

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX - ROMAN CATHOLIC
RELATIONS: A SHORT HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

The first-ever meeting between the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Moscow took place on February 12, 2016 on the island of Cuba. Many have speculated on the agenda behind this historic meeting. However, in order to measure its real significance, some historical perspective on Catholic-Orthodox relations in Russia is needed.

I. THE MIDDLE AGES

The Roman papacy fell away from the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church after it anathematized – and was in turn anathematized by – the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1054. This was just the time when Russia was taking her place as the youngest of the Christian nations. Having been baptized by St. Vladimir in 988, Kievan Rus' was now the largest state in the Orthodox Byzantine commonwealth – although the Great Prince of Kiev acknowledged the formal suzerainty of the Byzantine emperor.

Relations between Russia and the schismatic papacy were fraught almost from the beginning. Thus in 1150 the Roman Catholic Bishop Matthew of Crakow in Poland asked Bernard of Clairvaux to “exterminate the godless rites and customs of the Ruthenians [Russians]”. The “Teutonic Knights” duly answered Bernard’s call and invaded Russia, but were defeated at the famous battle on the ice by St. Alexander Nevsky, Prince of Novgorod.

In 1204 the Roman Catholic crusaders conquered Constantinople, and imposed a Catholic patriarch and emperor on the Greeks. Russia, together with Georgia and other Orthodox countries, remained faithful to the Orthodox emperor in Nicaea... Shortly afterwards, in the 1240s, the Mongols conquered Russia – a great tragedy, without a doubt, but a tragedy that, by the Providence of God, turned out for the ultimate benefit of Russia, since the Mongols, though pagans, were much more tolerant of Orthodoxy than the Roman Catholics.

Nor did the threat from Catholicism cease... In 1299 Metropolitan Maximus of Kiev moved his see from Kiev to Moscow, and from the time of his successor, St. Peter of Moscow, the northern city became the new centre of Russian Orthodoxy. There were hopes that Muscovy could unite with the neighbouring pagan state of Lithuania, which, though ruled by pagan princes, had a very large Russian Orthodox population; and in 1383, the Lithuanian Great Prince Jagiello signed a treaty with Moscow and agreed to convert to Orthodoxy. However, he quickly changed his mind and instead, in 1386, converted to Catholicism, which led to the union of Lithuania with Catholic Poland. This state was to become the main threat to the existence of Orthodox Russia for centuries to come.

That Catholic Poland was a real threat already in the fourteenth century, and even in some parts of Great Russia, is illustrated by an incident that took place in Novgorod, which was traditionally, because of its foreign merchant colony, less anti-Catholic than other parts of Great Russia. “On one occasion at the end of the fourteenth century, the city, in bargaining with the patriarch of Constantinople for privileges for its archbishop, threatened to go to Rome as a final argument. This threat was not serious and did not fail to elicit a severe rebuke from the patriarch, but, up to the time of the loss of their independence, the Novgorodians saw no objection against a political alliance with the Catholic kings of Lithuanian Poland.”¹

¹ G. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, Harvard University Press, 1966, vol. I, p. 336.

In 1438-39, the Byzantines, led by their emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople, who were still the formal suzerains of the Russian state and Church, entered into union with Rome at the Council of Florence in 1439.

This was a decisive moment in the history of Russia, when the Russian State and Church took over the leadership of the Russian Church in resisting the false union with Rome.

In 1434, on the death of Metropolitan Photius, Bishop Jonah of Ryazan had been elected metropolitan of Kiev and sent to Constantinople for consecration. "But here," writes Protopriest Peter Smirnov, "obstacles were encountered. The Greeks were going through their last years. The Turks had moved up to Constantinople from all sides. The only hope of salvation was seen to be help from the West, but that could be bought only by means of humiliation before the Roman pope. Negotiations concerning the union of the Churches were undertaken. On the Latin side, people were being prepared in the East who would be able to agree to union, and they were given influential places and posts. One of these people was a certain Isidore, a very talented and educated person, but one who from a moral point of view was not especially firm, and was capable of changing his convictions. It was he whom they hastened to appoint as metropolitan for Moscow before the arrival of Jonah in Constantinople. St. Jonah was promised the metropolitanate after Isidore.

"Soon after Isidore had arrived in Moscow, he declared that the Eighth Ecumenical Council was being prepared in Italy for the union of the Churches, and that it was necessary for him to be there. Then he began to prepare for the journey. Great Prince Basil Vasilievich tried in every way to dissuade Isidore from taking part in the council. Finally he said to him: "If you unfailingly desire to go to the eighth council, bring us thence our ancient Orthodoxy, which we received from our ancestor Vladimir, and do not bring us anything new and foreign, which we will not accept.' Isidore swore to stand for Orthodoxy, but at the council of Florence he was especially zealous in promoting an outcome that was favourable for the pope. At the end of the council and after the reception of the unia, Isidore... returned to Moscow, and in his first service began to commemorate the pope instead of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The great prince publicly called him a Latin seducer and heretic and ordered that he be placed under guard until a conciliar resolution of the matter. The Russian bishops gathered in Moscow [in 1441] and condemned Isidore. Together with his disciple Gregory he fled to Tver, then Lithuania, and finally to Rome, where he remained for good with the pope.

"After Isidore's flight from Russia, St. Jonah remained for seven more years a simple bishop... Finally, in 1448... Basil Vasilievich summoned all the bishops of the Russian land to a council. The Fathers of the Council, on the basis of the Church canons, previous examples and the decision of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch that St. Jonah should be metropolitan after Isidore, appointed him to the see of the first-hierarchy. At a triumphant service in the Dormition cathedral the omophorion which

had placed on earlier metropolitans was placed on him, and the great metropolitan's staff, the symbol of first-hierarchical power, was put into his hands."²

The Russian Church was now technically in schism from the Great Church of Constantinople, which had fallen into the Latin heresy... "However," writes N. Boyeikov, "even after he had learned about the treachery of the Orthodox emperor and the events which had shaken Byzantium, Basil did not consider that he had the right to break the canonical dependence which the Russian Church had inherited since the time of the Baptism of Rus', and after Jonah's election he wrote the following: 'After the death of Metropolitan Photius, having taken counsel with our mother, the Great Princess, and with our brothers, the Russian princes, both the Great Princes and the local ones, together with the lord of the Lithuanian land, the hierarchs and all the clergy, the boyars and all the Russian land, we elected Bishop Jonah of Ryazan and sent him to you in Constantinople for consecration together with our envoy. But before his arrival there the emperor and patriarch consecrated Isidore as metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus', while to Jonah they said: "Go to your see - the Ryazan episcopate. If Isidore dies or something else happens to him, then be ready to be blessed for the metropolitan see of all Rus'." Since a disagreement in the Church of God has taken place in our blessed kingdoms, travellers to Constantinople have suffered all kinds of difficulties on the road, there is great disorder in our countries, the godless Hagarenes have invaded, there have been civil wars, and we ourselves have suffered terrible things, not from foreigners, but from our own brothers. In view of this great need, we have assembled our Russian hierarchs, and, in accordance with the canons, we have consecrated the above-mentioned Jonah to the Russian metropolitanate of Kiev and all Rus'. We have acted in this way because of great need, and not out of pride or boldness. We shall remain to the end of the age devoted to the Orthodoxy we have received; our Church will always seek the blessing of the Church of Tsargrad and obey her in everything according to the ancient piety. And our father Jonah also begs for blessing and union in that which does not concern the present new disagreements, and we beseech your holy kingdom to be kindly disposed to our father Metropolitan Jonah. We wanted to write about all these church matters to the most holy Orthodox patriarch, too; and to ask his blessing and prayers. But we do not know whether there is a patriarch in your royal city or not. But if God grants that you will have a patriarch according to the ancient piety, then we shall inform him of all our circumstances and ask for his blessing.'

"On reading this gramota of the Great Prince Basil, one is amazed at his tact and the restraint of his style. Knowing that the emperor himself had betrayed the faith, that Patriarch Gregory had fled to Rome, as also Isidore who had been sent to Moscow, Basil II, instead of giving a well-merited rebuke to his teachers and instructors, himself apologised for the fact that circumstances had compelled the Russian bishops to consecrate a metropolitan for themselves, and comes near to begging him to receive Jonah with honour. It is remarkable that the Great Prince at every point emphasizes that this consecration took place 'in accordance with the canons', while doubting whether there was a lawful patriarch in Byzantium itself or

² Smirnov, *Istoria Khristianskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Orthodox Christian Church), Moscow: Krutitskoe podvorye, 2000, pp. 159-160.

not. The whole of this gramota is full of true Christian humility and brotherly compassion for the emperor who had fallen on hard times."³

The Russian Church was now de facto autocephalous – and would become so de jure towards the end of the sixteenth century. And soon, after the fall of New Rome in 1453, the Russian State, too, would be independent, not only in the sense of being de facto self-governing (she had been that for centuries), but also in the sense of owing no filial, de jure allegiance to any other State. Russia was becoming the leader of the Orthodox world and the main champion of the Orthodox Faith against the heresy of Roman Catholicism...

³ Boyeikov, *Tserkov', Rus' i Rim (The Church, Rus' and Rome)*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983. See Fr. John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

II. THE UNIA OF BREST-LITOVSK

On emerging from under the yoke of the Mongols in the late fifteenth century, the Russians did not forget the threat of Catholicism: by the sixteenth century they had turned their land into a fortress whose main purpose was: to preserve the Orthodox Faith pure and undefiled from the ravages of the Latins. For the re-emergence of Russia as an independent (in fact, the *only* independent) Orthodox state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries coincided with the rise to power of one of the two great states of the Catholic Counter-Reformation – Poland. At the same time that the other great Catholic State, the Hapsburg Empire, was slaughtering Protestants in the West, the Poles – with the active connivance of the Jews (of whom there were millions on their territory) – were persecuting the Orthodox over a vast swathe of what is now the Ukraine and Belorussia.

Finally, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Poles conquered Moscow and placed a Catholic king, the “false Dmitri”, in the Kremlin. But Patriarch Hermogen of Moscow from his prison cell in the Kremlin issued appeals to the Russians to rise up against the heretical invaders. And although Hermogen did not live to see the outcome (he was starved to death in his cell), his appeals were heeded, and in 1612 a great army of national liberation drove the Poles and the Swedes, if not out of Russia completely, at any rate out of her historical heartland.

From the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries the Orthodox peasants living in what is now Belorussia and Western Ukraine were severely persecuted by their Polish-Lithuanian landlords and the Jesuits. The cause was the foundation of the Society of Jesus in 1540, which aimed to buttress the buttressing of the Counter-Reformation papacy throughout the world. The Jesuits were soon waging war, not only against Protestantism, but also against Orthodoxy, and their methods included both crude force and the subtler weapon of education.

“At the end of the 16th century,” writes Protopriest Peter Smirnov, “the so-called Lithuanian unia took place, or the union of the Orthodox Christians living in the south-western dioceses in separation from the Moscow Patriarchate, with the Roman Catholic Church.

“The reasons for this event, which was so sad for the Orthodox Church and so wretched for the whole of the south-western region were: the lack of stability in the position and administration of the separated dioceses; the intrigues on the part of the Latins and in particular the Jesuits; the betrayal of Orthodoxy by certain bishops who were at that time administering the south-western part of the Russian Church.

“With the separation of the south-western dioceses under the authority of a special metropolitan, the question arose: to whom were they to be hierarchically subject? Against the will of the initiators of the separation, the south-western metropolia was subjected to the power of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the patriarchs, in view of the dangers presented by the Latins, intensified their supervision over the

separated dioceses.”⁴

The formerly Russian lands from Kiev westwards were largely deprived of political protection until a part of the Ukraine came under the dominion of Moscow in 1654 as a result of the victories of Bogdan Chmielnicki and his Cossack armies. Until then they were persecuted by the Poles and the Jews.

“In such a situation, the Jesuits appeared in the south-western dioceses and with their usual skill and persistence used all the favourable circumstances to further their ends, that is, to spread the power of the Roman pope. They took into their hands control of the schools, and instilled in the children of the Russian boyars a disgust for the Orthodox clergy and the Russian faith, which they called ‘kholop’ (that is, the faith of the simple people). The fruits of this education were not slow to manifest themselves. The majority of the Russian boyars and princes went over to Latinism. To counter the influence of the Jesuits in many cities brotherhoods were founded. These received important rights from the Eastern Patriarchs. Thus, for example, the Lvov brotherhood had the right to rebuke the bishops themselves for incorrect thinking, and even expel them from the Church. New difficulties appeared, which were skilfully exploited by the Jesuits. They armed the bishops against the brotherhoods and against the patriarchs (the slaves of the Sultans), pointed out the excellent situation of the Catholic bishops, many of whom had seats in the senate, and honours and wealth and power. The Polish government helped the Jesuits in every way, and at their direction offered episcopal sees to such people as might later turn out to be their obedient instruments. Such in particular were Cyril Terletsky, Bishop of Lutsk, and Hypatius Potsey, Bishop of Vladimir-in-Volhynia....

“The immediate excuse for the unia was provided by the following circumstance. Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople, during his journey through the south of Russia to Moscow to establish the patriarch, defrocked the Kievan Metropolitan Onesiphorus for bigamy, and appointed in his place Michael Ragoza, and commanded him to convene a council, by his return, to discuss another bigamist who had been accused of many crimes, Cyril Terletsky. Michael Ragoza was a kind person, but weak in character, he did not convene a council inflicted unnecessary delays and expenses on the patriarch. The Patriarch, summoned out of Russia by his own affairs, sent letters of attorney to Ragoza and Bishop Meletius of Vladimir (in Volhynia) for the trial of Teretsky. Both these letters were seized by Cyril, and the affair continued to be dragged out. Meanwhile, Meletius died, and Cyril Terletsky succeeded in presenting the Vladimir see to his friend, Hypatius Potsey. Fearing the appointment of a new trial on himself from the patriarch, Cyril hastened to act in favour of the unia, and made an ally for himself in Hypatius, who was indebted to him.

“In 1593 they openly suggested the unia to the other south-western bishops in order to liberate themselves from the power of the patriarch and the interference of laymen in Church administration...”⁵

⁴ Smirnov, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204.

⁵ Smirnov, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207, 208.

Now the Russian bishops wanted to secure for themselves a certain degree of autonomy, and the retention of the eastern rite in the Divine services. Differences in rites had been allowed by the decrees of the council of Florence in 1439. "However," as V.M. Lourié writes, "after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Roman Catholic church was not interested in giving anyone the right of administrative autonomy. Therefore we must call it a diplomatic victory for the Orthodox supporters of the unia that they succeeded in convincing the Roman curia of the necessity of establishing in Poland-Lithuania a parallel Catholic hierarchy of the Greek rite, which would be independent of the local Latin bishops. In 1595 the diplomatic efforts of the bishops were directed, on the one hand, to securing the future uniate organization at as high a degree of autonomy as possible, and on the other, to convincing the Orthodox aristocracy to accept the unia. Among the nobles the main opponent of the unia was Prince Constantine Ostrozhsy. By the summer of 1595 such a sharp conflict had been lit between the bishops and the laity that Patriarch Jeremiah Tranos of Constantinople turned directly to the laity, passing by the bishops. The patriarch sent to Jassy (Romania) his exarch Nicephorus, who convened a council of six bishops, including the metropolitans of Moldavia-Wallachia (Romania) and Ugro-Wallachia (Hungary). On August 17, 1595 this council issued a decree in which it addressed 'the nobles and simple people' who were 'under the power of the Polish king', telling them not to submit to their local bishops. But the latter were told immediately to present penitential acts to the patriarch, otherwise they would be stripped of their rank, while the laymen would receive the right to put forward their own candidates to the Episcopal sees that had become vacant (Welykyj, 1970, 120-121, document № 69). The bishops found themselves to be not only on the verge of being deprived of their rank, but also under threat of excommunication from the Church. It goes without saying that as private individuals they would not have been able to influence the decision of the question of the unia with Rome.

