In this Special Issue

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IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

An explanation is needed for the content of this special issue. Normally only articles which deal with the religious situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and those issues which have an impact on religious life are published in OPREE. In this issue we present some material which is peripheral to our concerns but has a contextual character.

The first article is by the editor. In it he observes some interesting, little observed intellectual fermentation in the post-Tito era in Yugoslavia. This article would profit by some updating. Regretfully this is not possible at the present time. It should be noted, however, that the trends discernible in the article have continued and even expanded during the past year.

The second piece is an essay likewise written by the editor after several recent trips to the Soviet Union. It contains observations on certain aspects of Soviet life which are less frequently scrutinized by observers. Of particular interest to the author were those aspects of Soviet life which to an outsider generally appear to be well ordered in Soviet life. Here the author was inspired by the Marxian urging to subject all aspects of reality to criticism. Ideally such criticism should be exercised by members of the respective society, namely, in this case it should be an internal Soviet Marxist critique. But it is the author's impression that this task has been avoided by Soviet Marxists. Hence it is important that outsiders engage in it.

The final piece is the most interesting one and the real reason for publishing this special issue. It is a three part samizdat from Moscow
by an anonymous author. The circumstances under which the samizdat was obtained were quite interesting. Several years ago an American professor was approached by a Moscovite in a subway station. Not speaking any Russian he was unable to understand what the man was saying to him. As the subway train approached the Soviet stuck some crumpled paper into the American's pocket and disappeared. The professor did not realize until later that there was a developed negative of a film inside the paper. The negatives contained photos of many typed pages which, however, were illegible at the time due to the minute print. The film was eventually taken out of the Soviet Union at considerable risk. After the film was developed and enlarged it became obvious that it is a rather interesting and sometimes bizarre piece of writing of a malcontent. Rollo May observed that lunatics, artists, and prophets (not necessarily in that order) are the most perceptive sensors of societal maladies. They, before the rest of us, feel and express our collective experiences. Sections of the writing may strike us as the ramblings of a lunatic. Other parts are lucid, literate, but angry attacks at practically all that surrounds the author. The translation is a faithful rendition except for substitution of obscene words with euphemisms to protect the sensibilities of the average reader. We leave it to the readers to judge for themselves whether this samizdat adds to their knowledge of Soviet Life or not.

Paul Mojzes
Editor