



Metekhi Church, Tbilisi. It was returned to the Georgian Orthodox Church in 1988.



Georgian Orthodox cathedral at Mtskheta near Tbilisi.

Georgian Orthodox Church

See article on pp. 292-312.

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Religious and political activists in Georgia.
Giya Chanturiya (left), Irina Sarishvili, Zviad Gamsakhurdiya (centre)
and Manana Gamsakhurdiya (right).

See article on pp. 292-312.

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Ivan Hel' (left of centre) and Mykhailo Horyn
at the July 1988 millennium celebrations of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Zarvanytsia.
See articles on pp. 313-31.

Photo © Ukrainian Catholic Church

Russian Orthodox Attitudes towards the Ukrainian Catholic Church

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Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to the post of General Secretary of the CPSU has brought a transformation of Soviet society. The facade of a monolithic, atheistic state has given way to the reality of an increasingly diverse, multi-national empire constantly wrought by social, national and even religious tensions. *Glasnost'* and *perestroika* have brought changes in all areas of Soviet life. At present we await new, reportedly more liberal, laws on religion.¹ Within this increasingly complex society a new role certainly awaits the Russian Orthodox Church. Already we see how its 'favoured status' has brought it great concessions from the government: the public celebration of the millennium of the Christianisation of Kievan Rus'; the return of prominent churches and monasteries to the Russian Orthodox Church and the 'return' of at least 700 churches in 1988.² Its many years of subservience to the Soviet regime is now being rewarded.³ However, *glasnost'* has also produced a resurgence amongst other religious groups within the Soviet Union. As a result the Russian Orthodox Church's position is being challenged by the Roman Catholic Church in the Baltic states, by Islam in Central Asia, and by Greek/Ukrainian Catholicism in Soviet Ukraine.

¹ Two drafts of a new law were presented in February 1989 and discussed at a meeting of the Russian Orthodox Synod on 20 February 1989. *Service orthodoxe de presse*, No. 138, May 1989, pp. 11-12.

² Much of this data has been documented (*Keston News Service [KNS]* No. 317, 19 January 1989, p. 17 and No. 318, 2 February 1989, p. 8) and the varying numbers reported have been noted, though to describe these churches as being returned to the Russian Orthodox Church is somewhat misleading. All reports suggest that at least 30 to 40 per cent of the churches 'returned' were on the territory of Ukraine, predominantly Western Ukraine which means that the churches in question are in fact historically Ukrainian Catholic, not Russian Orthodox.

³ The subservient role of the Russian Orthodox Church is widely recognised. See Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1986), pp. 251-84. However, special note must be made of two documents: 'The Furov Report' in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*, Vol. XIX No. 10-12 (1980), pp. 149-61; Vol. XX No. 1-3 (1981), pp. 4-13, 19; Vol. XX No. 4-6 (1981), pp. 52-68 and 'On the Seventieth Anniversary of the Law on the Separation of Church and State', *Glasnost'* (US edition) 1988 No. 13, pp. 2-9. All these documents clearly show the extent to which the Russian Orthodox Church and its leaders have become subservient and very often tools of the state.

Jane Ellis, in her landmark volume *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, writes:

The most troublesome and controversial relationships of the Russian Orthodox Church with other religious groups in the Soviet Union are with the Ukrainians and the Jews. The Ukrainians, in this context, form two distinct groups: Orthodox and Eastern-rite Catholics.⁴

Somewhat disappointingly, Ellis goes on to say that, 'There will not be space for a detailed treatment of either of these important subjects.'⁵ The significance of these relationships has been heightened by *glasnost*' and *perestroika*. It will be the concern of this paper to see exactly what the Russian Orthodox are saying about the Ukrainian Catholic Church and to judge whether in fact *glasnost*' has effected any change in this relationship.

This paper is the product of a survey of the pertinent documents and literature from 1985 to the present concerning Russian Orthodox attitudes towards the Ukrainian Catholics. It will initially discuss the political and religious context within which these two groups have engaged each other. Secondly it will present an overview of salient events and statements in this period. Finally its attention will focus on three areas: firstly, statements by Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Exarch of Ukraine; secondly, statements by Russian Orthodox beyond the USSR and finally, the dialogue between Ivan Hel', chairman of the Committee in Defence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, editor of *Byulleten' khristianskoi obshchestvennosti* (*The Bulletin of the Christian Community*) and a leading Russian Orthodox activist. The conclusion will then present a new interpretation of this relationship and its implications for the future of these churches.

The relationship between the Russian Orthodox and the Ukrainian Catholic churches has historically been turbulent and full of antagonism. Both churches have since the 17th century struggled for the hearts and souls of the same Ukrainian and Byelorussian people. This struggle did not diminish with the end of tsarism and the rise of the Soviet state. In fact, since 1946 with the cooperation of the Russian Church in the so-called self-liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, this animosity has deepened.⁶ However, the past years have seen remarkable changes in religious and political affairs which are forcing these two protagonists to re-examine their respective positions.

⁴Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶See Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, 'The Uniate Church in the Soviet Ukraine: A Case Study in Soviet Church Policy', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 1965 No. VII, pp. 89-113.

Theological Context

In 1982 the International Theological Commission for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches produced its first fruit, the document entitled 'The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity'.⁷ Subsequently the dialogue has produced two other joint declarations: in 1987 'Faith, Sacraments and Church Unity' and in 1988 'The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church'. These theological convergences reflect the high degree of agreement between the Catholic and the Orthodox churches. Such agreement means that neither of these ecclesial groupings can be said now to regard the other as 'not Church'. In other words their theology and ecclesiology must make room for the other's existence. The implications of this are paramount for our subject. In the past much of the animosity and violence produced by the two churches was justified by a religious messianism: the one perceived the other as a schismatic, or even worse as apostate. Traditionally there was no need to treat apostates with the charity that even a pagan was granted. The apostate had the faith, but rejected it, therefore he could justifiably be forced to return to 'the truth'.

