

Keston Newsletter

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A statue of St Andrew in Ukraine damaged by the war

The Ukrainian Crisis

by the Rt Revd Rowan Williams

When the Bourbon dynasty briefly returned to power in 19th century France, one despairing commentator remarked that they and their supporters had “learned nothing and forgotten nothing.” The tragedy that has unfolded in Ukraine in recent months will have prompted many to say something similar about the Patriarchate of Moscow. Just over a century ago, in the tense and violent period before the First World War, some Orthodox intellectuals in Russia, like Sergei Bulgakov (at the time, still a lay academic), were challenging the alliance between the Orthodox hierarchy and the

ideology of nationalist autocracy – already understanding that such an alliance risked binding the Church to a political system that was more and more perceived as morally bankrupt. The upheavals that followed and the terrible history of persecution and slaughter that overtook the Church in Russia in the 1920’s and after, both reinforced the point and offered the possibility of re-thinking the particular variety of church-state *symphonia* that had prevailed in the last century of empire. For many Russians who found their voice in the late 1980’s and early 90’s, as *perestroika*

From the Editor

The Keston Institute shares in the national grief at the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, whose life of service was an inspiration to us all.

It was also with great sadness that Keston's Council of Management learnt of the death of Keston's patron, Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, on 24 August (see p.19). He had been a wise adviser and faithful supporter of Keston's work, and will be sorely missed. Before becoming a patron, Metropolitan Kallistos served on the Council for many years: I for one will never forget his guidance and support at critical points in Keston's history after I was elected Chairman 20 years ago. May he rest in peace.

The Council look forward to welcoming Keston members to the next AGM on Saturday 5 November at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, London E14 8DS. The meeting will begin at 12 noon.

I am most grateful to Keston's patron, Bishop Rowan Williams, who has written an article for this issue of the *Keston Newsletter* on the Christian position as regards Russia's war against Ukraine (pp.1-5). After this article I have included a number of documents (pp.6-19) written by Orthodox clergy, both in Russia and Ukraine, some of which describe this war as fratricidal, similar to Cain's murder of his brother Abel in the Old Testament.

John Coutts, a Salvationist and long-time member of Keston, has contributed an article about the Salvation Army in Russia (pp.20-27). A Russian Orthodox martyr from the Soviet period, who died in prison in 1971, Boris Talantov, is someone whom I have long admired and about whom I have written an article for this issue of the *Newsletter* (pp.28-34).

The work of Keston's sister organisation in the USA, the Keston Center at Baylor University, continues under the excellent leadership of its Director, Professor Kathy Hillman, who contributes a report on recent events at the Center (pp.35-40).

Despite the problems created by the Covid pandemic and now by the war against Ukraine, Keston continues to support its Encyclopaedia project, *Religious Life in Russia Today*. Of course, I have not been able to join my Russian colleagues on field trips since the first Covid lockdown in March 2020 and now due to the war. Nevertheless, another volume has been published this year – volume 5 on religious life in St Petersburg – about which Sergei Filatov writes on pp. 41-44. This volume is now available on Keston's website.

Xenia Dennen

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began, that possibility was a life-giving hope; they turned to the writers of the Silver Age – as well as to Bulgakov’s contemporaries and heirs in the Emigration – to find some orientation that would free the Church to be more than a mouth-piece for ethnic pride and nostalgia for an imagined Byzantine ideal.

At the same time, though, along with the fresh witness of figures like Fr Alexander Men’ and Alexander Ogorodnikov, and the eager recovery of dissident Russian voices from an earlier era, along with the impressive programmes of translation and editing by those responsible – for example – for a journal like *Logos* in the early 90’s, other voices were gaining influence: not just the passionate anti-modern radicalism of Solzhenitsyn, but a more complex and troubling re-shaping of a deeply-rooted narrative. This was the persisting story of Russian vulnerability to the machinations of the stranger, the malign foreigner whose goal was to extinguish the unique witness of Russia to the divine purpose. The foreigner could be a Westerner or equally a Westernizer, a socialist, a Jew; the obstinate conviction that the Revolution itself could not have been a “native” affair, but must have been orchestrated by Russia’s enemies, gained traction once more (the trope of “*Jewish Bolshevism*”, which even writers like Bulgakov can sometimes entertain, persists in the murkier regions of Russian Christian rhetoric). And the mythology associated with the “Great Patriotic War”, the struggle against Hitler’s Germany, already scripted by Stalin as a new iteration of the story of Russia’s martyrdom, played a stronger and stronger role as the

possibilities of a transparent and accountable political settlement in Russia slipped further away, undermined by internal corruption and kleptocracy, and the international opportunism of greedy and impatient markets.

There may have been moments in the last 20 years or so when a more generous and imaginative Western attitude to Russia, and a greater willingness to assess the positive capacity of Russian geopolitical interest and experience, *might* have forestalled the catastrophe we are now witnessing; impossible to say. But what is currently unfolding is the triumph of the Russian “martyr” narrative, a narrative in which others are pre-emptively punished for the blasphemous suffering they intend to inflict on the Christ-bearing people of the *Russkii mir* (Russian world) out of hatred for the fidelity of Russians to the divine order. It is a narrative that has to cope with some awkward current realities. Ukraine is most emphatically seen as part of the Russian world, the wellspring of Orthodox enlightenment in the Russian lands; but it has sold itself to the stranger and must be rescued from itself. It has made the fatal mistake of supposing that Orthodox fidelity can co-exist with social and ideological pluralism. Patriarch Kirill’s obsession with Gay Pride marches in Ukrainian cities is a symptom of this profound fear that Orthodoxy might be seduced into making some kind of pragmatic peace with alien modernity, as if such a truce were *ipso facto* a betrayal of revealed truth. Thus the undoubted fact that the figures for active Orthodox practice in Ukraine are higher than in substantial tracts of Russia only worsens the position from the point

of view of the ideologue; it becomes all the more important to rescue the cradle of Russian faith and the vulnerable (Ukrainian) Russian faithful from the corruptions of the West, so that this portion of the sacred territory does not become an occupied salient in the war waged by the rest of the world against Russia.

Western understanding of all this remains patchy at best; it is more or less inconceivable to the modern Western imagination that moral and social pluralism could be so wholeheartedly repudiated (there are parallels with our incomprehension in the face of militant Islamism). And it is of course true that President Putin's agenda (elusive enough on any account) is not an exclusively or even primarily theological one. Like Stalin, he has found it convenient to mobilise a theologically freighted national mythology as a military resource; and the official Church has been only too willing to cooperate. But the cost has been enormous. Other Orthodox churches, not notable for their embrace of modernity or moral relativism, have been shocked at the spectacle of indiscriminate violence against civilians and especially fellow-believers; non-Orthodox Christians have been bewildered and outraged by the complete absence of any challenge to the rationale for and the methods of military action in Ukraine. The Patriarchate, for all its apparent institutional solidity and global influence, risks becoming a religious pariah in the Christian world.

And among the greatest ironies is that one of the foundational stories of

Russian Christianity is precisely about the risk of unrestrained violence. In the hagiographical account, the refusal of the princes Boris and Gleb/Hlib (the first Russians to be popularly venerated as saints) to offer violent resistance to their brother Sviatopolk establishes their status as "passion-bearers", made holy in virtue of their sharing in the non-resistance of Christ. In Christian tradition, there is a persistent conviction that the defence of the gospel by violent means corrupts the gospel itself (as Jesus in effect declares to Pilate in John 18:36). The Patriarchate's support for the aggression against Ukraine seems wholly indifferent to any considerations connected with this. It is true that Eastern Christianity, for various reasons, has never developed a "just war" theory comparable to what has been current in the West; the Patriarchate's implicit appeal to the duty of defending racial and religious kindred against aggression is a pretty hollow one, but it is the only hint offered of any real moral justification of this kind. But in classical "just war" theory, the self-defence argument is inseparably connected with issues around the means by which any military action is pursued (thus ruling out assault against non-combatants) and the clarity of the – necessarily limited – goal for any action involving force. Undertaking any kind of measure involving coercion and possible injury or death requires a very strong rationale for its justification, and can never be a good in itself; it must be a last resort, licensed by legitimate authority, conducted according to scrupulous conditions, and clear about what would count as a successful outcome. Even

self-defence does not legitimise indiscriminate violence; and St Augustine's seminal discussions of these issues make it clear that the justice of a cause can be fatally negated by the means used to pursue it. The idea that a threat to "Christian civilization" could lend moral defensibility to nakedly immoral acts is one that is deeply at odds with any ethic that takes seriously the nature of life in the Body of Christ.

The Christian majority across the centuries has not been unconditionally pacifist, and the clothing of rapacious and unprincipled violence in religious dress has not been exactly confined to Russian zealots; we have only to think of the extraordinary justifications of genocidal atrocity by "Christian" colonial powers and (all too often) their tame clerics. But the challenge remains: on what conceivable grounds can a Christian hierarchy consistently refuse to articulate the basic point that unlimited violence corrupts a cause irredeemably? No-one can have missed the horrible irony of a war waged by an "Orthodox" army against a largely Orthodox population during the Lenten and Paschal seasons. Why is it not obvious that this behaviour strikes at the heart of any claim to be celebrating the victory of Christ? To raise such issues in the context of this unprovoked and barbarous campaign by the armies of the Russian Federation is not to cast Ukraine as a faultless or shadow-free society (despite the absurdity of the "Nazi" stereotypes deployed by Russia in the present conflict, 20th century Ukrainian nationalism did have a pretty mixed history in terms of xenophobia and anti-Semitism; the

war has offered an opportunity for Ukraine's leadership to repudiate this heritage, an opportunity which has been taken up with energy). Nor is it to take sides in a Russia-versus-the-West narrative (it is important to remember how easily nations in the developing world have been persuaded to see the Ukrainian conflict as just another excuse for hypocritical Western moralising). It is, ultimately, just to plead for the Moscow Patriarchate to *learn* (as the Bourbons did not) from history as well as theology; to learn the risks of binding Christian identity and integrity to a single political settlement and a single ethnic story, and of enforcing that narrative on the citizens of a diverse polity, even at the price of countless innocent lives and of the death of spiritual credibility in a Church wedded to such violence.

Keston's history has been one of challenging as robustly as possible the evasions and untruths of authoritarian power and aggressive intolerance (atheistical and religious alike) in the name, not simply of liberty of conscience in a generalised modern sense, but of a religious conviction about human dignity and the lethal moral and spiritual damage involved in coercion in this area. At the first beginnings of Christianity in Kyivan Rus', those who venerated Boris and Hlib recognised something about this; may the intercession of those saints, and all others who have died in the name of Christ rather than kill in the name of Christ, help us towards a secure and just future for Ukraine, Russia and all their neighbours.

Documents

On 24 February 2022, the date on which Russian forces invaded Ukraine, the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is canonically under the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate and should not be confused with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (granted autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on 5 January 2019), made the following statement condemning the invasion. Ed.

Address of His Beatitude Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine, Onufri, to the faithful and citizens of Ukraine

Dear brothers and sisters, the faithful of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church!

As head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church I address all of you and all citizens of Ukraine. A calamity has befallen us. To my profound regret, Russia has commenced military action against Ukraine, and at this fateful time I call upon you not to panic, to have courage and to show love to your homeland and to one another. Above all, I call upon you to pray fervently for Ukraine, for our army and our people, I ask you to lay aside all mutual strife and misunderstandings and to be united in love for God and for our homeland.

