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Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe

Challenges since 1989

Edited by

Sabrina P. Ramet

*Professor of Political Science, Norwegian University of Science and Technology,
Trondheim, Norway*

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For Ted Jelen

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Following a well-established, though sometimes flouted, convention, we capitalize *Church* when referring to an institution, and lower-case *church*, when referring to a building. I am grateful to the two reviewers for their most helpful suggestions. I also thank the Peace Research Institute, Oslo, for providing a small subsidy in support of this publication.

Sabrina P. Ramet
February 2013

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1

Religious Organizations in Post-Communist Central and Southeastern Europe: An Introduction

Sabrina P. Ramet

I

The upsurge of popular resistance, defiance, and collective self-assertion which swept the communists out of power in Central and Southeastern Europe between 1989 and 1990 had its roots in the 1970s (just think of Charter 77) and the early 1980s. One may even trace the ultimate collapse of the communist organizational monopoly in the region back to its initial establishment in the latter half of the 1940s. Never accepted as legitimate by the local population, in spite of its genuine achievements in terms of assuring a measure of economic equality and partial, if qualified, progress in promoting gender equality, communism was doomed by its intolerance of free thought, free speech, free travel, and political competition, as well as by its recourse to violence and incarceration in dealing with perceived threats (as in the murder of Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko by agents of the Polish secret police in 1984). Where free thought is concerned, freedom of religion was, as is well known, a central demand and the limitations on its exercise constituted only one of a number of fractures which ultimately brought the communist organizational monopoly to an end.

In the Central and Southeast European region, 1989/1990 marked a great historical watershed. Where political monopoly and a planned economy once prevailed, one now finds political pluralism and capitalist economics. Controlled and censored media have given way to a more diverse media market, albeit one in which there have been, nonetheless, tendencies toward concentration of ownership and not always subtle

forms of political influence.¹ And the Church–state formulae operative in communist times – which ranged from total suppression in Albania to tight control and monitoring in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, to various and diverse forms of *modus vivendi* within fixed limits in the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia – have been replaced by a religious marketplace in which the larger, traditional Churches have tried to consolidate their positions and expand their influence,² while newer entrants to the market, whether missionary Churches from the West (e.g., the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) or local creations, have tried to carve out a space and establish toeholds in the region.³ But, as Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu have noted, the post-communist governments in the region have tended to favor the dominant Church in both formal and informal ways, in spite of constitutional proclamations about the equality of (registered) religious associations.⁴ This volume examines some trends and tendencies in the public life of religious associations in Central and Southeastern Europe, identifying certain legacies and controversies arising from the pre-1989 Church–state condominium, and discussing some new challenges and opportunities for religious organizations in the region.

Leaving aside Albania and Kosovo, where statistics on religious affiliation are seriously unreliable, reported religious affiliation suggests that Catholicism is strongest in Poland (between 89% and 93% nominal Catholics,⁵ although only about 40% of Polish Catholics attended mass regularly in 2011)⁶ and Croatia (86.2%)⁷, see Table 1.1. Orthodox Christianity is recorded as strongest in Romania (86.8% reported Orthodox), Serbia (85%), and Bulgaria (82.6%). Muslims are the largest religious group in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where they constitute an estimated 40% of the population. Only in the Czech Republic are persons who are unaffiliated with any religion in a clear majority. In each of the remaining countries (Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovakia, and Slovenia), one Church predominates, with reported membership in the largest Church ranging from a “low” of 51.9% Catholic in Hungary to a high of 74.2% Orthodox in Montenegro.

In only three countries in the region do Protestants account for more than 5% of the population: Romania (7.5%), Slovakia (10.8%), and Hungary (15.9% Calvinist and 3% Lutheran). In Albania, which at one time had a Muslim majority, there has been “a significant movement of Muslims towards Catholicism... [alongside] Protestant Christian proselytism.”⁸ This conclusion is borne out by Isa Blumi’s contribution (Chapter 12) on Albanians. As he writes, the communist regime of

Table 1.1 Religious affiliation in Central and Southeastern Europe (population figures from July 2011; percentages from censuses of 2001–2002)

