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# RELIGION, STATE & SOCIETY

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## **Editorial**

The Polish city of Przemyśl, near the border with Ukraine, is the scene of a complex interplay of relationships between Poles and Ukrainians, Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics, as symbolised most visibly in the possession, repossession and reconstruction of church buildings. As Christopher Hann relates in his article in this issue of *RSS*, extreme Polish nationalist groups have been active. They are a very small minority in the local population; nevertheless 'the postcommunist experience of this city bears comparison with the extremism of Ulster ...' Another borderland, Moldova, long part of the Russian and Soviet empires, was throughout this century host to an Orthodox revival movement, chronicled by Eugene Clay. The movement

allowed the Moldovan Orthodox to assert control over their own spiritual lives ... By defying the bishops, Inochentie and his Moldovan followers made the Russian Orthodox into outsiders; at the same time, through their repressive measures against Inochentie, the Russians pushed his followers from the Church. This conflict between Russian and Moldovan Orthodox foreshadowed the current conflicts between the predominantly Russian Transdnestr Republic in Moldova and the Moldovan central government in Chişinău.

Is Hann right when he suggests that 'the most virulent expressions of territorial sentiment tend to be found at the borders of the state'? From Tatarstan, at the 'cross-roads of Islam and Orthodoxy', Sergei Filatov reports encouragingly on excellent relations between Mufti Galiullin and Bishop Anastasi. They give each other practical support. An important factor here, however, is that Muslims and Orthodox both feel threatened by the secularist government and radical atheists in political life. Oleg Sokolov, the founder of the Orthodox Brotherhood of St Guri, told Filatov 'We don't have problems with Muslims; we have problems with atheists, both Tatar and Russian'; and Mufti Galiullin often says that 'I have more in common with a Russian Orthodox believer than with a Tatar atheist'.

Meanwhile, as we know, well-established majority Churches in the postcommunist world are tending to adopt increasingly defensive positions even in their heartlands, closing the doors to 'foreign' influences. In his review of recent Russian books on the Russian Orthodox Church Dimitry Pospelovsky regrets the fact that 'A Church which by its martyrdom had attracted almost universal sympathy only a few years ago is now ignored or even rejected by many because it now advocates religious persecution.' Concluding his significant three-part study of the Armenian Church from 1938 to 1994 Felix Corley notes similar developments: 'The religious "free market" which developed after the 1988 earthquake was greatly resented by the Church ... The resentment spilled over into the ecumenical arena, with distrust displayed towards other Christian Churches, especially the Protestants and Catholics ...'

Keston Institute has been deeply involved in monitoring the issues thrown up by missionary activity in the postcommunist world. The fruit of three years' research cooperation between Keston and Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, is *Soul*

*Wars: the Problem and Promise of Proselytism in Russia*, edited by Michael Bourdeaux and John Witte, Jr, to be published in 1999 by Orbis Books.

Stephen Plant comments that 'So many religious nationalisms fail to recognise that national and religious "belonging" must include openness to the needs of strangers. The theological challenge is to understand national "belonging" in the context of the need for roots, roots which have a "spiritual" dimension.'

Plant is comparing the insights of Fedor Dostoyevsky and Simone Weil, who 'lived at different ends of the European continent and inhabited different religious traditions'. From an evangelical Anglican background, Jane Ellis, who worked at Keston Institute for almost 20 years, developed a creative understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church and produced one of the most important and influential studies of that Church in the twentieth century. Jane died earlier this year: in this issue of *RSS*, along with an obituary, we are publishing a selected bibliography of her most important works. In his review in this issue of *RSS* of Jane's last book, *The Russian Orthodox Church: Triumphalism and Defensiveness*, William van den Bercken writes that 'It would be good to have this book translated into Russian ... [in Russia] there still exists no survey of the recent history of the Church. Jane Ellis' book would fill this gap admirably.'

