

# The Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Vatican and the Soviet Union during the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II

IVAN HVAT'

In autumn 1978, when Cardinal Karol Wojtyła of Kraków became the first "Slavic Pope", various observers of Vatican affairs assumed that his election would have an important bearing on the Vatican's *Ostpolitik*. During the 1970s Rome's policy toward the Soviet bloc had been frequently criticised as too timid in defending the rights of Catholics and too conciliatory to the Soviet government and the Moscow Patriarchate. It was expected that the new Pope would revise this policy.

Perhaps no group had as much to gain as the Ukrainian Catholics, a body of five million believers which has been subjected to a policy of all-out persecution by the Soviet authorities.

Much has already been written about the methods by which the Ukrainian Catholic Church was liquidated in 1946 and therefore there is no need to repeat the details. Dennis J. Dunn, an expert on Catholics in the Soviet Union, has concluded that the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church resulted from, among other things, the Soviet government's desire to pander to the traditional hatred of the Russian Orthodox Church towards the Eastern-rite Catholic or Uniate Churches, which are in union with Rome and recognise the Pope as their head. The very manner in which the Ukrainian Catholic Church was liquidated in 1946 is reminiscent of the forcible "conversion" of Ukrainian Catholics to Russian Orthodoxy under Tsarist rule. Documents about the L'viv synod of 1946, which have been published by the Soviet authorities, demonstrate that the Soviet regime was anxious to destroy a Church that was seen by them as a major symbol of national identity in western Ukraine. In May 1945 the Soviet Ukrainian government approved the setting up of an "Initiative Group for the Reunification of the Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church" consisting of three priests. Simultaneously, members of the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church were arrested. The head of the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs, attached to the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, P. Khodchenko, demanded that the Initiative Groups supply him with details about clergy resisting the liqui-

dition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church:

The Initiative Group is to send . . . lists of deacons, parish priests and abbots who refuse to recognise the jurisdiction of the Initiative Group . . .<sup>1</sup>

This order from a representative of the Soviet government represents a flagrant violation of the separation of Church and State enshrined in the Soviet Constitution.

Despite the forcible “re-unification” of the Ukrainian Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church at the specially convened synod of L’viv and the imprisonment of its hierarchy, the Soviet authorities failed to destroy the Church and instead drove it underground where it has survived to this day as a “catacomb” church.

The latter part of the 1950s and early 1960s were a period of “de-Stalinisation” in the Soviet Union. The proscribed Ukrainian Catholic Church began to display greater vitality during the 1960s, particularly after Pope John XXIII secured the release of the Metropolitan of L’viv, Archbishop Iosyf Slipyi, and managed to persuade the Soviet government to allow him to leave for Rome. A number of Ukrainian Catholic priests were freed from labour camps at this time and some of them returned to western Ukraine and clandestinely resumed their pastoral duties. In Czechoslovakia, the Uniate Church, which has a sizeable Ukrainian constituency, was permitted to resume its activities as part of the democratisation of social life in the country during the “Prague Spring” of 1968. The Church had been liquidated in 1950 like its counterpart in western Ukraine. This was another factor which stimulated the general revival of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine.

Towards the end of the 1960s the volume of *samizdat* documents reaching the West from the Soviet Union was growing and many of them began to include reports on the activities of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Ukrainian Catholics began to campaign for the legalisation of their Church.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time the Soviets sought more effective methods to promote anti-Catholic propaganda. In December 1969 a conference on “Catholics in the USSR and the Present” was held in the Lithuanian city of Šiauliai. In 1974, an inter-republican conference took place in the Ukrainian city of Uzhhorod to examine “New tendencies in the ideology and activity of religious organisations and problems of atheistic propaganda”. Eleven of the papers delivered at the meeting dealt with the Ukrainian Catholic Church and discussed ways in which its activities could be combatted.<sup>3</sup> A year later the next conference on “Catholicism and the current ideological struggle” was held in Vilnius.<sup>4</sup>

Significantly, western Ukraine, traditionally the stronghold of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, is also the most religious region of Ukraine. On the basis of sociological research, Soviet authors have concluded that

at the end of the 1960s the number of religious believers among inhabitants of the western regions of Ukraine was twice as high as elsewhere. In the villages of the Transcarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil and Chernivtsi regions, fifty to sixty percent of the population are believers.<sup>5</sup>

