemerovo and the authorities carried out their threats on the remainder of the congregation.

In 1952 many were arrested. Old men and women and young children were subjected to interrogation and threatened with arrest. Then those who were arrested were tried as political offenders and sentenced to 15 or 25 years [...]

In 1955, after the death of Stalin, Art. 58, under which believers were tried as political offenders, was abolished, and an amnesty declared. Our friends in the church came home. Things were a little easier for us, and after some discussion we agreed to meet openly. We informed the authorities of this and began open services to our Lord. Permission was withheld, and our leaders began to be summoned by the authorities and once again threatened with arrest. The press began to publish the most vile falsehoods about us Christians in order to arouse the mass of the people against us. This cruel harassment forced us once more, two years later, to set out from unwelcoming Siberia. We helped one another to scrape together the money for the journey, and in 1957 we travelled to the Far East, to Nakhodka. There we began to hold services in 1958 in a small cottage on the edge of the town. We informed the authorities and submitted a list of believers so that we could be registered. But it was not to be. Would they really allow believers in the USSR to hold meetings? After all religion is scheduled for abolition. "Communism and religion are incompatible", therefore we, the believers, are enemies of communism, "remnants of capitalism" – so we hear from the mouths of atheists. We were not allowed to hold our

services for long. The authorities began to print foul slander against us in newspapers and booklets. They sent Komsomol gangs to disrupt our meetings, and stones were thrown through our windows from the street. Drunken youths broke in on our prayers, trying to provoke fights in order to convict believers as hooligans. In spite of our complaints at this violence, the authorities did nothing, since they were behind the whole affair. Believers in the USSR, after all, have no rights. These are the acts of the same government which fights for peace in the whole world, yet at home fights against religion.

Soon we began to lose our jobs under various pretexts. The pastor of our church, N. P. Goretoi, was sacked from his job, as were other church officials. This happened repeatedly, and we had somehow to support our large families. At that time I had four children and my wife was ill. Then in April 1961 the church leaders including myself were summoned to the police station where the Secretary of the Party Committee explained to us that under Art. 227 of the new Criminal Code we could be found guilty of a criminal offence. We did not have long to wait. A month later N. P. Goretoi was arrested, and three months later myself and the aged A. G. Railyan. Goretoi was sentenced to ten years – five in labour camp and five in exile – and myself and Railyan to five years in camp. I need not describe how our little children wept, how our large families suffered without their only breadwinner. But, praise God, who has preserved us hitherto, although what we suffered in prison deprived us of our health, leaving us subject to stomach complaints.

After I had served my term no-one would give me a job. With the greatest of difficulty I obtained a job cleaning sewers for a very small wage.

Since the surveillance of us did not cease and we were once again called to the Executive Committee of the town Soviet and threatened with a further trial, we had to leave the Far East and settle in the Krasnodar region in the village of Karer. I had by then eight children. Here we were able to hold our services a little more freely. Still, animosity against us believers continued. [...] Our children were insulted before

their classes at school. The teacher of the eighth class, K. G. Prokopenko, shouted at our daughter Lena: "If I had my way, I'd have you transported to the far North". The children of believers were bullied after school.

In the face of this religious intolerance we had to leave this place also. The next halt on our journey was the village of Staro-Titarovskaya in the same region. The Cossack people, we thought, must be more religious, since from ancient times they have been loyal to the Orthodox Church, and we should be less harassed here. But we were wrong. The communist leadership is the same everywhere. We have no freedom to meet here, in spite of the fact that the authorities wanted to give us permission, but proposed such punitive conditions, contrary to Scripture, that we refused. Our children are tormented here too. The head teacher of school no. 18, Alexandr Petrovich Kotov, held up to ridicule our daughter Tanya and my cousin Lyuba Bibikova in front of the whole of their class. "Your father is a preacher", he said, "he deceives the believers and has connections abroad. He sponges off the believers and lives at their expense, he opposes the Soviet government and ought to be put on trial". Kotov knew well that we work ten or twelve hours a day on the collective farm, but he evidently said this in order to set the other children against ours.

