**James Kapaló and Tatiana Vagramenko eds., *Hidden Galleries: Material Religion in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe*. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2020. 104pp.**

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Secret police in Central and Eastern Europe persecuted minority religious groups, and sometimes even representatives of the dominant churches, both during the interwar period and under state socialism. At times they did so at the urging of other churches, at others because of Communist ideology, which saw religion as a rival for citizen’s hearts and minds and as a threat to state security. Scholars have invested a great deal of effort into understanding how the secret police operated, their use of informers, the logic behind their files, and what it was that made someone suspect in their eyes. Others have used secret police files to reconstruct fragments of the past ranging from art, literature and culture, sexuality and fascism to church politics and anti-communist resistance. Although it builds on knowledge about Communist epistemics and illegal movements, *Hidden Galleries* focuses on neither of these. Instead, it approaches the archives as a treasure trove in which religious artefacts are buried. Working from the premise that a picture speaks a thousand words, the authors assemble an impressive array of images found in secret police files and use them to bring little known stories about encounters between police and religious practitioners to life. As the authors write, “testimonies, personal items, community photographs and the ephemera of religious life were preserved by the very state institutions whose role it was to delete them.” (8) The book’s purpose is to bring these images back into circulation, using them to help communities come to grips with their own histories and to educate others about the past.

The work of eight different authors who collaborated on a multi-year research project funded by the European Research Council, the book covers movements from Romania, Hungary, the Soviet Union, with materials taken from eight different archives. Its subjects include Catholics, Greek Catholics, Calvinists, Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists, Inochentists, Archangelists, Old Calendarists (*Stilişti*), Jehovah’s Witnesses and the True Orthodox Church. The photographs, surveillance documents, organizational diagrams, and song books they found in the archives were used to generate conversations with present-day members of these movements during ethnographic fieldwork, formed part of exhibitions in Cluj-Napoca, Budapest and Cork, and are included in an open access digital archive on the project’s website (<http://hiddengalleries.eu/>). Here they are displayed in what is effectively an exhibition catalogue, beautifully presented in an A4 format with short essays by the authors accompanying each collection of images. This would be a coffee table book were it not for the esoteric and sometimes traumatic subject matter. Although the readings of the images are obviously the product of extensive research, sophisticated theoretical approaches, and conversations between experts and with members of these communities, the essays are written in clear, accessible language for a non-academic audience.

Historians and anthropologists will be interested in this book first and foremost for use in the classroom. It is perfectly suited to this task because both the images and the essays are freely available on the project website for students to access at their leisure. What the printed version adds is a glossy presentation, as well as a more systematic approach to the images than one encounters when browsing a collection online. The book divides the images into categories such as underground spaces, communicating in the underground, religious network schemes, crime scene photographs, photograph albums, investigative methods, images of religious leaders, confiscated photographs, and confiscated religious materials. These divisions give the book an overall coherence and suggest implicit arguments and interpretive strategies. Given that so little has been written on these movements by historians, however, the question remains whether there are enough sources here for students to build essays on. Or, as few people have the knowledge to interpret these images without the accompanying essays, how well students will respond to them in class discussions. The images are nonetheless rich and the essays insightful, and one can see how they could be fruitfully used in courses on state socialism, police repression, religious movements, transitional justice or archival practices.