

News from Keston College

It is surely now proven that pressure from the West in the form of publicity in the press is of help to those who are being discriminated against under communist governments because of their religious beliefs or because of their dissenting attitude to the system. For many years my view of this was disputed, but the exchange of Vladimir Bukovsky in December was only the latest in the line of those who have benefitted from action in the West. Our careful reporting of the facts can do nothing but assist. It could well be that support for Georgi Vins will achieve the desired result in 1977. As I began working for him in 1964 – almost a decade before he became a household name – this would be a great moment. Unquestionably, however, he is needed in the USSR rather than here. Continue to pray for him and his family.

In the last *News from Keston* I wrote that the new newspaper would start production in January. But the separate note put out with that issue explained that we had reluctantly decided not to go ahead with the paper for a variety of reasons, partly financial. Instead, we shall develop our *News Service*, which we produce 12–15 times a year. It is widely used by the church press in this country, as no doubt many of you realize. What you may not know is that it is also sent to a hundred religious newspapers and periodicals in Canada and the United States. Our Australian committee is also helping to get the news into their papers, and now the Rev. Robert Yule, who is busy activating support in New Zealand, plans to get publicity there, too.

But we need an even wider coverage. Many missions and radio stations, which already use *Keston News Service* extensively, urgently need more material on a monthly basis. The radio stations are broadcasting daily and want up-to-the-minute news. The missions, many of which publish a monthly newsletter, also need far more material than we are sending them – more documents, more news items, more translations of comment and of articles which we have found in the press and journals of Eastern Europe. The monitoring of these latter forms a major part of our work at Keston College. So we now hope to extend this service for those people

who need it. This is to be one of our major enterprises for 1977, if additional support is given for this aspect of the work.

Please write to us if you would be interested in receiving such additional information. We hope that a new grant will help to pay the salary of the extra staff member who will be needed to run such a service, but, naturally, there will be an additional charge to those wishing to receive it.

We have also been carefully reviewing our policy on speaking engagements. Our primary function is to do the basic research and vast reading necessary to monitor the current situation of believers in Eastern Europe. From this grows our output in the form of *Religion in Communist Lands*, *Keston News Service*, our free newsletter *The Right to Believe* (which we plan to continue producing several times a year), not to mention books and translations (we now have ten books in the Keston Books series, which have either been published or are about to be published). But we are now being inundated with requests from churches all over the country to visit them and speak about our work. We are delighted at the growing interest and concern, but are also worried that if we respond positively to all these requests, the basic work of Keston College will not be done. Our Council of Management discussed this problem recently and came to the conclusion that our speaking engagements must be limited to approximately one per staff member per month. We hope you will understand if we are not able to provide a speaker at the time you ask. But if your church is interested and wants to hear more we can suggest that you hire one of the two films we send out – *The Bitter Cup* which tells the story of the Baptist Church in the Soviet Union and *Faithfulness*, a recent film made by the BBC which re-enacts the trial of Georgi Vins. We hope to inaugurate a series of talks on tape also. In addition, we can send you books on a "Sale or Return" basis, as well as extra copies of *The Right to Believe* to hand out. If we cannot visit you, do take advantage of these offers.

One of our staff, Milena Kalinovska, has been giving a course of lectures on "Russian Literature and Society" at the City Literary Institute, Stukely Street, Drury Lane, London W.C.2. since last September. The lecture takes place at lunch time and lasts for an hour and a half. They will continue until Easter 1977. Milena is also planning a book on religion in Russian art and literature. This follows our very successful exhibition in the Parkway Gallery last year.

New books produced by the staff of Keston include:

1. My own on the Lithuanian Catholics, *The Land of Crosses*.
2. *The Life of Father Zachariah*, the first in a series of Russian spiritual classics to be published by Mowbrays with Sir John Lawrence as general editor. It was translated by Jane Ellis.
3. *The Meek and the Mighty* by Hans Brandenburg, translated by Kathy

Matchett. This tells the story of the emergence of the Evangelical movement in Russia.

4. The newly published Christian prisoner list. Lord Soper referred to this on the BBC when he mentioned the protest of a number of church leaders about the imprisonment of believers in communist countries. This protest took place on 10 December, Human Rights Day, when the church leaders tried unsuccessfully to deliver a letter to the Soviet ambassador in London.

Our Annual General Meeting on 8 January was a great success. It was a pleasure to welcome so many of you to Keston College. We now have to hire the Village Hall to accommodate all of you. It is an encouragement to all our staff to feel your support so tangibly.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

Forthcoming Engagements 1977

Alan Scarfe

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| Mar. 2 | Mottingham at 8.00 p.m. |
| Mar. 13 | Luton at 6.30 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. |
| Mar. 26 | One day conference at Portsmouth Baptist Union and Baptist Missionary Auxiliary. |
| May 11 | Sittingbourne at 7.30 p.m. |
| May 24 | Horsham (Sussex) Baptist Association. Afternoon symposium. |
| Jun. 21 | Chislehurst at 8.00 p.m. |

Jane Ellis

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| Mar. 19 | Society of St. John Chrysostom, AGM. |
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Moir Blacklaws

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| Mar. 29 | Bromley Town Hall at 12.00 a.m. |
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Victoria Watts

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| Mar. 27 | Plaitford at 6.30 p.m. |
| Apr. 26 | Sidcup at 8.00 p.m. |