



Religion and Politics Research Committee (RC 43) e-news

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Special Issue on Religion and Politics in Russia today



The beautiful Smolny Monastery is located next to Smolny Cathedral and the Smolny Institute where Lenin started the October 1917 Revolution. At present, the monastery is home to the School of International Relations at St Petersburg State University, formerly the Leningrad State University.

During the summer course "Russia in the World" designed for the University of Miami MA in International Administration www.miami.edu/maia/ students, we had the opportunity to interview several young faculty members specializing in religion and International Relations, Olga Tserpitskaya and Alexander Sotnichenko.



WHEN HE BECAME president of Russia Vladimir Putin disclosed that "when I was serving in the KGB in Germany, I always wore a cross under my shirt."

An Interview with two Russian Professors on the topic of Religion, Politics and International Relations

We divided our questions into four groups:

1. Religion as an academic subject in Russian universities
2. Church and State separation
3. Religion in Russian foreign policy
4. Russian Islam

The answers we received represent a wide range of important subjects for Russia. In addition to the personal insights of the two young professors, we talked about the KGB, religiosity in Russia, Islam and the Orthodox Church, as well as Putin and his new law restricting NGOs. The two interviewees represent the new generation of academia with no ingrained Soviet inhibitions. Some of their answers might therefore be somewhat surprising.

Question: Given current world events, the topic of religion as a factor in IR is attracting broad attention in the US and Western Europe. It has not been easy to integrate the two topics, however, due to secular humanist neglect of religion, which also primarily informs positivist social science. This is particularly true in the US. As Robert Jervis, one of the leading US scholars in the IR discipline points out: "Terrorism grounded in religion poses special problems for modern [Western] social science, which has paid little attention to religion, perhaps because most social scientists find this subject uninteresting if not *embarrassing*" [italics added].¹

In our experience, it seems to us that Russian social scientists are very eagerly embracing features of Western positivism and secularism that are compatible with Marxist-Leninist positivism and atheism. In Russia, 70 years of state-sponsored, brutally enforced atheism perhaps have added to the embarrassment Jervis talks about with respect to the Russian scholar's willingness to discuss religion. There also seems to remain a bit of lingering fear among university teachers. Thus we hear of reopening theological seminaries throughout Russia since Gorbachev's reforms, offsetting the horror experienced by church and clergy in communist years (priests were often linked to the KGB, most notably the present Patriarch Alexi II), but what is happening in universities?

Answer: Olga Tserpitskaya: Before I answer this question let me comment on your allusion to Alexi II's involvement with the KGB. I have to tell you a bit about my family for you to understand why I know the subject I'm speaking about. Both of my Grandfathers were Orthodox priests – one of them preached in Vitebsk (now in Byelorussia), and the other – in Leningrad heading the chancellery of the Metropolitan (before this he'd been sent to Lebanon). My Dad is now the superior of a very big cathedral, and my uncle is the Archbishop of Novgorod and Staraya Russa. That is why some of the questions which would take months of research for scholars are just common "kitchen talk" for me, so well-known that I do not have to do research about them. (I'm not trying to show you my personal importance – just would like to explain why I'm

so sure in my comments.)



The ill famed KGB building in Moscow

So, regarding the connection of Patriarch Alexi II with the KGB, I should stress that EVERY priest in Soviet Union visited the KGB. There were no "crystal souls" who didn't – everyone did, it was the law. The KGB gave them permission to become a priest, and it decided whether they were worthy of preaching or not. So, a bishop's main task was to invent a method of how to make someone a priest and how to put them in this or that cathedral. I strongly recommend that you or your colleagues interested in this subject read the book *Man of the Church* – "Chelovek Zerkvi" – but it's available only in Russian so far. It deals with the activities of the Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) who was the most brilliant bishop of the Khrushchev's period and who discovered and mentored Alexi II, metropolitan Cyril, my uncle – many of