Another development with direct bearing on our subject evolving out of the progress of the International Dialogue is the current formal discussion on the 'problem of the Uniates'. During the 1987 meetings of the Joint Commission for Dialogue a decision was made finally to tackle the troublesome issue of those Orthodox churches which had at various times in their history entered into union with Rome, thus leaving the jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarch.⁸

The largest such church is the Ukrainian Catholic Church (also known as the Greek Catholic Church). The fact that on the international level a serious attempt is being made to come to some kind of ecclesiological understanding of the so-called Uniates means that those who have in the past used theology to justify their animosity will soon be losing much of their justification. Consequently on the level of official Catholic-Orthodox dialogue both Russian Orthodox

⁷ See my forthcoming article in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 1989.

⁸ The commission to conduct this aspect of the dialogue was established in June 1988; see *Irénikon*, No. 61, (1988) p. 360. The senior Russian Orthodox member of this commission is Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk who has been known to be critical of past government repression of believers. See also the letter of Bishop William Keeler in *The Way* No. 21, 9 October 1988, p. 2. Also for an example of how certain Orthodox found it difficult even to engage in the International Dialogue when Eastern Catholics were in attendance see L. Bouyer, 'Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue: Patmos and Rhodes', *Sobornost*, 1981 No. III, p. 89.

and Ukrainian Catholics are being encouraged by their co-religionists to look upon each other not as enemies, but as 'one in Christ'.⁹

There is, however, an area which creates serious theological problems for many Orthodox Christians with Uniates. The 'Uniate' phenomenon is difficult for Orthodox ecclesiology to accept. Currently this ecclesiology is dominated by 'eucharistic theology' which sees the eucharistic celebration, presided over by a bishop, as what constitutes the Church. If Uniate bishops are to be regarded as bishops then they are the Church. However, Orthodox ecclesiology does not allow for 'two' Churches in one place.¹⁰ There can be only one bishop of Lviv or Ivano-Frankivsk, etc. A formal recognition of a Ukrainian Catholic bishop of Lviv, therefore, would amount to a denial of the Orthodox Church's existence in Lviv. Obviously this is less than palatable.

Political Context

Since 1985, the sweeping changes introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev have forced the two churches to re-examine their relationship. Up until then the official line concerning Ukrainian Catholics was that such a church existed only among Ukrainian emigres.¹¹ If manifestations of 'Uniatism' were actually officially mentioned they were decried as remnants of Ukrainian fascism and bourgeois nationalism.¹² However, in the years 1987 and 1988 a slow change in the official statements of government and party officials could be noted.¹³ This change probably arose in response to the need to extend *glasnost*' to the sphere of religion and to relieve political pressure building up in Western Ukraine.¹⁴ Since the creation in 1982 of the Initiative Group in Defence of the Rights of Believers and the Church',¹⁵ traditionally Ukrainian Catholic Transcarpathia and

⁹ This certainly is the theme which the primate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Major Archbishop Myroslaw Ivan Cardinal Lubachivsky, picked up in his speech to the congress of Aid to the Church in Need, held on 6 November 1987, when he said 'I extend my hand in forgiveness, peace and love to the Russian people and to the Patriarchate of Moscow.'

¹⁰ John Zizioulas, 'Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement', *Sourozh*, 1985 No. 21, pp. 25-27.

¹¹ Even in the 'Furov Report' in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas, op.cit.*, no mention is made of Ukrainian Catholics.

¹² This was the description published in an article in *Radyanska Ukrayina* on 1 December 1984, entitled 'Humanism i relikiya'. See *KNS* No. 219, 21 February 1985, p. 18.

¹³ Tendentious and virulently anti-Uniate pamphlets still appeared, however, in 1988. See Ivan Mihovich, *The Truth about the Uniate Church*, (Politvidav: Kiev, 1988).

¹⁴ Ivan Hvat, 'Increasing Activity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Western Ukraine', *KNS* No. 174, 19 May 1983, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ *Martyrolohiya ukrayins'kykh tserkov. Tom II: Ukrayin'ska Katolyts'ka Tserkva. Dokumenty, materiyaly, khrystiyans'ky samvydav Ukrayiny*, edited by Osyp Zinkewych and Taras Lonchyna (Smoloskyp: Baltimore, 1985), p. 651.

Galicia have been demanding ever more vocally the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Already in 1984 officials of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR and the Ukrainian Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) proposed that the church could be legalised if it would declare itself autocephalous, therefore free of ties with Rome and the emigre church.¹⁶ In 1986 the Institute for Social Studies of the republican Academy of Sciences prepared a survey for the Ukrainian CRA. This official survey of religious sentiment among the populace of Western Ukraine listed among the possible religious groupings 'Greek Catholicism'. It is reported that this indirect admission of the church's existence was the reason for the premature withdrawal of the survey when close to 20 per cent of the people of the Ternopil region responded that they were Greek Catholics!¹⁷ As late as December 1987 the then chairman of the CRA of the USSR, Konstantin Kharchev, omitted reference to Ukrainian Catholics while speaking openly about another illegal group, Jehovah's Witnesses.¹⁸

In September of 1988 a member of the CRA, Yuri Smirnov, stated in Vienna that the Ukrainian Catholic Church is not banned, but the issue of its status is 'highly charged politically'. Trying to extricate the state from responsibility he added that the existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is a question of the relations of the Russian Orthodox and Uniate churches.¹⁹ Since the end of 1988 this, however, has become the official government (and party) position on the status of the Ukrainian Catholic Church: it is an issue for the two churches to resolve, the government is neutral in the debate.²⁰ In fact in July 1989 Yuri Smirnov told reporters in Moscow that upon promulgation of the new law on religion the CRA will not refuse Ukrainian Catholics the right to apply for registration of their communities.²¹ It is in the past two years also that leading church activists have been released from camp, prison or terms in exile. In August of 1987 two underground Catholic bishops, a number of clergy and faithful signed a petition to Mikhail Gorbachev requesting legalisation of their church. This first public statement has been followed by further statements and to date a total of seven Ukrainian Catholic bishops

¹⁶The offer was made in a conversation with J. Terelya in *Khronika Ukrayin'skoyi Katolits'koyi Tserkvy*, No. 6, excerpted in an English translation in *Church of the Catacombs*, 7 March 1986, pp. 17-18. Also see *KNS* No. 223, 18 April 1985, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷V. Chornovil, 'Pravda naliakala', *Ukrayinsky Visnyk* No. 8. (Peredruk Zakordonnoho Predstavnytstva Ukrayinskoyi Helsinskoyi Spilky: Kiev-Lviv, 1988), pp. 182-83.

