Keston Newsletter

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Next year is the 50th anniversary of the founding of Keston College, 1969-2019. Recent years have been filled with research for the immense Encyclopaedia Project, successive volumes of studies of the myriad religions of Russia in their regional context. Wallace Daniel's detailed discussion of this work opens the issue, followed by Xenia Dennen's report of the publication of the latest volume.

Daniel Mullaney discusses the attitude of Russian Baptists in Novosibirsk towards the teachings of Fr Alexander Men, and Elizabeth Roberts presents a selection from Fr Alexander's correspondence with persecuted icon-painter Julia Reitlinger.

The increasing use of the courts to obstruct and punish non-Orthodox believers from churches and sects deemed unacceptable is catalogued in Victoria Arnold's review of court cases since the Yarovaya Law was passed.

Also in this issue:

Kathy Hillman reports on the past year's work at the Keston Center, Baylor University and Michael Bourdeaux reviews an important biography of Llewellyn E. Thompson, US Ambassador to Moscow.

Our celebration of the life of Irina Ratushinskaya concludes with an extract from Xenia Dennen's book chapter and a cameo moment from the memoirs of John Roberts.

Contemporary Religious Life in Russia's Provinces: A New Source

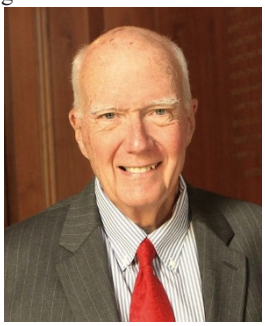
by Wallace Daniel

In 1976, shortly after leaving the Soviet Union with his wife and daughter, the Leningrad native and Dostoevsky scholar, Evgenii Aleksandrovich Vagin, reflected on Russia's past and its possible future. He emphasised the central role that he believed the provinces would play. 'Unquestionably', he said, 'the future of Russia depends a great deal on the extent to which the provinces will awaken, the extent to which all the processes of democratisation and spiritual rebirth will touch their depths.'[1]

This year's AGM is on Saturday 3 November, at 12.00 noon, at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, Limehouse, London E14 8DS. The speakers will be the president of Keston Institute, Canon Michael Bourdeaux and one of our trustees, Revd Keith Clements.

2019 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of Keston College. As part of the celebrations we shall have a special AGM to be addressed by Bishop Rowan Williams, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury and now Master of Magdalene College Cambridge. The meeting will be held on Saturday 9 November 2019 at the Foundation of St Katharine.

Vagin's belief in the significance of Russia's provinces is not uncommon. The nineteenth-century historian Nikolai Chechulin expressed a similar view in his classic work *Russian provincial society in the second half of the eighteenth century*. Chechulin wrote that the towns and villages of provincial Russia held a vast storehouse of cultural wealth; from them, he noted, came many of Russia's most creative individuals. Bringing their talents to the cities, they had infused literature, the arts and the sciences with fresh, often revolutionary, ideas.[2] In the early 1990s the great historian of medieval Russia, Dmitrii Likhachev, proposed that the country's top priority should be the reconstruction of cultural and social life in the provinces. 'We should remember', he wrote, 'that the majority of the talent, the geniuses of our cultural heritage, were born and received their early education not in Petersburg, Moscow, or Kiev. These cities only brought together the most enlightened members of our society. But, I repeat, most of the geniuses in our culture were born in the provinces.'[3] The rebirth of cultural life, Likhachev believed, had to begin with 'focusing on the small', rather than on the large, on making Russia's provincial towns and villages more attractive places to live.



Professor Wallace Daniel

Committed to developing its industrial strength, the Soviet Union, for most of its history, had moved in the opposite direction. In the two decades before the 1917 Russian Revolution, the industrial base of the country significantly expanded under the direction of Russia's able minister of finance and later prime minister, Count Sergei Witte. After coming to power, the Bolsheviks greatly enlarged the scope of his industrial aspirations, especially under Joseph Stalin and his Five-Year Plans, his collectivisation of agriculture, and the emphasis on steel and iron production. Russia's major cities became the central focus of this economic drive. Moscow's population grew from 1.027 million in 1920 to 8.980 million in 1990. A large part of this growth took place between 1965 and 1990 (6.427 to 8.980 million), more than 80 per cent of it came from migrations from the towns and villages of central Russia.[4] Consumer goods and food products flowed in a similar direction. A re-written Russian proverb might read, 'Moscow became fat, while the countryside became thin.'

After the fall of the Soviet government in 1991, it remained unclear whether similar trends would continue or whether more traditional social and

cultural forms would reassert themselves. With the country in turmoil and facing an uncertain future, would the centralised governing apparatus retain its dominance or would provincial Russia experience a rebirth? And if the latter, what forms would that rebirth take? Since Russian Orthodoxy and other religious beliefs traditionally had a strong influence in the Russian countryside, an influence that the Bolshevik government had sought unsuccessfully to destroy, a significant part of this question involved religion. It is those issues that the pioneering work of the sociologist of religion Sergei Borisovich Filatov and his research team attempt to address.

Filatov spent the early years of his academic career serving in the Institute for USA and Canadian Studies in the Russian Academy of Sciences. His work largely focused on religion and society in the United States, and he was the author of several significant studies on that subject. But, at the end of the 1980s, he changed course. He and his mentor, Dmitrii Efimovich Furman, the distinguished Russian sociologist of religion, reoriented themselves to the study of their own country, when, during President Gorbachev's perestroika, the opportunities for original research opened up. But this re-direction did not come easily. 'To my dismay', he said, 'I discovered that the published sources required for serious work on religious practices and beliefs in Russia did not exist. I needed to discover and collect the information myself.'[5]

The encyclopedic study that Filatov and his team have accomplished is unparalleled in Russia in the last century. At no time earlier had such a gifted group of sociologists attempted such a detailed examination of Russia's vast countryside as a whole, looking at patterns of religious belief and their evolution since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Beginning their work in 1994, Filatov and his crew, in 1998, were offered support by the Keston Institute in Great Britain. Keston's founder and esteemed director, Canon Michael Bourdeaux, had been for many years a strong advocate for the study of religion and a staunch defender of religious liberty in the former Soviet Union. Joined on occasion by Russian-speaking English scholars, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Russian researchers traversed the country multiple times, travelling thousands of kilometres, and holding discussions with more than 3,000 bishops, priests, church activists and government officials in their quest to map out the distinctiveness of religious life and the fundamental ideological tendencies in every region of Russia. The result is an invaluable, groundbreaking study, ranging across the entire gamut of religious belief, from Orthodoxy to paganism, in provincial Russia.

The first four volumes in this multi-volume series, published between 2003 and 2006, deal with the first decade of post-Soviet Russia. They were followed by a three-volume 'Atlas', which covers the second decade. If the first four volumes were concerned with identifying and describing each religious confession, the subsequent 'Atlas' had a different focus: it is organised by geographical region. The reader sees clearly the large influence of the distant past, as the Soviet state receded from dominance: in the area around Moscow, a tightly controlled and autocratic Orthodox Church, closely allied with the Russian government, reasserted itself. In the north-west, particularly in the area around Novgorod, with its long traditions of independence and cultural autonomy, much more open and free forms of religious beliefs re-emerged. Filatov's study disputes the

common view that religious activity has little importance in the social and cultural landscape of provincial Russia. He dispels the contention that a religious and ideological vacuum opened up after the end of the Soviet regime. Religious organisations returned with a vengeance throughout Russia, sprouting up in large numbers and in great diversity, many of them with small numbers of members, uncoordinated and widely different in their ideological orientation and their social and political activities. They represented what one local priest called, the 'first green shoots of new growth'. In many regions (for example, Ivanovo, Yaroslavl', Irkutsk and Orel), Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant organisations helped to rebuild social life, reconstructing services of compassion for the needy, holding concerts, organising sports clubs and engaging in philanthropy. The picture that Filatov and his colleagues paint is not one of provincial lethargy and hopelessness, but, in many locations, the slow but steady reconstruction of provincial institutions and activities that, during the Soviet era, had been neglected.

In 2014, recognising that many segments of the first volumes in the series and the 'Atlas' had become outdated in a rapidly moving social and political environment, Filatov and his team of researchers fundamentally altered the goals of their investigations. The third and present series is very different from the earlier volumes. In recent years, much additional information has become available, including valuable internet sources. But, most important, significant changes have taken place within provincial Russia, and Filatov wanted to capture them. The present volumes retain the 'Atlas's' focus on individual regions, but greatly expand the analytical sections. Filatov and his team are returning to each of the regions and holding much longer discussions with bishops, priests, religious activists and government officials. As a result, Filatov and his associates present a picture that is more in-depth than before, showing clearly changes in the last two decades, the trends that will help to shape the future.

By the fall of 2016, Filatov's current team (Roman Lunkin and the Keston Institute's current director Xenia Dennen) had completed two of a projected seven-volume series. Organised alphabetically, these first two volumes explore twenty-eight regions, from the Republic of Adygeia in southern Russia to the Krasnoyarsk district (*krai*) in central Siberia. Even more than before, the reader sees both the richness and diversity of religious life in these provincial societies. Both themes are particularly evident in three disparate parts of the country: Adygeia, situated in the northern foothills of the Caucasus Mountains, a region known for its natural gas and oil and its sheep breeding; Ivanovo province, located to the north-east of Moscow, the historic center of Russia's textile industry, whose workers played a major role in the Russian Revolution; and Vladimir province, in central Russia, east of Moscow, closely connected to the history of Moscow and a traditional bastion of Russian Orthodoxy.

In each of these regions, in the last decade, the former rapid emergence of disorganised religious groups has ended. Religious groups have consolidated, become much better organised, and strengthened themselves both economically and socially. This consolidation has especially taken place among Protestants, but, as Filatov notes, similar processes have occurred among Muslims, Old Believers and Buddhists. Everywhere, the emergence of new religious movements has sharply declined. In the 1990s and early 2000s

religious groups primarily focused their attention internally; they rarely reached out beyond the walls of their own sanctuaries. In the last decade, they have greatly expanded their educational, cultural and social projects, becoming agencies of compassion and philanthropy. Such activities are pronounced among Protestants and Catholics, whose work these volumes describe excellently. The Russian Orthodox Church has also become a serious player in all of these fields. If these trends continue over the next fifteen to twenty years, Filatov contends, they will reshape the social and political life of the country. The Orthodox Church will also become a sphere of internal conflict and debate on moral and social questions.

The most recent volumes are especially important for their enhanced focus on the politics of religion. It is a widely held view that church officials adopted a subservient attitude to the government. In the three regions, the interactions between government and church officials are multi-faceted and complex, and they have raised internal debates, especially within the Russian Orthodox Church, about political issues. As Filatov's study admirably shows, government leaders at the top of the regional administration have sought a balance between different religious organisations; they have held seminars, involved representatives of various religious groups in charity projects, and invited them to discussions of social problems. The most serious conflicts have taken place between individual Russian Orthodox priests or local officials and Protestants, Catholics and Muslims. For example, in Ivanovo province, where Mikhail Men' served as governor-general from 2008 to 2015, he made a determined effort to develop a tolerant religious environment. As Filatov's study shows, Men' stepped in on several occasions and resolved local conflicts: he came to the defence of Protestants who had come under attack from local government officials.[6] By providing such details for all the regions, Filatov and his group alter the picture of political and religious life in Russia's provinces. They show the relationship between politics and religion to be more fluid, more dynamic, less predictable, and also less dependent on commands from Moscow than has been supposed.

While the three regions have commonalities, the reemergence of religious institutions and practices are also widely disparate. It is one of the most valuable findings of Filatov's studies that these differences are brought into full view. In the last decade, each of the regions has experienced significant changes in development, internal relationships and ideological conflicts. In the northern Caucasus, the Republic of Adygeia, in the 1930s, had experienced the closure of all mosques and the near total destruction of the Muslim priesthood. The last decade has seen a rebirth of Muslim traditions and consciousness, as well as a nationalistic revival that has produced hostility towards Protestant groups, who are very active in the republic; this revival of nationalism has also generated passionate rhetoric about Russian imperialism. In the north-east, the city of Ivanovo and its diocese historically have lacked strong Orthodox traditions, but the region has been part of a remarkable spiritual regrowth. This is displayed not only in the physical reconstruction of churches but, perhaps most importantly, in the attempt to develop a relatively 'open' and tolerant atmosphere. The Orthodox Church holds seminars to which members of the intelligentsia are invited, and convenes annual conferences that feature both church officials and secular experts. Such

initiatives have also led to conflict with some local priests, who have a very different view of how the Church ought to conduct itself.

In contrast to Ivanovo, in the city of Vladimir and its diocese, which many Russian historians view as the 'spiritual centre of early Russia', the main theme has been the rebuilding of monastic traditions. The Communist government had 'rained down' on monastic life in Vladimir province. In the last decade, however, a large number of the monasteries have been rebuilt, and monastic life has been reinvigorated, including its educational functions, outreach to the poor and the care of orphaned children. Yet conflict is also part of Vladimir province's story. Filatov describes a local monastery, the famous Bogoliubskii women's monastery, in the same diocese and near the city of Suzdal', which has wealthy sponsors and has been magnificently reconstructed. The father confessor of the monastery, Archimandrite Petr (Kucher) is 'distinguished by his fanatical monasticism', his extreme nationalist views and his admiration for Joseph Stalin. Archimandrite Petr has surrounded himself with a core group of fundamentalists, who have entrenched themselves in the monastery. Their existence has created a dilemma for the bishop of the diocese, who tolerates them, but resents their presence. Filatov's pages on these subjects make for fascinating reading. He does not take sides, but the volumes that he and his team are writing reveal the religious and social struggles that are significant parts of Russia's present.