At this tragic time, we express our special love and support for our soldiers who are standing guard and protecting our land and our people. May God bless and preserve them!

As we defend the sovereignty and unity of Ukraine, we call upon the President of Russia and ask him to call a halt immediately to this fratricidal war. The Ukrainian and Russian peoples issue from the same baptismal font, and war between these peoples repeats the sin of Cain, who out of jealousy killed his own brother. Neither in the eyes of God nor of humanity can such a war be justified.

I appeal to your common sense, which teaches us to solve our earthly problems through mutual dialogue and understanding, and I hope sincerely that God will forgive us our sins and that God's peace will reign in our land and in all the world.

+Onufri

*Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine
Head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church*

On 1 March 2022, Fr Pyotr Meshcherinov, a scholarly and influential Russian Orthodox parish priest in charge of a church to the south of Moscow, published an appeal on his Facebook page, which was quickly signed by nearly 400 Russian Orthodox clergy. In this document he calls for dialogue and an end to the war, quoting one of the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the peacemakers”. Ed.

Appeal from the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church

We, priests and deacons of the Russian Orthodox Church, each in his own name, appeal to everyone on whom the cessation of the fratricidal war in Ukraine depends, with a call for reconciliation and an immediate ceasefire.

We send this appeal following Last Judgment Sunday and on the eve of Forgiveness Sunday.

The Last Judgment awaits everyone. No earthly authority, no doctors, no guards will protect from this judgment. Concerned about the salvation of every person who considers himself a child of the Russian Orthodox Church, we do not want him to appear at this judgment, bearing the heavy burden of mothers' curses. We remind you that the Blood of Christ, shed by the Saviour for the life of the world, will be received in the sacrament of Communion by those people who give murderous orders, not unto life, but unto eternal torment.

We mourn the ordeal to which our brothers and sisters in Ukraine were undeservedly subjected.

We remind you that the life of every person is a priceless and unique gift of

God, and therefore we wish that all soldiers – both Russian and Ukrainian – return to their homes and families safe and sound.

With heavy hearts we think about the abyss that our children and grandchildren in Russia and Ukraine will have to cross in order to once again begin to be friends with each other, to respect and love each other.

We respect the God-given freedom of humanity, and we believe that the people of Ukraine should make their choice independently, not at gunpoint, and without pressure from either West or East.

In anticipation of Forgiveness Sunday, we remind you that the gates of paradise are open to anyone, even a seriously sinful person, if that person asks for forgiveness from those whom he has humiliated, insulted, despised, or from those who were killed by his hands or on his orders. There is no other way except that of forgiveness and mutual reconciliation.

“The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath

opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand," said God to Cain, who envied his younger brother. Woe unto any person who realises that these words are addressed to him personally. No non-violent call for peace and an end to war should be forcibly suppressed and considered a violation of the law, for such is the divine commandment: "Blessed are the peacemakers."

We call all warring parties to dialogue, because there is no other alternative to violence. Only the ability to hear the other can give hope for a way out of the abyss into which our countries have been thrown in just a few days.

Let yourself and all of us begin Great Lent in a spirit of faith, hope and love. Stop the war.

On 6 March 2022, known as Forgiveness Sunday in the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill preached the following sermon in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. He has not at any time condemned the war against Ukraine, or even called for a ceasefire. Ed.

Patriarch Kirill's Sermon on Forgiveness Sunday

6 March 2022

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

I cordially congratulate you all, my dear bishops, priests, brothers and sisters, on this Sunday, on Forgiveness Sunday, on the last Sunday before the start of the holy Forty Days – Great Lent!

Great Lent is referred to by many pious ascetics as a spiritual spring. It coincides with the physical spring and at the same time is seen by the Church to be a spiritual spring. What is spring? Spring is the rebirth of life, it is renewal, it means new forces. We know that it is in the spring that powerful sap rises 10, 20, 100 metres, reviving trees. It's a truly amazing

miracle of God, a miracle of life. Spring is the rebirth of life, it is a kind of great symbol of life. So it is no coincidence that the main spring feast day is Easter – a sign and symbol of eternal life. And we believe that this is true, which means that the entire Christian faith that you and I share is a faith that affirms life, that is against death, against destruction, that affirms the need to follow God's laws in order to live, in order not to perish either in this world or in the world to come. But we know that this spring is overshadowed by grave events related to the deterioration of the political situation in the Donbas, with the beginning of hostilities. I would like to say something about this matter.

For eight years attempts have been made to destroy what exists in Donbas, where the so-called values supported by those who want world power are rejected fundamentally. Today there is a loyalty test for attaining such power, a sort of admission ticket into the “happy” world of excess-consumption, a world of apparent “freedom”. And do you know what this test actually is? It’s both very simple and also horrible – it’s a gay parade. The demand from many to hold a gay parade is a test of loyalty to that world of power; and we know that if people or countries reject this demand, they do not enter that world, they become aliens.

But we know the nature of this sin, which is propagated through the so-called marches of dignity. It is a sin that is condemned by the Word of God – both in the Old and New Testament. But, the Lord, while condemning sin, does not condemn the sinner. He only calls him to repentance, though not so that through a sinful person and his behaviour, sin becomes one of life’s standards, a variant in human behaviour which is respected and accepted.

If mankind thinks that sin is not a violation of God's law, if mankind accepts that sin is one of the variants of human behaviour, then this will be the end of human civilization. Gay pride parades are designed to demonstrate that sin is one of the variants of human behaviour. That is why in order to join the club of those countries, it is necessary to hold a gay parade rather than to make a political statement “we are with you” or sign an agreement. We know that some people resist these demands and that such

resistance is suppressed by force. So, this is all about imposing sin by force, sin which is condemned by God's law, and therefore, by force to make people deny God and His truth.

Therefore, what is happening today in the sphere of international relations is not only politically significant. It involves something different and much more important than politics. It is about human salvation, about what will become of humanity, about whether humanity is on the left or right of God the Saviour, who comes into the world as a Judge. Today, many head for the left side through weakness, stupidity, or ignorance, and most often because they are not willing to resist sin. All that justifies sin, which is condemned by the Bible, today tests our faithfulness to the Lord, and our ability to confess our faith in our Saviour.

Everything I say has more than just some theoretical and spiritual meaning. There is a real war going on around this subject today. Who is attacking Ukraine today, where for eight years the people in the Donbas have been oppressed and killed, where there has been eight years of suffering, while the whole world has remained silent – what does this mean? We know that our brothers and sisters are really suffering; moreover, they may suffer for their faithfulness to the Church. And so today, on Forgiveness Sunday, I as your pastor, call upon everyone to forgive sins and offences, including when this is very difficult to do, where people are at war with each other. But forgiveness without justice is capitulation and weakness. Therefore,

forgiveness must be accompanied by the indispensable right to stand on the side of the light, on the side of God's truth, on the side of the Divine commandments, on the side of what reveals to us the light of Christ, His Word, His Gospel, His great commandments given to the human race.

All this indicates that we have entered into a struggle that does not have a physical, but a metaphysical significance. I know how, unfortunately, some Orthodox believers, choosing the path of least resistance in this war, do not think about all that we are considering today, and instead meekly follow the path that the powerful of this world show them. We do not condemn anyone, we do not ask anyone to take up their cross; we simply say to ourselves: we will be faithful to the word of God, we will be faithful to His law, we will be faithful to the law of love and justice, and if we see violations of this law, we will never be reconciled with those who destroy this law, blurring the line between holiness and sin, and we will certainly never be reconciled with those who promote sin as a model or as one of the types of human behaviour.

Today, our brothers in the Donbas, Orthodox believers, are undoubtedly suffering, and we cannot but be with them – first of all, in prayer. We must pray that the Lord will help them to preserve the Orthodox faith, and not give way to temptation. At the same time, we must pray that peace will come as soon as possible, that the blood of our brothers and sisters will cease flowing, that the Lord will have mercy

on the long-suffering Donbas, which for eight years has born this mark of suffering inflicted by human sin and hatred.

As we start on our way into the Great Fast, we will try to forgive everyone. What is forgiveness? If you ask for forgiveness from a person who has broken the law or done something evil and unjust to you, you do not thereby justify his behaviour, but you simply stop hating this person. He ceases to be your enemy, which means that by your forgiveness you hand him over to the judgment of God. This is what forgiving each other's sins and mistakes truly means. We forgive, we renounce hatred and vindictiveness; but in heaven we cannot erase human evil, so, by our forgiveness, we commit those who have offended us into the hands of God, so that they might experience both God's judgment and mercy; so that our Christian view of human sin, error and offence will not be the cause of their death, but so that the just judgment of God will be applied to all, including to those who are responsible for increasing the gulf opening up between brothers, which they fill with hatred, malice and death.

May the Merciful Lord exercise His righteous judgment upon us all. And so that as a result of this judgment we do not find ourselves on the left side of the Saviour who has come into the world, we must repent of our own sins; we must analyse our life deeply and impartially, consider what is good and what is bad, and never justify ourselves by saying that I quarreled with this or that person because they were in the wrong.

It's a false argument, it's the wrong approach. We must always ask God: Lord, what have I done wrong? And if the Lord helps us to realise our own lack of truth, then we must repent.

It is today, on Forgiveness Sunday, that we must accomplish this spiritual feat of rejecting our own sins and lack of truth, this spiritual feat of surrendering ourselves into the hands of God and forgiving those who have offended us, which is the most important spiritual feat of all.

May the Lord help us all to go through the days of the Holy Forty Days in such a way that we may enter worthily into the

joy of the Resurrection of Christ. And let us pray that all those who are at war today, who shed blood, who are suffering, will also enter into this joy of the Resurrection in peace and tranquility. For, what joy will there be if some are at peace and others are under the domination of evil and afflicted by internecine strife?

May the Lord help us all to enter thus into the experience of Holy Great Lent, so that we may save our souls and increase the good in our sinful and often dreadfully misguided world, so that the truth of God may reign and guide the human race.

Amen.

On 10 April 2022, Fr Andriy Pinchuk, a priest of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, posted the following document on his Facebook page, which by 11 April had been signed by 324 Ukrainian Orthodox clergy. Ed.

International Church Tribunal

International Church Tribunal is how our contemporaries like to call the highest court of world Orthodoxy. We are talking about the Council of Primates of the Ancient Eastern Churches. For several centuries there has been a tradition in the Orthodox Church to appeal to the court of such a Council in the case of serious conflicts. The Council of the Eastern Patriarchs has repeatedly considered lawsuits against the highest church dignitaries.

In the history of the Russian Church, there was also a precedent for the appeal to the court of the Eastern Patriarchs. In 1666, it was the Eastern Patriarchs who

condemned the Moscow Patriarch Nikon, depriving him of his patriarchate and episcopal rank. Nikon was made a simple monk and sent to repent in a monastery.

Today, when Patriarch Kirill of Moscow openly supports Russia's war of conquest against Ukraine, we, the priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, have decided to appeal to the Council of Primates of the Ancient Eastern Churches with a lawsuit against Patriarch Kirill.

Our main accusations:

1. Kirill preaches the doctrine of the "Russian World", which does not

correspond to Orthodox teaching and should be condemned as heresy.

sive actions of Russian troops on Ukrainian territory.

2. Kirill committed moral crimes by blessing the war against Ukraine and fully supporting the aggres-

We hope that the Council of Primates of the Ancient Eastern Churches will consider our appeal and make its fair decision.

Open Appeal to the Primates of Local Orthodox Churches

We, the priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, in these tragic days when the cruel war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is ongoing, consider it our pastoral duty to appeal to the fullness of World Orthodoxy.