"The publication of this act could not be hidden from the Roman curia, and therefore the bishops found themselves in a situation in which their position at the negotiations with Rome was severely shaken. It was necessary to act without delay and agree now even to almost any conditions. And so two of the West Russian bishops set off for Rome as fully-empowered representatives of the whole of the episcopate of the Kievan metropolia. The upshot of their stay in Rome from November, 1595 to March, 1596 was the acceptance of the conditions of the future unia without any guarantees of equality between the Catholic churches of different rites - the Latin and Greek. The unia was established by the will of the Roman Pope, and not at all as the result of negotiations of the two sides. The Russian bishops were not even accepted as a 'side'. The future uniate church had to accept not only the decrees of the council of Florence but also those of the council of Trent. Moreover, it had to be ready for any changes, including changes in rites, that the Pope might introduce. The only right that the bishops succeeded in preserving was the right of a local council to elect the Metropolitan of Kiev. However, this had to be followed by the confirmation of the Roman Pope.

"Prince Ostrozhsy, in his turn, actively opposed the unia. A significant part of the Orthodox nobility took his side. Prince Ostrozhsy and his supporters succeeded in creating a schism in the pro-uniate party: two bishops separated from the others,

refusing to support the unia. Their renunciation of their former position is explained by the fact that they were in a state of significantly greater dependence on the local magnates than on the king. It is of note that Gedeon Balaban, Bishop of Lvov, who was the first to begin preparing his diocese for the unia, was one of these two bishops. Prince Ostrozhsky invited Exarch Nicephorus to Poland-Lithuania.

“In October, 1595 two councils were opened simultaneously in Brest. One of them took place with the participation of five bishops and proclaimed the unia with Rome. The other was presided over by Exarch Nicephorus. This council excommunicated the uniates, which became the beginning of the Orthodox resistance to the unia.

“Soon Nicephorus was accused of spying for Turkey and was put in prison under guard. He died in prison in 1598 or 1599. The role of the spiritual leader of the Orthodox resistance passed to Ivan of Vishna...”⁶

Smirnov writes: “The whole affair was carried through, as was the custom of the Jesuits, with various forgeries and deceptions. Thus, for example, they took the signatures of the two bishops on white blanks, supposedly in case there would be unforeseen petitions before the king on behalf of the Orthodox, and meanwhile on these blanks they wrote a petition for the unia. Potsej and Terletsky made such concessions to the Pope in Rome as they had not been authorised to make even by the bishops who thought like them. Terletsky and Potsej had hardly returned from Rome before these forgeries were exposed, which elicited strong indignation against them on the part of some bishops (Gideon of Lvov and Michael of Peremysl) the Orthodox princes (Prince Ostrozhsky) and others...

“From this time, there began persecutions against the Orthodox. The uniate bishops removed the Orthodox priests and put uniates in their place. The Orthodox brotherhoods were declared to be mutinous assemblies, and those faithful to Orthodoxy were deprived of posts and oppressed in trade and crafts. The peasants were subjected to all kinds of indignities by their Catholic landlords. The [Orthodox] churches were forcibly turned into uniate ones or were leased out to Jews. The leaseholder had the keys to the church and extracted taxes for every service and need. Many of the Orthodox fled from these restrictions to the Cossacks in the steppes, who rose up in defence of the Orthodox faith under the leadership of Nalivaiki. But the Poles overcame them and Nalivaiki was burned to death in a brazen bull. Then a fresh rebellion broke out under Taras. But, happily for the Orthodox, their wrathful persecutor Sigismund III died. His successor, Vladislav IV, gave the Orthodox Church privileges, with the help of which she strengthened herself for the coming struggle with the uniates and Catholics...

“However, although Vladislav was well-disposed towards the Orthodox, the Poles did not obey him and continued to oppress them. The Cossacks several times took up arms, and when they fell into captivity to the Poles, the latter subjected them to terrible tortures. Some were stretched on the wheel, others had their arms and legs broken,

⁶ Lourié, “Brestskaia unia i RPTsZ: istoricheskie paralleli” (The Brest Unia and ROCOR: historical parallels), <http://hgr.livejournal.com/1099549.html>.

others were pierced with spikes and placed on the rack. Children were burned on iron grills before the eyes of their fathers and mothers.”⁷

Oleg Platonov writes: “All the persecutions against the Orthodox in the West Russian lands were carried out by the Jews and the Catholics together. Having given the Russian churches into the hands of the Jews who were close to them in spirit, the Polish aristocracy laughingly watched as the defilement of Christian holy things was carried out by the Jews. The Catholic priests and uniates even incited the Jews to do this, calculating in this way to turn the Russians away from Orthodoxy.

“As Archbishop Philaret recounts: ‘Those churches whose parishioners could by converted to the unia by no kind of violence were leased to the Jews: the keys of the churches and bell-towers passed into their hands. If it was necessary to carry out a Church need, then one had to go and trade with the Jew, for whom gold was an idol and the faith of Christ the object of spiteful mockery and profanation. One had to pay up to five talers for each liturgy, and the same for baptism and burial. The uniate received paschal bread wherever and however he wanted it, while the Orthodox could not bake it himself or buy it in any other way than from a Jew at Jewish rates. The Jews would make a mark with coal on the prosphoras bought for commemorating the living or the dead. Only then could it be accepted for the altar.’”⁸

Especially notorious was the uniatic Bishop Joasaph Kuntsevich of Polotsk. Lev Sapiega, the head of the Great Principality of Lithuania, wrote to Kuntsevich on the Polish king’s behalf: “I admit, that I, too, was concerned about the cause of the Unia and that it would be imprudent to abandon it. But it had never occurred to me that your Eminence would implement it using such violent measures... You say that you are ‘free to drown the infidels [i.e. the Orthodox who rejected the Unia], to chop their heads off’, etc. Not so! The Lord’s commandment expresses a strict prohibition to all, which concerns you also. When you violated human consciences, closed churches so that people should perish like infidels without divine services, without Christian rites and sacraments; when you abused the King’s favours and privileges – you managed without us. But when there is a need to suppress seditions caused by your excesses you want us to cover up for you... As to the dangers that threaten your life, one may say that everyone is the cause of his own misfortune. Stop making trouble, do not subject us to the general hatred of the people and you yourself to obvious danger and general criticism... Everywhere one hears people grumbling that you do not have any worthy priests, but only blind ones... Your ignorant priests are the bane of the people... But tell me, your Eminence, whom did you win over, whom did you attract through your severity?... It will turn out that in Polotsk itself you have lost even those who until now were obedient to you. You have turned sheep into goats, you have plunged the state into danger, and maybe all of us Catholics – into ruin... It has been rumoured that they (the Orthodox) would rather be under the infidel Turk than endure such violence... You yourself are the cause of their rebellion. Instead of joy, your notorious Unia has brought us only troubles and discords and has become so

⁷ Smirnov, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207, 208.

⁸ Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia’s Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998, p. 224.

loathsome that we would rather be without it!"⁹

On May 22, 1620, local people gathered at the Trinity monastery near Polotsk to express their indignation at Kuntsevich's cruelty. "These people suffered a terrible fate: an armed crowd of uniates surrounded the monastery and set it on fire. As the fire was raging and destroying the monastery and burning alive everyone within its walls, Joasaphat Kuntsevich was performing on a nearby hill a thanksgiving service accompanied by the cries of the victims of the fire..."¹⁰

In 1623 Kuntsevich was killed by the people of Vitebsk. In 1867 Pope Pius IX "glorified" him...

⁹ L. Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 227-228.

¹⁰ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

III. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Even after the union of the Eastern Ukraine with Russia in 1686, very extensive formerly Russian lands still remained under Polish control. However, in 1717, as a result of civil war between King Augustus II and his nobles, Poland fell under the effective control of Russia. And so Poland's domination of the South Russian lands from the fourteenth century onwards now began to be reversed...

Nevertheless, the persecution of the Orthodox living in Poland did not cease. The Polish nobility did everything they could to deny the non-Roman Catholic Christians (the Orthodox, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists) political rights until well into the eighteenth century. As for the Orthodox, writes A.P. Dobroklonsky, they "suffered every possible restriction. In 1717 the Sejm deprived them of their right to elect deputies to the sejms and forbade the construction of new and the repairing of old churches; in 1733 the Sejm removed them from all public posts. If that is how the government itself treated them, their enemies could boldly fall upon them with fanatical spite. The Orthodox were deprived of all their dioceses and with great difficulty held on to one, the Belorussian; they were also deprived of the brotherhoods, which either disappeared or accepted the unia. Monasteries and parish churches with their lands were forcibly taken from them... From 1721 to 1747, according to the calculations of the Belorussian Bishop Jerome, 165 Orthodox churches were removed, so that by 1755 in the whole of the Belorussian diocese there remained only 130; and these were in a pitiful state... Orthodox religious processions were broken up, and Orthodox holy things subjected to mockery... The Dominicans and Basilians acted in the same way, being sent as missionaries to Belorussia and the Ukraine - those 'lands of the infidels', as the Catholics called them, - to convert the Orthodox... They went round the villages and recruited people to the unia; any of those recruited who carried out Orthodox needs was punished as an apostate. Orthodox monasteries were often subjected to attacks by peasants and schoolboys; the monks suffered beatings, mutilations and death. 'How many of them,' exclaimed [Bishop] George Konisky, 'were thrown out of their homes, many of them were put in prisons, in deep pits, they were shut up in kennels with the dogs, they were starved by hunger and thirst, fed on hay; how many were beaten and mutilated, and some even killed!'... The Orthodox white clergy were reduced to poverty, ignorance and extreme humiliation. All the Belorussian bishops were subjected to insults, and some even to armed assault....

"The Orthodox sought defenders for themselves in Russia, constantly sending complaints and requests to the court and the Holy Synod. The Russian government according to the eternal peace of 1686 had reserved for itself the right to protect the Orthodox inhabitants of Poland, and often sent its notes to the Polish court and through its ambassadors in Poland demanded that the Orthodox should be given back the dioceses that had been granted to them according to the eternal peace and that the persecutions should cease; it also wrote about this to Rome, even threatening to deprive the Catholics living in Russia of freedom of worship; more than once it appointed special commissars to Poland for the defence of the Orthodox from abuse and in order to investigate complaints. But the Polish government either replied with promises or was silent and dragged out the affair from one Sejm to another. True,

there were cases when the king issued orders for the cessation of persecutions... But such instructions were usually not listened to, and the persecution of the Orthodox continued. Meanwhile the Russian government insufficiently insisted on the carrying out of its demands.

“Only from the time of Catherine II did the circumstances change. On arriving at her coronation in Moscow, George Konissky vividly described for her the wretched condition of the Orthodox in Poland and besought her intervention (1762). A year later all the Orthodox of Poland interceded with her about this. The empress promised her protection and made the usual representation to the Polish court. At that time a new king, Stanislaw Poniatovsky, had been established, with her assistance, on the Polish throne. George Konissky personally appeared before him and described the sufferings of the Orthodox in such a lively manner that the king promised to do everything to restore the rights of the Orthodox (1765) and actually issued a decree on the confirmation of their religious rights, demanding that the uniate authorities cut short their violence. However, the uniate and Catholic authorities were not thinking of obeying the king. Their spite against the Orthodox found fresh food for itself. In 1765-1766, amidst the Russian population of Poland, and mainly in Little Russia, a powerful mass movement against the unia had begun. Its heart was the Orthodox see of Pereyaslawl headed by Bishop Gervasius Lintsevsky and the Motroninsky monastery led by Abbot Melchizedek Znachko-Yavorsky. Multitudes of the people went there and were there inspired to the task of returning from the unia to Orthodoxy. Crowds of people gathered everywhere in the villages; together they swore to uphold the Orthodox faith to the last drop of their blood, they restored Orthodox churches and restored Orthodox priests provided for them by Gervasius. They persuaded uniate priests to return to Orthodoxy, and if they refused either drove them out of the parishes or locked the churches. Whole parishes returned to Orthodoxy. The uniate authorities decide to stop this movement. The uniate metropolitan sent a fanatical zealot for the unia, the official Mokritsky, to the Ukraine with a band of soldiers. The Orthodox churches began to be sealed or confiscated; the people were forced by beatings to renounce Orthodoxy. Abbot Melchizedek was subjected to tortures and thrown into prison. There were even cases of killings for the faith... This violence elicited a fresh representation from the Russian court. Moreover, the courts of Prussia, England, Sweden and Denmark demanded that the Poles reviewed the question of the dissidents (Orthodox and Protestants) at the Sejm and protected their rights. However, the Sejm that took place in 1766 still further restricted their religious liberty. The Catholic bishops Soltyk and Krasinsky by their epistles stirred up the people against the dissidents; the Pope himself (Clement XIII) tried to persuade Stanislaw not to make concessions. Then the dissidents began to act in a more friendly manner towards each other. In Torn and Slutsk conferences of noblemen were convened, and in other places up to 200 similar unions appeared with the aim of obtaining rights for the non-Catholics of Poland. In her turn Russia, in order to support these demands, moved her army into Poland. Relying on it, the Russian ambassador in Poland Repin demanded a review of the question of the dissidents at the new sejm in 1767. When at this Sejm the Catholic bishops Soltyk, Zalusky and some others continued to resist any concessions in favour of the dissidents, Repin arrested them and the Sejm agreed upon some important concessions: everything published against the dissidents was rescinded, complete freedom of faith and Divine

services was proclaimed, they were given the right to build churches and schools, convene councils, take part in Sejms and in the Senate, educate children born from mixed marriages in the faith of their parents – sons in the faith of their fathers and daughters in the faith of their mothers, and forcible conversions to the unia were forbidden. These decrees were confirmed by a treaty between Russia and Poland in 1768. It was then decided that the Belorussian see should remain forever in the power of the Orthodox together with all the monasteries, churches and church properties, while the monasteries and churches that had been incorretly taken from them were to be returned. For this a special mixed commission of Catholics and dissidents – the latter led by George Konissky – was appointed. In these circumstances the movement among the uniates that had begun before was renewed with fresh force. Most of them – sometimes in whole parishes – declared their desire to return to Orthodoxy; these declarations were addressed to George Konissky, presented to Repin and written down in official books; even the uniate bishops turned to the king with a request that they be allowed to enter into discussions concerning a reunion of the uniates with the Greco-Russian Church. But the indecisiveness of the Polish and Russian governments hindered the realization of these desires. Comparatively few parishes succeeded in returning to Orthodoxy, and then the matter of their reunion was stopped for a time. Immediately the Russian army left the boundaries of Poland, the Polish fanatics again set about their customary way of behaving. Bishop Krasinsky of Kamenets went round Poland in the clothes of a pilgrim and everywhere stirred up hatred against the dissidents; the papal nuncio fanned the flames of this hatred in appeals to the clergy, and sometimes also in instructions to the people. Those who were discontented with the Sejm of 1767 convened the conference of Bar in order to deprive the dissidents of the rights that had been granted them. Again there arose a persecution of the Orthodox, who could not stand the violence. In Trans-Dnieper Ukraine, under the leadership of the zaporozhets Maxim Zhelezniak, a popular uprising known as the Koliivschina began. The anger of the rebels was vented most of all on the landowners, the Jews, the Catholic priests and the uniate priests. They were all mercilessly beaten up, their homes were burned down, their property was looted; even the whole of the small town of Uman was ravaged. The rebellion enveloped the whole western region. The Polish government was not able to cope with it. The Russian armies under Krechetnikov came to its aid. The revolt was put down. But unfortunately, Krechetnikov and Repin, listening to the insinuations of the Poles and not seeing the true reasons for the rebellion, looked on it as an exclusively anti-state peasants' rebellion, and so they themselves helped in destroying that which stood for Orthodoxy and Russian nationality in the Ukraine. Gervasius and Melchizedek, being suspected of rebellion, were retired; the Orthodox people, being accused of stirring up the people, had to hide in order to avoid punishment. The uniate priests took possession of many Orthodox parishes; in many places the Orthodox were forced to appeal with requests to perform needs to parishless priests coming from Moldavia and Wallachia. Fortunately, in 1772 there came the first division of Poland, in accordance with which Belorussia with its population of 1,360,000 was united with Russia. At this the Polish government was obliged to take measures to pacify the Orthodox who remained in their power, but in actual fact nothing was done. A new woe was then added to the already difficult position of the Orthodox: With the union of Belorussia with Russia not one Orthodox bishop was left within the confines of Poland, and for ordinations the Orthodox were forced to turn to Russia or Wallachia.

