

# Keston Newsletter

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## **Michael Bourdeaux** *Starets of the Church of Silence*

by Alexandru Popescu

I first met Michael Bourdeaux in June 1991, during a visit to Oxford on the way back to Bucharest from Edinburgh. This was my first ever research trip,<sup>1</sup> since, as a medical student in Communist Romania with links to the Christian thinker and political dissident Petre Țuțea,<sup>2</sup> all my passport applications had been rejected before the execution of the Ceaușescus in December 1989. Keston College was in the process of changing its location from the village of Keston in Kent to rented space in a former community centre in Canal Street, Jericho, an inner suburb of Oxford.

At a time when Keston's library and archive collections were being unpacked and re-housed, storage furniture upgraded, and space savings under consideration in what was a rather chaotic office rented from the local parish church, a meeting with the Keston Director was arranged for me by Fiona Tupper-Carey, a member of Keston's research staff specialising in the situation of religion in contemporary Romania, who was fluent in Romanian and French. Before 1989 Fiona had travelled behind the Iron Curtain to attend immersion summer courses in Romania, where she met Fr Constantin Galeriu, a former prisoner of



*Canon Michael Bourdeaux*

conscience and a well-known Orthodox theologian and priest, who gave her spiritual advice in Bucharest.

I had not known Fiona in person – nor had I any idea who Michael Bourdeaux was, as at that time I knew very little about Keston. My only contact in Oxford was Fiona to whom Fr Galeriu had written and signed a short note of recommendation in French. Having phoned Fiona from Edinburgh to confirm my visit (as a representative of the recently established Christian Youth Centre in

## ***From the Editor***

Keston Institute's trustees look forward to welcoming Keston members to the AGM on 4 November, to be held at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in Limehouse (London E14) at 12 noon. In the afternoon Professor Mary Heimann, Chair in Modern History, Cardiff University, Wales, who thanks to a Keston scholarship was able to work in the Keston archive at Baylor University, will give a talk on "Bible-smuggling and Christian Cold War".

I was profoundly saddened in June to learn of the sudden death of Roland Smith, Keston's Vice-Chairman. He had been such a wise, calm and intellectually acute member of the Council, upon whom I had constantly relied for advice and guidance since he joined the Council in February 2003. A service of thanksgiving for Roland's life will be held in the chapel of the Royal Foundation at 3.30pm after the AGM on 4 November. An obituary is published in this issue of the *Keston Newsletter* on p.32.

I have also included in this issue an article by Dr Alexandru Popescu describing the importance of Michael Bourdeaux's life and work both for the author personally and for the world at large (pp.1-21). This is followed by an article on Islam in Ingushetia, part of the North Caucasus, by Tanzila Chabieva, a researcher at Moscow's Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, who explores some of the internal tensions within Ingush society. My colleague Sergei Filatov, in charge of the research for Keston's Encyclopaedia project, has contributed an intriguing article on moves within Russia today to canonise a Russian tsar, who unlike

Nicholas II, is little known outside Russia, namely Paul I who was murdered in 1801.

An important Soviet dissident, Vladimir Poresh, who defended religious freedom and was an intellectual leader during his lifetime, is remembered in a obituary on p.34. He was a member of Alexander Ogorodnikov's Christian Seminar, which attracted former young Marxists who started searching for an alternative ideology and found their way to the Christian faith. He was treated appallingly by the Soviet authorities: he was arrested in 1979 for what was termed "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and sentenced to five years in a strict regime labour camp; one day before the end of his sentence he was re-arrested in July 1984 and sentenced to another three years. Many of us who worked for Keston got to know him once it was possible to visit Russia after perestroika.

The work of the Keston Center at Baylor University is going from strength to strength as demonstrated by the Director's report (pp.36-44). Thanks to the generosity of Keston members, the Council is delighted to have been able to create a new Endowed Excellence Fund, which will support the Center's work far into the future.

*Xenia Dennen*

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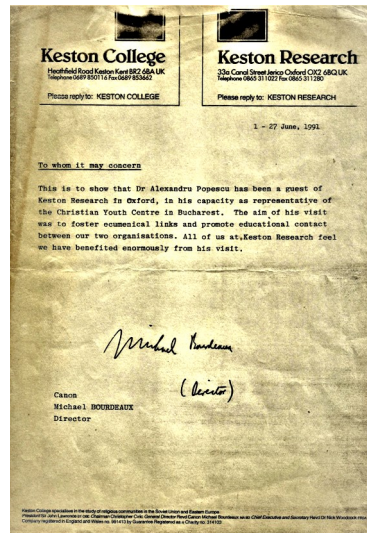
Bucharest), I managed to hand that note over to her, somewhat hesitantly, just before she introduced me to Michael. They read the handwritten endorsement with extreme care, exchanging smiles as they recognised Fr Galeriu's signature. Michael looked straight into my eyes and gave me a warm "Welcome!". He then arranged for me to meet my doctoral supervisor-to-be, the then Bishop (eventually Metropolitan) Kallistos of Diokleia and the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Rowan Williams (who was soon to move from Oxford as newly elected Bishop of Monmouth, later becoming Archbishop of Canterbury).

Following that first visit to Keston, under its Director's watchful and visionary eye, I tried in my academic work to follow Michael's example of first listening deeply and then recording carefully in order to study and celebrate the lives of contemporary witnesses for Christ who – under Communist and subsequent forms of "post-Communist" persecution – have responded to Christ's command to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). I was soon to find that my experience as Petre Țuțea's amanuensis, and my first-hand testimony as a participant on the street in the Romanian "Stolen Revolution" of 16-22 December 1989, were of great interest to the founder of Keston, whose academic journal was just about to publish one of Fr Galeriu's seminal articles.<sup>3</sup>

### ***OTEP and Keston***

I returned to Oxford as a visiting student on the Oxford Theological Exchange Programme (OTEP),<sup>4</sup> set up in 1990 by

the university's Faculty of Theology, whose aim was to bring students from countries formerly behind the Iron Curtain to Oxford for one academic year, to pursue their chosen subject under the



*Alexandru Popescu's reference, dated June 1991, signed by Michael Bourdeaux*

guidance of a Faculty member. As an OTEP student for the 1992-1993 academic year, I saw the Keston Director briefly again in October at the beginning of Michaelmas Term. Keston had now moved to "an imposing but dilapidated house",<sup>5</sup> No 4 Park Town in North Oxford. While using the facilities and attending lectures at the University of Oxford, the OTEP scholarship also gave me the opportunity, as a significant part of my research, to visit Keston regularly and to attend lectures, seminars, and workshops on themes relevant to the ongoing relationships between church and state, following the collapse of Communist power in Russia<sup>6</sup> and the various post-Soviet countries of Central and

Eastern Europe. This enabled me to meet fellow post-Communist researchers, clergy, politicians, and members of religious communities from both the Western (mainly Protestant) and Eastern (mainly Orthodox) churches; and to put into perspective, discuss, and debate issues of immediate concern related to my own experience of the (still disputed) events of December 1989 in Romania.<sup>7</sup>

All this, together with Michael's obligingly collegial mentoring and guidance, in tandem with Bishop Kallistos's in-depth tutorials and legendary lectures in Eastern Orthodox studies, enabled me to bring a deeper understanding of my own national and spiritual identity to the work I was doing on introducing Petre Țuțea to the Western academic world.

Thus I got to value and honour Michael for his expertise in the field of church-state relations in the Soviet and post-Soviet era, with special reference to the persecution of religions under Communism, and the effects atheist and anti-religious policies continue to have in the former Communist countries. I was introduced to Keston specialists in this field, such as Jane Ellis,<sup>8</sup> whose critical ideas and value judgements have made me more aware of inherently triumphalist mentalities and defensively nationalist attitudes in the way my own Romanian Orthodox Church was often engaging with the "post-Communist" political powers and contemporary social developments.

Michael always showed unquenchable sympathy and generous support for Eastern Christianity, the Russian Orthodox

Church and its revival following Gorbachev's much-publicised political reforms of *glasnost* (openness) which started after he came to power in 1985.<sup>9</sup> However, Michael was also concerned about certain ingrained patterns of cultural bias, societal behaviours, and distorted self-image in former Soviet satellite, predominantly Orthodox, countries like Romania, which were different from those within Western communities.

Michael was aware of the dangers of *megalothymia*, defined by the American academic Francis Fukuyama as "the tyrannical ambition of a Caesar or Stalin"<sup>10</sup> which had destroyed ancient democracies; but also of the new nationalisms now emerging in the form of religious fundamentalism, whether Orthodox or anti-Orthodox, particularly in regions of relatively low socio-economic development, with their tendency to be "intolerant, chauvinistic, and externally aggressive".<sup>11</sup> When I first met Michael in 1991, he was preparing a lecture on "Religion and the Collapse of Soviet Communism", which concluded prophetically, in light of the current Russian invasion of Ukraine:

"The Ukrainian Catholics kept faith and hope alive despite the total ban on their church from 1946 to 1989. Though they seemed for long to be playing not only a peripheral, but even an underground role, their potent Ukrainian nationalism eventually inspired millions of more passive or more russianised Ukrainians to join in what was eventually, in December last year [1991], an overwhelming vote for independence.

There is no republic of the Soviet Union, not even the Islamic ones of Central Asia (not considered in this article), where religion has failed to play some vitalising role in the evolution of the democratic or secessionist process. However, the result was an explosion rather than a clinical dismemberment. Now there is another challenge which may in the long run be even more difficult: how can religion mediate in a chaotic situation which could rapidly deteriorate to threaten the lives of millions?"<sup>12</sup>

This apparently rhetorical question about the pacifying role of religion is still pertinent in today's world of geopolitical uncertainty. For instance there are elements within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church that, despite Russia's invasion of their country, continue to be pro-Moscow. Patriarch Kirill proclaims a "Russian World" identified with the so-called "canonical territory" of the Russian Orthodox Church, which is described as performing "a pastoral mission among peoples who accept the Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of their identity". This claim distorts historical fact and comes close to the ethnophyletism condemned by Ecumenical Orthodoxy. According to Patriarch Kirill's logic, "the Churches in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the Baltic States are literally doomed to remain forever part of the Moscow Patriarchate".<sup>13</sup>

### ***Religion, State and Society***

1992 was a momentous year for Keston's academic journal *Religion in*

*Communist Lands*, edited by Russian Orthodoxy specialist Philip Walters. Together with Michael Walters "decided to change its name to *Religion, State and Society*, but cover the same ground, hoping, *inter alia*, to describe the transformation, for the first time in history, of atheist states into ones where religion was fully free".<sup>14</sup> In its new format, much of the first issue of this newly relaunched journal was devoted to the sensitive subject of Jewish-Christian relations, on the assumption that:

"Religious believers in Europe today arguably have the best opportunity since immediately after the First World War to take a fresh look at long-standing contentious issues and to start trying to find new ways of resolving them."<sup>15</sup>

Rowan Williams, who was to be consecrated bishop on May Day of that year, contributed to the journal debate. His was an urgent reflection on other contributing scholars' attempts "to face candidly the dangers of a rebirth of the crudest forms of traditional Orthodox antisemitism in the present climate of revived Russian nationalism with a religious flavour".<sup>16</sup> The call to inter-faith dialogue, and the injunction for the Orthodox community to refrain both from sequels of Soviet antisemitism and from nationalist views of dissident reactionary groups, continue to be relevant to Christian and indeed any form of fundamentalism.

In his personal reflections intriguingly entitled "The Future of Auschwitz", Jonathan Weber, a founder member of

the International Auschwitz Council (appointed by the Polish Minister of Culture), commemorates “Jewish martyrdom” and acknowledges that “Germany is the European country with the longest experience of post-Nazi democratic education, given that curricula in a wide range of institutions to promote such education was insisted upon by the Western allies after the end of the war. The irony is thus that – at least in the field of education – Germans today know more about Auschwitz, so to speak, than anyone else in the West”.<sup>17</sup> No such educational programme has been implemented in former Communist countries in relation to the abuses of totalitarianism.

The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 was a pivotal event in world history which triggered significant moves towards closer European unity. This fresh start offered both challenges and opportunities, at least in theory, for religious communities, East and West, to engage in creative dialogue about the future, while engaging with wider issues concerning the nature of evil, and moral, spiritual and educational problems as they affect humanity in general.