Ukrainian Catholics could be sure that a Pope from Poland would have greater knowledge and interest in their plight than his predecessors had displayed. What his position would be remained a major question since traditional attitudes of the Polish clergy towards the Ukrainian Catholics or Uniates have been contradictory. On the one hand, the Polish clergy have seen the Union of Brest as one of the great accomplishments of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and in the nineteenth century they defended Uniate believers against the persecutions of the Tsarist Empire. On the other, they have often been intolerant of the Eastern Church's practices as an "inferior" Catholicism, particularly the custom of married clergy. In the twentieth century many Polish clergy belonged to the anti-Ukrainian National Democratic Party and many more disliked the Uniate clergy for their patriotic defence of the Ukrainian minority's interests in the inter-war Polish State. Undoubtedly Soviet persecution of Catholicism in Eastern Europe since the Second World War and the martyrdom of the Ukrainian Catholic Church had given the Polish faithful new respect for the Uniates, although the record of the Polish Church towards the approximately 200,000 Ukrainian Catholic believers in Poland had been far from exemplary. But it was the attitude of only one Polish clergyman that mattered. Ukrainian Catholics in the West took heart in the new Pope's family contacts with Ukrainian Catholics in the USA and his expression of his desire to promote Ukrainian-Polish understanding during a visit to the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard while he was still Archbishop of Kraków.

From the very day of his coronation, 22 October 1978, John Paul II demonstrated his great concern for the Catholics of the Soviet Union by delivering greetings in Ukrainian and Lithuanian, as well as in Russian. The ceremony was televised in Poland. As it is possible for Soviet citizens in the western borderlands of the USSR to pick up Polish television broadcasts on their television sets, the programme could be seen by a large number of Ukrainian and Lithuanian Catholics. Not surprisingly, the unexpected election of a Polish Pope caused the Kremlin considerable anxiety. The first meeting of a Soviet representative with the new Pope took place on 24 January 1979. On this occasion the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, spent almost two hours with John Paul II, longer than at any of his previous five meetings at the Vatican since 1966.<sup>6</sup>

The Pope was in Poland in 1979 from 2 to 10 June. The visit to his native land not only had a profound effect on the Polish Catholics, but also provided an additional stimulus for Catholics in the Soviet Union. The first Slavic Pope, free of a "Russian complex" and aware of the needs

of non-Russian nationalities, spoke at Gniezno about the origins of Christianity among the Slavic peoples. He emphasised that "it is necessary also to recall the christianisation of *Rus'* at Kiev in 988". In Kraków, on his last day in Poland, he declared, "There is no need to be afraid. The borders have to be opened. Remember: there is no imperialism of the Church. There is only service."<sup>7</sup>

In view of the historical significance of Kraków as a city where in the past Roman and Byzantine forms of Christianity were in contact with one another, and its geographical location, it is clear to whom this call was addressed. It was aimed at the governments of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, where the Catholic Church is subject to stringent restrictions and its members repressed.

The Pope's activities during the first year of his pontificate, especially his visit to Poland, further alarmed the Soviet leadership. Barely a month after John Paul II's return from Poland, a meeting of secretaries of the Central Committees of the communist parties of the socialist bloc took place in East Berlin to discuss international and ideological matters. Although the official communiqué about the meeting did not mention the Pope,<sup>8</sup> it subsequently became known that the participants discussed the resurgence of Catholicism in their countries that had occurred as a result of the Pontiff's influence. According to Ivan Poluk, a functionary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine:

As was noted at the conference of secretaries of the Central Committees of Communist and Workers' Parties of socialist countries on international and ideological questions (Berlin, 1979), the policy of the Vatican towards the socialist countries has entered a new phase, which is marked by a sharp increase in the activity of the Roman Catholic Church, by a desire to turn it into a political opposition in the socialist countries.<sup>9</sup>

Poluk went on to explain the threat posed by the new Pope to the Soviet Ukrainian authorities:

For the present leadership in the Vatican, the Ukraine is an object of particular solicitude. It is trying to use the still considerable active nucleus of the Catholic Church as a basis for extending religious influence over the population of the republic.<sup>10</sup>

In various other Soviet Ukrainian publications there have been similar admissions that despite the formal liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church by the L'viv "synod" of 1946, this Church continues to exist underground.<sup>11</sup>

Since the election of John Paul II Soviet authors have noted that "Uniate remnants"<sup>12</sup> have become more active in Ukraine and that

# HARVARD UKRAINIAN STUDIES

*Journal of the  
Ukrainian Research Institute,  
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The journal began publication in March 1977. Subscription rates per volume are \$28.00 in the United States and Canada, \$32.00 in other countries. Single issues are \$9.00 in the United States and Canada, \$10.00 in other countries. For further information please write to:

*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*  
Ukrainian Research Institute  
Harvard University  
1583 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138  
U.S.A.

(ISSN 0363-5570)



“some former Uniate priests and monks remain under the influence of the Vatican”.<sup>13</sup> At the same time they have criticised his solicitude to the pastoral needs of Ukrainian Catholics in the West. They see the Pope as attempting to revive contact with the Uniates in order “to stimulate the activity of the Uniate Churches in the socialist countries”.<sup>14</sup> What has the Pope done in this respect that has troubled Soviet officials and annoyed the Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church?

