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Baylor University campus, home to the Keston Archive

Working in the Keston Archive

by Zoe Knox

In April 2007, I visited the Keston Institute in Oxford to consult the archival holdings on atheist and anti-religious campaigns in the Soviet Union. Just a few months later, the collection began the move from Oxford to its current home at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. I was one of the last researchers to access these materials in Britain (and by coincidence, I had recently relocated from Texas to Britain, the reverse of the collection's transatlantic journey). At the time of my visit I was in the early stages of planning my second book and was considering focusing on Soviet anti-sectarian propaganda after World War II.

The days I spent at Keston were pleasurable and productive, in large part due to the treasures unearthed for me by Malcolm Walker, then the librarian. Among them was a fascinating poster. It depicted a shabby looking but suited man standing on top of a brick tower, which is protruding from a top hat worn by a rudimentarily drawn head in profile. The only facial features are a hook nose, a golden coin for an eye, and dollar sign on the cheek. The man atop the tower has a copy of *Watchtower* (*Сторожевая башня*) in his right hand; from the other swings a bomb with the letter 'A' on the side (an atom bomb, no doubt), like a chain censer. He shouts 'Anti-sovietism… anti-communism… lies, slander…'. In the background is a stylised city skyline, presumably Manhattan.

Also in this issue:

Poster attacking Jehovah's Witnesses discovered in the Keston Archive

A short poem appears on the poster; entitled 'Jehovah's Witnesses', it reads: 'Having covered the Soviet Union with slander / He's forecasting a world war... / Watch out for this persistent sect / It's dangerous to play war games with them!'. The poster was printed in Moscow in 1981 in a run of 42,000.[1]

Although the crude imagery and doggerel were typical of Soviet anti-religious propaganda, there was much more to this poster than the usual hackneyed portraits of sectarians as anti-Soviet misfits. This chance discovery begged a number of questions, chief among them: what was it about the Jehovah's Witnesses – a community whose numbers were so small they were described in 1977 as 'insignificant' by Vasili Konik, the leading Soviet scholar of the Witnesses[2] – which provoked such a strong response from the Communist authorities? It was this question which led me back to what is now the Keston Archive and Library in the Keston Center for Religion, Politics and Society at Baylor.

I knew from my visit to Oxford that there was a great deal of material of interest spread across Keston's collection and, now that my project was more refined, I wanted the opportunity to consult the holdings once again. This was made possible by a Keston scholarship, awarded for the project 'Sectarianism in Soviet Russia: The Case of Jehovah's Witnesses', which supported a three-week visit in September/October 2010. My research focused on situating the Jehovah's Witnesses within the wider context of the campaign against sectarianism (particularly against other groups of Western origin) and against religious belief more broadly.

The Jehovah's Witnesses were a new challenge for the Communist authorities in the post-war period. Their numbers dramatically increased with the expansion of Soviet territory in the 1940s. Mass exiles followed – over the course of a single night in 1951, for example, 723 families of Jehovah's Witnesses were deported from Western Ukraine, Western Belorussia, the Baltic states and Moldavia, territories recently acquired by the Soviet Union, to Siberia.[3] This only served to spread the Witnesses' message further, and Soviet religious officials in the east were soon confronted by active and expanding religious communities. The Witnesses were not tolerated by the regime: they were not only denied the right to legally exist as a religious organisation, but were persecuted particularly harshly by the regime, which decried the faith as an exemplar of a dangerous cult.

On the face of it, the Witnesses' challenge to the Soviet authorities was similar to that posed by Protestant communities which either refused, or were denied the right, to register with the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (from 1965 the Council for Religious Affairs), the state body responsible for administering religious life. In Soviet reports the Witnesses were usually discussed alongside underground Pentecostals, *Initsiativniki* (Reform Baptists) and Seventh-day Adventists. In other respects, however, the Jehovah's Witnesses were regarded as fundamentally different from the adherents of other illegal religious organisations. Their beliefs and practices challenged the Soviet authorities in very different ways. The poster points to the Witnesses' eager anticipation of Armageddon, which they believe is the final battle

between good and evil, which will lead to Jehovah's victory and the creation of his earthly kingdom. This was interpreted by the Soviet authorities as their longing for another world war (some propagandists claimed this would be profitable for American capitalists, who allegedly bankrolled the Witnesses, because of the increased market for armaments).[4] Much was made of the contrast between the war-mongering theocracy of the Watch Tower Society and the peace-loving democracy of Soviet socialism. The worldwide headquarters of the Society in Brooklyn led Soviet authorities to present them as agents of American capital and as imperialist spies. The literature produced by the Society (such as *Watchtower* magazine) was smuggled into the Soviet Union and, after clandestine duplication, circulated widely to Witnesses throughout the country. When Konik embarked on one of his studies he was able to consult books, brochures, journals, reference works and pamphlets circulating in the original and facsimile versions, in a variety of European languages, including (but not limited to) Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, English and German.[5] The image of the Jehovah's Witnesses as the most reactionary of sectarians was cemented by their refusal to carry out the basic duties of Soviet citizenship, from their refusal to bear arms and vote in elections to their lack of participation in aspects of life central to the daily rituals of good Communists, such as going to the cinema and theatre and involving their children in the Pioneers and Komsomol.

Larisa Seago, the archivist, who looks after the Keston Archive

Michael Bourdeaux explores the Keston Archive during one of his visits to Baylor

The confrontation between the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Soviet state was thus multi-faceted, and certainly more complex than it initially appears, extending beyond the truism that this was a clash between a militantly atheist state and an illegal religious community. A chapter based on material collected during two months of archival research with the files of the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow and during my visit to Baylor will appear in an edited collection entitled *New Religious Histories: Rethinking Religion and Secularization in Russia and Ukraine*, to be published in 2012. My chapter argues that the Jehovah's Witnesses acted as a useful foil for the 'new Soviet man', the archetypical citizen the Party set out to fashion. The new Soviet man would be replete in the qualities required for wholehearted participation in the construction of Communism and bound to fellow citizens through loyalty to the Party, the state, and the collective. The Witnesses were presented in stark contrast to this model citizen. They embodied broader threats to Soviet society, evident in accusations that the Witnesses were American spies, war-mongers, reactionaries, and prone to shirk their duties as citizens, particularly when it came to raising children. Beyond the specific case of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the chapter offers insights into what the Soviet government's attitudes towards a small Western religious group tell us about the perceived threat to Communism posed by illegal religious communities, particularly those with links to the West.

During my visit to the Keston Archive and Library I consulted files on well known religious groups,

(Bottom left) *The Carroll Library on the Baylor campus which houses the Keston Center for Religion, Politics & Society*

such as the *Initsiativniki* and Pentecostals, as well as the lesser known, such as the *Iegovistov-Il'intsev* (Jehovist-Ilintsevs), a sect which emerged in late Imperial Russia with similar apocalyptical expectations as the Witnesses, and which was sometimes confused by the Soviet authorities with them. These files contained a range of Russian language materials, from media reports to sociological studies to *samizdat*. These complement the documents I gathered in Moscow. The Keston Library houses a broad range of Soviet publications related to religion and belief, from handbooks on atheist education to studies of sectarianism, as well as more recent studies by Russian writers, from theologians to self-styled anti-cultists. Alongside these Russian language materials I found a wealth of material produced by religious rights organisations in the West, as well as canonical studies by Western scholars published during the Communist era.

It was a highly productive visit and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked in the archive in its new home. I returned with copious research notes and copies of primary source materials on sectarianism in Soviet Russia. My visit may also help to interest a new generation of researchers in religion under Communist regimes: some of these materials will be incorporated into the courses I teach at the University of Leicester, including a new Special Subject for History finalists entitled 'Church, State and Belief in Soviet Russia, 1941-1991'. One of the weekly seminars will focus on the international community's response to religious persecution, centring on the activities of Keston College, as it was then known.

To return to that fascinating poster: the prominent position of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Soviet propagandists' canon of harmful religious influences reveals much about the perceived challenge of Western religious sects to Soviet efforts to build a population of loyal, patriotic Communists. However, in the USSR, as elsewhere, the history of the Witnesses has been largely overlooked, though their distinct beliefs and practices have led to landmark legal rulings around the world on issues as diverse as conscientious objection, religious broadcasting, and public education.[6] The position of the Witnesses in Soviet Russia has particular contemporary relevance: following legal challenges to their activities (and even their very presence) from the late 1990s, in February 2009 the Russian government began a sustained campaign of harassment against the Witnesses. The present state of affairs – and indeed, religious liberties in Russia more broadly – cannot be understood without knowledge of Communist secularisation policy and anti-sectarianism in the Soviet Union. The materials in the Keston Archive and Library are invaluable in this regard.

[1]Soviet Poster ID 06keston-pos-00028, Izdatelstvo Plakat, 1981. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University.

[2]V. Konik, *Kakogo boga oni svideteli?* (Kiev: Znanie, 1977), p. 5.

[3]M. I. Odintsov, *Sovet ministrov SSSR postanovliaet: 'Vyselit' navechno!'* (Moscow: Art-Biznes-Tsentr, 2002), pp. 20-21.

[4]A. Gerasimets & N. Reshetnikov, *Religioznaia sekta Iegovistov* (Irkutsk: Irkutskoe otdelenie vserossiiskogo obshchestvo po rasprostraneniiu politicheskikh i nauchnykh znanii, 1959), pp. 5-6, p. 27

[5]V. Konik, *Illiuzii Svidetelei Iegovy* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1981), p. 6

[6]For further discussion see Z. Knox, 'Writing Witness History: The Historiography of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania', *Journal of Religious History* 35, no. 2, (2011), pp. 157-180.

Women of the Russian Catacombs
Monastics, Mothers and Martyrs
Part II

by Prioress Evfrosinia (Molchanova) and Sister Tatiana (Spektor)

The episodes from the lives of True Orthodox Christian (TOC) monastics and families described in Part I of this article (see *Keston Newsletter* No 13) provided examples of women actively involved in the Russian catacomb movement—from managing secret monasteries to raising children, including orphans whose mothers were serving prison terms in labour camps and prisons. Part II seeks to present the lives, hardships and struggles of these prisoners.

When we read the memoirs of Nonna Fomina and Anna Denisova (see Part I) which describe how Soviet teachers attacked young True Orthodox believers in school, and as we admire the courageous faith of these children and their mother, it becomes clear that a TOC believer and a mother of two school-age children could never be a teacher. Teachers had to be Communists and atheists in the USSR. From the first days of the Soviet state the professional life of educators was linked to an atheist mindset, for the Bolsheviks firmly believed that religious faith could be purged from the human mind and consciousness with the proper incentives and through instruction—by 'organising scientific educational and antireligious propaganda on a wide scale' (Lenin's telegram dated 2 April 1919 as quoted in **Szczesniak** 59: 49. See **Works Cited** at the end of this article. The number after the author denotes the year of publication, followed by a page reference. *Ed*)). However, by the 1930s it was clear that religious faith and activity were persisting in spite of the propaganda; the Communist leadership thus launched a long and torturous battle against religion. Soviet teachers became an important tool in this battle as they imposed an atheist moral worldview, 'scientific atheism', on the minds of their pupils.

A Soviet teacher in front of her class: on the wall to her right is a display illustrating the childhood & youth of Lenin

Among a group of documents entitled *Religious Persecution in Russia,* published in Geneva in 1930 by the Permanent Bureau of the International Entente against the Third International, there is one which describes the coercive measures used in the USSR to root out all belief in God: economic pressure, incarceration, interrogation, spying, tax increases. Education was attacked as vehemently as other aspects of people's lives:

> All schoolteachers are required to take up antireligious propaganda among children. Refusal means immediate dismissal. Even the relatives of a teacher have no right to attend church or to express sympathy for its institutions (*Religious Persecution in Russia* 30: 21).