¹⁸*KNS* No. 319, 16 February 1989, p. 22.

¹⁹*KNS* No. 311, 20 October 1988, p. 7.

²⁰There are times, however, when this 'neutrality' is set aside. For example, in an interview with *Izvestiya* N. Kolesnik, chairman of the Ukrainian CRA, stated that in fact people are not concerned with the ecclesiastical issue of whether a priest is Uniate or Orthodox. They simply wish that their church be opened. S. Tsikora, 'Kolokolni nad desnoi', *Izvestiya*, 1 February 1989.

²¹*KNS* No. 331, 3 August 1989, p. 7.

have signed various letters and petitions to the Soviet authorities. The summer of 1989 brought unprecedented street demonstrations and prayer services in Moscow. These demonstrations of Ukrainian Catholics calling for the legalisation of their church were so impressive that they were reported with positive editorial comment by *Moscow News*.²² Aside from harassment and fines, the authorities have taken no action to restrain this church which insists on coming out of the catacombs.²³

It is not the purpose of this paper to judge whether this is an honest change of official position or simply political expediency. Suffice it to say that either circumstance highlights the significance of our subject and increases the attention which those concerned with the societal tensions developing in the USSR give to the issue of relations between the Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholics.

The Historical Position of Russian Orthodoxy

Our topic very specifically refers to Russian Orthodox attitudes because many Russian Orthodox inside and outside the USSR differ significantly with the official position of the hierarchy. This double voice of Orthodoxy is not simply the natural plurality of any institution but rather is an outgrowth of that church hierarchy's decision to be subservient to the Soviet regime. This is strikingly obvious from Jane Ellis's work which devotes half the volume to the issue of Orthodox dissent.²⁴ One dissenter, Yelena Sannikova, wrote to Pope John Paul II in February 1983 requesting papal intervention on behalf of Ukrainian Catholic activist Iosyf Terelya: 'I myself do not belong to the Catholic Church. I am Orthodox. But all the same I am worried and afraid for the Greek Catholic Church which may suffer the same fate as the Russian Orthodox Catacomb Church.'²⁵

²² *Moscow News* No. 24, 11 June 1989, carried a photo of the demonstrators in the streets of Moscow. No. 31, 30 July 1989, carried a critical letter of the coverage from Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, followed by a positive comment from Sergei Filatov of the Institute of US and Canadian Studies in Moscow. Finally, No. 33, 13 August 1989, carried an interview with the underground Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop of Lviv, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk.

²³ Although once more the tactic of using the Russian Orthodox Church as its secret tool seems to be continuing. For example the 'return' of churches to the Russian Orthodox Church seems to be one of the ways the authorities feel they can destroy the Ukrainian Catholic threat. In August of 1988 after the Uniate church in Hoshiv was 'returned' to the Orthodox, Metropolitan Makari of Ivano-Frankivsk was reluctant to challenge the villagers' wrath by appearing there to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. However, reportedly, the authorities insisted saying, 'If you do not cooperate with us, we will give the Catholics freedom and you will end up without a single parishioner.' *Ukrainian Press Service (UPS)* — Canadian edition — 1988 No. 11, p. 2.

²⁴ Ellis, *op. cit.*, Part 2 exclusively deals with dissent and encompasses pp. 287 to 454.

²⁵ Yelena Sannikova, 'Letter to Pope John Paul II', in *RCL* Vol. 11 No. 3, (1983), p. 293.

This expression of concern by a Russian Orthodox believer was still very much a voice crying in the wilderness.

The consistent avoidance by the Russian Orthodox hierarchy of any reference to the Ukrainian Catholic Church characterises the 40 years since the so-called Synod of Lviv (1946). Even when obituaries appeared in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* for Uniate priests who became Orthodox the only reference to their specifically Uniate past would be to their membership in the Council for the 'Reunion' of Greek Catholics with the Russian Orthodox. Although reference would be made to their attendance at the Theological Academy in Lviv, there would be no specific mention that the academy was Catholic or that they were ordained as Catholic.²⁶

The 40th Anniversary of the Council of Lviv

The Russian Orthodox celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Council of Lviv provide a helpful resume of the dominant attitudes to the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Extensive coverage of the celebrations, held in Lviv on 17-19 May 1986, was provided by the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in its June issue of 1986. However, prior to the coverage of the celebrations an article appeared in the March issue entitled '40th Anniversary of the Lviv Church Council' written by V. Nikitin. In this article the Uniates were condemned as products of an enforced union which did not receive popular support. In fact the author writes that the people 'continued to preserve the Orthodox Faith. . . and in doing so continued to gravitate towards their true Motherland',²⁷ obviously meant to be Russia. Further the author 'proves' that Metropolitan Sheptyts'ky and Ukrainian nationalists collaborated with the Nazis. All this is done without any sense of ecumenical sensibility and in an attempt to paint the Uniates not as a church but as a manifestation of nationalistic attitudes among the Ukrainian people. A similar tone is set in most of the statements at the commemoration of the Lviv council in May. Patriarch Pimen's statement contains a reference to the Union being forced: 'The Brest Union was imposed by coercion, under moral and physical pressure from external forces.'²⁸ Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev says that the 'union is a thing of the past,' and there will be no return to it on our soil', but quickly adds 'the archpastors and pastors should continue

²⁶ 'Archpriest Ioann Yulianovich Korol', *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate (JMP)* 1985 No. 11, p. 6. This is identical to the style used in the 1956 obituary for Bishop Mykhailo Mel'nyk, one of the three central figures in the 'council' of Lviv. *JMP* 1956 No. 1, p. 16.