¹ Robert Jervis, "An Interim Assessment of September 11: What Has Changed and What Has Not?", *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 117, Number 1, 2002, p.37



them. He was accused of being the KGB's agent. But he wasn't – he was the most devoted person to the Church, to Christ. I know this because my uncle was his personal secretary. Returning to KGB, don't forget that the decision to become a priest was dangerous for the priest personally and for his family as well. You HAD TO promise to be linked with the KGB (or you would not become a priest at all). The priests were often given only two, very unfair choices: listen to the confession of a person – write the full text of this confession on a piece of paper– and bring it to the KGB – this resulted in a priest being considered a good Soviet citizen. OR the priest could listen to the confession – write something benign on the paper such as “he ate meat during the Lent” – and bring that to the KGB. Often, lying to the KGB was the shortest way to a soon death which is what happened to the metropolitan Nikodim and to my Grandpa – both of whom died at the age of 49 in a very strange way. For the Church's history, the Soviet period gave only two categories of priests – heroes or bastards. And there was no third way. I know Patriarch Alexi II personally and quite closely – he is not a bastard. Now I can't write on the origins of the gossip about the love between him and the KGB, but it's gossip and nothing else. I don't pretend to change the point of view of all the scholars who study the modern Church – they have different ways of getting financial help for their studies – but the main question here, in my opinion, is “it's not so important what you promise – it's important what you do.” To promise information doesn't mean to give it... So I'm afraid it's “a bit too much” to blame Alexi II for being a KGB man.

Outside specific educational establishments designated for religion, are there any departments of religious studies at Russian universities and if so where?

Answer: Professor Sotnichenko: religious studies departments were opened as part of Philosophy or History departments at Saint-Petersburg State University, Moscow State University, Krasnoyarsk State University, the Academy of Governmental Services in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow, in Blagoveshensk, Vladivostok and in many other cities and educational establishments. The courses are taught primarily in the traditions of the classical religious studies school, Eliade. But we can say that some departments at these secular universities are connected with the Russian Orthodox Church, for example the University of Pedagogical Studies (for school teachers) in Saint-Petersburg. Also special programs for graduates of madrassat and seminaries (classical religious studies) were opened at ISAA (School of Oriental Studies, by Prof. M.S. Meyer) and Smolny University (Saint-Petersburg).

Tserpitskaya agrees: concerning departments of religious studies, practically every big university has a department of “religion-knowing” in their school of philosophy. The main problem here is that religious studies are mostly considered to be a part of philosophy. But there's now a tendency towards founding non-state universities (for example the St. Tikhon's University, Russian Christian Humanitarian University, some Islamic Universities in Tatarstan etc.) in which the study of religion is the main profile.

Have there been any attempts to link the study of religion to the study of international relations among Russian scholars?

Professor Sotnichenko: I don't know about many



attempts. Prof. Legoyda (MGIMO - Moscow State Institute of International Relations) edits an orthodox magazine Foma with his colleagues. They also have some lectures about religion in IR, but they don't have a special department. Alexander Dugin pays more attention to the factor of religion in IR, but he's a more of an “independent marginal philosopher” than a professor.

Tserpitskaya: I'm not sure there have been many attempts. MGIMO and the Diplomatic Academy established something in cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church's Department for External Relations. Our School of International Relations last year held a conference titled: “Religion in the Modern System of International Relations” and it seems to become annual (See below for an invitation and announcement). The Russian State Museum of Religious History is now preparing the conference on the pilgrimage as a cultural factor (and they will deal with international relations during this event).

Are you familiar with the work of Canon Michael Bordeaux, assumed to be a leading British expert on the state of religion in Russia?

Professor Sotnichenko: Yes I've read two articles about him in English, but I couldn't find any information about him in Russian. As I understood, he analyzed the problem of government – church relations in Russia (and former SU) from a “human rights” point of view. I don't think it's applicable to the Russian conditions. Also, I think he's more of a specialist on the Soviet period, then on the modern situation.

In addition to the four scholars we met at SIR in St Petersburg, could you comment on the study of this topic at the Moscow MGIMO and other Russian universities?

Professor Sotnichenko: Education in Russia is secular, maybe more than in the US. So we can't say that the weak attempts of MGIMO professors could change the situation. The majority of the students (and also all citizens of the RF) think that religion today is not popular and doesn't strongly influence the economical and political processes. I think that Amitai Etzioni was right, that religion is not interesting for western society. Our political elite wants to make Russia a real western country, so the study of religion is now marginal. Have you heard about

the “Orthodox culture” lessons at school and the reactions of society? ²

Professor Tserpitskaya: I believe we have two ways of beginning study: somebody's external interest (Russian Church for MGIMO and Diplomatic Academy, Islam close to local government groups for Tatar Islamic University (not sure about the correct name) and personal initiative (as it was in the Russian State Academy of State-Service – there was a brilliant dissertation by Alexander Koshelev dealing with the modern Church-State relations at our conference). Each of these initiatives was successful in its field as the subject itself is not totally discussed yet.

Could you name main scholars handling this topic and give us some bibliographical information?