It was therefore surprising to learn from the numerous publications on the case of Raisa Ivanova, a member of the TOC arrested and sentenced to a term in a labour camp in 1972, that she had been a teacher. She was also the mother of two school-age children, who were taken in by their grandmother after Raisa's arrest. Raisa was charged with 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda with the aim of subverting or weakening the Soviet regime' (Article 70, part 1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code) and was sentenced to seven years hard labour and five of exile, the maximum punishment prescribed for this offence (if she had been charged with part 2 of the same article, the sentence could have been longer—up to ten years). In addition to the 'crime' of being a TOC believer, Raisa had 'offended' the state by 'reproducing and distributing' letters addressed to the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, encouraging them to renounce their collaboration with the Soviet authorities. At some point during her prison term, between 1974 and 1977, Raisa was declared insane by the camp administration and soon afterwards died.

Raisa Ivanova's case was widely publicised in the late 1970s by Amnesty International, Keston College, *Die Glaube in der Zweiten Welt, Les Cata-*

combes, Posev, Cahiers du Samizdat, Orthodox Life, *Russkaya Mysl',* and *Le Figaro* as well as by other Western publications in an attempt to draw the attention of the West to her plight and to the struggle of other True Orthodox Christians serving terms in the Gulag or undergoing compulsory treatment in KGB prison psychiatric institutions (see **KNS** in **Works Cited** for the Makeeva case). What was new in these publications was not the description of the harsh conditions under which religious prisoners were confined—at that time this was already known in the West—but the information that an Orthodox underground existed in the Soviet Union.

After Khrushchev fell from power in 1964, his successor as Party leader, Leonid Brezhnev, aimed to avoid the extremes of his predecessor. The Soviet Union entered into the relatively peaceful Brezhnev era, commonly called 'the period of stagnation': this may be an appropriate term for Soviet society in general but not for religious believers. Some researchers have claimed that 'in the 1970s, Soviet officials […] became tired of persecuting religious adherents': this seems overly optimistic, and was certainly not true of True Orthodox Christians (**Kotkin** 01 as quoted in **Froese** 08: 14). In fact, the election and installation of a new Patriarch, Pimen (Izvekov), in 1971 was marked by a new wave of repression against True Orthodox Christians. In addition to the enmity between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Catacomb movement, the TOC had managed to 'offend' Patriarch Pimen personally on at least two occasions. Firstly, Metropolitan Feodosi (Bakhmetiev) of Krasnoyarsk, who affiliated himself with the TOC, circulated a letter in which he declared the election of Pimen to have been invalid and stated that he had been appointed 'through the influence of secular rulers' which was a violation of Orthodox canon law. Secondly, a group of TOC activists (in all likelihood including Raisa Ivanova) submitted directly to the Patriarch a copy of a letter they had written, in which they condemned Moscow Patriarchate clergy for collaborating with the Soviet regime.

The existence of Metropolitan Feodosi of the Catacomb Church was confirmed by Anatoli Krasnov-Levitin once he had arrived in the West in 1974 after his release from the Gulag, and gave an interview to the Russian-language weekly *Russkaya Mysl'* (*RM*):

> I know that there is an underground Metropolitan Feodosi—he is their leader, and upon the election of Patriarch Pimen he issued [in samizdat] a letter which circulated throughout Moscow, Petersburg, and Kiev, in the name of the True Orthodox Church, condemning the Patriarchate (***RM*** 5 December 74: 5, in **Andreev** 82: 548).

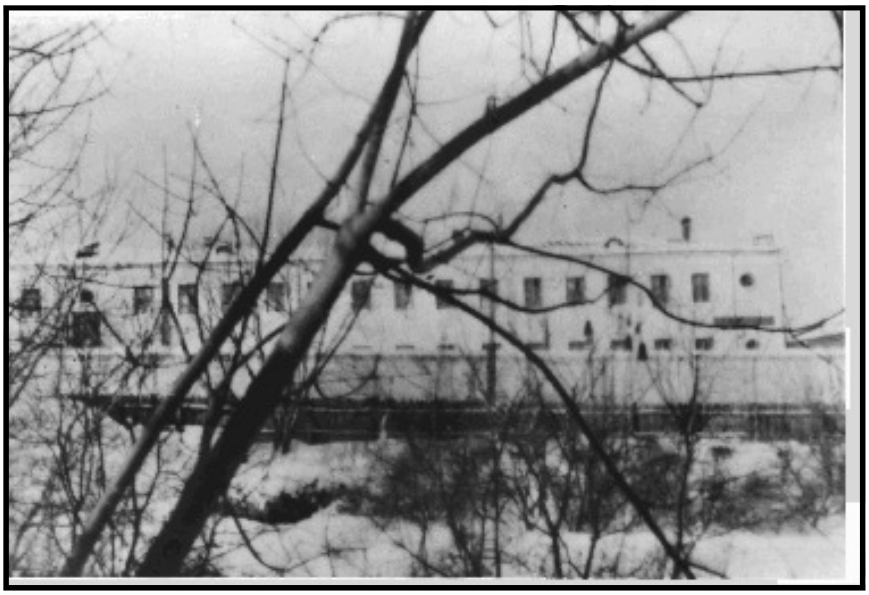
In August 1977 the same weekly published an article entitled 'Women in labour camps' based on eye-witness accounts recorded in samizdat publications. These accounts are particularly interesting as they are by nonbelievers imprisoned with TOC women, ten of whom they described (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5). From these accounts we learn that the TOC women had presented a copy of the above-mentioned letter to the Patriarch personally at the Elokhovsky Cathedral in Moscow. Raisa Ivanova's death is plainly stated at the beginning of the article:

> Ten women, calling themselves 'True Orthodox Christians' are being held in the camp for female political prisoners at Barashevo (385/3-4), in Mordovia at this time. In 1976 there were eleven of them, but one of them was sent to the Serbsky Institute [of Forensic Psychiatry] where she was declared mentally ill and subsequently interned in the Kazan special psychiatric hospital. She died soon after (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

Soviet and Western human rights activists only began to write about Raisa's case after the death of 'the eleventh woman'. Many sources carried an announcement of her death, but without the date, place or cause of death. Some sources claimed that she committed suicide, by hanging herself in the Kazan Psychiatric Hospital, while others claimed that she died on the way there. Still others claimed that she died while still in the camp. Because of all these discrepancies, the date of her death could have been anywhere between 1974 and 1977.

The *Chronicle of Current Events* No. 33 (1976) for example reported: 'Raisa Ivanova refused to work in the camp and was sent away for a psychiatric evaluation, from which she never returned. It is assumed that she was sent to a special psychiatric hospital. The prisoners considered Ivanova to be mentally stable.' This information contradicts the 'Women in labour camps' article suggesting that Ivanova had been sent to the hospital 'at her consent or even request' (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5). Two years later, the *Chronicle of Current Events* No. 35 (1978) reported that Raisa was declared mentally ill in October 1974 and transferred from the women's political zone to the psychiatric block in the hospital zone of the same camp. More information on Raisa's supposed 'insanity' appeared in *Bulletin* No 2 (1977) of the Working Group on the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes on which *Russkaya Mysl'* (8 December 1977) commented in an article entitled 'Before and after Honolulu' (reprinted in full in the *Posev* samizdat series in 1978):

Raisa (Raia) Ivanova was arrested in 1973, in connection with the case of the True Orthodox Christians of Vladimir. She is a teacher and mother of two children. She was sent to a political camp in Mordovia (385/3). In 1974 she was sent to Moscow, to the Serbsky Institute [of Forensic Psychiatry] for a psychiatric assessment. She was sent back to the camp, and the administration did all it could to find further evidence of mental illness. The prisoner Kogan (a KGB agent, according to several former inmates) said that Ivanova tried to kill her. Ivanova was transferred to block 12 (the psychiatric block); from there she was transferred to the Kazan special hospital. Her subsequent fate is not known to us. According to some sources she died during the transfer (***RM*** 8 December 77: 5, **Bulletin No 2,** Posev 78: 32).



Kazan Special Psychiatric Hospital

Keston College's announcement of Raisa's suicide, 'Reported to have hanged herself in 1977 to escape suffering inflicted by abuse of drugs' (Keston Book No. 11: 15) was based on the message of *Bulletin* No. 15 of the Working Group on the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes: 'Transferred to the Kazan special psychiatric hospital where she was subjected to forced treatment and hanged herself at the end of 1977' (8 March 1979). The *Chronicle of Current Events* No. 52 (1980) confirmed this: 'In 1974 Raisa Ivanova was transferred to the Kazan psychiatric hospital from the Mordovian camp complex, was subjected to intensive treatment from which she suffered severely, and at the end of 1977 she committed suicide'. A similar comment on Raisa's death as suicide, possibly resulting from compulsory medical treatment, is found in the 'Women in labour camps' article: 'It is well known that at the Kazan psychiatric hospital, doses of haloperidol and other psychotropic drugs are usually gradually increased, until a patient renounces his views; otherwise, they die.' (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

For an Orthodox Christian, and especially for someone committed to the TOC, suicide would not have been an option since it is considered a grave sin. We feel that death by suicide while in her right mind was highly improbable in Raisa's case. The only way of supporting this assertion, however, is through circumstantial evidence, by describing the lives and struggles of True Orthodox Christians—for example those of Raisa's ten TOC sisters and their prison term, served in Mordovia in the 1970s. Prisoners' accounts of the daily routine in labour camps, of prison transfers, and of prison psychiatric institutions, provide sources which contribute to an understanding of the mentality and faith of TOC camp prisoners.

Strict regime political women's zone No. 385/3-4

Our eleven TOC women were imprisoned in the women's zone, No. 385/3-4, of the Dubrovlag strict regime political camp in Mordovia in 1972. After Raisa Ivanova was removed from the group and then subsequently died, the other women remained to complete their camp terms. In 1979-82 several of them were released, while others were exiled to Siberia or Central Asia, to make room for the next inhabitants of the women's zone. Tatiana Velikanova, a well-known dissident and editor of the *Chronicle of Current Events*, arrived in the zone in 1979. Tatiana Osipova (1980), Olga Matusevich (1980), Raisa Rudenko (1981) and Natalia Lazareva (1982) followed her, as well as other political dissidents. Irina Ratushinskaya, the poet, joined them in 1983. By September 1987 no one was left in the women's zone and it was closed down.

What was it like in a strict regime labour camp? Publications about Ratushinskaya provide us with much detail. She was released in October 1986, by 'a secret order … signed by Gromyko two days before the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Reykjavik', as a result of a massive campaign in her support organised by the Western media

(**Ratushinskaya** 88: 285). Information on the women's zone comes from a report prepared by Amnesty International's Research Department in June 1985 and published in 1986 (**Ratushinskaya** 86: 31-36).

Political zone No. 385/3-4 of the Dubrovlag in Barashevo, Mordovia, located 450km south-east of Moscow, was the only known labour camp zone in the USSR specifically for women 'criminals, especially dangerous to the state'. Prisoners followed a 'strict regime' here, the severest prison regime for women under Soviet law. About 60 square meters in size, it was located in the corner of a much larger camp for ordinary female criminals, and consisted of a large building, three strips of a vegetable garden, and two outdoor laundry troughs. The building housed a dormitory, kitchen, dining-room, sewing shop and storeroom, with accommodation for 20 women. In 1978 the heating system was replaced with a wood-burning stove. In the early 1970s it was overcrowded. Besides the ten TOC women, two other religious believers (Jehovah's Witnesses) and 14 political prisoners were detained there (*Posev* special issue No. 6, February 1971: 20-21).

The daily routine began with a wake-up call at 6 a.m. Work started after breakfast at 8 a.m. and lasted eight hours. At 7 p.m. the women had an evening meal. Lights out was at 10 p.m. According to Amnesty International's report, prisoners received three meals a day: for breakfast and lunch they were served porridge or noodles with some oil, and in the evening cabbage soup with pork or fish. But this was only on paper. Any decent produce—if it ever actually reached the camp—was stolen by the prison staff, and the prisoners were fed on dirty, rotten, poor quality leftovers. A 1987 Keston publication contains a strict regime labour camp inmate's description of camp rations:

> For breakfast, the prisoners get a skilly ['soup' which is practically just hot water] with two or three black pieces of potato. Lunch is the same bullion, with a serving of either boiled wheat or buckwheat. The evening meal is another serving of the same wheat or buckwheat. Potatoes, usually rotten ones, are served once a week. Once a week, there might also be a serving of macaroni. The macaroni and cereals issued to the camps are usually those that have been stored for too long and were declared unfit for sale to 'free' people. On the rare occasions when meat is served it is usually from cattle heads, and crawling with maggots. Prisoners ordered to chop up this meat get so sick that they would rather risk punishment then touch it. The bread is very dark, hard and indigestible. … Camp food is cooked on chemical-based oils, and even that is kept to a minimum (**Prisoners** 87: 41).