²⁷ *JMP*, 1986 No. 3, p. 72.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, 1986 No. 7, p. 2.

their efforts to overcome its consequences.²⁹ The tone of Metropolitan Nikodim's speech was much more hostile and passionate. He attempted to show how even such Uniates as Fr Shashkevych and Prof. Holovatsky were in fact opposed to the Union!³⁰ Nikodim wishes to prove that Uniatism and Ukrainian patriotism have always been historically juxtaposed. All in all 27 pages in the July issue of *JMP* are devoted to the 40th anniversary of the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Those pages are almost exclusively filled with repetitions of old polemics indicting the Catholics for anti-Soviet conduct; the precious little which is positive will be analysed later when discussing the developing position of Filaret of Kiev.

A Period of Ambiguity

After this 40th anniversary celebration various representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church began to refrain from simple repetition of past accusations and entered into a period of ambiguity. One hierarch or representative would state one thing whereas another soon after, would state the contrary. In May 1986 Archbishop Makari of Ivano-Frankivsk stated vehemently that there is no Ukrainian Catholic Church and that 'return of the Union is out of the question!'³¹ However, two short months later the rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy, Protopresbyter Prof. Nikolai Gundyayev, conceded to Kathpress that forcible destruction of a church was not the way to union.³² In *Visti z Ukrayiny*, which is aimed at western readers, two Orthodox priests were interviewed in March 1987 and both used traditional arguments to condemn the Ukrainian Catholics: they were against the people, they were collaborators, they terrorised the Orthodox.³³ Yet when Soviet authorities suggested that the name of Hryhory Kostel'nyk (head of the Initiative Group for the Reunion of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Church) be among those canonised in 1988 it seems that opposition from Russian Orthodox circles prevented this state nomination from getting any ecclesiastical approval.³⁴ It was at this

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13. For a summary of the positive role which these Greek Catholics played in the 19th century national movement, see Jan Kozik, *The Ukrainian National Movement in Galicia; 1815-49*, (Edmonton, 1986). No mention is made therein of their being anti-Union although the problems which they had, for political reasons, with the Uniate hierarchy are well documented.

³¹ *KNS* No. 253, 26 June 1986, p. 17.

³² *KNS* No. 256, 7 August 1986, p. 5.

³³ O. Dykyi, 'Ukhvala bula odnostinoiu', *Visti z Ukrayiny* No. 13, March 1987, p. 7.

³⁴ *KNS* No. 273, 16 April 1987, p. 10.

time also that the *de facto* existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was widely recognised by Soviet authorities and the Russian Orthodox hierarchy. The apparitions of the Mother of God in Hrushiv in May 1987 brought on widespread condemnations of this as a 'Uniate phenomenon'.³⁵ Hardly possible if the Uniates were a thing of the past or non-existent.

Perhaps the most striking change in 1987 was the clear admission on the part of the Russian Orthodox that the continued existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church presented them with a serious problem. In an interview in October of that year Metropolitan Filaret said that the Pope would not be invited to the millennium celebrations 'for purely religious motives, particularly the attitude to the Greek Catholics, that is the Uniate Church'.³⁶ The tying of the Ukrainian Catholic Church's status to ecumenical relations of the Orthodox with Rome becomes, as we shall see, the favoured position assumed by Metropolitan Filaret.³⁷ But as much as this position was favoured by Filaret, Makari of Ivano-Frankivsk preferred to deny the continued existence of the Uniates. During a radio programme on 14 December 1987 Makari stated: 'All the people in the western part of Ukraine have now joined, really, the Russian Orthodox Church. . . I think this is the reality, and today all believers in the western part of Ukraine join the Russian Orthodox Church.'³⁸

The Millennium Year

1988, the year of the celebration of the millennium of the Christianisation of Kievan Rus', focused even more of the world's attention on religious affairs in the USSR and the problem of varying interpretations of that millennium by the Ukrainians and Russians.³⁹ However, it brought no breakthroughs in terms of Russian Orthodox-Ukrainian Catholic relations. In fact it might be said that the lack of fulfilment of high expectations may have produced a hardening of official positions.

Firstly, there was no official Russian Orthodox response to the gesture made by the Ukrainian Catholic primate, Cardinal Lubachivsky, in November 1987 to engage in mutual forgiveness of past errors. Secondly, although admitting that the Ukrainian Catholic Church existed, the Soviet authorities began to 'return' numerous

³⁵ KNS No. 280, 23 July 1987, p. 10.

³⁶ KNS No. 287, 5 November 1987, p. 6.

³⁷ An identical opinion is expressed by Patriarch Pimen in an interview with *Gésu*, dated 31 August 1987.

³⁸ M. Liss, 'US-USSR Radio Bridge', *Ukrainian Weekly*, 24 January 1988.