In March 1979 John Paul II sent a letter to the Metropolitan of L'viv and Primate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Cardinal Iosyf Slipyi, in which he called on the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy to prepare for the forthcoming celebration in 1988 of the thousandth anniversary of the adoption of Christianity by Kievan Rus'. The text of the letter did not appear in *Osservatore Romano* until 17 June 1979, that is, after the Pope had returned from Poland, but a Ukrainian translation was published earlier, in April.<sup>15</sup>

“The history and experiences of the Ukrainian people”, the Pope wrote, “lie heavily on Our hearts and are a source of sorrow for Us”. He went on to emphasise the “importance of the Union of Brest of 1596 of the Ruthenian Church (the old name for Ukrainians and Belorussians). “Just as in the past, so today, the Apostolic Throne attaches great significance to this unity.” The letter ended with a reference to the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man:

Every believer has the right to his own religious convictions and to be part of the religious community to which he belongs.<sup>16</sup>

The next important move by the Pope to the advantage of the Ukrainian Catholics was the convocation of a synod of the hierarchy of their Church to deal with their pastoral needs.<sup>17</sup> The main task of the Ukrainian Catholic bishops was to elect a candidate for co-adjutor *cum iure successionis* for the Metropolitan of L'viv. The naming by the Pope of Archbishop Myroslav Lubachivsky as successor to Cardinal Slipyi assured the continuity of the L'viv metropolia, canonically the highest institution in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, whose territory and faithful are in Ukraine. The far-reaching implications of this appointment were not lost on the Soviet authorities, who vehemently condemned the Pope's initiative in calling the extraordinary synod of the Ukrainian Catholic Church as “an unprecedented move”.<sup>18</sup>

Later the same year, the first ordinary synod of the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church took place in Rome with the approval of the Holy Father. One outcome of this meeting was a resolution which stressed that according to canon law the L'viv synod's decisions — reached under pressure and in the absence of the bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church — were illegal. The participants also drew attention to the fact that Rome had on two occasions in recent years

referred to the forcible nature of the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup> The resolutions of the synod were leaked to the press before they had been officially confirmed by the Pope.

The Pope's efforts to strengthen the existing structure of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, his expressions of sympathy for Ukrainian Catholics suffering for their faith under the Soviet regime, and his demonstrative use of the Ukrainian language at a time of intensified russification in Ukraine,<sup>20</sup> all this could not but irritate not only the Kremlin, but also the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church. In connection with the Pope's letter to Cardinal Slipyi, in September 1979 the Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Yuvenali, wrote to the head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity in Rome, Cardinal Willebrands. Voicing the official position of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Yuvenali stated that the Pope's positive appraisal of the union of the Ruthenian Church with Rome had created the "impression of a change in the ecumenical policy" of the Vatican. The Pope's letter to the Primate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church seemed "to contradict the decisions of the Vatican Council" with respect to ecumenism.<sup>21</sup>

In response to Metropolitan Yuvenali's letter, Cardinal Willebrands assured him that the Vatican would continue to conduct ecumenism in the spirit of the Vatican Council, but also expressed regret that in some circles of the Orthodox Church there existed a tendency "to judge the experience of the Catholic Uniate Churches in a totally negative light. Some would even prefer that their liquidation be a prerequisite for dialogue" between the Orthodox Churches and Rome.<sup>22</sup> It appears that Cardinal Willebrands had in mind the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church who believe that union with Rome must be totally extirpated as a means of achieving church unity. The resolution passed by the bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in 1980 on the uncanonical and illegal nature of the L'viv "synod" of 1946 provoked a fierce reaction in Moscow. On 22 December 1980 Patriarch Pimen of the Russian Orthodox Church wrote to Pope John Paul II:

With a deep sense of alarm and pain I must say that the positive results in the sphere of closer, fraternal relations between our two Churches, achieved through our mutual efforts during the Second Vatican Council, may be obliterated by the Declaration (passed at the synod of Ukrainian bishops). The text and spirit of the Declaration are alien to the atmosphere of brotherly ecumenism which prevails between us.<sup>23</sup>

In his reply to Patriarch Pimen's letter Pope John Paul II expressed regret that the Declaration of the bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church had been published before he had acquainted himself with its text and stated:

“this text has not been ratified and therefore is deprived of any official weight”.<sup>24</sup>

Cardinal Iosyf Slipyi made an official statement on the exchange of letters between Patriarch Pimen and Pope John Paul II. He stressed, as he had on many previous occasions, that the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church had been an act of violence against the faithful. He pointed out with satisfaction that the Pope had nevertheless emphasised the unwavering support of the Apostolic Throne for the rights of the Ukrainian Catholics.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to an interesting issue in the correspondence between the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican on the subject of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the West. Pimen's letter to the Pope and Metropolitan Yuvenali's letter to Cardinal Willebrands emphasised the resolution on the importance of ecumenism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches put forward at the Second Vatican Council. However, both letters ignore the clear support it gave to the fundamental importance of freedom of conscience.