### ***Romanian Christians in Keston’s archive and journals***

The files of Romanian documents in the Keston archive include letters from Orthodox priests – addressed to either a Romanian or a Western audience – and letters from laity in support of parish priests, with a large quantity of documents relating to Fr Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa (see p.8). According to Ryan

J. Voogt – against the conventional assertion that “Romanian Orthodox priests and bishops did little to combat or stand up to [Communist] state intrusion into church affairs” – the Keston archive reveals that:

“Romanian Orthodox priests were not unlike the clergy of other denominations: a good number of them acted or spoke in ways which did not conform to state requirements; their battle was an uphill one and made more difficult by the lack of any obvious source of community support.”<sup>18</sup>

Voogt’s focus is on the priests who:

“more readily interacted with everyday believers, not on the leadership of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The position of the bishops was unique (though certainly not wholly separate from the situation of the clergy): either a bishopric formed an integral part of the state ministry of religion, or the state was an integral part of church administration. The bishops have sometimes been viewed as outright collaborators, who had a ‘nickname’ assigned to them by the secret police, while others have had their behaviour justified on the grounds that they were playing the role of ‘double agent’, doing the minimum for the state while protecting the institution of the church.”<sup>19</sup>

The defiance of ethnic Romanian Protestant groups against the Communist regime is well documented and thoroughly analysed by Dănuț Mănăstireanu in his seminal article, “Protestants in

Romania”, published in the *Keston Newsletter*, a whole section of which is devoted to “heroes and visionaries”:

“such heroes were, for example, Richard Wurmbrand – probably the most important evangelical leader who ever lived in Romania; the Baptist Simion Cure – a disciple of Wurmbrand who was himself imprisoned for his faith, and had a major influence on Iosif Ton; Constantin Caraman – a visionary Pentecostal leader, whose incredible biography has yet to be written; Iosif Ton himself – clearly the most important Romanian evangelical leader alive; Ferenc Visky [...] – the Reformed pastor who led the Pietistic Bethany movement among Hungarians in Transylvania and beyond; the Baptist Liviu Olah – probably the most prominent evangelist in Romanian evangelicalism. All these paid a high price for their faithfulness to Christ, and were able to comfort and encourage their fellow believers during a dark period of church history.”<sup>20</sup>

In her research article “Life in a Romanian Communist Prison”, Mariana Alina Urs (she received a Keston scholarship to work in the archive) describes the spirituality of political prisoners at the interface of their ethnic background, religious beliefs, political convictions, and social class:

“An eminent student of the Law Faculty in Iași, Valeriu Gafencu, imprisoned in 1941 for being a member of the Iron Guard [a nationalist, anti-Communist organisation], was at the

centre of the spiritual resistance within Târgu Ocna [political prison and TB sanatorium]. [...] According to all testimonies, he helped convert other prisoners to Christianity, he looked after those in need, discussed theological questions with prisoners and celebrated Christian festivals. Today most Romanian Orthodox revere him as the ‘Saint of the Prisons’, although he has not yet been officially canonised by the Romanian Orthodox Church. [...]

Many witnesses recorded how Gafencu chose to sacrifice himself in order to save his good friend, the Protestant pastor, Richard Wurmbrand, from certain death. After receiving some streptomycin (the most effective drug against TB in the 1950s) from Leonida Stratan, a fellow prisoner, Gafencu insisted on giving it to Wurmbrand so the latter would have a chance to live, and to tell the outside world about what was happening in Romanian prisons.”<sup>21</sup>

Richard Wurmbrand was a professor of Jewish descent who converted to the Anglican Church’s Ministry Among Jewish People and was ordained twice (first as an Anglican, then, after World War II, as a Romanian Evangelical Lutheran pastor<sup>22</sup>):

“During the 30 months spent in that room (Room No 4), tens of people died and their places were taken by others. But a remarkable thing happened: none of them died an atheist. Fascists, Communists, murderers, thieves, priests, rich aristocrats and



poor peasants, they were all brought to our cell; and not one of them died without making peace with God and with all of us [...] It's easy to be an atheist when all is well. Strong faith resists enormous pressure; but I never saw atheism hold up when faced with death.”<sup>23</sup>

In her concluding paragraph, Urs describes what she considers to be the most extraordinary feature of Târgu Ocna as:

“the friendship and sense of community created between prisoners of different ethnicities, confessions or political beliefs – between Orthodox, Catholics, Greek-Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists, members of all the political organisations from the inter-war period, priests, former police, workers, students, peasants or intellectuals. Paradoxically, given the inhuman conditions in which they were imprisoned, the political detainees built their own micro-universe of mutual respect and compassion, of solidarity and trust, their illness acting as a catalyst for accepting the ‘other’.”<sup>24</sup>

### ***Gulag and Holocaust***

In the summer of 1993, before my second year in Oxford as an OTEP student, I had a 3-month travel and research grant from the Brooke Foundation to visit their headquarters in Washington, D.C., in relation to their clinical studies of Romanian institutionalised children. During that visit I had the chance to spend a few days with Fr Gheorghe Calciu-

Dumitreasa, Rector of Holy Cross Church, Alexandria, Virginia. Fr Calciu had served prison sentences for his religious education work as a Romanian Orthodox priest,<sup>25</sup> after being subjected, as a medical student, to re-education by Communist “anti-humans” in the notorious Pitești prison.<sup>26</sup> Following his release in 1984 from Aiud prison (where, before



*Fr Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa is greeted by a Keston staff member during his visit to Keston College, Kent, on 9 May 1986*

Ceaușescu’s “golden age”, Petre Țuțea too had been detained), Fr Calciu “managed to emigrate to the US in 1985 and was accepted into the Romanian Episcopate of America the following year”.<sup>27</sup> This is how Michael starts Fr Calciu’s obituary in *The Guardian*:

“When, in August 1978, I secretly met the Romanian Orthodox priest Fr Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa in Bucharest, he exuded the confidence that he would shortly be imprisoned and that his actions expressed a compulsion to do and say what his faith dictated in the most difficult of circumstances.

He could look back on 11 years of study, semi-secret ordination and



teaching at the Bucharest theological seminary, preceded by 16 years of deprivation, barely surviving a succession of brutal Communist prisons. He also knew he faced a further 10-year sentence for sharpening the social conscience of his students and confirming their moral obligation to stand firm against state atheism.”<sup>28</sup>

During his speaking tour of Great Britain, Fr Calciu had visited Keston College on 9 May 1986 and had encouraged Keston staff to continue to support the persecuted Church, once called the “Church of Silence”,<sup>29</sup> by sharing with them a story heard in his childhood:

“When God created the world, He created sorrow at the same time. Otherwise life would be too happy, and people would forget God. The Creator had much work to do, and so that He might have free hands, He put sorrow on top of a stone, but the stone was crushed immediately. Then He put it on a tree, but the tree withered. Finally He placed sorrow on a man and the man carried it. And so will you [...] Don’t be afraid!”<sup>30</sup>

When I met Fr Calciu in 1993, his greatest concern was still for the youth of Romania, “whose souls had been damaged by a materialistic philosophy and a total lack of spiritual endeavours”, as stated in *Keston News Service* 29 May 1986.<sup>31</sup> He spoke with reverence and gratitude about Keston and mentioned that he had also heard Alexander Solzhenitsyn speak about Michael Bourdeaux and Jane Ellis in similar terms.<sup>32</sup>

Fr Calciu shared Michael Bourdeaux’s “circumspect and careful approach” to the way contemporary historians from both East and West seem to inherit “a persisting Iron Curtain which separates the Holocaust from the Gulag within our collective memory and within our personal heart”: this split in awareness and discernment reflected a subconscious form of racial discrimination, perhaps based on a misconception about martyrdom, “as if the colour of our blood – whether Jewish, Christian, Muslim or even atheist – would differ”, in Fr Calciu’s words. For him, as for Michael, both the Gulag and the Holocaust were catastrophically complementary crimes against humanity.

Almost three decades on, Michael’s memoir would summarise this cognitive distortion and moral dichotomy, which is perhaps at the heart of much misconstrued and even fake history, whether in everyday talk, in history books, or within ecumenical institutions such as the World Council of Churches (WCC):

“Another issue predominant [in the WCC] was the Holocaust. While the world, rightly, paid unlimited tribute to its victims, similar weight was not being given to those, far greater in number, who perished in the Gulags. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s prayers are often read in church and his testimony quoted, but conversely it is only rarely that anyone cites the equally impressive testimonies of Christian martyrs in Russia.”<sup>33</sup>

My discussions with Fr Calciu were complemented in conversations with

Michael, a spiritual guide of a different kind (“a priest without a parish”, to use a phrase Petre Țuțea used to describe himself), whose judgements were based on the moral imperative “to keep close to the facts and never, unless unduly provoked, to enter into arguments for or against Communism as a political system”.<sup>34</sup> Based on personal, often dangerous experience in Moscow, Michael was, like Fr Calciu, convinced that Communism “was a system rotten to the core, not least in its one-sided and relentless war against religion”.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Keston values and doctoral research***

Although Michael was ordained as an Anglican priest, I never saw him celebrate the Eucharist, baptise anyone, or officiate at a wedding. Yet over the years it became clear to me that he was a confessor of the Christian faith, an unconditional defender of life as a gift whose supreme value lies within the human right and freedom to assert God’s glory and to celebrate our personal relationship with Him, with each other, and with the universe.

Founded in 1969 “as a centre for the study and dissemination of reliable information about religion in Communist countries”, Keston College “uncovered unpalatable facts about the true situation of religious believers behind the Iron Curtain, and it demolished the Communist propaganda that there was freedom of conscience in its ‘brave new world’.”<sup>36</sup> Michael’s Templeton Prize Acceptance Speech began with a solemn acknowledgment of the persecution and martyrdom of Christians, both in the

Roman Empire and in Communist concentration camps:

“The Christian Church was born in suffering and persecution. Christ died the death of a criminal. Rome oppressed Israel. For three centuries the Early Church faced physical extinction almost daily. Yet it’s probably true that more Christians have suffered for their faith in this [20<sup>th</sup>] century than in any other in history.”<sup>37</sup>

Michael’s life-long ministry was to tell the wider world about such Christian faith and suffering through the lens of personal contacts and samizdat reports, defending the rights of people persecuted for their religious beliefs in Communist and “post-Communist” countries, particularly Russia and Eastern Europe. He was fascinated by the tens of hours of testimonials granted to me personally (mostly in private audio, but also in video interviews and samizdat literature) by former political prisoners, survivors of Soviet and Romanian prison camps – an oral history record that in his view could shape the post-1989 understanding of Romanian Communism through the lens of former political prisoners’ personal experience.

### ***Petre Țuțea***

As I started to visit Keston regularly and to borrow books from its library, I gradually got to know staff members, such as the librarian Malcolm Walker. Whilst giving him a hand with lifting and sorting out archival boxes, I had a look at various items from the collection of samizdat papers. I realised that texts,

handwritten by me at Țuțea's dictation in his flat, (he was under 24-hour surveillance by the *Securitate*) had become samizdat material, once carbon copies were distributed underground to his friends. Keston colleagues then saw some of my scribe files and Țuțea's own handwritten texts, many of them quasi-illegible due to his intention tremor, acquired from torture in prison.

Michael showed genuine interest in these unpublished documents and advised me how to preserve and use such materials for my doctoral work. When victim testimony becomes part of public confession it can implicitly have the role of therapy for the tortured and their torturers alike, and for society as a whole. Michael was aware of the scientific, justiciary, and above all moral value of such qualitative interviews, even if, or precisely because, private reports are often steeped in devout Christianity and can document the way religious experience and conversion can cause profound changes in the personality.<sup>38</sup> Keston specialists advised me to focus on the authenticity of autobiographical accounts and the accuracy of first-hand documentation, before analysing their associated literary value and inherent bias (due to subconscious political intent and meaning) that would inevitably project partisan hermeneutics.

Using Keston's samizdat archive and transcripts of Michael's own interviews with political dissidents and eyewitnesses, I decided to choose the Romanian Gulag as the research topic of my doctoral thesis at Balliol College, Oxford, with special reference to "The Life and Work of the Romanian Christian Thinker Petre

Țuțea". During 1994-1995, my first academic year as a Probationer Research Student, Michael and Philip Walters encouraged me to publish a first article on Țuțea, in *Religion, State and Society*.<sup>39</sup> After confirmation of my doctoral status I submitted other contributions to Keston publications.<sup>40</sup>

Petre Țuțea (1902-1991) was a Romanian economist and diplomat who spent 13 years in political prisons and then 28 years under city arrest as a prisoner of conscience during the Communist era. A Doctor of Administrative Law, he had worked as a national economic adviser during the 1930s and 1940s, when Romania found itself caught between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Unlike close contemporaries such as the playwright Eugène Ionesco, the philosopher Emil Cioran, and the historian of religions Mircea Eliade, Țuțea chose to remain in Romania in the early 1940s, at a time when the very existence of Romania as a state was at stake as a result of the Ultimatum of the Soviet Union to Romania on 26 June 1940 (followed by the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina) and the Vienna Diktat on 30 August 1940 (after which the territory of Northern Transylvania was assigned from Romania to Hungary). For him, national identity was essential to humane civil society. Having initially advocated socialist then nationalist solutions, he came to challenge both the abstract universalised humanity of Marxism and right-wing nationalism.<sup>41</sup> In 1990, having never previously joined any political party, he pointedly joined the National Liberal Party, of which he remained a member until his death.