On 24 February 2022, Russian troops invaded the territory of the sovereign Ukrainian state without declaring war. The military aggression has been going on for more than a month. Russian troops systematically destroy not only military infrastructure, but also residential areas, businesses, schools, hospitals, theatres. The Ukrainian economy is suffering heavy losses. But the greatest sadness for us is the fact that thousands of civilians have already died during the war. The actions of the Russian army in Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Akhtyrka, Hostomel, Vorzel and especially in Mariupol and Bucha, demonstrate clear signs of genocide of the Ukrainian people and cause outrage around the world.

Already on the first day of the war, the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan

Onufri, condemned the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop the war. In addition, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufri appealed to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow with a request to raise his voice against the war. After that, both His Beatitude Onufri personally and the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church again appealed to Patriarch Kirill with calls to oppose the war and contribute to the cessation of military aggression. However, Patriarch Kirill ignored these appeals.

Moreover, since the beginning of the war, Patriarch Kirill has repeatedly made public statements containing *de facto* support for the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. On 13 March 2022, during a liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Patriarch Kirill presented the Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard of the Russian Federation, V.V. Zolotov, with an icon of the Mother of God, and gave his blessing to the employees of this state military organisation.

In his acceptance speech, V. V. Zolotov openly stated that the troops of the National Guard of the Russian Federation are taking an active part in the war that Russia had unleashed against Ukraine. At the same time, he called the Armed Forces of Ukraine “Nazis”. The Patriarch, after listening to Zolotov’s words, did not express any objections. Patriarch Kirill’s blessing of the Russian National Guard troops was a clear endorsement of the war, which the Russian Federation had unleashed against Ukraine.

Despite the fact that Patriarch Kirill, in his public statements, has for many years (including during his visits to Ukraine) claimed that he considers the Orthodox Christians of Ukraine to be his flock, for which he is responsible, today he directly blesses the physical destruction of this flock by Russian troops.

The actions of Patriarch Kirill caused indignation among the clergy and believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. At least 15 dioceses of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have already officially announced that they were ceasing the commemoration of Patriarch Kirill at the divine services. We know that in many other dioceses, the ruling bishops have given verbal permission to the clergy not to commemorate Patriarch Kirill. Thus, the bishops, priests and ordinary parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have expressed their unequivocal distrust of Patriarch Kirill.

We fully support the refusal of the bishops and clergy of our Church to

commemorate Patriarch Kirill at the divine services. But today this is no longer enough. We firmly declare that it is impossible for us to remain in any form of canonical submission to the Patriarch of Moscow. This is the command of our Christian conscience.

We are witnessing the brutal actions of the Russian army against the Ukrainian people, which are approved by Patriarch Kirill. As pastors of the Church and simply as Christians, we have always been, are, and will be, with our people, with those who suffer and need help. We fully support the Ukrainian state and the Armed Forces of Ukraine in their struggle against the aggressor.

Our position is fully consistent with the Gospel and Church Tradition. Protecting the Motherland from the enemy is one of the chief Christian virtues. We especially want to emphasise that our position is also in line with the internal legislation of the Russian Orthodox Church. Back in 2000, the “Foundations of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” was adopted. This document endorses Christian patriotism, which manifests itself, among other things, “in defending the fatherland from the enemy” (II, 3). Also, the “Foundations of the Social Concept” clearly state that “the Church ...does not forbid its children from participating in hostilities when it comes to protecting their neighbours and restoring violated justice” (VIII, 2). Also, in this document it is noted that “in time of war it is necessary to ensure the protection of the civilian population from direct military action” (VIII, 3).

We, as citizens of Ukraine, today act within the framework of these principles. We call for the defense of our Motherland from the enemy who came to us with weapons; we support the Ukrainian army, which stands up for our people and seeks to restore justice which has been violated; we call for an end to the brutal destruction of the Ukrainian civilian population by the Russian military.

At the same time, both Patriarch Kirill and numerous bishops and priests in Russia directly violate the norms of the “Foundations of the Social Concept”. This document clearly states that the Church cannot assist the state and cooperate with it if the state is waging an aggressive external war (III, 8). Today, the actions of the Russian Federation against Ukraine can only be described as an aggressive foreign war. This fact is recognised by the entire world community. In particular, on 2 March 2022, 141 countries supported the resolution of the UN General Assembly condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine. But Patriarch Kirill himself and numerous clergy in Russia continue to support the aggressive foreign policy of the Russian Federation. Consequently, the position of the Moscow Patriarchate regarding the war against Ukraine does not correspond to the norms of Christian morality,

As we think about the origins of the position of the Russian Orthodox Church regarding the war in Ukraine, we observe that one of the ideological foundations of this war is the doctrine of the “Russian World”, which Patriarch Kirill has been personally promoting for many years. This doctrine has been

constructed by Russian political scientists and sociologists since the 1990s. Its goal is to preserve the influence of the Russian Federation on the territory of the former Soviet Union after its inglorious collapse. The ideologists of the “Russian World”, in particular within the Moscow Patriarchate, have never concealed the fact that this doctrine promotes Russian irredentism, that is, the gradual establishment of Russian political control over the territories that were previously part of the Soviet Union or even the Russian Empire.

Patriarch Kirill is one of the main ideologues of the “Russian World” doctrine. In his opinion, the “Russian World” is a single civilisational space, covering territories on which Russian culture has historically had a significant impact. He has repeatedly stated that he considers modern Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians to be “one people”, the people of the “Russian World”. In particular, in 2014, in one of his speeches on television, Patriarch Kirill said: “The Russian World is ... a special civilization to which belong the people who today call themselves by different names – Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians” (<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3730705.html>). That is, Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, according to the Patriarch, simply call themselves by different names, but at the same time remain one people.

In 2021, in an interview on the occasion of his 75th birthday, Patriarch Kirill said: “For me, as the Patriarch of All Russia, there is no division into peoples and states, but there is one flock of the

Russian Orthodox Church” (<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5863267.html>). Although Patriarch Kirill has always emphasised that he does not question existing state borders, he nevertheless has stated that these borders “create unnecessary obstacles between the peoples of the Russian World” (<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html>).

On 20 March 2022, after Russia’s war against Ukraine had been unleashed, Patriarch Kirill, in his sermon in Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, stated that Russians and Ukrainians are indeed one people. He emphasised that he considers this to be God’s truth, which has not been changed by the fact that we live in different countries today. Therefore, the Patriarch said that he would continue to pray “for our united people, who today live in different countries” (<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5909901.html>).

All these statements are fully consonant with Russian state propaganda, which rejects the very existence of the Ukrainian nation and Ukrainian culture, and therefore, in fact, does not recognise the right of Ukrainians to their own statehood. Thus, the doctrine of the “Russian World”, propagated for many years by Patriarch Kirill, today contributes to the justification of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine.

However, we, Orthodox priests, want to pay special attention to those aspects of the doctrine of the “Russian World” which are directly related to the doctrine of the Church. In particular, Patriarch

Kirill stubbornly identifies the “Russian World” with the so-called “canonical territory” of the Russian Orthodox Church. In 2009, in his speech at the Assembly of the “Russian World” Foundation, Patriarch Kirill said that “the Russian Orthodox Church performs a pastoral mission among peoples who accept the Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of their national identity, or at least as an essential part of it. That is why, in this sense, we consider Moldova to be a part of this Russian World” (<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html>).

In his official speeches, Patriarch Kirill has repeatedly stated that, according to the charter of the Eastern Patriarchs on the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate (1593), all territories located north of Byzantium were transferred to the jurisdiction of this Patriarchate. For example, on 24 September 2014, speaking in Moscow at the 6th International Festival “Faith and Word”, Patriarch Kirill said that in 1593 the Moscow Patriarchate received “the Christian oecumene north of the Byzantine Empire. This is all that is north of Byzantium.” According to this logic, the Eastern Patriarchs supposedly recognised the extension of the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarch to Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic countries, and Moldova. It is these territories that Patriarch Kirill proclaims as the area of his “canonical responsibility” and identifies with the “Russian World”. From the point of view of Patriarch Kirill, all Churches in these territories do not have the right to ecclesiastical independence (autocephaly). According to his logic, the Churches in Ukraine,

Belarus, Moldova, and the Baltic States are literally doomed to forever remain part of the Moscow Patriarchate.

These statements of Patriarch Kirill clearly contradict historical fact. But it is especially surprising that Patriarch Kirill presents this false interpretation of history as the position of world Orthodoxy. Moreover, in the words and actions of Patriarch Kirill, we see clear distortions of Orthodox teaching about the Church. Patriarch Kirill's statements about the "Russian World" are reminiscent of ethnophyletism, condemned by Ecumenical Orthodoxy, where "Russian civilization" plays the role of an ethnos. Patriarch Kirill's statements that the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate extends to all people who accept "Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of their national identity" clearly contradict Orthodox canon law.

In March 2022, a group of Orthodox theologians published a Declaration on the Doctrine of the "Russian World", which has already been supported by more than 500 intellectuals from around the world (<https://publicorthodoxy.org/ru/2022/03/13/10845/>). We believe that this Declaration has become an important step towards understanding the distortions of the Orthodox teaching about the Church that have taken place in the Moscow Patriarchate.

All these considerations compel us to turn to the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches. We declare our allegiance to Ecumenical Orthodoxy, our wish to be fully in communion with it, and we condemn any attempts to limit

our involvement in it. We also believe that it is the Plenitude of Ecumenical Orthodoxy that should treat the statements and actions of Patriarch Kirill with all care and responsibility. The tragedy that is unfolding today in Ukraine is, among other things, the result of the policy pursued by Patriarch Kirill during his tenure as the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. Clearly this has already become a challenge for the whole of world Orthodoxy.

Therefore, we call on the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches to:

1. Clearly and unequivocally condemn the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
2. Call on the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, to immediately stop the war and liberate all the occupied territories of sovereign Ukraine.
3. Consider the public statements of the Moscow Patriarch Kirill regarding the war against Ukraine, and to evaluate them in the light of the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Tradition of the Church.
4. Consider at the pan-Orthodox level the "Russian World" doctrine, which has become one of the ideological justifications for the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which Patriarch Kirill has been promoting for many years, and to evaluate this doctrine from the point of view of Orthodox

teaching, and, should this doctrine be condemned, to judge Patriarch Kirill to be guilty and to deprive him of the right to occupy the patriarchal throne.

This appeal is open for signing to the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

On 27 May 2022, a Sobor or Council was held by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, after which the following statement was issued. Although this church firmly condemns the Moscow Patriarchate for its support of the war, and no longer commemorates Patriarch Kirill during the liturgy, officially there has been no formal schism between these two churches. Ed.

Resolution of the Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on 27 May 2022

The Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (hereinafter referred to as the Council), which was held on 27 May 2022 in Kyiv, considered the issues of church life that arose as a result of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Based on the results of its work, the Council adopted the following:

1. The Council condemns war as a violation of God's commandment "Thou shalt not kill!" (Exodus 20:13) and expresses condolences to all who have suffered in the war.
2. The Council appeals to the authorities of Ukraine and the authorities of the Russian Federation with a request to continue the negotiation process and to search for a strong and reasonable

statement which could stop the bloodshed.