POLAND total population = 38,441,588	
Roman Catholic	89.8%
Eastern Orthodox	1.3%
Protestant	0.3%
Other	0.3%
Unspecified	8.3%
CZECH REPUBLIC, total population = 10,190,213	
Roman Catholic	26.8%
Protestant	2.1%
Other	3.3%
Unspecified	8.8%
Unaffiliated	59%
SLOVAKIA, total population = 5,477,038	
Roman Catholic	68.9%
Protestant	10.8%
Eastern-Rite Catholic	4.1%
Other or unspecified	3.2%
None	13%
HUNGARY, total population = 9,976,062	
Roman Catholic	51.9%
Calvinist	15.9%
Lutheran	3%
Eastern-Rite Catholic	2.6%
Other Christian	1%
Other or unspecified	11.1%
Unaffiliated	14.5%
SLOVENIA, total population = 2,000,092	
Catholic	57.8%
Muslim	2.4%
Orthodox	2.3%
Other Christian	0.9%
Unaffiliated	3.5%
Other or unspecified	23%
None	10.1%
CROATIA, total population = 4,483,804	
Roman Catholic	87.8%
Orthodox	4.4%
Other Christian	0.4%
Muslim	1.3%
Other or unspecified	0.9%
None	5.2%

Table 1.1 (Continued)

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, total population = 4,622,163	
Muslim	40%
Orthodox	31%
Roman Catholic	15%
Other	14%
SERBIA, total population = 7,310,555	
Serbian Orthodox	85%
Catholic	5.5%
Muslim	3.2%
Protestant	1.1%
Unspecified	2.6%
Other, unknown, or atheist	2.6%
MACEDONIA, total population = 2,077,328	
Macedonian Orthodox	64.7%
Muslim	33.3%
Other Christian	0.37%
Other and unspecified	1.63%
MONTENEGRO, total population = 661,029	
Orthodox	74.2%
Muslim	17.7%
Catholic	3.5%
Other	0.6%
Unspecified	3%
Atheist	1%
ROMANIA, total population = 21,904,551	
Romanian Orthodox	86.8%
Protestants	7.5%
Roman Catholic	4.7%
Other (mostly Muslim)	0.9%
None	0.1%
BULGARIA, total population = 7,093,635	
Bulgarian Orthodox	82.6%
Muslim	12.2%
Other Christian	1.2%
Other	4%

Source: CIA Factbook, downloaded on 9 July 2011.

Enver Hoxha obliterated Islamic institutions and, since 1990, Christian Churches have made significant gains in Albania.

II

Although Pope John Paul II (1920–2005; reigned 1978–2005) responded to the collapse of communism by calling for a re-evangelization of

Eastern Europe, this was not because religious affiliation as such had particularly declined in the region (outside the Czech Republic and Eastern Germany) but rather because changes in legislation had contributed to changes in behavior. Divorce and abortion, in particular, had come to be seen as normal in communist-era Eastern Europe, not to mention contraception, and, for that matter, the Orthodox Churches have also decried these practices.⁹ Thus, by re-evangelization, what Pope John Paul II had in mind above all was to suppress, as far as possible, abortion and divorce, while preventing the passage of legislation granting civil union status to gays and lesbians. And yet abortion has remained legal, under somewhat varying conditions, in most of the countries in the region. The major exceptions are Poland and Hungary – both predominantly Catholic countries. In Poland, under a law passed in 1993, abortion is permitted only when the woman's life is in danger, when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, or when the fetus is determined to be seriously damaged.¹⁰ In Hungary, abortion had been legal until recently, but, under a new constitution passed in 2011, human life is declared to be protected from the moment of conception – effectively ruling abortion as unconstitutional. Moreover, although abortion is, at the time of writing, legal in Slovakia up to the tenth week and beyond that if the mother's life is in danger, under legislation passed in 2009, women are required to accept advice on the risks of and alternatives to abortion before undergoing the procedure.¹¹ Abortion has been legal in Croatia, but in June 2011 local Catholic bishops renewed their effort to obtain a total ban on it, alongside a ban on the adoption of children by same-sex couples.¹²

