

Mother Russia by Luba George

Patriarchate renews threat to Pope

The most violent denunciations yet of the papacy, the Filioque doctrine, and the Uniates (Ukrainian Catholics).

The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (No. 8, 1986) has warned Pope John Paul II to stick to the Vatican II decisions reached on “theological dialogue,” and to stop “engaging in futile attempts to restore the Union in the Ukraine.” Almost the entire August issue of the *JMP* was devoted to the most violent denunciation yet of the papacy, the Filioque doctrine, and the Uniates (Ukrainian Catholics).

The *JMP* articles occur in the context of an anti-papal offensive headed by the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and the church’s External Affairs Department. Metropolitan Filaret held a private meeting on Oct. 28 with the Pope after the Assisi peace gathering, where according to well-informed Pope after the Assisi peace gathering, where according to well-informed sources, Filaret pressured the Pope with degrading “conditions” for visiting the Soviet Union in 1988 for the millennium of the Baptism of Kievan Rus. John Paul II was told he will be *persona non grata* unless he drops his demand for reconstituting the Uniate Church.

Metropolitan Filaret’s article in the *JMP* came straight to the point: “In the course of the almost millennium-long division (East and West) three serious attempts at reunion were made. I mean the unions of Lyons (1274), of Florence (1439) and of Brest (1596). Everybody knows that all of them ended in failure. Instead of Church unity, the Unions—always and everywhere—gave rise to division, enmity and hatred. . . .”

The Kievan Rus Prince Danili Ro-

manovich concluded a union, based on the notion of individual human creativity inherent in the “Filioque doctrine,” with the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Lyons (1274). The process was ruptured by the decimation of Kievan Rus by the Mongol hordes. Later, the Metropolitan of Kiev, Isidore, signed a Union accord at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-39). This process was aborted once again when Moscow, violently rejecting the *Filioque* because it was in conflict with its autocratic form of the Byzantine Empire, rejected the Union of Florence, and formed the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate, forcing Metropolitan Isidore to flee.

The Brest Union of 1596, forged during the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth period, lasted for 350 years until 1946, when the Stalin-dictated Council of Lvov dissolved the Ukrainian Uniate Church and forced the Ukrainian Catholics en masse to return to the “Mother” Russian Orthodox Church.

“The Brest Union,” writes Metropolitan Filaret, “far from restoring Church unity, did violence to the Orthodox conscience. . . . Internal disease that was responsible for the division of the East and West—violation of the purity of ecclesiological teaching—was not cured by the Union. . . .”

Ukrainian Catholics, continues the Metropolitan, were “reunited”—by the Lvov Council of 1946 under Stalin—“with their Mother Church,” after “liberation of the Ukraine by the valorous Red Army from German fas-

cist occupation. . . . In the united family of Soviet nations, there is no national strife between the blood-related (sic) Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian peoples.”

“‘The Roman Pope is Worse Than the Crimean Khan’ was the common saying of the time when the Union was in force,” writes Archbishop Makariy of Ivano-Krankovsk in the same issue of the *JMP*, referring to the Brest Union of 1596. “There is something broken, twisted and unnatural in the Union, which cripples us and drains our strength, like, for example, cancer. . . . The Union, since it is a foreign body in the organism of our people, is doomed as such, because a healthy organism always gets rid of a foreign body.”

Methods of conducting propaganda against Catholicism and the Uniate Church are developed, in coordination with the Russian Orthodox Church External Affairs Department, at the Ivan-Franko State University in Lvov and the Institute of Social Sciences of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Anti-Uniate commissions have been set up under regional Party committee auspices. In the Ukraine, district, youth, and regional newspapers devote much space to anti-Catholic propaganda. A Ukrainian TV series “Myth and Reality” attacks the Vatican’s policy to restore the Uniate Church. Two new films recently made in the Ukraine portray the Ukrainian Catholic Church as “hostile” to the Ukrainian people.

One of the most defamatory articles against Pope John Paul II appeared this year in the journal of the Byelorussian Writers Union. The author, A. Bazhko, a former KGB official, now in the Central Committee department of ideology and propaganda, denounced the Pope as a “cunning and dangerous” adversary.