

The imperial policy of Patriarch Pimen

by Konstantin George and Luba George

On Dec. 10, the Soviet daily *Pravda*, acting more and more as the central organ of Third Rome Imperial Russia, delivered an unprecedented attack on the Pope and the Vatican for abandoning their “neutrality” of the 1960s and 1970s to join ranks with President Reagan on the East-West question, including “Star Wars.”

President Reagan, writes *Pravda*, “is trying to win over to his crusade against the Soviet Union . . . especially conservative Catholic forces” to support his “militaristic and hegemonistic policies.” In conjunction with “a shift to the right by the Vatican leadership,” says *Pravda*, “Washington is trying to establish a religious ideological basis for the idea of creating an anti-communist, anti-Soviet crusade.”

This *Pravda* attack on the Pope and the Vatican didn’t come out of nowhere. It was primed by the Russian military and political leadership’s full-scale rehabilitation of Josef Stalin—undertaken with the blessing and behind-the-scenes connivance of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). The Church’s imprint in co-orchestrating the Stalin revival is manifest in the recent Soviet TV and movie focus on Stalin’s “Mother Russia—Holy Russia” wartime speeches.

The Russian Orthodox involvement in the Stalin revival is highlighted by the fact that Stalin’s daughter Svetlana, upon her arrival in Moscow on Nov. 2, was received soon after by Moscow Patriarch Pimen, who embraced and “forgave” her for her pro-Western “aberrations,” hailing her “return to the fold.”

Just before the Stalin revival began in earnest with the dramatic early July reception in the Kremlin by Soviet leader Chernenko of Stalin’s Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, the same Patriarch Pimen in a little-noted visit to the Roman Catholic nation of Poland, in late June, publicly declared war on the Vatican—months before *Pravda*.

Pimen, speaking on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Communist regime in Poland—the establishment of the so-called Lublin Government in 1944 under the oversight and “protection” of Stalin and the Red Army—addressed the KGB-created organization of pro-Russian Empire collaborators, in the guise of “lay Catholics,” with the following

message, which, given the speaker, the audience, and the country, could only be a Russian Orthodox declaration of “open season” on the Polish Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican: “The Christians and the faithful of other religious beliefs in the Socialist countries do not differentiate themselves from their fellow citizens and are, together with them, actively engaged in the economic, political, social, cultural, and other spheres of life in their states. They actively participate in the construction of society based upon truly just relations between people with one another. . . . The duty of all Christians [i.e., all Catholics in Poland] is to support the state.”

This was the signal that the Soviet state and its KGB would soon launch total war against the Polish Catholic Church for starters and against the papacy itself. Pimen’s speech marked the unofficial “order” that it would be “open season” on officials of the Polish Catholic Church “hostile to the Polish state.” The Popieluszko kidnap-murder and a wave of beatings and tortures of Catholic priests in Poland, all organized by the Soviet KGB and their Polish secret-police underlings, have been the results so far of Pimen’s July *pronunciamento*.

After his Polish trip, the Moscow Patriarch made another unprecedented imperial foray, to the Serbian Republic—where Yugoslavia’s Orthodox population is concentrated—in the autumn to meet with the leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The *Journal of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate* not only praised Pimen and gave favorable coverage to the trip but also officially praised, for the first time in the postwar era, the historical role of the Russian state and Russian Orthodox Church as “friends and protectors” of the Christian populations in the Balkans.

The “carrot” being extended by Imperial Russia to Serbia is in no way evidence of a benign policy toward either Yugoslavia as a nation or Serbia as an “ethnic republic.” Simultaneously and in full consistency with the Stalin revival, the Soviet Union has launched an official propaganda and diplomatic drive aimed at a reconciliation with the world’s only official orthodox Stalinist state of Albania.

This is no contradiction for the ROC manipulators, who see playing the “Albanian Card” as a key manipulative instrument (the Soviet reconciliation move is coupled with a recent upsurge of ethnic Albanian-separatist terrorism in the Albanian populated Kosovo region of Serbia) in igniting a desired wave of “Greater Serbian” Orthodox chauvinism, the key process required for fragmenting Yugoslavia along ethnic and religious lines.

Recently the Yugoslav press agency (Tanjug) correspondent in Moscow blasted the Stalin revival campaign saying that Yugoslavia is well aware of the dangers inherent in such a policy. “Never before in the past three decades since the death of Stalin is Stalin ever so present as now in the Soviet media.” The Soviets, added Tanjug, are trying “to turn back the wheel of history.”