Our daughters Tanya and Lena were given such bad testimonials that they could get no further education, since it was mentioned that we, their parents, and they themselves were believers. [...]

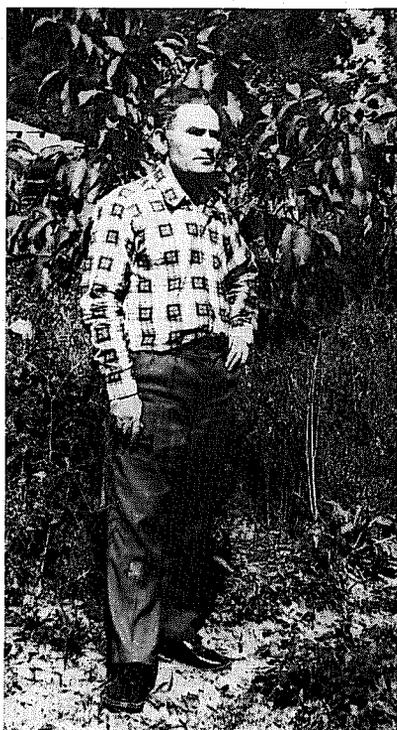
We have travelled all over the country and nowhere can we find peace. Where else can we flee from our persecutors? They pursue us for our children, to whom we teach the Gospel message, they pursue us because of our faith. We are ready to bear the cross of our suffering, but when believing parents have their children taken away the pain becomes unbearable because they want to make them into the offspring of wild beasts.

So we pray to our Lord that He will have pity on His people and help us to leave the territory of this State. [...]

VERA YEFREMOVNA SHCHUKINA
(BORN 1928)

I am a single parent. I have three children. My parents were Pentecostals and so raised me and my younger sister Zhenya in that Christian belief. I have only read about the fantastic cases of fanaticism and human sacrifice in Soviet newspapers and booklets; in practice I have not come across such disturbing occurrences among Orthodox Christians, Baptists, Adventists or Pentecostals. I want to tell the whole world about the fanatical way in which some believers are treated – in particular, about my own father. He was arrested in 1937 when I was in the second class at school. His arrest took place on a night which was one of terror for many families. On 25 December 1937 a police van drew up quietly in one of the side-streets of "Moscow", as the shanty-town district of Alma-Ata was facetiously known, where we Christians lived.

"Is Yefrem Mikhailovich at home?", my father heard the familiar voice of the pastor of our church, Konstantin Korneichuk. He had been terribly beaten. They had arrested him not long before this dreadful night. My father thought that he had been released and was filled with joy. But it was not like that. They used Korneichuk to arrest many people that night. They had beaten him so badly that he was forced to betray, to work with the authorities and, in the end, after the appalling torture of the electric chair, the wretched man broke down and now pointed out the homes of the members of his congregation. Although he did this, we still pity him and lay the blame at the door of his blaspheming torturers, not on him. "I'm here, brother Konstantin", my father replied joyfully. He quickly opened the low door of our tiny home [...] and militiamen rushed in. Terrified, we all leapt from our beds: "Are you Yefrem Mikhailovich Shchukin?" "I am", my father replied. "Get your things together, you are under arrest". Everything in the room was turned inside out; they felt in every corner of the mattresses, pillows, the patched blankets, our clothes. Only the earth floor was not dug up. We sobbed. "Please let me pray with my wife and



Above: Nikolai Petrovich Goretoi, pastor of the Pentecostal church in Nakhodka (on the Soviet Pacific coast) who is the leader of the Pentecostal emigration movement (see article pp. 170-174).