“Re-evangelization” of local behavior has had similarly limited success where same-sex relationships are concerned. In Romania, for example, the Orthodox Church fought hard to prevent the parliament from legalizing homosexuality, only to watch helplessly as the Chamber of Deputies passed the bill in June 2000,¹³ while Macedonia adopted an anti-discrimination law in 2010, but one that omitted any protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.¹⁴ The key international conventions protecting the rights of sexual minorities are Protocol 17 (concerning human rights, sexual orientation, and gender identity) to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (2011) and the declaration read in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on the same subject three years earlier. A new version of the declaration was issued by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2011. The 85 member states supporting it included all of the countries of the Central and Southeast European region except for Kosovo. In this respect, the traditional Churches would seem to have been

blocked in their endeavor to marginalize homosexuals and other sexual minorities. However, the violence at the June 2011 Gay Pride parade in Split and persistent displays of homophobia in several countries in the region, among them Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria,¹⁵ Poland,¹⁶ Romania,¹⁷ and Serbia,¹⁸ reflect both the influence of local Catholic and Orthodox Churches (and in Bosnia also provocation by the country's small but active Wahhabi community¹⁹) and prejudices which survive independently of the encouragement of these religious bodies. In Slovakia in May 2010, a week before a Gay Pride parade was scheduled to take place in Bratislava, Catholic bishops organized a public anti-gay demonstration. When the day of the parade arrived, it had to be canceled when hundreds of anti-gay protesters, including large numbers of neo-Nazis, attacked the assembled crowd with rocks and tear-gas grenades, calling the marchers for tolerance "deviants."²⁰ Again, in June 2012, on the eve of a Gay Pride parade in Sofia, Bulgaria, with various far-right formations planning a counterdemonstration, the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church issued a statement characterizing homosexuality as "an unnatural lust which unconditionally harms both the personality of those who commit it and society as a whole."²¹ In this connection, it is indicative of the strength of the hostility of some religious organizations toward homosexuality that, in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2009 the Islamic, Orthodox, Catholic, and Jewish communities, which otherwise have found it difficult to identify common ground in recent years, managed to unite in a coordinated protest against a law to legalize gay marriage.²² This scenario was replayed the following year in Macedonia, when the heads of the five leading faiths in the country (Orthodoxy, Islam, Catholicism, Methodism, and Judaism) united behind a proposal to introduce a definition of marriage – a union of a male and a female – into the constitution. "No one should be afraid of traditional and correct views regarding marriage," Archbishop Stefan, the head of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, declared on that occasion.²³ By contrast, in the Czech Republic, where there are gay-friendly parishes of the Old Catholic, Anglican, and Evangelical Churches, a Catholic spokesperson voiced nuanced support in April 2011 for a bill which granted certain legal rights to homosexual partnerships. Speaking for the Catholic Episcopal Conference, Rev. Daniel Herman added that "The church accepts that the state can recognize co-habiting homosexuals, whose lifestyles are a private matter."²⁴ Clearly the Catholic Church has learned to adapt to the more tolerant and more liberal political culture in the Czech Republic.

But “re-evangelization” has also been expressed in symbolic form, through highly visible manifestations of gigantomania. Perhaps the earliest token of this which carried over into the post-communist era is the Serbian Orthodox St. Sava Cathedral in Belgrade. Covering an area of 8,162 square meters and having an enclosed volume of 170,000 cubic meters, the cathedral was under construction between 1935 and 1941 but building work was suspended during World War Two. It was only in 1985 that construction was resumed, and the 4,000-ton central dome was lifted into place over the course of 40 days ending on 26 June 1989. Today the cathedral is essentially complete and measures 82 meters in height (counting a 12-meter cross fixed on top of the dome), 91 meters in length, and 81 meters in width. Its bell towers have 49 bells and the gallery can seat an 800-member choir.

The Romanian Orthodox Church, operating some 13,627 places of worship at the end of 1998, started construction of a further 1,017 churches between 1998 and 2003, and sketched out plans for a “colossal” new patriarchal cathedral which its advocates claimed would be the largest Orthodox church in Europe. In fact the edifice, if completed, was originally supposed to be 72 meters long, 44 meters wide, and 50 meters high, which is to say not as high or as large as St. Sava Cathedral.²⁵ The authorities allocated 110,000 square meters for the building in downtown Bucharest, but President Traian Băsescu held up construction, provoking tension with the patriarch. By February 2011 the Church had revised its plans upward: instead of standing 50 meters high, the cathedral is now supposed to be 120 meters in height, thereby topping both St. Sava Cathedral and the Catholic St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Mostar, which at 107.20 meters is currently the tallest cathedral in Southeastern Europe. The €2.5 million price tag has sparked controversy in Romania, however.²⁶ Criticizing the project, architect Serban Popa drew attention to the fact that, given its planned size and intended site, “the cathedral would tower over public institutions adjacent to the square and thus symbolically subordinate the state to the church.”²⁷ Construction of the Cathedral of the Redeemer, as the edifice is called, is supposed to be completed in 2013.