3. We disagree with the position of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia regarding the war in Ukraine.
4. The Council adopted appropriate additions and amendments to the Charter on the Administration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, testifying to the complete independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.
5. The Council approves the resolutions of the Councils of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the decisions of the Holy Synods of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the meetings of which were held after the last

Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (8 July 2011). The Council approves the activities of the Administration of Affairs and Synodal Institutions of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

6. The Council discussed the resumption of peacemaking within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.
7. For the period of martial law, when relations between dioceses and the central church leadership are complicated or absent, the Council considers it expedient to grant diocesan bishops the right to independently make decisions on certain issues of diocesan life, which fall within the competence of the Holy Synod or the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and subsequently, when the opportunity arises, to inform the clergy.
8. Recently, our Church has faced a new pastoral challenge. During the three months of the war, more than six million citizens of Ukraine were forced to go abroad. These are mainly Ukrainians from the southern, eastern and central regions of Ukraine. A significant number of them are faithful children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Therefore, the Kyiv Metropolia of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is receiving appeals from different countries with requests to open Ukrainian Orthodox parishes. Clearly, many of our compatriots

will return to their homeland, but many of them will remain permanently abroad. In this regard, the Council expresses its deep conviction that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church cannot leave its faithful without spiritual care, should be close to them in their trials and should organise church communities in the diaspora. It is necessary to further develop the Church's mission abroad among Orthodox Ukrainians to enable them to preserve their faith, culture, language and Orthodox identity.

9. Aware of its special responsibility before God, the Council expresses its deep regret at the lack of unity in Ukrainian Orthodoxy. The Council perceives the existence of schism as a painful deep wound in the church's body. It is especially unfortunate that the recent actions in Ukraine of the Patriarch of Constantinople, which resulted in the formation of the "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" (OCU), only deepened misunderstandings and led to physical confrontation. But even in such critical circumstances, the Council does not lose hope that dialogue can be resumed. In order for dialogue to take place, representatives of the OCU need to:

- stop the seizure of churches and forced transfers of parishes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church
- acknowledge that their canonical status, as it is fixed in the

“Charter of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine”, is actually non-automatic and significantly inferior to the freedoms and opportunities in the implementation of church activities, which are provided for by the Charter on the Management of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

- resolve the issue of the canonical status of the hierarchy of the OCU, because for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, as for the majority, it is clear that in order to recognise the canonicity of the hierarchy of the OCU, it is necessary to restore the apostolic succession of its bishops.

The Council expresses its profound conviction that the key to the success of dialogue should not only be the wish to restore

church unity, but also the wish that personal life be based on Christian conscience and moral purity.

10. Summing up the results of the work which has been completed, the Council offers prayers of thanksgiving to the Merciful Lord for this time of brotherly discussions, and expresses its hope that the war will come to an end and that the warring parties will be reconciled. In the words of St John the Evangelist, may “grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 John 1:3) be with you all and especially with our brothers and sisters in the Risen Christ.

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia

1934-2022

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, who died on 24 August 2022, was a renowned patristics scholar and author of books and articles, which introduced Western readers to Orthodoxy. He became a monk at the Monastery of St John the Divine in Patmos, Greece, and in 1966, after he had published his book The Orthodox Church, he was ordained to the priesthood within the Ecumenical Patriarchate and tonsured as a monk. That year he was also appointed Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford University, and a few years later elected to a fellowship at Pembroke College. He did much to promote theological dialogue and was awarded the Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2017. He helped build up the Orthodox community in England and served as a priest to the Greek Orthodox Community of the Holy Trinity in Oxford.

The Salvation Army in Russia

by John Coutts

In July 2021, *Salvationist* magazine featured a birthday cake proudly displayed by a smiling Salvation Army officer. The cake was inscribed with the words, “Thirty years: The Salvation Army in St Petersburg.” It was indeed 30 years since the pioneer group of Salvationists sat in an apartment in the city, still known as “Leningrad”, preparing for the week’s work that lay ahead. We had hardly got started when an urgent invitation came from a group in the office next door. They were gathered round a television; we joined them to hear grim news. The Communists were back. The putsch against Gorbachev was in full swing.

I was acting as interpreter for our non-Russian speakers, and hurriedly scribbled down the decrees of “The General Committee for the Emergency Situation” (GKChP), as announced by Colonel-General Samsonov. I had a job to keep up with his list of prohibitions: political parties were banned; trade unions were banned; public meetings were banned; most activities were banned, yet everyone was exhorted to save the harvest! Our Russian colleagues were in deep distress, for no-one knew, on that anxious morning, that the putsch would collapse in a couple of days. My wife Heather was with me, and we had a very personal worry: our teenage son Edwin had been left on his own, exploring the city’s extensive tramway system with a one-day runabout ticket. We hoped he



Salvationist magazine with a cake celebrating 30 years of the Salvation Army in Russia

would get home safely, and wondered whether the infant Salvation Army was to be strangled at birth.

But the coup failed, Edwin got home safely, and soon afterwards we found ourselves in Moscow, surveying the still-standing barricades around the White House.

In Tsarist times

Armiya Spaseniya (The Salvation Army) had been in St Petersburg before. The East London Christian Mission, founded by the Revd William Booth in 1865, was Methodist in theology and structure,

with the office of preacher open to both men and women. The growth of revivalism helped to transform the East London Mission and in 1878 it was renamed the Salvation Army. “General Superintendent Booth” became “General Booth” and government by Annual Conference was replaced by a top-down military structure. Its early evangelistic and social work, often sensational, attracted the attention of no less a figure than Friedrich Engels, who wrote:

“The Salvation Army revives the propaganda of early Christianity, appeals to the poor as to the elect, fights capitalism in a religious way, and thus fosters an element of early Christian class antagonism.”¹

The new movement went international. Its Methodist theology encouraged a rapid spread in Lutheran countries, and, like Lenin, the Salvation Army reached Tsarist Russia via Finland, beginning work in Russia in 1913. Interest there in William Booth’s social programmes, stimulated by his best-selling book *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (published in 1890) was counterbalanced by reservations about the spread of non-Russian and non-Orthodox groups.

But difficulties with the Tsarist regime were as nothing compared to the hostility that the infant Army faced after the October Revolution in 1917. “Fighting capitalism in a religious way”, as envisaged by Engels, did not appeal to the Bolsheviks, and despite outside support for its work, including an appeal by the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930) the Salvation Army was banned in

Soviet Russia in 1923. Some members linked up with the Baptists, and one of them – so memory tells me – survived to see the return of *Armija Spaseniya* nearly 60 years later.²

A new start



The Salvation Army parades in front of the Winter Palace in 1991

The Salvation Army returned to Russia in 1991. Those pioneer days, in what was still Leningrad, were exhilarating. The dark and divisive years of the Cold War seemed to be over. Many were keen to listen in the street, not a few to come along and share in our way of worship, and some to commit to working with the reborn *Armija Spaseniya*, in the spirit of one of its slogans, “Heart to God and hand to man”.

In Tolstoy’s great novel *War and Peace*, the victorious General Kutuzov surveys a wretched group of prisoners, who had survived Napoleon’s retreat from Moscow, and speaking to his own men, says that these strangers are “people like us” (*тоже люди*). Of course we

members of the Salvation Army already knew that everyone was human, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, but we were to discover new depths of meaning in that simple truth as Heather and I went visiting people in communal apartments with a Russian colleague, Nina Sergeevna Davidovich.



The Salvation Army delivers food & other goods to people in need

In one room lay a bedridden man. He was excited to be visited by people from the United Kingdom, and kept repeating the word “*Sorridox*”. I had learnt my Russian in the Joint Services School for Linguists, and was using my linguistic skills, not to interrogate prisoners captured during a Third World War, but to offer friendship and practical help in the name of Jesus Christ. The word “*Sorridox*” was baffling, but after much confusion we discovered that this new friend was trying to say “Surrey Docks”! He had served on a Soviet warship, which visited London during a thaw in the Cold War; but his visit to unknown territory had been confined to an unforgettable walk round the Surrey Docks.

“People like us” was not Kutuzov’s last word. After expressing sympathy with

the remnants of Napoleon’s Grande Armée, Kutuzov turned to his own troops and added, “But who invited them?” before riding away to loud cheers. The infant *Armiya Spaseniya*, along with many other groups from the West, had indeed been invited but were not always welcome; with hindsight, it’s clear that sensitive toes were sometimes thoughtlessly trodden on in the days of cultural inrush and disorder, which followed the end of Communism in December 1991.

I was invited to address the newly formed Rotary Club of Leningrad on the history, faith and practise of *Armiya Spaseniya*. I hoped my Russian was good enough for them to understand me. At the end of the session, a colleague presented each fledgling Russian Rotarian with a small North American style banner on a stand, worthy to grace a businessman’s desk. It bore the words “Rotary Club of Leningrad”. A few days later, that great city on the Neva assumed its old name of St Petersburg. The Rotary Club of St Petersburg still operates, but I wonder whether any of those mini-banners still exist.

Looking back after 30 years, the handing out of those American-style pennants appears deeply patronising – and some of my well-meant remarks may have sounded sadly patronising too. For the people of Russia, the break up of the USSR – successor-state to an Empire – came as a shocking blow as well as a liberating experience. Loss of the Baltic States was a blow, but the split between the Russian Federation and Ukraine was far more painful.

A few years later, just as the USSR was breaking up, I found myself translating Pushkin's epic poem "Poltava"³ – which describes the struggle between Sweden and Muscovy over control of that very same Ukraine. At that very time, the verdict of Peter the Great's victory at the battle of Poltava was about to be reversed. "Little Russia" – the imperial and politically very incorrect name for the enormous territory in the south – was to part company with "Great Russia" after a union of three and a half centuries – a full 50 years before the "United Kingdom of Great Britain" came into existence. The blow to national pride and identity was immense.

Small wonder then that official Russia reverted to a default policy of wounded pride and state-sponsored nationalism, which led to – but cannot excuse – the disastrous invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Relief work in the Caucasus

In 2002 our friend Nina Sergeevna Davidovich left St Petersburg and went to help the Salvation Army's relief work in the Caucasus. On the morning of 23 July, she was kidnapped by Chechen guerrillas and held hostage for 168 days. Here are some extracts from her own account:

"That July morning, my staff and I were returning from Grozny to the

accompaniment of dancing, singing, and applause. We had officiated at the opening of a children's centre for war refugees.

Suddenly, the holiday atmosphere was shattered when masked men appeared on the road. Terrified, we braked to a halt. The men shoved me and my companions into the back

seat... I insisted that the armed men release my companions [who] were left on the road while I was taken away at gunpoint...

I struck up a conversation with one of the men, who told me they had been watching me for

a month. The ransom he mentioned, one million dollars, was so unreal I just put it out of my mind.... The next day, the kidnappers forced me into a pit. With my right leg shackled, I lay down on the mat they had left for me... The next morning I took stock: the pit was two metres deep and covered by sheets of rusty iron; a mat, an old ragged blanket and a bucket were all that I had...

After three weeks I was put into another pit, smaller and darker than the previous one. I often heard sounds of shooting, explosions and helicopters passing overhead. Apart from brief visits by the guards, I was totally alone...



Title reads: "A hero among us. Nina Sergeevna Davidovich". Next to her face is a signpost "School" with the Salvation Army's logo underneath.

In the morning I would exercise. I meditated and read; from time to time, I would be given old books and newspapers. I even wrote letters to the guards thanking them for the food and medication they brought me. They enjoyed receiving them. It was something new.

And I prayed. O how I prayed... I prayed for my colleagues, that they would continue their work. I prayed for my captors; they knew I was a Christian and that I was praying for them; they never told me to stop; some of them even thanked me.

