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## Editorial

Interdenominational relations in Ukraine are particularly complex and have given rise to numerous myths which in turn have hindered an appreciation of the true situation. 'It is very important to note,' says Andrij Yurash, 'that traditional conventional ideas about the regional distribution of religious confessions lead to problems not only as far as Galicia is concerned, but throughout Ukraine as a whole.' In his article in this issue of *RSS*, Yurash modifies or refutes some of the most prevalent of these myths by paying close attention to the facts. His approach is salutary for those who are inclined to generalise on the basis of inadequate or partial information.

The myths he tackles are the following: that direct contact between the Orthodox and Catholic churches is limited to Galicia and Transcarpathia; that the natural interlocutor with Greek Catholicism in Ukraine is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate; that the revival of the Greek Catholic Church in Galicia from the late 1980s was at the expense of the Moscow Patriarchate; that Galicia is the unique historical stronghold of Greek Catholicism in Ukraine; that there are as many as five million Greek Catholics in Ukraine; that Orthodox-Greek Catholic relations in Galicia are essentially conflictual and unproductive; and that the confessional orientation of the Galicians influences how they vote.

Many of Yurash's conclusions run in the face of received wisdom. He argues, for example, that the L'vov Council of 1946 which dissolved the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine 'had a certain social base' among those who 'welcomed, or had a positive attitude towards, union with Orthodoxy'; he also finds that since 1996 'ecumenical contacts and cooperative activity' have become 'almost the norm' in interconfessional relations in Ukraine.

In his survey this issue of *RSS* of moral education in Russia's state schools in the postsoviet period, Perry Glanzer describes the failure of 'initial attempts by the Russian Ministry of Education in the early to mid-1990s to replace communist moral education with a pluralistic system of voluntary, supplementary moral education programmes'. These programmes opened state schools to foreign religious influences - CoMission, a partnership of over 80 Evangelical Christian organisations, was involved, as was the International Educational Foundation (IEF), founded by a member of Sun Yung Moon's Unification Church. The Moscow Patriarchate, feeling itself disadvantaged, objected. From the late 1990s the Ministry of Education returned to a centralised approach, in which 'Russian nationalism and Russian Orthodoxy have emerged as the major theoretical foundations for moral education in state schools'.

Pauline Schrooyen examines the concept of 'Christian Politics' developed by the Russian Orthodox thinker Vladimir Solov'yev from the early 1880s. She sees the concept as involving a practically-oriented attitude rather than being 'a political

programme, a social utopia, or a theoretical position as other students of Solov'yev have argued'; an attitude 'based on love which is characterised by openness and solidarity and expressed in free, conscious and autonomous commitment and service'. According to Schroyen, Solov'yev identified three main tasks for Christian politics to achieve: church union; a well-structured Christian society; and a proper balance in the relationship of church, state and society.

Katrien Hertog looks at the role of religion in the war between Russia and Chechnya.

The conflict is not a holy war, waged by Islamic fundamentalists; but to say that religion does not play a role at all is not true either. The truth has to be found, as usual, in the middle, the more so since the role of religion has been changing in the course of the conflict and in the dynamics of reciprocal revenge.

She supplies a very useful and concise overview of the history of Islam in Chechnya, noting its distinctive features. Despite the destruction of the institutional structures of Islam during the Soviet period, the constant and systematic activity of the Sufi brotherhoods ensured Islam's survival in Chechnya both as a religion and as a way of life. She goes on to describe the process whereby Islam in Chechnya was radicalised in the process of the First Chechen War of 1994–96. In her view there was nothing intrinsic to Chechen Islam which made this process inevitable: before the start of the war there was 'no social or political basis in Chechnya for Islamic radicalisation'. Her conclusion is that 'injustice and violence all too often transform moderate believers into extremists: the "self-fulfilling prophecy".'

Alima Bissenova considers the 'Islamic revival' which has taken place in Central Asia since the end of communism. She notes that 'much attention has been given to radical Islamic movements', but observes that although these are 'much feared by the national governments and the USA', they 'remain marginal in terms of their social base'. Bissenova is concerned with Islamic self-identification in the wider society, and looks specifically at students from Kazakhstan who are studying at the Al-Azhar university in Cairo. Their location and experiences there provide illumination on the 'Islamic revival' from a triple perspective. The students

come to Al-Azhar to recover and reinforce their Muslimness, which in a sense can be interpreted as strengthening their spiritual distinctness from the former colonising 'other'. However, in Cairo students find themselves in the midst of the new 'other' - the Arabs. To position themselves vis-à-vis this new other they have to renegotiate their relation with the previous Russian 'other'. Thus the experiences of Kazakh students in Cairo reveal the character of the postcolonial situation and discourse within Kazakhstan itself.

## Notes on Contributors

**Alima Bissenova** is completing her MA in Middle East studies at the American University in Cairo. She also has a BA degree in Kazakh literature and an MA in journalism. Her research interests include identity politics and Central Asian and Islamic studies.

**Perry L. Glanzer**, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School of Education at Baylor University. His research and teaching interests include moral education, the relationship between religion, education and politics, and the philosophy of education. His book *The Quest for Russia's Soul: Evangelicals and Moral Education in Post-Communist Russia* was recently published by Baylor University Press, and he has had articles on Russia and moral education published in *Journal of Church and State*, *Journal of Moral Education* and *Phi Delta Kappan*.

**Katrien Hertog** gained an MA in Eastern European languages and cultures at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and an MA in peace studies at the University of Bradford, UK. She is now a PhD student at the Centre for Peace Research and Strategic Studies at the Catholic University of Leuven, working on the subject of the role of the Russian Orthodox Church and of Islamic traditions in sustainable peacebuilding in Chechnya. She is currently continuing her research in Moscow.

**Pauline Schrooyen** graduated in Russian and German language and literature at Leiden University, and is currently working on her PhD thesis on the concept of 'Christian Politics' in the *publitsistika* of Vladimir Solov'yev at the Centre for Russian Humanities Studies in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Her research interests are in the area of nineteenth-century Russian religious thought and cultural history, in particular the debate between Westernisers and Slavophiles, and she is the author of a number of published articles.

**Andrij Yurash** is an associate professor at the Ivan Franko L'viv National University, the Ukrainian Catholic University and the L'viv Ecclesiastical Academy and Seminary, and a member of the board of the International Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe Association (ISORECEA). His research interests are: religio-political processes, church geography and the sociology of religion in Ukraine past and present; church-state relations; traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy; and interaction between religion and the media. He has been involved in research programmes and has held scholarships in a number of European countries and the USA, and he is the author of more than 80 published articles.