During the process of Soviet “re-education” in the Romanian political prisons (1948-1964), Țuțea’s experience of torture led him paradoxically to reaffirm the fundamental Christian vision of humanity as created in the image and likeness of God. In every aspect of his being, Țuțea testified to the love and power of God – his testimony is not merely a conceptual apologetics, but an informed and joyous affirmation of the relationship between humanity and God. This relationship can never be fully described or experienced as a conceptualised abstraction, but is realised in the incarnational context of individual human lives, with their personal gifts, ethnic and national identity, history, and aspirations.<sup>42</sup>

### *New martyrs and confessors*<sup>43</sup>

Subjected to ideological “re-education”<sup>44</sup> by means of physical and mental torture, prisoners of conscience became martyrs, as a result of isolation in small-sized, dark, insanitary cells and “catacombs”, starved and denied any medical attention. Somehow providentially, while being stripped of almost every single material element, which would facilitate personal opening of hearts to one another (placed as they were in isolation under permanent surveillance), and not allowed access to books, and certainly not any form of common worship, the new martyrs of the Gulag discovered through enlightened solidarity – by “Trinitarian punctuations of history”, in Țuțea’s words – the presence of Christ.

After the Second World War and under Soviet influence, new cities were artifi-

cially created by destroying traditional rural communities and imprisoning the peasantry. Structures were set up to prevent Christians from observing Christian traditions and to promote their continuing inoculation with the materialist values of the atheist *homo sovieticus*. Ceaușescu’s “systemisation” policy then proposed the destruction of more than half of Romania’s villages to make way for hundreds of “agro-industrial towns”. The outcomes of this experiment took different forms in different people, depending on the individual’s ability to resist political temptations and to preserve Christian identity. For some, identification with the power of the state was particularly meaningful; for others, faith in Orthodox spiritual values was supreme.

Some of the latter, especially intellectuals and peasants, remained spiritually robust under all circumstances. As an irony of history, the harsh conditions that were created, both in and outside political prisons, enabled them to discover the lifestyle of the Christian Fathers of the fourth century and the fertility of the “desert of God”.<sup>45</sup> The word “desert” literally means “uninhabitable place”<sup>46</sup> and such were the Communist prisons and the Communist “cities of the working class”, built behind the Iron Curtain. In that sort of ontological reclusion, through martyrdom and externally imposed anchoritism, a *sui generis* form of Christian monasticism was born in Communist Romania, outside the authority of the officially recognised national Orthodox Church, which had a close relationship with the Communist government. The regime impeded meritocratic vertical social mobility in order to consolidate

state-imposed mass uniformity. Absolute external power gave rise to a desire for solitude, inner exile and daily martyrdom of conscience in people who had been relegated to the social underground. Just like the lay hermits or “white monks” of the desert, some of these “solitaries” made use of their separation from society to find, like Țuțea, both a path for their own salvation and a way of transmitting their vision of this spiritual path to a new generation, through master-disciple relationships.

Despite the mass extermination of the national Christian opposition and brainwashing through Communist propaganda, Romanian Christianity was able to flourish where the tradition of spiritual fatherhood was maintained. Disciples were initiated by sharing the personal experience of people subjected to psychological threat and physical torture, rather than by collective missionary worship. The ideological reaction induced in those who had lost everything materially, or who had experienced a sense of loss through the application of absolutist materialist doctrines, often had a paradoxical effect: it unconsciously prepared the younger generation for the rediscovery of traditional Christian values. As a modern extension of the paradox of early Christian monasticism, in Romania under the Communist dictatorship, many political dissidents, who had spent years under house arrest in the cities of the proletariat, would turn themselves into urban hesychasts.<sup>47</sup>

Michael enabled me to realise that prisoners of conscience and “death-cell philosophers”<sup>48</sup> had not only established a

communal, *transmural* sense of love and prayer among themselves; but also, the total deprivation of all means of normal living led them (whether Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Uniates, or members of other Christian denominations) to rediscover a form of ecumenical “neo-hesychasm”.<sup>49</sup> Where possible they created an underground university, where charismatic and erudite intellectuals (like Petre Țuțea and Cardinal Alexandru Todea<sup>50</sup>) managed to survive as dignified human beings, by following their professional and priestly vocation of sharing philosophical ideas and teaching Bible lessons (sometimes in Morse code tapped on radiator pipes), while sharpening their own mystical thinking and belief in the primacy of God and biblical revelation as the source of all knowledge. In the desert of carceral adversity – displaced from institutional influence and doctrinal prejudice – the new martyrs of the Romanian Gulag were able to recover the essence of Christian life and a deep relationship with God in personal prayer.

### ***Crisis and a new start***

2002 was a difficult year both for Keston and for Michael himself, who had retired after his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was aware that the new director “would take on a difficult – perhaps impossible – job”.<sup>51</sup> After “some good hand-over meetings”, a sharp divergence of views emerged on Keston’s future direction, with the new director Larry Uzzell proposing to abandon both Keston’s archive and the historical contextualising approach of its researchers, and to “concentrate exclusively on current violations of religious

liberty”<sup>52</sup> in Russia and former Soviet Union countries. On 22 March 2003, St Antony’s College, Oxford, hosted a Keston EGM, entitled “Keston: A Vision for the Future”. It offered Michael the opportunity to set forth his long perspective:

“The rise and fall of Communism was not only a political system. It carried with it the zeal to re-mould the human mind. Part of this process was the imposition of state atheism (*gosateizm*). The collapse of this imperative is one of the most extraordinary testimonies to the power of the Christian faith that the world has ever seen. [...] It’s in its witness to and documenting of this process of survival and revival, I believe, that Keston’s main contribution lies. [...] We still, of course, lack many facts, but a vast amount of documentation on this climactic event of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century lies with us. I’m convinced that 50 or 100 years hence, historians will treat the rise of state atheism and its collapse as a marker in human experience. It’s a huge wave in the tide of history, one which swept up the shore, broke and receded.

[...] Larry Uzzell wanted to reduce Keston to a news service, concentrating solely on the infraction of religious liberty which is still endemic in some parts of the former Soviet bloc [...] I was a supporter of the news service as it grew under Larry. I argued, though, that it should be more comprehensive. It should focus on the immense gains in religious

liberty and interesting events in the lives of the churches, as well as the (often very local) intrusion of state officials into church affairs, or the attempts by the Russian Orthodox Church to dominate and curtail the rights of minority faiths. I argued, unsuccessfully, that this study of the present, from which I learned a great deal, fitted like a hand into a glove with the broader view I wished to take in my work: the perspective of the last 50 years.”<sup>53</sup>

It was in the wake of all this that my own book, *Petre Țuțea: Between Sacrifice and Suicide*, an adapted version of my doctoral thesis, was launched at Balliol College on 6 February 2004 and introduced by Rowan Williams,<sup>54</sup> who had kindly written a foreword to the book. Michael had contributed a most generous preface, and my acknowledgements included a significant number of former, mostly unknown, political prisoners.

### *A prophetic voice*

Michael Bourdeaux’s prophetic persistence, at the interface of two millennia, in being the voice of persecuted people, churches, denominations, and faiths in the vast territory of “former” Communist lands, continues to inspire both discipleship and social action on both sides of the fallen Iron Curtain.

Under the perplexed eyes of the West, the “state-church symphony” continues its chilling masquerade in the largest country on earth: backed by the Moscow Patriarchate, the versatile and “long hand of the KGB” has turned into the large

boot of its successor, the FSB: their duties include public censorship and the imposition by force of linguistic euphemisms (e.g. the war in Ukraine is required by law to be merely a “special operation”), in hallucinatory interchanges of wooden language and highly sophisticated news control, aiming to legitimise aggression and deny war crimes. Like most of his predecessors the current Russian President continues to employ, though now in the name of God and with the Patriarch’s blessing, a vast array of disinformation, brainwashing, and “re-education”.<sup>55</sup> Putin’s curtailing of civil freedoms and the rule of law, elimination of political opposition, and destruction of life-sustaining civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, are ominously reminiscent of Stalin-era atrocities:

“Soviet, Moscow-based, Communism betrayed its trust and treated Ukraine as a vassal state. The worst time was in the 1930s, when Stalin collectivised agriculture, forcing the productive Ukrainian peasants to provide grain from their rich ‘black earth’ regions to feed Russia, where longer frozen winters predominated. The resultant famine (*Holodomor*) killed literally millions and it is even reckoned that more Ukrainians died as a result than Jews in the Holocaust. Ukrainian trust in the Kremlin took a blow from which it would never fully recover.”<sup>56</sup>

As two facets of secular totalitarianism, in Michael’s view Soviet Communism and National-Socialism alike reduce human beings to nothing but themselves. Denial of God results in destruction of an

innate order within the created cosmos. By denying the vital reality of the soul, in its non-material, ultimately inexpressible nature, humanity is diminished and instrumentalised. In one of his lectures, Michael quotes Professor German Branover, a reputed physicist who described his discovery of the Jewish faith in Latvia as a “miracle”. Dissatisfied with the dialectical-materialism in which he had been educated, a system which he felt imprisoned his soul, Branover began reading the works of Aristotle, Plato, modern existentialists and, eventually, a study of Jewish history, which gave him “the key to the puzzle of mankind”:

“Now let us open the Book of Books, let us delve into the texts of the prayers for the Sabbath and the festivals. We very soon realise that previously we were forcing an open door, and that the fruits of our reasoning were long ago anticipated – moreover in such depth, in such a form and in such language, which we could not have ourselves devised. Only, instead of the word ‘nature’ which was used in our discussions, here we read ‘GOD’. We see that God is one, omnipresent, incorporeal and infinite. We see that in God is the essence of all things, in Him is the beginning and end of all that is on earth, in God are the causes of all causes and the laws for all laws.”<sup>57</sup>

### ***Reformed Orthodoxy and dissidents***

For Michael, the power of the Christian spirit – experienced as living martyrdom in societies governed by anti-religious ideologies – affirms normality as self-



giving holiness, even where liturgical Eucharist is not legally permitted. The victory of the Cross finds expression in the rediscovery of Christian traditions as well as their continuation in new forms. Under Soviet Communism, Christian witnesses included not only imprisoned priests and ministers, but also innumerable “voiceless” lay believers, even those outside official Churches or denominational organisations.

Many of the lay martyrs in Communist prison camps were reformers inasmuch as their ecumenical witness to the Christian faith was mainly expressed as resistance to torture, through inner prayer and interpersonal solidarity, and less as doctrinal sophistication. When such witness was offered by philosophers, thinkers, writers, or artists – who, like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, re-discovered Orthodoxy in the midst of labour camps – their way of affirming their Christian faith renewed the traditional means of expressing it and often refined traditional Orthodox doctrine.<sup>58</sup>

Soviet and Communist political prisons thus enabled a reformation from within of Christian faith and Orthodoxy, by rediscovering the incarnational dimension of persecuted, often tortured, communities as the sacrificial Body of Christ (Eph. 2:22), realised eucharistically beyond the official confines of institutional Churches. The mission of contemporary Orthodoxy, but also of evangelical communities, which are “re-engaging theologically and practically with the surrounding culture”<sup>59</sup>, is in part to continue to bear witness to the Cross carried in political prisons by the 20<sup>th</sup> century

martyrs and also, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, by uncompromising journalists like Anna Politkovskaya, the murdered news correspondent and human rights activist who reported on Russia’s atrocities in Chechnya.<sup>60</sup>

Michael was aware that, in the West too, systematic confinement of practical public discourse to a supposedly rational secular level can be problematic, especially in relation to religious groups and broader spiritual visions of society. A default rationalism leads to discussion of spiritual matters being treated as either threateningly radical or at best utopian, “effectively on a par with irrational opinion”, even when those discussions are undertaken in a generous, measured, and informed way.<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile, in a world of fraught and uncertain international relations, Michael anticipated that the Russian authorities would attempt to repress liberal dissidents even after the implosion of the Soviet system in 1991, foreseeing that, as was the case under Soviet law, human rights would be defined by and subordinated to the state. He would subscribe to suggestions made in Garry Kasparov’s book on Putin:

“My last policy recommendation is to listen to the dissidents, even if you do not like what they have to say. They are the ones who reveal to us the dark realities of our societies, the realities that most of us have the luxury to turn away from. Listen to the dissidents because they warn us of the threats that target minorities first and inevitably spread to the majority.