The female camp prisoners were supposed to work in the sewing room for eight hours a day, six days a week, producing protective gloves for workers. The daily quota in 1978 was 60 pairs of gloves, 70 pairs by 1984. If they failed to meet the quota or failed to go to work, they were punished. Detention for up to 15 days in a special isolation cell called the 'SHIZO' (an abbreviation for *SHtrafnoi IZOliator*—disciplinary isolation cell) was the most feared punishment.

The SHIZO block was located in zone 2 of colony No 3. Each cell of the block had a sleeping shelf, which had to be raised and locked on to the wall during the day. The prisoners were not allowed to have pens, paper, books, cigarettes or toiletries. The cell had a wooden floor with gaps between the boards and a layer of solid cement, about 40-50cm thick, underneath. Prisoners received the usual amounts of food only on alternate days while in the SHIZO. On the 'empty' days they were fed 400 grammes of bread and some hot water. The worst aspect of the SHIZO was the intense cold. According to regulations the temperature was not supposed to drop below 16° centigrade, but prisoners recorded temperatures as low as 8° and reported seeing snow on the inside windowsill. A special SHIZO uniform (no warm clothes) made the cold harder to bear. Anatoli Berger, a dissident poet, spent four days in a Mordovian SHIZO in the 1970s:

> They took away my jacket and hat in the guard room. They pushed me into a tiny cell —three steps long and one and a half wide. A wooden shelf would be flipped down at night. There is a piece of wood for a table and another one for a chair. You could neither sit, nor lie down. … I was tired of walking back and forth all day, but I was afraid to lie down on the floor—there was cement under the thin layer of wood. There is no place to sit down—you have to stand up, like a horse in its stall. Time dragged on and on. There seemed to be no beginning and no end. … Something completely still, silent, long, and dark … By the fourth day, I could not stand up anymore and lay down on the floor. For two or three months after detention in the SHIZO I felt pains under my shoulder blades because of the cement and the unbearable cold. When I got out of the SHIZO on the fourth day, I was dizzy for half an hour. If my friends hadn't caught me, I would have fallen (**Berger** 91: 27-28).

Women were allowed to wear slippers and a thin dress in the SHIZO and had to hand over their stockings, headscarves, and jackets.

True Orthodox Christians

The group of TOC women detained with Raisa Ivanova in the zone in 1972 represents the True Orthodox movement in terms of nationality, age, and level of education. All of them, except Ekaterina Aleshina, a Mordovian, were ethnic Russians, and none of them, except Ivanova and Nadezhda Usoeva, had more than four years of schooling. Usoeva graduated from a secondary school, and Ivanova, as a teacher, probably had an additional four years of training at a teacher training college. Three of the women, including Ivanova, were in their forties in 1977; Aleshina was fifty, Tatiana Krasnova and Aleksandra Khvatkova—over seventy. The rest of the women were in their late sixties.

By 1977 five of the ten TOC women were serving second, and two of them, even third sentences, having been pronounced 'especially dangerous recidivists' by a court, which meant that they had received the maximum sentence of ten years, followed by exile. Their crime: to have distributed the appeal condemning the collaboration of Moscow Patriarchate clergy with the Soviet authorities and presented to Patriarch Pimen (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5; **Glaube** 725, 31 May 78: 20), one of many such documents addressed to the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate in the early 1970s which demonstrate the TOC's refusal to accept the official church's submission to an antireligious regime. Because of this the TOC would endure the severest persecution up until Gorbachev's perestroika in the 1990s (**Gustavson** 60: 64, **Alexeev & Stavrou** 76: 22-23, **Regelson** 77: 417-28, **Andreev** 82: 17-18, **Moss** 91: 239-40).

The two major themes in TOC ideology—opposition to the Soviet regime and rejection of the official church—are usually interpreted in a strictly political sense:

> These sects are […] sociologically extremely interesting because they are the only religious organizations which actually *arose* in hostile response to the new political and social order and continue to sustain themselves by this militantly hostile attitude to Soviet society up to the present day (**Lane** 78: 80).
>
> Hostility to the contemporary Orthodox Church is strong. This hostility is not founded, as in many Western 'revolutionist' sects, on dissatisfaction with the Church's ability to satisfy religious needs. The Church is rejected solely for its political role, for its accommodative stance to Soviet power (**Lane** 78: 83).

It is equally important to consider the religious and spiritual aspects of these themes, as do Evgeni Vagin and Vladimir Moss. Vagin, a prominent religious and political dissident of the 1960s-70s, met many True Orthodox Christians in the Mordovian camps during his eight-year term, while Moss, a contemporary author, has written extensively on True Orthodoxy. Vagin constantly stressed that TOC opposition to the Soviet regime was of a religious and not a political nature in the interviews and lectures he gave after he emigrated in 1978. The TOC saw the regime as a satanic entity and used apocalyptic images—'the harlot in the wilderness riding the scarlet beast' (Rev. 17: 2-3)—to describe the Soviet church (**Andreev** 82: 562). In his article 'The True Orthodox Church of Russia', published in *Religion in Communist Lands* in 1991, Vladimir Moss agrees with Vagin:

> Although True Orthodox Christians are characterised by a rejection of the Soviet system and a veneration of the martyred Tsar Nicholas II and his family, it is a mistake to describe them as a politically oriented sect, as Soviet writers frequently do. Their opposition to the Soviet system is based on strictly religious considerations, on the incompatibility between Soviet ideology and the Christian faith, and on Patriarch Tikhon's anathema against the Soviet power. Nor is it correct to describe them as 'counter-revolutionaries' in the sense that they advocate war and physical violence against the regime. Their opposition to the regime is spiritual and non-violent. They are rather victims of violence than its proponents (**Moss** 91: 243).

Besides being catacomb Christians, the ten TOC women committed other crimes and violations, punishable under Soviet law. None of them carried an identity card (a Soviet internal passport), so they were not officially registered and had no *propiska* (residence permit). Most important—none of them had a permanent job:

> True Orthodox Christians refused to have their names inscribed in official registers and would not accept any officially registered work. They did not have a permanent place of residence and were constantly on the move. Travelling all around the country, they contented themselves with a minimum of food, given them by those who were sympathetic to their cause (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

Many also refused to handle Soviet money, which, though not a punishable offense, engendered much suspicion on the part of the authorities.

True Orthodox Christian Wanderers

TOC believers who followed these rules meticulously were called True Orthodox Christian Wanderers. The practice of wandering, or of pilgrimage, was well-known in Russian Orthodoxy before the Revolution (the best known description of this way of life is the famous account, by an anonymous author, *The Way of a Pilgrim*) and became increasingly common throughout the TOC in response to the severe persecution of the Khrushchev antireligious campaign (1959-64) and continued until the 1990s. In his study of the Orthodox underground in the USSR, William Fletcher writes:

> The True Orthodox Christian Wanderers gave up all attempts at maintaining any relationship whatsoever to society, and entered an absolutely clandestine life of hiding and of wandering about the countryside with no permanent residence. This movement, ideally suited as it was to conditions of extreme police and investigatory pressure, was able to organise quickly on a vast, virtually nation-wide scale. As such it has an influence on the religious life of Orthodoxy throughout the country and remains an attractive option for those Orthodox believers, clergy, and laity alike, who have felt themselves particularly oppressed (**Fletcher** 71: 276-77).

For Vagin, the Wanderers were the True Orthodox Christians *par excellence*. He felt that their refusal to accept Soviet official papers—identity documents and rouble notes—was based on their faith: they claimed that these documents bore the seal of the antichrist. He was also impressed that these people, constantly on the move, could find board and lodging anywhere in Russia; everywhere there were people who sympathised with their cause and wanted to pray with them (**Andreev** 82: 559).

Even while in the camps the TOC women observed the practices and traditions of their movement as strictly as they could:

> They refused all contact with the camp administration, and ignored the camp leadership as much as possible. For example, every woman, when she arrives at the camp, is asked to sign a receipt for bedding. They wouldn't sign it and slept on the ground, since they couldn't get anything at all without signing for it. That went on until a commission visited the camp. After that they were given bedding and other prisoners would sign for them (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

TOC Christians refused to participate in anything which supported the Soviet economy because of their profound conviction that the Soviet government was satanic. The ten TOC women prisoners were constantly watched, but they were never seen working in the camp—a very serious offence which merited severe punishment, solitary confinement in the SHIZO:

> They categorically refuse to work, which meant that they were regularly punished: stricter incarceration (PKT) [*pomeshchenie kamernogo tipa* = prison-type cell. *Ed*] or disciplinary isolation cell (SHIZO). In the PKT food is reduced to a minimum, and in the SHIZO they gave them cooked food once every two days; on the other days they got 400 grammes of bread and some hot water (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

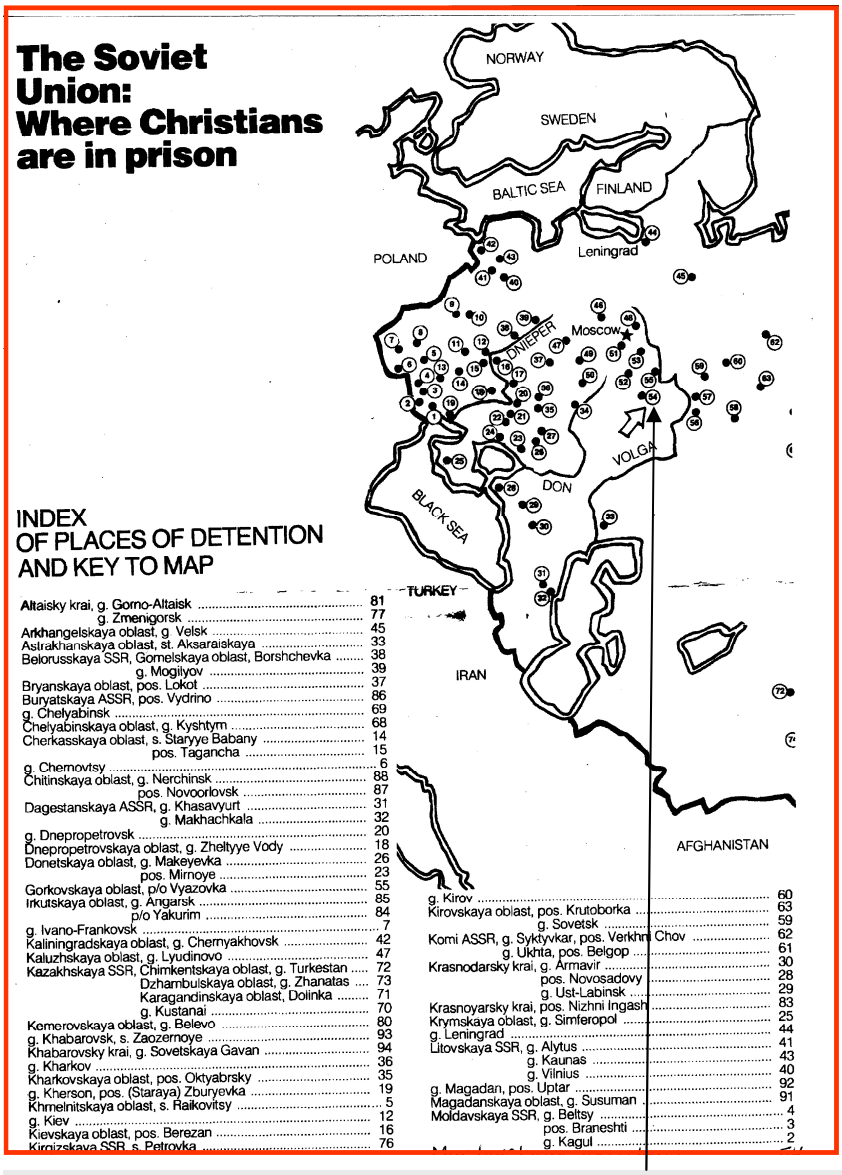
A document from the Keston archive dated 2 September 1981 (KC 3454) describes how these TOC women reacted:

> [Nadezhda Usoeva] … came back ill (from the punishment cell) but they wouldn't let her rest. They shouted: 'back to the correction cell!' She would quietly put on her boots and without a murmur return to the punishment cell: 'I'm coming, I'm coming.'

