

Department of Foreign Relations  
Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church  
Outside of Russia

NEWSLETTER #10

SPECIAL EDITION

"THEY WANT TO JUDGE"...

Oh God, the blood of those martyred, shot, smothered, those who perished from hunger and cold, I can hear the moans of the Russian land as I stand before God's Altar... Liars and slanderers desire to judge...

The Gulag Archipelago is their indictment. The ghost of my martyred father stands before me now and cries out...

In the "Literary Newspaper" (Literaturnaya Gazita) of April 20, 1977, they wrote that, "I am the son of a kulak"...

I recall the unforgettable scene which I wrote down, by my own hand, at the investigation, when they tried me a second time in the camp...

The year is 1933. We have nothing, we are all swollen from hunger. It is still winter, but spring is on the way, the sowing season, upon which we placed so many hopes is approaching - perhaps the harvest will be a good one, perhaps God will be merciful to us sinners.

From somewhere or other my late father obtained a half a pood of grain (18 lbs.) and guarded it (I use the word "guard", not "save" because it is possible to "guard", not "safeguard" only that which is sacred) either as a very last resort or for the sowing...

But suddenly the guardians of the law - the cruel atheists, come to confiscate...

Anyone can understand that it is more terrifying than if murderers would have come. The murderers might kill on the spot, but the "guardians of the law" take away our last remaining hope and leave us to suffer unbearably.

My late father grabs the sack of grain, his hands stick to the sack, or rather become soddered to it, they knock him to the ground, drag him, but they can not rip the sack away from him.

Then they sit on his stomach, pluck out his beard, hair by hair. All this he suffers but still he would not give up the sack...

The year was 1933. I was then 11 years old, having been born in 1922. I was the eldest. My brother Vladimir was born in 1925, and my brother Nicholas in 1927. We, the young children, together with our mother, who continually cries, an uneducated peasant woman, but with a heart of gold - I can remember now how she divided up crumbs of food for us, always taking for herself the smallest - we all stood by and cried. I do not wish to hide these tears, regardless of the fact that someone might think that I am playing on emotions.

Suddenly my father lets go of the sack. He can stand no more. With what malicious joy these godless ones leave our premises. Probably, only the Devil could do it in such a way after having completed his evil deed.

My father continues to lie on the ground, like a corpse, and we stand by frozen in our grief. Later on he is placed under arrest, and we are left to die a hungry death, (I described all of this in my autobiographical narrative, "Face to Face" (and) in an uncompleted poem entitled "A Poem About My Father"). If they, the godless, feel no shame in printing these poems of a young man which I babbled, when I first fell in love, and which are existant only in their files, then I shall not be ashamed if my narrative and poem are printed, as likewise my narrative entitled "They Lead to the Slaughter". This is my last narrative from my life's story, about who and how is persecuting me. Anyone who has these narratives - do not hesitate to print them.

That's the kind of kulak my father was, and this is the kind of kulak's son that I am. And still, they want to put me on trial...

It is not enough for them that they cut short my youth, that I spent my years of youth in labor camps, from which I returned balded. I am now 56 years of age, not a very old age, but due to my bald head and gray hair, most people think that I am over 80...

My accident of 1975, when both legs were broken and my whole body was unmercifully beaten is not enough for them. There wasn't a single inch of my body which would stay whole. Only my brain and heart did not suffer, but then again even they suffered, along with my lungs which shouted oedema.

This is not enough for them. Now they want to accuse me of slander. Their dark deeds - that is my slander!

Whenever storm clouds gather over me, the shadow of my martyred father comes to me and I ask for his prayers, and I feel relief...

During the time of my accident, my mother would appear to me in sleep. Once she even brought me a coffin - could it be that they are preparing my demise?

When Solzhenitzyn was placed under arrest for the last time, he said that he could not last long on this earth. I am two years his junior, but I too am probably not long for this world in the physical sense. But then again, there are miracles. I have already experienced one miracle when I rose to my feet, after my accident, without crutches and began to walk. I am walking, I serve and I pray to God.

