

## Mother Russia by Luba George & Carol Greene

### ROC-military 'Jubilee' readied

*First of a series on how the Soviet Empire plans to celebrate the millennium of Russian Christianity.*

**T**hose who are familiar with the thousand year-old history of the Russian Church know that patriotism has always been and remains an indispensable part of her Slavic mission. This was well expressed in the Message of his Holiness Patriarch Pimen and the Holy Synod on the 600th anniversary of the Victory at Kulikovo: 'In the accomplishment of the heroic national feat—the Great Victory of the Russian arms at Kulikovo—of special significance was the power of the grace of the Christian Faith, the spiritual and moral influence and patriotic service of the Russian Orthodox Church, which has never remained apart and indifferent to the historical lot of the nation. From the very beginning of her existence, now a millennium, she helped establish Russia's culture, nationality, and state.'—*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, February 1983.

The year 1988, the 1,000th anniversary of the Christianization of Russia, is three years away and the signs of a celebration being prepared by an Empire—the Muscovite present-day successor to Byzantium—with its three-sided leadership of Party, Army, and Church, are in full evidence. The media have started conditioning the Soviet population for the magical 1,000-year date.

For the Soviet leadership, the 1988 date defines a "deadline" for achieving global predominance.

This is not the first time that such anniversaries have played a central role in guiding Soviet Russian expansion-

ist policies. In 1947, the United States added Greece and Turkey to the countries it would protect. This put a stop to the Soviet drive to add Greece and European Turkey to the Russian Empire—including Istanbul (Constantinople), the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, a prize coveted by Muscovy for centuries. Stalin's target date for the acquisitions was 1948—the 500th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church as an autocephalous church, under the exclusive administration of the Moscow Patriarchate.

By 1988, the Moscow Patriarchate will have set up new headquarters in the huge Danilov Monastery complex in the middle of Moscow, only four kilometers from the Kremlin. Special workers and student brigades have been brought in to complete the massive task in time. Similar work brigades are busy throughout the European part of the U.S.S.R. restoring and reconstructing old Russian monasteries, church frescoes, and icons.

Church and State are also conducting a campaign accusing Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II of launching a "crusade" against the Soviet Union: Reagan for his Strategic Defense Initiative, and the Pope for his crackdown against the "Liberation Theology" and related wings of the Roman Catholic Church working hand in glove with the Russian Church and political leadership to undermine the West.

Gorbachov, who will clearly be

the leader for the 1988 anniversary, was formally nominated as leader by Politburo member and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, with language taken directly from the Russian Orthodox Church liturgy.

Months earlier, Gorbachov himself—already chairing Politburo meetings in place of the moribund Chernenko—proclaimed on Dec. 10, 1984: "The Soviet Union will do everything it can to ensure the strengthening of the country's position in the international arena, enabling it to enter the next millennium fittingly, as a great and prosperous power." Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov repeated the "Soviet Union entering the next millennium" theme in a speech in Ankara, Turkey on Dec. 26.

From the start of the Andropov-launched "post-Brezhnev era" at the latest, one can document Gromyko's regular use of phrases from the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In June 1983, West German Deputy Foreign Minister Alois Mertes, who speaks Russian fluently, was amazed to hear Gromyko during his visit to Bonn proclaim, "Security is the 'svyataya svyatykh' for the Soviet Union." This expression is taken straight from Russian Church liturgy. When the Orthodox priest emerges from the Ikonostas and shows the Sacrament to the congregation, he says: "Svyataya svyatykh"—Holy of Holies.

On March 18, one week after the Central Committee named Mikhail Gorbachov its new leader, the Soviet government released a pamphlet containing Gromyko's speech nominating Gorbachov. Gorbachov, he said, deserves to be made party secretary-general because he upholds "the 'svyataya svyatykh'—'the Holy of Holies'—for us all in fighting for peace and maintaining our defenses at the necessary level."