

## *News From Keston College*

It is over a year since News from Keston College last appeared in this publication: a year in which, as all *RCL* readers will know, financial difficulties presented us with many challenges and forced us to put all our activities under critical examination. The exercise, though traumatic, has proved therapeutic, and while we have had to shelve any immediate plans for expansion, the momentum and efficiency of our work has, if anything, increased.

Over a year ago we were planning to build an extension to the College. The hopes we had then of raising sufficient money still remain unfulfilled and we cannot now proceed with this enterprise. We have lost several members of our staff this year for various reasons: Xenia Howard-Johnston, the editor of *RCL* since its birth in 1973, and her editorial assistant, Gill Ablitt; Janet Curtis from the archive; and Marie Cornell from the switchboard. I would like to express the gratitude of all at Keston for the work of all of them.

Continuing fundraising efforts co-ordinated by the Rev. Bernard Tidball and the arrival of a number of generous grants from trusts and supporters have however meant that our work can go on. Two substantial grants have enabled Marite Sapiets to undertake a study of the Seventh-Day Adventists in the Soviet Union and Grazyna Sikorska to continue her work on Poland. Miss Ginte Damušis, of the Lithuanian Information Center, New York, received a grant enabling her to work at Keston during July and August helping to update our Lithuanian archive and disseminate information on Lithuanian Catholics. Meanwhile, an article published by one of our supporters in the evangelical press earlier this year has brought in substantial financial support from new contacts; and a leading firm of advertising consultants has designed, and paid for, a new brochure which will bring Keston before an even wider audience. We are extremely grateful for these and many similar gestures of support from all sides which have proved to us over the past year just how valuable and valued the work of Keston is. Nevertheless

we are still by no means on safe financial ground. Now more than ever we need substantial committed long-term support for our work if we are to plan ahead effectively and realistically.

As well as fulfilling our usual quota of speaking engagements in Great Britain we have been involved in a number of important international meetings. In autumn 1980 the Rev. Michael Bourdeaux chaired a session on the religious revival in socialist societies at the Second World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies held at Garmisch in West Germany, and two other members of Keston's staff participated. In November 1980 I went to Madrid to talk to British and US delegates at the opening of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and over the subsequent months Keston has been able to telex information to Madrid on the situation of believers in Eastern European countries which has been of material use to delegates in their negotiations with their counterparts from those countries. In June 1981 Alexander Tomsy was one of five speakers at a conference on "The Situation of the Church in Czechoslovakia" held in Passau, West Germany, and organized by the Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung in collaboration with Opus Bonum. The use of Keston material in the media, acknowledged or unacknowledged, continues to increase. Several members of Keston's staff are working on books, and Canon Trevor Beeson, whose invaluable book *Discretion and Valour* is due to appear shortly in a new updated edition, has been working on the revision of this text in close consultation with our staff.

Solidarity with the work of Keston finds concrete expression in the shape of Keston College Support Groups in different parts of Great Britain. Particularly active is the Edinburgh support group: both this year and last year during the Edinburgh Festival its members were allowed to set up a Keston stand in St Giles' Cathedral which attracted considerable interest. Our affiliated branches in Australia and New Zealand also constitute a vital part of Keston's activity. Our Information Officer, Mrs Alyona Kojevnikov, returned in September after three months in Australia where in response to ever-growing interest in our work she had accomplished a marathon of interviews and speaking engagements. Meanwhile, Keston's Director the Rev. Michael Bourdeaux is taking his first sabbatical since founding Keston College 12 years ago: he is teaching and lecturing for six months in the USA, and will be back here in January 1982. Needless to say, he will also be acting as ambassador for Keston, in close co-operation with Alan Scarfe, the executive secretary of SSRC, our affiliate in the USA.

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PHILIP WALTERS  
Acting Director