

## Mother Russia by Luba George & Carol Greene

### ROC's war on the Vatican

*Fourth of a series on how the Soviet Empire plans to celebrate the millennium of Russia's Christianization.*

The preparations for the 1988 anniversary of the Christianization of Kievan Rus have been marked by a constantly escalating hate campaign against the "Western" Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy.

The last column in this series gave the historical background to the "Third Rome" cult ideology, in which the upcoming millennium plays the role of a target date for achieving world dominion by the Soviets as a "new Roman Empire." Now we examine the reasons behind the virulence of Moscow's attacks on Pope John Paul II.

There are many evil elements nesting in the Vatican, including the Venetian patriarchate and the various Catholic monastic orders, the Benedictines, the Dominicans, the Jesuits, etc. These evil elements deal with Moscow from the standpoint of discussing redrawing the world map between the Western and Eastern (Soviet) Empires. This, however, is not what Moscow, smelling world domination, is attacking. The goal of the Russian campaign against the Vatican is the elimination of the Vatican and the Papacy as policy-making authorities.

In March 1985, in an interview with the Italian Communist Party daily *Unità*, Metropolitan Filaret (Vakhromeyev) of Minsk threw down the gauntlet to the Vatican, declaring that "Liberation Theology is the policy of the Russian Orthodox Church." Filaret (Denisenko) attacked the fall 1984 "clarification" issued by the Vatican criticizing so-called Liberation Theology.

Such war cries against the Roman

Church have been stated and published with regularity since mid-1984. For example, a major part of Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev's speech in Czechoslovakia, in June 1984, was used to denounce the "fabrications" of Catholic scholars concerning the "Western" influence on the origin of Christianity in Kievan Rus. He blasted the "Catholic scholars and their cohorts, the Ukrainian Uniates," for maintaining that the early Russian Church—before it betrayed the Popes and went under the jurisdiction of the Constantinople Patriarchate—was Christianized by Latin missionaries and thus canonically linked with Rome. Referring to the "Latin missionaries" in Russia, Filaret of Kiev said: "One should not forget that this was the time that the Roman Popes were already carrying out the fight to expand its realm to the East, and in part to Russia. . . ."

The shock value of this speech can be fathomed through noting that most Czechs are Catholic.

According to Vatican sources, one of the main themes discussed at the meeting on Feb. 27 between Pope John Paul II and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was the situation of Catholics in the Soviet Union. In view of the Pope's avowed concern about the plight of the Ukrainian Catholics of the Eastern Rite, also known as the Uniates, whose Church was banned by Stalin in 1946, it is believed that during the private talks the "delicate" issue of legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was discussed. The Uniates live in the Western or "Little" Ukraine, in territories which for the

most part belonged to pre-war Poland, contiguous to the present Polish and Czech borders.

It is believed that Gromyko in his meeting with Pope John Paul II repeated the "hands off" warning concerning the Uniates that was made earlier by Patriarch Pimen. In his letter of Dec. 20, 1980 to Pope John Paul II—six months before the Bulgarian-connected attempt on the Pope's life—the Moscow Patriarch indicated that any moves by the Vatican to call into question the results of the Synod of Lvov outlawing Uniates could "negate" all the progress made in improving relations between the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches and would be "against the spirit of ecumenicalism."

Just before Gromyko's visit to the Vatican, the Russian Orthodox Church in January 1985 commenced the first reprint of the 1946 Stalin-era state tracts (drafted with full ROC blessing) outlawing the Vatican-affiliated Uniate Church. This decision to reprint is a major escalation in the anti-Papacy conditioning of the Russian population for the big, imperial anti-Western 1988 Russian Millennium.

During Patriarch Pimen's imperial foray in 1984 to Warsaw Pact and neighboring Slavic countries—Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia (Serbia)—he declared that the "duty of all Christian and other religious believers in the Socialist countries . . . is to support the State." After this tour, Soviet and East bloc government media unaniously intensified their attacks against the Pope, especially during his South American trip, culminating with an official Soviet Government statements of one month ago which blamed the Polish Roman Catholic leadership—and thus, not so indirectly the Pope—for the situation which produced the murder of the Polish priest Popieluszko.