Crosses have, even more obviously, served a symbolic purpose, as have statues of Jesus of Nazareth. A 33-meter-high cross on Hum Hill overlooking Mostar, erected by local Catholic Croats, seemed to some to mark Mostar and its surrounding area as Catholic and provoked recrimination from Muslims, who circulated a petition demanding its removal. Catholics in turn cited the petition as evidence that the Muslims were intolerant of Catholics and Catholic symbols.²⁸ A subsequent

initiative on the part of Bosnian Serbs to erect a 26-meter-high cross on Mount Trebević, overlooking Sarajevo, elicited a similar response, with Sarajevo's mayor, Semiha Borovac, warning that it could undermine efforts to rebuild tolerance among members of different ethnic and religious groups.²⁹ However, it is Macedonia which holds the claim to having erected the world's biggest cross. Standing 77 meters in height, the Millennium cross is situated on top of Mt. Vodno, where construction began in 2002, with funding from the Macedonian Orthodox Church.³⁰ In spring 2012, the Macedonian authorities announced plans to erect a 30-meter-high statue of Mother Teresa on Skopje's Macedonia Square, not far from the giant equestrian statue of Alexander the Great.³¹

Where statues of Jesus of Nazareth are concerned, three cities have claimed to have erected Europe's tallest. The first was the Slovak city of Prešov, which in 2008 announced plans to erect a 33-meter-high statue of Jesus, which was promoted at the time as the "biggest" statue in Europe of the symbolic founder of Christianity.³² Subsequently, the town of Świebodzin in western Poland completed the erection of a statue of Christ the King, again standing 33 meters tall (with each meter symbolizing one year in the life of Jesus³³), but placing it on a high mound. Counting the mound and the crown on the head of the figure, the top of the statue is 51 meters above visitors.³⁴ Advertised at the time as the world's tallest statue of Jesus, it rises higher than the more famous statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, which is "only" 39.6 meters in height, including its pedestal. But, already by the time the citizens of Świebodzin were celebrating their statue, Poles in Tarnów in southern Poland began erecting their own giant statue of Christ the King on St. Martin's hill, which was expected to rise to a height of 54 meters. Aside from these two huge statues of Jesus, Poland also erected a 10-meter-tall statue of "the Polish pope," John Paul II, in front of the recently constructed basilica in Lichen, which in turn is the 7th largest church in Europe and the 11th largest in the world.³⁵ Meanwhile, in Croatia, Željko Kerum, mayor of the coastal town of Split, announced plans in July 2011 to erect a statue of Jesus to stand 3 meters taller than the one standing in Świebodzin.³⁶ As far as I have been able to determine, these displays of gigantomania have been restricted to the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The King Fahd mosque in Sarajevo, built with Saudi financing, although large, is situated in a part of town which, in spite of a dense population, had not had a mosque nearby and thus meets the real needs of the local Muslim population.

III

The religious communities in the region have faced some common challenges, such as property restitution, and have been drawn into various controversies. Where property restitution is concerned, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have, in general, done well, although there were controversies in some countries, such as the Czech Republic,³⁷ Poland, Romania, and Serbia. These disputes about property involved the question of restitution and/or compensation and, in the case of Romania, also disagreements between the Orthodox and Eastern-Rite Catholic Churches concerning certain specific property claims. In Serbia, including the Sandžak, the property disputes were not resolved until 2006, as Radmila Radić and Milan Vukomanović (Chapter 8) and Aleksander Zdravkovski (Chapter 9) note in their contributions. In the Czech Republic, where as many as 70% of the public were opposed to any form of restitution, the government agreed in January 2012 to return to 17 recognized Churches 56% of the property confiscated by the communist regime and, in addition, to pay the religious communities 59 billion crowns, adjusted upwards for inflation. As the largest religious association, the Catholic Church will receive the lion's share of the financial compensation. At the same time, the state will gradually taper off the subsidies it has been paying to the country's religious organizations.³⁸ The Chamber of Deputies subsequently approved the measure and, in late February 2013, the Czech government finalized the arrangement. Of the 59 billion crowns to be paid in compensation to 16 religious organizations, for properties confiscated by the communists and not being returned, 47 billion crowns are supposed to be paid to the Catholic Church.³⁹ But in Romania, more than elsewhere, an extra layer of complexity was added to the question of property restitution in that the Eastern-Rite Catholic Church claimed some properties also claimed by the Romanian Orthodox Church.⁴⁰ These and other disputes are discussed in the chapters which follow.