In the evening I had to fend off foraging mice and keep my eye out for snakes. The loneliness cannot be imagined, yet, somehow, I felt no fear or panic, something I can only explain by the presence of God.

I had understood from the beginning that there could be a tragic end to my story, but I still trusted that God would not leave me, that I would be rescued.”

Alone in the pit, Nina was unaware that a campaign for her release was taking place:

“I spent New Year’s Day (2003) alone in total darkness. The 6 January, Orthodox Christmas Eve, began as any other day. Evening came. Suddenly I heard footsteps approaching the pit and voices. Two men came down into the pit while the third stayed at the edge. ‘Get ready, Nina. You are going home.’ Unshackled, I

was pulled out of the pit, a black bag was placed over my head, and I was driven away. The car stopped. I was led through the thick snow. Uneasy



Nina (left) working today as a Salvationist in St Petersburg

and alarming thoughts raced through my mind. All I could do was to continually recite a prayer, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven...’ I was transferred to a second car, where a Russian officer said, ‘You can take off the bag. Congratulations, you are free.’”

Nina concluded:

“I am sure that many of my kidnappers later died in firefights with government troops. I was truly sorry for these young men. What did they see in their short life? War, blood and brutality... I bear no malice, though I cannot give myself the credit. Jesus told the disciples: ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.’ (Matt 5:44) It was heart-wrenching to leave the people of Chechnya and those I worked with... My heart still belongs there among the barren hills and dense forests where I was held for so long.”⁴

Banned and unbanned in Moscow

Armiya Spaseniya hit a problem in 1997 when a new Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations was adopted, requiring all religious associations to re-register. In 1999 the Salvation Army's application was denied in Moscow because of "perceived military operations and loyalty to a group outside Russia". The court's rejection stated:

"Article 6 of the Charter provides that members of the Branch shall include supporters, soldiers, local officers and officers under a commanding officer, appointed from London. Members of the Branch wear uniform and perform a service, which means that the Branch is a paramilitary organisation."

It is true that the Salvation Army's military symbolism, though derived from the New Testament, can lead to misunderstanding; true too that it has a top-down structure, which is closer to episcopacy than to the independent structure typical of churches who share its theology. But, paradoxically, the entire set-up is in reality voluntary. No one is forced to join, and no anathema follows anyone who chooses to leave. *Armiya Spaseniya* took root in Russia, and continues today, because some Russian citizens find it a worthy way to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

In 2002 the ban was overturned by the European Court of Human Rights, which found that:

"There was no evidence before the domestic courts that in the seven years of its existence the applicant branch, its members or founders had contravened any Russian law, or pursued objectives other than those listed in its articles of association, notably the advancement of the Christian faith and acts of charity."

Armiya Spaseniya is now legally registered in Moscow as a "Central Religious Organisation of Evangelical Christians", and is now constituted as an autonomous command with Russian leadership, part of the worldwide fellowship of the Salvation Army. In Ukraine, the work is currently (2022) a Division of the Salvation Army's Eastern Europe Territory, along with Georgia, Romania and Moldova.

30 years later

Today, in 2022, the Russian Command is led by Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandr Kharkov, and its headquarters are in Moscow (www.thesalvationarmy.ru). *Armiya Spaseniya* has not become a mass movement, but it has put down roots in Russia from St Petersburg to Vladivostok: it has 15 congregations ("corps" in the army's terminology), 28 full-time officers', and 39 employees.⁵ Officers are trained in cooperation with the Moscow Evangelical Christian Seminary, and, like churches in many parts of the world, much effort has been spent in working out a response to Covid.

In July 2021 *Salvationist*⁶ reported that the Murmansk corps, located north of the arctic circle, had supported homeless people during the lockdown by feeding

them in the street. The Moscow Unified Homelessness services reopened in November 2020, enabling clients to have a shower, wash their clothes and get their hair cut. The Rostov-on-Don corps had a special ministry to African students, most of whom were studying for five to six years, giving them support and making them part of a spiritual family during their studies. In addition, five corps ran



*Salvationists feeding the hungry
in Rostov-on-Don*

scout groups and managed to reach young children and adults.

In St Petersburg, where the work began 30 years ago, newly appointed Lieutenant Yulia Kvitova gave a detailed report on the challenges presented by Covid restrictions. Worship and prayer could take place on-line, but social ministry faced severe challenges, as well as new opportunities:

“We discovered that there were lots of unemployed migrants who had become stuck here when the Russian borders closed... All of them were facing huge debts and rent arrears. They were scared and desperate. We started by contacting the city administration, and were surprised to find

them very open to cooperating with us....We received a list of people in need. The Russia Command applied for some funds from the Salvation Army International Headquarters, which enabled us to distribute parcels of essential food and sanitary items. Although permission to reopen the canteen was denied....we now cook up huge pots of soup to feed [homeless] people staying at the government-run shelter. I have come to love this time... People want to cooperate with us – even the government. I love how people have been open to receiving spiritual help, asking for prayer and participating in on-line worship, teaching and group Bible studies.”

A last word

There are no battlemented Salvation Army citadels in Russia. Worship is simple, based on praise, prayer, biblical preaching and personal testimony, which can take place in rented buildings. In 1994 Svetlana Ivanova, then editor of *Vestnik spaseniya* (*Messenger of Salvation*), the official journal of the Russian Salvation Army, summed up the Salvationists’ faith and hope in a poem for Christmas:

The beggar despised
The drunkard reviled;
Black ice in the soul,
A brain driven wild

And gunfire staccato
Is heard everywhere
But Christ is at large
And his gibbet is bare.⁷

1. Friedrich Engels: Preface to the English edition of *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, quoted in *Bread for my neighbour: The social influence of William Booth* by Frederick Coutts, (Hodder & Stoughton: London) 1978. On Engels' judgement, Coutts comments: "The first statement is true, the second a half truth, and the others demonstrably false."
2. On the Salvation Army in Tsarist Russia see *Blood and Fire, Tsar and Commissar: The Salvation Army in Russia 1907-1923, Studies in Christian History and Thought*, 2007, by Tom Aitken.
3. *The Complete Works of Alexander Pushkin in English*, Vol. 5, "The Bronze Horseman and other Narrative Verse", pp.217-26, (Milner & Co: London) 2000.
4. From *Faith and Friends*, May 2007, The Salvation Army Editorial Department, 2 Overlea Road, Toronto, ON M4H 1P4, Canada.
5. Statistics for July 2021.
6. *Salvationist* 31 July, 2021.
7. The Russian original reads:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| И на нищего зол | А вокруг бесредел |
| И на пияницу лют. | Автоматы, стрельба |
| В душе гололёд | И Христос не удел |
| А в мозгу беспрют | И Голгофа пуста. |

***John Coutts**, a member of the Salvation Army, is also a poet and translator of Pushkin's poetry. From 1953-1954 he studied Russian and played rugby alongside Michael Bourdeaux, Keston's founder, in the Joint Services School for Linguists. In the 1980s he served for a short time as Keston's representative in Moscow.*

A Forgotten Christian Martyr

Boris Talantov

by Xenia Dennen

In 2005 I visited Kirov, which since the fall of Communism had reverted to its pre-revolutionary name of Vyatka, where I met a historian called Evgeni Ostanin. He told me how he had “discovered” Boris Talantov only the previous year. A drunken poet friend of his had given him a battered green exercise book containing one of Talantov’s letters to the Soviet authorities, from which Ostanin immediately could see that this was a man with a remarkable analytical mind. Thereafter Ostanin managed to find Talantov’s son, to whom his father’s archive had been returned during perestroika. This priceless mine of information was now in Ostanin’s possession, and became the basis for his own research on Talantov’s life and ideas. I managed to leaf gingerly through some of the archive’s contents: there were articles, plans for books and cuttings from the Soviet press with Talantov’s comments. In Ostanin’s view, in addition to Talantov’s defence of human rights and freedom of conscience, he was also an important political thinker whose analysis of and predictions about the Soviet Union had been fulfilled.



Boris Talantov as a young man

Boris Talantov, born in 1903, was the son of a Russian Orthodox priest. His mother and older brother died during the civil war (1917-1923) while his younger brother (arrested in 1930) and his father (arrested in 1937) both died doing forced

labour in the Gulag. As the son of a priest, Talantov was constantly watched: while studying maths at Moscow University in the 1920s he was nearly expelled when a fellow student denounced him to the director who, fortunately, tore up the letter and paid no attention to its contents. In 1934 he joined the staff of the teachers’ training college in Kirov where he remained until 1954, when, known for his deep Orthodox

faith, he was dismissed because of his convictions. He was widely recognised as a gifted maths teacher and so was asked to be one of the lecturers for the Moscow Engineering Institute’s correspondence course. In 1958, however, he was also dismissed from this post.

Talantov openly criticised the Communist system. From a letter he wrote to *Pravda* dated 27 May 1957, included in his KGB case file (the file has since been

destroyed) which a Kirov journalist managed to see in 1992¹ and from which she quickly scribbled some extracts, it is clear that Talantov had closely scrutinised Khrushchev's 1956 speech attacking Stalinism. Ahead of other thinkers, Talantov understood that Stalinism was endemic in the structure of Soviet society where a new ruling class, the Communist Party, had merely replaced the pre-revolutionary one: after 1956 he could see Stalinist policies being adopted once more by the Party and state. In his letter to *Pravda* he wrote:

"After the 20th Party Congress some non-Party people in our country entertained bright hopes that legal order would gradually be established in our society, that secret trials would be abolished and all those unjustly sentenced would be rehabilitated, that we would be able to express our ideas freely, that there would be freedom of conscience. Now it is clear that these were vain hopes."²

From 1958 Talantov began planning books and writing articles on the nature of the Soviet system and on the inevitable ideological conflict between it and religious believers. He started describing in detail the way priests in his diocese were being removed, parishes closed down and churches destroyed. In a long document dated 10 November 1966 (translation published in Michael Bourdeaux's *Patriarch and Prophets*³) he wrote: "From 1960 to 1964 in the Kirov region 40 churches out of 75 which had been functioning in 1959 (53%) were forcibly and arbitrarily shut" (there had been 500 churches in

that region before the Revolution). Earlier, in June 1966, a letter⁴ signed by Talantov and eleven other Orthodox believers from the Kirov diocese, describing the persecution, reached the BBC from where it was broadcast. In London, Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod (1929-1978) claimed that the letter was anonymous, and should therefore not be taken as genuine. He said:

"I am prepared to swear to you here that this letter does not exist in the original. At the Patriarchate we have a type-written copy of it, but there isn't a single signature. It's quite clear, then, that it's unsigned – it's an anonymous letter. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity of requesting you gentlemen of the press not to place too much trust in anonymous letters."⁵

Keston immediately contradicted Metropolitan Nikodim and vouched for the authenticity of Talantov's letter.