The Moscow Patriarchate demands the right to destroy the Ukrainian Catholic Church as a price for ecumenical contacts. The exchange of letters revealed how adamant both Church and State in Moscow are and how difficult is the position of the Pope, who must take into account the world ecumenical movement and the position of other Catholic believers in the Soviet bloc.

The high-level responses by Moscow have been accompanied by persecution of the catacomb church, while at the same time, John Paul II's concern for Ukrainian Catholics has stirred the faithful to more active resistance.

Anatoli Levitin-Krasnov, a Russian writer and participant in the human rights movement in the USSR (now in the West), wrote in 1974:

In western Ukraine and in western Belorussia, the Union (with Rome) is a wide-ranging popular movement. Its persecution is not only a factor of religious oppression but is a limitation of the material rights of the western Ukrainians.<sup>26</sup>

The uncensored Polish journal *Spotkania* (Encounters) published a letter from a group of Catholics in Soviet Ukraine to Pope John Paul II. The Ukrainian Catholics expressed their joy that the Pope came from “the family of long-suffering Slavonic nations” and understood their needs and hopes.

We Ukrainian Catholics of the Eastern Rite who live within the borders of the USSR are treated as an illegal Church. We exist thanks to God's grace and the great faith and sacrifice of our people . . . We can tell you, Your Holiness, as our spiritual leader . . . that our Catholic Church is with us, it exists and will



always exist.<sup>27</sup>

The authors of the letter to the Pope say that their aim is to procure the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine but that they have been prevented from achieving this by the organs of the State. They appeal to the Pope to use his authority "to explain to the representatives of the Soviet government that the Ukrainian nation has the right to demand freedom (of worship) for its Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite."

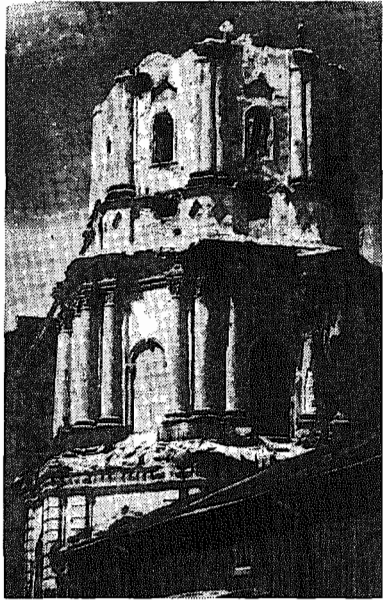
We seek only the full and consistent implementation of the paragraphs of the USSR Constitution which guarantee freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and freedom of worship.<sup>28</sup>

In a document "The life of the Ukrainian Catholic Church" (dated January 1980)<sup>29</sup> some anonymous members of the Church describe their attempts to gain the legalisation of the Church in Soviet Ukraine.\* A delegation from the faithful conducted eleven meetings with government officials; over a hundred petitions and letters were sent without result. "The Soviet organs of State try to deceive the faithful; they promise the registration of church communities if the believers will refuse to recognise the jurisdiction of Cardinal Slipyi." But no one has signed such a statement, write the Ukrainian Catholics. The document devotes a large section to descriptions of persecution of believers by the police. *The Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church* also gives some information on a particularly severe series of attacks against Ukrainian Catholics in the spring of 1981. The repression took on the form of a general pogrom on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The *Chronicle* gives information on police action in more than ten villages in western Ukraine.<sup>30</sup> In one of its subsequent editions the Lithuanian Catholic *Chronicle* published details of the trial of two Ukrainian priests in L'viv in October 1981.

The defendants, Vasyl Kavatsiv and Osy Roman, were alleged, "despite the prohibitions of the authorities, to have organised unlawful activity among Ukrainian Catholics, conducting illegal services in villages of L'viv region by day and at night, on working days and free days". They were found guilty under Articles 138, Part 2, and 209, Part 1, of the Ukrainian Criminal Code and each sentenced to five years deprivation of freedom and three years in exile with the confiscation of their property.<sup>31</sup>

The information bulletin (No. 30) of the Free Inter-Professional Association of Workers (SMOT) has reported on the increase of anti-Uniate propaganda in the mass media:

\*The document is published in full on pp. 280-90 — *Ed.*



The belfry of St. Nicholas ("the Great Nicholas") Monastery in Kiev (*above left*), and during demolition in 1934 (*above right*). The belfry was built in 1750 and its uppermost level was modified in 1890. It was damaged in 1918 by Bolshevik bombardment of the city, repaired in 1922, but subsequently demolished. (*Photo courtesy of the Ukrainian Centre, New York*).