A second, more troubling controversy has centered on the collaboration of clergy with the local security services or secret police in the communist era. Such collaboration may have taken place in every communist country except, of course, Albania after 1967. Most of the countries in the region have made their secret police archives open to the public; the exceptions are Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro and, until they do so, it may be impossible to confirm whether the clergy in these countries collaborated or not. As Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu note in their contribution (Chapter 11), as many as half of the Orthodox

clergy and theology students in Bulgaria were recruited as informers by the Komitet za daržavna sigurnost⁴¹; by January 2012, 11 of Bulgaria's 15 metropolitan bishops had been exposed as former collaborators with the communist security service, including metropolitan bishops Simeon of the Bulgarian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe, Kiril of Varna, and Galaktion of Stara Zagora. In addition, Bulgaria's current chief mufti, Mustafa Hadzhi, and his predecessor, Nedim Gendzhev, as well as Bishop Georgi Yovchev, the head of the Catholic Church in Bulgaria, also collaborated. The late Orthodox Patriarch Maxim's security file was either hidden or destroyed, thus he can be neither blamed nor exonerated.⁴² There were also accusations that Mustafa ef. Cerić, the reis-ul-ulema of Sarajevo, had collaborated with the Yugoslav security service, although Cerić denied the charges.⁴³ In Poland, as noted in my own contribution to this collection (Chapter 2), between 10% and 25% of Catholic clergy, including some bishops, became involved in collaboration with the local *Služba Bezpieczeństwa* (SB). One of the more spectacular revelations involved Fr. Konrad Hejmo, who had been on the staff in the Vatican beginning in 1979 and who used his access to the pope to report to the SB on the pope's activities. The situation was much the same in Romania, where Orthodox clergy passed along information obtained in the confessional to the inquisitive Securitate. According to a leading Romanian daily, at least six members of the Holy Synod, together with thousands of regular priests, had collaborated on an ongoing basis with the Securitate, while "smaller denominations were also heavily infiltrated by secret agents" reporting to the Securitate.⁴⁴ Among those found guilty of collaboration (as informants) with the Romanian Securitate were Archbishop Pimen of Suceava and Radauti, and the metropolitan-bishop, Nicolae Corneanu, who nonetheless distinguished himself by being the only metropolitan-bishop in Romania to admit his past role as a police informant.⁴⁵ Long-time Patriarch Teoctist, who had praised Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu shortly before the leader's overthrow for his "brilliant activity... wise guidance... [and] daring thinking," admitted his collaboration with the regime soon after Ceaușescu's fall from power.⁴⁶ Teoctist passed away in August 2007. In Hungary, as research conducted by Krisztián Ungváry has revealed, none other than László Cardinal Paskai, who served as archbishop of Esztergom and primate from 1987 until his retirement in 2002, had been recruited by the secret police while he was a seminary teacher and, during the years 1965–1974, regularly passed information to his handlers.⁴⁷ His information was considered sufficiently valuable that his services were eventually recognized by the acronym "tbm,"

meaning that he was motivated by genuine ideological commitment. The Lutheran bishop Zoltán Káldy is also said to have been a security police informant, as is the case with an additional five Catholic bishops and archbishops identified by Ungváry in 2006.⁴⁸ All told, between 7% and 10% of Hungarian clergy collaborated with the State Security Services, according to György Gyarmati, director of the Historical Archives of the State Security Services in Budapest.⁴⁹ Ungváry examines the issue of collaboration in greater depth in his contribution (Chapter 4).

Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina,⁵⁰ and also Slovenia, had their share of priest-informers, as did also Slovakia, as Milan Reban notes (Chapter 3). The most prominent of Slovak clerical informers was Archbishop Ján Sokol of Trnava, who in February 2007 admitted to having met with agents of the *Štátna bezpečnosť* (ŠtB), while nonetheless claiming to have “tried... to distract their attention to irrelevant issues.”⁵¹ According to documents released by the National Memory Institute, Archbishop Sokol received gifts from the ŠtB on at least six occasions, with one of these estimated at more than the average annual salary of that time.⁵² A little more than a month after the announcement (in April 2009) of his impending retirement, allegations surfaced that Archbishop Sokol had transferred the equivalent of €16.6 million (at the 2009 exchange rate) in 1998 to Štefan Náhlik, a former secret police agent. The funds were reported to have come from the proceeds of the sale of lands belonging to the Church.⁵³ In Croatia, Rudolf Pukljak, manager of the theological seminary in Zagreb and a man trusted by Archbishop Franjo Šeper of Zagreb (who served as archbishop from 1960 to 1969), was at the same time a collaborator with the Yugoslav security police, UDB-a.⁵⁴ The collaboration of Catholic bishops and priests with the Polish security service is discussed in the next chapter. Thus far, Serbian citizens have had very limited access to the security service files and, at the time of writing (3 January 2013), no new law concerning this particular area of human rights had been passed in Serbia.

A third theme which runs through this volume to a greater or lesser extent is intolerance and religious extremism. Among the countries in Central and Southeastern Europe, religious intolerance is weakest in the Czech Republic or, to put it another way, the Czech Republic counts as the most tolerant country in the region in most respects. Elsewhere one needs to distinguish between the “soft” intolerance of sexual minorities, sex education, and experimental sexual practices on the part of mainline religious organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, and the Islamic community,⁵⁵ and the more virulent, sometimes violently expressed intolerance of fringe groups. Such groups

might be associated with one or another religious organization, such as the Serbian Orthodox journal *Dveri srpske*, which in December 2001 staged a meeting of “Orthodox-national Serbian youth” at which those attending were advised that Serbian society was experiencing a spiritual crisis and that “retraditionalization . . . is an answer to the social crisis and crisis of values,”⁵⁶ or such as the anti-Semitic Redemptorist priest, Fr. Tadeusz Rydzyk, who operates Radio Maryja in Poland. Promoters of religious intolerance may also operate outside religious organizations, however, such as the Hungarian political party “Jobbik, Movement for a Better Hungary,” with its neofascist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic accents, which describes itself as a conservative and patriotic Christian party. Founded in 2002 by a group of Catholic and Protestant university students, Jobbik attracted more than a quarter of the votes of young persons aged 18 to 29 in the 2010 elections.

But it is the Wahhabi Muslims who have been the most worrisome, at least for the authorities in Southeastern Europe. As Janine Natalya Clark writes in her contribution about religious elements in the War in Bosnia (Chapter 7), “Wahhabism has its roots in the ideas and teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, an 18th-century scholar and religious reformist in Saudi Arabia,” and it seeks to purify Islam and to impose a literal reading of the Qu’ran on all Muslims. Wahhabism traces its presence in the region to the several hundred mujahedin who came to Bosnia during the war years (1992–1995) to help to defend the new republic against Serbian aggression. Originating in Afghanistan and various Arab countries, these mujahedin brought along their own ideas about Islam, and soon took it upon themselves to “correct” the “errors” of their fellow Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Muslims have traditionally been Hanafi Muslims, which is to say adherents of what is generally regarded as the most liberal school of Islam, and they have displayed great tolerance in all spheres. The Wahhabis, by contrast, are characterized by the claim to know the will of Allah, to know that Allah demands uniformity in prayer, ritual, attire, and customs, and to know that they are Allah’s chosen weapon to impose His will by force. Spreading out from Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Wahhabis made converts also in Kosovo, Macedonia, and both the Serbian and the Montenegrin portions of the Sandžak.⁵⁷ As Clark notes, the Wahhabis’ “strict Islamic beliefs do not resonate among the majority of Bosnian Muslims,” and thus they continue to resort to violence in their self-conceived holy war against fellow Muslims. This culminated in a police raid in February 2010 of the village of Gornja Maoca in the Brčko district, which had the largest Wahhabi community in Bosnia-Herzegovina (about 100 strong). As a result of the raid, six Bosnians and one foreigner were arrested

and taken in for questioning.⁵⁸ In March 2011, the Bosnian authorities deported six Palestinians with Israeli citizenship who were said to have been associated with the Wahhabi sect.⁵⁹ In the meantime, the Bosnian government instituted a process of vetting those Muslims from abroad who had been granted citizenship in the country since 1992. Of the 1,255 persons checked, 661 were stripped of their Bosnian citizenship by 2007.⁶⁰ Subsequently, in January 2012, the authorities arrested Nusret Imamović, the head of the largest Wahhabi community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, on charges of economic crime and corruption.⁶¹