All the TOC women accepted punishment not only 'without murmuring', but even joyfully:

> When they were told of their punishment (15 days in the SHIZO, up to six months in the PKT), they would bid farewell to the other prisoners, embrace them all, and, bowing low before them, ask their forgiveness. Then joyfully they would move on to the cell (***RM*** 25 August 77, 5).

This seemingly strange behaviour is based on Orthodox spiritual precepts: a Christian is to accept everything that comes his way in this life, be it pleasant or not, as something sent by God for his salvation. If a person learns to accept everything that happens, even affliction, with gratitude, this will be rewarded in heaven. The TOC women knew and lived by this spiritual law, and by accepting punishment with joy demonstrated a profound faith in God. Their response to punishment had a spiritual dimension and offered a solution to the problem which Alexander Ogorodnikov, another Orthodox Christian, raised in his letter from a camp published by Keston in 1987:



Map published in Keston's Christian Prisoners in the USSR, 1983-1984.
The Dubrovlag in Mordovia is marked as No 54

> The camp regime deprives a man of choice, rules out any possibility of his exercising moral choice in behaviour, and forbids (on pain of severe reprisals) any manifestation of such Christian impulses as mercy, compassion, defense of the persecuted, or love. … Since it cannot actually rule over consciousness and yet thirsts for our souls, a camp regime struggles to prevent any objective embodiment of thought … [I have become] only a pitiful little lump of flesh, tortured by hunger and cold (**Prisoners** 87: 48-51).

TOC Christians saw the endurance of suffering differently. They felt obliged to follow the Gospel commandments and their Christian conscience in any circumstances, regardless of the 'pain of severe reprisals':

During investigations they wouldn't sign any documents, but behaved with dignity, and as a rule, they tried to be open about their activities, never resorting to deceit (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

The ten TOC women prisoners would resist the demands of the camp administration up to the point of total collapse, but their spirits remained strong and their souls pure:

The punishment ended, some of them came out staggering out of weakness, but again they refused to work and again they were subjected to harsh punishment. After several days in the punishment cells they would collapse and would be sent to the camp hospital. Once discharged, the entire process would start all over again. It went on like this until they were completely exhausted by the suffering and were declared invalids, unfit for work (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

Prayer and fasting

Alexander Ogorodnikov found refuge from his sufferings in the camp—which he described as 'deprivation of the living conditions fit for a human being, torture by hunger, cold, by incarceration in punishment cells, humiliation, total lack of rights, complete isolation' and most of all as 'deprivation of books and culture'—by 'trying to express the voice of my heart in various appeals, declarations, letters' (**Prisoners** 87: 68-69). Another Orthodox dissident, Irina Ratushinskaya, survived the camp and the torture of not being able to 'put thoughts into words' by writing poems on pieces of soap and memorising them; she felt this helped liberate her spirit.

The TOC prisoners used a more traditional method—prayer. One Soviet scholar noted that True Orthodox Christians conducted daily prayer meetings, causing William Fletcher to comment: 'Such devotion would be especially impressive in the environment of the rapidly secularising Soviet society' (**Nikolskaia** 61: 168, **Fletcher** 71: 213).

The ten TOC women prisoners kept a still more impressive schedule: they prayed *twice* daily, for *two* hours at a time, in a political camp of the harshest regime possible in the USSR. Here is their schedule:

> Every day, after waking up at six o'clock, they washed and then remained in prayer until eight o'clock, and only after prayers would they eat. It is the same in the evening (***RM*** 25 August 77, 5).

Another source in the Keston archive described their nightly prayers:

> At two o'clock at night, after a very brief nap, they get up for prayer, making low prostrations to the earth. Their hands and knees are callused from the prostrations (KC 3454, 2 September, 1981).

Most of them prayed at other times as well. Tatiana Sokolova (born 1930) and Glafira Kuldysheva (born 1935) would continue to pray without noticing that a guard might have entered the room, (it was a grave offence to pray): 'We are ordered to stand up whenever Podust entered the room, and address her as "citizen superintendent"' (**Ratushinskaya** 88: 47). Sokolova and Kuldysheva were constantly being reprimanded and sent to the SHIZO for these offences, even though both were in poor health and officially declared invalids.

Along with prayer the TOC women tried to keep the fasts of the Orthodox Church:

> Each of the women fasted very strictly on Wednesdays and Fridays, some also on Mondays. At every opportunity, they collected dried crusts of bread, or small, dried fish (*kil'ka*) and would store up the kind of vegetable oil that is used in gruel, for the fast days (***RM*** 25 August 77, 5).

In the 1970s and 1980s hunger strikes became a popular way of drawing attention to prisoners' needs and demands. The True Orthodox women, however, never participated in these because they believed that such a form of protest was contrary to Orthodox teaching:

> Other prisoners were not offended when they refused to participate in collective actions against the administration (hunger strikes) because they saw that they fasted voluntarily and continuously (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

At the same time the TOC women felt deeply for their fellow prisoners on such occasions. Irina Kireeva (born 1912), always cried during the collective hunger strikes, feeling sorry for her new friends (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

Monastic 'habits'

Together with their rule and fasting, the TOC women observed a strict dress code, which was perceived by other prisoners as a monastic habit:

> Upon arriving in the camp, they lengthened their uniforms down to their heels, lengthened the sleeves and buttoned up their collars. All of them, without exception, wore monastic clothes (***RM*** 25 August 77, 5).

This observance of their own dress code was especially striking in the 1970s, when a female uniform was introduced into the camps to the extreme displeasure of the prisoners. The women were required to wear a short-sleeved, striped dress of dark grey or brown cotton, a plain cotton headscarf, thick stockings and heavy black boots all year long. When the cold weather came they were issued short black quilted cotton jackets. Irina Ratushinskaya wrote:

> Up until then the women prisoners had been allowed to wear their own clothing, both under Stalin and under Khrushchev. Khrushchev even repealed the regulation that they wear identity tags on their lapels. So in Khrushchev's time the women prisoners… looked reasonably human. They could even buy material in the camp and sew clothes for themselves. That was until Valentina Tereshkova [a cosmonaut and chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee. *EM & TS*] visited a Kharkov camp. The camp administration, bowing and scraping before her, had the prisoners lined up. And then our 'Valya' decided to make her mark. 'What's this?' she demanded, 'Some of these women are better dressed than I am!' What an object of envy! But as a result all of the prisoners' clothes were confiscated, and a standard uniform was devised: it is not hard to imagine what the State dreamed up. … Headscarves have to be worn all the time, in line, at work—in fact everywhere, to be removed only at night. … Then there are these ghastly boots: with typical inconsistency, women are allowed to wear light shoes in summer in Ukraine, but not in Russia. The only warm items permitted are socks and vests. So in winter the women have to line up, teeth chattering, in short 'standard tissue' cotton skirts. … But at least Valentina Tereshkova's aesthetic sense is satisfied (**Ratushinskaya** 88: 31).

The TOC women did not mind how they looked and never complained about the aesthetics of camp clothing; they even tried to make it less attractive. But there was another issue related to the camp uniform, much more sensitive than the choice of fabrics and colours—the insignia. The prisoners were required to wear an identity tag on their chest and the sleeve of their uniform, stating their name, sentence and the article under which they were convicted. This insignia was a painful subject, constantly debated in Ratushinskaya's camp in the 1980s, and the prisoners were constantly punished for refusing to wear it. The uniforms were ugly and uncomfortable, but the tags became a moral issue. The political prisoners may not have felt this as deeply as the TOC women, but they still protested. Ratushinskaya explained:

> Our KGB guardians tried hard to force us, by threats and force, to forget our principles and succumb to their humiliating demands. Podust [a superintendent] informed us of the decision to increase and intensify punishment for, among other things, not wearing our badges. We would not be permitted to receive visitors or to enter the store for the rest of our term unless we put on our identity badges. We explained our position to the camp administration repeatedly, but they said they were acting on orders. So we wrote an appeal to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. These badges are not the only humiliating demand they made since the summer of 1983. […] On 9 August it was announced that we were all deprived of the privilege of visiting the camp store for not wearing our insignia (**Ratushinskaya** 88: 47).

Surprisingly, our sources say nothing about whether the TOC women refused to wear their tags, but as they refused to carry identity papers and even their release forms it is unlikely that they wore them. Maybe the punishment for this particular offence made no difference to them. They would not have complained, and—rejected by their relatives—they received no visitors and had no money to spend at the store.

Personalities

Although the TOC women prisoners either had no family or were rejected by them, they believed that they were saving their souls and those of their relatives and neighbours by their prayers and suffering. Raisa Ivanova felt that she was saving the souls of her children. The other prisoners admired the TOC women for their spiritual strength and Christian compassion:

> All the True Orthodox Christians behave with great dignity in the camps. They were distinguished by their kind personalities and their gentleness, they were loved and respected by the other prisoners (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

> The most interesting personality among them was Nadezhda Usoeva. She was still young for a Catacomb Christian (42) and born in Vladimir. She spent her entire prison term in PKTs and in punishment cells for refusing to work. According to the testimony of a friend, she was the most radiant of the TOC women, noble and humility personified (KC 3454, 2 September 1981).

> Tatiana Krasnova (b.1903) was a calm and temperate person and no longer required to work because of her advanced age. She expected to die in the camp. However, this did not distress her as she tried her best to lead a life worthy of a Christian (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

> Maria Semyonova (b. 1922 or 1923), a person of remarkable child-like purity and simplicity, was serving her third ten-year term. She was afraid of losing her strong faith—this had been predicted by a starets—and said that during her first term under Stalin she had frequently been tortured, made to stand outside in winter, drenched with water, and left to freeze (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

> Anastasia and Klavdia Volkova (b. 1910) were serving their second ten-year terms and were respected by everyone for their forceful personalities. The authorities considered them 'especially dangerous recidivists' (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

The authors of the article on the TOC women in *Russkaya Mysl'*, themselves indifferent to religion, concluded:

> The camp regime brings on a slow death for them because of their behaviour, but having understood and come to terms with this, they accept everything with joy. These are truly spiritual martyrs for Christ of the rarest kind (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5).

Recanting in a prison psychiatric hospital

A 1987 Keston publication noted that a political prisoner's vulnerability increased when he or she was isolated from their fellow sufferers:

> Any time of isolation or removal from camp

> was considered to be dangerous because prisoners are more likely to be beaten when separated from their fellows, who offer support by collective strikes and protests (**Prisoners** 87: 43).

If it was important for a political dissident to stay with her friends, struggling against the camp administration by the means available to them, how crucial it must have been for a religious person to remain with her sisters in the faith in what they perceived as an 'invisible struggle' against the forces of evil. The camp administration singled out Raisa Ivanova and put intense pressure on her, maybe even forcing her to renounce her faith. Evgeni Vagin spoke eloquently of the temptations in the camps:

> They were constantly tempted: 'If you renounce your views and recognise the Moscow Patriarchate, you'll be released immediately,'—but they have stood firm unto death (**Vagin** 78: 259).

