



SCIENCE AND RESEARCH CENTRE KOPER  
Institute for Historical Studies  
ZNANSTVENO-RAZISKOVALNO SREDIŠČE KOPER  
Inštitut za zgodovinske študije

International conference  
**CROSSING THE LINES BETWEEN MARXISM AND  
CHRISTIANITY IN THE 20TH CENTURY  
EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE**

15th and 16th April 2021

**PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS**



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KOPER 2021

**International conference CROSSING THE LINES BETWEEN MARXISM AND  
CHRISTIANITY IN THE 20TH CENTURY EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE  
Programme and Abstracts**

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## FOREWORD

### **CROSSING THE LINES BETWEEN MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE**

Transnational interactions between Marxism and Christianity that emerged outside the sacred canopy of official institutions of East-Central European socialist states had been largely overlooked in the post-1989 narratives. Yet, these contacts that spanned from the interwar years to the fall of communism offer a good insight into intellectual, cultural, and political dynamics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century East-Central Europe.

The conference explores various aspects of these transnational interactions that underscored the uneasy relationship between Christianity and Marxism such as, for example, Christian Socialists' revolt against interwar Catholic integralism and their cooperation with communists during World War II, the postwar emergence of Marxist revisionism and shared Christian-communist visions of humanist socialist community, the issues of persecution and accommodation of clergy, or Vatican's encounters with socialist states. These and other issues occurred, sometimes in a dramatic way, in a multi-religious Yugoslavia, infamous for its link between religion and ethno-nationalism, but also in other countries thus requiring a wide geographical, topical, and temporal approach to the subject.

Considering newly available sources and new research perspectives, the goal of the conference is to launch a broad academic debate that provides novel insights into the following issues:

- 1) Theological and philosophical achievements of left-oriented Christian thought in the interwar *Zwischeneuropa* and the postwar *Other Europe*;
- 2) Intellectual transfers between religious and secular milieus of East-Central Europe and the ones of Western Europe and the Americas;
- 3) Visions and concepts of Christian socialist movements in Yugoslavia, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and elsewhere;
- 3) Issues of ideological and political confrontation between Christian political agency and socialist establishments;

4) Significance of Christian-Marxist dialogue across the “Iron Curtain” for the Vatican’s *Ostpolitik*;

5) Post-1989 potentials of emancipatory political theological thinking in the *New Europe* and beyond.

**ORGANISER:**

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies  
Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper, Inštitut za zgodovinske študije

**PROGRAMME COMMITTEE:**

Jure RAMŠAK  
Egon PELIKAN  
Mateja REŽEK

# PROGRAMME

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### CROSSING THE LINES BETWEEN MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021

*Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies*

#### THURSDAY, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**9:00–9:10**

*Online meet-and-greet*

**9:10–9:30**

*Opening remarks*

Rado Pišot, Egon Pelikan, Jure Ramšak

**9:30–11:00**

Chair: Jure Ramšak

**Egon Pelikan** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Marxism and Christianity and the Confrontation between Their Political Representations in Slovene Territories during the 1930s*

**Bojan Žalec** (University of Ljubljana): *Ušeničnik's Social Model: Critique of Capitalism, Christian Socialism of Solidary Personalism, and the Utopia of Religious Renewal*

**Irina Gordeeva** (Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam & St. Philaret's Christian Orthodox Institute, Moscow): *The Tolstoyans' Criticism*

*of Marxist Thought and Bolshevik's Revolution in the Transnational Press of  
the Religious Pacifist Movement of the 1920–1930s*

*Discussion*

**11:30–13:00**

Chair: Bojan Žalec

**Gašper Mithans** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Christian Socialism, the Slovene Journal "Beseda o sodobnih vprašanjih" (1932–1935) and the Perception of Social Crises by "the Lost Generation"*

**James Robertson** (University of California Irvine): *Between Lenin and Maritain: Edvard Kocbek's Engagement with Interwar Marxist Thought*

**Bojan Godeša** (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana): *Edvard Kocbek's "Mission to Align European Christianity with Communism"*

*Discussion*

**14:00–15:30**

Chair: Petar Dragišić

**Mateja Režek** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Searching for a Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism in the Post-Revolutionary Slovenia*

**Jože Pirjevec** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Metamorphosis of an Agent of the Yugoslav Secret Police (UDBA): From a Marxist Dogmatist to a Humanist*

**Vedran Obućina** (University of Regensburg): *Red Friars: Relationship between Bosnian Franciscans and Communist Party in Yugoslavia*

*Discussion*

**16:00–17:00**

Chair: Pál Hatos

**Michael Zok** (German Historical Institute Warsaw): *“The Family Is the Basic Cell of Society”. Family, Reproduction, and Demography in Political Thought of Communists and Catholics in Post-war Poland*

**Sabrina P. Ramet** (Norwegian University of Science and Technology & Science and Research Centre Koper): *God, Sex, and Christian Religion*

*Discussion*

**17:30–19:00**

**Keynote lecture**

**Piotr H. Kosicki** (University of Maryland): *Reading Marx in an Era of Counter-Reformation? Cross-Iron Curtain Sketches from the Encounter between Christianity and Marxism in the 1950s and 1960s*

**FRIDAY, 16<sup>th</sup> April**

**9:30–11:00**

Chair: Anja Zalta

**Ladislav Beneš** (Charles University, Prague): *The Christian Peace Conference as a Result of Christian and Political Negotiations in a Socialist State*

**Agathe Jacquin de Margerie** (Paris Institute of Political Studies): *Blurring the Lines between Theology, Academic Debate and Political Activism: The Austrian Paulus-Gesellschaft and Its Advocacy for Dialogue in the Late 1960s*

**Radmila Radić** (Institute for Recent History of Serbia): *The Yugoslav Authorities and the Christian-Marxist Dialog of the Second Half of the 1960s and the Beginning of the 1970s*

*Discussion*

**11:30–13:30**

Chair: Sabrina P. Ramet

**Pál Hatos** (University of Public Service, Budapest): *“The French Connection”*

**Petar Dragišić** (Institute for Recent History of Serbia): *Yugoslavia and the Second Vatican Council: Perceptions and Expectations*

**Hrvoje Klasić** (University of Zagreb): *Cardinal Tisserant’s Visit to Yugoslavia in 1968 in the Light of Relations between Yugoslavia and the Holy See*