Professor Sotnichenko: I think it would be a topic for a serious article. Herewith a very short list:

- ***Vorobyeva, M.** - <http://ethna.upelsinka.com/>
Traditional Religious Studies
- ***Torchinov, E A.** (died in 2002) -Buddhism SpbU
- ***Kunstkamera** (the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Russian Academy of Science), the Institute of Oriental Studies, Islam – History and theory – SpbU.
- ***Rezvan, E.A.** (spec. Kur’anic studies),
- ***Hismatuln, A.A.** (Sufism in middle ages),
- ***Prozorov S.M.** (Muslim law and other),
- ***Abdullaeva F.I.** (Persian Islam),
- ***Vassiltsov K.S.** (Muslim mysticism and metaphysics),
- ***Kotin I.Yu.** (Islam in India) etc. Modern Islam and political Islam – Moscow, Institute of Oriental Studies. This institution and 90% of its published literature is paid for by supporters of Israel. It is the former Institute of Israel Studies, lead by Mr. **E.Ya. Satanovsky**, former leader of the Russian Jewish Congress, www.iimes.ru. So you see, the information about Islam and the Islamic political movements is strongly negative.
- ***Sotnichenko A.A.** (Christianity and Judaism in Ottoman Empire, modern relations between Orthodoxy and Islam, modern political Islamism in Turkey etc) and my project www.meast.ru
(cont'd. right)

Christianity – Orthodox Church Institutions and authors:

- ***Dvorkin, A.** (Geterodoxal Sects in modern Russia),
- ***Kuraev** (Modernism and Orthodoxy), A Metropolitan of Tashkent Vladimir (Relations between Orthodoxy and Islam) and many others.
- ***Panchenko A.A.** (Geterodoxal Christianity in Russia and its folklore.)

The New York Times

² in an article by C. J. CHIVERS, published: September 1, 2006, “Several regions in Russia are including mandatory courses in the Orthodox Christian faith as the new school year begins today, The Moscow Times reported. The courses will teach the subject from a secular and cultural point of view, and not be religious instruction, education officials told the paper. The addition of religion to public school curriculums is further sign of the recovery of the Orthodox faith in a nation still evolving from Soviet times, when atheism was state policy.” However this news has been received with tremendous uproar of opposition claiming that this discriminates against other faiths. For some of the protests See <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=1952>

And many others. I can write more and more about each religion, different authors and their positions, but I know more about Islam.

Professor Tserpitskaya: Among my “favorites” is Dugin (he’s one of the leading modern Russian geopolitics scholars – quite ultra Orthodox but amazing – his picture below).



Are there any research institutes in Russia dealing with the topic, any journals?

Professor Sotnichenko: I don't know about serious journals except “Studies of Religion” at http://www.amursu.ru/religio/index_en.htm. Among Institutions I would name: Moscow www.iimes.ru (Institute of Middle East Studies (modern ME), Institute of Oriental Studies (www.ivran.ru – Moscow, <http://www.orientalstudies.ru/rus/> - SPb) Saint-Petersburg - Kunstkamera (the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Russian Academy of Science, <http://www.kunstkamera.ru/>)
 Professor Tserpitskaya: I am not aware of any special editions – no. You can find information in “Foma”, “Russkij Dom” (too radical), Diplomaticheskij Vestnik, practically everywhere but parted. With the institutes, it is the same situation.

Are you interested in joining the IPSA/AIPSA RC 43 on religion and politics?

Professor Sotnichenko: Yes, it'll be very interesting for me, thank you!

Professor Tserpitskaya: Yes, sure.

Church and State separation
 Question: Gorbachev reversed decades of communist restrictions on religious rights and freedoms and both post-Communist leaders, Yeltsin and Putin, seemed to have embraced the Orthodox Church in particular (I have a picture of Putin virtually kissing the Patriarch). Despite his KGB past, Putin is regularly showing up at church – and the connection of the Patriarch of Moscow to KGB is well known.



President Vladimir Putin and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II during an Easter service attended by thousands in the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow.



Is Putin reaching out to the Orthodox Church for an additional source of legitimacy as his democratic record is diminishing?

Professor Sotnichenko: Yes, I think so.

Professor Tserpitskaya: You know, after Peter the Great and his reforms, the Church still had everything but freedom. After 1917 it had nothing and no freedom. Now the Church has something and some freedom – and nobody in the Church wants to lose this freedom. For the State, the Church is an important factor in the elections, for example – when the priest is the only authority for many kilometers around (as it is in many villages where priests are at once doctors, friends, writers, etc.) a candidate is automatically interested in his support.