Each of the three republics responded to different circumstances. Their experiences lead to one of the main arguments of Filatov's most recent volumes: leadership matters. All three regions had visionary leaders – barely recognised in the Western world – who significantly influenced the social and religious framework in which they operated. In Adygeia, Hazret Sovmen served as president from 2002 to 2007. A substantial businessman, who made a fortune in Siberian gold-mining, Sovmen, after becoming president, reached out to both the Islamic and Russian Orthodox communities. He used his personal funds to support the building of an Orthodox Church; he initiated policies that gave financial help to Islamic organisations; he expressed admiration for the Baptists' work ethic and integrity, calling them the 'very best workers' he had in his Siberian enterprises. His policies set a tone of religious tolerance, which his political successors have followed.

In Ivanovo, Archbishop Amvrosii (Shchurov) (1977–2006) supported the independent activities of the priesthood in his diocese. Although a strong Russian nationalist, he promoted the emergence of a free atmosphere, accepted priests who were denied positions in other dioceses and, through his educational policies, cultivated close relationships with the intelligentsia. He created an intellectual atmosphere in Ivanovo that persisted long after his retirement. In Vladimir, Bishop Innokentii (Iakovlev) (2011–) has been an outspoken critic of what he has called 'the obscurantism of the nationalists and renovationists'. He has also been critical of the relationship between the Church and the government: 'To manage entirely without the government's help is impossible, but each time it is essential to think, perhaps we can do this without the government.'

Filatov's encyclopedic work provides insights into the experiences of other provinces. Especially noteworthy are the

regions of Kaliningrad province (Kaliningradskaia oblast'), formerly in East Prussia, where only in 1985, thirty-eight years after its incorporation into Russia, did the Orthodox Church begin its activities; the Republic of Kalmykiia, on the western shores of the Caspian Sea, with its large Buddhist population that lives side-by-side with Orthodox and Catholic faiths; the Republic of Kabardino-Balkariia, in the North Caucasus, where the predominant Islamic faith and both Orthodox and Catholic minorities engage actively in social service and exhibit compassion for the needy: and the Republic of Kareliia, in northern Russia, where the Scandinavian countries have played a large role in its religious life, but where, during Soviet times, the governing authorities destroyed all church literature in the Karelian language, and where present struggles are focused little on religion and mostly on preserving the language and on strengthening traditional culture.

While the work of Filatov and his team covers a lot of ground, it sharpens our view of Russia. Their books draw on a large assortment of primary, first-hand sources to provide a unique portrait of Russia's provincial life – its struggles and opportunities – at a level we have all too rarely had, either during the Soviet period or the post-Communist era. He and his colleagues offer an intimate picture of a country still in transformation and where Russia's future may well be determined. Filatov and his team have given us only the first two volumes in this latest series: the ones to follow promise to show even more of the commonalities and differences among the various regions of that vast country. What kinds of leadership within religious organisations and in provincial government will develop? How will the growing diversity of religious organisations affect the evolution of Russia's identity and sense of being in a globalised world? One anxiously awaits these future volumes. They are essential sources for scholars and other observers of Russia's politics, society and religion.

1. L. Sergeev, "Лицом к России: Интервью Е. А. Вагина" (Viewing Russia: interview of E. A. Vagin), *Posev* x (1976), p.53.
2. Nikolai Dmitrievich Chechulin, *Русское провинциальное общество во второй половине XVIII века. Исторический очерк* (Russian provincial society in the second half of the eighteenth century: an historical essay), St Petersburg 1889.
3. Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev, "'Культурное одичание"' (Cultural wildness), *Izvestiya*, 29 May 1991, p.3.
4. Timothy J. Colton, *Moscow: governing the socialist metropolis*, Cambridge, MA–London 1995, pp.462, 757–8.
5. Sergei Borisovich Filatov, interview by author, Moscow, 9 Sept. 2016, and e-mail correspondence with the author, 11 Sept. 2016.
6. Mikhail Men' is the son of the famous Russian Orthodox priest, Fr Aleksandr Men' (1935–90).

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Full details of the Keston-supported publications under review:

Современная религиозная жизнь России. Опыт систематического описания (Contemporary religious life of Russia. An attempt at systematic description). 4 vols. Moscow: Universitetskaia kniga, Logos, 2003–6.

Атлас современной религиозной жизни России (Atlas of contemporary religious life of Russia). 3 vols. Edited by Michael Bourdeaux and Sergei Borisovich Filatov. pp. 621, 686, 864. Moscow–St Petersburg: Letnii sad, 2005–9.

Религиозно-общественная жизнь регионов России (Religious-social life of Russia's regions). 2 vols (of a projected 7). Edited by Sergei Borisovich Filatov. pp. 620, 512. Moscow: Letnii sad, 2014–16.

Launch of Keston Encyclopaedia Volume 3

Moscow, 24 May 2018

by Xenia Dennen

Left to right: *Roman Lunkin, Xenia Dennen & Sergei Filatov*

The launch of the third volume of Keston's Encyclopaedia took place at the Institute of Europe in Moscow on Thursday 24 May, 2018. Only about twenty people actually came to the event and there was no representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, although Sergei Filatov assured me that Fr Alexei Uminsky (who sent me his greetings) and Fr Piotr Meshcherinov would have come had they not had services to take.

Five senior figures within the Moscow Patriarchate, for example Vladimir Legoida, were invited and said they would come; that, said Sergei, was a good sign - some years ago he thought they would have refused. The weather was particularly fine so this might have discouraged people from attending. Nevertheless, a journalist from *Blagovest-Info*, another from *Ogonyok* and the editor of *Science and Religion* were present, as well as an Evangelical pastor (Prokhanov tradition), an academic specialist on the North Caucasus, the director of an Orthodox drug rehab centre, and the publisher, Olga Fadina. A young scientologist was keen to talk to me afterwards: I was as patient as I could be, although I strongly disapprove of this organisation.

I started the proceedings with a speech about why Keston was founded in the 1960s and about the origins of the Encyclopaedia, adding a paragraph on how important it was for all Christian denominations to maintain warm relations during the current period of East-West tension. I said that there were many Christians in Great Britain, including myself, who had close friends in Russia and knew Russia at a deep level, and who therefore did not accept what was often false information. I added that during my many field trips and my many meetings with Christians of different denominations

With Olga Fadina, the publisher

in Russia, I had encountered Christian brotherly love and unfailing hospitality.

Sergei Filatov then spoke, pointing out that, whereas ten years ago it was rare to find the Russian Orthodox Church engaged in any social work, today it was active on this front in almost every city. Inter-denominational relations had improved. The Moscow Patriarchate, in Filatov's view, did not kowtow to the government: it had not officially supported the invasion of Crimea or the developments in Donbas; Metropolitan Illarion had criticised government economic policy.

More Orthodox voices had criticised internal church relations (e.g. Deacon Kuraev) and the lack of legal order (unfair treatment of clergy by bishops): this was "a healthy sign".

Roman Lunkin spoke about Protestants in Russia: they were Russian citizens, "we share common values". Dialogue with

Protestants, he said, was important and something which Catholics in Russia acknowledged. The Orthodox were learning about the church's social responsibility, and approaches to social work from both Protestants and Catholics; they were becoming more civilised. Roman then pointed to the current increasing discrimination against minority religious groups. Protestantism was the second largest and thus the most significant denomination in Russia after Orthodoxy.

Olga Fadina, one of the four at the top table, pointed out that her firm, Letnii Sad, had been publishing our research for twenty years. Over this time, the work had evolved and was now presented in a way which interested the general reader. She felt that inter-denominational relations were improving thanks to the Encyclopaedia.

The specialist on the North Caucasus was very complimentary: our research on her area was accurate! The *Blagovest-Info* correspondent questioned whether the Russian Orthodox Church's silence on political matters was sufficient. Then there was a question about the quality of local officials dealing with religion: Roman was able to answer this with first-hand knowledge. I had a long conversation with the editor of *Science and Religion*, Sergei Antonenko, and mentioned that the Keston archive had a complete set from issue No 1. He was keen to interview me at some stage Throughout the proceedings a photographer was taking photographs, which, I assume, will soon be provided to social media by Roman. Before I left Moscow, already 65 people, including Yeltsin's former press secretary, had responded positively to Roman's message about the book launch on one social media circuit.

By the time I got home on 27 May, Roman had a report and photographs on his Facebook page with many complimentary comments.

Left to right: *Xenia, Sergei, Olga and Roman*

Alexander Men and the Russian Baptists

by Daniel Mullaney

My first encounter with the name of Russian Orthodox priest and theologian Alexander Men came in 2006 as the answer to a question. As a young, enthusiastic Western Evangelical Christian recently arrived in Russia I was keen to know if there was an 'evangelical' movement within the Russian Orthodox Church. I asked an experienced Protestant missionary this question and received the answer: 'Well, there was Alexander Men, but he was murdered'. From this I drew two conclusions. First, *Alexander Men was something like an 'evangelical' Russian Orthodox figure*, and second, *any Russian Orthodox 'evangelical' movement founded by him no longer existed.* I came to see that both these statements were part-truths that required substantial caveats, but at the time I was merely left with a sense of curiosity concerning the person of Alexander Men.

Between 2006 and 2011, I was closely involved with the Russian Baptist Church – Evangelical Christian Baptists, the descendants of the 'registered Baptists' of the Khrushchev era – in Novosibirsk, helping with student ministry, children's camps and even on occasion preaching in my local church. It could not be said that Alexander Men had a large profile in the Russian Baptist Church. He wasn't mentioned often in sermons, and he wasn't a topic on the curriculum of the Russian Baptist Seminary. If asked, however, many Baptists recognised his name and seemed to have respect for him and his books, and this only increased my curiosity. It turned out that in the Baptist bookshop in Novosibirsk there was a shelf containing many of his substantial tomes, and as soon as I was able, I asked the bookseller which of Men's works might be the best one to start with. I was presented with a copy of *Son of Man*, which I duly bought and read. In fact, it was probably the first book in the Russian language that I read from cover to cover.

Combining erudition and clarity, it presented the person of Christ in straightforward Russian (it must have been straightforward if I could read it). Since it had good answers for many of the questions I encountered in my work with students, I set it on one side to use as a resource. I then read some of his other works, also bought from the Baptist bookshop in Novosibirsk, including his published lectures *Life after life* and *Russian Religious Philosophy*. Although these works were less obviously useful for preparing sermons and talking to students, they suggested to me the immensity of the Christian tradition and the existence of a theological world where questions could be asked with courage, and nuanced answers could be found in the Scriptures, if a preference for simple 'proof-texting' was discarded.

Alexander Men and the Bible

While leading Bible study for teenagers at my church in Russia one day in 2007, I came across a few words in the Russian Bible that I didn't understand and couldn't find in the dictionary. I asked the teenagers if they could help me: if they knew what these words meant. In response, they admitted that they really could not understand any of the Bible readings in the Bible study I had prepared. This shocked me. As an English speaker, I was used to having the Bible available in

all sorts of readily comprehensible versions, such as the NRSV, NIV and NLV. I had not realised that the Russian of the Synodal Bible had little in common with the Russian these young people normally used. I then did some research and found that this translation had been published in 1876, although its language was even more antiquated than the date would suggest.

This experience led to a visit to the local branch of the Russian Bible Society, where I found a translation of the New Testament into modern Russian by Valentina Kuznetsova, called 'joyful news' (*Radostnaya Vest'*). At that time, only some of the Old Testament books had been translated (the Russian Bible Society only realised its full translation into modern Russian in 2011), so I collected these one-by-one as they were published. Nonetheless, Kuznetsova's translation of the New Testament became a standard work for me that I would use in leading groups for students and young people. I gave away copies to people interested in the Christian faith. Over time I found that a number of other Baptists involved with students and young people also used this new translation extensively in their work.

I did not realise then that Alexander Men was responsible in no small measure for this translation. As a member of one of Alexander Men's study groups at Novaya Derevnya Valentina Kuznetsova had begun her translation, closely helped and encouraged by Men himself. Men's enthusiasm for helping Russians understand the Scriptures clearly found its way into the Baptist community of which I was a part not only through his own books, but through the translation initiative that he had started. The standard biblical text for use in Baptist services was then and remains the Synodal Bible of 1876. Yet in small groups, at least at that time, I found greater dynamism in the discussions which meant I could use different translations of the bible when I felt they would be helpful to group members.

Alexander Men and the Baptists

Turning to Alexander Men himself, it is of note that he was well-known for his ecumenism. He visited the Russian Baptist Church on numerous occasions throughout his life just as he visited Catholic and Lutheran churches.