Only in 1785 did the Russian government, with the agreement of the Polish king, appoint a special bishop for them, Victor Sadkovsky, with the title of Bishop of Pereyasavl and vicar of Kiev, with a salary and place of residence in Slutsk monastery. But when, with his arrival, another movement in favour of Orthodoxy arose among the Ukrainian uniates, the Poles were disturbed. Rumours spread that another Koliivschina was being prepared and that the clergy were inciting the people to rebel. Whatever Victor did to quash these rumours, they continued to grow. They began to say that arms for a planned beating up of the Catholics and uniates were being stored in the hierarchical house and in the monasteries. In accordance with an order of the sejm, Victor was seized and taken in fetters to Warsaw, where he was thrown into an arms depot (1789); some Orthodox priests were subjected to the same treatment; many were forced to save themselves by fleeing to Russia. The whole of the Orthodox clergy were rounded up to swear an oath of allegiance to the king. After this the thought was voiced in the Sejm of 1791 of freeing the Orthodox Church within the confines of Poland from Russian influence by making it independent of the Russian Synod and transferring it into the immediate jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Pinsk congregation, made up of representatives of the clergy and brotherhoods, did indeed work out a project for the conciliar administration of the Church. But it was not fated to be put into effect. Soon there followed, one after the other, the second (1793) and third (1795) divisions of Poland, in accordance with which Russia acquired all the ancient Russian lands with the exception of Galicia, and the Lithuanian region with a population of more than 4 million.

“With the union of Belorussia and the south-western regions to Russia there finally came to an end the age-old sufferings of the Orthodox there. At the same time there came the right opportunity for the uniates to throw off the fetters of the unia that had been forcibly imposed upon them. The Belorussian Archbishop George Konissky received many declarations from uniate parishes wishing to return to Orthodoxy. Although the Russian government did not allow him to do anything about these declarations without special permission, and itself did not give permission for about 8 years, the striving of the uniates for Orthodoxy did not wane. When, finally, permission was given, up to 130,000 uniates went over to Orthodoxy. In the south-western region an energetic assistant of George Konissky in the work of uniting the uniates was Victor Sadkovsky, who had been released from prison and raised to the see of Minsk (1793). With the permission of the government, he published an appeal to the uniates of his diocese urging them to return to Orthodoxy. Soon, on the orders of the government, the same was done in the Belorussian region. Moreover, the government told local authorities to remove all obstacles that might appear in the unification of the uniates on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy and landowners, and threatened the guilty with responsibility before the law, while at the same time forbidding their forcible union. The appeals had an extraordinary success. In less than a year (from the middle of 1794 to the beginning of 1795), more than one-and-a-half million uniates had joined the Orthodox Church; the numbers of those united by the end of the reign of Catherine II came to no less than two million.”¹¹

¹¹ Dobroklonsky, *Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi* (A Guide to the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, pp. 651-652.

The liberation of millions of Orthodox peasants from their Polish and Jewish persecutors, under whom they had suffered already for centuries, and the return of millions of uniates, i.e. those Orthodox who had been beguiled into Catholicism after the Unia of Brest-Litovsk, to their original faith and Church, was undoubtedly a great triumph of Orthodoxy. However, the bitter fact was that the cost of the annexation of Poland (with help from Prussia in the west and Austria in the south) came at a very high cost – not only in terms of the thousands of people killed on both sides in the eighteenth century, but in another very important respect. For it meant the inclusion into the Russian empire of many millions of Poles and Jews who were bitterly hostile both to Russia and to the Orthodox faith, and who were to cause continual civil strife in the western territories right up to the First World War.

As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, “from the point of view of the interests of Great Russia, it was necessary to pacify Poland, but not seize the age-old Polish and purely Lithuanian lands. This wrong attitude of Russia to the neighbouring peoples then became a ‘mine’ which later more than once exploded with bad consequences for Russia...”¹²

¹² Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 232.

IV. FROM 1812 TO THE CRIMEAN WAR

Napoleon Bonaparte was no friend of Catholicism, but he did conclude a Concordat with the Pope, and was probably behind the ecumenical overtures that the Pope made to the Russian Church in 1810. For Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, as K.A. Pappmehl writes, “became the recipient of ecumenical overtures by the French senator Grégoire (formerly Bishop of Blois), presumably on Napoleon’s initiative. In a letter dated in Paris in May of that year, Grégoire referred to the discussions held in 1717, at the Sorbonne, between Peter I and some French bishops, with a view of exploring the prospects of re-unification. Peter apparently passed the matter on to the synod of Russian bishops who, in their turn, indicated that they could not commit themselves on a matter of such importance without consulting the Eastern Patriarchs. Nothing had been heard from the Russian side since then. Grégoire nevertheless assumed that the consultation must have taken place and asked for copies of the Patriarchs’ written opinions. He concluded his letter by assuring Platon that he was hoping and praying for reunification of the Churches...

“Platon passed the letter to the Synod in St. Petersburg. In 1811 [it] replied to Grégoire, with Emperor Alexander’s approval, to the effect that a search of Russian archives failed to reveal any of the relevant documents. The idea of a union, Platon added, was, in any case ‘contrary to the mood of the Russian people’ who were deeply attached to their faith and concerned with its preservation in a pure and unadulterated form.”¹³

Platon himself had never been an ecumenist; he abhorred the “tolerance” and “indifferentism” that Masonry had injected into European religious life. During his journey to Kiev and other Russian cities in 1804 he reproached “the Russian authorities for following ‘that new-fangled mode of thinking which is called tolerance’ in their relations with the Jesuits, and blamed the Jews for the impoverishment of the Christian population in the areas in which they are numerous”.¹⁴

Alexander’s victory over Napoleon had important religious consequences. First, Russian Orthodoxy was now at the heart of Catholic Europe. Thus the Orthodox Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Alexander’s namesday, September 12, 1815, on seven altars on the Plaine de Vertus, eighty miles east of Paris, in the presence of the Russian army and all the leading political and military leaders of Europe. Neither before nor since in the modern history of Europe has there been such a universal witness, by all the leaders of the Great Powers, to the true King of kings and Lord of lords and His true religion, Orthodox Christianity. And if this was just a diplomatic concession on the part of the non-Orthodox powers, it was much more than that for Alexander. His Orthodox spirit, so puzzling to the other leaders of Europe, was manifested in a letter he wrote that same evening: “This day has been the most

¹³ Pappmehl, *Metropolitan Platon of Moscow*, Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners, 1983, p. 85.

¹⁴ Pappmehl, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

beautiful in all my life. My heart was filled with love for my enemies. In tears at the foot of the Cross, I prayed with fervour that France might be saved..."¹⁵

Secondly, Alexander now presented his fellow sovereigns with a treaty creating a Holy Alliance of Christian monarchs and requiring them "to take as their sole guide the precepts of the Christian religion". The treaty was dedicated "to the Holy and Indivisible Trinity", and the Tsar insisted on creating it in Paris because it was the most irreligious of all Europe's capital cities.¹⁶ Only the King of Prussia welcomed the idea. The Emperor of Austria was embarrassed, and in private agreed with his chancellor, Metternich, that Alexander was mad. On the British side, the Duke of Wellington and Castlereagh mocked it in private.¹⁷

Stella Ghervas writes that the author of the Holy Alliance "was Alexander I himself. He wrote the preliminary notes in pencil and then gave them to his Head of Chancery, Count John Capodistrias, so that he could render them in a diplomatic language. In his turn, Capodistrias passed the document to a brilliant and cultivated secretary named Alexandre Stourdza. Stourdza later provided a detailed explanation of the text of the treaty in an unpublished piece called 'Considérations sur l'acte d'alliance fraternelle et chrétienne du 14/26 septembre 1815'...

"In his 'Considérations,' Stourdza sought to demonstrate that the pact was grounded on a solid theoretical and ideological base, in order to overcome the suspicions of those who opposed the pact and to refute their objections. In his theoretical construction, Napoleon was the heir of French Revolution, and his fall the end of an epoch of social and political disorder. Referring to the recent victory of the Allies following the Hundred Days, Stourdza wrote, 'the principle of subversion against all religious and social institutions has just been slain a second time.' This European unrest found its origin, according to him, in the Seven Years' War (1765) and included the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the succeeding Napoleonic epoch. Hence the sole solution was to restore a principle of order in public life, and therefore to 'proclaim [...] the sole conservative principles, which had been too long relegated to the subordinate sphere of domestic life.' There lies the explanation for the intentional but otherwise incomprehensible [!] intrusion of Christian principles into the political sphere. In fact the Tsar had already expressed that very idea nine months earlier, on December 31, 1814, in a diplomatic note that he had sent to the plenipotentiaries of the three great powers... More generally, the feeling from many contemporaries that they had just escaped a near-apocalyptic experience largely explains the wave of mysticism that washed over Europe in those years.

"Stourdza's testimony thus confirms that the Holy Alliance did pursue a conservative, religious, and counter-revolutionary agenda. For all that, it would be a mistake to call it a reactionary or ultra-royalist manifesto. Between these two extremes, there existed not only a vast spectrum of ideas, but also profound

¹⁵ Alan Palmer, *Alexander I*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, p. 333.

¹⁶ Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

¹⁷ Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace*, pp. 520-522.

divergences. We should sooner speak of a middle ground, a 'defensive modernization,' which sparked a storm of criticism from both sides..."¹⁸

The more cynical attitude of the foreign statesmen was not unexpected. After all, religion had long ceased to be seen as the basis of political life in the West. True, the monarchs protected religion as a foundation of their own monarchical power; but in the post-1815 settlement the Catholic Church received few of its lands back, which showed their true attitude to it. The fact was that Tsar Alexander was now the most powerful man in Europe, and the others could not afford to reject his religio-political project out of hand. So, led by Metternich, they set about discreetly editing the treaty of its more mystical elements until it was signed by the monarchs of Russia, Austria and Prussia (the British and the Turks opted out, as did the Pope of Rome) on September 26.

Thus the original draft read: "Conformably to the word of the Holy Scriptures, the three contracting Monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity, and considering each other as fellow countrymen, they will on all occasions, and in all places led each other aid and assistance; and regarding themselves towards their subjects and armies as fathers of families, they will lead them, in the same fraternity with which they are animated to protect religion, peace and justice."¹⁹ But Metternich modified the first part to remove the phrase "by the bonds of a true fraternity" to read: "The three monarchs will remain united". Again, the original draft stated that the three Powers were three provinces of a single nation. But Metternich changed this to present them as three branches of the same family.

"Metternich," continues Ghervas, "having obviously grasped that there was an attempt to pass political reformism under the guise of religious rhetoric (both of which he disliked), had therefore been quick to temper the enthusiasm of the Tsar. His was also the paternalist idea that the monarchs were 'benevolent fathers.' However, the idea that Europe represented a "Christian nation" still made it into the final version of the text.

"It is obvious from the original proposition that Alexander I had sought to found a European nation "essentially one" and living in peace, of which the various states would be provinces. We can easily guess the reason for Metternich's amendments: the original wording would have united the peoples of Europe in a position, so to speak, "over the heads of the sovereigns," while placing unprecedented constraints on the monarchs; the text would have smacked of a constitution. The original version even provided that the military forces of the respective powers would have to be considered as forming a single army – 130 years before the aborted project of the European Defense Community of the early 1950s! Even though Tsar Alexander I had initially envisaged a sort of league of nations united under the authority of the sovereigns, what eventually emerged was an alliance of kings.

¹⁸ Ghervas, "Antidotes to Empire: From the Congress System to the European Union", in John W. Boyer and Berthold Molden (eds.), *Eutropes: The Paradox of European Empire*, Paris and Chicago, 2014, pp. 58-59.

¹⁹ Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-334.

“From this point of view, the pact of the Holy Alliance stemmed from a line of thought of the Enlightenment. We should keep in mind that the monarchs and ministers of the post-Napoleonic era considered themselves as heirs of that movement as a matter of course: after all, they were the direct descendants of the sovereigns Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine of Russia, and Joseph II of Austria, all of whom had surprised their epoch with their intellectual audacity and rivaled one another to host in their courts philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Kant, much to the chagrin of the conservative minds of their respective kingdoms. On the other hand, the three sovereign signatories of the Holy Alliance rejected the French Revolution with their utmost energy...”²⁰

This was not only the beginning of a new, multilateral approach to politics: it was also the beginning of a kind of United Nations, with the great monarchical powers as the security council who pledged themselves not to take major decisions on the international stage without consulting each other. Moreover, it was a consciously *Christian* United Nations; for the powers declared themselves to be, according to the original draft, “members of a single Christian nation” – a remarkable idea in view of the fact that of the three members of the Alliance, one, Russia, was Orthodox, another, Austria, was Catholic, and the third, Prussia, was Protestant.

Another important aspect of the Holy Alliance was its anti-papism. The Pope was in effect removed from politics and confined to the ecclesiastical sphere. According to Gervas, however, “the concept of a ‘Christian nation’ in Europe, an ecumenism embracing the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox faiths was, in fact, an insidious attack aimed at the Holy See. Somewhat surprisingly, it has not been noted that the Pope of Rome, a major political actor of European history for centuries, was now being banned from the continental chess game of the Congress of Vienna and would never recover his former status.

“In fact, the statement in the treaty of the Holy Alliance that ‘the three sovereigns make up a single nation with the same Christian faith’ amounted to a notice of liquidation of the thousand-year-old political system of Western Europe, which had been founded (at least ideologically) on the alliance between the Catholic Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. By putting Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy on equal footing, thus making the political organization of Christian Europe ‘non-confessional,’ the sovereigns of the three powers were plainly declaring that the Pope’s claim to supremacy in Europe was null and void. From that angle, it takes the aspect of a backstage revolution. Napoleon had already damaged the prestige of the Sovereign Pontiff with his own sacrilegious coronation in 1804. Two years later, the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire had sealed the bankruptcy of the temporal side of the fellowship between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1815, it was the turn of the spiritual side to be liquidated. As a result, the political role of the Sovereign Pontiff was reduced to that of a sovereign of an Italian state. This ideological backlash profoundly upset Pope Pius VII; therein lies the reason why the Holy See refused to sign the pact of the Holy Alliance.