The practice of forcing 'recantations' from dissidents had a long history in the USSR. The first victims of such torture in the cells of the secret police were the leading Bolsheviks, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Under extreme pressure, they began to accuse themselves and each other of the most horrific crimes at their 1936 show trial. Subsequently these methods were applied to 'enemies of the people' under Stalin and used successfully again in the early 1960s—in psychiatric institutions:

> Nikolai Samsonov, a prominent physicist and recipient of the Stalin prize, was arrested in 1958 for sending a letter to *Pravda*, in which he criticised Khrushchev for not being critical enough of Stalinism. Samsonov was diagnosed as mentally insane and sent to a Leningrad psychiatric hospital. During the first two years of his eight-year term nobody bothered him, there was no treatment, and nothing was demanded of him. But in the 1960s a different tactic came into vogue. Before every regular examination the medical staff would insist that he 'recant'. He refused, and a course of intensive treatment would be prescribed, or he was placed in a ward with seriously ill patients. After six years of such 'treatment', suffering from high doses of psychotropic drugs and in poor health, he gave in to the requests of his relatives and agreed to a formal compromise. He was immediately released (**Khronika** 77: 44).

This tactic was often used on political dissidents in the 1960s-1980s. Irina Ratushinskaya and her friends in the Mordovian women's prison constantly argued with the KGB 'consultants' who came to the prison to try to talk them into signing a denial or a 'confession', or at least a 'request for release'. The KGB kept putting pressure on Ratushinskaya to do this until the very last day of her imprisonment, and probably because of her unusually firm refusal to compromise in any way, she was eventually released on a 'secret order' (**Ratushinskaya** 88: 225). In 1983 Ratushinskaya was sent to the same zone where Raisa Ivanova had been in 1972, to serve the same sentence as Raisa. She had been convicted of the same crime—offending the Soviet state by 'reproducing and distributing' the truth. A similar spirit drove both Ratushinskaya and Ivanova and made them take enormous risks, as a friend of Irina's explained:

> A true poet cannot lie. To be silent, or to shy away from seeing the world in which one lives as it is—that is also a lie! The vocation of a poet is to speak the truth… (**Ratushinskaya** 86: 27).

Raisa was also incapable of deceit; this is what brought her to True Orthodoxy. The camp administration first noticed her probably because she was better educated than the others as was the TOC member, Nadezhda Usoeva, who 'attracted greater attention from the administration because she was comparatively young and educated' (***RM*** 25 August 77: 5). And they would have been particularly interested in Raisa's conversion (as a school teacher, she probably started out as an atheist, even if only an indifferent one). When imprisonment and 'rehabilitation' in the SHIZO failed, the administration's practice was to move on to another form of pressure—psychiatric treatment, considered especially 'appropriate' for a person of faith. As Paul Froese observed:

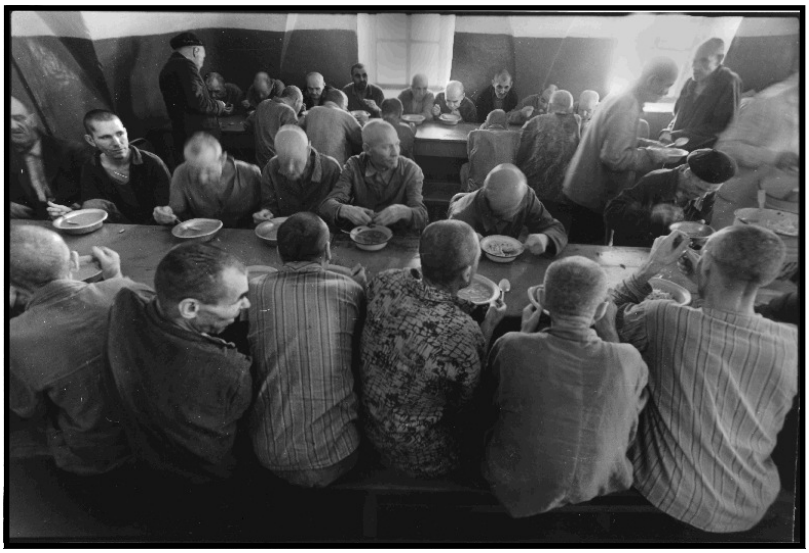
> One harsh penalty for religious belief that continued throughout most of the Soviet era was confinement within psychiatric hospitals. Because religion was officially viewed as illusory, religious believers could subsequently be deemed insane (**Froese** 08: 51).

This happened to Glafira Kuldysheva, one of the TOC women, whose husband thought that her religious faith was a symptom of latent mental instability. That Raisa should have been declared mentally ill was not therefore surprising.

Prison psychiatric hospitals

Gerald Buss described the conditions which religious believers encountered in an ordinary Soviet psychiatric hospital:

> [In] a psychiatric hospital … a believer may be surrounded by patients with severe mental illnesses; many of them will have committed violent crimes such as rape, assault, and murder. […] Nurses and medical staff are subject to the security demands of the institution, and find it difficult to act humanely towards patients even if they wished to do so (**Buss** 87: 148).



Mealtime in a Soviet psychiatric hospital

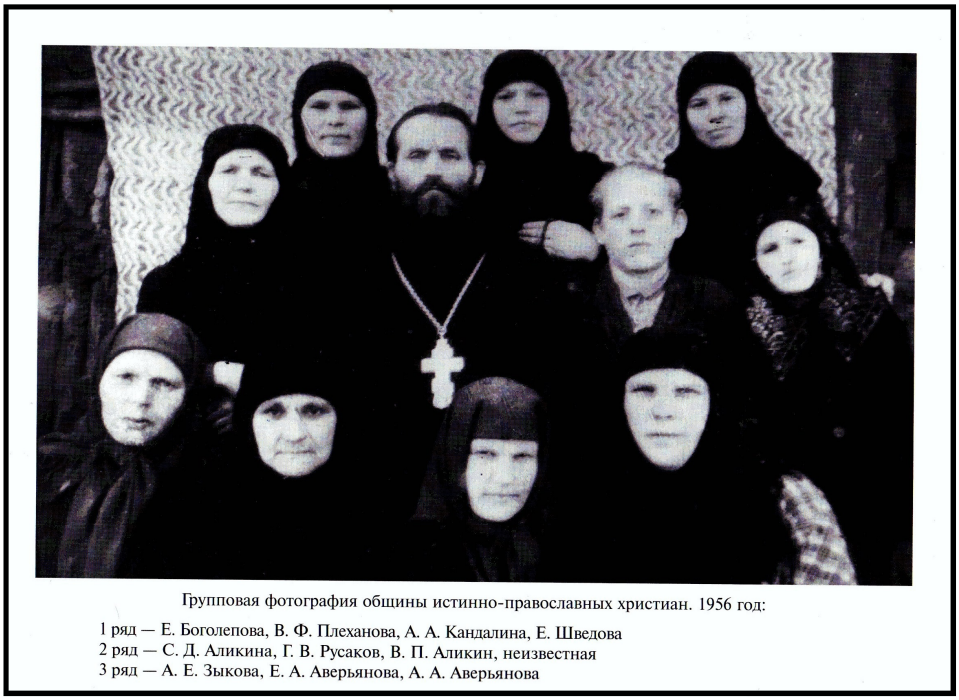
An ordinary hospital, however, was very different from a special KGB or MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) psychiatric institution. 'Treatment and conditions are far more severe, even brutal, in the special psychiatric hospitals, which are controlled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs' (**Ellis** 86: 146). Iosif Terelia, a religious prisoner, described a KGB psychiatric hospital in an open letter to Yuri Andropov when the latter was the head of the KGB. Here are some excerpts, published by the Working Group on the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes in their *Bulletin* No. 1 (1977):

> What is Sychevka? This is the place that Dante dreamt of, the source and inspiration for his Inferno. […] Any reason is good enough for the orderlies to beat and abuse the patients. […] Patients have been raped just for fun. And they have been forced to eat live frogs, just for the fun of it.
>
> Bondarenko, a Ukrainian True Orthodox Christian, formerly a Communist Party Secretary in the city of Donetsk, was arrested and imprisoned in the late 1930s, and sentenced to an additional 25-year term in 1949 for preaching the Gospel in the camp. In 1951 he was sent to a camp in the Gorky region, and from there to the Kazan Special Psychiatric Hospital. In 1961 he was transferred to Sychevka where he was tortured to death by the administration of the 3rd division in the presence of another convict... May this servant of God rest in peace!
>
> The head orderly of the 3rd division strangled the patient Surganov, a minor, in 1964, for requesting permission to go to the toilet. And what was his punishment for such a crime? The murderer was transferred to another hospital. In 1973, at the orders of Elena Anatolievna, chief of the 9th division, the orderlies tortured patient Smirnov for two months: he was beaten every night and finally died […]. In the 7th division the sadist Tsarev tortured a Georgian patient to death. Anatoli Volodin, a Russian sentenced under Article 70, transferred in 1971 from the Vladimir prison, was hanged in his cell by the orderlies (**Terelia** 78: 16-19).

While the sadistic hospital staff abused patients physically, the 'doctors' abused their minds and souls, forcing them to take psychotropic drugs in dangerously large doses. Those who refused to take the drugs were forcibly injected (*Keston News Service* No. 28, 3 August 76: 3).

In the early 1970s, Vladimir Gershuni, an Orthodox Christian, was held at the Orel Special Psychiatric Hospital. His notes, published by *Posev* in an October 1971 special issue, provide detailed information on 'medical treatment' in the prison hospitals. Gershuni wrote:

> In the morning I complained about a side effect of the haloperidol and asked them to decrease the dose. Instead, a dose of aminazin was prescribed as well. […] During my hunger strike I was treated with aminazin, and asked that the dosage be changed because my health was deteriorating. Instead they began to inject me with it, the maximum dose possible. I then developed insomnia, I couldn't sleep at all, but they continued the injections for 12 more days, until they saw that I would not stop the strike. Now the injections are administered twice a day, and in addition I'm supposed to take two pills of haloperidol twice daily. […] The haloperidol causes a nervous state that I have never experienced before—as



Групповая фотография общины истинно-православных христиан. 1956 год:
1 ряд — Е. Боголепова, В. Ф. Плеханова, А. А. Кандалина, Е. Шведова
2 ряд — С. Д. Аликина, Г. В. Русаков, В. П. Аликин, неизвестная
3 ряд — А. Е. Зыкова, Е. А. Аверьянова, А. А. Аверьянова

A group of True Orthodox Christians with their priest, photographed in 1956. First row: *E. Bogolepova, V.F. Plekhanova, A.A. Kandalina, E. Shvedova.* Second row: *S.D. Alikina, Fr G.V. Rusakov. V.P. Alikin, unidentified*. Third row: *A.E. Zykova, E.A. Averyanova, A.A. Averyanova.*

> soon as you lie down you feel the need to stand up, as you stand up you want to sit down, when you sit down you need to walk, but there is nowhere to walk to, etc. I am not the only one here suffering. Everybody is tormented by these narcotic stimulants—triftazin, aminazin, and others. […]
>
> A patient in a special hospital is completely defenseless and at the mercy of the doctors. You are always in danger of being prescribed dangerous drugs for any trivial reason—you either said something wrong, or had the wrong expression on your face. I often received larger doses after complaining that medication was causing side effects (**Gershuni** 71: 5).

What can we tell from these accounts? The dangerous drugs did not always affect the actual mind, even in dangerously large doses: Gershuni never altered his opinions, and kept on fighting for his freedom through hunger strikes until he was finally released in the 1970s. Iosif Terelia's account bears witness to the fact that people were often murdered in these KGB special hospitals—one patient was hanged in his cell by the orderlies.