His impressions of the Baptist Church in Irkutsk are recorded by Zoya Maslenikova:[1]
'I greatly valued the evangelical, prophetic and moral spirit intrinsic to Protestantism. After arriving in Irkutsk in 1955, I visited the [Orthodox] cathedral and a Baptist meeting on the same day. The contrast was striking. A half-empty [Orthodox] church, tastelessly decorated, dejected old ladies, senior priests shouting at the junior deacons, a sermon (very short), which resembled political information (something about China), but on the other hand a packed 'House of Prayer' [Baptist], many young people (from the factory), living, deeply felt sermons,[2] a spirit of community, special days for youth meetings to which I was invited. The elderly people in our church are rude, but here [at the Baptist Church] people received me very well, although I said that I am Orthodox'.[3]

Such positive impressions of the Baptist Church correspond with the recollections of Pastor Aleksei Bychkov from his meeting with Men in 1968 at a Moscow Baptist Church, when Men was serving at Tarasovka under difficult circumstances:
At one of the services I saw on the balcony a very noticeable and fine-looking young man. He was carefully following the

course of the service. “Probably a student of Moscow Theological Seminary,” I thought. “I need to get acquainted.” After the service I approached him and introduced myself. “Yes, I sometimes visit your church,” said Alexander Men. “I like the christocentricity of the sermons and the prayers of believers. I am myself a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church at a small church near Moscow. I sometimes visit parishioners and their families in Moscow, I write on theological themes and witness to Christ”. And with humour he added “Considering today's situation, I have trouble from both worldly and ecclesiastical powers.” O, how thankful I am to God for this meeting! We immediately felt that God is between us.[4]

These two citations suggest two things that Baptists see positively in Men's approach to the Christian faith. The first is christocentricity. Beginning with his book *Son of Man,* this is a major theme that runs throughout Men's writings, perhaps finding its fullest expression in the extensive article on Paul in his final completed work, the three-volume *Dictionary of Bible Studies,* where Paul's christocentricity is emphasised. Given this, it is not surprising that he should remark to Pastor Aleksei Bychkov that he valued this quality in the Baptist sermons. The second theme is Men's emphasis on a 'living encounter' with Christ. This is even more important than his emphasis on dogmatic christocentricity. Thus, to Aleksei Bychkov he says that he 'witnesses' to Christ and to Maslenikova he remarks on the 'evangelical spirit' and 'living sermons' of the Baptist Church he attended in 1955.

Such views on theology and the nature of the ministry are likely to find a positive response only among Russian Baptists, who for their part, are keen to emphasise the centrality of Christ and a living relationship with Him. Indeed, this aspect of their theology tends to include a strong personalism, demonstrated in published Baptist writings, such as the article 'Eternal Life: Who is it?' by Senior lecturer in Systematic Theology at Novosibirsk Baptist Seminary, Pastor Pavel Togobitsky.[5] It should be no surprise, then, that I was encouraged to read *Son of Man,* and that even a brief online search shows that other works by Men in a similar style such as *The First Apostles* may readily be found on Baptist web sites.[5]

Despite this similarity, there are areas where Men's theology differs substantially from that of the Russian Baptists. In the volume *Alexander Men Answers Questions*,[6] he answers the question 'How does Orthodoxy relate to the Baptist Church?' He replies: 'Orthodoxy greatly respects iconography, but Baptists do not accept it. Orthodoxy preserves many ancient traditions, but Baptists try to preserve only the traditions of the first centuries of Christianity. Orthodoxy has a strict hierarchy, but Baptists have a democratic or selective hierarchy. Orthodoxy preserves an ancient sacred language, Church Slavonic, but Baptists minister, like all the other Christians of the world, in their native language. Finally, the Orthodox hold that there are special priestly actions where God and the Spirit of God work in the womb of the Church. For Baptists these are just symbolic rituals. These things make up the difference. But they are our brothers in faith. They, just like us, confess the God who has come into the world in Christ Jesus'.

It is significant that Moscow Baptist Pastor Yevgenii Bakhmutsky (who is originally from Novosibirsk and a well-known figure in contemporary Russian Baptist circles) includes this citation on

his own web site[7] to explain the differences between the Orthodox Church and the Russian Baptist Church. This suggests his broad acceptance of Men's characterisation of 'the Baptists', even if more detailed analysis of Men's comments reveal some of the points as debatable: for example, to claim that Russian Baptists see Communion or Baptism as mere 'symbols' at the very least lacks nuance.[8] Nonetheless, Men's characterisation is straightforward, broadly correct and lacks the antagonism of many Orthodox commentators. Although Men as an Orthodox believer views certain teachings of the Church differently to the Baptists, he is prepared to see them as fellow believers in Christ rather than wayward heretics. His comment on the Orthodox use of Church Slavonic even suggests considerable sympathy with the Baptists for their decision to minister in their native language like 'all the other Christians of the world'.

The Baptists and Alexander Men

The group of churches generally known as the 'Russian Baptists' in fact includes a complex combination[9] of different theological and ecclesiastical traditions. They find their origins partly in the German-speaking Baptist communities of 1860s Ukraine, partly in the 'Evangelical' Christians who followed the teachings of Radstock and others in late 19th century St. Petersburg and partly in Orthodox sectarianism. Many individuals from groups such as the Molokans broke away from the Orthodox Church to join the Baptists.[10] The final synthesis took place when Stalin effectively forced the 'Evangelical Christians' and the 'Baptists' together in 1944 to form the 'Evangelical-Christian-Baptists' (ECB).

Understandably, the focus of ECB Russian Baptists during the Soviet period and the period immediately after, has been to 'witness' to Christ and preach the Gospel, rather than reflect theologically on the nature of the Gospel and the Church it formed. This has had positive results, and has enabled the church to survive as a vital force in Russian religious life. It has, however, also resulted in something of a theological void, which the Baptist leadership and teaching institutions founded after 1991 have tried to address. While many of the discussions surrounding the schism of the Khrushchev era are now fading into the background, at least for the 'registered' Baptists, the question of Baptist identity has become increasingly important, as the Baptist Church has sought to convince Russian society that it is not a 'sect'.

This question is considerably more complex than might appear at first sight. For one thing, it is obvious to any Western observer that Baptist churches in Russia maintain certain traditions that they have received not from Western Baptists or Evangelicals, but from the Orthodox Church through such groups as the Molokans. Women wear headscarves in church and the choir has a significant role in the service. I do not know how widespread this is, but in the Russian Baptist Church that I attended, the congregation would stand during a communion service for the entrance of the bread and wine, a fact that left American Baptist missionaries in attendance somewhat confused. Another example of this Orthodox inheritance, perhaps not so immediately obvious, is a through-going conservatism with respect to the Biblical texts. The 2011 Russian Bible Society translation into modern Russian (initially inspired by Alexander Men) has so far failed to find any acceptance among Russian Baptists for use in services. Although the reasons for this are complex and should be subject to further study, it

may be noted that both Russian Orthodox and Russian Baptist believers have a similarly conservative approach to textual traditions, even if the texts they use are different. Change is deemed at best unnecessary by both churches. Russian Orthodox believers use Church Slavonic and Russian Baptists use the Synodal translation of 1876. These two translations correspond to the respective origins of the two Russian Christian traditions: Missionary work among the Slavs led to the foundation of the Russian Orthodox Church, whereas the promulgation of the Synodal Bible after 1876 led to the rapid growth of Evangelical groups in Russia.

All these points can make recent appeals to continuity with the Baptist traditions of the West appear forced.[11] Nonetheless, it is also possible, erroneously, to understate connections between the Russian Baptists and Western Evangelical thought. Russian Evangelicals from their origins in the 1860s have never been entirely independent of Western theological thought,[12] despite their isolation during the Soviet period. With the arrival of Western missionaries after the fall of the USSR, that influence has gathered pace. Part of this has been the gradually increasing preference of Russian Baptists for translated Western evangelical literature at the expense of such Russian writers as Alexander Men. A perusal of the web site of the Novosibirsk Baptist bookshop in 2018 will not reveal as many titles by Men, as would have been the case in 2006 when I first visited.[13] It is, however, still easier to find his books there than at the various Russian Orthodox bookstores in Novosibirsk.

Beyond the question of establishing Baptist identity there is one further reason why the profile of Alexander Men is falling in the Russian Baptist Church. A more sustained encounter with his work shows his acceptance of Evolutionism (including his respect for Teilhard de Chardin) and of the thought of such dogmatically 'suspect' Russian religious philosophers as Vladimir Solov'ev and Sergei Bulgakov. One of the core beliefs of the Russian Baptist Church is that the Bible is the 'Word of God' and that has generally meant that the Bible should be interpreted literally. It is perhaps no surprise to find some Baptists citing the article by Sergei Antiminsov[14] that criticises Men's 'modernist' and 'heretical' approach to Biblical interpretation. Baptists, just like Antiminsov, are unlikely to accept Men's interpretations of Genesis 1-3, his acceptance of the Documentary Hypothesis or his assertion of multiple authors for the Book of Isaiah. The criticism of Men by such conservative Orthodox commentators as Antiminsov has gained significant traction in the Orthodox Church, thus leading Baptists also to neglect the significance of Men's theological legacy as a potential conduit in Orthodox-Baptist dialogue. There is little incentive in such debates to engage with the work of a theologian who is viewed with ambivalence by both sides.

Conclusion

While Men has clearly had a significant impact in some Baptist circles over the last thirty years, such as the one of which I was a part, it appears that this influence is currently fading. While open attacks on his theology from a Baptist perspective are limited in number, due to the ready availability of Western evangelical literature in modern Russia, his theology is no longer of great significance in contemporary Russian Baptist searches for identity. That said, individual Baptists undoubtedly still find some of his books to be a source of encouragement. His theology, due to its breadth, is easily misunderstood, but it is likely to intrigue

those who have questions. In this sense, it has the potential to provide resources for inquiring Baptists just as for similar Orthodox believers. Even now, many Baptists retain a respect for his name, even if they either no longer read his books or read them rather selectively. As one comment on Yevgenii Bakhmutsky's web site reads: 'I love this brother. They killed him. I read his books. Of course, a lot [of his theology] isn't great... But I like him'.

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1. Maslenikova, Zoya: Zhizn Otsa Aleksandra Menya (The Life of Father Alexander Men) at http://krotov.info/library/13_m/as/lennikova_00.htm, p.138.
2. A Russian Baptist service normally has three sermons.
3. All citations from Russian texts are given in my own translation.
4. Pasternak, Yurii, ed.: *Tsvetochki Aleksandra Menya: podlinnye istorii o zhizni dobrogo pastyrya* (Flowers of Alexander Men: Genuine stories about the Life of a Good Shepherd), Moscow: Litres, 2017, p.87.
5. Togobitsky, Pavel: *Vechnaya zhizn – eto Kto?* (Eternal Life – Who is it?) at http://nbbs.ru/vechnaya-zhizn-eto-kto/ [Accessed 21/02/2018].
6. This book by Alexander Men may be found in its entirety at http://www.nbchurch.ru/library/books/a-men/predislovie [Accessed 21/02/2018].
7. Men, Alexander (ed. Vladimir Ilyushenko): *Otets Aleksandr Men otvechaet na voprosy* (Father Alexander Men Answers Questions), Moscow, Alexander Men Foundation, 1999. Available online at http://www.alexandrmen.ru/books/voprosy/vopros0.html [Accessed 21/02/2018].
8. See http://bakhmutsky.ru/o-aleksandr-men-o-baptistax/ [Accessed 21/02/18].
9. For further information, compare with https://baptist.org.ru/faith/principles [Accessed 21/02/18].
10. More information on the Molokans can be found at Prokhorov, Constantine: *Russian Baptists and Orthodoxy, 1960-1990,* Langham, Carlisle, 2013, pp. 49-51.
11. An example of this is the recent celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the Baptist Church: https://baptist.org.ru/read/article/94438 [Accessed 21/02/18].
12. Prominent 1920s Evangelical leader Ivan Prokhanov is a good example of a figure who combines a Molokan background and Western Evangelical theological training: https://baptist.org.ru/news/main/view/prokhanov-data [Accessed 21/02/18].
13. See http://shop.posoch.ru [Accessed 21/02/18].
14. Sergei Antiminsov is a pseudonym for Vladimir Volgin. See http://www.krotov.info/library/13_m/myen/de_antimins.html for his article 'Protoierei Aleksandr Men kak kommentator svyashchennogo pisaniya' (Archpriest Aleksandr Men as a Commentator of the Holy Scriptures). This article is cited extensively by a Baptist commentator at http://rusbaptist.stunda.org/alexander-men.htm. [Accessed 21/02/18]

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Alexander Men, parish priest

by Elizabeth Roberts

« Le prêtre est un homme mangé » (Yves Hamant, biographer of Alexander Men).

Alexander Men (1935-90) was an active parish priest at his country Church of the Presentation at the Temple in Novaya Derevnya outside Moscow. He conducted marriages, baptisms and funerals for his parishioners and officiated at regular Sunday services, where his sermons were memorable aids to Christian observance in the face of ruthless official opposition. He also acted as a 'spiritual father' and mentor to many in his congregation, including spending many hours counselling those tormented by the difficulties of living in a militantly atheist society.