Every society has its dissidents, not just dictatorships. They speak for the disenfranchised, the ignored, and the persecuted. Listen to them now, because they speak of what is to come.”<sup>62</sup>

### *Psychiatry of history*

Just before the Covid-19 pandemic, comparing Putin, Trump, Ceauşescu, and Herod, Michael spoke of the “psychiatry of history”. This followed an unfinished discussion at the end of a lecture given by me on the “autistic state”<sup>63</sup> in which I had raised three main questions:

1. Is it possible to apply the psychopathology of individuals, e.g. autism, to systems of governance; can one speak of an “autistic state”?<sup>64</sup>
2. Why is art, especially music, such an important and resistant medium to totalitarian influence?
3. How can religion, with such a long history of support for totalitarianism, and which might even have been invented to buttress it, also be able to protect individual freedom under an inimical regime?

Michael liked the idea of music as an existential defence against totalitarian autism. He was himself a singer who loved and supported young musicians from Britain, Russia and former Soviet countries.<sup>65</sup> He knew from personal experience behind the Iron Curtain – when all Bach’s vocal music was mutilated by Communist censorship – that:

“You can take the words out of Bach, but not the spirituality. When Rostropovich played a solo cello suite, the

audience would sit in rapt contemplation, many no doubt immersed in the deep Christian feeling behind it (and Rostropovich later identified himself as an Orthodox believer).”<sup>66</sup>

### *Conclusion*

For me, Michael Bourdeaux epitomises the “man of God”. In a recent conversation with Lorna, his widow, she described him as a prophetic rather than diplomatic priest:<sup>67</sup>

“The extraordinary thing is that Michael wasn’t really an Anglican priest in the sense of being a parish priest, with responsibility for the cure of souls in a parish. He knew from very early on that his calling was quite different. But, I suppose, in a sense his ordination to the priesthood gave him an entry-point to all kinds of avenues in his future work which he wouldn’t otherwise have had – because, although the Orthodox regarded the Anglicans by and large with suspicion and looked down on our theology and our way of applying it to life, at least there was some advantage in them connecting with the Anglicans, as it was helpful for them to have access to organisations like the WCC and the British Council of Churches. So, the Orthodox cultivated relations with the Anglicans, for their own benefit. On that level Michael had a certain leverage or advantage: although at higher levels, WCC leaders regarded him with intense suspicion (as if he was their enemy), at parish level, ordinary Orthodox parish priests – the ones that were

engaged in the struggle for truth – became his friends and they had a special bond through priesthood (even though their understanding of priesthood would have been quite different). Thus, it is extraordinary that Michael might have just finished his degree in Oxford and been a very good, competent Russian linguist; but the fact that he studied theology, then was ordained, and then went on to a different kind of ministry was clearly God’s direction.”<sup>68</sup>

Michael’s original inspiration came through an unexpected meeting, in Khrushchev’s Moscow, with two Ukrainian *babushki* who urged him to “be our voice!”<sup>69</sup> He and Keston did exactly that, becoming “the voice of the voiceless”. His legacy continues (I use the present tense because, through Keston, his work goes on posthumously), in that spirit of tenacious advocacy for the worldwide Church of the voiceless, that he had identified as his vocation.

Michael remains for me a kind of Dostoevskian *starets*, “who takes your

soul, your will into his soul and into his will”.<sup>70</sup> In Michael’s words, the *starets*:

“just needs to be. Wherever he is, deep in hiding in the forests, in a side-street, anywhere, people will find him and send others to him. That is where he often was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, avoiding the crowding influence of a changing society and ignoring any official favours which come the Church’s way. That is where he is now. If he is found and put behind barbed wire, his new circle of spiritual children will be those sharing his barracks or cell.”<sup>71</sup>

In coming to Britain, researching, celebrating, and writing about Petre Țuțea and generations of martyrs of the Romanian<sup>72</sup> and Soviet Gulags<sup>73</sup>; and in seeking, in their spirit, to live out the truth of the Incarnation, and to share with them in the salvific joy of the Resurrection, under the guidance of *starets* Michael Bourdeaux, I have found my own personal identity within the “Church of Silence”.

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1. As a Parliamentary Consultant to the Commission for Health, Work, and Social Care of the newly elected Romanian Senate, I was invited to visit the prison social work system in Scotland.
  2. Alexandru Popescu, “Petre Țuțea (1902-1991): the Urban Hermit of Romanian Spirituality”, *Religion, State & Society*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1995, pp.319-341.
  3. “No ‘iron curtain’ can be permanent in an age of ever more sophisticated means of communication. All these changes have contributed to the conflict between society and totalitarian regimes. A time of change has become inevitable here too, brought about by both external and internal forces. The major internal force was a global crisis – not only an economic crisis, but also, and more profoundly, a moral and spiritual crisis. The totalitarian system of Eastern Europe, characterised by materialism and atheism in particular, has produced a tragic spiritual vacuum, which shows itself in two main phenomena: an identity crisis in the individual, and a general sense that existence has no meaning.” Constantin Galeriu, “A Time of Change: Fundamental Options in the Present Dialogue between Believers and Society”, *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 19/1-2, 1991, p.66.
  4. For the history of OTEP see: Michael Bourdeaux, *One Word of Truth: The Cold War Memoir of Michael Bourdeaux and Keston College*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 2019, pp.253-260.
  5. Ibid, pp.257-258.

6. After the failed coup in Moscow, “during those fateful three days, 19-21 August 1991, [t]he fact that, of the three young men subsequently killed in the half-hearted tank attack, two were Russian Orthodox and the third Jewish and that they received a joint burial ceremony (on Shabbat!) turned, even if only temporarily, the eyes of the whole nation towards religion”: Michael Bourdeaux, “Religion and the Collapse of Soviet Communism”, (typed) lecture dated 13 December 1991, to be given at the “Soviet Society in Turmoil: The Grass Roots” Conference, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Marjorie Mayrock Center for Soviet and East European Research, 5-8 January 1992, pp.1-2.
7. See, for example, Keston Institute Seminar with Alexandru Popescu, László Tőkés, and Konstantin Gavrilkin, organised in the Autumn of 1993, at the start of my second academic year as an OTEP student: <https://digitalcollections-baylor.quartextcollections.com/Documents/Detail/photographs-of-keston-institute-seminar-with-alexandru-popescu-laszlo-tokes-and-konstantin-gavrilkin-united-kingdom.-autumn-1993/1132990>
8. Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: Triumphalism and Defensiveness*, MacMillan Press (in association with St Antony’s College, Oxford), Basingstoke & London, 1996.
9. Michael Bourdeaux, *Gorbachev, Glasnost & the Gospel*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1990.
10. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1992, p.182.
11. Ibid, p.273.
12. Bourdeaux, “Religion and the Collapse of Soviet Communism”, p.10.
13. “Open Appeal to the Primates of Local Orthodox Churches” (dated 10 April 2022; by 11 April it had been signed by 324 Ukrainian Orthodox clergy), *Keston Newsletter*, no. 36, 2022, pp.15-16.
14. Bourdeaux, *One Word of Truth*, p.260.
15. Philip Walters, “Editorial”, *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1992, p.3.
16. Rowan Williams, “The Need for a Christian Critique of National Messianism”, *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1992, p.57.
17. Jonathan Weber, “The Future of Auschwitz: Some Personal Reflections”, *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1992, pp.87-89.
18. Ryan J. Voogt, “Romanian Orthodox Clergy and Communist Opposition? What the Keston Archive Reveals”, *Keston Newsletter*, no. 20, 2014, p.35.
19. Idem, p.30.
20. Dănuț Mănăstireanu, “Protestants in Romania”, *Keston Newsletter*, no. 25, 2017, pp.8-9.
21. Mariana Alina Urs, “Life in a Romanian Communist Prison”, *Keston Newsletter*, no. 17, 2013, pp.3-5.
22. In 1967, Wurmbrand formed “Jesus to the Communist World” (later named “The Voice of the Martyrs”), an interdenominational organisation working initially with and for persecuted Christians in Communist countries, but later expanding its activities to help persecuted believers in other places, especially in the Muslim world.
23. Richard Wurmbrand, *Cu Dumnezeu în subterană*, Stephanus Publishing, Bucharest, 2001, pp.90-91 – quoted by Urs, op.cit., pp.5-6. Cf. Richard Wurmbrand, *In God’s Underground*, ed. by Charles Foley, W.H. Allen, London, 1968, p.76.
24. Urs, op. cit., pp.8-9.
25. <http://gheorghecalciu.ro/category/7-cuvinte-catre-tineri/>
26. Dumitru Bacu, *The Anti-Humans, Student “Re-education” in Romanian Prisons*, Soldiers of the Cross, Englewood, Colorado, 1971.
27. <https://www.oca.org/in-memoriam/the-rev.-george-calciu-dumitreasa>
28. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/jan/10/guardianobituaries.religion>
29. Michael Bourdeaux, “Keston College – The Plaque 1972-1992”, *Keston Newsletter*, no. 30, 2019, p.3.
30. *KNS* no. 251, 29 May 1986, p.17: <https://digitalcollections-baylor.quartextcollections.com/Documents/Detail/keston-news-service-issue-no.-251-29-may-1986/1054034?item=1054068> See also Michael Bourdeaux, “Ring the Changes, Keston at Forty (1969-2009)”, *Keston Newsletter*, no. 10, 2009, p.3: “We established the credibility of some of the great names: Fr Gleb Yakunin, Fr Pavel Adelheim, Anatoli Levitin, Aida Skripnikova, Nijole Sadunaite, Fr Gheorghe Calciu and countless others.”
31. *KNS* no. 251, ibid.
32. In the Keston Collection there is a copy of Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* personally inscribed to Jane Ellis: <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n19369>

33. Bourdeaux, *One Word of Truth*, p.183.
34. Id., p.182.
35. Ibid.
36. Xenia Dennen, "Michael Bourdeaux Obituary": <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/16/michael-bourdeaux-obituary>
37. <https://www.templetonprize.org/laureate-sub/bourdeaux-acceptance-speech/>
38. In his classic book, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James recognises, following Freud, that subconscious forces play a defining role in our personal lives, even when we have no conscious awareness of them. However, whereas Freud regarded the unconscious, if not well-ordered, as potentially disruptive within the psychic life, James tended towards Carl Gustav Jung's view that the "collective unconscious" could play a redemptive role in life. Hence, conversion re-orientates the individual around a new centre of previously submerged value. This is not to deny that conversions are possibly deluded. They may all be hallucinatory. James's phenomenological methodology was not to judge: it was carefully designed so as to ensure his own religious views did not distort the qualitative accounts of his subjects.
39. Popescu, op. cit.
40. See, for example, Alexandru Popescu: "A Burning Bush: Călin Nemeș", *Frontier*, vol. no 3, June-Aug 1996, pp.20-22; "Moldova: Faith as Continuous Martyrdom", *Frontier*, vol. no 6, Nov-Dec, 1998, pp.8-9.
41. During the Legionary National State (14 September 1940 – 14 February 1941), Țuțea served as a technocrat member of the Romanian delegation "negotiating" an economic treaty with the USSR, an aggressor state in the aftermath of the Soviet Ultimatum. On his return from Moscow, the shift of his political thinking from far Left to far Right was complete, though he continued to work as Director in the Ministry of National Economy before 12 April 1948, when he was arrested and sent, without trial, to several political prisons of the newly established Romanian People's Republic.
42. See Alexandru Popescu Prahovara, "Petre Țuțea: Science as Doxology, A Romanian Master of the Socratic Dialogue between Science and Spirituality", *Transdisciplinary Studies*, no. 1 (2011), Curtea Veche Publishing, Bucharest, 2011, pp.157-168.
43. This section is an amended version originally published in Popescu, "The Urban Hermit", pp.320-321.
44. See Alexandru Popescu, "Remembering the Lessons of Communist Re-education", *Keston Newsletter*, no. 24, 2016, pp.19-29. Cf. Urs, op. cit., pp.1-10.
45. From the end of the third century AD in Egypt people began to abandon their villages for a monastic life in the desert. Their act of withdrawal (Gk. *anachoresis*) from worldly life led to the building of Christian communities in the wilderness. Such monks gradually populated the desert and turned it into a paradoxical city: citizenship was defined by their affiliation to the Christian faith rather than to the Roman state. See: Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1966.
46. *Les Apophtegmes des Peres: Collection Systematique (Sources Chretiennes no. 387)*, introduction, critical text, translation and notes by Jean-Claude de Guy, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1993, p.17.
47. In the Septuagint *hesychia* refers both to outward peace and to inner stillness reflecting faith and submission to God's will. In early sources *hesychia* describes the external state of the monk living as a hermit; it is closely associated with the monk's cell. See: Kallistos Ware, "Silence in prayer: the meaning of *hesychia*", in A. M. Allchin (ed.), *Theology and Prayer*, studies supplementary to *Sobornost*, no. 3, London, 1975, p.8.
48. Rowan Williams, "Why Religious Liberty Matters", *Keston Newsletter*, no. 31, 2020, p.3.
49. Archimandrite Teofil Păraian, "Neoisihasmul: 'O Bucurie'", *Altarul Banatului*, Timișoara, April-June, 1998, pp.136-140.
50. Alexandru Todea is described by the Keston Director as "one of the most outstanding of a whole generation of clergy in the former Soviet bloc whose rock-like endurance ensured the survival of the faith during over forty years of persecution": email from Michael Bourdeaux to Alexandru Popescu; date: 27 May 2002; subject: Cardinal Todea. A short version of this first draft was published in the obituary columns of *The Guardian*, 2 July 2002.
51. *One Word of Truth*, p.279.
52. Ibid., p.283.
53. Michael Bourdeaux, "Keston: A Vision for the Future", paper presented at Keston EGM, St Antony's College, Oxford, 22 March 2003 (typed manuscript).