**Árpád von Klimó** (The Catholic University of America): *Dialogue or Confrontation? Cardinal Mindszenty in Vienna 1971–75*

*Discussion*

**14:30–16:30**

Chair: Árpád von Klimó

**Dirk Schuster** (University of Potsdam): *Christianity in the Eyes of Communist Research- and Party Representatives in the GDR and Austria*

**Jure Ramšak** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *A Close Flirtation with the Revolution: Slovenian Left-Wing Catholics, the Vatican's Ostpolitik, and a Test of Faith for Socialist Self-Management*

**Anja Zalta** (University of Ljubljana): *Dialogue between Christians and Marxists in Slovenia in the 1980s - Historical Materialism and/or Marxism as a Worldview*

**Eva Guigo-Patzelt** (Sorbonne University Paris): *"An Inner-Marxist Dialogue on the Dialogue": East German Marxist Scholars Facing the Pitfalls of an Exchange with Christians*

*Discussion*

**17:00–18:30**

Chair: Gašper Mithans

**Sielke Beata Kelner** (Leiden University): *From Capitol Hill to Jilava Prison: Christian Transnational Activism, the Case of Father Calciu-Dumitreasa, and Us-Romanian Diplomatic Relations*

**Barbara M. Martin** (University of Basel): *From the Komsomol to the Church: Conversions to Orthodoxy among Soviet Youth in the 1970s–1980s*

**Maja Kaninska** (University of Ljubljana): *The Orthodox Church in the Socio-Political Transformations of the Socialist Countries – Yugoslavia, Romania*

*Discussion*

**18:30–19:00**

**Pavel Kolář** (University of Konstanz): *Concluding discussion*



# ABSTRACTS



## **MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY AND THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THEIR POLITICAL REPRESENTATIONS IN SLOVENE TERRITORIES DURING THE 1930S**

**Egon Pelikan**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

Robert O. Paxton, when analysing political Catholicism in France, identified three ideological and political orientations of 1930s political Catholicism: Social Christians, Integralist Conservatives, and Christian Democrats. At the same time, he accused the French Catholic left of adopting a similar negative, dismissive, and critical stance towards market economy and parliamentarism to that of the “corporatist” Catholic right – the only difference being the solution proposed. An analogous ideological and political schism within political Catholicism occurred in the Drava Banovina during the 1930s. In order to compare the visions and dilemmas of Slovene Christian Socialists with those of left-oriented Christian groups in Europe and their decisions before WWII, this paper examines the developments in Slovene territories in a larger time perspective and within the European context.

## **UŠENIČNIK'S SOCIAL MODEL: CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM, CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM OF SOLIDARY PERSONALISM, AND THE UTOPIA OF RELIGIOUS RENEWAL**

**Bojan Žalec**

*University of Ljubljana*

The paper deals with the model of social renewal of society advocated by Aleš Ušeničnik (1868–1952), the main Catholic philosophical authority in the first half of the 20th century and one of the pioneers of sociology in the Slovenian lands. In Ušeničnik's model, the economic component played an important role. He was a critic of capitalism, believing that usury was an integral part of it. As a form of usury, he criticized profit and interest. He believed that the main task of economic and social renewal is to save people from usury. He advocated a social economy in which the separation of labour and capital would be overcome. Cooperatives and corporations are an integral part of this economy. He substantiated his model from the economic point of view (account of the origin of the exchange value of commodity), as well as from the philosophical anthropological and theological point of view. His model can be described as the model of solidary personalism. He himself used the terms Christian socialism and solidarism for it. He distinguished Christian socialism from materialist socialism (Marxist models), which he rejected, fundamentally because of atheism, but also because of the abolition of private property. Although the economic component is important in Ušeničnik's model of social renewal, it is not fundamental. The basic level is spiritual, which is the level of Christian religious spiritual renewal of (Slovenian) society, without which, in Ušeničnik's opinion, we cannot expect improvement neither in social nor in economic area. The paper presents the main components, sources and influence of Ušeničnik's social view. It draws attention to its shortcomings, and places it in the context of a various Christian social movement and thought in the first half of the 20th century in the Slovenian lands and beyond.

## **THE TOLSTOYANS' CRITICISM OF MARXIST THOUGHT AND BOLSHEVIK'S REVOLUTION IN THE TRANSNATIONAL PRESS OF THE RELIGIOUS PACIFIST MOVEMENT OF THE 1920-1930S**

**Irina GORDEEVA**

*Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam &  
St. Philaret's Christian Orthodox Institute, Moscow*

The paper explores the intellectual history of Tolstoyism and religious anarchism that were a part of the transnational pacifist movement of the 1920-1930s. For a long period this history was underestimated due to the lack of access to the key archives of the Russian Tolstoyans. With the opening up of the archives, it became possible to deepen our knowledge about the Tolstoyan pacifist movement as a primarily transnational phenomenon, which linked numerous groups of religious pacifists and adherents of non-violence from different countries of Europe (Soviet Russia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, England, the Netherlands, Baltic states, etc.) The participants of this movement were ordinary people (rank and file intellectuals, teachers, peasants, workers and so on).

The Tolstoyan movement had a radical, revolutionary character, its proclaimed aim was "worldwide nonviolent revolution of Brotherhood". Its goals and activities were initially framed to overcome the state boundaries. The organizational centres of the movement were the War Resistance International, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, some Tolstoyan, vegetarian or pacifist periodicals and publishing houses, as well as Tolstoyan and vegetarian communities.

The social goals of the movement partly overlapped with the agenda of the socialist movements. However the Tolstoyans and related Christian pacifists were highly polemical towards Marxist thought and Bolsheviks' publicists on the topic of the methods of social change, insisting that these methods have to be nonviolent. In some my publications I have already described the result of this criticism – creation of the International Movement for Christian Communism (1926). In new paper I am planning to analyse the content of the critique basing on the Tolstoyan archives, as well as their underground and transnational (published mainly in Soviet Russia and Bulgaria) press. It

seems that some of Tolstoyan ideas on the methods of revolutionary changes influenced the prominent pacifist Bart de Ligt.

Another line of the paper – the reaction of the Bolsheviks scholars and ideologists on the Tolstoyan critique of Marxism and Bolshevism, represented in the philosophical researches and ideological propaganda.

