

# QUO VADIS EASTERN EUROPE? RELIGION, STATE AND SOCIETY AFTER COMMUNISM

edited by Ines Angeli Murzaku



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Pomnik Poległych Stoczniowców - (Monument of the Fallen Shipyard Workers 1970)  
Gdansk Shipyard Monument, Poland.

Three huge crosses, on which much smaller anchors are attached, commemorate the people killed when a December 1970 strike was suppressed. The crosses symbolize Faith and the anchors Hope. The monument was unveiled in 1980 by the Solidarity movement, the year in which the trade union movement was legally recognized by the government.

Picture is taken in Gdansk, Poland, on May 14, 2004.

Courtesy of Stanley Milewski.

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Ines Angeli Murzaku

## FOREWORD

In *Quo Vadis Eastern Europe? Religion, State and Society after Communism*, the focus is to present the newest research and thought on religion in Eastern Europe. The invited authors analyze the radically changed religious situation in the former communist countries and give some perspective on the future of religious co-existence in the area. This volume provides accurate source material for scholars, area specialists, and students interested in the region. The invited authors, among the best internationally recognized scholars in the field, present sophisticated analysis of common religiously motivated patterns that have historically faced and are facing the region.

The first part of the book evaluates major theoretical observations focusing on common phenomena facing the countries under investigation, including Bulgaria, Georgia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. Scholars observe that there is a certain reversal to the pre-communist pattern of rivalry and alienation among religious communities in the former Eastern block countries. It is interesting to investigate how ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue are being rejected as heresies by many religious leaders, as if they were somehow linked with communism. Additionally, among the problems facing the region are the New Religious Movements, or the "new war for souls", which have added tension to the already fragile religious balance in the region. Proselytism in all its forms is causing conflicts and is a potentially destabilizing phenomenon in the region. Among other problems facing the region is the radically changed nature of dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches as a result of the emergence of new religious phenomena. The situation was especially exacerbated by the emergence of the Eastern Catholic churches.

The second part of the volume is a country-specific case study investigation. Sample countries from Central Eastern Europe – including Russia, Georgia, Poland and Slovenia – will be under scrutiny. In today's Russia, efforts at ecumenical dialogue between the traditional Orthodox Church and the newer faiths at official levels continue under great strain. The volume will also focus on various possible aspects of Georgian national self-identity. The difference between the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland and that of Christian churches in other east-central European countries under communist rule are also investigated.

The third part of the volume focuses on the Balkans and the troubled religious, political, and social problems facing the region. Balkan countries – including Bulgaria, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia – are the focus. As explained in these chapters, the role of religion within Balkan societies needs to be redefined within the confines of the new and emerging nations and the changing European and international landscapes. Furthermore, inter-church and inter-religious relations seem to have shifted. Bulgaria is a typical example of what scholars call a “negative” case of tolerance between the majority Eastern Orthodox and the Muslims.