Surveys have shown that the end of the Soviet era led to a sharp increase in Russian religious belief and practice. Do you believe that there is a newfound religiosity among post-Soviet Russians?

Professor Sotnichenko: Religion isn't very popular now. Liberalism is a new religion of modernity, and the Russian Church has its 5% disciples, not more. The traditions of liberalism differ from the conservative traditions of Russian Orthodox Church, and there are no preconditions for the growth of believers in Russia now.

Is it true to surmise that the Orthodox Church worried about an influx of foreign missionaries and thus did not mind, and in fact urged Putin's most recent legislation restricting NGO operations in Russia?

Professor Sotnichenko: Putin thinks more about liberal NGOs, which are connected with scientists, scholars, and journalists. Maybe sometimes different religious organizations fall into this category, but they are not the main target group for these NGOs.

Professor Tserpitskaya: The Church does worry about this fact because criminals often come under the name of the preachers (remember the Japanese (if I'm not mistaken)

Aum Sinriqye sect). Concerning Putin's new law, I'm afraid it's based more on financial concerns, and on the desire to know where their money goes and what they pay for (and if they give money to terrorists).

Has this legislation affected the work of religious organizations?

Professor Sotnichenko: No, religion, for our political elite, is an auxiliary and not serious institution for it is meant for the psychological correction of nervous people. Some religions have to be restricted because they are aggressive. Religion is good if it doesn't interfere with the political and economical way of Russia.

Professor Tserpitskaya: Perhaps it presented some difficulties, but no more or less visible changes in this field happened.

Do you believe that the political position of religious minorities in Russia is affected negatively by these new restrictions?

Professor Sotnichenko: No, I don't think so. I haven't read even an article about it.

Professor Tserpitskaya: Same answer.

How does the "special relationship" between the Orthodox Church and the state affect the relationship between the Church and Russian religious minorities?

Professor Sotnichenko: The Church has the right to two short TV-programs in the mornings, not in prime-time, and sometimes radio-stations. The school program of "Orthodox culture" is taught in several schools of several regions, not everywhere, but the protests of liberal media are well-known. But the Kremlin really doesn't help the church with money or special laws.

Professor Tserpitskaya: Only in one really important sphere: according to the religious legislation of Russia, only the Orthodox Church has the right to be called "Russian" minding all the conditions for this name (which is surely important for the State image and PR abroad). In the other ways, Putin is not such a Patriarch's doll as it sometimes written.

Religion in Russian foreign policy



Catherine the Great

Question: If we overlook the brutalities in Chechnya now, Stalin's deportations of Muslims in the 20th century and the multiple wars of Imperial Russia with the Ottoman

Empire, we discover that for 500 years Russia managed to coexist very well with Islam under the banner of Catherine the Great's "toleration". Since then, Russian Tsars treated religions including Islam in a very pragmatic fashion. Professor Sotnichenko mentioned in his lecture that Putin's Russia keeps its options wide open, propelled in its foreign policy by the search for petro rubles and material advantage wherever it can come from. Russia has an observer status in the Islamic conference and is the conference's only non-Islamic country.

Does today's Russia want to follow in the footsteps of Catherine the Great and try to assume a leadership role among the world's Muslims as indicated by Professor Sotnichenko?

I don't know about Russia, but the Russian political elite doesn't.

Professor Tserpitskaya: Interesting idea! Never thought about this. Having such a big percentage of Muslims inside the country Russia has to do something like that...

What role do religious groups play in shaping Russia's foreign policy other than "soft power" as defined by Joseph Nye and applied to IR by Jeff Haynes? Does the Orthodox Church enjoy a privileged status that others do not enjoy? Why?

Professor Sotnichenko: I don't know examples of the "enjoyment", maybe only that Alexiy II regularly has meetings with Mr. Putin, and the leader of "Church of Scientology" doesn't have this opportunity. Churches pay the same taxes as mosques and synagogues.

Professor Tserpitskaya: What do you call "a privileged status"? When the Patriarch is sitting near the President? It is called "wasted time" in normal life. But when a priest is trying to find money to pay all the taxes for the church building, when he's weekly explaining to the museum commissions that this particular spot was on this wall long before his birth, when he's not allowed on TV, when he meets many officials who are on their places since Soviet time and hate him as a class enemy... formal privilege is not a real privilege. But formally the State shows the support to the Church as it seems to be the biggest and eldest on Russian territory, symbolizing the tradition lost and found.