True Orthodox Christians were used to endless sessions in the SHIZO and strengthened by lengthy daily prayers and strict fasting. An especially striking account by Natalia Gorbanevskaya of a True Orthodox Christian Wanderer, whom she met in the Kazan Special Psychiatric Hospital in 1971, mentions 'a special sort of power'. She related the experience in a BBC interview:

> It's not easy to be a believer in the USSR, but these people have surely endured more persecution than anyone else. They are granted a special sort of power. There is a special sense that they are reaching out to something essential, to the Lord. They feel that they are striving towards Him, towards a Christian life, although nobody ever really reaches this ideal. At the same time there is a recognition of one's own weakness, but also a perception of some power that is granted us, of grace—granted not only from above, from outside, but also coming from inside ourselves.
>
> I was not persecuted for my faith, but in the Kazan Psychiatric Hospital I met women who were there because of their beliefs. One such meeting left a particularly vivid impression. The woman's name was Lyuba Tsygankova. I met her in 1971. By that time she had been there for 12 years. I do not know what movement or sect she belonged to—she said she was a wanderer. Religious wanderers have always existed in Russia, and in the past these people were welcomed gladly, but today, under the Soviet regime, they are simply considered 'passportless vagabonds'. She was arrested for this 'crime' of not carrying a passport. The usual sen-

tence was for two years, but she was sent to a psychiatric prison and was kept there for 12 years.

This woman fascinated me. I was being given haloperidol in pills. This is a very oppressive drug with many side effects, Parkinson's disease among them. Lyuba refused the pills and was injected instead with haloperidol which was much more difficult to take. I am certain that her inner strength, rooted in her faith, helped her to survive this torment. She was simply radiant. She was a person of tremendous kindness and gentleness. She spoke with such meekness, and I repeat—was infused with this incredible light. I got the impression that either the haloperidol was not affecting her or that she managed to overcome it by the strength of her spirit.

I met her frequently on walks outside, and all of the two hours that we walked, she sang church hymns. Every walk was like a little Liturgy. She was surrounded by women—all sorts—those serving time because of their faith, psychopaths, even murderers as well as real patients. She brought the light into all of their lives, the light of faith (**Gorbanevskaya** 77: 286-87).

Conclusion

In 1986, an Anglican priest, the Revd Richard Rodgers, decided to demonstrate his support for Irina Ratushinskaya in an ascetic way, rather uncommon for the modern world, by recreating for himself Soviet prison conditions:

> […] the Revd Dr Richard Rodgers, staged a protest during February and March 1986 in the middle of Birmingham to draw the British public's attention to her plight. With his head shaved, he spent the whole of Lent in conditions similar to hers, living in a cage on bread and water prison rations for 46 days (**Ratushinskaya** 86: 13).

Catacomb priests supported the TOC women prisoners in a similar way—with fasting and prayer, but they had no need to demonstrate anything to the world. Their purpose was simply to reach out to God and intercede for those eleven women struggling in a political camp and those in special psychiatric hospitals. Raisa Ivanova and her ten TOC sisters in Christ, by humbly keeping the fasts of the Church and saying their daily prayers, by practicing the Orthodox Christian faith of their fathers, regardless of the circumstances in which they found themselves, were able to achieve what was most important to them under the most horrific conditions—they were free to work out their salvation and to show the way to other people. In the words of Vladimir Moss:

> Most of all, we have to remain faithful to our catacomb roots and our catacomb communities, for they are the salt of the earth, and without their prayers and their witness of Christ the Russian land would have been long ago rejected by God (**Moss** 01: 8).

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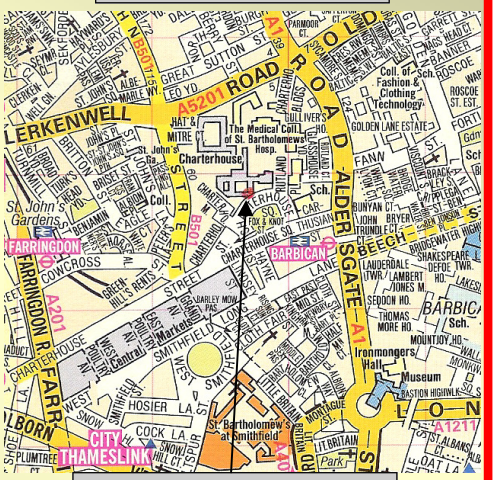
Keston AGM
Saturday 5th November 2011

The Great Chamber
The Charterhouse
Charterhouse Square
London EC1M 6AN

12.00 noon	AGM
12.45 p.m.	Lunch
2.00 p.m.	'Ukraine between East and West', a talk by Roland Smith, British Ambassador to Ukraine 1999-2002
3.00 p.m.	'Eastern Europe's Churches: what remains to be done?', a talk by Jonathan Luxmoore, freelance correspondent and specialist on Church affairs in Europe
4.00 p.m.	Tea



Entrance to the Charterhouse

In Memoriam

Chris Cviic

Michael Bourdeaux writes:

When I established Keston College in 1969, its original focus was on the Soviet Union. Soon, however, seeing our success, other countries wanted to come 'on board'. As our financial support began to increase, we were able to respond. I don't think that we would ever have been able to employ a full-time member of staff on Yugoslavia, but information of great interest, not being published elsewhere, was available. The main channels for this were Chris and Mrs Stella Alexander. The two often did not agree, but that we were able to accommodate both of them within the sphere of our discussions was a mark of the early maturity of Keston.

What were Chris's characteristics in my early memories of him? Unquestionably, there was the pleasure of shared friendship: not only did he and I feel at one with each other, but his wife, Celia, had been a musical colleague at Oxford, where we were exact contemporaries. I must have met him first soon after he came to the UK from Yugoslavia (under interesting political circumstances which I knew nothing about at the time). He was, in one way, unique: the combination of loyalty to his Croatian nationality and upbringing with the characteristics, early acquired, of an English gentleman of exquisite manners.

The other combination, so rarely found in émigrés, was his ability to be at the same time fiercely loyal to his origins and to be able to commentate on the political and economic affairs of Eastern Europe and the Balkans with outstanding impartiality. You always felt that there was passion there, which added interest to his writing, but it was deep down and never for a moment clouded his judgment. This ensured his outstanding career at *The Economist,* the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) and, later, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. But it was rarely in these contexts that I met him.

When we met Chris and I would discuss religion, its persecution under Communism and the abiding strength of the Roman Catholic Church in combating this. Chris often found time to write for our publications, especially *Religion in Communist Lands.* When he did, you could feel his loyalty to the faith, but he did not express it openly. What he wrote was always illuminated by the detail that came only from close personal acquaintance with his subject. He was a 'fundamentalist', too – in other words, unlike those in the hard-bitten world inhabited by most journalists, he believed in miracles. Most notably, he wrote with objective passion (!) about Medjugorje, the village in Herzegovina where apparitions of the Virgin Mary were being systematically reported.

Chris's exquisite politeness was much in evidence in his relations with Mrs Alexander. He never said anything in public about this, but he felt that her grappling with a difficult language and reportage on her many trips to Yugoslavia left something to be desired, so when she wrote a long book about religion in the country he was critical of it, but he declined to write a review on the grounds that if he were honest this would harm their personal relations, which were always good. So he kept his silence.

When Sir John Lawrence, Keston's first chairman, retired in the mid-1980s, Chris, who had long been a member of the Council, was unanimously elected as his successor. Here the balance of his judgment – and, as it turned out, his decisiveness – were always in evidence, and he led the work through many good days leading up to the collapse of Communism in 1989-91. He was chairman when the decision was taken in 1990 to move the work permanently to Oxford. It is a matter of regret, though entirely understandable in the circumstances, that he felt unable, with all his other commitments, to maintain the hands-on role that chairmanship would have demanded during the difficult days of transition. Had he been able to stay on, subsequent mistakes might have been avoided.

In recent years, Chris and I began to meet again, most recently last year over lunch at the Athenaeum. I was astonished by his mental vigour as he approached 80 and at his ability to continue working in a responsible job (for the EBRD). Sadly, his ill health intervened and a 'return match' at the Oxford and Cambridge Club did not materialise. My life is the poorer for it.

Keston Members Recollect

Elisabeth Morse

Russian Royal Family Rescued

After the Russian Revolution the Dowager Empress and other members of the Russian royal family travelled down from St Petersburg to the Crimea and their summer residences to escape the troubles, hoping at first that they might one day return home. Ships of the British Royal Navy were sent to bring them away to various destinations. The Dowager Empress refused to leave whilst she thought her son, Nicholas II, was still alive, but was eventually persuaded and embarked on HMS Marlborough with many others. As they were sailing, so the story goes, the Empress was on the quarterdeck (recorded in a well-known photograph) when another ship passed them with Russian troops on board who broke into the Russian national anthem. This was taken up by those on board HMS Marlborough and was said to have been the last time the national anthem was sung.

1930s: Captain H.E. Morse, DSO

My father, Harold Edward Morse, (he retired a Rear Admiral) was serving as a young naval lieutenant on another battleship, HMS Lord Nelson, which was ordered to take Grand Dukes Nicholas and Peter, with their entourage, and deliver them ashore at Genoa, which task was completed on 23 April 1919. The ship then returned to Malta where HMS Marlborough had by now docked, and took on board the Dowager Empress and her suite of 43 persons who included her daughter, Grand Duchess Xenia with five children, Princess Olga Dolgorukaya (a close friend and lady-in-waiting of the Dowager Empress) and the latter's young granddaughter Sofka. My father was put in charge of caring for the royal party during the voyage from Malta to England. He never spoke much about them, finding the Empress rather daunting, it seems. He mentioned Princess Olga, but Grand Duchess Xenia was the one he found most easy to get on with.

When the ship docked at Portsmouth on 9 May 1919, Queen Alexandra, with her daughter Princess Victoria, came on board to greet her sister, the Empress (they being Danish princesses by birth). As the royal party left the ship, they presented my father with a silver Fabergé bowl, which I have to this day, containing the Romanov arms – a regular gift for services rendered, no doubt. A short while later, he ran into a member of the royal party in London and was invited to tea at Buckingham Palace. Sadly he was unable to accept.

Victoria Watts

The Keston Road Show

I suppose it was Sandy Oestreich who thought of it (the wonderful American Baptist girl with whom I was lucky enough to share a flat during my time at Keston). She adored the theatre and had the idea of a dramatic presentation to illustrate our work – we were always trying to think of new ways to raise funds and awareness.

The Keston Road Show started as, and remained, a sort of joke because it did not quite chime with Keston's sedate image. It involved four of us: I was to write and direct, Alan Scarfe, our Romanian researcher (now Bishop of Iowa) was to play the guitar and sing, and Donna, his beautiful black American wife, was to act and dance. Sandy would do the driving and 'play as cast' – parts which included Aida of Leningrad and a Christian girl at the beginning of the show who discusses God with a wavering atheist, Donna.

The big scene was in a labour camp in Russia where Georgi Vins, the great Baptist dissident, was imprisoned. This was really exciting as we could use children from the parishes to play other prisoners trooping in from work. They only ever needed one rehearsal and their in-character ad-libbing always had me in stitches.

Our troubles began, however, long before we got to that stage – at our very first rehearsal at home.

Georgi Vins has somehow managed to secure a bible, and in answer to the other prisoners' 'Have you got it? Is it safe?' he replies with the single, not wildly challenging line, 'Yes. It's safe.'

Now Alan had been converted as a teenager by, I think, the Methodists and it came out that he felt pretending to be someone else was sinful; a sort of lie. He simply couldn't, and then wouldn't say the line. We explained, we cajoled, we got cross, we pleaded.

After two hours Donna was in tears, Sandy white-lipped, I coldly furious. In the end I silently picked up my coat and put it on. Suddenly, with a great gulp, Alan spat out the line following it with the now immortal words 'You're lucky I'm not stubborn!' The tension broke and we all collapsed in helpless, near hysterical giggles. As far as I remember that was the only hiccup we ever had.

We trekked north as far as Shropshire and all round our own areas to as many supporting churches as would have us. On Saturday evening Alan would give a talk and on Sunday we would fit our recital into one or more of the services.

The programme finished with a heart-stopping climax. Alan was singing 'The Lord of the Dance' with his guitar accompaniment, while Donna danced radiantly to her own choreography. I never saw or heard this quite often enough.