These pastoral duties did not prevent him from writing many books for the Russian general reader on Christianity and the Bible. His books were printed abroad and smuggled back into the USSR. As a figure of influence, he was hounded by the KGB on the one hand and the conservative wing of the Russian Orthodox Church (at a certain level sometimes one and the same) on the other.

Despite these pressures, he managed to conduct a riveting fourteen-year correspondence (1974-88) with one of his furthest-flung parishioners, the Russian icon painter Julia Reitlinger, exiled to Tashkent. These letters, published in Russian under the title 'Umnoe Nebo' – 'The Wise Sky' – the technical term used by icon painters for the background -, are to be published in 2019 in an English translation by the author of this article, Elizabeth Roberts, and her co-translator Jonathan Sutton.

Julia Reitlinger (1898-1988)[1] was born into an upper-class Russian family in St Petersburg. Her mother's closest friends included the Obolenskys and other liberal representatives of the aristocracy. From a relatively early age Julia suffered from deafness but showed early artistic talent, and at the time of the 1917 revolution was studying at art school. The family initially fled to the Obolensky estates in the Crimea, where Julia worked as a volunteer nurse during the civil war. Following the death of her mother and a sister from typhus and the defeat of the White army, she, a younger sister and their father escaped across the border to Poland and thence by stages (via Warsaw and Prague) to Paris.

In the Crimea Julia had met Fr Sergei Bulgakov, a former Marxist economist turned Orthodox priest and theologian. Bulgakov had also taken refuge in Paris in the early 1920's, and Julia became a member of his household, exploited as a skivvy, while attending Maurice Denis' 'Atelier d'Art Sacré'.

She and her sister returned to the USSR in 1956 and were banished to Tashkent in Central Asia. In due course, the authorities relented so far as to allow the elderly sisters to return to Moscow during the summer months to avoid the intense heat of their home in exile. Thus it was that friends introduced her to Men, an – some would say the - outstanding personality of the 20th century Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, who was serving as an assistant priest in the country parish of Novaya Derevnya outside Moscow.

Alexander Men, always open to ideas, was fascinated by Reitlinger's connection with Bulgakov and her knowledge of icons. He commissioned her to 'write' (icons are 'written' not 'painted') icons he called 'little stars' for his parishioners and family members. This was strictly against the law and they had to be sent disguised as boxes of sweets. They knew that their correspondence was routinely intercepted by the authorities, hence their use of code words for icons in the letters: 'photographs', 'series' (as in the example below) and 'presents'.

25/VIII/74

Dear Fr Alexander!
It is risky to offer to start a correspondence with an old woman. We do run on so, - we are garrulous. But perhaps my situation gives me some justification – having left Moscow for my 'desert', inhabited by people, - I am envious…

Your request[2] led me to thinking (this has nothing *whatever* to do with my having with pleasure offered to comply at the first opportunity). Someone accused somebody recently of having a mistaken relationship with the saints, like Protestants. As if they were only people, serving as an example, but not to pray to. Then I realised that I myself never pray to the saints, and when I thought about it, - justifying myself with the thought that prayer discipline – morning and evening – is praying to the saints – and that is only to the saint whose name one bears – takes up a miniscule amount of time: of course, the whole Church prays to other saints, on their days of remembrance, but I from deafness and all the other circumstances have turned away from that, and clearly that grew in me. And, indeed, Elena Yakovlevna[3] had the habit (she does no drawing now), as soon as a baby was born, was christened – and given a saint's name at baptism - of making an icon of that saint for the baby. And when people started to come to me with similar requests, for an icon of Our Saviour, or the Mother of God, I would talk them into having their name saint, and they would agree on the basis that their son or daughter would in the first instance pray (if they prayed at all) to Our Saviour or The Mother of God, not to a saint not known to them. Clearly, and in the case of the first person I mentioned here, isn't this somewhat heretical?

Elena Alexandrovna and I have now discussed a lot about icons in connection with prayer, - and I insist that the connection is not how she sees it; it was Grigory Bogoslov[4] – or Ioann Zlatoust ('the Golden Tongued')[5] - who rightly said that when one is standing to pray, one should look at an icon and then close one's eyes (in church nowadays, the old women do not allow one to close one's eyes, saying: 'You don't come to church to go to sleep'!) – and eventually your series made me to think something I could not formulate, - that the issue was not whether one looked or not, or whether that helps, or according to Elena's theory simply gives pleasure (she even often refers to 'narrative or 'celebratory' feasts and so on – or 'enjoyable') whereas in the Presence…And you see the Presence will be the most important in this series. I am sharing my thoughts with you, as I prepare to fulfil the task , and a 'reply' to my letter, of course, is *completely un*necessary; once I am back home, I will send you some more questions, for there are many, of course, - but for now before I leave (I still do not have an air ticket, and have no idea how it will all work out) I wanted to say sorry, for having behaved so stupidly when we said goodbye, but I was thrown into confusion by the crowd, - and want to

repeat how happy I am to have met you, something I dreamed of all winter long – and God brought us together!
May He preserve you! J

Sister J

The last visit to you was wonderful again, from the smallest details – because I am so often ill, unable to get around due to my age and my deafness – but everything this time was clearly helped… And how can one convey that to those (and I know many older people) who all repeat formulaically 'to some it shall be given…' – 'some have, others have not' - not seeing or noticing 'the blowing of a gentle wind…"

2nd Sept

Dear Julia Nikolaevna!

On no account limit yourself: write every time you feel the need. I may not be able to reply straight away, but I will eventually reply. For you do indeed live in a desert, and although we do not exactly live in a paradise here, nevertheless, we have far more possibilities of human contact and conversation, and it is up to us to reach out to those who are in need.

What can I say with regard to the question you raised? I can begin by saying that I myself have always felt a keen connection with the saints, and turn to them constantly. It is true that in their cults there are often pagan elements, true that many saints – are legendary figures (even pagan gods transformed) and it is true that veneration of them can often be harmful to piety, undermining a turning towards Christ, our only Saviour. That sort of thing is clearly a distraction, a deviation, a distortion.

The basis of veneration of saints rests in our shared feeling of unity in the Church, both in her earthly and heavenly aspects. We pray to each other, we know the power of prayer in many people who sincerely love the Lord. We ask them to pray for us. This relates to the dead as well as the living. I have often sensed their prayer for me, and consciously asked them for it. But if this really is true of the recently dead, why should we forget the great heroes, the apostles, martyrs, the saints? We read about their lives, we read what they have written. Their images are alive for us. And they are truly alive in The Lord, who is not the God of the dead.

Whenever one's spirit weakens, when prayer becomes weak and feeble, then it is good to turn not only to God from whom one feels oneself to be so distant, but to those of great faith and power! We enter into a living relationship with them, ask them for prayer and help. For they are beings like us, and because of that from time to time it is easier to find them in our prayers. And they really help, really take part in our life, if we turn to them.

25 years ago, I was at the Kiev-Pechersky Monastery, and the inscription above the entrance to the caves amazed me. There it spoke of the prayers of the departed saints. 'Do not forget them, - wrote the anonymous author of the inscription – 'and they will not forget you'. This taught me a lot. At one of the most difficult, catastrophic moments in my life 17 years ago[6], I got through with the help of an extraordinary power. And their icons, for me, were a real sign of the presence of the saints. How this happened, I will not try to explain. The inner reality of itself is more important than all explanations. Of course, when instead of an icon of Christ there are displayed only the icons of the saints – that is not right. That is already the start of a slippery slope. A saint must

take his or her place 'below', as in the icon screens where they all stand in attitudes of prayer. In other words, we do not pray to them, we pray with them, and ask for their intercession in our spiritual and life journey.

Finally, here is a crude and banal example. When we see portraits of our nearest and dearest hanging on the wall, we feel their presence more vividly, we conduct an internal dialogue with them. The same happens as far as the saints are concerned, as they look at us from their icons.

I am very happy that your stay with us has fortified you. I believe that nothing happens by chance. Your arrival is also no accident. I hope that your series in some particularly intimate way will become part of the life of our congregation. May God help you.
Yours proto A. Men.

1. For a more detailed account of Reitlinger's life and work, see *East-West Review,* Summer 2017.
2. To supply icons for his parishioners.
3. Vedernikova.
4. Literally 'the word of God'.
5. St John Chrysostom.
6. Men was expelled from the Irkutsk Agricultural Institute for his religious beliefs.

Elizabeth Roberts is a writer and translator, co-author with Ann Shukman of 'Christianity for the Twenty-First Century, the Life and Work of Alexander Men'.

The Yarovaya Law: Prosecutions and New Appeals

By Victoria Arnold

Russian religious believers and communities continue to face prosecution for publicly exercising freedom of religion and belief. Forum 18 found 156 such prosecutions in 2017 and prosecutions have continued in 2018. The main instruments now used are the July 2016 "anti-missionary" legal changes, Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity"), and Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity").

In 2017, Forum 18 found 143 prosecutions under this Article, as against 13 under Administrative Code Article 20.2 ("Violation of the established procedure for organising or conducting a gathering, meeting, demonstration, procession or picket"). Article 20.2 was the previous main Administrative Code article used to restrict freedom of religion and belief in public. The use made by the authorities of the "anti-missionary" legal changes has led to widespread confusion and concern among religious communities. They are "worried because they do not know how to profess their religion and share it with others without violating the law", Pentecostal Union lawyer Vladimir Ozolin told Forum 18 on 12 April 2018. He commented that "most Christians sharing their beliefs on the street do not even suspect that they are violating the law. They learn about this later, when employees of the competent authorities begin fabricating the case".

As both Russian and foreign citizens continue to be prosecuted for unlawful "missionary activity", victims have lodged a number of legal challenges to the July 2016 "anti-missionary" amendment to the Yarovaya Law and its associated Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity"), and 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity"). A Baptist pastor appealed to Russia's Constitutional Court seeking to question the assumptions inherent in the July 2016 amendment and the vague language in which it was written.[1]

The Court refused in March 2018 to consider his appeal, but issued a partial clarification of the amendment. This said that giving information about religious events would constitute an "offence" only if it was aimed at attracting people who are not already members of a religious organisation. Some have cautiously welcomed the Constitutional Court's interpretation, hoping it will reduce the number of prosecutions. "Thanks to this definition, we hope to change radically the approach of the courts to missionary work," Pentecostal Union lawyer Vladimir Ozolin told Forum 18 (see below).

The other two appeals – to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (ECtHR) – have both come from foreigners punished under these provisions while legally resident in Russia. Foreigners make up a small proportion of those prosecuted so far, but face comparatively higher penalties, including deportation. The ECtHR is still considering these cases and decisions are not expected for some years.

Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity"), and 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity") punish broadly defined "missionary activity" carried out against the Yarovaya Law. There is also a Part 3, which punishes: "Implementation of activities by a religious organisation without indicating its official full name, including the issuing or distribution, within the framework of missionary activity, of literature and printed, audio, and video material without a label bearing this name, or with an incomplete or deliberately false label".[2] There have been no known appeals so far to the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, or ECtHR against convictions under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 3. However, Forum 18 is aware of one failed attempt to seek compensation from prosecutors after a Part 3 sentence was overturned on appeal in Krasnoyarsk (see below).

Prosecutions under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 4 and 5 are frequent. Forum 18 found 143 such prosecutions in 2017, and prosecutions have continued in 2018. Hare Krishna lawyer Mikhail Frolov told Forum 18 in April that "the fines are large, and where the boundaries of lawful behaviour lie is incomprehensible. Everyone has become much more cautious in their public actions".[3]

Plight of foreigners charged under "anti-missionary" amendment

Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 3, 4 and 5 can all carry heavy fines, although courts have so far generally imposed fines at the lower end of the scale for first offences. The minimum penalty for foreign citizens under Administrative Code Article 5.26 Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity") is much higher (30,000 Roubles) than that for Russian citizens under Part 4 (5,000 Roubles). Foreigners may also be ordered deported, even if they have lived in Russia for many years.[4] Individuals of several different nationalities have been prosecuted or threatened with prosecution under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 5 since it came into force in July 2016, including Americans, South Koreans, Ukrainians and Israelis.

One notable grouping is African students at Russian universities. These include citizens of Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Nigeria, Swaziland and the Democratic Republic of Congo, several of whom have been ordered deported.

In early 2017, law enforcement agencies began investigating several African students who attend the Pentecostal Embassy of Jesus church in Nizhny Novgorod for appearing in videos inviting international students to church events, or for reposting videos on their social media pages. One Zimbabwean – Kudzai Nyamarebvu – was convicted of violating the terms of her visa (Administrative Code Article 18.8, Part 2) and ordered deported, although her departure has been delayed to allow her to complete her course. Investigations of other African students are continuing.

Constitutional Court offers partial clarification

On 13 March 2018, the Constitutional Court announced its refusal to consider an appeal from Baptist Union pastor Sergei Stepanov. He had posted an invitation to an Easter service at another church on his page on the VKontakte social network, which was found during internet monitoring by the FSB security service. Tambov District Magistrate's Court No. 1 fined him 5,000 Roubles on 10 July 2017 under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity").