²⁰ Gervas, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

“Why had the sovereigns of the great powers engaged in such a radically anti-clerical manoeuvre that deliberately ousted the Pope from European politics?”

“... From Alexander’s point of view, a Patriarch of Rome who not only considered himself independent of the sovereigns, but historically claimed to be their suzerain, was a contestant on the European political scene that had to be remorselessly shoved out of the way.

“That rather unfriendly attitude toward the Catholic Church was shared, but for entirely different reasons, by the Protestant king of Prussia (a hereditary enemy of Roman supremacy) and the sovereign of Austria – the same who had liquidated the Holy Roman Empire and crowned himself emperor of Austria under the name of Francis I. The latter was also the nephew of the archduke Joseph II (1741–90), who had applied a policy known as Josephism, aimed precisely at subordinating the Church to the State and at restraining pontifical power. Hence, beyond the mysticism of the epoch, would it be appropriate to speak of a strand of mystification in the Holy Alliance, especially when considering the amendments from a character as down-to-earth as Metternich? In any case, there was a shared interest on the part of the three Powers to put the final nail in the coffin of Papal political authority.

“In firm opposition to the Holy Alliance, there arose, naturally enough, representatives of Roman Catholic thought, such as the Jesuits, as well as Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. In defiance of all odds, they kept advocating an alliance of sovereigns under the auspices of the Pope, as well as a return to the prerogatives of the aristocratic class. It is those views that most impressed minds in France, especially the alliance of the Bourbon monarchy and the Church of Rome, despite the fact that both were now only secondary pieces on a rather complicated European chessboard. In addition, Maistre knew the Tsar well, since he had spent several years in Saint Petersburg; if he mistrusted him, it was not for failing to know him. Maistre wrote about the Holy Alliance, even before its publication: “Let us note that the spirit behind it is not Catholic, nor Greek or Protestant; it is a peculiar spirit that I have been studying for thirty years, but to describe it here would be too long; it is enough to say that it is as good for the separated Churches as it is bad for Catholics. It is expected to melt and combine all metals; after which, the statue will be cast away.” Maistre was exposing what he had rightly perceived as a cunning maneuver: by adopting the Christian religion as the guiding principle, but diluting it at the same time into a vague whole, the three sovereigns had meant to undermine the Pope’s sphere of influence. By a process that our age would call ‘embrace, extend, and extinguish,’ they had deliberately opened the door to a European political sphere that would henceforth be free of ecclesiastical influence (though not of religion).

“Finally, the wording ‘Christian family’ offered yet another advantage in the geopolitical context of the time: it covered all states of Europe, but left out the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim state. Russia, which had concluded a war with Turkey only three years before, had been entertaining definite ambitions over it since the epoch of Peter the Great. Thus the Holy Alliance potentially gave the Russian Empire a free hand on the rather complex Eastern Question – in other words, the competition among the

great powers to partition the territory of the declining Ottoman Empire."²¹

The diminution in the power of Catholicism, and the increased prestige of Orthodox Russia, helped to increase the stream of uniates returning voluntarily to Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century. Favourable conditions for this change had been created by the fall of Poland in 1815, the expulsion of the Jesuits from Russia in 1820 and the suppression of the Polish rebellion in 1830-1831. Then, in 1835, a secret committee on the uniate question was formed in St. Petersburg consisting of the uniate bishop Joseph Semashko, the real soul of the movement, Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, the over-procurator of the Holy Synod and the minister of the interior. By 1839 1,600,000 uniates had converted to Orthodoxy.

But Catholicism was not finished yet. And in the Crimean War of 1853-56 the Pope saw an opportunity to wound Russia. As A.S. Khomiakov wrote: "Whatever political bases and excuses there may be for the struggle that is convulsing Europe now, it is impossible not to notice, even at the most superficial observation, that on one of the warring sides stand exclusively peoples belonging to Orthodoxy, and on the other - Romans and Protestants, gathered around Islam." And he quoted from an epistle of the Catholic Archbishop of Paris Sibur, who assured the French that the war with Russia "is not a political war, but a holy war; not a war of states or peoples, but solely a religious war". All other reasons were "in essence no more than excuses". The true reason was "the necessity to drive out the [supposed] error of Photius [his opposition to the heretical introduction of the Filioque into the Creed]; to subdue and crush it". "That is the recognized aim of this new crusade, and such was the hidden aim of all the previous crusades, even if those who participated in them did not admit it."²²

²¹ Gervas, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-67.

²² Khomiakov, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Moscow, 1994, vol. II, pp. 74-75; in Selischev, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

V. RUSSIAN INTELLECTUALS AND CATHOLICISM

In 1871 Garibaldi's red shirts seized Rome and brought the temporal power of the papacy to an end, completing the process begun by Napoleon and Alexander I. This was a cause of rejoicing to many, but not to the Russian diplomat, Constantine Nikolaevich Leontiev, who lamented: The Pope a prisoner! The first man of France [President Carnot] not baptized!"²³ The reason for his alarm was not far to find: for all its vices, and its newest heresies, such as the Infallibility of the Pope and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, the papacy was still one of the main forces in the West restraining the liberal-socialist revolution as it descended ever more rapidly down the slippery slope towards atheism...

However, conservative and anti-revolutionary though the papacy might be, it remained true, as the Russian poet and diplomat Fyodor Tyutchev pointed out, that the revolution in western society had really begun with Pope Gregory VII in the eleventh century, who could be called both the first Protestant and the first revolutionary... Moreover, while the Vatican would never again present a direct, existential threat to the survival of Russia or Russian Orthodoxy, the increasing influence of the religious tendency known as "indifferentism" or "ecumenism" meant that Russian intellectuals continued to be influenced by Catholicism. Two nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals who took directly opposing views on Catholicism were Dostoyevsky and Soloviev...

The simultaneous defeat in 1870-71 of both the most reactionary and the most revolutionary regimes in Europe (the Papacy and the Paris Commune) raised the question: might there be a connection between these seeming opposites? Following the suggestion of some French socialist thinkers, Dostoyevsky saw a link between the two antichristian systems. "Present-day French Socialism," he wrote, "is nothing but the truest and most direct continuation of the Catholic idea, its fullest, most final consequence which has been evolved through centuries. French Socialism is nothing else than the compulsory union of mankind - an idea which dates back to ancient Rome and which was fully expressed in Catholicism."²⁴

Papism, according to Dostoyevsky, was the beginning of western atheism. As Prince Myshkin says in *The Idiot* (1868): "Roman Catholicism believes that the Church cannot exist on earth without universal temporal power, and cries: Non possumus! In my opinion, Roman Catholicism isn't even a religion, but most decidedly a continuation of the Holy Roman Empire, and everything in it is subordinated to that idea, beginning with faith. The Pope seized the earth, an earthly throne and took up

²³ Leontiev, "Natsional'naia politika kak orudie vseмирnoj revoliutsii" (National politics as a weapon of universal revolution), *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 526. Leontiev also wrote: "If I were in Rome, I should not hesitate to kiss not only the hand but also the slipper of Leo XIII... Roman Catholicism suits my unabashed taste for despotism, my tendency to spiritual authority, and attracts my heart and mind for many other reasons" (*op. cit.*, p. 529). "An interesting ecumenical remark for an Orthodox," comments Wil van den Bercken (*Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 213), "but it is not meant that way." That is, he admired the papacy for its *authoritarianism* without sharing its religious errors.

²⁴ Dostoyevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Moscow, 1914, vol. I, p. 150.

the sword; and since then everything has gone on in the same way, except that they've added lies, fraud, deceit, fanaticism, superstition wickedness. They have trifled with the most sacred, truthful, innocent, ardent feelings of the people, have bartered it all for money, for base temporal power. And isn't this the teaching of Antichrist? Isn't it clear from Roman Catholicism itself! Atheism originated first of all with them: how could they believe in themselves? It gained ground because of abhorrence of them; it is the child of their lies and their spiritual impotence! Atheism! In our country it is only the upper classes who do not believe, as Mr. Radomsky so splendidly put it the other day, for they have lost their roots. But in Europe vast numbers of the common people are beginning to lose their faith - at first from darkness and lies, and now from fanaticism, hatred of the Church and Christianity!"²⁵

And since Socialism is "above all an atheistic question, the question of the modern integration of atheism", Papism is its parent, too: "Socialism, too, is the child of Catholicism and the intrinsic Catholic nature! It, too, like its brother atheism, was begotten of despair, in opposition to Catholicism as a moral force, in order to replace the lost moral power of religion, to quench the spiritual thirst of parched humanity, and save it not by Christ, but also by violence! This, too, is freedom by violence. This, too, is union through the sword and blood. 'Don't dare to believe in God! Don't dare to have property! Don't dare to have a personality of your own! *Fraternité ou la mort!* Two million heads!"²⁶ So akin is Socialism to Papism that Papism "will tell the people that Christ also preached everything that the Socialists are preaching to them. Again it will pervert and sell them Christ as it has sold Him so many times in the past."²⁷

Peter Verkhovensky in *The Devils* (1871) even envisages the possibility of the Pope becoming the leader of the Socialists: "Do you know, I was thinking of delivering the world up to the Pope. Let him go barefoot and show himself to the mob, saying, 'See what they have brought me to!' and they will all follow him, even the army. The Pope on top, we all round him, and below us - the Shigalev order. All we need is that the Internationale should come to an agreement with the Pope; this will come about. The old boy will agree at once. He can't do anything else. Mark my words."²⁸

"The Western Church," wrote Dostoyevsky, "has distorted the image of Christ, having been transformed from a Church into a Roman state and incarnated it again in the form of the papacy. Yes, in the West there is in truth no longer Christianity and the Church, although there are still many Christians - yes, and they will never disappear. Catholicism is truly no longer Christianity, and is passing into idol-worship, while Protestantism with giant steps is passing into atheism and a slippery, shifting, inconstant (and not age-old) teaching on morality. The Empire accepted Christianity, and the Church - the Roman law and state. A small part of the Church departed into the desert and began to continue its former work: Christian

²⁵ Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, Penguin Magarshack translation, p. 585.

²⁶ Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, p. 586.

²⁷ Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, 1877.

²⁸ Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, August, 1880; *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Moscow, 1984, vol. 26, pp. 151, 169. Cf. Thomas Hobbes: "The papacy is not other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof" (*Leviathan*).

communities appeared again, then monasteries. But then the remaining, huge part of the Church divided, as we know, into two halves. In the western half the state finally overcame the Church completely. The Church was annihilated and was reincarnated finally into a state. There appeared the papacy - a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire in a new incarnation."²⁰⁸

Dostoyevsky saw in Germany's victory over France at Sedan in 1871 an attempt to crush Socialism, and thereby Papism, and foresaw the time when the madness of Papist individualism would seek to unite itself with the madness of socialist collectivism: "By depriving France of her political existence, Prince Bismarck hopes to deliver a blow at socialism. Socialism, as a heritage of Catholicism, and France are most hateful to a genuine German. It is excusable that Germany's representatives believe that it is so easy to master socialism by merely destroying Catholicism - as its source and beginning.

"However, this is what is most probably going to happen should France fall politically: Catholicism will lose its sword, and for the first time will appeal to the people whom it has been despising for so many centuries, ingratiating itself with worldly kings and emperors. Now, however, it will appeal to the people, since there is nowhere else to go; specifically, it will appeal to the leaders of the most worldly and rebellious element of the people - the socialists. Catholicism will tell the people that Christ also preached everything the socialists are preaching to them. Once more it will pervert and sell them Christ as it has Him so many times in the past for earthly possessions, defending the rights of the Inquisition which, in the name of loving Christ, tortured men for freedom of conscience - in the name of Christ to Whom only that disciple was dear who came to Him of his free accord and not the one who had been bought or frightened.

"Catholicism sold Christ when it blessed the Jesuits and sanctioned the righteousness of 'every means for Christ's cause'. However, since time immemorial, it has converted Christ's cause into a mere concern for its earthly possessions and its future political domination over the whole world. When Catholic mankind turned away from the monstrous image in which, at length, Christ had been revealed to them, - after many protests, reformations, etc., at the beginning of this century - endeavours arose to organize life without God, without Christ. Devoid of the instinct of a bee or an ant, unmistakably and with utmost precision constructing their hive and ant-hill, men sought to create something on the order of an unmistakable anthill. They rejected the unique formula of mankind's salvation, derived from God and announced through revelation to man: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and substituted for it practical inferences, such as 'Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous' ('Each one for himself and God for all'), or scientific axioms, such as 'the struggle for existence'.

"Bereft of the instinct which guides animals and enables them to organize their life faultlessly, men haughtily sought to rely upon science, forgetting that for such a task as the creation of society, science is still, so to speak, in swaddles. Dreams ensued. The future tower of Babylon became the ideal but also the dread of humanity. But after these dreams there soon appeared other simple doctrines, intelligible to everybody,

for instance: 'to rob the rich, to stain the world with blood, after which *somehow everything will again be settled of its own accord.*'

"Finally, even these teachers were outstripped: there appeared the doctrine of anarchy, after which - if it could be put into effect - there would again ensue a period of cannibalism, and people would be compelled to start all over again as they started some ten thousand years ago. Catholicism fully understands all this, and it will manage to seduce the leaders of the underground war. It will say to them: 'You have no centre, no order in the conduct of the work; you are a force scattered all over the world, and now, after the downfall of France [Dostoyevsky is referring to the fall of the Commune in 1871] - also an oppressed force. I shall be your rallying center, and I shall attract to you all those who still believe in me.

"One way or another, the alliance will be formed. Catholicism does not wish to die, whereas social revolution and the new social period in Europe are indubitable: two forces, unquestionably, will have to come to understanding, to unite. It stands to reason that slaughter, blood, plunder, even cannibalism would be advantageous to Catholicism. Precisely then it may hope to catch once more its fish in troubled waters, foreseeing the moment when, finally, mankind, exhausted by chaos and lawlessness, will fall into its arms. Then, once more, it will become in reality the sole and absolute 'earthly ruler and universal authority', sharing its power with no one. Thereby it will attain its ultimate goal."²⁹

Although not an exact prophecy, this accurately identified the general trend in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For there has been an increasing tendency for the papacy, if not to identify with the revolution (although its "liberation theologians" did precisely that in Central and South America in the 1980s), at any rate to accept many of their premises and strive to work with them rather than against them. Thus the papacy has fitted easily into the modern liberal-socialist structure of the European Union - even though, much to the Pope's chagrin, there is no mention of God in its constitution...

In *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881), Dostoyevsky underlined the link between Papism and Socialism by making the leading proponent of Socialism a Papist Inquisitor. After his disillusionment with Papism, Western man could not be satisfied with the atomic individualism of the societies that replaced it, but yearned for the brotherhood of all men in obedience to one Father that Papism provided, albeit in a perverted form. "For the chief concern of these miserable creatures," says the Inquisitor, "is not only to find something that I or someone else can worship, but to find something that all believe in and worship, and the absolutely essential thing is that they should do so *all together*. It is this need for *universal* worship that is the chief torment of every man individually and of mankind as a whole from the beginning of time. For the sake of the universal worship they have put each other to the sword..."

²⁹ Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, November, 1877, pp. 910-912.