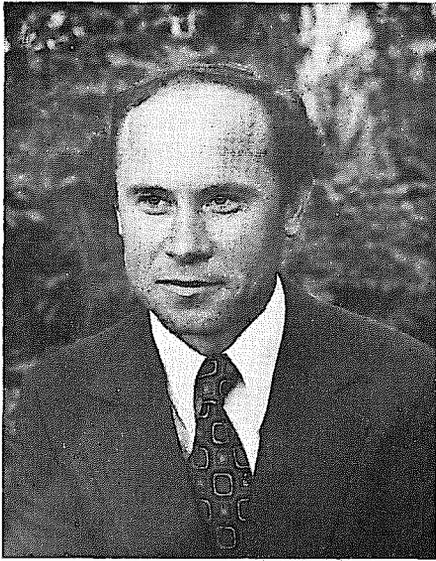
Above left: N. P. Goretoi's wife, Varvara Nikolaevna.



Left: N. P. Goretoi with his family. All wish to emigrate.

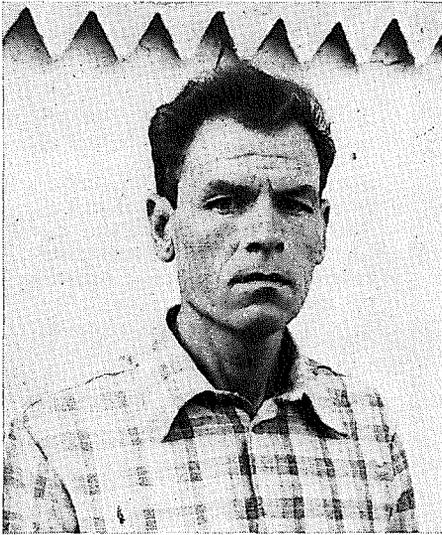
Right: Andrei Stepanovich Kovalenko and his family. As Pentecostals they all wish to emigrate (see article pp. 170-174, especially document p. 177).





Above left: Stanislav Trofimovich Babichenko, a Pentecostal living in the Soviet Union (see p. 179).

Above: S. T. Babichenko with his family. All wish to emigrate.



Left: Nikolai Grigorevich Bobarykin, a Pentecostal living in the Soviet Union (see document p. 174).



Right: N. G. Bobarykin with his family. All wish to emigrate.

children for the last time". "Go on then, pray, perhaps your God will help you", the policeman said sarcastically. We all fell on our knees, wept and sobbed, feeling the presence of the Spirit. "That's enough, stop now", the policeman broke in anxiously, "We haven't much time".

[...] My father came home after ten years in prison and was free for about a year, and then he was arrested again, put in prison for three months, then sent to Kyzyl-Orda in perpetual exile. He died in exile in 1967. [...]

I live now in the village of Staro-Titarovskaya with my three children. [...] The two younger ones, Misha and Nadya, are continually terrorized at school. Misha is ridiculed because he does not want to wear the Pioneer scarf. "Why do you not wear the Pioneer scarf?", the head teacher of the school, Alexander Petrovich Kotov, asked him, taking him into his study. After some trite blasphemous questions, Misha answered, "Because I am a Christian, that is why I do not wear the scarf". The head teacher looked at him blankly and after that asked no more questions. Misha went on to the eighth class, but my daughter Nadya and another girl called Natasha, in the ninth class, were kept by Kotov for four hours in his study while he threatened them with his fists and shouted, "the KGB will see to the whole of your congregation and we shall try your parents for teaching you what is contrary to the Soviet power". The girls' crime in the eyes of this tyrannical teacher was that Nadya and Natasha did not want to write a composition on the subject "I take the communists for my example". "Why do you not want to write this composition?", demanded the head teacher. "Whom should we take as our example?", asked Nadya. "What do you mean, whom?", asked Kotov. "Surely there are many communists whom you could take as your example. What about me, for example, Alexander Kotov, head teacher and communist. Why can you not write about me in your compositions?" The children said nothing, glanced at each other timidly and giggled. This insulted the head teacher and he furiously pounded the table with his fist. "Tomorrow your parents must come and see me, and the KGB will see

to your church. Am I not example enough for you?" Natasha looked at him in amazement and suddenly asked a question the head teacher had not expected. "Alexandr Petrovich, do you believe in God?" The teacher replied, taken off his guard, "In God? I believe in no gods. I am a communist". "But we believe in Him", Natasha replied quietly and calmly, "and God himself commands us to take as our example the Lord Jesus Christ and those people who live His life". The head teacher looked in amazement at the impudent Christian children and concluded gruffly, "I shall not leave this here, and will carry this matter to its conclusion. We shall put your parents on trial". [...]