The Constitutional Court did, however, issue an interpretation of the legal norms disputed in Stepanov's appeal – the July 2016 "anti-missionary" amendment. According to Stepanov's lawyer Sergei Chugunov, the appeal raised two issues: firstly, that the anti-missionary amendment does not distinguish between "missionary activity" and citizens' right to share their own beliefs on an individual basis; and secondly, that it is unclear what actually constitutes activity aimed at disseminating the beliefs of a religious association – whether this has to include "any principles of belief of this association" or could be merely "a simple announcement of events held by the religious association".

In remarks for the Moscow-based Slavic Centre for Law and Justice on 2 April, Chugunov concluded that the Constitutional Court's response "does not clarify the uncertainty regarding the dissemination of personal religious beliefs", but gives "an unambiguous answer" as far as the definition of a religious association's missionary activity is concerned.

What is "missionary activity"?

According to the Constitutional Court, a religious association's missionary activity:

- "firstly, is carried out by a particular circle of persons (the religious association, its participants, other citizens and legal entities in the established order)";

- "secondly, is aimed at disseminating information about its doctrine (its religious postulates) among persons who are not participants (members, followers) of this religious association"

- and "thirdly, aims to involve these persons in the membership ... of the religious association by appealing to their consciousness, will, feelings, including by means of the person doing the missionary work revealing their own religious views and beliefs".

Thus, "A defining feature [*sistemoobrazuyushchy priznak*] of missionary activity is the dissemination by citizens and their associations of information about a specific religious belief among persons who, not being its followers, are involved in their number, including as participants in specific

religious associations". Therefore, the distribution of information for example about services, ceremonies or events "falls under the definition of missionary activity as such, only if it contains the said defining feature".

The Constitutional Court concludes that establishing that missionary activity has been carried out requires "the identification of all the signs of missionary activity specified in [the Yarovaya Law]". If any is absent, the religious activity "cannot qualify as missionary activity in the sense of the [Yarovaya] Law, and therefore, even if it is committed in violation of the requirements of the Law, it does not constitute an offence as stipulated in Article 5.26, Part 4 of the Administrative Code".

The Constitutional Court also stipulates that courts should request "expert analysis" of religious activities where this is necessary to differentiate between "missionary activity" and "other activities in the field of religious relations, including those aimed at public information". However, "expert analyses" can be produced by people who are not expert in the activities, beliefs or material under review, and who are biased against groups or people the authorities dislike.[5]

Will Constitutional Court interpretation reduce prosecutions?

The Constitutional Court's interpretation may mean such cases as Imam Raman Samadarov's in Tula Region may be avoided.

The police charged Samadarov under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity") for leading Friday prayers in a house "in the presence of parishioners, that is, he performed missionary activity in violation of the Law". According to the verdict, seen by Forum 18, the police had been alerted by an anonymous telephone call about "a mass gathering of foreign citizens".

On 18 December 2017, Uzlovaya District Magistrate's Court No. 44 in the Tula Region fined Samadarov 30,000 Roubles. His appeal at Uzlovaya City Court on 31 January 2018 was unsuccessful.

However, the question of how to protect individuals' constitutional right to share their beliefs as private citizens from infringement by the July 2016 "anti-missionary" amendment is no clearer. Despite many defendants arguing that they were not representing any religious organisation or group and therefore did not need authorising documents, most of these cases have ended in convictions.[6] "Nobody wants to answer this question," lawyer Sergei Chugunov told Forum 18 on 19 April, "because, if you answer it, you can forget all about these [legal] norms – they will not work, as it will suffice to say 'I'm disseminating my own beliefs'."

Too early to say how far definition has affected court practice

In its refusal of an earlier appeal, by American Baptist Donald Ossewaarde, the Constitutional Court also avoided pronouncing on this issue. It stated that "the question of whether [Ossewaarde] was a member of a religious association and carried out missionary activity on its behalf ... or was simply publicly disseminating his own religious beliefs, as related to the establishment and evaluation of the factual circumstances of a particular case, do not come within the powers of the Constitutional Court". See below for Pastor Ossewaarde's European Court of Human Rights appeal.

Lawyers have nevertheless greeted the Constitutional Court's clarification of missionary activity with a degree of optimism. The Constitutional Court's interpretation "correctly noted that in order to determine the existence of

missionary activity, one must proceed from the presence of all the attributes, since not all the activity of religious associations is missionary", Pentecostal Union lawyer Vladimir Ozolin commented to Forum 18 on 12 April. "So far, unfortunately, law enforcement practice has been different. Thanks to this definition, we hope to change radically the approach of the courts to missionary work."

Hare Krishna lawyer Mikhail Frolov added on 19 April: "The Constitutional Court's 13 March definition will certainly have a strong influence on judicial practice under Administrative Code Article 5.26, since, for the first time, the Constitutional Court has detailed the composition of missionary activity, singling out three of its characteristics and calling one of them 'system-forming' [a defining feature]".

It is still too early to say how far the definition has affected court practice, Chugunov told Forum 18 on 10 May. It is now possible, he explained, for defendants to appeal against convictions (including those which came into force before 13 March), citing the Constitutional Court's stipulation of how the legal norms should have been applied.

Frolov notes that it has already been cited in an appeal verdict which overturned the conviction of two Hindus in Orenburg under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity"). Olga Ovchinnikova and Igor Ovchinnikov were each fined 5,000 Roubles by the city's Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 11 for running a study group on Hindu texts at their yoga centre. On 6 April, Judge Murat Kuzhabayev of Orenburg Regional Court upheld their supervisory appeals.

The written verdict on Ovchinnikova, seen by Forum 18, quotes the Constitutional Court's 13 March definition, and concludes that "By itself, collective reading of religious books without the presence of the defining feature [*sistemoobrazuyushchy priznak*] of missionary activity does not constitute the composition of the offence provided for in [Administrative Code] Article 5.26, Part 4".

Aleksandr Mikhailov, pastor of the Glorification Pentecostal church in Sharypovo, unsuccessfully took Krasnoyarsk Regional Prosecutor's Office and Russia's General Prosecutor to court in what appears to be the first attempt to seek compensation for an unfounded prosecution under the anti-missionary amendment.

On 15 March 2017, Sharypovo Magistrate's Court No. 30 fined the pastor and his church 30,000 Roubles each under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 3 ("Implementation of activities by a religious organisation without indicating its official full name, including the issuing or distribution, within the framework of missionary activity, of literature and printed, audio, and video material without a label bearing this name, or with an incomplete or deliberately false label"). Their initial appeals to Sharypovo City Court were unsuccessful on 24 April 2017. Krasnoyarsk Regional Court, however, upheld Mikhailov's supervisory appeal and overturned his fine on 30 June 2017. The church's fine was also eventually overturned on 25 September 2017.

On 3 August 2017, Mikhailov lodged a suit at Krasnoyarsk's Central District Court, seeking compensation from Krasnoyarsk Regional Prosecutor's Office and Russia's General Prosecutor for having been "subject to unlawful administrative prosecution". Judge Yelena Senkina rejected the suit on 17 April 2018.

Although the compensation suit was unsuccessful, lawyer Vladimir Ozolin of the Pentecostal Union hailed the overturning of Mikhailov's conviction

(and that of his Church) as important for judicial practice under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 3. Ozolin noted that Krasnoyarsk Regional Court agreed that the Yarovaya Law does not require the full official name of a religious organisation to be displayed on the facade, or at the entrance of the building where religious activity is carried out. "We sincerely hope that this resolution will have a positive impact on further law enforcement practice and will stop attempts by law enforcement agencies to act contrary to the law," Ozolin remarked in an article on the Pentecostal Union website shortly after the supervisory appeal.

European Court of Human Rights appeals

Indian Protestant Pastor Victor-Immanuel Mani, who is married to a Russian and has a Russian-born child, was the first foreigner to be ordered deported under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity"). Naberezhnyye Chelny City Court found him guilty on 20 December 2016 of advertising religious gatherings on social media and allegedly giving religious literature to a non-member of his church. He was also fined 30,000 Roubles.[7]

Mani left Russia after his appeal to Tatarstan's Supreme Court failed in January 2017, but returned after Russia's Supreme Court overturned the deportation order in November 2017 on the grounds of "the strength of Mani's family and social ties to the Russian Federation" and the fact that deportation violated his right to a "private and family life" under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Supreme Court's ruling nevertheless upheld Mani's conviction and did not overturn his fine.

Mani lodged his appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg (Application No. 54264/17) on 31 July 2017.

On 19 January 2018, the ECtHR asked the Russian government whether Mani's prosecution had violated his right to freedom of religion and belief under Article 9 ("Freedom of thought, conscience and religion") of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). The ECtHR particularly asked about the distinction (or lack thereof) between "missionary activity" and individual sharing of beliefs. The ECtHR also asked whether the difference in the treatment of Russian and foreign citizens under Administrative Code Article 5.26 Parts 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity"), and 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity") amounts to unlawful discrimination, and whether the Russian courts had taken into account the impact of Mani's deportation on his family.

American Baptist pastor Donald Ossewaarde was fined 40,000 Roubles under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity") by Zheleznodorozhny District Court in Orel in August 2016. His "offence" was holding services in his home and allegedly advertising them on noticeboards. He was not ordered deported, but left the country of his own accord after the last of his appeals in Russia was unsuccessful. [8]

Ossewaarde lodged an appeal at the ECtHR (Application No. 27227/17) on 18 April 2017. On 6 July 2017, the ECtHR asked the Russian government whether Ossewaarde's prosecution had violated ECHR Articles 9 ("Freedom of thought, conscience and religion") and 11 ("Freedom of assembly and association"), particularly regard to the distinction (or lack thereof) between "missionary activity" and individual sharing of beliefs. The ECtHR also asked whether the difference in the treatment of Russian and foreign citizens under Administrative

Code Article 5.26 Parts 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity"), and 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity") amounts to unlawful discrimination.

Forum 18 has been unable to establish if the Russian government has responded to these questions in either case.

Appeals to the ECtHR can take years to be resolved. If Mani and Ossewaarde are successful, the ECtHR would require the Russian government to pay them compensation ("just satisfaction") and undertake other "individual measures" designed to remedy the violation. (In Mani's case, rescinding the deportation order, had this not already occurred.)

A judgment also requires a state to undertake "general measures" to prevent a violation happening again. Were the ECtHR to find in favour of Mani or Ossewaarde, this would, for example, require Russia to amend the part of the Yarovaya Law governing so-called missionary activity in order to bring it into line with international human rights law.

In December 2015, Russia adopted a law which stated that its own Constitution took precedence over ECtHR judgements and that the Constitutional Court would rule on whether these judgments would be put into practice.[9] On 1 March 2018, the RIA Novosti news agency reported that Russia was considering withdrawing from the European Court of Human Rights altogether.[10]

1. See: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246
2. ibid.
3. See F18News 18 April 2018 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2370
4. See http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246 and also F18News 18 April 2018 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2370.
5. See http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246.
6. See http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2370
7. See F18News 1 March 2017 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2261.
8. See Keston Newsletter No 27, p.24, for this case, and http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2261
9. See Forum 18's general Russia religious freedom survey http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246
10. For more background see Forum 18's survey of the dramatic decline in freedom of religion and belief related to Russia's Extremism Law at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article id=2215.
    A personal commentary by Alexander Verkhovsky, Director of the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis http://www.sova-center.ru, about the systemic problems of Russian anti-extremism legislation, is at F18News 19 July 2010 http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=1468.
    A personal commentary by Irina Budkina, Editor of the Old Believer website: http://www.samstar.ucoz.ru, about the continuing denial of equality to Russia's religious minorities, is at F18News 26 May 2005 http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=570.

Victoria Arnold *is a journalist and analyst at Forum 18.*

The Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society 2017-2018 Highlights

by Kathy R. Hillman

The Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society joins with the Keston Institute to achieve its mission and is committed to the preservation and utilisation of the library and archive held in the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center. The Keston Center at Baylor University seeks to promote research, teaching, and understanding of religion and politics in communist, post-communist, and other totalitarian societies.

Keston Fall 2017 Public Lecture, Revisiting Red October: Events, and Exhibition

On October 25, Keston Advisory Board member Dominic Erdozain *(below right)*, Research Fellow at King's College in London and Visiting Scholar at Emory University in Atlanta, gave a talk, titled "Holy Fools: Faith and Freedom in Soviet Russia," as part of a series of lectures, panel discussions, and films marking the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Following Dr Erdozain's talk, the distinguished panel of Wallace Daniel, Julie deGraffenried, and Philip Jenkins responded. A Russian-themed reception and signing of Dr. Erdozain's book *The Dangerous God: Christianity and the Soviet Experiment* followed.

Other events co-sponsored by the Keston Center included a lecture by Karen Petrone, professor of history at the University of Kentucky, who spoke on "Revolution and Memory: One Hundred Years of Commemorating the Russian Revolution," and film screenings for context.