54. John Jones, "Two Old Common Room Occasions", *Balliol College Annual Record 2004*, p.61.
55. <https://inkstickmedia.com/russian-disinformation-and-the-erasure-of-history/>
56. Michael Bourdeaux, "The Christian Voice in Ukrainian Elections", *Religion in Eastern Europe*, XXIV, 6 (December 2004), pp.2-3.
57. *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 2, no. 3, May-June 1974, p.20. Quoted in Bourdeaux, "Religion and the Collapse of Soviet Communism", p.8.
58. See, for example, Fr Arsenie Boca's post-prison visions of theology in paint, including the Icon of the Resurrection, which does not follow literally the Orthodox iconographic *typicon* (rule): Alexandru Popescu, "Fr Arsenie Boca: Guide of Souls in Communist Romania", *Keston Newsletter*, no. 18, 2013, pp.28-30.
59. Dănuț Mănăstireanu, op. cit., p.12.
60. Garry Kasparov and Mig Greengard, *Winter Is Coming, Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World Must Be Stopped*, Atlantic Books, London, 2015, pp.183-184.
61. James Ramsay, "Speak No Evil", in J. Barton et al., *Prayer and the Struggle Against Evil*, SLG Press, Oxford, 2021, p.41.
62. Kasparov & Greengard, *Winter Is Coming*, p.267.
63. <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/soviet-supermen-and-autistic-state>
64. "Autism" as a descriptor antedated identification of the condition to which it is now indissolubly linked. Returning to its original adjectival meaning, the concept of an "autistic state" has two defining properties: 1. It seeks to dominate communication between individuals to its advantage; and 2. It classifies all such communication as either promoting or harming the state. It can therefore be described as autistic in the following senses: A. It cannot take points of view other than its own: the individuals in the state either hold its views or are enemies. B. It is exclusively utilitarian in its understanding: meaning is constrained to promoting or impeding its goals. C. The inability of the totalitarian state to incorporate alternative points of view imposes a frozen rigidity upon social development within it. We can see how this maps into the current two dimensions (lack of social communication and cognitive rigidity) in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) definition of the individual level disorder.
65. Iffley Music Society in Oxford was founded in 1996 by Michael Bourdeaux: <https://iffleymusicsociety.org.uk/our-history>. Michael was also the founder and organiser of the Iffley Music Festival: <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/4136329.iffley-music-festival-iffley-church-hall/>
66. Michael Bourdeaux, "Goskontsert: Soviet Persecution of Musicians and Religion", *Keston Newsletter*, no. 23, 2016, p.21.
67. Cf. Hugh Wybrew, "Prophets and Diplomats", *Keston Newsletter*, no. 34, 2021, pp.9-13.
68. Telephone interview with Lorna Bourdeaux, Oxford, 9 May 2022.
69. Michael Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed, Lessons in Faith from the USSR*, Foreword by Bishop Donald Cogan, Keston Book No. 16, Darton, Longman and Todd, London & St Vladimir Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1983, pp.5-9. See also Bourdeaux, *One Word of Truth*, pp.85-87.
70. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, A Novel in Four Parts with Epilogue, translated, introduced and annotated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, Vintage Books, London, 2004, p.27. Dostoevsky gives expression to his Orthodox understanding of personhood, when he describes the relation between Alyosha Karamazov and his spiritual father, the Elder (*Starets*) Zosima.
71. Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed*, chapter "Startsy: The Secret Inspiration", p.74.
72. See, for example, Alex[andru] Popescu, "Mission as Martyrdom in Post-Marxist Societies – An Orthodox Point of View", *Together in Mission*, Orthodox Churches Consultation with the Church Mission Society, 25-30 April 2001, CMS, London, pp.32-33.
73. Michael Bourdeaux & Alexandru Popescu, "The Orthodox Church and Communism", in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 5, Eastern Christianity*, ed. by Michael Angold, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, pp.558-599.

***Dr Alexandru Popescu is a Senior Research and Pastoral Associate, Balliol College, Oxford, and works as a Community Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in the Oxford Deanery.***





*Ingush medieval towers in the  
Caucasus Mountains*

## Islam in Ingushetia Some New Trends

by **Tanzila Chabieva**

*During the Soviet period Chechens and Ingush were united in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) from 1934-1944 and again from 1957-1992. During WWII the Germans captured half of the North Caucasus. In 1944 the Ingush and Chechens were accused by the Soviet authorities of collaboration with the Germans, and on Stalin's orders were deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia. In 1957 Khrushchev allowed them to return, whereupon the Ingush found that part of their territory had been given to North Ossetia. This led*

*the Ingush to campaign from the early 1970s for this territory to be returned. After the fall of Communism, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was disbanded and the Republic of Ingushetia founded on 4 June 1992. By October 1992 the conflict between the North Ossetians and Ingush (see p.25) came to a head and serious violence erupted. On 31 October Yeltsin sent in Russian troops to restore order but fighting continued until 4 November 1992. The official death toll was 419 Ingush and 171 Ossetians dead, but many claimed the numbers were much higher. The Ingush accused the Russian authorities of supporting the Ossetians and committing ethnic cleansing against them. Ed.*

The main causes of religious and political tension in Ingushetia, which periodically lead to acts of terror, are disagreements between the many Ingush religious communities. Young people, who get drawn into such conflicts, tend to use force when standing up for their values and often act quite independently of any instructions from above. In the background of the conflict between followers of Sufism (a mystical form of Islam) and Salafism (revival movement within Sunni

Islam, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) is the appearance of a new religious group, which has adopted both the religious practise of familiar traditional Islam and a series of dogmas which are basic to moderate Salafism. This new group was founded by the famous theologian Khamzat Chumakov, whose appearance on the religious scene of tiny Ingushetia has influenced the religious views of a significant section of Ingushetia's youth.





Towards the end of 2014, Chumakov's community gained tens of thousands of Ingush members, and spread into neighbouring regions, including Chechnya, while the leaders of traditional Islam, who thoroughly disliked Chumakov, left Ingushetia, thus relinquishing any influence over the minds of young Ingush. Chumakov's sermons strongly criticised the socio-political situation in the Caucasus with its corruption and bureaucratic irregularities, and called people back to traditional values and religious fundamentals. Their content was simple, but highly relevant to current problems, and became particularly popular among the young.

This situation seriously worried traditionalist Ingush communities, which had lost

members, and also it worried radicals, who are a minority but nevertheless are still present within Ingush society. Relations between the republic's political leadership and Chumakov, who was often the subject of official censure, were also very poor.



*Khamzat Chumakov*

Chumakov himself has survived more than one attempt on his life, while the official Muslim leaders constantly put pressure on the members of his community. On 14 September 2010 the first assassination attempt on him took place, as a result of which he lost a leg and his eyesight was affected. On 11 March 2016 there was a second attempt on his life: a car parked by a mosque, near Chumakov's car, was blown up by unknown assailants; Chumakov's armoured vehicle saved his life and he escaped with a few bruises. In October 2017 the police managed to prevent yet another assassination attempt.

In many respects public opinion in Ingushetia has blamed the government for the divisions among Muslim communities, because the local authorities, which have the means to prevent such divisions, have failed to build up good relations with local clergy, including with the Muftiate of the Ingush Republic, which is in open conflict with the government and pays no attention to the policies of the local authorities. The Muftiate likes to build up its contacts with neighbouring regions, and, for example, in November 2019 the Mufti Issa Khamkhoev visited the Chechen Republic for the celebrations in honour of the birth of the Prophet.

The government's Office for Religious Affairs (ORA) aims to promote good inter-confessional relations; it has set up its own website and has established a plan of action. In October 2018, the head of ORA together with the Head of the Ingush government held a meeting in the Ingush capital of Magas with the

Mufti of North Ossetia, Khadzhimurat Gatsalov, during which the main focus of discussion was the construction of a mosque in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia's capital. However, as with all the institutions within the Ingush Republic's system of government, there are constant personnel changes leading to instability, which has had an impact on the work of ORA.

Within Ingushetia new mosques are being built as there is much construction taking place with the resulting need for places of worship. The construction of a central mosque in Magas, with space for 8000 people, has been the cause of controversy over recent years. The foundations started to be laid in 2011 and cost substantial sums, but money regularly started to disappear whereupon construction was halted. The Republic's authorities blamed the Muftiate, while the latter blamed local bureaucrats. Since this highly suspicious situation has arisen, all those who currently have any dealings with the project, in accordance with Islamic rules, have had to swear that all monies raised have been spent on the mosque.

Radicalism within local Ingush Islam seems to have lessened slightly, the result of local government policies according to a number of experts. However, a closer look at the current ethnic-confessional situation, reveals that radicalism has in fact penetrated local Sufi Islam and has not lost its influence. But this is a moderate radicalism, with its basic dogmas based on the Koran: followers of this strand call themselves disciples of Akhlyu-Sunna val-Dzhamaa,

and meet in particular mosques (about 14 of these exist in the republic) where the sermons of local imams are close to their way of thinking.

The role of Sufi brotherhoods in the region is central: the Kadiriya tarikat (a tarikat is a Sufi order and stems from the word tarika = path or way), founded by Abdul Kadir Gulani (1078-1166) and set up as an organisation towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, completely controls the activity of the Muftiate. This is justified by the fact that the Kadiriya tarikat is the largest Muslim group in Ingushetia. However, as the Muftiate is under the control of one family, the Khamkhoeyi, it is strongly criticised by other Muslim communities and by the region's political leadership. The latter tends to support the Salafite tradition, a tradition considered dangerous by other neighbouring regions of the North Caucasus, as they believe it can exacerbate the conflict between Muslim communities as has happened in Dagestan.

Although there is conflict between Sufi Islam and Salafite Islam in Ingushetia, when faced with some threat or on the occasion of some significant anniversary in Ingush history, local religious communities find grounds for cooperation. For example, people representing the public and religious activists felt it their duty to take part in the remembrance service, which took place at the "Gloazota kashamash", the memorial in Nazran which commemorates the victims of the Ossetian-Ingush ethnic clashes in the autumn of 1992 (see Editor's introduction). Religious rituals such as the Hajj also unite different groups; in 2019 a local firm was

tasked with organising the Hajj while the Russian authorities allocated 1400 places for Ingush to take part. Another event which brought different Muslim traditions together took place in 2017 when 4000 people celebrated the anniversary of the death in 1867 of the revered Sufi mystic Sheikh Kunta-Hajji Kishiev, and the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ingushetia's adoption of Islam. The Head of the Ingush Republic, representatives of various religious traditions, guests from North Caucasus republics and well-known theologians took part in the celebrations.