ANDREI STEPANOVICH KOVALENKO
(BORN 1930)

We Christians must want not only to save our own souls from death, but also those of our children. But the Soviet government allows us neither to live in peace nor to bring up our children in a Christian way. From childhood our children have suffered the scorn of their schoolteachers. We too, because we are believers, have no respite from the attentions of both teachers and Party workers. Our wives have to bear the contempt of Soviet doctors in the maternity hospitals, because we think it a sin to use abortion or other means of contraception. Our wives even prefer not to go to hospital, knowing the taunts and humiliation which they will suffer from the medical staff: "What are you multiplying poverty for?", they say, and then blaspheme vulgarly and brutally. This is no exaggeration.

As for education, as soon as our children start school, their mothers' hearts begin to ache, especially when attempts are made to force them into the Octobrists and Pioneers. The pitch of hysterical blackmail and irrationality to which head teachers and teachers will go, because our children do not want to be atheists or wear the insignia of atheism, is fearful. When they see that the children will not submit to their persuasion, teachers will egg on other children to attack Christian children because of their beliefs. This happened to our children not only in

Nakhodka, but also in other towns, and especially in the Caucasus in the village of Karer where exactly the same thing happened. [...]

On 18 August 1976, a morning service was held with the permission of the authorities in Karer in Lesnaya street. Three people, including the chairman of the village Soviet, Kuznetsov, arrived before the end of the meeting and began a communistic harangue. The names of all children of school age and under who had come to the service with their parents, were taken. My wife said to the chairman, "Does it seem better to you that my children should become atheists and lie drunk in the gutter, or believe in God and lead upright lives?". The chairman replied, "We would rather they lay about in the gutter than become believers". And when he had drawn up his statement he said, "We have an instruction that children under 18 should not go to your meetings".

My wife has a heart complaint, due to the constant strain inflicted on us by the authorities about our children, trying to make them obey atheist teachers instead of their parents.

Because the USSR is nurturing atheism and because the authorities are harassing and dealing violently with us and our children because of our faith in God, we want to leave the USSR. [...]

VALENTIN ALEXANDROVICH BURLACHENKO
(BORN 1942)

[...] When I was at school we were taught that every citizen of the USSR was allowed freedom of conscience. But when I became a Christian I saw quite a different picture. When I told people at the trade school where I was studying that I was a believer, I became the butt of various sneers and insults. In 1958 I went to live in Taganrog. I got to know some Pentecostal believers and became an active participant in their prayer meetings. In those days the Pentecostal sect was outlawed. Regularly, several times a month, the gathering of believers which I attended was visited by militiamen, auxiliary police and representatives of the local authorities. At every visit they broke up the meeting, accused

the believers of superstition and fanaticism, took down the names of all those present. Those who allowed their houses to be used for meetings suffered a great deal. They received summonses for holding illegal meetings and were fined, in spite of the constitutional right to freedom of conscience, of the press, of assembly. [...]