The Keston Center also mounted a related exhibition, "Revisiting Red October: Power, Propaganda & Persecution" both onsite in the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center and online. Divided into three sections, the exhibition chronicles the journey from power to propaganda to pervasive persecution. "The revolution impacted every aspect of life in Russia, but especially religion. This exhibition highlights propaganda in the persecution of religion during the political and social upheaval following the 1917 Revolution, specifically how anti-religious rhetoric, suppression, and atheism reinforced, solidified, and extended Soviet rule. It tells the story of Saint Benjamin of Petrograd (*below left*), analyses various propaganda forms used by the Soviets, and shows images of destroyed churches that reveal the extent that the government feared and suppressed religion in post-revolution Russia."
See: http://sites.baylor.edu/keston-collections/2017/09/25/revisiting-red-october/

Keston Spring Public Lecture and Panel
On March 22, Alyona Kojevnikov, former Director of the Keston News Service, British government translator, BBC broadcaster, and Chief of the Moscow Bureau for Radio Liberty, spoke on the topic "Hush! Religion and the Secular Media." Wallace Daniel, Keston Advisory member who helped Baylor obtain the Keston library and archives, put the lecture into context by relating material about Michael Bourdeaux, the Keston Institute, and the Keston Center.

Using images available in the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center as background, Kojevnikov traced her journalistic journey beginning in 1971 and stated in part, "...A religious journalist must have a good grasp of a whole range of religious traditions, as most of them are related to the Bible or other scripture, so an adequate knowledge of scripture is essential in order to report responsibly even on beliefs that cannot be proved empirically, while retaining the healthy skepticism that is essential to good and balanced news reporting."

She outlined the role of Keston News Service, noting that although "Keston College was not a campaigning organization as such...Keston became the epicenter of a huge global campaign demanding the release of the 28-year-old Russian poet and novelist Irina *Alyona* Ratushinskaya, a Russian Orthodox Christian." The poet was released "on the eve of a summit meeting between President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev."

Alyona Kojevnikov, Robert Darden, Lynn Tatum, Roland Smith

A panel responded to the address, discussed the topic, and answered questions from the audience. Experts participating included Journalism Professor Robert Darden who moderated the panel, Religion Professor and Middle East expert Lynn Tatum, and former British Ambassador to Ukraine Roland H. Smith. Kojevnikov and Smith held additional informal sessions with Baylor undergraduate and graduate students during their stays in Waco.

The Blessings of Christmas: Library Fellows Christmas Program
The Libraries chose "The Blessings of Christmas" as the theme for the 2017 Library Fellows Christmas Reception Since Keston researcher Christopher Campbell from the University of Glasgow had arrived in Waco prior to the event, he joined in the celebration. Guests enjoyed an exhibition of materials related to Christmas blessings from the various library special collections. The Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society selected:

- Orthodox dissident Yuri Titov's hand-painted Christmas card which he personally sent to Keston Institute founder Michael Bourdeaux and his family.
- *Our Mother's Tears: Ten Weeping Madonnas in Historic Hungary* prepared for the Franciscans of the Immaculate by Erika Papp Faber (Academy of the Immaculate, 2006).


Above right: Roland Smith, Michael Bourdeaux and Xenia Dennen

The Keston Advisory Board and the Keston Council

The Keston Advisory Board met on March 23 in conjunction with the Keston Lecture and visit by Keston Institute Trustees Roland H. Smith and Alyona Kojevnikov. A majority of members attended. Special guest Amie Oliver, Associate Director of The Texas Collection, made a presentation on the new Women's Collections at Baylor website that contains several entries from the Keston library and archives and had opened earlier in the week. Kathy Hillman gave updates, and Smith reported on the Keston Council. The Board examined and discussed the state of audio-visual materials held by Keston.

As a member of the Keston Institute Council of Management, Director Kathy Hillman attended the June 2017 meeting in Iffley near Oxford at the home of Michael Bourdeaux. During the year, she read materials and participated in the Council's work through e-mail.

Research Activities and Visiting Scholars

Keston received more than 300 information requests during the year. In addition to about 600 individuals who attended presentations sponsored or co-sponsored by Keston or visited the Center, five independent researchers and one Keston scholar extensively utilized the collection. About 200 students and faculty physically entered the archives. Three students visited twice following the "Hush! Religion and the Secular Media" lecture to obtain material for various projects.

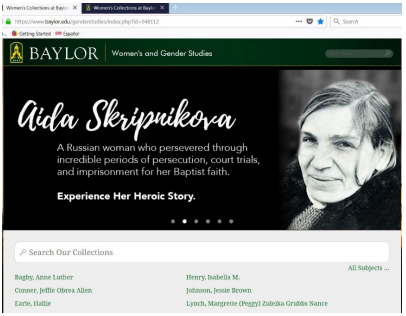
Sharing Her Story: Women's Collections at Baylor
https://www.baylor.edu/genderstudies/index.php?id=948112

On March 15, Baylor University officially launched the Women's Collections at Baylor

The online resource centralises items, highlighting the contributions of women and offering convenient searching across all disciplines. The website serves as a guide to research materials contained in the libraries and oral history. Although more entries will be added as time and staff permit, Keston currently has three women featured: Aida Skripnikova, Xenia Dennen, and Alyona Kojevnikov who was in Waco and attended the event.

Summer Teaching Fellows

The 2016 Libraries Teaching Fellows continue to bring their students to the Keston Center and utilise class materials prepared during that summer.



Three faculty or graduate student teachers of record applied in the spring of 2018 with two fellowships available. The Keston Director and Advisory Board members Steve Gardner and Julie deGraffenried composed the selection committee. During July and August of 2018, Adrienne Harris, Associate Professor of Russian, Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, and Steven Jug, Lecturer, Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, will work on their projects. Harris will gather visual materials for two courses. Jug will revise four lessons on Orthodoxy in Russia. His emphasis will be church-state relations in the Imperial Era and after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Scholars and Research Topics

- "Religious Dissidents in the Soviet Union during the Cold War: Qualitative Content Analysis of the Arguments and Goals of Orthodox Dissidents" (Christian Föller, Muenster University)
- Czechoslovakian religious history during the 20th century, including Augustin Navrátil, other dissidents, and the use of psychiatry (Marta Kordikova, Charles University, Prague)
- Cold War history, church-state relations under Communism and the role of religion in foreign policy (Christopher Campbell, University of Glasgow)
- Fr. Aleksandr Men' and Gleb Yakunin (Wallace Daniel)
- Various Keston materials (James Warhola)
- Keston archives and religion and secular media (Alyona Kojevnikov)
- "Revisiting Red October: Power, Propaganda & Persecution" (Two undergraduates)

Other Visitors and Presentations

The Center hosted scholars, individual students, classes, library colleagues, and other researchers. Kathy Hillman's University 1000 cohort and several classes met in the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center. The College of Arts & Sciences Board of Advocates met in the Center for a session on research conducted by Julie deGraffenried. One of her students, senior International Studies major Luke Walters, shared the impact of his experiences with the primary source materials. The Board toured the Center and viewed items ranging from posters to photographs to Aida Skripnikova's trial transcript.

The Arts & Sciences Board was so impressed with their time in the Keston Center and in The Texas Collection that "The Joy and Value of Engaged Learning" special issue of their Baylor Arts & Sciences periodical featured campus archives. The writer quotes Walters who stated, "My research in the Keston Center helped me see the world through a lens largely ignored by my generation."

Processing and Preservation

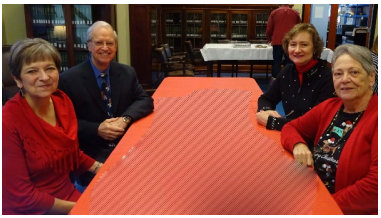
Processing continued in the Center with ongoing projects and the goal of reducing the quantity of unprocessed boxes. During the year, the number declined from 70 to 46. Although all remaining materials could not be moved from Baylor storage facilities into library space, the items are housed in a climate-controlled location.

Through redistribution of staff responsibilities, Janice Losak's position was upgraded to include periodicals processing and binding. Her work resulted in the cataloging of 28 newspapers, 60 other periodicals, and the addition of 233 bound volumes to the collection. Some 143 printed books (198 volumes) were placed in BearCat. Two manuscripts and 11,191 periodical issues were also included in the collection. One periodical was withdrawn. Therefore, 326 titles and 11,391 volumes in all formats were added. Keston disseminated electronic 308 files. Digitization consisted of rescanning samizdat and completing the 10,271-image photograph collection.

Finding aids and archives officially opened in the Baylor Archival Repositories Database (BARD) during 2017-18 include Mozambique, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Radio Free Europe, Poland, Teodorovich Nadezhda, Chile, and Soviet Union Orthodox Church. A listing and link to Keston materials became part of the Prague Spring Archive portal, a collaboration between the University of Texas' *Perry-Castañeda* Library, the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (CREEES) at UT, and the LBJ Presidential Library.
See: http://scalar.usc.edu/works/prague-spring-archive

Tanya Clark, Sarah Howard & Julia Pantleo

Staff



l. to r. Kathy Hillman, Bill Mitchell, Larisa Seago, Janice Losak

Keston retained Director Kathy Hillman and Library Information Specialists Larisa Seago and Janice Losak on staff (*see photo above*). In addition to normal training activities and seminars, Texas Collection processing archivist Paul Fisher consulted on BARD, Baylor's archival repository. Although she was hired as editorial assistant for Baylor's *Journal of Church and State,* Tanya Clark *(below left)* continued assisting with Russian materials part-time.

Sophomore Julia Pantleo remained as an undergraduate work-study student. For the fourth year, the Center and Museum Studies partnered to employ a graduate assistant, and Sarah Howard spent her first assistantship with Keston. During summer 2017, Eva Hruska, Modern Languages and Cultures Lecturer, worked in the Polish archives funded by a grant from the Keston Council.

Additionally, the Keston Center plans to commemorate and celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Keston College and Institute (1969-2019). Part of the celebrations will be the publication of a book *'Be our Voice': Highlights from the Keston Archive* (working title).

Kathy R. Hillman *is Director of the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society at Baylor University.*

America's Man in Cold War Moscow

by Michael Bourdeaux

Review of *The Kremlinologist: Llewellyn E Thompson, America's Man in Cold War Moscow,* by Jenny and Sherry Thompson; Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2018. (€29.50, available from Waterstones and Amazon).

Nikita Khrushchev came from a rural background in the Ukrainian south, so he had constant problems with his domestic agricultural policy in the cold north. One disparaging nickname for him in Moscow was *kukuruznik* (the maize man) and it came vividly to mind in this book. Among many telling incidents from a child's point of view, two daughters writing the biography of their ambassador father, one stands out. Jenny Thompson, Ambassador Llewellyn E. Thompson's elder daughter, saw Mr Khrushchev come to her greenhouse in the back garden of her father's residence, Spaso House, where she was growing a crop of sweet corn. There is an accompanying picture of the leader's look of amazement, as he points to the product of the girl's hard work. She was then eleven. Khrushchev wanted to know if this was some new spectacular variety, but on being told that it was available in any standard American seed catalogue, Jenny received a pat on the head from the leader as he called her *molodets* ("great girl"). She continued feeding the household with her corn all over the summer, while we can imagine Khrushchev calling in his agricultural minister for perhaps a quiet (or not so quiet) word.

Such a meeting does not appear in the book, because there is no evidence for it. Jenny and Sherry Thompson stick strictly to the results of their research or their childhood and adolescent memories. Jenny was only 22 when her father died in 1972 and Sherry four years younger. Therefore, the daughters, who spent fifteen years researching this milestone of diplomatic history, were too young to interview their father before he died and probably did not even realise how great his reputation was at that time, but much later they sought out every available record of his career. Many documents remained in closed files until relatively recently and only the CIA barred access to its holdings.

Because the facts of this biography have never been written up before, even the most complicated sections of the diplomatic *khorovod* – to purloin an image from a Russian dance - move with momentum. There is a sweep in the narrative, which combines insight and analysis. It is hard to believe that this is a début work from two authors, who deserve an accolade as major historians.

Anyone who doubts this claim should read the reconstruction of the events of 1 May 1960 (Chapter 20), a date which stands out in the annals of history as the "U2 Incident", when the Soviet defences shot down Gary Powers with his spy-plane from 60 thousand feet, a height never previously achieved by a Soviet rocket. The Soviets had known of these flights over their airspace for some time, but did not reveal this for fear of criticism for their inability to shoot them down! The preceding tale of gross American incompetence – President Eisenhower's wish to stop the sorties from being carried out – followed by the unbelievably crass

decision to send such a mission on (of all days) the date of the Soviets' sacred May-Day Parade - reads like a novel, except that authors of fiction would not make up the presentation of such a gift wrapped in shiny gilded paper to the "arch-enemy".

The true greatness of this book, however, is precisely the way in which the two authors see their father, not as a confrontational figure, but one who gained the deepest respect from both camps as a peace-maker, one who, almost to his too-early dying day, was still seeking out new ways of building a better world. He was a leader in the extended and exhausting series of SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) until a few weeks before his death.

Both American and Soviet bureaucracy often blocked his way forward. A succession of presidents, from Eisenhower to Nixon, under whom Thompson served two terms in Moscow as head of mission, always listened to him with respect, but often he did not receive the fullest backing. He surpassed, in my view, the better-known Charles 'Chip' Bohlen, his predecessor and friend, and the more controversial George Kennan before that, about whose work he had reservations.

American diplomacy was traditionally represented by men (not many women in those days!) from the East Coast. Llewellyn Thompson came from a rural Baptist background in Colorado and his life journey led him from a failed attempt to breed rabbits (or rather, to sell their abundant progeny) to receiving the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service. He was not conventionally religious, yet his qualities of straightforward honesty, his quiet demeanour, his unfailing wise advice, his generosity of time given even to people who would never have expected a private word, would, once experienced, never be forgotten.