Over forty years later, on the death of Lenin in 1924, the Social-Revolutionary leader Victor Chernov confirmed Dostoyevsky's analysis of the relationship between Papism and Socialism when he compared Lenin to the most famous of the Inquisitors: "His love of the proletariat was the same despotic, exacting, and merciless love with which, centuries ago, Torquemada burned people for their salvation..."³⁰

Dostoyevky's friend, the philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, took a very different view of the papacy. He was attracted by its universalism and independence of national governments, which contrasted with the nationalism of the Orthodox Churches and their too close dependence on national governments. Russian Tsarism, he believed, needed a partner – and that partner should not be the Orthodox Church. It should be, he revealed in his work *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle* (1889), the papacy. As a consequence, he became a Catholic – although he returned to Orthodoxy on his deathbed.

The Orthodox Church, in Soloviev's opinion, was no longer the Universal Church, and had therefore lost the right to represent Christ. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church had a wealth of mystical contemplation, which had to be preserved. "In Eastern Christendom for the last thousand years religion has been identified with personal piety, and prayer has been regarded as the one and only religious activity. The Western church, without disparaging individual piety as the true germ of all religion, seeks the development of this germ and its blossoming into a social activity organized for the glory of God and the universal good of mankind. The Eastern prays, the Western prays and labours."

However, only a supranational spiritual power independent of the State could be a worthy partner of the State, forming the basis of a universal theocracy. For "here below, the Church has not the perfect unity of the heavenly Kingdom, but nevertheless she must have a certain real unity, a bond at once organic and spiritual which constitutes her a concrete institution, a living body and a moral individual. Though she does not include the whole of mankind in an actual material sense, she is nevertheless *universal* insofar as she cannot be confined exclusively to any one nation or group of nations, but must have an international centre from which to spread throughout the whole universe..."

"Were she not one and universal, she could not serve as the foundation of the positive unity of all peoples, which is her chief mission. Were she not infallible, she could not guide mankind in the true way; she would be a blind leader of the blind. Finally were she not independent, she could not fulfil her duty towards society; she would become the instrument of the powers of this world and would completely fail in her mission..."

"If the particular spiritual families which between them make up mankind are in reality to form a single Christian family, a single Universal Church, they must be subject to a common fatherhood embracing all Christian nations. To assert that there exist in reality nothing more than national Churches is to assert that the members of

³⁰ Chernov, "Lenin", in *Foreign Affairs*, January-February, 2012, p. 12.

a body exist in and for themselves and that the body itself has no reality. On the contrary, Christ did not found any particular Church. He created them all in the real unity of the Universal Church which He entrusted to Peter as the one supreme representative of the divine Fatherhood towards the whole family of the sons of Man.

“It was by no mere chance that Jesus Christ specially ascribed to the first divine Hypostasis, the heavenly Father, that divine-human act which made Simon Bar-Jona the first social father of the whole human family and the infallible master of the school of mankind.”

For Soloviev, wrote N.O. Lossky, “the ideal of the Russian people is of [a] *religious* nature, it finds its expression in the idea of ‘Holy Russia’; the capacity of the Russian people to combine Eastern and Western principles has been historically proved by the success of Peter the Great’s reforms; the capacity of national self-renunciation, necessary for the recognition of the Pope as the Primate of the Universal Church, is inherent in the Russian people, as may be seen, among other things, from the calling in of the Varangians [?]. Soloviev himself gave expression to this characteristic of the Russian people when he said that it was ‘better to give up patriotism than conscience’, and taught that the cultural mission of a great nation is not a *privilege*: it must not dominate, but *serve* other peoples and all mankind.

“Soloviev’s Slavophil messianism never degenerated into a narrow nationalism. In the nineties he was looked upon as having joined the camp of the Westernizers. In a series of articles he violently denounced the epigons of Slavophilism who had perverted its original conception. In the article ‘Idols and Ideals’, written in 1891, he speaks of ‘the transformation of the lofty and all-embracing Christian ideals into the coarse and limited idols of our modern paganism... National messianism was the main idea of the old Slavophiles; this idea, in some form or other, was shared by many peoples; it assumed a pre-eminently religious and mystical character with the Poles (Towianski) and with some French dreamers of the thirties and forties (Michel, Ventura, etc.). What is the relation of such national messianism to the true Christian idea? We will not say that there is a contradiction of principle between them. The true Christian ideal can assume this national messianic form, but it becomes then very *easily pervertible* (to use an expression of ecclesiastical writers); i.e., it can easily change into the corresponding idol of anti-Christian nationalism, which did happen in fact.’ ...

“Soloviev struggled in his works against every distortion of the Christian ideal of general harmony; he also struggled against all the attempts made by man to satisfy his selfishness under the false pretence of serving a noble cause. Such are for instance the aims of chauvinistic nationalism. Many persons believe, Soloviev tells us, that in order to serve the imaginary interests of their people, ‘everything is permitted, the aim justifies the means, black turns white, lies are preferable to truth and violence is glorified and considered as valor... This is first of all an insult to that very nationality which we desire to serve.’ In reality, ‘peoples flourished and were exalted only when they did not serve their own interests as a goal in itself, but pursued higher, *general* ideal goods.’ Trusting the highly sensitive conscience of the Russian people, Soloviev wrote in his article, ‘What is Demanded of a Russian Party?’ ‘If instead of doping themselves with Indian opium, our Chinese neighbors suddenly took a liking to the

poisonous mushrooms which abound in the Siberian woods, we would be sure to find Russian jingos, who in their ardent interest in Russian trade, would want Russia to induce the Chinese government to permit the free entry of poisonous mushrooms into the Celestial empire... Nevertheless, every plain Russian will say that no matter how vital an interest may be, Russia's honor is also worth something; and, according to Russian standards, this honor definitely forbids a shady deal to become an issue of national politics.'

"Like Tiutchev, Soloviev dreamed of Russia becoming a Christian world monarchy; yet he wrote in a tone full of anxiety: 'Russia's life has not yet determined itself completely, it is still torn by the struggle between the principle of light and that of darkness. Let Russia become a Christian realm, even without Constantinople, a Christian realm in the full sense of the word, that is, one of justice and mercy, and all the rest will be surely added unto this.'"³¹

As we have seen, Dostoyevsky disagreed with his friend on this point, considering the papacy to be, not so much a Church as a State. Nor did he agree with the doctrine of papal infallibility, which Soloviev also supported.

As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote in 1890, in his review of Soloviev's book: "A sinful man cannot be accepted as the supreme head of the Universal Church without this bride of Christ being completely dethroned. Accepting the compatibility of the infallibility of religious edicts with a life of sin, with a wicked will, would amount to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of wisdom by admitting His compatibility with a sinful mind. Khomiakov very justly says that besides the holy inspiration of the apostles and prophets, Scripture tells us of only one inspiration – inspiration of the obsessed. But if this sort of inspiration was going on in Rome, the Church would not be the Church of Christ, but the Church of His enemy. And this is exactly how Dostoyevsky defines it in his 'Grand Inquisitor' who says to Christ: 'We are not with Thee, but with him'... Dostoyevsky in his 'Grand Inquisitor' characterised the Papacy as a doctrine which is attractive exactly because of its worldly power, but devoid of the spirit of Christian communion with God and of contempt for the evil of the world..."³²

As a warning against the dangers of a Russian nationalism lacking the universalist dimension of the early Slavophiles and Dostoyevsky, Soloviev's critique had value. But his attempt to tear Russia away from Constantinople and towards Rome was misguided. And it had an unhealthy influence on other writers, such as D.S. Merezhkovsky.

Thus Merezhkovsky, according to Sergius Firsov, "found it completely normal to compare Roman Catholicism headed by the Pope and the Russian kingdom headed by the Autocrat. Calling these theocracies (that is, attempts to realize the City of God in the city of man) false, Merezhkovsky pointed out that they came by different paths

³¹ Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1952, pp. 115-117.

³² Khrapovitsky, "The Infallibility of the Pope according to Vladimir Soloviev", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 37, N 4, July-August, 1987, pp. 37, 43.

to the same result: the western – to turning the Church into a State, and the eastern – to engulfing the Church in the State. ‘Autocracy and Orthodoxy are two halves of one religious whole,’ wrote Merezhkovsky, ‘just as the papacy and Catholicism are. The Tsar is not just the Tsar, the head of the State, but also the head of the Church, the first priest, the anointed of God, that is, in the final, if historically not yet realized, yet mystically necessary extent of his power – ‘the Vicar of Christ’, the same Pope, Caesar and Pope in one.’”³³

³³ Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune peremen (konets 1890-kh – 1918 g.)* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes (the end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2002, pp. 39-40.

VI. THE VATICAN AND SOVIET RUSSIA

In 1917, on the thirteenth day of the month of May, and for six months thereafter the Virgin Mary supposedly appeared to three shepherd girls in Fatima, Portugal. The girls were entrusted with “three secrets”, the second of which is the most important. This supposedly revealed that, in order to avoid terrible calamities in the world and the persecution of the Catholic Church, the Virgin will ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. If her request is granted, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, then she [Russia] will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecution of the Church. “The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”

Now from the point of view of the Orthodox Saints and Holy Fathers (and even of some of the Catholic “saints”, such as John of the Cross), these visions and revelations are clear examples of demonic deception and not to be trusted. In May, 1917 it did not require Divine inspiration to see that Russia was descending into chaos, and the devil used the opportunity to try and persuade people that the chaos could be averted only through the submission of Russia to his tool, the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, the Vatican seized on these “revelations” and in 1930 pronounced them worthy of trust; and every Pope since then has been committed to belief in the Fatima phenomenon.

How did the Vatican, Russia’s age-old enemy, react to the revolution? In reality, with joy, as being a wonderful missionary opportunity seemingly blessed by the Mother of God herself in the false vision of Fatima. However, since the Vatican had always opposed communism as well as Orthodoxy, it had to hide its joy at first....

On March 12, 1919 Pope Benedict XV sent Lenin a protest against the persecutions of the Orthodox clergy, while Archbishop Ropp sent Patriarch Tikhon a letter of sympathy. The Bolshevik Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin noted with dissatisfaction this “solidarity with the servers of the Orthodox Church”. In general, however, the attitude of the Vatican to Orthodoxy was hostile to the Orthodox. In 1922 Hieromartyr Benjamin of Petrograd said to Fyodorov: “You offer us unification... and all the while your Latin priests, behind our backs, are sowing ruin amongst our flock.”

Nicholas Boyeikov writes: “In his epistle of 25 June, 1925, the locum tenens of the All-Russian Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, who suffered torture in Soviet exile, expressed himself on the ‘Eastern Rite’ as follows: ‘the Orthodox Christian Church has many enemies. Now they have increased their activity against Orthodoxy. The Catholics, by introducing the rites of our divine services, are seducing the believing people – especially those among the western churches which have been Orthodox since antiquity – into accepting the unia, and by this means they are distracting the forces of the Orthodox Church from the more urgent struggle against unbelief.’”³⁴

³⁴ *Tserkovnie Vedomosti* (Church Gazette), 1925, №№ 21-22); Boyeikov, op. cit., p. 13.

Protodeacon Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty writes: "Pope Pius X (who was canonized in 1954) pronounced on the very eve of World War I, 'Russia is the greatest enemy of the [Roman] Church.' Therefore it is not surprising that the Roman Catholic world greeted the Bolshevik Revolution with joy. 'After the Jews the Catholics did probably more than anyone else to organize the overthrow of tsarist power. At least they did nothing to stop it.' Shamelessly and with great candour they wrote in Rome as soon as the Bolshevik 'victory' became evident: 'there has been uncontainable pleasure over the fall of the tsarist government and Rome has not wasted any time in entering into negotiations with the Soviet government.' When a leading Vatican dignitary was asked why the Vatican was against France during World War II, he exclaimed: 'The victory of the Entente allied with Russia would have been as great a catastrophe for the Roman Catholic Church as the Reformation was.' Pope Pius conveyed this feeling in his typically abrupt manner: 'If Russia is victorious, then the schism is victorious.' ...

"Even though the Vatican had long prepared for it, the collapse of the Orthodox Russian Empire caught it unawares. It very quickly came to its senses. The collapse of Russia did not yet mean that Russia could turn Roman Catholic. For this, a new plan of attack was needed. Realizing that it would be as difficult for a Pole to proselytise in Russia as for an Englishman in Ireland, the Vatican understood the necessity of finding a totally different method of battle with Orthodoxy, which would painlessly and without raising the slightest suspicion, ensnare and subordinate the Russian people to the Roman Pope. This Machiavellian scheme was the appearance of the so-called 'Eastern Rite', which its defenders understood as 'the bridge by which Rome will enter Russia', to quote an apt expression of K.N. Nikolaiev.

"This treacherous plot, which can be likened to a ship sailing under a false flag, had very rapid success in the first years after the establishment of Soviet power. This took place in blood-drenched Russia and abroad, where feverish activity was begun amongst the hapless émigrés, such as finding them work, putting their immigration status in order, and opening Russian-language schools for them and their children.

"It cannot be denied that there were cases of unmercenary help, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, this charitable work had a thinly disguised confessional goal, to lure by various means the unfortunate refugees into what seemed at first glance to be true Orthodox churches, but which at the same time commemorated the pope...

"In Russia the experiment with the 'Eastern Rite' lasted more than ten years... The heart and soul of the papal 'Ostpolitik', its eastern policies, was a Jesuit, the French Bishop d'Herbigny, who was specially authorized by the pope to conduct negotiations with the Kremlin for the wide dissemination of Roman Catholicism in the Soviet Union and by the same token the supplanting of Orthodoxy in Russia and in Russian souls.

“With this in mind, d’Herbigny travelled three times to the Soviet Union on a French diplomatic passport. He consecrated several Roman Catholic hierarchs with the aim of building up a group of Russian Catholic clergymen who would be acceptable to the Soviet authorities. Let us listen to the degree of open amorality that these clerics were capable of: ‘Bolshevism is liquidating priests, desecrating churches and holy places, and destroying monasteries. Is this not where the religious mission of irreligious Bolshevism lies, in the disappearance of the carriers of schismatic thought, as it were presenting a “clean table”, a tabula rasa, which gives us the possibility of spiritual recreation.’ For those to whom it is not clear just what kind of spiritual reconstruction the Benedictine monk Chrysostom Bayer is referring to, his thoughts can be amplified by the official ...Catholic journal, *Bayrischer Kurier*: ‘Bolshevism is creating the possibility of the conversion of stagnant Russia to Catholicism.’

“No one less than the exarch of the Russian Catholics, Leonid Fyodorov, when on trial in March of 1923 along with fourteen other clergymen and one layman, pathetically testified to the sincerity of his feelings in relation to the Soviet authorities, who, Fyodorov thought later, did not fully understand what could be expected from Roman Catholicism. He explained: ‘From the time that I gave myself to the Roman Catholic Church, my cherished dream has been to reconcile my homeland with this church, which for me is the only true one. But we were not understood by the government. All Latin Catholics heaved a sigh of relief when the October Revolution took place. I myself greeted with enthusiasm the decree on the separation of Church and State... Only under Soviet rule, when Church and State are separated, could we breathe freely. As a religious believer, I saw in this liberation the hand of God.

“Let us not lose sight of the fact that all these declarations by Roman Catholics, who were quite friendly with the Soviets, were pronounced during the nightmarish period when the Soviets were trying to eradicate the Orthodox Church. Keeping in mind that Vatican diplomacy adheres to the principle that the end justifies the means, which is illustrated throughout its centuries-old history, the game which the Vatican has been playing with Moscow should be clearly understood. The essence of the matter is that Russia has become a sacrifice to two principles hostile to it, Catholicism and godless communism, which are drawn together by a curious concurrence of interests. Moscow realizes that the eradication of faith from the Russian soul is a hopeless task. As long as the Russian Church remained faithful to itself, and uncompromising towards the godless power, courageously witnessing to the fundamental incompatibility between Christian and communist principles, the Soviet leaders were ready for two reasons to graciously study the variant of Roman Catholicism offered to them. By this means they hoped to manipulate the religiousness of the Russian soul.