Letter to the Editor

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church

I enjoyed reading Patrick Roseberry's article 'Ukraine and a Trinity of Churches' in issue No 13 of the *Newsletter*. However, what the article says about the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is somewhat incomplete. Patrick Roseberry wrote: 'There is an "autocephalous" (i.e. independent) Ukrainian Orthodox Church founded shortly after independence in 1991. But very soon that church broke into two factions.' In fact the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) was created in the period after the First World War and the Russian Revolution. In the brief period of Ukrainian independence at the end of the First World War, a law was passed in 1919 allowing for the establishment of a Ukrainian autocephalous church. In 1921, a *sobor* (Church Council) was held in Kiev which established such a church, though there are doubts about whether its first head, Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, was properly ordained in the apostolic succession. The church was at first tolerated by the Soviet government, but was increasingly persecuted, and then, in 1930, forced into a merger with the Russian Orthodox Church. It re-emerged briefly at the time of the German occupation of Ukraine, during which period some of its bishops were ordained by Polish bishops who were undoubtedly within the apostolic succession. After the Second World War, it was again forced underground within Ukraine, but there was a Ukrainian Orthodox hierarchy (periodically also divided) in North America.

In 1990, following the declaration of Ukraine's independence, the UAOC was again recognised by the state. Initially it was governed from North America by the Ukrainian-born Patriarch Mstyslav Skrypnyk. In 1992, the Metropolitan of Kiev of the Russian Orthodox Church, Filaret Denysenko, led part of his church into a brief union with the UAOC. Some of the clergy of the UAOC were unhappy about this, and before the situation could be resolved, Patriarch Mstyslav died in Canada in 1993. Following his death, the UAOC (at least most of it) again split with what was now the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate. Its new Patriarch was Dymytriy Yarema, who died in 2000, and was succeeded by Metropolitan Mefodiy Kudriakov. The new Patriarch of the Kiev Patriarchate Church was Volodymyr Romaniuk, who in turn died in 1995, when he was succeeded by Filaret, who still remains Patriarch.

I am sure some readers could add more to this account, which is no doubt still over-simplified. But I hope it at least serves to give a somewhat more complete picture.

Yours sincerely,

Roland Smith

(British Ambassador to Ukraine 1999-2002)

Ivan Hel (1937-2011)
Ukrainian Journalist and Human Rights Activist

by Michael Bourdeaux

The door of the drab Moscow apartment opened suddenly to reveal a blaze of colour inside. The room was full of bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, crammed into a small space, and every one dressed in full regalia. It would have been an amazing sight under any circumstances, but here in 1988 every cleric was 'illegal', representing a church which had been suppressed by Stalin 40 years earlier.

The only layman in the room was Ivan Hel, who has died aged 74. His early activism in the cause of human rights and of Ukrainian independence had led to 16 years in prison camp and five years in internal exile. As a young man he risked all for what he believed in, apparently lost, but survived with immense dignity and courage. When I met him he was bursting with confidence that at last his sacrifice was on the point of realising the goal for which he had been imprisoned: the legalisation of his church. He became the principal spokesman for religious liberty in Ukraine just at the time when there seemed to be hope at last.

Far from being totally suppressed, the Ukrainian Catholic Church, unbeknown to the world outside – and to only a select circle in the Vatican under the influence of the exiled Cardinal Iosif Slipyi – had survived underground. There were clandestine ordinations, ensuring the apostolic succession, the circulation of *samizdat* keeping isolated cells of activists in touch with each other and even rumours of a secret seminary. But with the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev and his new policy of change, the church leaders began to feel that their cause was realisable at last. So in June 1988 they came to Moscow in strength, hoping to contact world Christian leaders who had assembled to celebrate the Millennium of the baptism of the Eastern Slavs (from which celebrations Ukrainians were significantly excluded, unless they embraced the cause of the Moscow Patriarchate which took all the glory from the great series of events).

So Ivan Hel led his clerical mission to Moscow, hoping for contact with the Vatican delegation which was there at the invitation of the Patriarchate. It was my privilege to pass on the message that the Ukrainian Catholic Church had come in more than symbolic force.

A year and a half later the mission would more than fulfil its purpose. The 'Ukrainian Catholic Action Group', of which Ivan Hel was the leader, soon announced that there were now no fewer than ten underground bishops to lead some four to five million clandestine believers. They achieved their first objective when Gorbachev visited the Vatican on 1 December 1989, bringing news of the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church as a kind of offering to Pope John Paul II.

The rest truly is 'history'. The restored church played a major part in unifying Western Ukraine, which in turn became the spearhead of the drive towards independence, achieved just before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Ivan Hel was born near Lviv in 1937, a time when Western Ukraine was precariously under Polish rule, following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Successively to be occupied by the Nazis and then the Red Army, the region became the cradle of Ukrainian nationalism. In post-war years this influenced Hel to such an extent that he became a leading activist in what at the time seemed a hopeless quest for independence. Prison prevented him from developing his chosen career in journalism, but in 1987, now 50 years old, he was at last able to benefit from Gorbachev's political changes and he became a leading staff member of the magazine *Ukrainian Herald.*

After the Moscow events of the previous year he played a major role in organising a demonstration in Lviv which brought out no fewer than 300,000 people on to the street to draw attention to a five-month hunger strike by Ukrainian believers on Moscow's Arbat. No doubt this influenced Gorbachev, who hated to be the target of demonstrations.

After independence Hel became an active politician, and in 2009 Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko awarded him the Order of Liberty for his 'significant contribution to the revival of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.'

(Reprinted from *The Guardian,* 27 May 2011, with kind permission)

Dr Oto Madr (1917-2011)

by Janice Broun

Janice Broun gleaned much of the following biographical information from Monsignor Vaclav Maly—a former dissident and fellow Charter 77 signatory and associate of Dr Madr—now Auxiliary Bishop of Prague. She and Margaret Conway were two of the go-betweens who made contacts and friends with Czechoslovak Christians active in the unofficial 'underground', and brought out information, especially the samizdat publication, Informace o Cirkvi, *which provided Keston with the latest news on persecution.*

The first time I met Dr Madr he turned up his radio, apologetically. Although he had been conditionally released from a life sentence back in 1966, after serving 15 years, the Czech secret police kept him under close surveillance until the Communist government collapsed. As a leading theologian, organiser of Czechoslovakia's flourishing religious samizdat, translator of Second Vatican Council documents, adviser to Cardinal Tomašek, organiser of unofficial lectures delivered in private apartments by foreign academics and theologians, he did plenty to keep the secret police busy. He had played a key role in maintaining church structures, training clandestine priests in tiny groups. He had ensured that church members could obtain uncensored church articles and theology through *Teologicke Texty*, which he edited, and *Informace o Cirkvi*, and was thus a key link with Keston. (He had studied in Rome before his arrest and sometimes switched to Italian or French when talking to me.) He urged believers to conduct themselves as if they lived in a free state, to avail themselves of every opportunity to try to improve the state of the nation.

Dr Oto Madr

As this modest, inconspicuous, frail priest handed me a cup of black sweet tea—he was sorry he had no milk—I had no idea that he would survive to the age of 94. He did not mention his many years in the most severe prisons, Valdice and Mirov. 'Prison was the happiest time of my life,' he told me, though he admitted that a young priest had died in his arms there. The last time I met him, 12 years ago, he was in his office, five storeys up in the Catholic press building, still editing his prestigious journal.

What struck Margaret and me most about Dr Madr was his deep spirituality, his wisdom, moderation, his commitment to a *via media* and to ecumenism. When I first questioned him on relations with Protestants he said 'We could achieve so much more if we could forget our historical conflicts and work together.'

When freedom came he had to confront frustration. His poor health precluded preaching and an active pastoral ministry. 'Liberty poses the biggest problem. Sociologically we have some of the sicknesses of the West. We need to begin to renew structures but on the basis of the Second Vatican Council, whose documents have not been properly published here. We have too few priests and most are old, unable to respond to the de-

mands of the younger generation and of some younger priests for more democracy and fuller participation within church life. The church has become too polarised.' He wrung his hands as he deplored the widening gulf between traditionalist and leftist-liberal elements. He had, through his sympathy and readiness to listen, attracted some of the latter but had, according to another former dissident, Mikhail Semin, who was active in restoring the Tridentine aspect of the church, become disillusioned with them. Semin amazed me by describing Dr Madr as 'extreme'.

Dr Madr was no radical (he found Hans Kung too revolutionary) and remained unfailingly loyal to his church. He was upset by the way some 'progressives' had become too egotistical, confrontational, even destructive, but at the same time he was critical of the ultra-conservative elements who had gained the upper hand, especially in training the new generation of seminarians whom they tried to insulate from 'Western contamination' and heresies. There was a yawning gap in theology; he compared his church with that in Poland where contacts with the rest of the Catholic world and mainstream theological trends had not been broken. Too often, and even more so in Slovakia, the church, in his view, had reverted to its pre-Vatican II mentality, 'Marian piety, old images and symbols and hymns—all very "sweet".'

A young Salesian friend of mine, who came into contact with Western liberal theology, had reservations about Dr Madr. He wrote: 'He enhanced the development of Czech underground theological and church life, but in a way he was also a hindrance preventing some developments from happening.'

Charles University's theological faculty did not see fit to restore him to his teaching post, though Bonn University awarded him a doctorate in 1991 and he was decorated with the Order of Tomáš Masaryk Order (class III) in 1997. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the European Society of Catholic Theology (founded in 1989) and since the 1990s chairman of the Czech section.

He had considerable reservations about Bishop Felix Maria Davidek who during the draconian persecution of the 1950s and 1960s took extreme measures to found an underground church. After his consecration as bishop in 1967 [declared valid by the Vatican in writing in 1992. *Ed*] he ordained married men and even a few women to the priesthood; he also consecrated bishops and reserve bishops. This secret church has gained publicity and sympathy in the West where Christians seem ignorant of the key role of the mainstream 'underground', which Margaret and I had found lively and committed. Eventually, in freedom, in 1992 the Vatican accepted the ordination of male priests by Bishop Davidek (d.1988), provided they agreed to re-ordination. Married priests could transfer to the Greek Catholic Church. Dr Madr described Bishop Davidek as a passionate near-genius and visionary who lived and spoke in extreme terms, but who had acted unilaterally as if he were Pope. There was a good argument, Dr Madr believed, for clandestine women priests to minister to nuns in 'concentration' convents. He had nothing against women priests—provided his church decided to ordain them—but felt they should be celibate.

On my last visit, Dr Madr showed me how he acted as a sorting house for articles on theology, vetting and printing articles from Orthodox and Protestant as well as Catholic sources (he even printed some of mine—for instance, one on Bulgaria's Muslims) while passing some over to other religious journals. He longed for the laity as well as the clergy to study theology. He was pleased that *Teologicke Texty* continued to attract subscribers in Slovakia, though a mere 45, as compared with 600 in the Czech Republic. Slovak Catholicism, he said, was more a communal rather than a personal faith—'puerile'—and was fast losing its hold in the cities. Twice a year he and collaborators met with Slovak bishops and church people there. 'Though they make us welcome and are critical enough of disturbing trends in Slovak politics' (it was the era of Vladimir Meciar, president until 1998 who exploited his close links with his corrupt Communist *mafiosi* cronies to try to subvert Slovakia's progress towards genuine democracy) 'they stop short of protesting in public.' During my last visit, in contrast however, I was impressed by Teoforum, an ecumenical Slovak group composed of men and women, of clergy and laity, which held day conferences where Catholic priests could say what they would not dare say elsewhere and seek help and advice.

Dr Madr was a member of a joint Catholic-Protestant commission and particularly committed to the rehabilitation of Jan Hus. He had close relations with the Commenius Faculty and a particularly warm friendship with Pavel Smetana, the President of the Evangelical Church, which did not go down well with the more fundamentalist Catholics. Above all he and his collaborators were bridge builders: they have tried to foster the seeds of discernment and self-examination within the Catholic Church and of openness and readiness for dialogue with fellow Christians of other denominations and with alienated secular society.