My personal involvement in this story was occasionally being more than a bystander. I was a member of the first-ever cultural exchange of seventeen British students and the same number of Soviets, each attending universities in the respective countries. The above comment on the ambassador's character is my own judgment, not that of his daughters. In circumstances that I shall later explain, I was a frequent caller at the residence, Spaso House. Shortly after the U2 Incident the ambassador asked me to recount an unpleasant experience. I had been staying a few nights in a student dormitory in Leningrad, when the U2 incident of the First of May took place. I was grilled all night after the news broke and I shall never forget the feeling of being almost personally accused of collusion in the incident, about which, of course, I had no access to information except from the raised voices of my interlocutors. In a conversation, Mr. Thompson indicated that, up to then, he had had reactions only from Moscow. I experienced one of his diplomatic qualities: he was a superb listener.

As a young man, he used a gift from his father to fund his higher education. Once graduated from the University of Colorado, his advance was astonishing. In the diplomatic corps, he was posted to pre-independence Ceylon. After this, he served in Moscow during the war, distinguishing himself when he remained behind as, in effect, chargé d'affaires, while the ambassador and most of his staff moved to Kuybyshev as the Nazis advanced. During this time he learned his excellent Russian from a girl-friend, who doubtless reported on him, but he betrayed

no secrets and ended the war with a stellar reputation.

Recognition as a negotiator soon came his way. He worked towards a painstaking agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia over the status of Trieste and its hinterland. Recognition of this success led to his appointment as Ambassador to Vienna, where he was primarily responsible for the withdrawal of the Soviet occupation of parts of Austria. His understanding of Russians, rather than confrontation with them, led to his career in Moscow.

The Kremlinologist recounts in detail Thompson's frequent meetings with Khrushchev, his respect for him, without yielding an iota of America's position, and his ability to ride the leader's irascibility and frequent changes of mood. Probably his finest achievement in Moscow was picking up the pieces after the disaster of the U2 Incident. He never established subsequently such a close relationship with Premier Alexei Kosygin, but his efforts to do so were unrelenting. Later in his career he excelled in his participation in the protracted negotiations over Vietnam and the much shorter ones resulting from Israel's Six-Day War, but they were never his natural scene. The book pays warm tribute to Jane Thompson, an extraordinary ambassador's wife, who was innovative while she was the chatelaine of Spaso House, as well as being the perfect hostess. Her political comments were of well-judged acuity. Among her innovations were introducing a ballet master to the residence for diplomats' children, which led eventually to Sherry's acceptance into George Balanchine's prestigious school.

It is worth pausing over the Khrushchev period, Thompson's heyday. His two young daughters needed a nanny. From 1958-60 this was Gillian Davies, known to them as "Gill" and featuring marginally in the book. I met her on Christmas Eve 1959 and we started seeing each other. Thereafter the Thompson residence was open house to me. One of the first episodes Gillian recounted had just occurred. Khrushchev invited the Thompson family to join him for a weekend in his dacha complex. The ambassador said that, if the children were to come, this would be possible only if Gill came too. The daughters reconstruct the event from memory and from documents, but Gillian's recall was fresh when she told me about it and the two versions are slightly different. She was included in the invitation to a formal dinner with Khrushchev and many of the ruling Presidium on the Saturday evening. Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan was the toastmaster and each nationality had to be individually celebrated. That included Mikoyan's Armenia and Khrushchev's Ukraine, but also the homeland of the sole "Anglichanka", Gillian, who was in fact Welsh. Next morning Khrushchev appeared on the doorstep of the girls' individual dacha. Gillian answered the knock, after which Khrushchev took the children and her for a hectic ride on a *troika* (sled drawn by three horses).

The authors, probably correctly, date the beginning of Khrushchev's decline from the U2 Incident, leading to his eventual dismissal in 1964. He was under severe domestic pressure over his original de-Stalinization programme, but this became international also, when the Chinese communists began accusing him, behind closed doors, of disloyalty to Marxism-Leninism. It was my original view – and still is – that the anti-religious campaign which the Communist Party began at that time was largely instigated as an attempt to prove the leader's pristine credentials

against the criticism that he was betraying the dogma. The revival of religion, which Stalin had not discouraged during the final years of his dictatorship, led to the emergence of a growing number of emboldened and outspoken religious figures, not only Orthodox, but Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews and assorted others. They were defenceless against the intensifying onslaught , instigated by Khrushchev and orchestrated by the security services. These events led directly to the founding of Keston College a few years later.

The authors' frequent asides, giving two child's-eye views of the swirl of contentious politics around them, is a singularly delightful aspect of the book. Many of these are funny. More serious is an event preparatory to the visit of Vice-President Nixon to Moscow. An American security team reviewed the condition of Spaso House. Probably with glee, the children talked about their discovery of "secret passages" deep in the bowels of the building, one of which, they suspected, led to the Mongolian Embassy across the street. When Jenny and Sherry next went down there the entrances were bricked up.

These girls spent eight years of their lives in Moscow, which was their home many years before they first visited America. They had Russian friends, attended Russian schools and Jenny spent a year at university there. Sadly, their story peters out with the death of their father. They are writers with considerable gifts and one would much like to read an autobiography from each. It was my privilege to know them as children and to have had all-too-infrequent meetings with them since.

I end with an inconclusive and sad addendum. The authors refer to electronic surveillance of those who came and went through the doors of Spaso House. It was noticed, in later years, that the incidence of cancer among those who lived there was higher than, statistically, would have been expected. Johns Hopkins University, which published this book, also instigated an investigation, backed by a lavish grant of $400 million. Neither of the Thompson children has suffered in this way (Llewellyn Thompson never enjoyed good health but his premature death was caused by stomach cancer.) Gillian died of cancer, aged 44, after which the university team contacted me requesting access to her medical records. I gave permission, but heard no more. My suspicions were aroused that Gillian might have been an unwitting victim of the Cold War, but nothing was ever proven. The book states that the investigation reached no conclusion and petered out.

Canon Michael Bourdeaux *is the President and Founder of Keston College (now Keston Institute).*

Faith and Resilience in the Gulag

by Xenia Dennen

"AND I WILL TELL OF THE BEST PEOPLE IN ALL THE EARTH"
Irina Ratushinskaia

Why do some people survive the horrific conditions of a Nazi concentration camp or a Soviet labor camp and others die quickly? Why does a person not commit suicide? These were questions that the psychotherapist and writer Dr. Viktor Frankl explored with his patients. In *Man's Search for Meaning* he explores this subject and comes to the conclusion that those who had a sense of "meaning" in their lives, who felt their existence was part of a metaphysical framework, were able to survive and even sometimes to demonstrate extraordinary inner strength and human goodness.[1] Simone Weil took an opposite view: in her essay "The Love of God and Affliction," she claims that extreme human suffering, which she calls "affliction," is always dehumanising and destructive. It "deprives its victims of their personality and makes them into things. [...] it freezes all those it touches right to the depths of their souls. They will never find warmth again. They will never believe any more that they are anyone."[2]

These two diametrically opposed views are illustrated in the form of two figures from literature—the first view through Lukeria, a character in the short story "A Living Relic" by Ivan Turgenev,[3] and the second through Gregor in Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Gregor endures a terrifying life, imprisoned within the carapace of an unwanted and unloved insect who shrivels up, until in death he is no more than a flat piece of shell that is swept up like rubbish, and which his family do not even bother to bury. He is totally destroyed. Very different is the life-affirming Lukeria: although paralysed as the result of a fall when she was young, she exudes joy and peace, she loves life, loves listening to the pigeons, watching the bees and chickens. Her head "looked exactly like an ancient icon," writes the agnostic Turgenev, who feels there is something holy about her. The Soviet Gulag is a rich source for examples of life-affirming individuals who could support Frankl's theory. Among them was the poet Irina Ratushinskaia.

Irina Ratushinskaia

Ratushinskaia was determined that the fortitude she witnessed in the Gulag should not be lost to posterity. "And I will tell of the best people in all the earth," she wrote in her poem "*I Will Live and Survive*"—"The most tender, but also the most invincible." The poem was written in November 1983 after seven months in prison where she was beaten and put in solitary confinement in freezing conditions, until many thought she would die from her injuries.[4] Her remarkable memoir, *Grey is the Colour of Hope*,[5] describes her years in the Small Zone, a special unit for women political prisoners within the Barashevo labour camp in Mordovia. Here, despite the near-starvation rations and the regular spells in the SHIZO[6] (the prison isolation cell) where prisoners had to wear just a thin smock in freezing temperatures, these women still put others first, supported one another, shared any extra food they received, and refused to compromise their principles. Frequently they even went on hunger strike if one of their number was put into the SHIZO or was refused the regulation annual family visit. Ratushinskaia writes: "Probably this is the best way to retain one's humanity in the camps: to care more about another's pain

than about your own."[7] The women did not respond rudely to the insolence of the prison warders; they simply refused to speak. They were careful to avoid hating their persecutors and tried to laugh instead. Out of their bleak, inhuman environment, they created a garden, growing nettles and anything that would add some nutrition to their appalling diet.

Labour Camp Brutality

Soviet reality and the labor camp environment were based on a construct of lies in which the aim of the authorities was to turn people into slaves or even to drive a person mad. Isaiah Berlin, during just a short visit to the USSR in 1956, felt the Soviet world was divorced from normality: "If one stays in the USSR more than two weeks one's perspective and values are fatally transformed: to leave it is like waking from a dream: there is no bridge with reality."[8] For someone like Ratushinskaia who faced years in prison, it could have been a real threat to her sanity, as she admitted: "it seemed to me that the normal human world no longer existed, and that I was living in a huge mental asylum."[9] In a BBC broadcast in 1987 she explained:

> When prisoners are held in a camp or punishment cell, one of the KGB's main aims is to reduce them to a state where they lose all human dignity. To achieve this, they place people in conditions which are inconceivable, incomprehensible to the rational mind. Sometimes the prisoner's psychological defence mechanism is to retreat into madness. People try to substitute an imaginary reality for the horror which their mind can no longer bear. This is more of a threat to creative people, and I knew that I faced that risk. But I always hoped that I had sufficient resilience to withstand the reality of the KGB's making and hold on to my sanity.[10]

Conditions in the Barashevo labour camp were inhuman. Orders came at one point for Natalia Lazareva (a former theater director from Leningrad), one of the women prisoners in the Small Zone, to be moved to Saransk. She was running a high temperature so some of the other prisoners demanded that a doctor come and examine her. Instead she was grabbed by her hands and feet and hauled by two warders out of bed clad only in a blouse and briefs:

> She is towed through the snow which already lies on the ground, and thrown into a cart. The gate slams shut. Natasha [Natalia] screams for help. Major Shalin kicks her with a heavy boot once, twice, three times. Then they all fall on her, kicking her into unconsciousness.[11]

On a number of occasions Ratushinskaia went on hunger strike for which a prisoner would get fifteen days in the SHIZO; there was no heating in winter and you were allowed to wear only thin clothes. During one such spell she felt extremely ill and was saved only because Tatiana Velikanova (one of the leaders of the human rights movement in the USSR) was in the cell with her and shouted for a doctor: "I lay flush up against the heating pipes, but to no avail, because they were cold. I fell into a delirious fever: in that delirium, I kept feeling that I was being drawn into the shapeless stain on one of the walls, and clutched at the pipe to avoid being sucked into that dark patch."[12] On another occasion in the SHIZO Ratushinskaia again nearly died: totally exhausted she slept and allowed her mind to flee her cell going whither she knew not, but the memory of her husband, Igor, helped to pull her back to life:

> Then I would find myself in a dark tunnel, at the end of which someone was waiting for me. And I would fly towards it, yet every time, just as I neared the end, the realisation would come that I had to go back. And, oh, how I did not want to go back! But I had to because it

was not yet my time. And, then what about Igor? So I would go back.[13]

Ratushinskaia's resilience was extraordinary, strengthened by her religious faith and, as she later acknowledged, by the prayers and support of many organizations and individuals who publicised her situation and campaigned for her release. As a young person, before her imprisonment, she had loved airplanes and dreamed of flying one.[14] She continued to fly in her imagination and was able to preserve a sense of inner freedom during her imprisonment. Indeed, she likened to flying a particular sort of strength that she experienced:

> The security which I felt in the labour camp—of knowing that they could only kill my body with torture, nothing more—was something which I'd understood theoretically before. But it was another thing to learn that this was actually true. [...] It produced a special kind of strength, like imagining yourself flying, then suddenly finding that you are.[15]

Faith and Compassion

Ratushinskaia's attitude to other human beings, even to the criminals who were imprisoned with her, was always positive, affirming that "there is something else to them as well—and that I will never forget. I shall try to appeal to that 'something else' which exists in even the most hardened criminals, and the guards."[16] She believed that hatred should be expunged from within yourself as "it will flourish and spread during your years in the camps, driving out everything else, and ultimately corrode and warp your soul."[17] Most of all among those in the Small Zone she admired Tatiana Velikanova, who established "the honourable practices of dignity and care for others in the Zone!"[18] The two women would have lengthy debates about what constitutes a human being to prevent themselves losing touch with "the normal human world" and treasured above all the warmth of the friendship that grew between them and the others in the Small Zone. On returning from a spell in the camp's "icy, filthy hospital," Ratushinskaia recorded: "I already feel much better within these walls, but even better than the walls of this our home is our friendship."[19]

