

## Vatican by Augustinus

### Playing the New Yalta game?

*Vatican actions suggest that someone wants to peddle the fairytale of the "crumbling Soviet empire."*

Echoes of the bitter regret expressed by the Pope about not having been able to participate in the celebrations of the 500th Anniversary of Lithuania have reverberated through the international press. The Vatican's decision to make public Moscow's refusal to allow John Paul II to attend has only one precedent in Vatican diplomacy: the protest made by Paul VI over a trip to Poland that never came off, on the occasion of the "Polish Millennium" in 1966.

Paul VI said at the time, "This pilgrimage has not been permitted to us." Now, Pope Wojtyla, expressing himself in a similar way, declared: "It has not been given to me to take part in these celebrations," and added that an entry visa was also denied to his legate, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the Vatican secretary of state and architect of the Vatican's "Ostpolitik" (opening to the East).

Among the many articles and commentaries provoked by the episode, it is enlightening to take note of an entire page dedicated to the topic by the Roman communist daily, *Paese Sera*. The Soviet authorities' refusal of the visas, according to the newspaper, is not so much due to a freeze in the relations between the Vatican and the Kremlin, since Cardinal Casaroli had already gone to the Soviet Union several times, but to their decision to avoid possible explosions of conflicts in Lithuania. The journalist observed that in that republic, Catho-

lics number 2.5 million out of a population of little more than 3 million inhabitants, and the visit of the Polish Pope or his envoy could have sparked off "patriotic" demonstrations—conflicts between the Church and the civil authorities—as occurred during the Pope's trips to Poland.

That a *communist* newspaper should give credence to the thesis of a growing instability in the East bloc countries, and of the existence of conflicts about to explode, should surprise no one. It all has to do with the new fairy tale being dangled before the Reagan administration by the two "New Yalta" negotiators, Henry Kissinger and Lord Peter Carrington, according to whom the Soviet empire would not signify any threat to the West because it is too weakened by the centrifugal thrusts within its boundaries, and cringes under the sword of Damocles of possible revolts fomented by Catholic networks.

Giving further credence to this thesis of the bombshell spiritual power which the Catholic Church supposedly has in the East European countries, it just happens that the celebrations of the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Saint Methodius, the missionary who converted the Slavic peoples, are imminent.

According to the Catholic daily of the Milan Archdiocese, *L'Avvenire*, a fight has broken out between the Orthodox Church of Moscow and the Catholic Church of Rome over who

will take control of the celebrations of Methodius. "Does Moscow Want to Capture Methodius?" headlines the daily, and writes: "An underground invitation has come from Prague. The 1,100 years of the death of Methodius could be the appropriate spot for an 'ecumenical' celebration directed by the church of the 'Third Rome.'" *L'Avvenire* continues: "This would be the best way to 'neutralize' the Roman initiative, which is encouraged by the petition of 17,000 Czech Catholic believers who signed the invitation to Pope Wojtyla to come on April 6 to Velehrad, where Methodius is buried."

One wonders whether there is not somebody in the Vatican who is one of the "brains" of the New Yalta deal and is pushing President Reagan into a trap. For example, Vatican policy in Nicaragua: The ongoing clash between the Catholic authorities of Rome, and the Sandinist priests who have been ordered to leave their government positions cannot be read solely from the standpoint of conflicts in the Catholic hierarchy and over canon law. The open hostility taken up by the Church in Rome toward the Sandinista government is being played by those U.S. forces around Henry Kissinger and roving State Department envoy Gen. Vernon Walters, who have planned, down to the smallest details, for a United States military intervention into that country.

We're not defending the Nicaraguan government here, but as U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche has stressed on a number of occasions, that would simply be an operation to throw the United States into a Vietnam-type conflict and to turn it into a pliable instrument of the International Monetary Fund, which would like to use American military force as the means of collecting debt payments in the developing countries.