Russian Islam

Question: According to CIA Fact book estimates, 2006 Russian religious affiliations were as follows: Russian Orthodox 15-20%; Muslim 10-15%; other Christians 2%. These estimates refer to practicing worshipers; Russia has large populations of non-practicing believers and non-believers, due to the legacy of over seven decades of Soviet rule. Come what may, there are between 14 million to 23 million Muslims in Russia, who represent 10 to 15 percent of Russia's population.



One in five Russians may be Muslim by 2020, <http://eng.islam.ru/>

Russian Islam has always existed in a multi-confessional setting. This has led to powerful Islamic reform movements such as jadidism among Tatar Muslims. Do you see this as a potential source of alienation from their co-religionists in the east?

Professor Sotnichenko: No, the same modernist movements took place also in other countries; jadidism was connected with pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism, so it worked more for the unification of all the world Muslim community.

Professor Tserpitskaya: I'm afraid it's a world tendency during long period of time. And it seems to me this tendency has a political origin put on a religious basis. But Muslims are so separated by their theological schools, their ways of Islam-understanding that something extraordinary would have to happen to unite them.

Scholars have noted a greater extent of religious belief and practice among Russia's Muslims when compared to ethnic Russians. Do you see this as a potential source of tension between Russian Muslims, Christians and secularists?

Professor Sotnichenko: Yes, it can be the reason. And this tension grows now not only in Russia, but also in Europe, in the countries with Muslim minority.

Professor Tserpitskaya: It's difficult to prove this. It will mostly depend on the state's policy with regard to this question. You know, a strange thing happens: the more you say that all "must live in peace and be tolerant" the less tolerance you get, and vice versa. Russia has a very positive historical experience of living together with different confessions, and talking about the differences as a starting point promotes instability.

How do Muslims inside the Russian Federation relate to the national strife in the south, in Chechnya in particular?

Professor Sotnichenko: Most Muslims don't look at the Chechnya problem in terms of "the Clash of Civilizations". There were many more Muslim volunteers in Chechnya from Turkey, Arabian countries and Afghanistan, than from other Muslim regions of Russia.

Professor Tserpitskaya: There is some gossip that wealthy Chechens from Moscow or St-Petersburg have given

money to separatists in order to kill their relatives in Chechnya. But it's just gossip...

Do you see the potential for the emergence of Islam as a pan-ethnic unifier that might threaten the stability of the federation?

Professor Sotnichenko: Only if Islam becomes pan-ethnic unifier in other parts of the world. Russian Muslims don't have conceptions like this.

Tserpitskaya: Not sure. Unfortunately the image of Islam among European part of Russia citizens is too negative.

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions.

Prepared by Dr. Vendulka Kubalkova and Rachel Roberts, research assistant for "Russia in the World" at the St. Petersburg State University, summer 2006.



Alexander Sotnichenko in a Central Asian costume; called a halat or bornoz indigenous to the regions of Samarkand and Bukhara.

About the two Professors:

Associate Professor **Alexander Sotnichenko** was educated at Saint Petersburg State University, School of Oriental Studies and School of International Relations. He holds a PhD in History (2003) specializing in Ottoman Empire, Islam and Turkey.



Olga Tserpitskaya, native of Leningrad (USSR) (at present St.Petersburg, Russia). In 1996 she graduated from the Saint-Petersburg State University (School of International Relations) and in 2003 she earned her PhD in Political Science. She is lecturer at SIR; her main research topic is the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian State.



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Announces an international conference on:

«Religion in the Modern System of International Relations: Liberalism and the Traditional Mentality»

November, 24, 2006 at 10am registration at 9.30
AM.

The conference will deal with religion as a factor in modern international relations and its interaction with contemporary ideological conceptions including topics such as:

1. Religion and problems of liberal identity:
 - The phenomenon of globalization and the problem of religious-cultural identity.
 - "Motherland" and "patriotism" in religious consciousness under the conditions of globalization.
 - Liberalism and tradition: the possibility of a dialog.
2. Religion and international organizations:
 - Interreligious organizations on the world scene.
 - Joint activities between religious communities and intergovernmental organizations.
3. Ecumenism and traditionalism in international relations:
 - New conceptions of transreligious co-operation
 - Multiculturalism and the new European identity
 - Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) and his role in the formation of modern transreligious and international relations

15 minute presentations in the plenary session are welcome.
 Please inform us of the topic of your presentation before October, 15, 2006.