As a result of his activity, Talantov began to be regularly vilified in the local Kirov press, against which he defended himself with analytical skill. Tragedy struck in September 1967 when his wife, Nina Agafangelova, under dreadful stress from the newspaper attacks and suffering from high blood pressure, died. Two years later Talantov was arrested, and sentenced in the autumn 1969 to two years in prison. He died in the prison hospital on 4 January just before (Orthodox) Christmas 1971.⁶

In 1965 Talantov worked out an extensive reform plan for the Russian

Orthodox Church,⁷ based on decisions taken at the Church Council of 1917-18, which aimed to renew and democratise the church. In the introduction to his programme of reform, set out in a handwritten notebook, he wrote:

“In order to strengthen faith among the Christians of Russia and to attract to the church as many unbelievers as possible, it is essential to raise to the required level the spiritual and moral life of the clergy and laity, it is essential to strengthen the unity of believers and to increase knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and Christian morality among believers... Between Christians of various denominations there is enmity. In order to achieve the above it is essential in my opinion to introduce the following measures.”⁸

What were these measures? He began to think about them as early as the 1950s and was spurred on to put them down on paper by Khrushchev’s anti-religious campaign. His first paragraph stipulated that those bishops, including the Patriarch, who were spreading false information abroad about the church, should be removed; it was thanks to their collaboration that so many churches were being closed. The main goal of a cleansed leadership would be to attain full freedom of conscience for all Christians in the

USSR. The governance of the church from top to bottom should be based on the principle of election, in order to root out bureaucratic domination and to renew a spirit of freedom, love and unity. Clergy should be encouraged to focus on pastoral care. They should teach Orthodox Christians to relate to Christians of

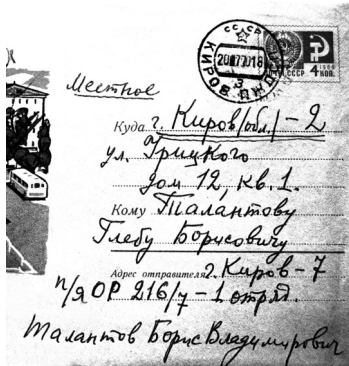
other denominations not only with tolerance, but also in a spirit of Christian love, in order to promote Christian unity. In every diocese there should be a good seminary, and Talantov stressed the need to encourage women to be admitted as, after all, he noted, it was women who had kept the church going during periods of persecution; he also suggested creating an order of deaconesses. As a teacher in



Talantov, the teacher & thinker

higher education, Talantov worked out an interesting balance in the curriculum: only one third should be devoted to theology, and two thirds should include study of secular subjects, especially scientific disciplines, so that students were equipped to counter anti-Christian arguments of the secular world. The final section of his reform plan was devoted to language: he saw the use of Church Slavonic in church services as a root cause for the mass loss of faith after the Revolution and the victory of Bolshevism:

“In churches scripture is read and the liturgy celebrated in a language incomprehensible to the people, in



Letter from Talantov to his son, with the prison address of the sender

Church Slavonic... No explanations of the texts are given as a rule... A believer takes little from church because his mind has been asleep during the liturgy... Today incomprehensible Church Slavonic is one of the obstacles to spreading a conscious faith among the young... This reform should be introduced gradually and carefully... In every church there should be discussions in order to convince believers that such a reform is essential.”⁹

Part of Talantov’s vision on how to renew and preserve the church involved creating secret Christian brotherhoods.¹⁰ He formed such a brotherhood in Kirov in the early 1960s during Khrushchev’s anti-religious campaign, when many church leaders were doing the bidding of the Communist Party in the hope that thereby they could keep a certain number of churches open. Talantov in the circumstances believed that illegal activity in defence of the church was now required in order to strengthen believers and preserve their unity. He foresaw the total eradication of Christianity from

Soviet society, and was convinced that only secret brotherhoods could preserve the few remaining believers: these should set up an informal structure of governance with a constitution, they should hold secret services, and provide material help for those members who were in need.

The Kirov brotherhood, consisting of 14 members including Talantov, used to meet under the guise of going into the countryside for a picnic during the summer months; they said prayers and listened to a talk. Talantov, considered to be the best educated of them all, was the acknowledged leader, who kept an account of the money raised for mutual support. He organised letters addressed to Kirov Christians or to all Christians in Russia, which the group would type out, simultaneously producing a number of carbon copies, and then circulate with the help of their contacts. One such letter stated:

“Christian! After reading this letter, either copy out by hand or type carefully a few copies and give them to faithful Christians whom you know. This small effort towards distributing this letter will be an expression of your love for Christ and your wish to strengthen Christ’s church. Amen.”¹¹

Many of these letters analysed what was happening to the church and gave detailed instructions on what action should be taken in response, such as demanding from the State that full freedom of conscience be instituted. In order to achieve their goals all members of the church, Talantov believed, must be united. And

to this end, the secret brotherhoods, which he recommended, should be governed from the bottom up, rather than from the top down, and all the brotherhoods within each oblast should be coordinated as well as coordinated on an all-Russia level; they should cooperate with legally existing churches and groups. These secret groups should contradict the false information on the religious situation within the USSR conveyed by church leaders abroad; they were to publicise the mass closure of churches and other forms of persecution. In March 1960 the Kirov brotherhood adopted a constitution drawn up by Talantov: any Orthodox Christian who accepted the authority of episcopal and priestly orders could join. Each member solemnly promised not to speak about the brotherhood to anyone, and not to reveal the time and place of meetings, even if arrested.

In the end Talantov's wife and son dissuaded him from continuing this activity, pointing out how dangerous was the existence and work of the Kirov brotherhood: they believed that he and the brotherhood's members would unquestionably be arrested. So Talantov disbanded the brotherhood in the autumn of 1963.¹²

An important new source of information about Talantov appeared in 2015 when Ostanin published a collection of Talantov's war-time diaries and letters from prison.¹³ These texts reveal how near to starvation the Talantov family lived during the war; they record the price and amounts of grain he was able to buy, often only by selling something in the market. None of his family had leather shoes, boots or galoshes and he was

constantly making and mending *valenki* (thick felt boots). He was put in charge of his teacher training college's plot of land and studied how to raise goats; in December 1943 he managed to sell one goat hide for 130 roubles. He complained one day that 30% of his institute's potatoes had perished because they froze in the store, where the roof had been left open and where there was no stove.

In a post-war diary for 1947, at a pre-election meeting, Talantov noted how the audience was "hypnotised" and clapped mechanically. I was fascinated to discover how he avidly read the *British Ally*, which was published in both English and Russian and was edited by one of Keston's founders, Sir John Lawrence, who served as Britain's press attaché in the USSR during WWII. Talantov noted in his diary the standard of living in Great Britain, the nationalisation of transport, of the coal and steel industries, the free meals and milk for school children and production standards. He was impressed that the trade unions could criticise government foreign policy, and noted the difference between the views of the British Labour Party and Soviet Communists on democracy and freedom of the press.

Throughout these years of the 1940s Talantov recorded when he was able to get to church, and mentioned how church bells could be rung when victory over Germany was celebrated. In one entry he wrote: "A person is an indivisible synthesis of the spiritual and material principle ... But the spiritual is the fundamental principle – the content – while the material is only the form."¹⁴

Ostanin's publication of 2015 also includes Talantov's correspondence from prison from 1969 until his death. Talantov by this time was a sick man and found the prison food impossible to eat, so frequently wrote to his son Gleb with requests for money so that he could buy something in the camp shop. Gleb was not even allowed to deliver underwear to the prison, but a fellow prisoner, who worked on a building site during the day, wrote to Gleb telling him to wrap up the clothes and throw them over the fence to him on the building site.¹⁵ A small glimmer of light shines through Talantov's letter to his son dated 24 December 1970, when he mentions a 19-year-old Pentecostal from Kyiv who had given him some envelopes and was helping him like he would his own father.

In a detailed "Complaint"¹⁶ dated 13 August 1970 and addressed to the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Court, Talantov laid out the arguments in his defence. (He did not in the end send off this document.) He had been accused of distributing deliberately false information: Talantov rebutted this, protesting that all he had written had been true. He was accused of sending his articles abroad: he objected that he had not done this, and also knew nothing about any foreign radio programmes about him. His essay entitled "Soviet Society", published in the 1960s, expressed his personal views and was a protest against corruption and illegality; this should not have been used in the case against him as he had the right to express his personal views under the Constitution's guarantee of freedom of speech and of the press. His diaries and notes had also been used

-1-

В президиум Верховного Суда РСФСР
от осужденного Малайчева
Бориса Владимировича, Киров-7
1/3 ОР 216/7 - 101792

Нагорный Малайча.

Архивом Судебной Коллегии по уголовным делам Кировской обл. суда от 3/IX-1969, 2 осужден по ст. 190 УК РСФСР к двум годам лишения свободы в ИТК без решения. Этот приговор Судебной Коллегии по уголовным делам Верховного Суда РСФСР 30-го июля 1969, был оставлен без изменения.

Я был осужден не на основании свидетельских показаний, а на основании беззастенчивых рукописных литературных материалов:

1. Малайча, Генеральному Прокурору СССР - 10-го июля 1968г.

2. Работы "Советские обшары", написанные весной 1968г.

The opening page of Talantov's "Complaint" addressed to the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Court

against him: he argued that they were written as a defence of Christianity and not as a criticism of Soviet society; and they were not intended for distribution. He was condemned for writing about the moral degeneration of the younger generation, although, he pointed out, this had often been stated in official Soviet publications. He protested, furthermore, that the case against him had not been based on the testimony of witnesses, but rather on his manuscripts, which he had not been allowed to access while in prison, thus affecting his ability to build up arguments in his own defence. He pointed out that his trial had undermined people's belief in Soviet justice, and mentioned that even the soldiers on guard at the court during his trial were shocked at his sentence. He recorded their words: "this sick old man was given two years in prison only because he believes in God." Finally, he argued that any democratic state would make allowances for the accused's age and poor state of health.

Talantov on occasion was placed in the camp hospital where conditions were not much better than in the cells. On 23 November 1969 he wrote:

“I carry my cross with patience and resignation... All that I have lived through teaches me that Christ’s words ‘learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls’ are true, and the source of salvation for each person who faces a fate which is hard to bear.”¹⁷

The last letter which Gleb received from his father was dated 29 December 1970: Talantov thanked his son for his love; he was in the camp hospital and was grateful for the immense effort his son had put

into getting some apples and grape juice to him. This letter was only delivered to Gleb on 2 January 1971; his father died at 2.30pm two days later.

We learn from Gleb in his letter dated July 1972 that when obituaries about his father were published in the West, he was summoned to the KGB, whereupon he refused to cooperate with “the organs”, telling the KGB that he did not know how the news had reached the West. This final letter in Ostanin’s 2015 collection ends with Gleb’s words, “evidently the shadow of my father continues to worry them”.¹⁸ Talantov was canonised in 1981 by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, but not by the Moscow Patriarchate, and rehabilitated by the Soviet state in 1990.

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1. Notes taken by T.Ya. Dvinina in the personal archive of E.S. Ostanin.
 2. E.S. Ostanin, “Net proroka v svoem otechestve: B.V. Talantov kak politicheskii myslitel” in *Lichnost’ i vremya. Materialy regional’noi nauchnoi konferentsii, posvyashchennoi 180-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya P.V. Alabina* (Kirov) 2005, pp.23-26, http://krotov.info/history/20/1960/ostanin_1.htm
 3. Michael Bourdeaux, *Patriarch and Prophets. Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today*, (Macmillan: London) 1969, pp.125-152.
 4. *ibid.*, pp.60-61.
 5. *ibid.*, p.153. Original Russian text in *Posev*, 3 March 1967, p.7.
 6. Michael Bourdeaux wrote Talantov’s obituary, *The Times*, 13 May 1971, p.19.
 7. E.S. Ostanin, “Proekt tserkovnoi reformy Borisa Talantova (1965)”, http://krotov.info/history/20/1960/ostanin_1.htm
 8. B.V. Talantov, “Moya bor’ba s nechestiem dukhovenstva. 1965”, p.127, *MS* in personal archive of E.S. Ostanin.
 9. *ibid.*, pp.191-93.
 10. E.S. Ostanin, “Boris Talantov i bratstvo vyatskikh khristian v nachale 60-gg”, lecture delivered on 3 October 2009 to a conference entitled “Daby vziraniem na Svyatuyu Troitsy pobezhdalsya strakh pered nenavistnoi rozn’yu mira sego: obshchnost’, obshchenie, obshchina v sovremennom mire”.
 11. B.V. Talantov, “Obrashchenie k khristianam 1960 i 1961”, *MS* p.16, in personal archive of E.S. Ostanin.
 12. *ibid.*, *MS* p.2.
 13. E.S. Ostanin, *Boris Talantov: Dnevnik 1943-1945, 1947gg. Tyuremnaya perepiska 1960-1970gg.* (Kirov [Vyatka]: Raduga-Press), 2015.
 14. *ibid.*, pp. 51-52, entry for 22 March 1943.
 15. *ibid.*, p.277.
 16. *ibid.*, pp.247-260.
 17. *ibid.*, p.275.
 18. *ibid.*, p.356.