Today the Ingush Republic is divided with serious disagreements between various social groupings – between the government and religious communities on the one hand, and between the government and Ingush clans on the other. At the same time, the authority of various religious communities has increased against a background of falling approval ratings for state institutions and the local authorities.

This dynamic was established by specialists on the basis of their observations and is confirmed now by my own survey among Ingush country and city dwellers. I noticed particularly their extreme reluctance to reply to my questionnaires and their fear that this information would be used by the security organs. A refusal is of course a reply, and this appears in the results of my research. I interviewed 500 people and aimed to clarify attitudes towards the socio-political and ethno-confessional situation in the republic. The results of my survey carried out in 2019 showed that 31.1% of those asked, "What is the most serious problem in

Ingushetia today?” replied that it was socio-economic. The second most frequent reply (26.75%) was “the corruption of the ruling elites”. These percentages were lower than the results gathered in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, which were 39.8% to the first question and 38.2% to the second. About 21.1% put personal security in third place in the list of current problems. Only about 0.2% were concerned about intra-ethnic relations. Rather more were concerned about inter-religious relations – 17.6% – which reveals the current unresolved problems within the region’s religious life. The main reasons for the high level of dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation in Ingushetia, were: the high population density, the high level of unemployment, the lack of essential jobs and the low pay. The replies to questions about “religion and society” demonstrated the importance of religion in Ingush life: 79.1% replied that religion was significant in their life, while 19.5% said it played “a big part”; 0.5% said it played a “significant role”; another 0.5% found it difficult to give an answer, while others said it played “no role at all”. The level of religiosity in Ingushetia remains high; the growth of religious communities and mosques also attests to the importance of the religious factor. High indices of religiosity resulted from the replies to the question, “Are the rights of Muslims respected in your republic?”: 30.6% replied that they were respected, whereas 40.1% replied that they were “sort of respected”. About 11.6% thought these rights were not respected, while 13.9% said they were “sort of” not respected. So, the total who thought these rights were, as a whole,

respected, amounted to 70.7%, that is the majority of those surveyed.

The strength of religious identity was also revealed in the answers to questions about future expectations. All those surveyed replied to questions about their hopes for the future: “How do you think your life and that of your family will change over the next 12 months – will it improve, get worse or remain the same?” A little over half – 50.6% – entrusted themselves to fate and the Almighty; 28.8% were convinced that their life would remain the same; only 9.3% expected their life to improve and 9.0% thought it would get worse. These results reveal two central facts: that the Ingush identify with Islam, which determines their faith in the future, their belief that the fate of man is in the hands of the Almighty, and that all that happens to a person is in accordance with His will. The second fact is that the hopes of the Ingush in relation to the leadership of the republic have not been fulfilled: the last two presidential terms did not alter the high level of corruption, or raise the standard of living.

Thus, within Ingush society, the level of religiosity is high, while the influence of religious norms and self-identification with Muslim culture are growing. The main conflicts in the religious field focus on differences between the Sufis and Salafites, while there are clearly also ongoing conflicts between the religious and political leadership.

***Tanzila Chabieva is a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology & Anthropology (Russian Academy of Sciences).***

# Saintly Tsars?

by Sergei Filatov

The fall of Communism produced a not unexpected result – an interest in, justification of and even love for imperial Russia among a significant part of Russian society. First and foremost, interest centred on Nicholas II and his family, all murdered by the Communist regime. This is an understandable yet at the same time a strange ideological impulse. Despite its emotional charge, this interest did not lead to a call for the monarchy to be restored: in all the years since the fall of the Communist regime in 1991, no sociological survey has established more than 8% of monarchists; at the same time most Russians feel sympathy for the imperial family.



*Paul I*

This sympathy for Nicholas II has evolved markedly and changed its nature over the past 33 years. For more than three decades, Russia has been searching for what has been described most often as “the Russia we have lost”, attempting to reconnect the past and present. Subsequently, the search for this “lost Russia” spread to other periods, not necessarily just the pre-revolutionary, and also to other members of the royal family. During all this time the Russian Orthodox Church played the most important part in the interpretation of the person of the last tsar, and also led public discussion about the monarchy and Nicholas II as an individual. It is particularly interesting that a significant proportion of secular society recognised the church’s right to undertake such a reappraisal; not only religious believers but also the general public were

concerned about whether Nicholas II and his family should be canonised. In 2000 the imperial family was added to the list of martyrs and canonised as “holy passion-bearers”. Although shortly after that, the wave of public sympathy for the last Russian tsar subsided somewhat, the process of re-evaluating the pre-revolutionary past, Nicholas II, his family and other members of the royal family, continued to occupy a place in the public mind, and particularly among churchgoers. Nicholas II and his family were now firmly numbered amongst the great host of Russian saints.

With the passage of time, another tsar has attracted attention and given rise to demands that he be canonised as well: this is Paul I (1754-1801), sometimes

called the “Russian Hamlet”. A movement campaigning for his canonisation was formed with most of its members based in the St Petersburg Archdiocese.

The Rector of the Chapel of St Peter and St Paul within the Palace of Pavlovsk, Fr Daniil Ranne, who is known as an intellectual and missionary, is a strong supporter, as well as Fr Oleg Skoblya, the Orthodox priest at the chapel within the Mikhailovsky (Engineering) Palace, who is a convinced monarchist and firmly believes in the

sanctity of Paul I. The Palace of Gatchina, built by Catherine the Great and particularly loved by her son Paul I (the town of Gatchina is about 28 miles south-west of St Petersburg) has become the focus for a Paul I cult.

A chapel in the Gatchina palace contains what is revered as a relic, Paul’s personal bible which is filled with his annotations in his handwriting, and it is beside this relic that services take place, which are attended by employees of the palace’s museum. A “Society of Zealots in Memory of the Emperor Knight Paul I” was founded in the 1990s in Gatchina and is supported by the local bishop, Bishop Mitrofan. The Society’s founder was an engineer called Nikolai Berinov, who died in September 2019 and was succeeded by Vasili Kukhar. The latter’s son, Fyodor Kukhar, runs a youth movement which is linked to the Society. In

2019, some Russian monarchist organisations established a similar society in Moscow, but so far it appears to have remained inactive. The Gatchina Society



*Icon of Paul I*

holds annual “Pavlovsk Readings” in the palace and organises a number of church processions. The Kukhars claim that Berinov discovered archival evidence showing that Nicholas II was planning to get Paul I canonised, while the Society’s members, who insist that Paul was deeply religious and spent much time in fasting and prayer, while his policies as head of

state showed how much he cared for the church, are campaigning for the Russian Orthodox Church to officially declare Paul I to be a “passion-bearer”.

The Kukhars have said that once Paul I is canonised, the Society will try to achieve the same for Paul’s father, Tsar Peter III, whom they also venerate as a martyr. They claim that Paul I deeply respected his father, and planned to build a monastery in Gatchina, which was to be dedicated to St Charalambos, Peter III’s patron saint. The Society aims to carry out Paul I’s plan and build such a monastery. Most of the Society’s members believe that all the Romanov tsars should be added to the list of saints, as, after 1917, the entire dynasty can be regarded as “passion-bearers”.

The veneration felt for Paul I was particularly evident in the spring of 2021 on the 220<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his assassination



by conspirators on 25 March 1801. On that day red roses were laid on his tomb in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul, followed by a memorial meeting held in the courtyard of the Mikhailovsky Palace by the statue of Paul I, and attended by clergy, representatives of state bodies and public organisations, museum employees, military personnel, students, scholars and schoolchildren. Baskets of flowers were laid at the foot of his statue. That same day, a requiem was sung in the St Peterburg church which Paul I had helped to build on Kamenny Island, and which is dedicated to the Nativity of St John the Baptist. Fr Oleg Skoblya, the priest-in-charge of the Chapel of St Simon and St Anna within the Mikhailovsky Palace, led a requiem with other clergy “for the repose of the soul of the unjustly killed Paul I” and emphasised in his sermon that the most important aspect of this tsar had been his love of God. That evening another requiem was held in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul by Paul I’s tomb, which was attended by 200 people and led by Fr Aleksandr (Fedorov). For this occasion an icon of Paul I, which had been produced with the blessing of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), was brought from Moscow. Fr Aleksandr reminded those present that before 1917 the Russian Orthodox Church had been preparing to canonise Paul I, and that clergy in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul had recorded miracles and healings at the tomb of the martyred tsar; these records had disappeared during the Soviet period, but, announced Fr Aleksandr, a record of such miracles would now be resumed. On the evening of 25 March a concert dedicated to the

memory of Paul I took place in the Holy Trinity Centre of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery.<sup>1</sup>

The closing stage began on 17 April in the palace on Kamenny Island on the banks of the Malaya Nevka river, where Paul I spent a great deal of time, both when heir to the throne and after his coronation. A large screen transmitted greetings to the participants of the event



*Left to right: Sergei Filatov, Fyodor Vasilevich Kukhar & Xenia Dennen in Gatchina, 2019*

from the chairman of the ROCOR committee on canonisation, Archbishop Gabriel of Montreal and Canada, who said that all should be done to support Paul’s canonisation “because the holiness of the Russian tsar-knight is becoming increasingly obvious”. This event continued with singing and poetry readings dedicated to Paul I by students of the Pavlovsk Secondary School, the oldest educational establishment in St Petersburg, whose head teacher, Dmitri Efimov, spoke about the many activities dedicated to Paul I which the school was planning. On Kamenny Island a further speech was made, this time by the priest-



in-charge of the Church of the Nativity of St John the Baptist, Fr Vadim Burenin. His talk was entitled “The Most Holy Governing Synod during the reign of Emperor Paul I”, and demonstrated how surviving policy documents signed by Paul I had revealed what sort of ruler and human being he had been. Fr Vadim stressed that Paul I had authorised the Holy Synod to select independently the Ober-Procurator and that this showed how he respected the clergy. Fr Vadim supported Paul’s canonisation, reminding his audience that veneration for him had begun straight after his funeral.<sup>2</sup>

In 2021 Gatchina was made the official capital of the Leningrad District instead of St Petersburg and celebrated the town’s 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It had been founded on Paul I’s orders and brought together a number of small settlements. All the celebrations were organised by the local authorities and were dedicated solely to Paul I under the title of “2021 – the Emperor’s Year in the Leningrad District”. The rhetoric of the celebrations concentrated almost exclusively on the architectural and other aesthetic achievements of Paul’s reign and avoided all controversial views of that period.<sup>3</sup>

While St Petersburg clergy focused on three aspects of Paul I – the innocent victim, the devout Christian, and the protector and benefactor of the church – in Moscow, a requiem for Paul I was celebrated by Patriarch Kirill, whose sermon differed strikingly from those of the St Petersburg clergy:

“In killing Emperor Paul, the conspirators held out great hopes for

radical changes to the life of our country and its people, based on existing examples resulting from 18<sup>th</sup> century revolutionary events in Western Europe, in the first instance in France. This kind of change was so intensely desired by a part of the Russian intelligentsia, that those who raised their hand against the Emperor did not hesitate to murder a totally innocent man. The conspirators pinned their hopes on Aleksandr Pavlovich [Alexander I], son of the legitimate emperor, assuming that his rise to power would ensure the changes for which this crime was committed... We believe that the experiences which our country and our people went through in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries must nurture deep patriotic conviction, which aims to preserve the distinctive nature of the life of our people, our faith, our culture, our language and most importantly – our freedom; only in such conditions of freedom can our country move forward peacefully.

As we remember the murdered innocent Emperor Paul, we raise our voices again and again in prayer to the Lord for our Fatherland, for the peaceful life of our people and that we, enlightened by historical experience, should never again repeat the terrible mistakes of preceding generations. May God grant that past experience will strengthen us in love for our Fatherland and in the Orthodox faith. Amen.”<sup>4</sup>

Faced with impending parliamentary elections, Patriarch Kirill gave a political

slant to the canonisation of Paul I and made it relevant to the moment. He praised Paul's foreign policy and his call to resist "westernisation" within Russia. The Patriarch's rhetoric was pro-government and aggressive, something which he had not done for a long time, and he condemned any opposition to those currently in power.