This attitude to other human beings flowed from her Christian faith, which she had discovered early on in her life in Odessa. She wrote warmly about her fellow prisoner, a Lithuanian school teacher, Jadvyga Bieliauskiene, whose Catholicism was "the cornerstone of her existence": like her Ratushinskaia was not interested in denominational differences as "God is one, after all, and it is to Him that we shall all come in the end."[20] Another fellow prisoner, Galina Barats-Kokhan, after working as a Moscow University lecturer on Marxism, had become a Pentecostal: in her letters to her husband she called her hunger strike a fast and, commented Ratushinskaia, she would "depend only on water and prayer to sustain her. [. . .] What a mixed bunch we are: a Catholic, a Pentecostal, several Orthodox, an unbeliever . . . later we were to be joined by a Baptist. Yet we were always deeply respectful of one another's convictions. And God did not turn His face away from our small patch of Mordovian soil."[21]

When Natalia Lazareva had two cardiac seizures in the SHIZO, Ratushinskaia prayed that she might live and although desperately weak from a hunger strike, when Natalia cried out with pain, Ratushinskaia mysteriously found within herself enough strength to reach her on the other side of the cell: "From what reserves? I don't know. Strange things happen when you have nothing to depend on except God's help."[22] During another spell in the SHIZO some of the women

sang hymns and psalms, and one Christmas Eve when back in the Small Zone they gathered around a table, said the Lord's Prayer while Bieliauskiene divided up a Communion wafer from Lithuania that had been sent in an envelope by her relative: "And we, despite our various creeds, never doubted for a moment that God was looking down on us all at that moment."[23]

After her release from prison and her arrival in Britain in December 1986, Ratushinskaia was interviewed by Keston College staff: she explained that in a labour camp the authorities aimed to break you spiritually and she recounted a mysterious experience of warmth in the punishment cell:

> … while I was still in the camp, we all—my fellow prisoners and I—were frequently aware, actually physically aware, of the support of prayer. It is very hard to explain, it sounds very mystical, but we all at varying times, felt what could be described as an active flow of strength, a sort of warmth, and bearing in mind the icy conditions of punishment cells, this warmth could only have been the force of prayer, sustaining and protecting us.[24]

The Poet

Iosif Brodskii wrote a moving introduction to a 1986 edition of Ratushinskaia's poetry published in translation. He described her arrest and imprisonment "as a Neanderthal shriek; or rather, it testifies to the degree of bestialisation achieved by the first socialist state in the history of mankind." He considered her "a remarkably genuine poet, a poet with faultless pitch"[25] whose crown of thorns had turned into a laurel.

Her Christian faith often comes clearly through her poetry. In "*I Will Live and Survive"* she testifies to experiencing a "second birth" and describes an epiphany in her cell brought about by "a frost-covered window."[26] In the midst of what was meant to destroy her, she had acquired a level of perception that transfigured her surroundings and gave her the strength to survive. In January 1984 she wrote the poem "*I Talk to the Mice and the Stars*."[27] In this she becomes aware that her poetic gift is a divine calling. Echoing Pushkin's poem, *"The Prophet*," her mouth is touched by a six-winged seraphim. She proudly wears the marks of the rank awarded to her by a divine hand, and Christ-like is prepared to drink the cup that is presented to her. In the midst of death-dealing reality, she transforms the horror into something life-giving and beautiful.

While imprisoned Ratushinskaia sometimes managed to write down her poems on four-centimeter-wide strips of cigarette paper, which were then tightly rolled into a small tube "less than the thickness of your little finger"[28] that were sealed and made moisture-proof by a method of her own devising. These "capsules" were then secreted out of the prison when an opportunity presented itself. She would write poetry in her head while sewing gloves on sewing machines that made a racket like "machine-guns": "After arriving at the final version of five or six lines, I jot them down on a bit of paper which is concealed under a pile of unsewn gloves. When the poem is complete I commit it to memory and burn the paper."[29]

Her poetry was much in demand in the Small Zone and even by the non-politicals in the main part of the camp. A thief called Vasya who because of his TB had been sent to the prison hospital, jumped over a fence into the Small Zone one day and was fascinated by the uncompromising moral standards of Irina and the other women; he asked her to write down some of her poetry and there ensued a correspondence between the Small Zone and some of the

thieves, who through their contacts and the use of bribes managed to get letters from Ratushinskaia out to her husband, until the warders carried out a detailed search and moved the women to different quarters. While in the SHIZO she would recite her poems to those in the neighbouring cell, speaking into a mug by a pipe that, running along the wall, would help carry the sound. She described how prisoners demanded more and more poetry, how she began to flag but "was filled with new strength which came from some source I did not know I possessed."[30] This occurred on New Year's Eve, when she felt so much delight at "bringing at least a few minutes of pleasure to the driven and the suffering [...] in the midst of so much everyday sorrow."[31]

International Campaign

Thanks to an international campaign Ratushinskaia was eventually released in October 1986 and soon thereafter allowed to come to Britain. During the last four months before Ratushinskaia's release, Keston, through Alyona Kojevnikov, was lucky enough to establish telephone contact with her husband in Kiev. This regular contact enabled Keston to inform the world about exactly what was happening to her. In the words of Irina's husband, Igor Geraschenko, Keston College played "the most decisive role"[32] in the campaign because Keston kept the international media constantly up-to-date about her situation. Many organizations such as PEN International and Amnesty International joined the campaign in support.

Shortly after Ratushinskaia's arrival in London she and her husband were received by Margaret Thatcher at No. 10 Downing Street and met numerous other prominent political and religious figures. In 1987 Ratushinskaia was invited to spend a year as "Poet in Residence" at Northwestern University in the United States, and afterwards returned to England. Several years later, thanks to excellent medical care in the West after the appalling physical suffering of her time in the Gulag, Ratushinskaia gave birth to twin boys, Sergei and Oleg. She and her husband never intended to emigrate permanently, but as they had been stripped of Soviet citizenship they were not able to return to Russia until they eventually received Russian passports in 1998 during Yeltsin's period in power. When the twins were school age the family returned to Russia and now live in Moscow.

During an interview with Keston College staff in early 1987 Ratushinskaia expressed deep gratitude to all those who had taken part in the campaign for her release, and dedicated to them the following poem, which was published by Keston in its magazine *Frontier*:

Believe me, it was often thus
In solitary cells, on winter nights
A sudden sense of joy and warmth
And a resounding note of love

And then, unsleeping, I would know
A-huddled by an icy wall
Someone is thinking of me now
Petitioning the Lord for me

My dear ones, thank you all
Who did not falter, who believed in us!
In the most fearful prison hour
We probably would not have passed

Through everything—from start to end—
Our heads held high, unbowed,
Without your valiant hearts
To light our path.[33]

1. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (London: Rider, 2004).
2. Simone Weil, *Waiting on God* (London: Fontana, 1959), 84.
3. Ivan S. Turgenev, "Zhivye moshchi," in *Zapiski okhotnika* (Moscow: GIKhL, 1954), 364–77.
4. Irina Ratushinskaya, *No, I'm Not Afraid* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1986), 132.
5. Irina Ratushinskaya, *Grey is the Colour of Hope*, trans. Alyona Kojevnikov (Hodder & Stoughton: London) 1988.
6. *Shtrafnoi izolyator.*
7. Ibid., 193.
8. Isaiah Berlin, *Enlightening: Letters 1946–1960*, ed. Henry Hardy and Jennifer Holmes (London: Pimlico, 2011), 541.
9. Ratushinskaya, *Grey is the Colour of Hope*, 234.
10. "'The Living Poet': A Reading by Irina Ratushinskaya," BBC broadcast, May 3, 1987.
11. Ratushinskaya, *Grey is the Colour of Hope,* 146.
12. Ibid., 243–44.
13. Ibid., 186–87.
14. A memoir by Ilya Nykin in Ratushinskaya, *No, I'm Not Afraid,* 23.
15. Jonathan Luxmoore's interview with Ratushinskaya, September 1990, in *The God of the Gulag* by Jonathan Luxmoore (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 2016), 2:157.
16. Ratushinskaya, *Grey is the Colour of Hope*, 25.
17. Ibid., 212.
18. Ibid., 65.
19. Ibid., 160.
20. Ibid., 74.
21. Ibid., 102
22. Ibid., 182.
23. Ibid., 248.
24. "Someone is thinking of me now," interview with Ratushinskaia conducted by Keston College staff, *Frontier* (Keston College), March–April 1987, pp. 12–14.
25. Ratushinskaya, *No, I'm Not Afraid*, 14–15.
26. Ibid., 132.
27. Ibid., 136.
28. Ratushinskaya, *Grey is the Colour of Hope*, 67.
29. Ibid., 69.
30. Ibid., 186.
31. Ibid.
32. Author's interview (May 2016) with Alyona Kojevnikov who was the editor of the Keston News Service and also the translator and editor of *Grey is the Colour of Hope.*
33. "Believe me, it was often thus," poem by Irina Ratushinskaia, quoted in "Someone is thinking of me now," interview with Ratushinskaia conducted by Keston College staff, *Frontier*, (Keston College), March–April 1987, p. 13.

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John Roberts and Soviet Cultural Politics

As Director of the Great Britain-USSR Association (later the Britain-Russia Centre), 1973-1992, John Roberts organised many events bringing together prominent British and Soviet cultural figures. He has recorded the highs and lows of this work in his memoir Speak Clearly into the Chandelier: Cultural Politics between Britain and Russia, 1973-2000.

The Soviet authorities usually sent solid supporters of Soviet cultural policies, without real talent, and denied more interesting figures exit visas. The literary round table of May 1986 during which the exchange reprinted below took place, was drawing to a close. After comments from all present and some polite discussion on literary issues on which they could all agree, the biographer Michael Holroyd decided to speak his mind:

'We are divided,' Michael Holroyd said to the Soviet side, 'by your attitudes to women, which we find ludicrously out of date. We find your persistent points of reference to the Second World War as a self-indulgence that has gone on too long.' We could not credit, Mr Holroyd said, many Soviet moral attitudes, which seemed to us merely sentimental - to faint in horror at a post-card of a punk girl wearing a Hitler T-shirt was simply unconvincing. Did not Hitler rise to power on the backs of those who wished to suppress eccentricity, oddity, and finally individuality? Had Mr Mikhalkov[1] understood the reference made on the first day of the conference to the poet Irina Ratushinskaya? Did he or any member of the delegation know her work or predicament? Did they realise how incredulous such tragedies made the British side feel, when they heard accounts of the brave satirical role of the writer in Russia today?

Mr Holroyd sat back in his chair: there was silence.

Sitting as co-chairman next to Mikhalkov, I wondered silently whether Michael Holroyd had reached for his megaphone simply because the press had been invited to attend this final session. According to all reports, the Soviets had reached for theirs at the equivalent juncture in Moscow. I had even been told by one Soviet participant that the press report of a hostile tirade from him, at that final session in Moscow, had been a total fabrication. Mikhalkov bided his time and then reproached Holroyd for raising at the last moment the case of the 'so-called poetess' held in a Soviet prison. He launched himself into a speech reminiscent of the one delivered eight years earlier [to another group of British writers] by Kosorukov[2], clearly demonstrating the continuing cultural stagnation at the top, what [Bulat] Okudzhava[3] had cuttingly described to me as 'stability':

'Every country has its laws,' said Mikhalkov. 'People who break them can be sent to prison. Nobody is put into prison in our country unless they have

Sergei Mikhalkov (left) and John Roberts

broken a law. Michael was demanding release for some poetess. We have to admit we do not know her poetry. She has never been published in the USSR. She is not a member of the Writers' Union. She only started to write poetry after she was put in prison. That's her business, but it doesn't make her a poetess.'

He told his wrath; his wrath did end - and we somehow brought the ship of discussion into harbour. Nearly six months later, partly due to the efforts of Michael Holroyd and International PEN, Irina Ratushinskaya was released and came to settle in Britain. In February 1987 I invited her to give a poetry reading. It was to be held in the room where she had been described so scathingly. Upon her arrival, I asked permission to introduce her by first playing a tape of Mikhalkov's remarks. She welcomed the idea and pointedly began her recital with a quantity of fine poems, written and already in unofficial circulation *before* she was put away as a 'criminal'.

1. Sergei Vladimirovich Mikhalkov, 1913 - 2009, writer and chairman of the Union of Writers of the RSFSR.
2. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Kosorukov, chairman of the Foreign Commission of the Union of Writers.
3. Bulat Okudzhava, 1924 – 1997, poet, novelist and bard, setting his own poems to music and accompanying himself on guitar as he sang.

With thanks to Mr J.C.Q. Roberts for drawing our attention to this episode illuminating the Soviet attitude to any writer, artist or creative individual who dared to criticise Soviet reality.

Speak Clearly into the Chandelier: Cultural Politics between Britain and Russia, 1973-2000. Curzon Press, 2000, pp.164-165.

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