Xenia Dennen is the Chairman of Keston Institute and a member of Keston’s Encyclopaedia team.

Keston Center Report

September 2022

Professor Kathy Hillman, Director of the Keston Center for Religion, Politics and Society at Baylor University, who as an ex officio Council member regularly attends Keston Council meetings virtually, has submitted the following report.

Everyone loves a compelling story, whether a meaningful biblical narrative, a child's bedtime snuggle book, grandparents' shared tales about family adventures, a friend's account of recent experiences, a page-turner mystery, descriptions of incidents that impact the world, or chronicles of seemingly ordinary people living extraordinary lives. Keston Center Director Kathy Hillman's brief presentation on dissident poet Irina Ratushinskaya for Baylor University's annual panel on ten Boundary Breaking Women, was a reminder of the courageous stories contained in the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society. Some have been told. Others have yet to be rediscovered by researchers, professors, students, and others who visit the archives. The Keston Center hopes that its work will continue to shed light on the suffering of the persecuted, the bravery of those who fought for freedom yesterday, and the courage of those who continue that fight.

With the weakening of pandemic restrictions, some normalcy returned to Baylor University and Keston, beginning with the Spring 2022 semester, including new student assistants, classes held in

the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center, a hybrid Keston Advisory Board meeting, in-person events, selection of summer interns and summer teaching fellows, international researchers travelling to Waco, and a host of other activities taken for granted prior to March 2020.

On 10 March, Keston Center Director Kathy Hillman conducted oral history interviews with Leonid Regheta who immigrated from Ukraine at

age 14 and currently pastors River of Life Russian Language Church in Plano, Texas, and with his friend Paul Minyakov, who received political asylum as a young adult. Paul's father, Council of Churches member Dmitri Minyakov, pastored an underground Baptist church in Siberia and spent nearly 20 years in



*Irina Ratushinskaya
Flyer circa 1986*



Paul Minyakov and Leonid Regheta

Soviet prison camps, including when Paul was born. The family eventually moved to Estonia where Paul himself spent two years in prison for organising youth camps, including when his son was born. The two found stories of friends and acquaintances as they poured over the Keston archives.

On 1 April, a dozen professors spent two hours in the Keston Center while in Waco for the Central Association of Russian Teachers of America Conference (CARTA) which was organised by Michael Long, Keston Advisory Board member and chair of Baylor's Modern Languages and Cultures Department. Visitors included William Craft Brumfield, who has photographed churches extensively in Russia, and personally knew Michael Bourdeaux.

In 2017, when Christopher Campbell (on Keston UK's Council) began working in the archives, he quickly realised a future trip would be necessary to mine the wealth of materials in the Michael Bourdeaux Papers for his research. In July 2022, the now Dr Campbell returned with his wife Gillian and their children Zac and Aria.

The campus and Keston recently said good-bye to Michal Bittner, his wife Alexandra Bittnerova, and their sons Vaclav and Henry from Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. Dr Bittner was a Fulbright Professor in Environmental Studies and Dr Bittnerova served as Visiting Professor. In August, Masaryk University and McLennan Community College resumed their nearly 30-year exchange programme and with it, Keston's involvement.

Additional researchers included:

- Wallace Daniel, Distinguished University Professor of History, Mercer University, 16-24 March
- Elżbieta Przybył-Sadowska, Professor, Institute of Religious Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, 21-27 August
- Jakob Sadowska, Professor, Institute of Eastern Slavonic Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, 21-27 August

On 29 April, Keston staff taught a session for each of two sections of the second semester of elementary Russian for past Summer Teaching Fellows Adrienne Harris and Steven Jug. Rarely has the Center hosted 23 more engaged students. A number of them remained after class to ask questions, talk and spend additional time in the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center. An international student from Nigeria stayed and asked to see the Mozambique files, since her grandfather had served as a Nigerian diplomat in Mozambique shortly after their independence from Portugal.

Spring classes included:

- Former Summer Intern and Teaching Fellow, Luke Sayers, ENG 1310.06 Writing and Academic Inquiry (Peace and War Theme)
- Religion Professor and Director of the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Elizabeth Flowers, REL 5336 History of American Christianity: Missions Graduate Seminar

- Modern Languages and Cultures Professor and Former Summer Teaching Fellow, Adrienne Harris, RUS 1302.01 Elementary Russian
- Modern Languages and Cultures Lecturer and Former Summer Teaching Fellow, Steven Jug, RUS 1302.02 Elementary Russian.

Throughout the Spring semester, the Keston Center co-sponsored several events:

- *Black Garden Aflame: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Soviet and Russian Press*,

Gardner, Dr Julie deGraffenried, Dr Sara Dolan, and Dr Peter Campbell, and joining from Europe, Dr Serhiy Kudelia.

The Keston Advisory Board met on Friday, 18 March, using a hybrid format. All Board members except Stella Rock attended either in-person or via Zoom.

The Baylor Libraries Board of Advisors (BOA) held one of their sessions in the Keston Center in late April. On 16 September, the Fall Keston Lecture, *Afghanistan: The Next Chapter*, was officially part of the BOA agenda. It was co-sponsored by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University



Keston Advisory Board

22 February, a conversation with author Dr Artyom Tonoyan; interviewed by Dr Stephen Gardner.

- *Stalingrad on Screen: From Stalinist Propaganda to Putin-era Blockbuster*, 22 March, lecture by Dr Stephen Norris, Walter E. Havighurst Professor of History, Director, Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies at Miami University (Ohio).
- *Ukraine Update: A Conversation with the Baylor Community*, 16 March, featuring Dr Stephen

of Notre Dame and included panelists Palwasha Kakar, Aref Dostyar, and Mohammed Qasim Wafayezada, with moderator Charles Ramsey. This hybrid event featured in-person listening and Q&A with the moderator, while the panelists participated from across the world.

On 13-14 May, Baylor held five commencement ceremonies – one of them for Truett Theological Seminary. Although many graduates could not attend in person, more than 3,000 students

walked across the stage at McLane Stadium. Among those were two with Keston ties who have been named Fulbright Scholars. Camille Watson, 2019 Summer Intern, earned her degree with honors in University Scholars with additional majors in Russian, Professional Writing and Rhetoric. She will teach English next year in Azerbaijan. Former student assistant Faith VanVleet received her BA in University Scholars with honors and additional majors in Slavic and Eastern European Studies and International Studies. The announcement of Faith's Fulbright was delayed because she was to go to Ukraine but was reassigned to Poland.



Camille Watson

During the Spring, Tesia Juraschek continued as the Keston Museum Studies Graduate Assistant. From Woodbridge, Virginia, Tesia earned her BA in history from Taylor University in Indiana. Over the summer, she served as the Dowdy Intern jointly in the Poage Legislative Library and the Riley Digitisation Center.

The Center also employed two new student assistants. Julia Ash, from Peachtree City, Georgia, was adopted when in the 9th grade from Ukraine. Fluent in both Russian and Ukrainian, she has also studied German but only learnt English when she moved to the United States. A University Scholar, her goal is to work for the US State Department with a focus on international adoptions. Keston also chose Julia as this year's Nancy Newman Logan Summer Intern. Although Julia worked this spring, she was the only

applicant who possessed the necessary language skills.

Faith VanVleet hails from Spring, Texas. She studied in Ukraine, is fluent in Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish, and has taught English in Beijing, China. She chose "Nationalism in Poland as Reflected in Monuments" as her Honors College thesis topic, so she worked on processing Polish files in Keston.



Faith VanVleet

Junior Maria Ivchenko served as a Keston student assistant during the summer. Originally from Ukraine, the business major currently resides in Vancouver, Washington. A member of the US Tennis Association, Maria teaches private lessons in Waco and at Baylor, plays club tennis, and participates in Christian Business Leaders and the Russian Language Club.

The Keston Summer Teaching Fellows selection committee chose History Professor Daniel Barish, and Retired US Diplomat and Adjunct Political Science

and Honors College Professor Joanne Held Cummings as the Jim and Lou James Summer Teaching Fellows. Daniel Barish prepared materials for his undergraduate course on Modern China and his graduate seminar, Major Issues in Modern Chinese History, while Joanne Held Cummings worked on a project related to her Islam and Democracy upper-level course in Political Science.

Upon completion of his fellowship, Daniel Barish reported, “For several weeks, I systematically read through the 27 boxes of catalogued materials related to China held in the Center. The work has provided a fascinating view into a critical era in Chinese history, opened up exciting possibilities for innovative classroom pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and highlighted new opportunities for student research... I will incorporate two new weeks of lessons into the syllabus, where I demonstrate the process of asking a question, searching the archives for potential answers, and then arranging the sources to communicate the answer as an historical argument based on the China-related holdings. The students will visit the archive to take that process and apply it to a question of their own interest, giving them concrete practice in using raw archival materials in preparation for their final research projects...The time period and range of topics covered are of major interest to our students, and as a primarily English language collection, it is a uniquely accessible archive. I am excited by the possibilities the Keston Collection holds.”

Joanne Held Cummings wrote that her work in Keston would add a new

component to the Islam and Democracy course, expanding the scope into Muslim areas within the USSR and their subsequent political development, and would help her stimulate student interest in research projects using Keston resources. Personally and professionally, she gained insight into understanding and assessing the connection between religion and politics in the Soviet Union and its implications for political Islam movements; she examined the multi-dimensional impact of Soviet suppression of Islam (among other religions) using primary source materials.

Thus far during 2022, a significant number of Keston Collection finding aids have been completed, edited, and submitted for inclusion in Baylor’s Archival Repository Database. These include: the John Lawrence Papers, Soviet Union Tolstoyans, Soviet Kariate Jews, Soviet Masons, Soviet Unification Church (Moonies), Soviet Union Mormons, Soviet Rerikhism, Soviet Shamanism, Soviet Subbotniki, and Soviet Teilhardism. Nancy Newman Logan Summer Intern Julia Ash also completed a Keston Collection finding aid for the Robert G. Hoare Papers, 1975-1994, which focus on the religious situation in Communist Bulgaria, including a brief period after the collapse of Communism in the Eastern Bloc countries. Notable topics include Bulgarian Armenians, persecution of Pastor Khristo Kulichev and Brother Dimitar of the Sofia Congregational Church, Bulgarian Orthodox priest Fr Hristo Subev, Varna Baptist Church, Christian literature for believers in Bulgaria, Islam and Muslims in Bulgaria, and Pentecostals in Bulgaria.