## **CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM, THE SLOVENE JOURNAL “BESEDA O SODOBNIH VPRAŠANJIH” (1932–1935) AND THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL CRISES BY “THE LOST GENERATION”**

**Gašper MITHANS**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

Following the Great Depression, social issues and political antagonisms in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia where state authorities struggled to inhibit nationalisms, left hardly any space for moderate politics, movements, and institutions. Cultural journals were milieus where intellectuals developed, presented, and discussed some crucial political, economic, and societal ideas and issues, which occasionally caused fervent public responses. The circle around rather overlooked journal *Beseda o sodobnih vprašanjih* (eng. Word on Contemporary Issues), open to contributors of any worldview, though Catholic in principle, presents a new ideal and practical political phase in the development of Christian Socialism, i.e. the Catholic Left, characterised also by criticism of the politicization of Catholicism and its exponents. The collaborators of the journal (“Besedarji”) probably most sophisticatedly rejected the Christian corporatism as advocated in the papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), as well as Pope Pius XI’s refutation of any cooperation between Christians and Socialists (and Communists). Thus, Jože Pokorn argued that Marxism is comprised of two elements: the economic theory, i.e. scientific analysis of capitalism, and materialism conflated with atheism. “Besedarji” accepted the former and combine it with a Christian ethos and democratic values, significantly influencing the Slovene Christian Socialist movement with the echoes of the same views also decades later.

## **BETWEEN LENIN AND MARITAIN: EDVARD KOČBEK'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERWAR MARXIST THOUGHT**

**James ROBERTSON**  
*University of California Irvine*

During the 1930s the Slovene Christian socialist, Edvard Kocbek, developed a political philosophy that drew on personalist and phenomenological concepts to promote a project of social revolution and spiritual renewal. This philosophy underpinned his growing rapprochement with the Slovene communist movement and led to his eventual involvement in the anti-fascist partisan struggle of WWII.

Kocbek's engagement with Slovene communism has typically been understood either through a biographical or politico-strategic lens: that is, this engagement is either reduced to his momentous, individual moral decision to join the partisan movement or interpreted as a pragmatic political and military alliance between Christian socialists and the Communist Party. Much less attention has been given to the intellectual historical developments in Kocbek's interwar thought that conditioned this political rapprochement with communism.

Through an excavation of Kocbek's interwar writings, this paper will highlight the ways in which his turn to the languages of personalism and phenomenology during the 1930s created the conditions for a more constructive engagement with Marxist ideas and communist politics. In particular, the concepts of action (*dejanje*) and embodiment (*utelešenje*), which Kocbek gave a strong phenomenological inflection, offered an account of the human subject through which he could engage and adapt the chief moral claims and political visions of the communist movement to his own political-theological project.

## EDVARD KOCBEK'S "MISSION TO ALIGN EUROPEAN CHRISTIANITY WITH COMMUNISM"

**Bojan GODEŠA**

*Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana*

With his essay *Premišljevanje o Španiji* (Reflections on Spain), which criticised the stance of the local ecclesiastical hierarchy during the Spanish Civil War, Edvard Kocbek severely upset the influential Catholic circles in Slovenia and triggered a conflict with the Church hierarchy. The subsequent developments showed that this conflict, also known as the crisis of the *Dom and svet* magazine, strongly affected the Slovenian Catholics and decisively influenced the differentiation of their ranks during the occupation.

After the anathema, Kocbek decided to pursue an independent career. He established the *Dejanje* magazine, in which he and his circle of associates argued for a vision of authentic Christianity/Catholicism that represented an alternative to the concept of the Church hierarchy. The latter would – in close connection with the leaders of the political Catholicism in Slovenia (mainly from the ranks of clericalists) – increasingly often resort to the ideological patterns offered by the various authoritarian models (often flirting with fascism and based on corporatism) as a replacement for the liberalism discredited during the economic crisis.

Kocbek was aware that Catholicism/Christianity could not be reformed in the context of the existing socio-political relations – especially as, because of their way of thinking and political concepts, no political subjects existed capable of assuming such a role or task in the Slovenian political arena.

During the occupation, the Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation (OF) was established at the initiative of the Slovenian communists. It brought together a coalition of ideologically and politically diverse groups to organise and lead an armed resistance against the occupiers. Kocbek saw this as an opportunity to realise his vision of transforming Catholicism/Christianity and freeing it from clericalism and the reactionary perception of religion. In the liberation organisation, he identified the very social and political potential that he had missed in the ranks of the pre-war opposition. Although Kocbek was not among the founders of the OF, he took part in its organisa-

tion early enough to be able to co-shape its programme, embodied in the basic points of the OF. He is rightfully ascribed with the greatest merits for – if not even with the authorship of – the formation of point 4 of the OF programme, stating that “the liberation actions represent the foundations for the transformation of the Slovenian national character”. Kocbek believed that an appropriate form of harmony between Catholicism and communism in the post-war Slovenian society was crucial for the successful realisation of the OF programme (according to point 7 of the programme, “after the liberation, the power shall be assumed by the OF as a whole”).

During his contacts with the associates in Italy and France, Kocbek conveyed the impression that the alliance between the Catholics and communists in their common struggle against fascism represented the foundations for a global post-war process that would “align European Christianity with communism”. Therefore, his ambitions attained international dimensions.

In his attempts to realise these plans, Kocbek soon encountered a number of obstacles. It became increasingly evident that the developing circumstances were not very favourable in this regard. This became completely obvious even before the liberation of Slovenia when Kocbek was transferred to the “Orthodox” Belgrade. There, he even became the Minister for Slovenia in Tito’s government of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. Thus, he was removed from the environment where he could contribute his vision to the shaping of the post-war Slovenian society. Nevertheless, Kocbek never completely abandoned his aspirations or his “comrades” (as he referred to the group that had successfully envisioned and carried out the “liberation action” project in the context of the OF) and remained loyal to the OF ideals for the rest of his life.

## SEARCHING FOR A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM IN THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY SLOVENIA

**Mateja REŽEK**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

The paper deals with the attempts at a dialogue between Christianity and Marxism in socialist Slovenia in the first decade after the Second World War, when the relations between the state and the Catholic Church were most strained. It focuses mainly on the pro-socialist priests gathered in the Slovenian priestly association, called Cyril-Methodius Society, and around the magazine *Nova pot* [New Path], the only Slovenian magazine at the time that published theological articles and in which Catholic intellectuals could present their views. The analysis of their views provides an insight not only into the encounter between this major European religion and the grand secular narrative of the 20th century, but also into concrete political, ideological and intellectual dynamics of post-revolutionary Slovenia, which reveal a much more complex and contradictory image than hitherto. One of the most productive contributors to the magazine *Nova pot* was the theologian and philosopher Janez Janžekovič. In the first half of the 1950s, he published a series of articles in which he searched for a dialogue between Christianity and Marxism by detecting a common point between the two in ethics, where the ruling ideology and Christianity would not only meet but even cooperate.