“The first reason was Rome’s consistent, impeccable loyalty to the communist regime, both in the U.S.S.R. and outside it [until 1930]. Secondly, it was advantageous to the Kremlin, or simply entertaining, that the religious needs of the Russians should be satisfied by this centuries-old enemy of Orthodoxy. For their part, the Catholics were ready to close their eyes to all the atrocities of Bolshevism, including the shooting of the Roman Catholic Bishop Butkevich in April of 1923 and the imprisonment of

Bishops Tseplyak, Maljetsky and Fyodorov. Six weeks later, the Vatican expressed its sorrow over the assassination of the Soviet agent Vorovsky in Lausanne! The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs told the German Ambassador, 'Pius XI was amiable to me in Genoa, expressing the hope that we [the Bolsheviks] would break the monopoly of the Orthodox Church in Russia, thus clearing a path for him.'

"We have discovered information of the greatest importance in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A secret telegram № 266 of February 6, 1925 from Berlin, stated that the Soviet ambassador, Krestinsky, told Cardinal Pacelli (the future Pius XII) that Moscow would not oppose the existence of Roman Catholic bishops and a metropolitan on Russian territory. Furthermore, the Roman clergy were offered the very best conditions. Six days later, secret telegram № 284 spoke of permission being granted for the opening of a Roman Catholic seminary. Thus, while our holy New Martyrs were being annihilated with incredible cruelty, the Vatican was conducting secret negotiations with Moscow. In short, Rome attempted to gain permission to appoint the necessary bishops and even permission to open a seminary. Our evidence shows that this question was discussed once more in high circles in the autumn of 1926. In all likelihood, it had not been satisfactorily settled earlier. This might be viewed as the culmination of the unnaturally close relations between the Vatican and the Soviet government."

In July, 1927 the deputy leader of the Russian Church, Metropolitan Sergius wrote a notorious declaration, committing his church to cooperation with the Bolsheviks. Having broken Sergius, - but not the True Russian Church, which went underground, - the Bolsheviks no longer needed the Catholics. And so, as an "unexpected and indirect result" of the declaration, writes Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "Moscow put an end to the negotiations and the attention it was devoting to Vatican offers... The restitution of the traditional [in appearance] Russian Orthodox Church, neutralized as it were, seemed more useful to the Soviet authorities than the Vatican. From then on, the Soviets lost interest in the Vatican. Only at the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1930 did the Vatican finally admit that it had suffered a political defeat and began vociferously to condemn the Bolshevik crimes. It had somehow not noticed them until 1930. Only in 1937 did Pope Pius XI release the encyclical Divini Redemptoris (Divine Redeemer), which denounced communism..."³⁵

³⁵ Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "The Vatican and Russia", <http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/new.htm>. See also Oleg Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, pp. 464-465.

VII. THE VATICAN AND POLAND

Although, as a result of the revolution, Russia was not in direct danger from the Vatican in the inter-war period, this was not the case with regard to the Orthodox populations in two countries closely linked to Russia – Poland and Yugoslavia. Poland was particularly important since most of the Orthodox population there were Russians, and the Polish Church was canonically part of the Russian Church.

Immediately Poland acquired independence from Russia, during the First World War and the Russian revolution, its old hatred of Russia manifested itself again and the persecution of the Orthodox restarted. Thus already on October 22, 1919 the Poles had ordered 497 Orthodox churches and chapels, which had supposedly been seized from the Catholics in the past, to be returned to the Catholic Church. The nuns of the great missionary monastery of Lesna were forced to flee, first to Bessarabia, then Serbia, and finally France.

Again, in Turkovichi in Kholm region there had been for centuries the miraculous Turkovitskaya Icon of the Mother of God cared for by a convent of nuns. In 1915 the nuns were forced to flee to Moscow, and the icon perished during the revolution. Meanwhile, in 1918, writes Archbishop Athanasius, "the Poles occupied the monastery and turned it into an orphanage under the direction of Polish nuns. The Orthodox were strictly forbidden to enter the monastery. Upon return from exile, the Orthodox inhabitants of Turkovichi built with their own means a small chapel in the cemetery not far from the monastery and ordered from the local artist and iconographer, Zinya, a copy of the miraculous icon, adorning it with a large kiot (shrine) and placing it in the church. The people heard of this and began to make massive pilgrimages to Turkovichi in order to venerate the sacred 'Turkovitskaya' Icon as one equal to the original. Thus the feast day of Turkovichi was restored and drew numerous pilgrims on the July 2/15 date."³⁶

Then the Poles tried to destroy the links between the Russian Orthodox in Poland and their Mother Church in Russia by creating an autocephalous Polish Church. Thus in 1921 Patriarch Tikhon appointed Archbishop Seraphim (Chichagov) to the see of Warsaw, but the Poles, whose armies had defeated the Red Army the year before, did not grant him entry into the country. So on September 27 the Patriarch was forced to accept the Poles' candidate, Archbishop George (Yaroshevsky) of Minsk. However, he appointed him his exarch in Poland, not metropolitan of Warsaw (that title remained with Archbishop Seraphim). Moreover, he refused Archbishop George's request for autocephaly on the grounds that very few members of the Polish Church were Poles and the Polish dioceses were historically indivisible parts of the Russian Church. Instead, he granted the Polish Church autonomy within the Russian Church.

On January 24, 1922 Archbishop George convened a Council including Archbishops Dionysius (Valedinsky) and Panteleimon (Rozhnovsky). Under pressure from the authorities, Bishop Vladimir also joined them. Pekarsky, an official of the

³⁶ Archbishop Athanasius, "The Tragedy of Orthodoxy in Kholm: Eternal be its memory!", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 34, № 1 (January-February, 1984), pp. 34-35.

ministry of religious confessions, tried to make the Russian hierarchs sign the so-called "Temporary Rules", which the ministry had drawn up and which envisaged far-reaching government control over the Orthodox Church in Poland. On January 30 the "Temporary Rules" were signed by Archbishops George and Dionysius, but not by Archbishop Panteleimon and Bishop Vladimir. On the same day Patriarch Tikhon issued a decree transferring Archbishop George to the see of Warsaw and raising him to the rank of metropolitan; for it was clear that the Poles would never grant entrance into Warsaw to Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov), who had the reputation of being an extreme rightist. However, the titular promotion of Archbishop George by no means signified that the patriarch supported his intentions, for in the decrees there is no mention of ecclesiastical autocephaly, nor of exarchal rights. Consequently, as was confirmed by the patriarch in 1925, he was simply one of the diocesan bishops in Poland, and not metropolitan "of all Poland".

Liudmilla Koeller writes: "The Polish authorities restricted the Orthodox Church, which numbered more than 3 million believers (mainly Ukrainians and Byelorussians).³⁷ In 1922 a council was convoked in Pochaev which was to have declared autocephaly, but as the result of a protest by Bishop Eleutherios [Bogoyavlensky, of Vilnius] and Bishop Vladimir (Tikhonitsky), this decision was not made. But at the next council of bishops, which gathered in Warsaw in June, 1922, the majority voted for autocephaly, with only Bishops Eleutherios and Vladimir voting against. A council convoked in September of the same year 'deprived Bishops Eleutherios and Vladimir of their sees. In December, 1922, Bishop Eleutherios was arrested and imprisoned."³⁸

Eleutherios was later exiled to Lithuania. Two other Russian bishops, Panteleimon (Rozhnovsky) and Sergius (Korolev), were also deprived of their sees. The three dissident bishops were then expelled from Poland by the Catholic authorities. In November, 1923, Metropolitan George was killed by an opponent of his church politics, Archimandrite Smaragd (Laytshenko), and was succeeded by Metropolitan Dionysius "with the agreement of the Polish government and the confirmation and blessing of his Holiness Meletius IV [Metaxakis]". Patriarch Tikhon rejected this act as uncanonical. On November 13, 1924 Patriarch Gregory VII signed a *Tomos* "on the recognition of the Orthodox Church in Poland as autocephalous".

The *Tomos* significantly declared: "The first separation from our see of the Kievan Metropolia and from the Orthodox Metropolias of Latvia and Poland, which depended on it, and also their union to the holy Moscow Church, took place by no means in accordance with the prescription of the holy canons, nor was everything observed that had been established with regard to the complete ecclesiastical autonomy of the Kievan metropolitan who bears the title of exarch of the Ecumenical Throne". Hereby the pro-Catholic (and Masonic) Patriarch Meletius indirectly laid

³⁷ Already on October 22, 1919 the Poles had ordered 497 Orthodox churches and chapels, which had supposedly been seized from the Catholics in the past, to be returned to the Catholic Church. (V.M.)

³⁸ Koeller, "Kommentarii k pis'mu Arkhiepiskopa Rizhskago i Latvijskago Ioanna Arkhiepiskopu Vilyenskomu i Litovskomu Elevferiu ot 2 noiabria 1927 g." (Commentary on the Letter of Archbishop John of Riga and Latvia to Archbishop Eleutherios of Vilnius and Lithuania), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), №№. 3-4, May-June-July-August, 1992, pp. 56-57; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

claim to Ukraine as his canonical territory, in spite of the fact that it had been under Russian rule for two-and-a-half centuries. And yet, in contradiction with that, he affirmed as the basis of his grant of autocephaly to the Polish Church the fact that “the order of ecclesiastical affairs must follow political and social forms”.

The Polish government continued to persecute the Orthodox. Thus V.I. Alexeyev and F. Stavrou write: “Usually Soviet border zones were very thoroughly communised. The churches there were closed. When a part of Poland became Soviet territory and a border zone, Soviet power was forced to review its usual policy. It was too risky to start large-scale religious persecutions and arouse the displeasure of the populace in the presence of the German army on the other side of the border. It was necessary to take into account the fact – which was beneficial in the given circumstances for Soviet power – of the Polish authorities’ discrimination against the Orthodox Church. Before the beginning of the Second World War the Poles had closed hundreds of Orthodox churches on their territory on the grounds that the Tsarist government had in 1875 returned these churches from the unia to Orthodoxy. The Polish government considered the return of the uniates to Orthodoxy an act of violence, and they in their own way restored justice by means of violence, which, needless to say, elicited protests even from the Catholic and Uniate churches.

“The results of these measures of the Polish government were such that, for example, in the region of Kholm out of 393 Orthodox churches existing in 1914, by 1938 there remained 227, by 1939 – 176, and by the beginning of the war – 53 in all.³⁹ Particularly disturbing was the fact that, of the cult buildings taken away from the Orthodox, 130 churches, 10 houses of prayer and 2 monasteries were simply destroyed.”⁴⁰

The persecution of Orthodoxy by the Poles continued well into the war. Thus Archbishop Athanasius writes: “During the terrible years of 1943-1945 during the Second World War Polish bandits attacked the peaceful Orthodox inhabitants at night, slaughtered them, burned their homes, and brought a reign of terror and fear to these Orthodox people. In this tragedy hundreds of thousands of Orthodox people who inhabited the four districts of Grubeshovsky, Tomashevsky, Zamoisky, and Bielgoraisky perished at the hands of the Poles.”⁴¹

After the Soviet victory in the war, it was the turn of the Soviets and the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate to persecute the Catholics. Towards the end of the war it was

³⁹ In June and July of 1938 150 village churches visited by Ukrainian Orthodox were demolished. On July 16 the Polish Church issued a memorandum on the event, as did the MP on the same day. For further details of the persecution, see Danilushkin, M.B (ed.) *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: “Voskresenie”, 1997, vol. I, p. 588; K.N. Nikolaiev, “‘Unia’ i vostochnij obriad” (The ‘Unia’ and the Eastern Rite), *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 6 (1411), March 15/28, 1990. Among the buildings destroyed was the cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky (in 1927), and the Orthodox cathedrals in Liublin, Kalisha, Vlotslavka, Plotsk and Koltzy (Monk Benjamin, part 1, op. cit., p. 175). (V.M.)

⁴⁰ Alexeyev and Stavrou, “Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ na Okkupirovannoj Nemtsami Territorii” (The Russian Orthodox Church on German-Occupied Territory), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1980 (IV), № 12, pp. 122-124.

⁴¹ Archbishop Athanasius, op. cit.

suggested to the uniate episcopate in Western Ukraine that it simply “liquidate itself”. When all five uniate bishops refused, in April, 1945, they were arrested. Within a month a clearly Soviet-inspired “initiative movement” for unification with the MP headed by Protopresbyter G. Kostelnikov appeared. By the spring of 1946 997 out of 1270 uniate priests in Western Ukraine had joined this movement. On March 8-10 a uniate council of clergy and laity meeting in Lvov voted to join the Orthodox church and annul the Brest unia with the Roman Catholic Church of 1596. Those uniates who rejected the council were forced underground. Similar liquidations of the uniate churches took place in Czechoslovakia and Romania... Central Committee documents show that the whole procedure was controlled by the first secretary of the Ukrainian party, Nikita Khrushchev, who in all significant details sought the sanction of Stalin.

VIII. CATHOLIC-ORTHODOX ECUMENISM AND "NIKODIMOVSHCHINA"

By the time of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in 1945, the official church of Russia – the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (MP), as it is now called – was a complete slave of the Bolsheviks. Its attitude to Catholicism was strictly determined by what came to be called the KGB, and the Department of Religious Affairs; and this was in turn determined by Stalin. The True Church of Russia continued to exist outside Russia (ROCOR) and in the catacombs of Soviet Russia, but had no influence on the decisions of the official church.

In 1948 the World Council of Churches (WCC) was founded in Amsterdam with the participation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and several other Local Orthodox Churches. The MP, in obedience to its KGB masters, not only refused to join the WCC but also denounced it as a creature of the Vatican and Anglo-American imperialism. This anti-ecumenist attitude continued to prevail in the MP until the late 1950s and the pontificate of Pope John XXIII, who convened the ground-breaking Second Vatican Council, which introduced ecumenism into the Roman Catholic bloodstream. The Orthodox were now “separated brethren” rather than schismatics and heretics, and the Popes were now willing to enter into friendly relations with them – although whether this was simply the wolf putting on sheep’s clothing remained to be seen... Moreover, in December, 1964 Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople met in Jerusalem and supposedly “lifted the anathemas” of 1054 between the two churches.

ROCOR in the person of her new first-hierarchy, Metropolitan Philaret of New York, reacted with a series of “sorrowful epistles” condemning the betrayal of Orthodoxy that Athenagoras and other leading hierarchs of the Orthodox world were carrying out. St. Philaret insisted that the Orthodox Church was the only True Church, and the Catholics remained outside and in heresy until and unless they repented of their heresies. Large parts of the Orthodox world sympathized with the position of St. Philaret, although most of them remained in communion with Athenagoras.

The response of the KGB was quite different. Abandoning its anti-ecumenist policy, it ordered the MP to enter the WCC and send observers to the Vatican Council. The aim, undoubtedly, was not ecclesiastical, but political: to infiltrate western church life with Soviet agents, and to influence western church gatherings in a pro-Soviet direction... The most important KGB agent involved in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue was Archbishop Nikodim (Rotov) of Yaroslavl and Rostov, agent “Sviatoslav”. In 1961 he was sent, together with another important agent of influence living in England, Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh, to the New Delhi General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. From this time he rose very fast through the ranks of the hierarchy until he became metropolitan of Leningrad and the real power behind the throne in the Russian Church.