Intern Julia Ash also researched, prepared and mounted an exhibition on her native Ukraine entitled “Persecuted, Starved, and Killed BUT NEVER SILENCED.” She explained in a note that she wanted “to shine a light on many of years of Soviet domination in Ukraine and help people understand why Ukraine continues to fight for its independence.” She also prepared a Baylor Women’s Collections entry on imprisoned Ukrainian Orthodox nun, Sister Valeria Makeyeva. When Julia was unable to find out the rest of Sister Valeria’s story, long-time Keston researcher Sister Alexandra Spektor was able to add what happened to Sister Valeria after she was released.

The first two groups of Keston audio video holdings have been digitised and added to the Keston Center’s Digital Collection. The vendor has digitised and returned the third group of 50 videotapes, which are having metadata added by Keston Curator Larisa Seago. The fourth group has been shipped. Keston staff member Janice Losak continues on the periodicals project. Thus far, all titles have been interfiled and are now shelved in one alphabet. Additional titles are being sent to the Libraries central processing for cataloguing or placed in archival boxes for preservation.

To further enhance security of the valuable Keston library and archives, swipe card access has been installed for the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center. Additionally, the work room has been rearranged for maximum efficiency, and the former Church State graduate

student break room, accessible from the Bourdeaux Reading Room, will become collections space.

The Director attended the grand opening of the Czech Project PIVOVAR on 31 March which includes a hotel, restaurant, bakery, and traditional Czech brewery. The Director also organised and moderated two panels at the annual Texas Library Association Conference, the first in-person since 2019: *Lessons Learned: Planning for the Future* and *Reinvigorating, Retaining and Recruiting Library Supporters*. She also delivered the keynote address for the Association of Librarians and Archivists at Baptist Institutions, *Courtship and Engagement: Before the I Do’s in Archival Digitisation Funding*.

Thus, the Keston Center continues to steward Keston Institute’s library and archives, to support students and scholars in their quest for knowledge, to spread the influence and reach of Keston, and to seek avenues for communicating truth. For Jesus said in John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

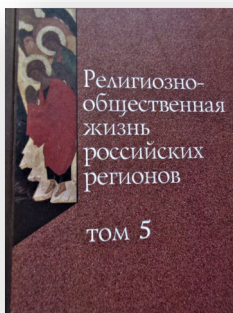


Ukraine exhibition, prepared by Summer Intern Julia Ash: “Persecuted, Starved & Killed BUT NEVER SILENCED”

Keston's Encyclopaedia: Volume on St Petersburg Published

by Sergei Filatov

Early in 2022 the 5th volume of Keston's Encyclopaedia – or to give the publication its full title, *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions* – finally left the printer. As a rule, it took our team (Xenia Dennen, Roman Lunkin and myself) about two years to complete a volume; in the case of volume 5 it took us four years. Obviously, the Covid pandemic affected our schedule, but this was not the sole cause of all the delays.



The 5th volume is devoted to the religious and social life of St Petersburg and the Leningrad region, an area which is full of variety and bears little resemblance to the rest of Russia. Exaggerating slightly, one could say that this area is a world apart, and were it not for the inevitable deadline, we would have happily extended our research in St Petersburg for another four years.

St Petersburg and Russian Orthodoxy

The main difference between St Petersburg and the rest of Orthodox Russia is its emphasis on knowledge, on learning and on the study of the biblical text. There is an old saying among the clergy: “in Moscow they pray, and in Petersburg they learn.” In St Petersburg every parish tries

to set up some kind of educational centre, to organise different courses and to attract the most authoritative lecturers, both from among the well-educated clergy and secular academics. It amazes me that there are enough lecturers and people to attend all these centres! The focus of most courses is bible study and church history, but they are not limited to these subjects and also include Russian and world history, history of art, philology, and the social sciences. In other parts of Russia, parishes also set up courses but on a much smaller scale, while even in Moscow there are markedly fewer, and their intellectual potential is weaker.

The St Petersburg theological colleges are the strongest and the best developed in Russia. They are the intellectual centre of the whole Russian Orthodox Church, and, to a certain degree, they are the power house for the entire religious institution. This situation developed in the post-war years, when there were only a few parishes in the city, and all active clergy and churchgoers were concentrated around the Theological Academy.

Bishop Vladimir (Kotlyarov) who was Metropolitan of St Petersburg and Ladoga 1995-2014 and is now retired, records in his memoirs that even in his youth the

Moscow and St Petersburg theological colleges differed greatly. The Moscow Theological Academy was controlled by the Trinity-St Sergius Monastery, and its curriculum was in the hands of the monks, while the life of those studying at the seminary was governed by the monastic rule. In contrast, the Leningrad seminary, despite being next to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, was always autonomous, while the leadership of the Petersburg theological colleges insisted that the seminarians receive a sound, all-round education, which involved visiting libraries and attending exhibitions and theatres. This was a Petersburg tradition with the exception of the period when Bishop Konstantin (Goryanov) was rector of the Petersburg Theological Academy. Furthermore, the Petersburg Theological Academy has a discernible influence on the life of the Monastery, whose abbot, Bishop Nazary, devotes much attention to education: the monastery has an educational centre, where exhibitions are organised and lectures given by outstanding teachers. The Trinity-St Sergius Monastery has nothing like this.

Do the diocesan educational projects and the Theological Academy influence the intellectual life of secular Petersburg? Where is the intellectual standard higher – in secular academic circles, or among the educated clergy? According to my observations, the creative atmosphere within the Theological Academy is richer than that of the University, where there are certainly outstanding, brilliant minds, but where the general culture suffers. I am reminded of a comment made by the religious philosopher, Vasili Rozanov (1856-1919) that in Italy there

could be no good army because all the great men went to serve in the Church, which led me to joke in my own mind that perhaps it is impossible to have good universities in St Petersburg because all the cleverest men choose to enter the Church.

“Liberals” and “Conservatives”

It is generally accepted that Petersburg Orthodoxy is more liberal than that of Moscow. In fact, the issue is much more complex and the words “liberal” and “conservative” should be used with care when speaking about church life. It would be more accurate to describe Petersburg clergy as less politicised than their Moscow counterparts: my impression is that most Petersburg clergy have a low opinion of all shades of political opinion and reject politics on principle, while the laity are less fixated on politics. I visited about 60 parishes in the area and came away with the impression that they were not particularly conservative or liberal and had chosen a sort of “third way”; they were either “moderate conservatives” or “moderate liberals” depending on the meaning one attaches to these terms.

I met three clear conservatives among the Petersburg clergy, who did not conform to the Petersburg mainstream, Archpriest Vladimir Sergienko, Archpriest Gennady Belovolov and Archpriest Alexander Zakharov. These three were the most popular priests among the conservatives, and all opposed democracy and liberalism in politics, and advocated adherence to patristic precepts in church life. They distrusted the dominant

line in the diocese, but were all open to honest, serious discussion and were involved in extensive social work. I was pleasantly impressed by them (even though I do not share their views) and wish that all the conservatives in the Russian Orthodox Church were like them. There were about two dozen more less noticeable priests in the metropolia who, by Petersburg standards, could be considered conservatives, but there were no Stalinists among them.

I encountered a group of publicists concentrated around the “Russian People’s Line” (*Russkaya narodnaya liniya*) including Anatoli Stepanov and Deacon Vladimir Vasili, who proclaimed themselves to be patriots and were ready to do battle to defend the “Soviet Church”. At the height of the pandemic, a radical (by Petersburg church standards) social organisation called “The People’s Council” (*Narodny Sobor*) made its appearance, headed in Petersburg by Anatoli Artyukh, but after making a lot of noise for several months and scaring the church leadership, it disappeared. Groups like this are colourful, noisy, but not at all typical of St Petersburg, and find themselves on the periphery of church life; the clergy offer them no support, but at the same time hardly persecute them.

An imperial spirit

An important feature of Orthodox Petersburg is its devotion to imperial tradition. Every local parish treasures its history, honours the memory of the tsars, dukes, counts, ministers, regiments and social organisations which built Petersburg’s churches. Even those deemed to be liber-

als speak with reverence about Russia’s tsarist heritage. Fr Georgi Mitrofanov, for example, who is widely described as a liberal, considers the Synodal Period in Russian Orthodox Church history (1720-1917), inaugurated by Peter the Great who dispensed with the Patriarchate and subjected the Church to the state’s administrative control, to be the best period, unlike Moscow liberals who regard the Synodal leadership with nothing but censure.

For Orthodox Petersburg, the Russian Empire does not mean, first and foremost, a definite political system, but rather a great culture which is deeply valued. For these devotees of Russian imperial culture, the thread linking the past with the present, albeit somewhat worn, remains unbroken. To this day, members of the old city élite attend the same churches as their pre-revolutionary forebears; some kept their heads well down in Soviet times and are now emerging, while others come to the city from abroad. Many organisations in Petersburg are reviving their on-site churches. I was particularly interested in the parish at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, founded in 1738 by the Empress Anna Ioannovna (probably the most detested Russian empress), for whom prayers are regularly offered. Many ballet dancers have donated icons to this academy from their personal collections.

Petersburg bishops

Moving archbishops from one diocese to another has become a common practice in Russia these days. In many instances there is no understandable reason for

such relocations, and for a weak, or young diocese, such a changeover of bishops can lead to a great upheaval. But Petersburg is different. Here it is not easy to change anything. When Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev) of St Petersburg and Ladoga, for whom Petersburg culture was alien, was in post from 1990-1995, he in fact changed nothing at all. The current Metropolitan Varsonofi (Sudakov) wisely refrains from interfering in diocesan life and allows Petersburg to go on living as it always has done. Those who have met him say that he has the mentality of a Soviet citizen; he loves the Soviet past and Soviet pop music; and although he has nothing against education, he considers high-quality education to be overrated. Patriarch Kirill is a native of Petersburg and has surely been influenced by that city's culture. He knows Orthodox Petersburg well, and probably feels part of it. He continues the policies of his teacher, Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov, 1929-1978, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod 1963-1978) who in many ways created the Theological Academy in its present form, and has a large number of disciples in Petersburg.

An important component of Petersburg Orthodox culture is what I would call activism which takes many different forms. Moscow priests see their main task to be that of maintaining the customs of their predecessors, whereas in Petersburg clergy are always looking for new

Patrons

The Rt Revd Lord Williams of Oystermouth
The Archbishop of Westminster
The Chief Rabbi of Great Britain
The Moderator of the Free Churches
The Archbishop of Glasgow
The Archbishop of Thyateira & Great Britain

forms, and when it comes to the liturgy they sometimes use the ancient rite or then celebrate the liturgy in modern Russian.

In Petersburg there has long been a movement advocating the creation of a Uniate Catholic church liturgy within the Orthodox Church (using Latin in worship but retaining Russian Orthodox doctrine). Such ideas were advocated by Metropolitan Nikodim, who wanted to make the Russian Orthodox Church as active and well-organised as the Roman Catholic Church. "Nikodim-ism" is particularly evident still in Petersburg: some elderly priests have announced proudly to me "I am a Nikodim-ite" while a very young priest said to me "I am a hereditary Nikodim-ite". The Nikodim-ites profess varying socio-political and religious views: some are pro-West and others are anti, but all are active innovators at heart. To them, the Church is a movement and they constantly affirm "the Church is not some kind of swamp". These attitudes are very different from what you find in Moscow, where most Moscovites want to avoid change at all costs, whereas Petersburgers always want "to do better".

Keston Institute

47 South Street, Durham DH1 4QP, UK

administrator@keston.org.uk www.keston.org.uk

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