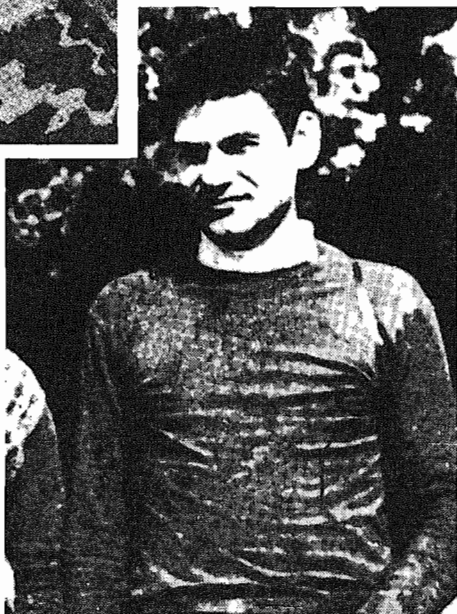
A group of Ukrainian Catholics gathering for prayer outside their church, which has been forcibly closed by the Soviet authorities. (*Photo © Keston College*).



*Cadinal Iosyf Slipyi, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (right), now in exile in Rome, where he still plays a part in his Church's life. He was imprisoned in Siberia for 18 years.*



*Iosyf Terelya, the president of the Initiative Group to Defend the Rights of Uniate Believers and the Ukrainian Catholic Church, arrested on 24 December 1982 (right). See documents on pp. 290-94. Terelya's wife Olena (above) with her daughter, Marianna, has given birth to a second child since his arrest. (All photos courtesy of Keston College).*



Assaults on Uniates are assuming a statewide character: there is nothing specifically Ukrainian about this phenomenon. The tone of pamphlets about the Uniates published in Moscow, for example, is such that it is difficult to find anything to outdo them in Kiev . . . Ukrainian television pours out hatred (for Uniates) in its programme "Myths and Reality". Whole broadcasts are devoted exclusively to the Uniates.<sup>32</sup>

A signal for the intensification of the ideological campaign against the Ukrainian Catholics may be seen in an article by Ivan Myhovych, a senior official of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Ukrainian Central Committee, published in the journal *Komunist Ukrainy* in May 1981. The author attacked the Ukrainian Catholic Church abroad, recalling that a representative of Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Rubin, attended the synod of Ukrainian Catholic bishops in Rome in spring 1980 and that the Pope himself subsequently received the bishops in audience and addressed them:

The Ukrainian people indignantly reject this provocative intervention of the Vatican, which has long specialised in anti-Sovietism and sought to discredit our political system in the eyes of believers and to hamper social progress in the USSR.<sup>33</sup>

In November 1981, the late first deputy chairman of the KGB, Semyon Tsvigun, referred in the CPSU Central Committee journal *Kommunist* to the activity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and to the support it receives from abroad.<sup>34</sup> This and other articles in the theoretical journals of the central committees of the CPSU and the Ukrainian Communist Party were quickly taken up in Ukraine. Ivan Poluk wrote:

The growing efforts of the Vatican and clerical-nationalistic centres abroad to influence the population of the Ukrainian SSR and negative tendencies in the actions of the Catholic clergy and the remnants of Uniatism have called for an expansion of aggressive counter-propaganda activity from Party committees, Soviet organs, and ideological institutions.<sup>35</sup>

The methods employed in this ideological counter-propaganda in western Ukraine are the best evidence of the devoutness of the population and its devotion to Eastern-rite Catholicism: In L'viv region, there are 587 commissions to promote Soviet festivals and rites.<sup>36</sup> The task of these commissions is to extirpate religious and national rites and traditions from the lives of believers. Atheist propaganda in the region is conducted by more than three thousand lecturers and seven thousand agitators.<sup>37</sup> For adults there are 450 atheist clubs, and for young people 1,600 similar institutions — the "Svitoch" atheist clubs, where atheist propaganda lectures are said to be attended by "tens of thousands of

young men and women".<sup>38</sup> In one year alone (probably 1980) twenty-two churches and chapels in the region were taken over "for social and cultural purposes", various museums — primarily museums of atheism — being opened in them.<sup>39</sup>