Alexander Soldatov writes: “The most vivid supporter of the ‘reunion’ between the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in the whole of history was

Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) – the spiritual father and protector of the present Patriarch Cyril. In the Moscow Patriarchate it is widely believed that he was a secret cardinal, and also the prophecy of Blessed Pelagia of Ryazan addressed to Nikodim: ‘You will die like a dog at the feet of your pope’. The metropolitan really did die at the age of 48 during a reception by Pope John-Paul I [in 1978]. In spite of his young age by hierarchical standards, Nikodim did a great deal. He was the first in the history of the Russian Church to serve with the Catholics, absorbed the Catholic mass, practiced spiritual exercises according to the method of Ignatius Loyola, and idolized pontiffs, especially the ‘red pope’, John XXIII, to whom he devoted his master’s dissertation. He went to the Vatican every year; from 1968 he began to take with him Volodya Gundiaev, the present patriarch. In 1969, when Patriarch Alexis I was dying, Nikodim was able to push through the Synod the decision to make it obligatory for Orthodox priests to give communion to Catholics ‘in the case of mortal danger’. This decision was condemned even by the ecumenically-minded Greeks [and condemned as “heretical” by the Russian Church Abroad in 1971].

“The Russian émigré and well-known theologian Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) explained this tendency as follows: ‘Metropolitan Nikodim was drawn to Catholicism above all by the idea he had of it as a powerful, strictly disciplined, single Church. In vain did they tell him many times that such a picture did not correspond to contemporary reality... Metropolitan Nikodim was in no way willing to renounce his conviction! It was the external appearance that worked on him.’”⁴²

Nikodim’s links with the Vatican went much further than an intellectual affinity. He was in fact a high-ranking Jesuit and secret Vatican bishop! This at first sight unlikely hypothesis gains credibility from two witnesses. The first is the True Orthodox hieromonk Fr. Tikhon Kozushin: “In 1989 I and several other Orthodox ‘informals’ were invited to lunch at the French embassy. Among other guests there was an elderly man from France of Czech origin. He introduced himself as the director of a Catholic boarding-school in Medon, a suburb of Paris and a high-ranking officer of the Jesuit order. And then he said that Metropolitan Nikodim was also a secret-official officer of the order who was quite close to the Pope.”⁴³

The second witness is Fr. Michael Havryliv, a Russian priest who was secretly received into the Catholic Church in 1973. Fr. Serge Keleher writes: “The Capuchin priest told Havryliv that Metropolitan Nicodemus [of Leningrad] was secretly a Catholic bishop, recognized by Rome with jurisdiction from Pope Paul VI throughout Russia. This assertion is not impossible – but neither is it entirely proved.

“On September 6 1975 Havryliv made a sacramental general Confession before Metropolitan Nicodemus, who then accepted Havryliv’s monastic vows and

⁴² Soldatov, “Sviateishij Posol” (His All-Holiness the Envoy), *Novaia Gazeta*, February 9, 2016.

⁴³ Kozushin, *Facebook*, February 12, 2016.

profession of Faith to the Apostolic See and the Pope of Rome. Kyr Nicodemus commanded Havryliv to order his monastic life according to the Jesuit Constitutions, and presented him with a copy of this document in Russian. This was all done privately; four days later the Metropolitan tonsured Havryliv a monk. On 9 October Kyr Nicodemus ordained Havryliv to the priesthood, without requiring the oaths customary for Russian Orthodox candidates to Holy Orders.

“In 1977 Havryliv was reassigned to the Moscow Patriarchate’s archdiocese of L’viv and Ternopil... In Havryliv’s final interview with Kyr Nicodemus, the Metropolitan of Leningrad ‘blessed me and gave me instructions to keep my Catholic convictions and do everything possible for the growth of the Catholic cause, not only in Ukraine, but in Russia. The Metropolitan spoke of the practice of his predecessors – and also asked me to be prudent.’”⁴⁴

These words indicate the truth behind the mask of the Vatican’s ecumenism; and the fact that Havryliv was re-ordained by Nikodim show that Rome accepted the sacraments of the Orthodox for only as long as it suited her. The Orthodox were, according to Vatican II, not heretics, but “separated brethren”. However, the “separated brethren” still had to return in repentance to their father, the Pope...

The intriguing question is: which master was Nikodim really serving – the Soviets or the Vatican? His pro-Soviet statements on the international stage were notorious. But his love of Catholicism also seems to have been sincere.

In any case, the Catholics with their “liberation theology” were moving ever closer to communism, while Nikodim was rushing to meet them from the other direction. Thus Soldatov writes: “Nikodim’s sympathies with Catholicism were interwoven with a very specific ‘theology of communism’. He considered the Soviet socialist system to be the closest to Christianity and dreamed of a powerful Orthodox USSR.

“A group of church dissidents addressed the Local Council of the ROC of the MP in 1971, a which Nikodim was almost elected patriarch. Their lengthy address ‘On the newly-appeared false teaching of Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov)’ called this teaching ‘apocalyptic religious communism’...”

Now just as the new phenomenon of Catholic-Orthodox ecumenism created problems for the Orthodox Church’s conception of herself as exclusively the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, so did it create problems for traditional Catholic believers, who not only believed that it was the Roman Church that was the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, but also that the Mother of God had promised at Fatima to “convert” Russia, calling on the Pope to “consecrate” her to her Immaculate Heart. Thus one of the leaders of the “Blue Army” of Fatima believers, Fr. Nicholas Gruner, writes: “God asked for the consecration of a specific country – Russia. Now, centuries ago, Russia was known as Holy Mother Russia. It had been, so to speak, consecrated to God, but the Catholics of that country fell into schism not

⁴⁴ S. Keleher, *Passion and resurrection – the Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine 1939 – 1989*, L’viv: Stauropegion, 1993, pp. 101-102.

so much directly but through the bishops – between them and Rome. The Catholics of Constantinople fell into schism in 1054 and people from Russia followed suit over time. They have been separated from the True Church ever since. Also, Russia was, in a sense, ‘consecrated’ to the devil in 1917 to be the instrument of atheistic Communism and its worldwide war against God; to deny God’s existence, to fight God in every way.

“Thus God calls for a public reparation, a solemn ceremony by the Pope and the bishops of the world consecrating Russia to the Immaculate Heart – to call people back to the service of God.”

However, no Pope has yet specifically “consecrated” Russia. In fact, when Pope John Paul II “consecrated” the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1984 he specifically acknowledged that this was not the consecration of Russia.

Another Fatima fanatic, Atila Sinke Guimaraes, writes: “From 1917 until today, the schismatic Russian Church has not changed any of its erroneous doctrines on the Holy Trinity, Papal infallibility, and the immaculate Conception of Mary. It also sustains the same spirit of arrogance towards Rome that it has held for the last 1,000 years”.

Now it will be immediately apparent that this is the old-fashioned, pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism speaking. The modern, ecumenist Vatican would never say that Russia has “separated from the True Church” or that it was “schismatic”. Such language would ruin its ecumenist diplomacy with the Moscow Patriarchate. Of course, in his heart the present Pope may think like the Fatima fanatics, and in practice the Vatican allows this old-fashioned kind of thinking to coexist with the newer spirit of ecumenism. But the fact is that the cult of the Fatima phenomenon and the Vatican’s present ecumenist strategy in relation to Russia are incompatible – which may explain the tensions between the Fatima fanatics and the Pope over the “Third Secret” and other questions...

IX. THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

Whatever the Vatican hoped to achieve through its policy of ecclesiastical détente with the Moscow Patriarchate, it must have known that it could achieve little as long as the Soviet regime remained in power and the restrictions on all religions remained in place. But that regime had looked immovable in the 1970s. However, in 1978 the Vatican elected the first Pope from Eastern Europe, the Polish Karol Wojtyła, or John-Paul II, who in keeping with his Polish roots and experience was sincerely anti-communist. And in 1981 Ronald Reagan entered office in Washington as the first American president who seriously aimed at the overthrow of communism. The alliance of these two men, followed by the coming to power in the Soviet Union of a real reformer, Michael Gorbachev, changed the political landscape dramatically.

There is a hypothesis that the Polish Pope was brought to power, at least in part, through the activity of the famous anti-Soviet Russian dissident, Fr. Gleb Yakunin. Lev Regelson writes: "After Pope John-Paul I said of him 'This is a person from whom I can learn how one must love the Church', it was almost guaranteed that the following Pope would be pro-Soviet... [Fr. Gleb Yakunin] sat down to write a letter to the Vatican in which he exposed the antichristian activity of Metropolitan Nikodim. I know all this at first hand, because I helped him in his work on this letter. Finally, it was read out at the Conclave for the election of the new Pope, and produced such a powerful impression – in the words of one of the cardinals passed on to Fr. Gleb – that the Polish cardinal Wojtyła was elected as Pope. He was a convinced 'anti-communist', who knew of the methods of the Soviet secret service from personal experience. Many investigators had supposed, with good reason, that the 27-year pontificate of John-Paul II played a decisive role in the beginning of the weakening of Soviet global expansion, and thereby in the fall of the USSR, which without this expansion lost 'the meaning of its existence'..."⁴⁵

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that Pope John-Paul II introduced important changes into Vatican diplomacy, abandoning the policy of peaceful co-existence and even co-habitation with the Soviet State and Church that had characterized the reigns of his predecessors. Thus he succeeded, with the help of the Polish trade union Solidarnost and the American CIA, in fatally weakening the communist regime in his native land; and when Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the whole of the Soviet power structure in Eastern Europe began to totter. The Vatican saw its chance, and began a more aggressive – although still outwardly "eirenic" and ecumenist – approach to Russia. Thus in November, 1987, the Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius went to Rome and concelebrated with the Pope (up to but not including communion from a common chalice. At this point it seemed as if nothing could prevent the full union of the Orthodox Churches with Rome...

But while the Pope's ecumenism was welcome in Russia, his anti-communism was not – at least in the eyes of the KGB agents in cassocks who constituted the leaders of

⁴⁵ Regelson, personal communication on his Facebook page, January 24, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/lregelson/posts/981429488551934?comment_id=983137605047789&offset=0&total_comments=96¬if_t=feed_comment_reply.

Russian Orthodoxy. Thus in 1986 Patriarch Pimen publicly criticized the Pope for criticizing socialism and dialectical materialism. "We speak out," he said, "for the cooperation of Christians, Marxists and all people of good will... which only increases our perplexity at those sections of the recent Encyclical of Pope John-Paul II, Dominum et vivificantam which are devoted to materialism and Marxist doctrine.... [The encyclical] contains elements directed towards the division and opposition of Christians and Marxists... In the encyclical an attempt is made to analyze the system of materialism... as an ideology... It is quite obvious that such a combined application of materialist doctrine to life can be found first of all in the socialist states and countries, which have chosen the socialist path of development... It is precisely in these countries that the creation of a new life by the efforts of believers and unbelievers working together is being realized... This reality, as we understand it, contradicts those positions of the encyclical in which it is affirmed that materialism as a system of thought has as its culmination - death... Insofar as 'signs of death' are indicated in relation 'to the dark shadow of materialist civilization', the impression is created, in the context of a critique of Marxist doctrine, that in all this the states and people who follow the socialist path of development are guilty... It remains to express our profound sadness at such a position."⁴⁶

Even in an age distinguished by unheard-of betrayals of Orthodoxy, this amazes one by its audacity: the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church officially defending the doctrine of materialism!!!

A critical point was reached in the millennial year of the Baptism of Rus' in 1988. Since the Baptism of Rus' in 988 had taken place when the Eastern and Western Churches were in full communion, this festivity might have been expected to have ecumenical potential. However, the nationalist revival had begun in the Baltic States, and the Russian secular and ecclesiastical authorities feared that if the Pope were invited to the country, his presence might provide a focus for separatist sentiment in the Baltic and Ukraine as it had in Poland earlier in the decade.

The Achilles' heel of Soviet ecclesiastical diplomacy was the Western Ukraine, where Stalin had forcibly "converted" the majority uniate or Greek Catholic population into the Moscow Patriarchate at the council of Lvov in 1946. The uniates were Catholic through their submission to the Pope, but Orthodox in their ritual and historical ancestry. In other circumstances and in earlier centuries, they might have been happy to return to the Orthodoxy of their Fathers, from which the Poles had separated them at the false unia of Brest-Litovsk in 1596. However, Stalin's heavy-handed approach to church unity had only alienated them even further from Orthodoxy and the Russians.

Another important factor was the fact that the Moscow Patriarchate recruited a large proportion of its clergy from the Western Ukraine (Stalin had killed most of the clergy in the other regions of the country in the previous thirty years), and was therefore highly sensitive to the possible defection of large numbers of clergy in that region.

⁴⁶ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), № 10, 1986.

Now when Gorbachev came to power, the uniates who had resisted absorption into the Moscow Patriarchate came out of their catacombs and began agitating for the legalization of their Church. They were supported, surprisingly, by the chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, Constantine Kharchev, who insisted that local authorities keep the law in their dealings with believers and suggested the legalization of the uniates and the free election of bishops. This roused the patriarchate and members of the Ideology department of the Central Committee to complain about Kharchev to the Supreme Soviet, and he was removed in June, 1989.

The ferment in the Western Ukraine also motivated the Moscow hierarchs to refuse the request of Pope John Paul II to attend the festivities commemorating the millennium of the Baptism of Russia by St. Vladimir of Kiev in 1988. So they offered him an invitation on condition he did not visit the Western Ukraine. The Pope refused this offer. He pointed out, correctly, that in 988 there had been no schism between Eastern and Western Christianity, so his attendance was natural, especially in the contemporary climate of inter-Christian ecumenism. But Moscow feared that the Pope's visit would elicit a stampede of conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism, not only in the Western Ukraine, but also in the heartland of Russia. Not the least of the attractions of Catholicism for many Russians, especially intellectuals, was the fact that the Pope was clearly an independent hierarch, whereas the Moscow hierarchs were "KGB agents in cassocks", completely dependent on the whims of their communist bosses. Ecumenism was all very well, but it could not be allowed to undermine the power of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union!

However, the tide of liberalization could not be stopped, and in January, 1990, just after Gorbachev met the Pope in Rome in order to try and stem the tide, the uniates finally achieved legalization for their church. Moreover, even before they had recovered their freedom in law, the uniates started taking over churches in Western Ukraine which they considered to be theirs by right. By December, 1991, 2167 nominally Orthodox parishes had joined the Uniates.

Deprived of the help of the local authorities, who were on the side of the uniates, and discredited by its associations with communism, the MP seemed helpless to stop the rot. One reason for this was that for many years the patriarchate had been teaching its seminarians, a large proportion of whom came from the Western Ukraine, that the Orthodox and the Catholics were "sister churches". For 60% of those who joined the uniates were graduates of the Leningrad theological schools founded by that KGB Agent, Orthodox Metropolitan and Catholic bishop, Nikodim...

Relations between the Orthodox and Catholics continued to deteriorate. In March, 1990 the Uniates withdrew from quadripartite discussions between the Latin-rite Roman Catholics, the Uniates, the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. When the red flag came down for the last time from over the Kremlin in December, 1991, the way seemed open for a repeat of the Catholic conquest of Moscow in the early seventeenth century, spearheaded once again by a Pole...