A small, yet intellectually propulsive group of Catholic intellectuals, who rejected the Catholic Church's stance regarding the incompatibility of Christianity and Socialism posed a challenge and threat not only to the official doctrine of the Catholic Church but also to the communist authorities. However, these pro-socialist Catholic intellectuals were virtually powerless and without any institutional background: on the one hand the church authorities rejected their friendly attitude towards socialism and the attempts to seek a dialogue with Marxism, and on the other the ruling regime deliberately overlooked them, as the realization of the political potentials of Christian socialism could threaten the ideological and political hegemony of the Communists. Faced with the expectations of socialist oriented Catholic intellectuals, the ruling establishment entrenched even more in its rigid views and delayed the possibility of a dialogue between Marxists and Christians for almost two decades into the future.

## **METAMORPHOSIS OF AN AGENT OF THE YUGOSLAV SECRET POLICE (UDBA): FROM A MARXIST DOGMATIST TO A HUMANIST**

**Jože PIRJEVEC**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

The paper presents a story of a 20-year-old youngster, Zdenko Roter, who joined the WWII partisan struggle still as a teenager. After the victory he accepted with enthusiasm the invitation to join the Slovenian branch of the Yugoslav Secret Police, considering it a great honour. As a member of the group in charge of the Roman Catholic clergy, he performed his duties with all the zeal of his Marxist indoctrination. Later, he became one of the founders of sociology of religion in Yugoslavia, his attitude towards the Catholic Church having changed as a result of his intellectual maturity but also because of improved relations between Yugoslavia and the Vatican. During the Sixties and Seventies, in fact, Belgrade and the Holy See found common ground as much in their Third World policies as in their acknowledgment of shared humanistic values between faith and socialism.

## **RED FRIARS: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOSNIAN FRANCISCANS AND COMMUNIST PARTY IN YUGOSLAVIA**

**Vedran OBUĆINA**

*University of Regensburg*

For centuries, friars of Franciscan Province of Bosna Srebrena survived under the Ottoman rule, based on Ahdnama, a document given by the Sultan Mehmed II Conqueror for freedom of Catholic faith. This historical experience led Bosnian Franciscans to uneasy cooperation with any power, including the Communist one. This paper explores trends and trajectories of Franciscan-Communist relations in Bosnia, particularly through the activities and journal of Association of Catholic Priests in Bosnia and Herzegovina “Good Shepherd” (Dobri pastir). This institution did not have permission to act from ecclesial authority but was recognised by the state (some claim even made by the Communist Party), and many Franciscans were blamed for too close contacts with the Communist rule. However, the Franciscans believed it is possible to have a loyal citizenship relation to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, to have a normal communication and seek practical solutions for many problems that occurred after the introduction of the Communist rule in Church-State relations. Such activities led to a conflict within the Catholic church and with condemnation of society and journal by the Vatican. It is clear from the public appearances of the priests and members of the Association, especially those who were leaders in the “Good Shepherd”, that they did not consider their prominent support for Yugoslavia and the socialist order and the rise of the Communist Party problematic. They did not consider their public engagement in the service of Yugoslavia and the socialist order to be a political engagement and certainly not something inadmissible. The paper argues pro and contra the many arguments about Good Shepherd.

## **“THE FAMILY IS THE BASIC CELL OF SOCIETY”. FAMILY, REPRODUCTION, AND DEMOGRAPHY IN POLITICAL THOUGHT OF COMMUNISTS AND CATHOLICS IN POST-WAR POLAND**

**Michael ZOK**

*German Historical Institute Warsaw*

The current disputes about rights of (female) reproductive self-determination as well as of LGBT persons show the irreconcilable gap that exists in Polish Post-socialist society. Questions about the permissibility of abortions, about “right” sexual education in schools, as well as about partnership in a general sense function as markers of distinction of “liberal” and “conservative” views on these issues. On the one hand, it seems that supporters of a liberalisation of the law on abortion are part of a “left-wing” tradition, because first, it were left-wing intellectuals and physicians that influenced the debates in Interwar Poland leading to a less restrictive legislation. And second, it was under Communist rule that the permissibility of abortions was widely broadened. On the other hand, the supporters of a more restrictive legislation on these questions seem to be part of a “Catholic” tradition with the Church as the most powerful actor.

The paper questions this black-and-white-scheme. Regarding political ideas and agendas of the protagonists in this dispute during Communist rule, the Party and the Church, it looks at parallels and differences. Although both actors stood on different sides during the conflicts about the legislation of family and reproductive matters, there were similar perspectives on these issues, e.g. about the harmfulness of abortions as a tool to limit the number of children. Both, the Party and the Church, were eager to uphold the “biological potential of the nation”, which had suffered extremely during the Nazi occupation of Poland. Therefore, the actors’ answer to questions regarding family, reproductive rights, and demography were not as obviously different as it seems from a nowadays perspective. Thus, the paper analyses the antagonists’ argumentative strategies. It concentrates on the 1970s and 1980s, when the balance of power between these two sides shifted – first slowly, then with observable effects. Furthermore, the paper takes the impact of transformation in the early 1990s into consideration. The establishment of

the power divide in the early stage of the Third Republic after 1990 led to the current legislation being the main source of today's struggles and protests. Therefore, the paper looks at discursive continuities and fractures.

## GOD, SEX, AND CHRISTIAN RELIGION

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Christian religion is about many things, including obedience to God – translated as obedience to the hierarchs of the given Church. God is understood in self-contradictory terms as simultaneously omniscient (He is aware that many children suffer from malnutrition and serious diseases), omnibenevolent (He wants to end the suffering of children), and omnipotent (He can end the suffering of children). Yet children (and for that matter, also adults) continue to suffer needlessly. The sixteenth-century Protestant reformer, John Calvin, sought to address this conundrum by declaring that God was “incomprehensible”, while at the same time holding onto the assertion that God is omniscient, omnibenevolent, and omnipotent – which is to say that God can be comprehended after all.