Methods of conducting propaganda against Catholicism and the Uniate Church are developed at the Ivan Franko State University in L'viv and at the Institute of Social Sciences of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.<sup>40</sup> Commissions for criticism of Catholicism and the Uniate Church have been set up under the auspices of the regional Party committee.<sup>41</sup> The propaganda against Catholicism is particularly sustained in the regional press of western Ukraine:

The press directs the main thrust of its criticism against Catholicism and Uniatism (the Greek-Catholic Church): 23.7 percent of all material. Particularly great attention is paid to the question by *Vil'na Ukrayina* — 47.7 percent; *Prykarpats'ka pravda* — 31.7 percent; *Vil'ne zhyttya* — 25.5 percent; and *Zakarpats'ka pravda*, 23.3 percent of all materials published about the reactionary essence of religion and church.<sup>42</sup>

District, Komsomol and other newspapers in the area also devote much space to anti-Catholic propaganda and propaganda against religion in general. Ukrainian radio and television keep step, as pointed out in *samizdat* documents. Apart from the series "Myth and Reality", there are television broadcasts entitled "Uniate Radio Saboteurs", which criticise the Ukrainian transmissions of Radio Vatican.<sup>43</sup> Soviet authors are especially sensitive about broadcasts that speak of the coexistence and even harmony of faith and science in questions relating to the existence of the supernatural:

An analysis of radio talks shows that Uniate theologians, speculating on the controversial and unresolved problems of contemporary science and on the contradictory nature of human cognition, persistently propagate the neo-Thomist principle of the harmony of religion and science as proof of the existence of God.<sup>44</sup>

The film industry is also utilised for anti-Catholic propaganda. In the last two years, two films have been made in Ukraine portraying the Ukrainian Catholic Church and its works as hostile to the Ukrainian people. Entitled "The False Halo" and "The Secrets of St George's", they quite unfoundedly and indiscriminately accuse the leadership of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of abetting the Nazi occupation of western Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> The increase in repression against the faithful and anti-Catholic propaganda serve only to increase opposition in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. In early 1983 there was news of new initiatives by the

Ukrainian Catholics to gain the registration of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and recognition of its activities in Soviet Ukraine.<sup>46</sup> Ukrainian *samizdat* documents have given more detailed information on the efforts of the believers.

One of the documents is a letter from the Ukrainian human rights activist Iosyf Terelya to the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. The letter announces the formation of an "Initiative Group for the Defence of the Rights of Believers and the Church" in Ukraine and specifies the number of members in the group.<sup>47</sup> A second document is an appeal by members of the group to the Ukrainian government with proposals for the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. In his capacity as leader of the group, Iosyf Terelya has written a letter to the president of the Central Committee of German Catholics, Professor Hans Maier, describing the illegal existence of the Catholic Church in Ukraine.<sup>49\*</sup>

The Initiative Group was formed at an unidentified location in Ukraine on 9 September 1982. Iosyf Terelya became its leader, and the priest Budzyns'ky its secretary. Also in the group are two other priests, Father Dionisii and Father Ignatii, and a woman believer, Stefaniya Petrash-Sychko, the wife of the Ukrainian political prisoner Petro Sychko. Iosyf Terelya's letter to the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party states that the formation of the Initiative Group

was a response by Ukrainian Catholics to increasingly repressive measures against our Church. From now on, all information about the Ukrainian Catholic Church will be made available for world-wide public scrutiny. Catholics the world over must know and remember under what conditions we exist. We have a single goal — legalisation.

The same desire for legalisation is expressed in the appeal by members of the Initiative Group to the Ukrainian government. The appeal emphasises that the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church at the L'viv "synod" in 1946 was an illegal act in which representatives not only of the Russian Orthodox Church but also the Soviet authorities were actively involved. But even after its liquidation, the activities of the Ukrainian Catholic Church did not cease but continued underground.

But we survived the evil years of Stalinism. Even today, after the denunciation of the crimes of the tyrant Stalin, a part of the Ukrainian people and the Church of its ancestors exist in far from normal circumstances. It is strange that a State which declared as its creed the principles of freedom, equality and brotherhood should conduct a campaign of total persecution

\*The first and third of these documents are to be found on pp. 290-93 — *Ed.*

against its own population, simply for worshipping Christ in its native language.

In order to rectify the present situation, the authors of the appeal to the Ukrainian government suggest that a procedure for the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church be worked out. They formulate their proposals under nine points. As a start, free elections should be held in all the dioceses of western Ukraine:

In those dioceses where the majority of the parishioners profess the Greek-Catholic faith, churches, monasteries and chapels should be transferred to them (Point 1).

Where Catholic parishioners are in a minority compared with other groups of believers, they should be allowed to build prayer houses (Point 2).