³⁹ For varying perspectives on the millennium see *RCL* Vol. 15 No. 3, (1987).

church buildings to the Russian Orthodox. Although many decisions as to which church was to be returned would have been based on the sincere requests of Orthodox believers, there clearly were many cases with other motivations. Many of the 'returned' churches were in Western Ukraine and in areas of high concentrations of Ukrainian Catholics. A case in point was the village of Kalynivka, where Petro Zeleniukh was the first Ukrainian Catholic priest openly to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on a regular basis. This church was transferred to the Orthodox Church even though the majority of villagers condemned this decision of the authorities.⁴⁰ Thirdly, the fact that Ukrainian Catholics were becoming increasingly associated with the voice of nationally conscious Ukrainian dissent seems to have forced the Russian Orthodox Church to begin a mild form of ukrainianisation. The December 1987 decision of the Holy Synod to publish a Ukrainian translation of the New Testament was reported in April 1988 in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.⁴¹ In early 1988 an additional 100,000 Ukrainian Bibles were ordered from the United Bible Society.⁴² Also a decision was made to encourage the use of Ukrainian in services and homilies.⁴³ Finally, at the June 1988 Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church a new *ustav* (statute) was promulgated which raised the status of the Metropolitan of Kiev; it declared that upon the death of the patriarch a *locum tenens* is to be elected at a meeting of the Holy Synod, chaired by the metropolitan. Other 'ukrainianising' decisions made at the Local Council were that the Kievan Exarchate's journal *Pravoslavny Visnyk* was to have its print run doubled (there is even talk that it will be allowed to be exported to the West); a new seminary was to be established in Kiev⁴⁵ and courses in Ukrainian were to be offered at the Odessa seminary.⁴⁶

These changes also meant a strengthening of the hierarchy's opposition to the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, however. In an interview with *Ispania*, given by Filaret of Kiev in the early part of the year, he was reported to have 'acknowledged the existence of Greek Catholic believers in Western Ukraine. . .'. True, he gave their number as a few thousand. In his words there are also three Greek Catholic bishops. At which point Filaret expressed

⁴⁰ KNS No. 297, 31 March 1988, p. 7.

⁴¹ JMP 1988 No. 4, p. 5. Also see KNS No. 198, 3 May 1984, p. 15.

⁴² KNS No. 299, 28 April 1988, p. 15.

⁴³ See the interview with Filaret of Kiev in *Sovetsky patriot* No. 29, 9 April 1989. This decision was confirmed to the author in a conversation with a Russian Orthodox hierarch.

⁴⁴ KNS No. 302, 9 June 1988, p. 19.

⁴⁵ KNS No. 318, 2 February 1989, p. 9. Although this has recently been referred to as only a possibility by Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novochoerkassk in 'Gosudarstvo i Tserkov': god soglasiya', *Izvestiya* No. 120, 29 April 1989, p. 3.

⁴⁶ KNS No. 320, 2 March 1989, p. 9.

himself most categorically as opposed to the official establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, saying that he will not give the Catholics 'a single church'.⁴⁷ The Final Communique of the Bishops' Pre-Council, held in March 1988, contains reference to problems caused by dissenters within and without the church who 'are attempting to introduce division and discord into church circles, ignoring church discipline, sowing discord and a lack of faith'.⁴⁸ This statement is definitely aimed at Russian Orthodox dissidents but is probably also meant for the Uniates who are affecting the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church without being its members.

A startling exception to the official position of the hierarchy was the public pronouncement by Metropolitan Irenei of Vienna. At a press conference the metropolitan stated that he can no longer support the lies which deny the existence of Ukrainian Catholics within the USSR.⁴⁹ He also called for the legalisation of the church. Apparently, Metropolitan Irenei's words produced a sharp rebuke directed at him by Patriarch Pimen, along with a threat of deposition.

Nonetheless, support for the Ukrainian Catholics among those distant from official ecclesiastical pressure was increasing. In a letter to Patriarch Pimen in April 1988 the long-time Russian Orthodox dissident Vladimir Poresh wrote, 'For me it is terrifying and insufferable that the Russian Church stands on the side of the oppressor. I consider it our Christian duty to defend the rights of Ukrainian Greek Catholics and not forcibly bind them to our church.'⁵⁰ A similar statement of support was made by the Russian Orthodox priest Georgi Edelshtein in an unofficial Moscow journal, *Referendum*.⁵¹ Another important statement was that of Edmonton priest John Margitich, dean of St Barbara's Cathedral. In July 1988 he said, 'bygones are bygones . . . the Ukrainian Catholic Church should be legalised'.⁵² This support was repeated by Edelshtein and Fr Gleb Yakunin during their visit to the offices of Cardinal Lubachivsky in Rome in June 1989.⁵³ Although not resident in the USSR, Fr Margitich is still under the direct jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate and so reflects the opinion of at least an element within that church.

1989, however, has given rise to an even more interesting development. For the first time a Russian Orthodox priest has joined

⁴⁷ *KNS* No. 299, 28 April 1988, p. 20.

⁴⁸ *JMP* 1986 No. 6, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Metropolitan Irenei's comments at a press conference were confirmed in correspondence between the author and the metropolitan.

⁵⁰ *KNS* No. 301, 26 May 1988, p. 7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ukrainian Weekly* No. 28, 10 July 1988, p. 3.

⁵³ *UPS* (Ukrainian edition), No. 7-8 (43-44), 1989, pp. 8-12.

Ukrainian Catholic priests for prayer services. The specific event was a *panakhyda* for Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, held in Lviv on 26 February 1989. At this service the Catholic priest Mykhailo Voloshyn was joined by a priest of the Russian jurisdiction Mykhailo Neiskohuz. At the conclusion of the service the two embraced and declared the need for Orthodox and Catholic to work together for the good of the Ukrainian people.⁵⁴ Compared to the treatment of Fr Voloshyn, who was sent to serve in the army for six months, Fr Neiskohuz' suspension from parish duty was a minor punishment. However, in May of this year Fr Neiskohuz went one step further and officially joined the Ukrainian Catholic Church.⁵⁵

Overall, the years since 1987 have seen a gradual change in the relationship of Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholics. Orthodox denials of the very existence of the Ukrainian Catholics seem to have ceased. Increasingly voices of laity and clergy from among the Orthodox can be heard in support of the Ukrainian Catholics. Also the Russian Church is being forced into a more positive involvement in the cultural and national revival in Ukraine.⁵⁶ The person who most clearly embodies these changes is the Exarch of Kiev himself, Metropolitan Filaret.

Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev

Metropolitan Filaret, Exarch of Ukraine, is clearly the most prominent Russian Orthodox churchman in Ukraine today. His prestige has also been increased by the changes in the *ustav* commented upon earlier. Without doubt, therefore, his pronouncements on the Ukrainian Catholics are worthy of scrutiny. In May 1986 at the celebrations commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Lviv Council, Filaret's address was the most reasoned and calm presentation of Orthodox objections to the Uniates. Although not what one could call objective, in comparison to the other speeches it included fewer historical inaccuracies and less tendentious polemic. There were three important points which Filaret made. Firstly, Filaret's speech indirectly admits the continued existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church inside and beyond the USSR. Its existence, in his view, has a detrimental effect on Orthodox-Catholic relations.⁵⁷ Although he at times repeats the official state line that the

⁵⁴ KNS No. 320, 2 March 1989, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Report from the Ukrainian Press Bureau (Rome), 25 May 1989.

⁵⁶ We note the report that a Russian Orthodox priest was officially sent to preside at a *panakhyda* during a popular demonstration near Kiev on 7 May 1989; St Sophia Religious Association, *Press Release* 1989 No. 7.

⁵⁷ JMP 1986 No. 8, p. 8.

Ukrainian Catholic Church is but a tool of bourgeois nationalism, Filaret fundamentally views the issue as one of ecclesiological relationships. As such he makes his second point and places the issue of the Ukrainian Catholics in the context of two different ecclesiologies: emphasis on the local, i.e. national, church being the Orthodox approach and a legally and jurisdictionally constituted church being the Catholic view. Thirdly, he uses history and Catholic authors to show that the unions have not justified themselves. Quoting the Ukrainian author Mykola Chubaty he supports his argument about the problems inherent in politically motivated unions. Then he refers to Melkite Patriarch Maximos V Hakim who has often criticised the inevitable latinisation which has befallen all Uniate churches. However, the one issue which Filaret avoids is whether any form of coerced union, as the events of 1946 clearly were, can in any way be justified. His only reference to this issue was an attempt to defend the canonicity of the Lviv Council by pointing to attendance on the part of two bishops. He conveniently does not mention that these bishops were ex-Ukrainian Catholics who had already become Orthodox and been consecrated Orthodox bishops. Nonetheless, Filaret's words are important. Clearly he no longer is striving to deny the existence of the Ukrainian Catholics, nor does he continue to hurl accusations of collaboration at them. The thrust of his argument is theological: the Union of Brest was wrong, the existence of Uniate churches is an ecclesiological anomaly and so the act of 1946 in Lviv is justified. The shift from seeing the relationship in strictly political terms is significant.

In 1988 and early 1989 this shift in Filaret's position is distinctly evident. In discussing the upcoming ecumenical and theological discussions at Valamo Filaret held a press conference in June 1988. Although describing the Ukrainian Catholic Church as an illegitimate offspring of the Orthodox Church and stating quite unequivocally that the 'restoration of the church will mean a deterioration of brotherly ecumenical relations', Filaret continues to speak of the Uniates in a theological context.⁵⁸ Similarly, in an interview in May 1989 Filaret once more defends the canonicity of the Lviv council and complains that the Uniates are the source of historical conflict and antagonism within Ukrainian society. However he also makes an interesting theological mistake, which someone in his position should have avoided. Filaret contends that the Catholics call the Lviv council uncanonical because it was not convened by a Pope. This is clearly false. The debate over the council's canonicity revolves around two other issues: its coerced nature and, the indisputable fact that no

⁵⁸F. Barringer, 'Russian Orthodox to Meet Vatican about Ukrainians', *New York Times*, 5 June 1988, pp. 1 and 5.

Ukrainian Catholic bishop attended this council. Both these points are sincere and severe theological obstacles to declaring the council canonical. This interpretation is shared by both Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiology. Finally, Filaret presents a proposal which is becoming increasingly popular among the Soviets and leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church: Uniates should attend the Roman Catholic Church in the USSR.⁵⁹ This latter proposal may be difficult for the Ukrainian Catholics to resist. It would not only resolve the Uniate question for the Orthodox and the Soviet authorities, but also resolve a lasting problem for the Vatican, which has historically been uncertain of how to deal with autonomous tendencies within the non-Roman, Catholic churches.

Until recently Metropolitan Filaret seemed to be comfortable dealing with the question of the Ukrainian Catholics as a religious issue. However, the summer of 1989 saw Filaret return to old-style Uniate bashing. Perhaps the increased popularity of the Ukrainian Catholic cause among reform minded Soviet citizens and even party members⁶⁰ angered the Russian Orthodox exarch into resurrecting old polemical attitudes. The sympathetic hearing Ukrainian Catholics were given on the pages of *Moscow News* during June provoked Filaret to write to the editor.⁶¹ In his letter he wrote with obvious anger that the paper's article was misleading and overly sympathetic to a 'handful' of Uniates. He defended the synod of Lviv and condemned the Uniates as Nazi collaborators. Finally he argued that the Ukrainian Catholics are nothing but a cover for Ukrainian nationalists who wish to secede from the USSR. Notwithstanding the vehemence with which the exarch attacks the Ukrainian Catholics, his attack amounts to a recognition of the size and importance of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR today. Clearly the changing political situation in the Soviet Union provoked Filaret into returning to old-style anti-Uniate polemics rather than trying to engage in a theologically grounded dialogue. Such a change is disappointing, however understandable, when one considers the potential loss of both property and prestige that the Russian Orthodox Church could suffer if the Ukrainian Catholic Church were legalised.