To maintain a Church community, belief in God, however such a being is understood, is not sufficient. Ritual and shared values are needed to create the bonds that keep a community together and define the borders separating the community from the rest of the world. Rituals, such as Sunday Mass, are not performed for the sake of a divine being, since that would humanize that being by suggesting that He needs or enjoys hearing prayers and hymns. Rituals are performed for the sake of the believers. But beliefs in what? Among the more potent values are those that exclude people who do not share the beliefs of the religious community concerning sexuality; thus, intolerance has been central to Christian religion.

One might object that the Church could embrace a morality of common sense, instructing members to respect others and treat them with kindness, and not to harm others or lie or steal, for example. But such a moral code does not require the sanction of a God or endorsements by a Church hierarchy; and it would not serve to set a given Church apart from others. For a religious body to have a *raison d'être*, it must go beyond mere common sense and impose rules that, on the face of it, have no obvious validity. A member who violates any rule, whether an obvious one or a non-obvious one, is defined as a sinner. And this is why penance is the most important of the seven

sacraments of the Catholic Church (whether of the Roman or the Eastern-Rite or any of the other six rites of the Catholic Church).

For Marxists, religion puts people in an *altered state*, in which common sense is suspended. In this sense, for Marx, religion was “the opium of the people”, allowing members to feel justified, for instance, in killing members of other faiths. Marx recognized, as others have, that religion is intrinsically political. But Marxism-Leninism had its own doctrines, its own demands for the suspension of disbelief. In this, Marxism-Leninism recognized the utility of aggregating people around a common value system.

## **THE CHRISTIAN PEACE CONFERENCE AS A RESULT OF CHRISTIAN AND POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS IN A SOCIALIST STATE**

**Ladislav BENEŠ**

*Charles University, Prague*

The Christian Peace Conference (CPC) represents a unique connection between Christians and the socialist establishment. On the one hand, the CPC helped promote the socialist ideology. On the other hand, the organization helped connect Christians from both sides of the Iron Curtain, including those who would otherwise be completely isolated from the ecumenical movement. Moreover, they would create their own, autonomous Christian program.

The CPC was established in 1958 by theologians from both the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (Českobratrská církev evangelická) and the Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland). Its headquarters was based in Prague. In the 1960s, the CPC was, after the World Council of Churches, the most important ecumenical organization both in the number of attendees and in the number of the individual churches it represented.

In my contribution, I will argue that the establishment and activity of the CPC was in a sense a trade-off. The CPC connected Christians from the Easter and the Western Bloc, which would lead to transfers of money, literature, medicine, or mail being exchanged between the two blocs. However, in its official resolutions, the CPC supported the policies and politics of the socialist governments, which in turn brought a great deal of criticism upon the organization.

Secondly, I will show that the regime kept a close eye both on the political topics discussed at CPC's meetings and its resolutions. That was being done with the goal of limiting the realization of the Christians own program. It is evident that the socialist regimes controlled the political statements of the organization but not its autonomous theological thinking. This led, among other things, to relatively open discussions about the relationship between Christianity and Marxism. In my presentation, I will examine the communi-

cation between the Czechoslovakian CPC organizers and the State Security (Státní bezpečnost, StB), which resulted in the aforementioned outcomes.

Thirdly, I will demonstrate what role of the dialogue between the Christians and the Marxists within CPC was and how the StB dealt with it. The Christian-Marxist dialogue within the CPC will also be compared in an outline with a similar discussion within the World Council of Churches.

## **BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN THEOLOGY, ACADEMIC DEBATE AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM: THE AUSTRIAN PAULUS-GESELLSCHAFT AND ITS ADVOCACY FOR DIALOGUE IN THE LATE 1960S**

**Agathe Jacquin DE MARGERIE**

*Paris Institute of Political Studies*

Using research from my on-going PhD thesis, this paper will seek to enlighten the dialogue between Marxism and Catholicism that was led in the Austrian section of the *Paulus Gesellschaft* in the late 1960s, with a particular focus on its transnational aspects.

In Austria, Left Catholicism has not been a widely spread movement. A heavily anti-Communist climate restrained it. Left-leaning Catholics, interestingly, used the dialogue with Marxism as one of their constant demands and associated it with a wide array of ecclesiological and theological claims. The Austrian section of the originally German *Paulus-Gesellschaft* was created in late 1966 by Günther Nenning with this precise goal, and constantly collaborated with intellectuals from Eastern Europe. It was mainly active until 1970 and has been largely ignored in historiography. Using the Austrian case, and combining documents found notably in Nenning's personal archive, the Karl-Rahner archive and the archives of the Austrian Church, this paper will strive to give insight on the meaning and results of this dialogue<sup>1</sup>:

- The blurred lines between theology and political activism in the thought of the founder, Günther Nenning, in order to analyse the way in which Nenning envisioned the dialogue between Catholicism and Marxism, and how both European and extra European networks provided him with key references, notably revisionist readings of Marx;
- The network of the society and the way Nenning's political activism created tensions inside it. I will especially look at the way that the asso-

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1 Which importance has been stressed for Eastern Europe by recent scholarship. See for example Helena Toth and Todd. H. Weir, « Religion and Socialism in the Long 1960s : from antithesis to dialogue in Eastern and Western Europe », in *Contemporary European History*, 2020 ; 127-138 (introduction to the special issue : *Religion and Socialism in the long 1960s : From Antithesis to Dialogue in Eastern and Western Europe*).

ciation engaged with academics from the other side of the Iron Curtain, and I will show how their contribution was crucial to the dialogue that was being led. The implication of Austrian Communists that had been marginalized in their own party will also be of interest; other members joined the association because of their numerous journeys in Eastern Europe, notably Yugoslavia, whose particular situation was a source of inspiration;

- The results of this dialogue, on the Austrian political and ecclesiological stage. Though a small country largely ignored by studies on Left Catholicism or on dialogue between Marxism and Christianity, notably because this dialogue ultimately failed, Austria can provide us with valuable insight on this phenomenon. Given their position of minority, the proponents of dialogue constantly engaged in a negotiating process both with the socialist establishment and with the clergy.