The authors of the appeal also wish to see Catholic seminaries opened in L'viv and Uzhhorod. They provide an assurance that, in the event of the Ukrainian Catholic Church being legalised, the Church "pledges to observe all precepts and laws of the State and instruct its parishioners to do likewise" (Point 8), but since the sovereign head of the Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church is the Pope, "no subordination to the Soviet authorities is possible". The law on the separation of Church and State should be observed (Point 9).

The formation of the "Initiative Group for the Defence of the Rights of Believers and the Church" in Ukraine after the formation of the Lithuanian "Catholic Committee for the Defence of Religious Rights" in 1978 shows a systematic growth in organising the defence of Catholics' rights in the Soviet Union.

The head of the "Initiative Group", Iosyf Terelya, was arrested on 24 December 1982 on a charge of "parasitism". It became known that Terelya's "state of unemployment" had been induced deliberately by the security services in order to provide a formal pretext for his arrest. Yelena Sannikova, an Orthodox believer living in Moscow, confirms this fact in a letter to Pope John Paul II.\* She characterises Iosyf Terelya as a courageous and honest man who has undergone great suffering for his faith in the Ukrainian Catholic Church. She begs the Pope to defend Terelya against the "KGB collaborators in white coats" who may diagnose him as "psychiatrically ill" and have him locked away in a psychiatric hospital.<sup>50</sup> A brutal attack on the secretary of the "Initiative Group", Fr H. Budzins'kyi, was reported in the newspaper *Radyans'ka Ukrayina*. The text of the article implies that the reasons for the attack on H. Budzins'kyi were his activities in the Ukrainian Catholic Church.<sup>51</sup> The attack on Fr Budzins'kyi may be seen as the first stage in the fabrication of a "criminal record" which may be used to arrest him and sentence

\*See pp. 293-94 — *Ed.*

him to a long period of imprisonment.

The revival enjoyed by the Ukrainian Catholic Church in its homeland should be considered less as a phenomenon linked with the actions of the first Slav to be elected Pope than in the context of a general revival of religious belief among the population of the USSR — not just the emergence of new sects referred to by Tsvigun in *Kommunist*.<sup>52</sup> Soviet researchers themselves confirm this trend:

Empirical observations testify to a certain revival of religious faith, or at least interest in religion, in specific regions and certain sections of the population . . . Of late, a new type of believer has been emerging and becoming more and more noticeable who, compared with the old traditionalist believer, has a higher level of intellectual development, a marked tendency towards rationalistic justification of his faith, and an interest in the philosophical and ethical aspects of dogma and in the history of religion.<sup>53</sup>

There is no doubt that Pope John Paul II has stimulated the Catholic revival in the USSR. The increase in articles in the Soviet press overtly criticising the Vatican and John Paul II in particular bear out this view. At the end of last year the journal *Političeskoye samoobrazovanie* (Political Self-education) criticised the Pope for his “persistent and hard-line attitude” towards the socialist State compared with previous Popes and suggested that the Pope’s visit to Poland in 1979 strengthened “anti-socialist forces” in the country, the implied reference being to the formation of Solidarity.<sup>54</sup> The ideologues of Soviet Ukraine have voiced the conviction that the contemporary Catholic Church is the “genuine apostle of anti-communism”.<sup>55</sup> They treat the Pope’s relations with the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the West as a “provocation by the Vatican” and as an attempt “to interfere in the internal affairs” of the Soviet Union.<sup>56</sup>

One of the most defamatory articles against Pope John Paul II was published in the journal of the Belorussian Writers’ Union. The author, A. Bazhko, formerly an official in the department of ideology and propaganda, considers the Pope to be a “cunning and dangerous” ideological adversary. “K. Wojtyła did not take an active part in the struggle against fascism during the occupation in Poland” he writes, but became “a militant anti-communist and fought against the liberation of Poland”, and now he has become an “apologist” for American militarism.<sup>57</sup> The Belorussian propagandist considers Pope John Paul II to have a split personality: on one hand he is said to be “kind, well-educated [. . .] intelligent and progressive” but on the other he is “coarse, evil, faithless and lazy, despite his two doctoral dissertations and perfect command of many languages”.<sup>58</sup>

In summer 1981 an official pamphlet entitled “The Uniate Church and



Fascism” was published in L’viv. Among other arguments, the author asserts that the present activities of Pope John Paul II are a front for the aspirations of the revanchists, the enemies of democracy and neo-fascists. In the chapter “In the service of the neo-fascists” the author writes:

Revanchists and enemies of democracy and socialism look with hope upon the new Pope [. . .] for he has made it his goal to unite Catholics all over the planet into a single anti-communist force. It is dictated not by anxiety for mankind and its future but by the desire for religious authority over the planet.<sup>59</sup>