Emigre Theologians

Oliver Clément, Nicolas Lossky and Alexander Schmemmann had long associations with the Institut St Serge in Paris, home of Russian Orthodox theology outside the USSR, and have established

⁵⁹D. Desyatnikov and V. Savchak, 'Zayednist'is perebudovu', *Radianska Ukrayina*, 9 May 1989.

⁶⁰KNS No. 317, 19 January 1989, p. 3.

⁶¹*Moscow News* No. 24, 11 June 1989.

themselves as leading spokesmen for Orthodoxy in the West. The late Rev. Archpriest Alexander Schmemmann made the comments below during a conference on Russian and Ukrainian relations in 1984 in the United States. Asked to speak on the Ukrainian-Russian dialogue in its religious context, Fr Schmemmann immediately said that unfortunately 'in this area of Ukrainian-Russian religious relations no dialogue has existed until now.'⁶² This absence, he goes on to say, reflects the lack of study and objectivity given to this issue. His, therefore, was a landmark presentation. His thesis was that in fact two realities must be clearly perceived and accepted.

Firstly, one must accept the fact that the Russian hierarchy forced the Ukrainian Church into what he calls its 'tragedy'.⁶³ This refers to both the position of the Ukrainian Catholics and the Autocephalous Orthodox. Secondly, he calls for an appreciation of the Orthodox position, wherein there is a lack of theological critique of Orthodoxy's historic bond to the state power within which it exists. Schmemmann clearly has not patience for what he terms the 'Byzantine myth' of symphony and harmony in church-state relations.⁶⁴ This prominent and extremely well-respected Orthodox theologian then concludes 'We must repent for all these forced "reunions", of which there were so many in our history. . . All of them horrible, . . . are criminal'.⁶⁵ Such an unequivocal statement by a senior Russian Orthodox cleric and theologian certainly marks a move towards a true dialogue between the Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholics.

Similarly significant comments were made by Oliver Clément in 1987. In an interview concerning the Third Preconciliar Conference of the Orthodox Church, preparing for the Great and Holy Synod, he volunteered an important critique of Orthodox attitudes towards Uniate Churches.⁶⁶ Clément regrets the conference's silence on the issue of the forced liquidation of the Eastern Catholic churches of Ukraine and Czechoslovakia and he calls upon the Orthodox to avoid falling into the complex of 'persecuted-persecutor'. The latter complex justifies persecutions today of those who persecuted you in the past. He also specifically condemns the persecution of Ukrainian Catholics in the days of the Russian Empire. Clément notes for the zealous Orthodox that more has been gained by the voluntary acceptance of Orthodoxy by Uniates in the United States in this

⁶² A. Schmemmann, 'Ukrayinsko-Rošiis'ky Dialoh: Relihiinyi Aspek', *Vidnova*, 1984-85 No. 2, p. 51.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁶⁶ *Service orthodoxe de presse* No. 117, April 1987, pp. 13-25. Interestingly an English translation of this interview was published in the Russian Patriarchal Diocese of Sourozh (England). Oliver Clément, 'The Third Preconciliar Conference: An Interview', *Sourozh*, 1987 No. 30, pp. 29-45.

century than by the years of persecution and 'forced reunion'. Finally he states that there is a need for forgiveness and understanding in the mutual relationship, rather than for hatred. In the context of the on-going Catholic-Orthodox dialogue he says that an ecclesiastical transition phase needs to be created for the Eastern Catholics, as the two larger bodies come closer and closer to complete unity.

Nicolas Lossky's comments were made in an interview given in January 1988 to *L'Actualité religieuse dans le monde*.⁶⁷ Lossky gives a very sympathetic assessment of the dilemma of the Uniate churches in the age of improving Catholic-Orthodox relations. Significantly, he does not regard Eastern Catholic churches as an impediment to unity. He also adds that the 1946 forced re-integration of Ukrainian Catholics into the Orthodox Church was an injustice. 'I think that the Russian Church should recognise its sin,' he adds.⁶⁸

Lossky, Clément and Schmemmann present us with valuable and dispassionate theological perspectives on the relationship of Russian Orthodoxy and Ukrainian Catholicism. Their common voice calls for mutual understanding and respect between the two churches. Finally, they are eager to see historical animosity give way to a rediscovery of common traditions and a oneness in the Church of Christ.

The Ogorodnikov-Hel' Dialogue

Although this approach has not as yet been taken up by the Russian Orthodox hierarchy in the USSR, it can be found in the relationship of Ukrainian Catholic and Russian Orthodox laity and lower clergy. The best example of such mutual respect and co-operation can be found in the discussion between Ivan Hel', Chairman of the Committee in Defence of the Church in Ukraine, and Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, a leading Russian Orthodox activist. On 22 December 1987 representatives of the Ukrainian Catholic Church held a press conference in Moscow at the home of Aleksandr Ogorodnikov. At that conference both Ogorodnikov and Fr Gleb Yakunin spoke out in favour of the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR.⁶⁹ After the presentation of three appeals from Ukrainian Catholic bishops, priests and laity concerning legalisation, Ivan Hel' presented his paper entitled 'The Ukrainian Catholic Church: The Catacombs and an

⁶⁷The text of the interview was reprinted in *Service orthodoxe de presse* No. 125, February 1988, pp. 18-21.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶⁹'Press Conference of the Representatives of the Committee for the Defence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church', *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, Vol. IX No. 1, p. 42.

Alternative'.⁷⁰ In this document the leader of the Committee for the Defence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church declares the illegality of the act of 1946, both because of its forcible nature and because it was undertaken and executed by the civil authorities. He places the dilemma of the Ukrainian Catholic Church within the context of Stalin's policy of genocide against the Ukrainian people. The Russian Orthodox hierarchy is condemned for its collaboration with the Soviets in this action, but a *proviso* is also given: 'We repeat that we are not speaking of the Russian Orthodox Church, but of its functionaries who are devoted to the state.'⁷¹ Two other important points are noteworthy: firstly, the author sees the Uniate church as inextricably bound to the struggle of the Ukrainian people for self-determination;⁷² and secondly, Stalin's reason for destroying the church was not that it was Catholic, but rather that it was politically motivated: 'ours is a national, Ukrainian Church'.⁷³ This document contained therefore a resume of what may be described as the popular Ukrainian Catholic position concerning its status in the USSR. In and of itself it said nothing new.