## **THE YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES AND THE CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOG OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1960S AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 1970S**

**Radmila RADIĆ**

*Institute for Recent History of Serbia*

This article deals with the motives and attitudes of the Yugoslav authorities towards the Christian-Marxist dialog that opened in the mid-1960s. It will try inspecting the conditions that have enabled the opening of the dialogue in Yugoslavia, its development and flow, the leader actors, the side influences and the outcome of the dialogue. Archival sources, the press and the literature will shape the idea of the paper.

## “THE FRENCH CONNECTION”

**Pál HATOS**

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The elaboration of the Ostpolitik – the new foreign-policy orientation of the Holy See, established from the mid-1960s on which was open to negotiating with the communist regimes behind the Iron Curtain – was contemporary with the most momentous event in the modern history of the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council, held between 1962 and 1965. The initiator of both was Pope John XXIII, elected in the fall of 1958. He and his successor, Paul VI, played an active role not only in proclaiming and organizing the Council and in drafting the most important conciliar documents, but in the theoretical and practical realization of the Eastern policy as well. Can we interpret the Vatican Eastern policy as one of the consequences, indeed, even the logical consequence, of the conciliar movement, the *aggiornamento*? The very fact that the policy of rapprochement from the outset won recognition more in Western than in Eastern Europe indicates that the factors playing a role in the Vatican’s opening to the East were partially independent of the problems of the region, yet were linked all the more to the reformulation of the relationship between religion and modern society, incessantly present ever since the Enlightenment, and to global geopolitical changes. The peculiar context of Ostpolitik is provided by the fact that at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s the attraction of leftist thought grew throughout Western Europe, and in West European societies undergoing revolutionary changes the idea of dialogue with left-wing forces criticizing the development of atomic weapons, neo-colonialism and capitalism gained ground in every mainstream Church in Western Europe. The *aggiornamento* announced by John XXIII, and in its wake the Second Vatican Council, may be read also as the Catholic expression of this turnabout, and Ostpolitik as one of the concrete consequences of the changes adopted at the Council. A symbol of the end of the first period of the Cold War, which was already alien and distant from the West European atmosphere at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s. For this reason, the developments of *aggiornamento* may be interpreted in the first place as a response to changes taking place in West European societies, and parallel to this as the cultural and political repositioning of the Catholic Church in the

welfare societies, which were transforming at a rapid pace, and growing with the help of continuous technological development. The challenge and defeat of Communism in this framework was connected not to the nightmare of a new world war, but rather to the inevitably ensuing societal transformation and generational shift, and to the hope in the success of the new kind of pastoral outlook adapting to this.

In this regard it is of no small importance that both Council Pope, John XXI-II and Paul VI – canonized since then by Pope Francis – had established very strong ties with various representatives of the intellectually powerful French Catholicism, the cradle of almost all innovative theological movements – modernism, neo-Thomism, personalism etc. – of the 20th Century World Catholicism. In my paper, I will analyze some key elements of the thinking of two internationally acclaimed Catholic lay French *intellectuels*: the philosophers Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) and Etienne Gilson (1884–1978) – especially through their correspondance – and try to establish their impact in the context of the postwar European East-West cultural relations.

## **YUGOSLAVIA AND THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Petar DRAGIŠIĆ**

*Institute for Recent History of Serbia*

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) represented a watershed both in the spiritual orientation of the Catholic Church and in the global role of the Vatican in the following years. The Vatican II fundamentally changed Vatican's previous perceptions of non-Catholic and even left-wing movements worldwide, thus distancing itself from Pacelli's Cold War radicalism. In a bid to counter religious scepticism and mass disaffiliation (growing number of dropouts) the Catholic Church launched extensive doctrinal, ideological and even political *aggiornamento*, which profoundly changed its place in the contemporary world. Besides, the ground-breaking encyclical *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth), issued several months prior to the death of Giovanni XXIII (in 1963), softened Vatican's position on communism, thus paving the way for introducing new policy towards the East Block countries (including Yugoslavia).

The paper focuses on Yugoslav perceptions of the innovations introduced during the Second Vatican Council. The presentation will pay particular attention to Yugoslav views of Vatican's relations with other Christian denominations (ecumenism) and non-Christian religions as well as of Vatican's global strategy (Vatican's policy towards the socialist world and the Global South) during and after the Second Vatican Council. The analysis will include not only the perceptions of Yugoslav regime but also the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church on Vatican's *aggiornamento*. The research is based on an analysis of archive sources (from the Archive of Yugoslavia and the Diplomatic Archive of Serbia), contemporary press articles, published documents and secondary sources.

## **CARDINAL TISSERANT'S VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA IN 1968 IN THE LIGHT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE HOLY SEE**

**Hrvoje KLASIĆ**  
*University of Zagreb*

In 1968, Vatican Cardinal Tisserant visited the SFRY and met with the most important people from political and religious life. The cardinal was a close associate of Pope Paul VI, so his visit can be understood as part of the pope's policy of ecumenism, but also openness to European communist states. It is important to observe the visit also because at that time the Holy See and Yugoslavia did not have diplomatic relations, which were interrupted in 1952 after Pius XII proclaimed the Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac a cardinal.

The presentation will discuss the contents of Tisserant's talks with the hosts in Yugoslavia, his statements on the relationship of Croatian Catholic priests with the Ustasha movement during World War II, criticism of the behavior of Croatian Catholic priests at the time of the visit, and his assessments of socialist Yugoslavia.

## **DIALOGUE OR CONFRONTATION? CARDINAL MINDSZENTY IN VIENNA 1971–75**

**Árpád VON KLIMÓ**

*The Catholic University of America*

Cardinal József Mindszenty (1892–1975) was, as Archbishop of Esztergom, head of the Catholic Church of Hungary between 1945 and 1974. However, he could only act in this role for three years, from 1945 until 1948. In December 1948, the Hungarian Stalinist regime arrested and incarcerated him until 1956, after which he spent the years 1956 to 1971 as a refugee in the US Embassy in Budapest, and finally the last four years of his life in exile in Vienna. Mindszenty has been a symbol of anti-communist resistance throughout this time and after his death. He had no time for “dialogue” with Marxists in whatever form.