The Russian public is engrossed in discussing the historical past. The most heated arguments are focused on three figures – Ivan the Terrible, Nicholas II and Stalin – whereas the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church is doing its utmost to promote the image of Alexander Nevsky, who, however, does not evoke comparable passionate feelings or, indeed, much interest at all. The veneration of Ivan the Terrible and Stalin is a natural reaction to the disintegration of the USSR, to the economic and social degradation of the country: in response to this decline, people who had become accustomed to authoritarianism, saw a solution to the problem in the creation of an all-powerful tyranny. Patriotism was declared to be a national idea and aimed at constructing a powerful state. Nicholas II and Gorbachev were perceived to be the worst rulers – they had created chaos and destroyed the empire, whereas Ivan the Terrible and Stalin had united the country with an iron fist.

The cult of Nicholas II's family, in contrast, shows a completely different approach to the historical past. The last emperor "loosened the reins" from time to

time, and by Russian standards was merciful towards his enemies. He became an innocent victim of a new, much more cruel and treacherous regime. The cult of the innocent victim, analogous to the first Russian saints Boris and Gleb, is non-aggressive and opposed in essence to the cult of those, like Stalin, who sacrificed these victims on the altar of the sacred Leviathan. The growth of veneration for Paul I indirectly confirms this opposition to violence, as in essence it is similar to the veneration for Nicholas II.

1. News agency *Вода живая (Living Water)*, 25 March 2021 <http://mitropolia.spb.ru/news/culture/?id=190026>
2. <http://mitropolia.spb.ru/news/culture/?id=190028>
3. *St Petersburg Gazette*, 31 March 2021.
4. <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5790820.html>

***Sergei Filatov is a member of Moscow's Oriental Institute and heads Keston's Encyclopaedia project.***



*Fr Oleg Skoblya leads a requiem for Paul I*

# Obituaries

## Roland Hedley Smith, CMG

(1943-2023)



*Roland at his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party, celebrated  
at the Bluebell Railway, Sussex,  
on 11 April 2023*

Born in Sheffield and studying languages at university did not immediately suggest the stellar diplomatic career that Roland later had. His interests were wide, he enjoyed travelling but stayed close to his family, remaining a lifelong supporter of Sheffield United. His linguistic skills were impressive and he went on to learn Russian and Ukrainian in the course of his service, but he never sought an academic career. His modest demeanour, and self-deprecating humour concealed his intellectual brilliance, which showed itself in different roles throughout his career.

His first tour to Moscow, after he had learned Russian, was the start of a life-

long involvement with what was then the USSR. The embassy was also where he met his future wife Katherine, who had to give up her diplomatic job on marriage. She thereafter supported him unfailingly in his various postings abroad and in London. Among his favourites was his posting to Moscow as Cultural Attaché, which allowed him to meet ordinary Russians and to make some Russian friends, including the composer Alfred Schnittke. Music played a large part in Roland's life, starting from being a choir boy and following him in his career when he sang in choirs and in Ukraine started an embassy choir. In retirement from the diplomatic service he continued to sing in choirs, including the Brighton Festival Chorus.

His postings to Moscow were marked by two sinister events – a few days' illness in Voronezh caused by a spiked drink and later a totally unexpected heart attack, recovery from which ended the posting as Cultural Attaché. It left him with a damaged heart and the need for medication for the rest of his life. Recent assassinations on British soil show nothing has changed since the Soviet defector Oleg Gordievsky reported the KGB's plot against Roland.

His various postings to Berlin and NATO in Brussels used all his linguistic skills and his methodical brain. His role as

political adviser to the British Military Government in Berlin involved regular visits to the Soviet Embassy in East Berlin to liaise with his Soviet opposite number. In all his roles Roland sought to establish good relations with his interlocutors and in this post he succeeded in bringing together all four allied diplomatic representatives and their spouses for dinner. During his time in Berlin, the last German prisoner from the Second World War, Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess, committed suicide at the age of 96. Sorting this out involved the future of the prison (it was demolished) and of Soviet access to West Berlin now that the last member of Hitler's team had died. His abilities in complex negotiations and his languages were used to the full in the negotiations for a non-proliferation treaty on nuclear weapons and other arms control agreements, and in his work as deputy ambassador to Nato at a time when the countries of the former Soviet bloc were pushing to join the alliance.

It was in his final posting as Ambassador to Ukraine that Roland's many talents came together. It was the early years of Ukrainian independence and there was a big effort to provide assistance to the many areas of governance that Ukraine was struggling to establish in the morass of chaotic post-soviet institutions and endemic corruption. He had to tread a careful path among the corrupt oligarchs, former KGB officials and Soviet functionaries, who were seeking to gain from Ukraine's first steps as an independent country. Roland's unflappable manner, skilled approach to the many human rights issues in Ukraine, and knowledge of Ukrainian, made many friends among

the Ukrainians. His passion for music was put to good use with the embassy choir and his participation in other musical initiatives, including commissioning work from a Ukrainian composer.

Aside from the political problems an ambassador had to address, in Kyiv Roland had many other functions to perform: for example, presenting the prize for a British Council competition, a weekend for two in Britain. Another was to take part in a TV breakfast programme in which foreign diplomats talked about their country and its cuisine and prepared appropriate dishes. Katherine was called in to explain, in Ukrainian, the chosen dishes and to cook them, which she did with aplomb.

On his retirement from the Diplomatic Service, Roland became the first Director of the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace and then worked for the Wakefield and Tetley Trusts, from which he retired in 2018. He continued until his death as trustee and deputy chairman of the Keston Institute, where he will be much missed.

Throughout his career in the Foreign Office, Roland remained a strong family man. He himself had been raised in a close family, where the foundations of his Christian beliefs were laid and sustained him throughout his life. He was supported always by Katherine, who was ordained an Anglican priest after Roland's final posting abroad. He took great joy from his two daughters and two grandsons. He will be remembered as a man of principle, who led a life of service and also of love, a man of warmth, humour and honour.

## Vladimir Yurevich Poresh (1949-2023)

Vladimir Yurevich Poresh was born in Leningrad in 1949 and became one of the leading figures of the unofficial Christian Seminar on Problems of Religious Renaissance in Russia founded by Alexander Ogorodnikov in 1974. Members of the Seminar were mainly young people who had followed broadly similar ideological paths: convinced young Marxists, they became disillusioned with the Soviet version of Marxism and began searching for an ideology that led them eventually to Christianity and study of Christian philosophy and social doctrine.



From 1976 Poresh participated in producing the *samizdat* journal *Obshchina* [Community] that addressed current socio-political issues, including the persecution of believers by the Soviet authorities.

Apart from participation in the Christian Seminar and production of *Obshchina*, Poresh, a talented, prolific writer and very active person, took part in compiling the *samizdat* "Bulletin" miscellany and wrote a number of open letters including an appeal "To Our Czech Friends", "To Young People in the West", an open letter to the then President of the USA Jimmy Carter, to

Alexander Solzhenitsyn and others on various aspects of the situation in the USSR.

Poresh's activities soon came to the attention of the Soviet punitive "organs" and his arrest on 1 August 1979 was inevitable. Among the charges levelled against him, he was accused of photocopying Solzhenitsyn's *The Calf and the Oak* for unofficial distribution.

Arraigned under article 70-1 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR ("anti-Soviet agitation

and propaganda") he was accused of aiming to undermine the Soviet state and social system, and of speaking about restitution of the monarchy. On 29 April 1980 he was sentenced to five years in strict regime camps followed by three years of internal exile. Initially he was sent to Perm labour camp No. 35, where he took part in prisoners' protests against violations of human rights – hunger strikes and refusal to work, which landed him in prison isolation punishment cells ("SHIZO") many times. His wife Tatyana was left with two small children in Leningrad.

On 25 August 1982, he was transferred to prison No 4 in Chistopol, far from

central Russia in the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Republic.

The Soviet authorities had yet another blow in store for such an unrepentant dissident. On 30 July 1984, one day before his release upon completion of his sentence, he was re-arrested and tried on 23 October 1984 under a recently introduced article 188-3 of the Criminal Code: "Malicious refusal to obey the orders of the administration [staff] of a corrective labour institution." This catch-all article could extend even to such trivia as an undone button on a prisoner's shirt.

This article was struck from the Criminal Code on 7 December 2011.

But back in 1984, Poresh was sentenced to a further three years imprisonment plus the one day left from his previous sentence, to be followed by three years of internal exile. To serve this new sentence he was sent to the general strict regime criminal camp in the Kemerovo region.

His release came in February 1986 pursuant to a Ruling by a Plenum of the Supreme Court of the USSR, according to which Poresh was eligible to be freed, as the accusations against him under article 188-3 were invalid, since they had been committed outside the relevant term.

The Christian Seminar became of particular interest to the staff of Keston College, quite apart from the writings and

activities of its members. Alexander Ogorodnikov and Vladimir Poresh met with members of Keston College, including Michael and Lorna Bourdeaux, Philip Walters, Jane Ellis, Xenia Dennen,

John Anderson and Alyona Kojevnikov to name just a few, both before and after the collapse of the USSR. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they became our friends personally, far beyond our professional interest in the situation of believers in the USSR. That is why we are so deeply grieved by the death of Vladimir Poresh;

he was one of the giants, the amazing few such as Vladimir Bukovsky, Anatoly Marchenko, Irina Ratushinskaya and many whose names we may never know but are known to God, who were not afraid to stand up to the juggernaut of Soviet punitive power, and to emerge victorious in their battle for the integrity of the human soul. May you rest in peace among the righteous, our dear friend.



*Poresh with his wife & children*



*Christian Seminar: (left to right) Alexander Ogorodnikov, Viktor Popkov & Vladimir Poresh*



# ***Keston Center Report***

## ***from the Director, Professor Kathy Hillman,***

### ***September 2023***

In June, while in the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport awaiting a flight to London to attend the Keston Council of Management meeting, word came that Council



*Roland Smith & Kathy Hillman at the  
Baylor Ball Park*

Vice-Chair Roland Smith had unexpectedly passed away. My thoughts immediately turned to a photograph Council Chair Xenia Dennen had forwarded from Roland's recent 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in which he wore a Baylor University baseball cap. He loved cricket but grew to appreciate its American counterpart, baseball. I well remember that in 2019, my husband John and I presented Roland with that cap on our way to watch the Baylor Bears play. During the game, he smiled at John Fogerty's iconic baseball hit song "Centerfield" blaring over the loudspeaker with the words, "Put me in coach, I'm ready to play today!" He well understood. Ambassador Roland Smith

always stood ready, prepared to take the field. That year and the previous one, he graciously represented Keston in Waco at the Keston Advisory Board meeting when the Chair had other responsibilities.

As former Ambassador to Ukraine, we invited Roland to participate on a panel for the 2019 Global Business Forum. Speaking on ethical issues in diplomacy, he acknowledged the tension between loyalty to the government he served and personal conscience, addressing "how to recognise the point beyond which further compromise would be immoral" and considering the question "whether you could do more by continuing to serve". He closed with an admonition: "In any job, you need to have a moral sticking point, and when you work for the state, you should never allow that to absolve you from your own moral responsibility." We will miss Roland Smith's tactful diplomacy, strong moral compass, and readiness to "take the field" every day or any day.

In February, Keston Council Chair Xenia Dennen travelled to Waco to participate in the 2023 Keston Advisory Board meeting. The agenda included a report from the Keston Council, as well as updates from 2022 Nancy Logan Summer Intern Julia Ash, Graduate Assistant Tesia Juraschek, History PhD Candidate Patrick Leech, and 2022 Summer Teaching





*Supper for Advisory Board & guests; Xenia Dennen (right) with Nancy & Joe McKinney*

Fellows Dr Daniel Barish and Joanne Held Cummings. Attendees toured Keston Center facilities with an eye to future ideas and plans. The group participated in a hands-on experience led by Curator Larisa Seago that helped them understand the challenges of preparing metadata for digitised videos that include minimal information and contain more than one event or recording on the videocassette. Dean of Baylor University Libraries Jeffry Archer hosted lunch for the Board and invited guests, including Joy and Tim Watson, international workers in Russia.

Xenia Dennen also participated in several other events and activities during her visit. On 24 February, she presented the 2023 Keston Spring Lecture, *Irina Ratushinskaya: Triumph of the Spirit*, on the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. Ratushinskaya, imprisoned as a dissident poet, was born in Odessa, which is now part of Ukraine. International pressure for which the *Keston News Service* provided information, helped obtain the young woman's release. A reception and

conversation followed the event which was available in person and livestreamed with about 100 attending. International Studies and the English Department, History Department, and Department of Modern Languages and Cultures co-sponsored the lecture.

The previous afternoon, Keston co-sponsored *Ten Lessons Learned in 12 Months of War in Ukraine: An Economic Historian's Perspective*, a lecture by Volodymyr Kulikov, Visiting Professor in the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies at the University of Texas, and Mykhaylo Simanovskyy, Graduate Researcher in the Global Disinformation Lab at UT Austin.