St Nicholas of Mozhaisk

by Mikhail Roshchin

Painting of the St Nicholas Cathedral by Larisa Karazhbei entitled 'Nicholas in Springtime'

Tolstoy in *War and Peace* describes how Pierre Bezukhov walked down a steep hill, away from where had once stood Mozhaisk's kremlin, on the eve of the Battle of Borodino (7 September 1812), the main battle in Napoleon's campaign against Russia:

> 'At the descent of the high steep hill, down which a winding road led out of the town past the cathedral on the right, where a service was being held and the bells were ringing, Pierre got out of his vehicle and proceeded on foot. Behind him a cavalry regiment was coming down the hill preceded by its singers. Coming up towards him was a train of carts carrying men who had been wounded.' (*War and Peace* Vol. 3, Part 2, chap. 20)

Mozhaisk, first mentioned in a 13th century manuscript, was only 12km away from Borodino and for over five hundred years had acted as Moscow's most westerly outpost, guarding the road to Moscow. Its strategic position in many ways contributed to its history. Ivan the Terrible's father, Vasili III (1479-1533), who was Grand Prince of Moscow from 1505-1533, made Mozhaisk his residence with his administration, a park and excellent hunting in the country roundabout. Much of the city was built in those early days, including the stone St Nicholas Gates on top of which a chapel was constructed; it was here that a famous wood carving of St Nicholas of Mozhaisk, dating from 1320, was originally kept. This image became a symbol of Mozhaisk and its most revered object. According to legend, St Nicholas came to the rescue of Mozhaisk when in the 14th century it was being attacked by the Mongols. He was said to have appeared in the sky with a sword in his right hand, raised above the heads of the enemy, and an image of the city in his left hand. The Mongols retreated, the city was saved, and the image of St Nicholas of Mozhaisk became revered throughout Russia as the defender of warriors, pilgrims and merchants. The original 14th century wood carving is now in Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery.

Icon of St Nicholas, holding Mozhaisk in his left hand, which is now inside the St Nicholas Cathedral

In the early 17th century Mozhaisk became strategically important once again after the Livonian War of 1558-1583 and the end of the Time of Troubles (1598-1613). In 1624 a kremlin built of stone began to be constructed on the hill (down which Pierre Besukhov walked) in place of a wooden one. After two years Mozhaisk's kremlin was ready to take the place of the one in Smolensk which had been lost to Poland in 1618. However, its importance did not last long as Smolensk was eventually returned to Russia, and during the 18th century the stones used to build Mozhaisk's kremlin were used for other structures, so that by the time the war with Napoleon began, all that remained was an image of the kremlin on Mozhaisk's coat of arms granted to the city in 1781: 'a stone wall with six towers on a white field.'

Mozhaisk's St Nicholas Cathedral, built 1802-1812, is an exceptional example of Russian architecture. It is the tallest building in the city. Documents dating from the 16th and 17th centuries record that a stone church dedicated to St Nicholas already existed in Mozhaisk by the middle of the 16th century; this is confirmed by an inscription on a stone in the

north porch of today's cathedral. By the beginning of the 19th century, however, it was so dilapidated that it needed iron strips to hold it together; in 1844 it finally collapsed. On the bell-tower of the new cathedral are the dates 1802 and 1812, indicating the beginning and end of its construction. During the war against Napoleon the cathedral was damaged and the ensuing repairs, using some stone from parts of Mozhaisk's former kremlin, were only finally completed in 1814.

The new cathedral was built on the site of Mozhaisk's St Nicholas Gates which by 1596 were made of stone. The chapel built on top of the gates was reconstructed in the 17th century, and stone from both the gates and chapel were integrated into the structure of the new cathedral. Below in the vault under the southern apse you can see a fragment of the gates with an arch and part of the original kremlin walls, and above in the north chapel part of the 1689 St Nicholas chapel. The ancient and much-revered wood carving of St Nicholas of Mozhaisk was moved into the new cathedral.

The many-tiered bell-tower points needle-like to the sky

The name of the cathedral's architect is not known, but it has been suggested that it was built by one of Kazakov's pupils (M.F. Kazakov, 1738-1812, was famous for his classical and neo-gothic buildings) since it incorporates details which are characteristic of his work. Red and white stone is combined with much decorative white stone detailing and elongated windows in the gothic style. Gazebo-type towers surmount each corner of the building and the tall, many-tiered bell-tower points needle-like to the sky. The building was badly damaged during the Second World War: the central tower fell down, and after the war the cathedral was restored without the cupola over the central part making it look rather like a mighty ship. It was used to house a knitted-goods factory and only in 1980 was it, and other buildings on the kremlin hill, handed over into the safekeeping of the State Borodino Military Historical Museum.

Inside the St Nicholas Cathedral today

In 1994 Orthodox services began to be held in the St Nicholas Cathedral again, and today it is looked after by the priest-in-charge, Ieromonakh Daniil (Zhirov), who is also the equivalent of an archdeacon (*blagochinnyi)* and is responsible for all the churches in Mozhaisk. The congregation is lively with many young people, and has built up a splendid children's choir which has become well-known far beyond the confines of Mozhaisk (a performance of 'We pray to you O Lord' can be heard on http://video.mail.ru/mail/mln70/1588/2881.html).
The Cathedral has built up warm relations with the enterprising St Filaret Institute in Moscow, which offers high-level theological courses for laity and clergy and is headed by Fr Georgi Kochetkov, well-known for his campaign to introduce Russian into church services in the place of Church Slavonic. St Nicholas sometimes hosts gatherings of this enlightened institution's teachers and pupils.

Gazebo-type towers surmount each corner of the building

Home News

Michael Bourdeaux writes:

It is always a moving experience to reflect on the lives of some of the heroic figures who strove for religious liberty under Communism, and this year I have written three such obituaries. With the exception of Elena Bonner, their names are totally unknown in the West, so in a sense what I have written is more than an obituary: it is more of an attempt to re-align Western values. For *The Guardian* I wrote about two redoubtable figures of the Catholic Church: the layman, Ivan Hel (see p.22) who fought for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and Cardinal Kazimierz Swiatek, who rebuilt the church in Belarus after a long spell of imprisonment. I wrote a short obituary of Elena Bonner, widow of Andrei Sakharov, for the *Church Times.*

Encyclopaedia team in Ivanovo: (left to right) *Roman Lunkin, Xenia Dennen & Sergei Filatov*

I reviewed *Freedom and Responsibility: A Search for Harmony – Human Rights and Personal Dignity,* by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow for *The Times* but did not find this book interesting. I was not impressed by his attempt to uphold the values embodied in his own church, as compared with the alleged loss of moral fibre in most Christian institutions in the West.

With one exception, my lecturing since the last issue of the *Newsletter* has been confined to five lectures on a cruise, but as this was through the Baltic, I was on home ground. As well as talking about religion in Russia, Estonia, and Poland, I addressed a full house when I spoke on my experiences of the Stasi and the KGB. The exception was on 18 May when I spoke at an evening conference arranged at St Thomas's Hospital, London, by ChildAid, a charity closely associated with Keston in its early days. I shared a platform with Metropolitan Kallistos, a former Council member of Keston, and the Bishop of Gibraltar, Geoffrey Rowell. Each of us, from his own perspective, was invited to reflect on why it is important, in a not very favourable environment, to continue charitable work in the former republics of the Soviet Union.

St Seraphim parish in Ivanovo

The Chairman writes:

In April Keston's Council were pleased to award a scholarship to Milutin Janjic studying at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, to enable him to work in the Keston Archive at Baylor on documents related to religious dissent in the USSR. In July the Council agreed to give a grant to Maria Petrova, a lecturer in Oriental Studies at St Petersburg State University, so that she could spend three weeks working in the Keston Archive on religious movements influenced by Eastern religions during the Soviet period. Gennadi Kuzovkin, Director at 'Memorial' in Moscow of a research programme entitled 'History of dissent in the USSR 1954-1987', was also awarded a grant so that he could work in the Keston Archive and include its Soviet samizdat in a catalogue which he is compiling for 'Memorial'.

The Council agreed to cover the travel expenses of myself and Michael Bourdeaux to visit Ukraine where a conference on the Catacomb Church is being organized in November by members of the Shevchenko National Pedagogical University in Chernigiv. Both of us will be speaking to the participants about Keston, its history, and work.

The Encyclopaedia team have compiled a collection of essays about the current religious situation in Russia which was published in September in Moscow. Fieldtrips to gather the latest information for the second edition of the Encyclopaedia are planned for next year: to Astrakhan and Elista (Kalmykia) in January, and to Petrozavodsk and Arkhangelsk in March. In June this year the team, including myself, visited Ivanovo and Kostroma over 300km north-east of Moscow. I was particularly struck by the St Seraphim parish built among high-rise blocks of flats on the edge of Ivanovo. A small wooden church and parish hall with a garden and children's playground were dwarfed by a vast new half-complete building supported by internal scaffolding which will even-

tually become the parish church. Fr Andrei Lvov, the parish priest, told us that the church complex had begun to be built in 2003: 'We first created children's play areas—children were put off by the long services; they needed space to run about.' He had banned swearing and drinking in the area and made it a safe place. People from outside the church, he said, began to come in and children, seeing the statue of St Seraphim in the middle of the complex, started asking who he was. Then Fr Andrei built a stage, organised a puppet theatre, set up a rock music competition and organised concerts, all of which, he said, helped the young to feel at home in the church. It seemed a very lively parish to me, attended by people of all ages as well as lots of children. On Fr Andrei's recommendation we also visited a small mixed religious community in the village of Ermolino, outside Ivanovo, where we met the Abbot, Fr Varlaam Borin, and Fr Antoni Loginov, the community's spiritual director. The principle of the community's spiritual life was simple, said Fr Antoni: 'not to obstruct what God wants to do.' Former prisoners lived in the community, as well as drug addicts who were sometimes sent from Petersburg. 'We find it much more difficult to handle alcoholics. Former prisoners are much easier,' remarked Fr Varlaam, 'You can only be healed through love. Strict programmes are not in our spirit.'

Left to right: *Fr Antoni Loginov, Fr Varlaam Borin, Xenia & Sergei*

A highlight of our time in Kostroma was a visit to Fr Georgi Edelstein, a Russian Orthodox priest who has often spoken out about his church's past collaboration with the Soviet regime and who now is in charge of a church a few miles outside Kostroma in the village of Karabanovo. 'My aim is to witness to my faith,' he said, 'and get people to come to church... When I arrived in Karabanovo the church had neither roof nor floor—it was a tractor shed and store for fertiliser.' He described the appalling conditions in the countryside where the local authorities have no funds to improve the primitive standard of living. When help was needed, they simply sent people to Fr Edelstein. He believed the Russian Orthodox Church should help anyone, never mind their denomination: 'We must read the New Testament and do what Christ did. We shouldn't ask whether someone is Orthodox or a non-believer. In order to be real Christians we must feed the unrighteous.'

Encyclopaedia team with Fr Edelstein

Before returning to Moscow we visited another town, Nerekhta, half-way between Ivanovo and Kostroma, where we met Fr Andrei Voronin who runs a remarkable children's home for boys, opened in 1996 after he had raised the funds from private sources. Many of the boys had had a traumatic past and needed a lot of help, he told us. He believed in taking them on expeditions and letting them experience extreme situations in which they were able to learn to look after each other and develop strength of will. The aim of an expedition was not 'to get to the top of a mountain... We are concerned with a child's development; we want him to experience the joy of community.' I noticed a photograph of him with a group on top of a mountain in the Altai (southern Siberia): he was in his vestments having celebrated the liturgy—for the Transfiguration, he told me. The boys helped to run a farm and grew much of their own food. They lived in groups of seven in flats within the main building each of which had a cosy kitchen with attractive wood furniture made on site. We sat in one of these round a table and talked to Fr Andrei who made us a pot of tea. He was wearing old corduroys and a red fleece, quite informal, whereas I had made sure I was in a skirt with my smart shoes on. This was a potential hazard when it came to going round the pigsty: I had been clicking away with my camera as we were shown the dairy and cows, but once in the pigsty with its slippery mucky floor I concentrated on staying upright and put away my camera.

Sergei talks to Fr Voronin (right) *in the gym where the boys learn mountaineering*

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