Project coordinator – Alexander A. Sotnichenko.

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Call for papers:

Secularism and Beyond – Comparative Perspectives

International Conference, Religion in the 21st Century, University of Copenhagen, May 28th to June 1st, 2007

The research priority area, 'Religion in the 21st Century at the University of Copenhagen invites to the international conference, 'Secularism and Beyond – Comparative Perspectives':

The relationship between religion and politics has attracted increased interest in public as well as academic discourse, especially within the humanities, legal studies and social sciences. The dominant way of conceiving this relationship in the Western world is through the lens of secularism. In that sense, the conception of secularism is the focal point for studying and analysing the relationship between religion, politics, law and public life and the separation of the public as a distinct sphere different from and independent of religion and a religious sphere. In general, secularism refers to this separation in terms of institutional arrangements and individual reasons. In a normative sense secularism has become articulated as a political doctrine giving priority to principles of toleration, impartiality and neutrality aiming at universality on the basis of conceptions of secular or public reason. The question to be addressed in this conference is whether secularism as political doctrine provides an adequate perspective for approaching the contemporary challenges of religion in politics, law and public life, at both a macro- and micro-level.

The conference will address this question of secularism from a comparative and interdisciplinary point of view, following the recent tendencies to go beyond secularism within the humanities, legal studies and social sciences. The aim of this comparative approach to secularism is to go *beyond secularism as a political doctrine* and to understand *secularism in the plural* in terms of the diverse national institutional arrangements and practices regulating the separation of religious and public spheres and the different conceptions of secularism embedded in political and legal institutions. In addition to such structural issues, the conference will seek to develop a clearer analysis of the ways in which secularisms are articulated in national public discourses and political cultures, and in the worldviews and everyday practices of ordinary people. The conference will not seek, so much, to return to debates about the secularization of modern society, but to develop a critical understanding of the cultural roots, content, and social, political and institutional significance of doctrines of secularism in different national contexts. Through its comparative approach to this subject, the conference seeks to make explicit and to problematise assumptions within particular national contexts, and to open up the possibility for critiques of existing institutional arrangements and cultural assumptions that regulate the relationship between

religion and politics. Beyond this, the conference aims to raise further questions about the nature of viable democratic, multi-faith societies, and the nature of citizenship within these. The comparative analysis of secularisms thus leads back into more normative discussions about secularism as a political doctrine – opening up possibilities for new questions, conversations and approaches to personal and public life.

The conference is organised around a) keynote speeches, b) plenary panels and discussions addressing the different dimensions of secularism studies mentioned above and c) workshop sessions with paper presentations and discussions within the following themes:

- Exploring the history and models of secularism in the Western world
- Islam and secularism
- Secular state, civil society, religious norms and legal systems
- Secularism, Religion and Political Culture
- Secularism in postcolonial settings
- Legal implications of comparative secularism
- Secularism and the Acknowledgement of Civil Society and Religious Associations in a Multi-Cultural Context
- Traditional, non-Western alternatives to secularism
- Secular and/or religious values in public schools
- Secularism and migration

The conference takes place from the 28th May to 1st June 2007. The invitation to participate and present papers in the workshop sessions is open for scholars from all academic disciplines within the humanities, legal studies and social sciences and with experiences and knowledge from all over the world. Paper proposals addressing one or more of the workshop topics in terms of 300 words abstracts should be submitted January 15, 2007, and the papers April 15, 2007. Fee for participation in the conference: 100 Euro. For further information see: http://www.ku.dk/satsning/religion/sekularism_and_beyond/index.asp or contact Assistant Professor, Dr. Anders Berg-Sørensen, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, P.O. Box 2099, DK-1014 Copenhagen K, e-mail: abs@ifs.ku.dk

International Politics and Religion Newsletter Advisory Board: the next issue

We would like to thank all of the well wishers/respondents to the RC 43 Religion and Politics E-Newsletter.

We have contacted some of the key authors in the field of International Relations and Religion and asked them to be interviewed in the next several issues.

We have also asked them to associate with us as members of the e-newsletter advisory board. They are all IR scholars, all interested in religion as a factor of International Relations, and all have made a major contribution to the field.

We plan to introduce them and their work in the next issues.

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- Advertise your programs and your ideas
- Advertise positions
- Inform us about successes of your faculty and graduates
- Inform us about your publications
- Develop a platform to discuss issues of concern
- Review books of interest Please write to us at the address below, religionpoliticsRC43@miami.edu

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