In the form of an editorial response in the *Byulleten' khristianskoi obshchestvennosti* (*Bulletin of the Christian Community*) Aleksandr Ogorodnikov issued a statement correcting certain errors which he saw in Hel's statement.⁷⁴ In his response he unequivocally states that 'We, Russian Orthodox Christians . . . consider it our Christian debt and civic duty to support the just demand of our suffering and persecuted brothers in Christ — the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics.'⁷⁵ He goes on to condemn the 'compulsory, anti-canonical and illegal retention of the national church of Western Ukraine under the jurisdiction of our patriarchate'.⁷⁶ However, he appeals to Hel' for more understanding and honesty. Firstly, he reminds Hel' that the Russian Orthodox have been forced into servility. Now since Hel' only criticised the hierarchy for their collaboration in the liquidation of his church, this statement of Ogorodnikov's must be seen as a defence of that very hierarchy. He also suggests that Stalin's use of the Russian Church in destroying the Ukrainian was an obvious example of Stalinist policy 'to divide and create animosity between Russians and Ukrainians, Western and Eastern Ukraine, Orthodox and Catholic'.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ UPS 1988 No. 4 (28), pp. 7-12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷² 'This Greek Catholic Church was the guarantor of Ukrainian national determination in the struggle against polonisation, and it preserved both our spiritual accomplishments and us as a nation,' *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷⁴ UPS 1988 No. 6 (30), pp. 7-12.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Ogorodnikov appeals for understanding and compassion, not tendentiousness and polemics.

Ogorodnikov seems particularly offended by Hel's reference to St Volodymyr as being Catholic because he accepted Christianity prior to the Great Schism of 1054. Secondly, Ogorodnikov suggests that although the Russian Orthodox are today the persecutors, Hel's view of the past needs to be more objective. He writes, 'The position of the Ukrainian Catholic Church would appear much more honourable and strong, if its hierarchy and faithful would confess the sin of forced conversion of many Byelorussians and Ukrainians to a union they certainly did not want to join.'⁷⁸ Although the decision of the Ukrainian hierarchs in 1596 is described as 'historically understandable and psychologically justified',⁷⁹ Ogorodnikov does not wish anyone to forget the massive, popular opposition to the Union.⁸⁰ Ogorodnikov's final point, however, is a positive one: he calls for an end to the circle of violence and for all to come together with humility and brotherly love and to unite in the common struggle for freedom.⁸¹

Although Ogorodnikov is somewhat naive in presenting Russian Orthodoxy as an innocent in the hands of the despotism of such men as Ivan the Terrible and Stalin, nonetheless his commentary attempts to be dispassionate, objective and constructive. It does not demand total agreement, but rather searches for a common understanding of difficult historical questions. All in all it must be regarded as the most positive formulation of a Russian Orthodox attitude toward Ukrainian Catholics by anyone in the USSR. Ogorodnikov's statement is clearly an attempt at sincere dialogue with a partner who has been ignored for years.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Russian Orthodox attitudes towards Ukrainian Catholics have changed in the past few years. Ostensibly the first and crucial change is that the voices denying the existence of Ukrainian Catholics in the USSR are increasingly in the minority.

That the debate among leading hierarchs of the Russian Church has shifted from treating the problem as simply political to recognising its religious context is a positive second change. By placing the issue within the realm of theology and ecclesiology the Russian Orthodox

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Ogorodnikov's analysis does not, however, make room for the autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox tradition manifested in the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox movement.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

are opening themselves to the influence of international theological dialogue and, potentially, withdrawing it from the political context of Soviet society. The work of the International Theological Sub-Commission for Dialogue between the Catholics and Orthodox is currently deliberating over this issue. The positive desire of many members of this commission for greater understanding and eventually union between Orthodoxy and Catholicism bodes well for a reasoned and theologically honest approach to the problem. For the commission to conclude that forced reunions of churches are in any way theologically justifiable is a near impossibility. One would expect an attempt by the commission to present a compassionate and theologically sound suggestion for solving that problem of so-called Uniate churches. Such a conclusion to their work would increase pressure on the Russian Orthodox hierarchy to attain a reasonable *modus vivendi* with the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Further presenting the problem as an ecclesiological and ecumenical one should help Ukrainian Catholics differentiate the issue of legalisation (which is clearly political and relates to the state) from the recognition of their existence by the Russian Orthodox Church (a theological issue). Reaching agreement with the Orthodox on the latter could ultimately help them achieve the former.⁸²

Thirdly, significant Russian Orthodox voices from within and without the USSR are today attempting to enter dialogue with Ukrainian Catholics and overcome the mutual history of animosity and even violence. However, a very fundamental step is still lacking in this relationship: an official recognition by the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Ukrainian Catholic Church's right to exist. This would certainly be the next step if the two churches are to establish any kind of normalisation of relations. This study has shown that many Orthodox are ready and waiting for just such a move on the part of their hierarchy. Conceivably such a recognition would allow for the establishment of a true Christian dialogue: a fruitful dialogue between these two significant churches that so many impatiently await. Nevertheless for two parties who have ignored each other for so long, even these modest changes carry much weight and hope for the future.

⁸² Recently a member of the CRA of Ukraine made the point that the authorities fear heightened religious unrest if the Ukrainian Catholic Church were legalised. Old Orthodox-Catholic wars could rise to the surface of Soviet society. These remarks clearly signal that until the Orthodox and Catholics come to some kind of understanding the authorities hope to play them off, one against the other.