In May 1962 a criminal charge was made against me and I was tried by the Neklinov district court in the Rostov region. I was accused of being a leading member of the sect, of spreading American propaganda, of being responsible for an attack on an auxiliary police-woman, and of having no job, but living at the expense of the believers. I was sentenced as a parasite to five years' exile in a remote area and confiscation of property. The charges had been brought by the local authorities and there was no possibility of appeal. During the trial I was told, "If you renounce your God here and now, to the court, we will let you go free, but if not, we will send you well away from the green pastures". The charges against me were false, since I was not involved in politics and worked as a fitter in a factory. I refused to deny my beliefs and was sent to Siberia. My wife and small daughter, then about a year old, accompanied me. After two and a half years I appeared before the district court at Alarsk in the Irkutsk region where I was a church member and was released after half my sentence had been served, as being a good, well disciplined and honest worker. After my release I lived in Kirghizia. In 1972 I moved to Nakhodka where I now live with my family. [...] I belong to a church of Evangelical Christians - Pentecostals. In 1975 the local authorities tried to register the congregation. It seems strange to me that a sect that had been outlawed should now be registered. But I am against this registration, since to accept it is to betray Christ - to disobey the commandments to perform charity, not to kill, not to swear. Living in the USSR we can see that the whole aim of the Party and the government is to destroy believers, and so when we heard that Brezhnev had signed the Helsinki Agreement my family decided to apply to emigrate. [...]

STANISLAV TROFIMOVICH BABICHENKO
(BORN 1940)

I was brought up in a Christian family. From earliest childhood I can remember being aware of atheists' sneers and of the pressures upon me solely on account of my faith in the Living God. I remember especially several instances when the constitutional human rights, of which we learnt at school, were grossly violated.

In 1957 I was working in the railway engineering works at Alma-Ata. When the Party activists in the plant discovered that I believed in God, they roused the other workers against me who used to surround me at my work, all jeering and shouting both at God and at me. This continued for a long time.

In 1962, whilst I was serving in the army in Kaluga, the Komsomol workers in the unit found out that I did not belong to the Komsomol because I believed in God, and began to work on me in order to persuade me to abandon my faith and join the Komsomol. When all their efforts proved fruitless, they set the entire company against me, so that from reveille until lights-out I had not a moment of peace, until I should join the Komsomol. This went on for about two months, not only in the form of verbal attacks, but of blows from people hiding in corners or behind the backs of the next in line.

In 1970 I was living with my family in Krivoi Rog where I witnessed illegal persecution directed against the believers of the local church, of which my wife and I were members. [...] In 1971 we moved to Rovno in the region of

Sumy. There the authorities likewise would not allow us to meet in peace, demanding that we accept their godless registration, which forbade us many of the things which God's word commands us to do. During the two years we lived in the Ukraine we witnessed a great deal of illegality on the part of the authorities. In 1972 we moved again, to Batumi, where I had been a member of a Pentecostal church since 1963. We frequently had to meet for worship at all hours of the night in order to avoid the authorities' threats and persecutions. At present we have verbal permission to hold meetings, but the authorities still do not leave us in peace: they take photographs, make notes on sermons, forbid us to take children to the meetings and threaten to take them into care.

I have had occasion to visit our fellow-believers in Tbilisi. [...] At the beginning of June this year I was talking to the pastor of the Tbilisi Pentecostal church, Pyotr Ivanovich Shutov. He told me that he had been summoned to the KGB and asked to work for them in return for a motor car and the post of assistant to the senior presbyter for Georgia. He refused outright. They summoned him a second time and proposed that either he work for them, or go to prison for 15 years. He chose the latter.

We are living witnesses of the blatant disregard for those laws which were formulated to blind the eyes of the international community. Therefore I, my family and my fellow-believers appeal to the international community and its organizations to do everything in their power to help us to emigrate from this godless country. We beg you, help us.

ERRATA

RCL Vol. 3, Nos. 1-3, 1975, "Pentecostal Documents from the USSR", p. 16, 1.17: "congregations which had to amalgamate" should read "congregations had to amalgamate"; p. 17, 1.15: "harassment of Korosten" should read "harassment at Korosten"; p. 28, 1.31: "a human sacrifice as anti-Soviet propaganda" should read "a human sacrifice and anti-Soviet propaganda"; p. 30, 1.18: "as the investigator of the Kharkov regional procuracy said" should read "under which, as comrade Khorkov, the investigator of the regional procuracy, said"; p. 30, 1.20: the articles of the Criminal Code referred to should be 190-1, 192 and 192-1.

MICHAEL ROWE