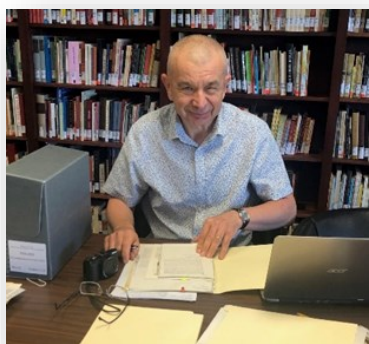
For the 2022 Fall Lecture on 16 September, Keston presented a one-year



*Xenia Dennen lectures on Irina Ratushinskaya & her "Triumph of the Spirit"*

retrospective, *Afghanistan: The Next Chapter*, co-sponsored by the Kroc Institute at Notre Dame. The in-person, livestreamed event brought to light changes in Taliban Afghanistan, particularly the plight of women and education. Panelists included the former female head of the Gender Studies Institute at Kabul University, a former Consul General in Los Angeles and National Security Council official, and a former Minister of Information and Culture. Dr Charles Ramsey, 2019 Keston Teaching Fellow, moderated.

On 22 May, the International Hybrid Conference *Ethnic Nationalism and Politicised Religion in the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Borderland* was held at the Centre for Public Policy and Governance at Forman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan. Co-sponsors included the Afghanistan Program for Peace and Development at the University of Notre Dame and the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society at Baylor University. Dr Ramsey helped host and coordinate the conference and chaired a session that encompassed papers on both Islamic and Pakistani ethnic political parties. The



*Dr Bogusław Wójcik, Institute of National Remembrance, Poland*

event featured nine speakers from five different locations on Zoom and in person. Well attended on campus at Forman, many declared the format a useful model to bring together international scholars without involving impossible travel or incurring heavy expenses. The papers will be edited for a special edition of *Review of Faith & International Affairs*.

On 24 May, Keston Center Director Kathy Hillman presented *Bicycles, Bed Sheets & Bulletins: Brave Unregistered Baptist Women* at the Association of Librarians and Archivists at Baptist Institutions Annual Meeting, which was held virtually and in-person at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.

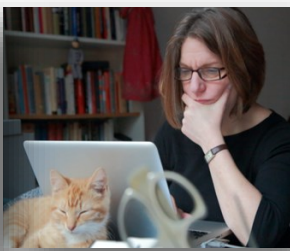
International researchers returned to the Keston Archives and Library and the Michael Bourdeaux Research Center in August 2022 with the arrival of Dr Elżbieta Przybył-Sadowska, Professor, Institute of Religious Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, and Dr Jakub Sadowski, Professor, Institute of Eastern Slavonic Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

Additional researchers during the 2022-2023 academic year included:

- Keston Scholar Dr Bogusław Wójcik, Institute of National Remembrance in Poland, 16-30 September
- Independent Researcher Andrew Bunnell, PhD Candidate, University of Washington, 20 October
- Keston Scholar Dr Mary Heimann, Cardiff University in Wales, 5-12 November



*Andrew Bunnell, PhD Candidate University of Washington*



*Dr Mary Heimann, Cardiff University, Wales*



*Dr Barbara Martin Ustinova, University of Basel, Switzerland*

- Independent Researcher Anatoliy Orgunov, PhD Candidate, South-western Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, 14 November
- Dr Barbara Martin Ustinova, University of Basel, Switzerland, 20-27 November
- Dr Wallace Daniel, Mercer University, 21-24 February
- Dr Brenda Rupar, University of Buenos Aires in Argentina, 16 June
- Keston Scholar, Dr Zoe Knox, University of Leicester, 20-27 August
- Seven Baylor students used significant parts of the archive and library for their research.



*Brenda Rupar*



*Anatoliy Orgunov from Ukraine*

than 30 significant research and reference requests from across the world. Some involve the provision of images for publication while many require delving deeply into the collection. Topics have ranged from women in the Russian Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church in

Romania, and Islam in the Soviet Union, to refuseniks and individuals such as Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Aida Skripnikova, Sergei Soldatov, Gennadii Kryuchkov, and Valeri Barinov.

Classes and major visitors during the academic year have included:

- Dr Luke Sayers' English class, American Literary Cultures, met in the Center where students participated in active learning assignments, including a treasure hunt, 25 April.
- Dr Daniel Barish brought his Modern Chinese History graduate seminar to

During the pandemic, remote research and virtual reference assistance became the norm and continues to grow. Over the last year, Keston has handled six interlibrary loan requests and more

explore archival materials appropriate for their teaching presentations, 11 October.

- Dr Daniel Barish taught his Archival Research in History graduate seminar in the Center, 18 May.

- The Libraries' Directors Council, consisting of 26 members, met in the Keston Center for an informational session, tour, and learning activity, 15 December.



*Dr Daniel Barish discussing primary sources with students studying Modern Chinese History*

Documents Librarian, visited the archives to explore materials on refugees and immigration/emigration, 23 May.



*Dr Luke Sayers engaging English 2310 students*

- Baylor alumnus Randy Stevens visited Keston for a tour following The Texas Collection's Centennial Birthday Celebration on 12 June.

The 2022 Summer Teaching Fellows, Dr Daniel Barish and Joanne Held Cummings, continued

- Ezra Choe, Theology and Philosophy Librarian, and Laura Semrau, Humanities Librarian, visited the Center to tour the archives and learn how to better encourage faculty to utilise the Keston Center's primary sources in their courses, 21 March.
- Dr Stephanie Boddie, Assistant Professor of Church and Community Ministries, and Sinai Wood,

to be engaged with the Keston Center. Dr Barish held his graduate seminars in the facility, introducing them to the archives and providing primary source materials for use in their class presentations. Retired United States diplomat Cummings accepted a position on the Keston Advisory Board. In July, she was interviewed on BBC News for an analysis of the current situation and events in Israel and Palestine.



For 2023, the Keston Special Libraries Teaching Fellows Selection Committee chose Dr Sarah Lee, Assistant Professor of Political Science, and Dr Adrienne Harris, Associate Professor of Russian in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, to participate in the programme. Dr Lee will use Keston archives to help design a course on Chinese Politics that will “provide students with a closer look at how China developed over the course of history, but from the perspective of real-life people and their stories”. Dr Harris will prepare lessons using primary source materials for Elementary Russian I and II and her upper level “Conflict and War in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature” class.



*Dr Sarah Lee*



*Dr Adrienne Harris*

Two highly qualified, Russian-speaking students applied for the 2023 Nancy Newman Logan Summer Internship in the Keston Center. Kaitlyn Vana, a native of Celina (Texas) and a Slavic and East European Studies and Mathematics double major with a minor in Russian, accepted the position. A Truman Scholar who also earned a Critical Language Scholarship, Kaitlyn has studied abroad at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, and in programmes focusing on Russian and Azerbaijani. She is part of

Baylor’s US Air Force ROTC detachment, and aspires to be a pilot or a specialist in linguistic and cross-cultural communications skills and mastering critical foreign languages.

Julia Ash, Keston’s 2022 Summer Intern, continued through the academic year as a student assistant. Adopted from Ukraine while in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, her knowledge and fluency in Ukrainian, Russian, German, and English have been invaluable. A University Scholar, Julia hopes one day to work for the US State Department in the area of international adoptions.



*Kaitlyn Vana*

Second-year Graduate Assistant Tesia Juraschek earned an MA in Museum Studies on 12 May, so a new graduate

assistant will begin in the Fall and be shared with the Institute for Oral History. Ms Juraschek has been one of Keston's most outstanding student staff members.



*Tesia Juraschek & her family*

History doctoral candidate Patrick Leech, who has been processing Keston's Hungary Collection, was named a Fulbright Scholar for his research on the Hungarian diaspora during the Cold War era, and will travel to Hungary on a Fulbright Study/Research Award.

The Keston Center enjoys a stable, capable staff. Curator Larisa Seago has been with the Keston Center since the archive and library moved to Baylor in 2007, becoming full-time in 2012. Janice Losak joined the Keston family in 2012 but has been employed in various capacities at Baylor for 40 years. Although Tanya Clark no longer serves as a part-time Keston language specialist, she remains invaluable to the Center since she shares space in the suite.

The Keston-funded AV project with the Riley Digitization Center continues.

Approximately 88 videos are available online. Clips from one of those introduced the *Irina Ratushinskaya: Triumph of the Spirit* lecture and one played during the reception. However, anyone can access videos online such as a 1991 film dedicated to the memory of Fr Aleksandr Men' along with his talk on Christianity and Art, a video recording of the Ukrainian Catholic Church's Millennium celebration, and much more.

Another 139 videos are ready for metadata or metadata editing.

The 900+ items remaining include challenging formats such as wax cylinders, IBM floppy disks, magnetic tape, and various audio cassettes.

Xenia Dennen continues listening to and providing metadata for 17 digitised audiocassette tapes which she gave to Baylor in November 2022. The detailed project involves referencing diaries to establish locations, circumstances and precise names and titles of the interviewers and interviewees. The 1983 AGM talk given by Professor Leonard Schapiro has been digitised, and the Council Chair prepared the transcription from a very rough machine-created voice to text document.

Preparing and updating finding aids continues. Graduate Assistant Tesia Juraschek has integrated new material into the Michael Bourdeaux Papers. Patrick Leech is working on Hungarian materials. After helping process materials during his Keston research visit, Dr Bogusław Wójcik wrote, "organising Polish materials turned out to be a remarkably



*Keston staff, left to right: Director Kathy Hillman, Office Suite Mate Tanya Clark (Managing Editor, Journal of Church and State), Curator Larisa Seago, Library Information Specialist Janice Losak*

interesting experience...I have found out how laborious it is, requiring a lot of attention..." Other new or updated finding aids include Bosnia Subject Files, Soviet Union Subbotniki Subject Files, Keston Institute Administrative Records, the Philip Walters Papers, and the Stella Alexander Papers. The Walter Kolarz Papers are being sent to the Center in several shipments. Additionally, summer interns and graduate assistants have created Baylor Women's Collections entries for Stella Alexander and Sally Becker for a total of 25 available Keston biographies. To date, 73 finding aids are accessible in Baylor's Archival Repositories Database (BARD).

Remodeling the Carroll Library 3rd floor corridor has been completed. The Keston Center and the Institute for Oral History share the space, so, with funding assistance from the Dean of Libraries, the area sports new carpet, new paint, new baseboards, updated lighting, American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant signage and a few other upgrades. A digital directory that includes a TV screen has been installed. To ensure the integrity

of materials that share a wall with the former graduate student break room in the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, the water has been turned off. The next phase of facilities enhancement will be to remove the sink and add a continuous counter as well as installing shelving to make the space usable for archival purposes.



*Renovated Carroll Library 3rd floor corridor & entrance to the Keston Center*

The Director organised and moderated a panel at the annual Texas Library Association Conference in April: *Make New Friends, Keep the Old: Starting and*



*Sustaining All Types of Library Support Groups.* She attended the 2022 Keston AGM and the November 2022 and June 2023 Keston Council meetings in-person in London. Following the June meeting, she was able to meet Keston Researcher Marta Kordíková and Keston Lecturer Alice Luňáková in Prague, where she also toured the Museum of Communism. The host at the entrance, who was originally from Africa, was familiar with Keston and its work.



*Roland Smith speaks at the 2019 Global Business Forum*

On 11 November 2022, the Keston Institute of the United Kingdom officially created the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society Endowed Excellence Fund, for which we are most grateful. Since then, the Center has received

several small gifts that have been added to the endowment. The first distribution will be made during the 2023-2024 academic year. The endowment, along with gifts from individuals, will expand what the Keston Center can accomplish beyond what is possible within its budget. Thank you for your partnership and support.

At the 2019 Global Business Forum, Roland Smith expanded on “the moral and ethical responsibilities of public servants”. As did he, the Keston Center takes seriously its responsibility to the Keston College Library and Archives as one of moral and ethical trust. We are grateful for Roland’s commitment and the opportunity for the Keston Center to carry on Keston’s legacy as the “Voice of the Voiceless” by gathering, processing, preserving, and disseminating information to help shed light on those who faced and continue to face religious persecution and find themselves without a voice even in today’s world.

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## **Keston Institute**

**47 South Street, Durham DH1 4QP, UK**

**[administrator@keston.org.uk](mailto:administrator@keston.org.uk)**

**[www.keston.org.uk](http://www.keston.org.uk)**

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