Meanwhile, the Macedonian authorities had taken similar action against a Wahhabi community in the Albanian-populated village of Brodec in November 2007, apprehending 13 of the Wahhabis and taking possession of a huge arsenal of diverse weaponry.⁶² This proved to be only a minor setback for the local Wahhabis, however, and, having lost five mosques to the Wahhabis between April and September 2010, the mainstream Islamic community was reported to be increasingly alarmed by their activity.⁶³ Both Ibrahim Shabani, the mufti of Skopje, and Sulejman Rexhepi, the head of the Islamic religious community (Islamska vjerska zajednica, IVZ) in Macedonia, appealed to the authorities “to support [the] IVZ and take appropriate measures against these radical groups whose goal is to harm [Macedonia’s] image and prevent our country from entering [the] EU and NATO.”⁶⁴ Saudi Arabian sources have provided funds not only to Wahhabis in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia but also allegedly to an illegal branch of the Islamic organization Al Waqf al-Islami, which put down roots in neighboring Bulgaria. In October 2010, Bulgarian police and officers from the State Agency for National Security searched the homes and offices used by this branch in the village of Lazhnitsa, near the town of Gotse Delchev, confiscating propaganda brochures.⁶⁵ To the extent that the Wahhabis are intolerant of the beliefs, practices, and attire of fellow Muslims, they threaten, at a minimum, the human rights of those Muslims who are not Wahhabis and, in this sense, they represent a threat to liberalism and democracy in Southeastern Europe. To the extent that they stockpile arms and use them against those of whose lifestyles they disapprove, as Aleksander Zdravkovski notes in his contribution (Chapter 9), they threaten the peace and security of those countries in which they operate.

IV

The Catholic and Orthodox Churches share many features in common, including the principle of hierarchy, an emphasis on doctrine, conservative social values (including the exclusion of women from

positions of authority within the respective religious bodies), and a tendency, reasserted in the Catholic Church in the papacy of Benedict XVI, to treat Protestant Churches as human creations, which is to say as in some sense unworthy vehicles for reverence. The most striking difference between the two, however, lies in controversies between rival Orthodox Churches, for which there is no strict comparison within the Catholic communion. Here I am thinking of the as yet unresolved rivalries between the Macedonian and Serbian Orthodox Churches within Macedonia, and between the Montenegrin and Serbian Orthodox Churches within Montenegro – rivalries which are a point of focus in the contribution from Aleksander Zdravkovski and Kenneth Morrison (Chapter 10). The ongoing polemics between the partisans of each side suggest that these rivalries are not unassociated with sentiments of religious intolerance.⁶⁶ In the case of Macedonia, however, there were some signs of a potential reconciliation when, in October 2012, the Serbian president, Tomislav Nikolić, met with the Macedonian president, Gjorge Ivanov, to discuss, among other things, a way to resolve the interecclesiastical dispute.⁶⁷ This remarkable initiative was immediately seconded by Serbian Bishop Lavrentije of Šabac, who offered that the Macedonian Orthodox Church's autocephaly should be recognized⁶⁸ – which is to say not only by the Serbian Patriarchate in Belgrade but also by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul and the entire Orthodox communion.

The three central themes of this volume (property restitution, the collaboration of clergy with the communist secret police, and intolerance), together with a subtheme (religious instruction in the state schools), identify the most salient challenges in this sphere, albeit for different reasons. Property restitution has generally been advocated on the premise that whatever each religious organization possessed on the eve of the communist takeover or, alternatively, on the eve of World War Two, should be restored to each respective religious body. Not taken into account, however – at least not by advocates of restitution – is how the Churches came into possession of forest lands and other estates in the first place (typically, in the Habsburg domain, by royal grant) and whether such restitution would impact social services negatively (where schools or hospitals are involved). In the case of restitution to the Eastern-Rite Catholic Church in Romania, there is the added complication that the local Orthodox Church had received the lands in question from the communist authorities in 1948.

Property restitution to the religious organizations moved the most slowly in the Czech Republic, because the Czechs are among the least