But then something unexpected happened. Along with the Jesuits and the Freemasons and the Protestant missionaries that poured into newly-liberated Russia from the West, there also came the Russian Church Abroad, the so-called "White Russian" Church. This Church had long been a thorn in the side of the Moscow Patriarchate. Fiercely anti-communist, it was also anti-ecumenist and anti-Catholic. And although the numbers of its adherents in Russia remained small, and its attempt to unseat and replace the Moscow Patriarchate failed, its ideological influence continued to increase throughout the 1990s. Anti-ecumenism and anti-Catholicism grew in Russia, and even found adherents among the hierarchy. True, the patriarchate remained in the World Council of Churches, and ecumenist meetings with leading Catholics continued – but the Pope was still not invited to Moscow...

Indeed, the Russian Orthodox were becoming more defensive in relation to the Catholics, who were making inroads, not only in the Western Ukraine, but also much further east. Thus in November, 1991, as Roman Catholic bishoprics in the former Soviet Union multiplied, the new patriarch, Alexis II (Ridiger), said in London that the Vatican had broken certain non-proselytism agreements, and that a flock of no more than 300 Catholics in Novosibirsk did not justify the creation of a bishopric there.⁴⁷ The idea was becoming popular that each of the two Churches had their own "canonical territory" – the West for the Catholics, and the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for the Orthodox – and that ecumenical good manners presupposed no "trespassing" on each other's territory.

Thus in March, 1992, the heads of the Local Orthodox Churches met in Constantinople and issued a communiqué that more or less renounced missionary work. After condemning the work of Catholic Uniates and Protestant fundamentalists in Orthodox countries, they went on to "remind all that every form of proselytism – to be distinguished from evangelization and mission – is absolutely condemned by the Orthodox. Proselytism, practiced in nations already Christian, and in many cases even Orthodox, sometimes through material enticement and sometimes by various forms of violence, poisons the relations among Christians and destroys the road towards their unity. Mission, by contrast, carried out in non-Christian countries and among non-Christian peoples, constitutes a sacred duty of the Church, worthy of every assistance" (point 4).

Here a dishonourable deal was being proposed: if you refrain from proselytising in Orthodox countries, we will not receive converts in western countries. Of course, this renunciation of proselytism among western heretics had been implicit in all the Orthodox leaders' actions in ecumenical forums since the 1960s. But it still came as a shock to see "World Orthodoxy" (as opposed to the True Orthodox Churches) renouncing the hope of conversion and therefore salvation for hundreds of millions of westerners. Here the ecumenical "Orthodox" renounced the first commandment of the Lord to His Church after the Resurrection: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28.19-20).

⁴⁷ Oxana Antic, "New Structures for the Catholic Church in the USSR", *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, № 21, May 24, 1991.

In spite of this rather touchy defensiveness, ecumenical dialogues and unions intensified and multiplied in the early 1990s. In 1990 the Orthodox signed a Union with the Monophysites at Chambésy in Switzerland. In 1991 Patriarch Alexis gave a famously conciliatory – and from a theological point of view, treacherous and heretical – speech to the Rabbis of New York. Meanwhile, he began to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the uniate Catholics of the West Ukraine, and at the March, 1992 meeting he strongly resisted the call by Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem for a cessation of all dialogue between the Orthodox and the Vatican. Finally, in 1994 at Balamand in the Lebanon, the delegates of all the Local Churches except Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Jerusalem signed an agreement with the Catholics, according to which the Orthodox and the Catholics were declared to be “two lungs” of the same body (with the Monophysites as a “third lung”?). “On each side it is acknowledged that what Christ has entrusted to His Church – the profession of the apostolic faith, participation in the same sacraments, the apostolic succession of bishops, and, above all, the one priesthood celebrating the one Sacrifice of Christ – cannot be considered to be the exclusive property of one of our Churches.” “All rebaptism [of penitent Catholics in the Orthodox Church] is prohibited.” The Orthodox Church “recognizes the Catholic Church in her entirety as a sister Church, and indirectly recognizes also the Oriental Catholic Churches” (the uniates). “Special attention should be given on both sides to the preparation and education of future priests with regard to the new ecclesiology, (that they may) be informed of the apostolic succession of the other Church and the authenticity of its sacramental life, (so that) the use of history in a polemical manner (may be avoided)”.

In 1997 the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew went even further, extolling the widest possible toleration: “Orthodox Christian and modernist, Protestant and modernist, Jew and modernist, Catholic and modernist: however we worship, as long as we abide in our faith and unite it to our works in the world, we bring the living and always timely message of Divine wisdom into the modern world.”⁴⁸ On November 30, 1998, referring to the representatives of the Pope, he said: “In view of the fact that one Church recognizes the other Church as a locus of grace, proselytization of members from one Church to the other is precluded.”⁴⁹ This elicited protests in Greece and Mount Athos, but Patriarch Bartholomew forced the protestors to back down...

All this ecumenical activity on the highest official level could not fail to have consequences lower down the hierarchical ladders of the Orthodox Churches. Russian Orthodox bishops in particular regularly gave communion to Catholics.

Thus Liudmilla Perepiolkina writes: “In 1994 the Bishops’ Council of the MP left practically all matters concerning communication with the non-Orthodox to the personal discretion of its bishops and clergy, merely pointing out to them the undesirability of bewildering their flock.

⁴⁸ Patriarch Bartholomew, Address at Emory University at the Presidential Medal award ceremony, October 31, 1997.

⁴⁹ *Ekklesiastiki Alitheia* (Ecclesiastical Truth), December 12, 1998.

“The instances of Protestants partaking of Holy Communion, unprecedented, in the MP, have now become a regular phenomenon, at least in the Novgorod diocese, where its ruling Archbishop Lev [Tserpitsky] openly admits Protestants and Catholics to Communion in the ancient Cathedral of St. Sophia in the city of Novgorod. In this and similar instances the obvious motivation is undoubtedly the material benefit gained as a result of attracting foreign tourists, along with their dollars, pounds and marks, into the Patriarchate’s churches...”⁵⁰

In 1992 the Pope said that he had two cardinals among the bishops in Russia, recalling the time of Nikodimovschina.⁵¹ Perhaps one of them was Archbishop Lev.... Another of them may have been Archbishop Theodosius (Protsyuk) of Omsk, who, according to Perepiolkina, “has not only received legates from the Vatican and openly concelebrated with them, even the Divine Liturgy, but presented the well-known Verenfried with an ‘episcopal cross..., thus becoming an inseparable friend’ of the wealthy Catholic sponsor.

“The practice of offering communion to the heterodox... is reaching epidemic proportions in the MP. This may be illustrated by the state of affairs in the Kaliningrad vicariate of the MP which is... ruled by Bishop Panteleimon (Kutov), a subordinate of Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev). In connection with the building project (still only a project, although some donations have already been collected a long time ago) for a Cathedral in the former Koenigsberg (now Kalinigrad), local parishioners hope that ‘this will be an Orthodox church not only by its name. Unfortunately, Bishop Panteleimon’s ecumenical views leave little hope that in the new Cathedral things will be any different from what they are now in the patriarchal churches of the Kaliningrad area, *where Orthodox people are offered communion from one chalice with heretics*. Bishop Panteleimon himself felt no embarrassment when he declared that ‘Catholics... partook of communion in our churches, and the priests offered prayers for them’.

“The ecumenical epidemic has spread to even the remotest areas. In accordance with the Balamand Agreement [of 1994], the same church buildings are now being regularly used by representatives of different denominations (particularly in the Baltic States). In the village of Yegla of Borovichi region of the Novgorod district they are building a church which *right at the start* will be intended for ecumenical services. It will have *three altars: Catholic, Protestant and ‘Orthodox’*. The number of such ecumenical prayer houses in Russia is growing.”⁵²

On the first day of the new millennium, KGB Colonel Putin came to power in Russia. By contrast with Yeltsin in the 1990s, Putin turned the nation in a sharply anti-western direction, many elements of the Soviet past were resurrected, and the prestige and greatness of Russia were emphasized. He also returned to the tradition of Soviet leaders taking an active interest in Church matters.

⁵⁰ Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 122. An earlier, Russian-language edition of this important book is entitled *Ekumenizm - put' vedushchey k pogibeli* (Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1992).

⁵¹ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁵² Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214.

This manifested itself in three ways. First, Putin worked hard to bring together the MP and ROCOR, the last bastion of anti-communist and anti-Catholic sentiment in the Russian Church. In 2007 the Churches were united under the leadership of the MP – although about 95% of ROCOR parishioners inside Russia rejected the union.

Secondly, Putin's nationalist and anti-western stance increased the tensions between the two leaders of World Orthodoxy, the patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow. This rivalry began in the 1920s when Constantinople seized many of the canonical territories of the Russian Church (Poland, the Baltic States) and intervened in Russian Church affairs on the side of the renovationists. It revived after the Second World War, when Constantinople was seen as an agent of the American CIA just as the MP was seen as the agent of the Russian KGB. Since Putin's rise to power, the rivalry flared into open conflict in Estonia, Britain and, especially, Ukraine. After Putin's annexation of Crimea and invasion of Eastern Ukraine in 2014, many parishes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate left the MP and joined the Kievan Patriarchate, which is not recognized as canonical by Moscow but is supported by Constantinople.

Thirdly, Putin has used the Russian Church to exert influence on the Vatican, and has himself paid several visits to the Pope in Rome. Patriarch Cyril, like his predecessor, Alexis I, is pro-Catholic in the tradition of their common teacher (some would also say: lover), Metropolitan Nikodim. And both, like Nikodim, are KGB agents (Alexis was Agent "Drozdov", and Cyril is Agent "Mikhailov"). So their pro-Catholic activities must be approved by the KGB-run state as part of a wider political strategy to influence Western leaders and believers in a pro-Russian direction. In particular, it has been suggested that the KGB through Cyril wants the Pope to exert pressure on western leaders to ease sanctions placed on Russia because of her annexation of the Crimea...

However, Alexander Soldatov points out that Cyril's attachment to Catholicism is exceptional even in today's ecumenical climate: "Cyril, having begun his career at a very young age, has been at audiences with the Pope more than once. The last such meeting took place a year before his ascent of the patriarchal throne on December 7, 2007, when the living pope was Benedict XVI. In a small clip shown on Channel One, it is evident that Cyril is receiving the blessing of the Pope and kissing his hand. According to Catholic teaching, this is a sign of recognition of the special status of the Pope as the bishop of bishops, the bearer of the fourth level of the priesthood, which does not exist in the Orthodox Church. Alexis II was not very comfortable for the Pope as patriarch, and it is clear that the Vatican placed its cards on Cyril.

"The present patriarch does not share the traditional Orthodox attitude to Catholics as heretics.

"In the television programme 'A Pastor's Word', he has often preached the Catholic dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. 'Since the division of the churches in 1054 into the Orthodox and the Catholic,' says the patriarch, 'there have been no ecumenical councils. That means that formally speaking not a single ecumenical council has condemned the existing confessions as heretical.' Cyril

interprets the ban on prayer with heretics that is contained in the canon law of the Orthodox Church only to prayers with his own, Orthodox but 'schismatic' people. It is true, however, that Metropolitan Hilarion, who also sympathizes with Catholicism, hastened to assure the Orthodox that there would be no joint prayers between the Pope and the Patriarch at the airport of Havana on February 12..."⁵³

⁵³ Soldatov, *op. cit.* "However, Bishop Diomed (Dziuban), who left the ROC MP in 2008, thinks there is no romanticism in Cyril's attitude to Catholicism, only business [Cyril has a personal fortune calculated to be four billions dollars some years ago]. "They stash their money in western banks, they have business interests in the West. This is what propels them to march in tune with the Catholics and cooperate with them. For this they receive dividends from the Vatican."

X. THE SUMMIT IN HAVANA

So what is the significance of the recent meeting between Pope Francis and Patriarch Cyril in Havana? First of all, the first-ever meeting between a Pope and a Russian Patriarch must indicate that Russia is in as imminent danger of being drawn into a unia with the Vatican as it was in 1612, when a crypto-Catholic Polish tsar was ruling in the Kremlin. Indeed, the danger is probably greater now for the simple reason that the leaders of the Russian Church are as compromised in their own way as the papacy itself, and can therefore offer far less effective opposition to the threat than the dying Patriarch Hermogen warned against from his freezing Kremlin prison. The long communiqué issued by the Pope and the Patriarch emphasized that the Catholics and the Orthodox were now “sister churches” – not a new concept (it was first proclaimed at Balamand in 1994), but one that has alarmed many Russian Orthodox Christians. Professor Olga Chetverikova has denounced the patriarch as a heretic, and several priests have ceased to commemorate him at the liturgy...

But what were the real aims of the two sides? Officially, they were concerned to present a common front against the persecution of Christians by Muslims in the Middle East. However, in view of the fact that both leaders have been exceptionally accommodating to Islam in true ecumenical fashion, this does not sound convincing.

Another suggested reason for the meeting was to facilitate an alliance of the two churches in support of “traditional Christian values” and against the general degradation of faith and morals in the world.⁵⁴ Patriarch Cyril’s “foreign affairs supremo”, Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), even thinks that the two Churches should form “a single structure” in order to carry out this crusade more effectively – which would seem to imply the complete absorption of the Russian Church into the Roman Church! But again, the extreme moral corruption of both churches makes this hypothesis far from convincing. Thus the Catholic church had had to contend with widespread paedophilia among its priests, a moral and legal burden that is said to have all but broken the previous pope, Benedict XVI. As for the MP, not only is it “filthy rich”: Fr. Gleb Yakunin and Fr. Andrei Kuraiev have revealed the massive extent of homosexuality in the hierarchy.

A Catholic journalist, Andrea Gagliarducci, has put forward another, more likely hypothesis: that the MP is looking ahead to the Pan-Orthodox Synod, slated for June, 2016. “As the June gathering of the Pan-Orthodox Council approaches, Patriarch Kirill must show himself to be as close to Rome as Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who promoted and organized the Pan-Orthodox Council.

“Patriarch Bartholomew proved to be closer than ever to the Catholic Church during the Pope Francis pontificate. He was the first Orthodox Patriarch ever to take part to a Papal installation Mass. He was present at the global prayer for peace with Pope Francis in the Vatican Gardens in June 2014. He hosted the Pope at his

⁵⁴ “The Geopolitics of Catholic-Orthodox Rapprochement”, February 11, 2016, <http://katehon.com/article/geopolitics-orthodox-catholic-rapprochement>.

headquarters in Istanbul during the papal visit to Turkey in November 2014.

“This way, Patriarch Bartholomew gained authority among the Orthodox Churches and was able to organize the Pan-Orthodox Council. This is a long-standing dream for the Constantinople Patriarchate that until now was unachievable.

“After meeting Pope Francis, Patriarch Kirill can go to the Pan-Orthodox Synod on a par with Patriarch Bartholomew. Both the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Patriarchate of Constantinople can claim a privileged and special relationship with the Catholic Church.”⁵⁵

This suggests that the rivalry between Constantinople and Moscow may be bringing the unia of the Orthodox and the Catholics closer as the two patriarchs engage in a bidding war with the Pope as to which of them will be the second bishop in the post-union Christian world after “the Vicar of Christ” ...

Be that as it may, one thing is certain: the papacy’s centuries-old dream of absorbing the Russian Church into itself is close to fulfilment. Therefore he who wishes to save his soul must flee from Babylon, the empire of false Christianity, as the apocalyptic voice from heaven says: “Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities...” (Revelation 18.4-5).

February 6/19, 2016.

*St. Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople.
St. Theophan the New Recluse, Archbishop of Poltava.*

⁵⁵ Gagliarducci, “Four reasons why Pope Francis will meet with Patriarch Kirill”, *Catholic News Agency*, February 11, 2016.