However, when he arrived in Vienna in 1971, the city had become one of the centers of Christian-Marxist dialogue since the 1960s, with the Theologische Fakultät of the University as very active participant. As an agent of the Hungarian State Security Agency found out in 1972, there was unrest among the representatives of Christian-Marxist Dialogue activities at the university. Even the rector of the university, a Catholic theologian himself, Prof. Alexander Dordett (1916-84), had said allegedly that Mindszenty would “not count”, “was a zero”, and that “priests should not have any influence on a university”. (ÁBTL 3.2.9. R-8-009/ II “Vecchio”) The Viennese Theologians had just started a year earlier with symposia on “Christian-Marxist” dialogue and were obviously concerned about the cooperation between Catholic Theology and Sociology (where Rudolf Weiler, a peace activist) had been one of the initiators of the Dialogue.

## **CHRISTIANITY IN THE EYES OF COMMUNIST RESEARCH- AND PARTY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE GDR AND AUSTRIA**

**Dirk SCHUSTER**

*University of Potsdam*

It is well known that in the ideological understanding of Soviet-influenced communism, 'religion' was understood as a direct contrast to the propagated Marxist-atheist worldview. Nevertheless, and this is shown by recent research, the view of religion and the religious policies of countries under Soviet influence were quite heterogeneous.<sup>2</sup> This can also be determined for different epochs between 1945 and 1990: While the Austrian Communist Party KPÖ, for example, took a strongly anti-religious stance, during the brief phase of the opening of the party between 1961 and 1970 there was an open discourse about Christianity. Representatives of the party even advocated direct cooperation, since the social goals of communism and Christianity would show similarities.<sup>3</sup>

In the GDR, on the other hand, representatives of scientific atheism suddenly recognized at the beginning of the 1980s that cooperation with Christians would certainly bring advantages to the desired building of socialism. These scholars, who made expert reports and empirical studies for the SED, also argued that communists and Christians were actually pursuing the same goals.

Based on the two examples mentioned, the paper examines which argumentation patterns were used by the communists in relation to Christianity. It is also shown how the arguments have changed compared to the previously strongly anti-Christian stereotypes and what purposes were pursued with this. This comparison would like to find out whether the communist representatives were serious attempts at a dialogue on equal terms with the Christians in their own country.

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2 See for example Jenny Vorpahl/ Dirk Schuster (eds.): *Communicating Religion and Atheism in Central and Eastern Europe*, Berlin 2020.

3 Dirk Schuster: *Discussions about Atheism and Religion in the Austrian Communist Party (KPÖ) between 1945 and 1990*, in: Pokorny, Lukas/ Hödl, Hans-Gerald (Hg.): *Religion in Austria [RiA]*, Vienna 2020, 139–169.

## **A CLOSE FLIRTATION WITH THE REVOLUTION: SLOVENIAN LEFT-WING CATHOLICS, THE VATICAN'S OSTPOLITIK, AND A TEST OF FAITH FOR SOCIALIST SELF-MANAGEMENT**

**Jure RAMŠAK**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

Examining the main tenets of “socialist theology” as a variant of contextual theology which saw (Yugoslav self-management) socialism as a “sign of the times,” this paper discusses the dimensions of the conceptual and political significance of this endeavor. The focus is on transnational discussion and the modes of intellectual transfers and circulations between Slovene Catholics and progressive theologians, philosophers, and activists from Germany, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, the divergent attitudes within the ruling League of Communists and among the leading Marxists towards more or less loyal leftist Catholics is presented in order to evaluate the democratic deficiencies of the Yugoslav experiment and the intransigency of the Catholic Church through a prism of religion-state relations and the Vatican's *Ostpolitik*.

## **DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MARXISTS IN SLOVENIA IN THE 1980S - HISTORICAL MATERIALISM AND/OR MARXISM AS A WORLDVIEW**

**Anja ZALTA**

*University of Ljubljana*

The purpose of the presentation is to consider one of the central dilemmas that drove the discussions between so-called Marxists and Catholics in the 1980s in Slovenia. The central axis of the debate revolves around (understanding) the method of historical materialism and emphasizing Marxism as a worldview. In order to find the final answer to the central dilemma, it will be necessary to shed light on the historical background, especially the attitude of the Church and papal views towards socialism and consequently towards Marxism and communism, which then conditioned the attitude towards it in Slovenia. Proceeding from the context of anti-communist restoration, the rhetoric of the „cultural struggle“ as a conflict between two worldviews remains particularly problematic, which consequently brings and consolidates the idea that Marxism and (Catholic) religiosity are in a kind of a conflict. The very division into two poles (so-called Marxist and Catholic) is problematic, as it deepens ideological rifts and rhetoric that are not characteristic of many actors in these debates. The article problematizes such positions, and at the same time shows the importance of the introduction of historical materialism as a method adopted (to some extent) by the socialist theology of the Auxiliary Bishop of Maribor Vekoslav Grmič and his circle. Based on the analysis of articles written against Grmič and his theological thought and/or political engagement, especially in theological circles in the 1980s, we will explain the attempts at „re-Catholicization“ in Slovenia.

## **“AN INNER-MARXIST DIALOGUE ON THE DIALOGUE”: EAST GERMAN MARXIST SCHOLARS FACING THE PITFALLS OF DIALOGUE WITH CHRISTIANS**

**Eva GUIGO-PATZELT**  
*Sorbonne University Paris*

The history of Christian-Marxist dialogue in the German Democratic Republic is known to be a very ambivalent one (see G. Dietrich/B. Schäfer 1997, S. Thiede 1999, A. Hoffmann 2000). Even if the dialogue is said to have flourished especially during the regime’s last decade, the will to cooperate and discussions of various nature between theologians and politicians could be found during its whole existence. While Hoffmann concludes “that the Marxist-leninist position towards the essence of religion was shaped by continuity and that no ‘revolutionary’ changes emerged in this field” (Hoffmann 2000:282), newly available archives and interviews as part of an advanced PhD project on scientific atheism in the GDR outline a more precise picture. The analysis of different generations of scholars of scientific atheism and different local situations brings to light the whole difficulty of Marxist-Christian dialogue from the point of view of the Marxist establishment. As soon as the mid-1960s these experts on religious topics were supposed to deliver theoretical foundations to the cooperation with Christian citizens; however, as archives show, they did not. They even adopted an attitude of complete unwillingness towards all dialogue initiatives, whether from Western Germany or Europe or from the GDR Churches, from Protestants or Catholics. Especially the Vatican-initiated dialogue meetings remained a cautionary example twenty years later when they had to reconsider the matter. Partly as reaction on the changed political national and international situation, partly as result of new research agendas among scientific atheists of several Eastern European countries, they found themselves at the forefront of dialogue with Christians. Some of them rather against their wish, as shown by what S. Thiede has called “an inner-Marxist *dialogue* on the Christian-Marxist dialogue” (S. Thiede 1999:58) on such concepts as “dialogue”, “cooperation” and “common grounds”. They felt their way and engaged in practical experience, coping with changing attitudes at the top of the communist party. Requested, promoted, but also obstructed and restricted, Marxist-Christian dialogue ac-

tivities remained an explosive issue. In 1989 they reached utmost publicity in the academic world thanks to the newly established “university centre for peace and common understanding” in Rostock. Two months later the creation of a federation of the free thought, closely related to several scientific atheists, appeared as a declaration of war. During the Peaceful Revolution and beyond, Marxists perpetuated the dialogue unconscious of the fact that small Marxist-Christian dialogue groups were hardly taken into account.