We also report with regret the deaths this year of three other people associated with Keston: Stella Alexander, Bohdan Bociurkiw and Yuli Shreider. Like Jane Ellis, all three were scholars of academic rigour and impartiality whose work was nevertheless suffused with their Christian faith and their commitment to positive interaction between people of differing convictions. Stella Alexander was a long-standing member of Keston's Council of Management and of the Editorial Board of its journal. Born in America, she brought Quaker and Catholic understandings to bear on the religious problems of Yugoslavia, and her book *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1979) is a work of central importance, as is her study *The Triple Myth: a Life of Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac* (East European Monographs, Boulder, 1987). Bohdan Bociurkiw, born into a Ukrainian family in eastern Poland, emigrated to Canada in 1947. He spent some time at Keston College on research for what eventually became *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-50)*, published in 1996. Another definitive study, it uses material from Vatican and church archives and also from former Soviet archives in Ukraine and Russia. Yuli Shreider, who lived in Moscow, held a doctorate in mathematics and was the author of more than 700 publications in pure and applied mathematics, computer science, information theory, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of religion and ethics. He became a Roman Catholic in 1970 and a lay Dominican in 1977. He was president of the Centre for Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology of Religion, and from 1991 he was a member of the board of the Russian Bible Society. He was involved in issues of interconfessional relations and techniques of conflict resolution. He was an active participant in the Keston-Emory proselytism project and contributed articles to *Religion, State and Society*.

The comment by Philip Boobbyer on the book by William van den Bercken which he reviews in this issue of *RSS* could apply equally well to the works of Jane Ellis, Stella Alexander, Bohdan Bociurkiw and Yuli Shreider: 'It is a reminder that there is a prophetic aspect to the writing of history. History can be a study of man's relationship with God.' We recognise with gratitude the contribution of these scholars to international understanding and reconciliation.

## Notes on Contributors

**William van den Bercken** is a lecturer at the Institute for Missiology and Ecumenical Research at Utrecht University and professor of Eastern Christianity at the Catholic University of Nijmegen.

**Philip Boobbyer** is a lecturer in modern European history at the University of Kent. He is currently working on the moral and religious experiences of the dissidents in the Soviet Union.

**J. Eugene Clay** received his PhD in history from the University of Chicago in 1989 and is currently an assistant professor in the Religious Studies Department of Arizona State University. His research explores religious dissent in Russia and the Russian Empire.

**Felix Corley** is a writer and broadcaster on religious affairs in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, with a special interest in the Caucasus. His book *Religion in the Soviet Union: an Archival Reader* was published by Macmillan and New York University Press in 1996.

**Sergei Filatov**, born in 1951, graduated from the Departments of Psychology and History at Moscow University and then worked in the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences. He is now a senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and director of the Sociological Centre of the Moscow Public Scientific Foundation. In 1990–92 he directed a Russia-wide sociological survey ‘The Religiosity and World-View of the Russian People’, and is currently head of the project ‘Encyclopedia of Religious Life in Russia’.

**Christopher Hann** is professor of social anthropology at the University of Kent, Canterbury. He has conducted research in Eastern Europe (mainly Hungary and Poland) since the mid-1970s, with interests in political and economic development as well as ethno-national and religious issues. At present (1997–99) he is a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

**Stephen Plant** is a Methodist minister and currently Europe secretary of the Methodist Church in Britain. He has a PhD from Cambridge University on theological ethics and is the author of *Simone Weil* in the Fount Christian Thinkers series.

**Dimitry Pospelovsky** recently retired from his post as professor of history at the University of Western Ontario. A Russian–Ukrainian by birth, he spent several months in Russia each year from 1990 lecturing on Russian and Soviet church history at various theological schools and secular higher educational establishments.

**Sidonie F. Winter** was born in Czechoslovakia and has lived in the USA since 1986. She is studying simultaneously for an MA in Russian and East European studies at the Jackson School of International Studies and an MA at the Graduate School of Public Affairs, both at the University of Washington in Seattle.