Lord; may Your will be done. As for them - forgive them for they know not what they do. If there are unfortunate people on Russian land, it is they only, the godless, for they do not realize their crime - and that is the most terrifying of all.

They say that a certain Nazi who was tried at the Nurnberg Trials and who realized his crimes, grabbed his head in anguish and said: "I am guilty, judge me with no mercy!"

But these others do not realize it, but they wish to judge...

They wish to judge for the fact that I am unable to forget how they executed the Russian Tsar with all his children and servants. They can not forgive my prayer for him. But now, I no longer pray for the Tsar, but rather implore him that he pray for me in heaven. O Great Saints of the Russian land, Great Martyr Nicholas, together with all your much suffering family, pray to God for us!

I too have children, and they already are much tormented in school...

They want to judge me for the fact that I am unable to forget how they killed the Russian peasantry, how they uprooted and drove them into the freezing cold. And now the village remains homeless, the wind of godlessness roars through the village, and Russian women cry throughout the villages. All the youth has run off to the cities, leaving nobody to work in the fields.

They want to judge me for the fact that I am unable to forget the terrible plight of the Russian nobility, which suffered a ruthless extinction. They were thrown into mine shafts, and those who called for help were shot down. And with them they executed Russian literature, which only now is beginning little by little to come back into existence...

They want to judge me for not being able to forget how they annihilated our priests, how they placed them before the firing squad, or left them to rot in prison, or crucified them over the altars, or covered them with tar in barrels, and now there is nobody to minister to the needs of a morally degenerate population...

They want to judge me for my concern for souls devastated by atheism, for my concern over the common drunkenness, which has reached epidemic proportions, and debauchery and the desintegration of family life, and our destroyed churches and all the ruins in our Russian land...

They want to judge me for trying to get our people to stand morally erect, and not give in to the petty promises of the atheists, for trying to get our people to see those values which do not pass, to stand and to say with conviction - "No".

Now, we have had enough of atheism, of one disappointment after another, of doubt and corruption...

We want to believe!

The Russian people thirst for faith just as an earth scorched from the heat thirsts for moisture. All has turned a sickish yellow, all has taken on a look of dispondence

Oh Lord, is it possible that you have forgotten us, that you hast forsaken us?

The people of Israel, who for many centuries had no home of their own, have found a fatherland. But we, having a fatherland, as it were, have none.

We have nothing. All has been destroyed, placed before the firing squad, bricked up, buried. Only wolves of atheism sound their terrifying cry over the Russian land.

Oh Lord, we thirst for Faith, You alone can save us. Only a miracle can set everything right. That which is impossible for us, is possible for you, Oh Lord!

I stand at Thine Altar, (so long as they do not deprive me of the right to serve, and this they threaten to do!), and pray to Thee, performing, perhaps for the last time, the Bloodless Sacrifice.

Hear us sinners, for it is Thou who have allowed us to fall into the hands of the atheists because of our sins. This is what the Russian philosopher L. Karsavin, who died in the camp at Varkute, used to say. We all cry out to Thee, Oh Lord, have mercy upon us according to Thy great mercy.

And forgive them...

Soften their stone-like hearts, enlighten their dulled consciousness, that they might see their works, become fearful for them and repent.

I see that they too have suffered much, revolving in the emptiness of atheism. They are martyrs without sanctification, dying with a curse on their lips, as did the senseless thief who hanged on Thine left side, Oh Lord.

But those who have been martyred at their hands - they are the blessed ones.

I know that the great multitude of Russian martyrs, and all Russian people worn out by suffering pray with me at the Holy Liturgy, and I am happy to pray with them.

I can hear the voice, filled with love and all forgiving: "Forgive them for they know not what they do"...

These maddened atheists know not what they do for their deeds will be also their doom...

Forgive them.

Father Dimitry Dudko

21 of April 1977  
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