## **FROM CAPITOL HILL TO JILAVA PRISON: CHRISTIAN TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM, THE CASE OF FATHER CALCIU- DUMITREASA, AND US-ROMANIAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

**Sielke Beata KELNER**

*Leiden University*

In the early 1980s, George Calciu-Dumitrescu emerged as the most notorious Romanian priest on Capitol Hill. Christian and secular audiences throughout the US and Europe saw in him a political prisoner, a human rights activist, and a martyr. In 1978, his sermons calling for the independence of the Church from the state and the suppression of atheist propaganda had been recorded, translated, and circulated across the West, making headlines in Washington and Paris. The agents that allowed to turn the spotlight on him and other jailed Christians were both secular and faith-based NGOs. From well-known Amnesty International, and Helsinki Watch, to world-renowned intellectuals such as Eugene Ionesco, but also small Christian NGOs such as Swiss Christian Solidarity International and American CREED. The case of father Calciu drew the attention of the US broader public to Ceausescu's human rights violations.

To be sure, the suffering of Romanian Christians represented the driven motivation of a multitude of faith-based NGOs, Ceausescu's abysmal human rights record drawing their attention. Such cause did not go unnoticed and was soon espoused by several congressmen who took interest in Ceausescu's religious repression. Beyond NGOs' activism, the international diplomatic effort that resulted in Calciu's release from prison in 1985 involved several Congressmen across the aisle as well as US president Ronald Reagan; but also UK prime minister Margaret Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II.

By investigating the case of Calciu-Dumitrescu, this paper informs on the interplay of private and traditional diplomacy. By employing French, US, and Romanian primary sources and integrating it with the documents from NGOs such as Helsinki Watch, this paper traces the generation and transformation of the transnational network constituted private citizens, state agents, as well as secular and Christian NGOs that advocated for the release of father Calciu. Furthermore, by looking at Eastern Europe and adopting an unexplo-

red space by the literature, this analysis identifies a major trend in the study of diplomacy: the emerging role played by religion and religious actors in the cold war. Informing on the interaction of religion and politics, this paper argues that Western faith-based NGOs constituted a decisive force pushing Congress to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on Bucharest and that the fate of father Calciu played a crucial role in such process.

## **FROM THE KOMSOMOL TO THE CHURCH: CONVERSIONS TO ORTHODOXY AMONG SOVIET YOUTH IN THE 1970S–1980S**

**Barbara M. MARTIN**

*University of Basel*

This paper will examine the conversion of Soviet youth to Russian Orthodoxy in Moscow and Leningrad in the 1970s-1980s. These representatives of the so-called “last Soviet generation,” to use Alexei Yurchak’s term, mostly grew up in a thoroughly Soviet setting, in non-religious families. Subjected to atheist propaganda since childhood, they were or had been members of the communist youth league (Komsomol) and mastered the regime’s ideological codes. Yet the weakening hold of Marxist-Leninist ideology over young Soviet minds prompted them to switch allegiances and embrace religious faith as the only officially authorized “counter-ideology.” The paper will examine the following questions: How can we characterize the predominant mindset of young believers concerning communist ideology and the Soviet regime before and at the time of their conversion? How could they reconcile religious faith with Komsomol membership? Which strategies did they develop to evade Komsomol affiliation, which had a near obligatory character? And how did the Soviet regime react to the growing attraction of religion among Komsomol members? We will answer these questions on the basis of oral history interviews, archival documents and Soviet press articles.

## **THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES – YUGOSLAVIA, ROMANIA**

**Maja KANINSKA**  
*University of Ljubljana*

After World War II Romania, with its peculiarities remained in the so-called Eastern bloc, while Yugoslavia left the Soviet track with Tito's historical "No" to Cominform. The Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) underwent unexpected social transformations with a sudden change in 1989, when the communist government led by Nicolae Ceaușescu was overthrown. The church did not "immediately" recognize or react in accordance with the new currents. After Tito's death in 1980, the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), led by up-and-rising hieromonks, launched a media campaign to regain its voice and presence in society. The Romanian Church, during the period of the Ceaușescu regime, used the nationalist experience of the great Romanian nation, which maintained the pulse of the mood of the Romanian people. This mood was used for church-political purposes in the case of the geopolitical status of the ROC in Bessarabia. The Securitate used the clergy with its methods for the control the obedience of the citizens. ROC saw the purpose of cooperation with the Securitate in the goal to preserve church property. The Serbian Church suffered the confiscation of property (as well as the Catholic Church and other religious communities) in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav State Security Administration (srb. Uprava državne bezbednosti – UDBA) had a different approach to controlling church life and the SOC's clerical work. In this regard, the right of the UDBA to influence the election of the patriarch will be shown, part of the SOC cooperated with the UDBA for existential reasons, but also with the idea of cooperation between the church and the state. Although Yugoslavia developed quite successfully the social ideal of "Brotherhood and Unity", Orthodox nationalism, the Serbian type, pulsated in church circles, until the space in the socio-political sphere opened in the early 80's. With these changes, questions of the status of the SOC in the territories of the Yugoslav republics were reopened. The comparative process will also present the picture of the relationship between the psychology of nationalism and religion, as well as the process of symbolic

significance of building monumental Orthodox churches in Belgrade (Temple of Saint Sava) and Bucharest (The People's Salvation Cathedral). The paper uses a comparative method to show the ROC and SOC transitions, from the status of a church in communist society, to the center of political change, the strengthening of nationalist ideology and of the political leadership.





