

RELIGION, STATE & SOCIETY

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Editorial

I am delighted that this issue of *Religion, State & Society* is the fruit of collaboration with a colleague in the field: Dr Douglas Rogers, a postdoctoral fellow in the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies and the Department of Anthropology at Miami University in Ohio. He first approached me in summer 2003 about the possibility of publishing in *RSS* some of the papers to be presented in the panel 'Religion, Power, Political Economy: Postsocialist Views' at the Meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago in November of that year.

The panel was of specific interest for the fact that it brought together specialists in the field of anthropology, a discipline which, as Rogers explains in his 'Introductory essay' in this issue, has been possible in a long-term and systematic manner in the states of the former Soviet Union only since the early 1990s. There is now a critical mass of anthropologists working on religion in the 'transition from socialism' who have done long-term fieldwork with religious communities in the region.

Their work addresses a number of important themes, which Rogers identifies and describes in his article. These are all themes the study of which can only be enriched by findings from the postcommunist world presented in the work of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines. Many of them, moreover, are relevant for an understanding of the current and future role of religion not only in the postcommunist world but in the 'western' and Islamic worlds as well. Just one example is the 'secularisation thesis' in the context of modernisation. 'Increasing modernisation', notes Rogers, 'has not, as many proponents of the thesis once predicted, led to the decline or disappearance of religion.' He notes that 'one of the primary arenas for recent discussions of modernity and religion has been Islam in the Middle East', and he points to the 'significant insights that might be garnered from research on socialism and its transformations'. 'What might ethnographies of religion, secularisation and desecularisation in the former Soviet bloc contribute to broader theory,' he asks, 'and how might they help to expand our understandings of what it has meant to practise religion and practise secularism in the "modern" world?'

I would like to apologise for a number of orthographical errors which went uncorrected in the last issue of *RSS* (vol.32 no.4). Most were minor, but two which should be noted are the incorrect diacritical signs on the surname Milošević in line 7 of the Editorial and the incorrect spelling of the surname Potrata in the table of contents and on the back cover.

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PHILIP WALTERS

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Melissa L. Caldwell is assistant professor of anthropology at University of California, Santa Cruz. She is the author of *Not by Bread Alone: Social Support in the New Russia* (University of California Press, 2004), and her articles have appeared in *Ethnos* and *Journal of Consumer Culture*. Her current research in Russia explores hunger and food aid, church-based welfare programmes, summer gardens and changing food practices more generally.

Sonja Luehrmann has an MA in cultural anthropology from the University of Frankfurt, Germany, and is currently a doctoral student in the Program in Anthropology and History, University of Michigan. Her dissertation deals with interreligious relations, missions, and the relationship between secular culture and religiosity in postsoviet Mari El (Volga region, Russian Federation).

Douglas Rogers is a postdoctoral fellow in the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies and Department of Anthropology at Miami University in Ohio. He is currently working on a book entitled *Heirs of the Old Belief: Work, Prayer, and Moral Practice in the Russian Urals, 1861–2004*. He is also continuing research on the history of field archaeological expeditions to religious communities in the Soviet and postsoviet periods.

Russell Zanca is an anthropologist. He is an assistant professor at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. Zanca has been working in Central Asia on a variety of projects since 1993. His latest research takes account of culture change among Uzbeks during Stalinist collectivisation in the 1930s. This research is cross-disciplinary and a joint Uzbek–American project based on extensive interviewing of elderly informants throughout Uzbekistan.