

Russian Church seeks German reunification

by Luba George

Sensational headlines in the West German press these days are speculating that the Soviet Union will offer a modern version of the 1952 "Stalin Note," proposing a deal for a "neutral," reunified Germany. What is not revealed, however, is that the terrain for such a treasonous arrangement was explored in two high-level, closed-door conferences involving the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), the German Protestant Church (EKD), and anti-Papal "Catholic" clerical elites.

On April 21-26, the Bavarian city of Regensburg was host to a symposium titled "*Mir-Miru—Peace on Earth—A Thousand Years Between Volga and the Rhine*," involving the largest Russian Orthodox delegation ever to visit Germany, and those nominal West German Catholics who are bitter foes of the current Pope. Regensburg is notorious as the residence of the evil billionaire Thurn und Taxis family, reportedly in the thick of efforts to strike a German-Soviet strategic accommodation.

The event was sponsored by members of the German Catholic Bishops Conference and the Benedictine-run Oskirche Institut in Regensburg. The ROC sent 13 delegates of bishop rank and higher, including Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk, mooted successor to Patriarch Pimen, and Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev. Dr. Rauch, Director of the Oskirche Institut, who had spent over six weeks in the U.S.S.R. last year, organized the event.

In theory, the gathering was open to any Catholic priest; but in reality, the list of attendees was as restricted as any Moscow "peace" festival. A Ukrainian Uniate (Catholic) priest who was registered to attend, was barred, after the ROC delegation threatened to leave: "Either he goes, or we go." Forbidding entry to the priest was in direct violation of Pope John Paul II's policy in support of the Uniates. The Regensburg "Catholics" instead tacitly endorsed Stalin's 1946 bogus "Council of Lvov," where the Uniate Church was outlawed.

The symposium's agenda focused on preparing a 1988 joint Russian-German "co-celebration" of the Russian Church's 1,000-year anniversary. Speeches and papers emphasized "the special bonds" uniting Russians and Germans over the centuries, "the thousand years of relations between the Russians and the Germans," in the cultural, political, economic, and religious realms. Russian participants included, for the first time ever at the same dais with the ROC,

leading European members of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, headed by Father Count Ignatiev (descendant of the infamous "Okhrana" family of the Czarist nobility).

A source close to the Vatican said that the conference, which alleged that with Kiev began the "Russian" millennium, was a slap in the face to Pope John Paul II, who defends the pro-Western Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church. The Church, outlawed in the U.S.S.R., traces its tradition to the Councils of Lyons and Florence, where the principles of Augustinian Christianity triumphed.

The Pope has asked Soviet authorities for permission to visit Kiev in 1988, besides Moscow, for the celebration of the Christianization of Kievan Rus. The Regensburg "Catholics" thus conformed to Moscow's agenda, rejecting the Pope's wishes to visit the Catholic regions of the U.S.S.R., the Ukraine, and Lithuania.

The nefarious designs of this conference were graphically presented in an ROC paper praising the 19th-century Russian mystical theologian and Isis-cultist Vladimir Solovyev, the exponent of a "Third Rome," Moscow-centered "Universal Church" as the "bridge-builder" between the Eastern and Western churches.

Next stop, Tutzing

The ROC delegation was next hosted by the German Protestant Church May 7-10, at its Academy in Tutzing, Bavaria, on the shores of Starnberg Lake south of Munich. Unlike the Catholic Church in Germany, which contains strong anti-Soviet currents, the EKD leadership is committed to a reunification deal with Moscow.

In the presence of 150 participants, the Tutzing Academy's director, Dr. Claus-Jürgen Röpke, was awarded a "Special Order" by the ROC delegation. It was bestowed on him *in absentia* by Moscow's Patriarch Pimen, for his "ecumenical" work. Roepke, the author of a recent book titled *Third Rome: Renaissance in Russia*, is one of the top figures involved in the EKD elites' deal with the Soviets. In the conference room, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev proclaimed: "The Russian Orthodox Church totally supports the transformation taking place in our society"—a reference to Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov's *perestroika*—the reorganization for a war buildup. The EKD applauded.

At Tutzing, the ROC announced plans for a 1988 "Ecumenical Council" in conjunction with the millennium celebrations. An Ecumenical Council is an event of extraordinary importance, attended by all ROC Bishops from the Moscow Patriarchate (from inside the U.S.S.R. and from abroad). The EKD and other Western churches will attend as observers. The last such Council was held in 1971, and Pimen was elected the new Moscow patriarch.

As the chances are high that Pimen will not survive until June 1988 (he has been seriously ill for many months), the ROC millennium celebrations could well coincide with the appointment of a new patriarch.