In November 1982 a symposium was specially organised to discuss the history of Catholicism in Ukraine, its contemporary manifestations and new forms of anti-Catholic propaganda.<sup>60</sup> It is also worth pointing out that in the decade between 1971 and 1981 over eight hundred publications appeared in the Soviet Union attacking the Catholic Church and its teachings.<sup>61</sup>

To sum up: the tactics employed by the mass media towards Pope John Paul II and towards Catholicism are designed to identify the activities of the Pope with the wishes and inclinations of ultra-right, ultra-conservative groups both inside and outside the Church. They foster the idea that Karol Wojtyła became head of the Roman Catholic Church with the help of ultra-right circles within it. The Pope’s sympathy towards the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is interpreted as support for the “remnants of Ukrainian fascism”. This tactic simplifies the ideological motivation behind the anti-Uniate propaganda in Ukraine since the faithful can be persecuted as epigones of “Ukrainian fascism”, or at least, as enemies of socialism and the Soviet system. The tactics of Soviet propagandists evidently rely on attempts to create reality out of wishful thinking. But in fact Ukrainian Catholics in Ukraine do not question or struggle against the social order in the Soviet Union, as numerous *šamizdat* documents have shown. Their aim has been and remains to take full advantage of the rights guaranteed religious groups under the Soviet Constitution — above all to achieve the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine of which they all consider themselves to be members. They have been greatly inspired by John Paul II’s solicitude. Although Ukrainian Catholics in the West, fearful of being engulfed by the Latin-rite Church, have been critical of John Paul II’s refusal to recognise Cardinal Slipyi as Patriarch, his opposition to the right of Ukrainian Catholics in the West to ordain married clergy and his failure to back the Ukrainian hierarchy fully in the exchange with Patriarch Pimen, they have become convinced of his sincere dedication to the future development of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR and in the West. Ukrainian Catholics in Ukraine, fighting for their very existence, have been heartened by the Pope’s actions that have brought

their plight to world attention and have served notice to the Soviet authorities and the Moscow Patriarchate that Rome cannot accept the denial of freedom of conscience to Ukrainian Catholic believers.

<sup>1</sup>*Diyanya Soboru hreko-katolyts'koyi tserkvy u L'vovi 8-10 bereznya 1946* (Vydannya prezidiyi soboru), L'viv, 1946, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, "The Catacomb Church: Ukrainian Greek Catholics in the USSR", *RCL*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1977, p. 8; Hans-Dieter Kome, *Die kommunistische Religionspolitik gegenüber der unierten griechisch-katholischen Kirche der Ukraine seit 1944*, Munich, 1979, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>*Lyudyna i svit*, No. 12, 1974, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>See *Katolitsizm i sovremennaya ideologicheskaya bor'ba* (Materialy k nauchnoi konferentsii), Vilnius, 1975.

<sup>5</sup>*Stanovlennya i rozvytok masovoho ateizmu v zakhidnykh oblastyakh Ukrayins'koyi RSR*, Kiev, 1981, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup>Hansjakob Stehle, "Die Ostpolitik des polnischen Papstes", *Europa-Archiv*, 14 Folge, 25 July 1979, p. 436.

<sup>7</sup>*Słowo Papieža. Jan Paweł II w Polsce* (Teksta dokumentalna), Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, London, 1979, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup>*Problemy mira i sotsializma*, No. 9, September 1979, pp. 54-55.

<sup>9</sup>I. V. Poluk, "O praktike raboty po protivodeistviyu katolicheskoi uniatskoi propagande", *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, No. 28, Moscow 1981, p. 202.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>11</sup>M. P. Mchedlov, *Katolitsizm*, Moscow 1974, p. 248.

<sup>12</sup>I. V. Poluk, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>13</sup>I. I. Myhovykh, "Uniats'ko-natsionalistychny al'ians na sluzhbi imperializmu", *Komunist Ukrayiny*, No. 5, 1981, p. 84.

<sup>14</sup>L. F. Shevtsova, *Sotsializm i Katolitsizm* (Vzaimootnosheniya gosudarstva i katolicheskoi tserkvi v sotsialisticheskikh stranakh), Moscow 1982, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup>*Khrystyyans'ky Holos*, No. 16, 22 April 1979, Munich.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20 March 1980.

<sup>18</sup>I. V. Poluk, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>19</sup>*Khrystyyans'ky Holos*, Nos. 1-2 (January) 1981, Munich.

<sup>20</sup>*Katholische Nachrichten Agentur* — Informationsdienst, No. 48, 29 November 1979, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>*Svoboda* (Ukrainian daily), 15 January 1980.

<sup>22</sup>*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11-12 November 1979.

<sup>23</sup>*Information Bulletin* of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, 8 April 1981. German translation in *Informationen und Berichte*, Digest des Ostens, No. 7, 1981, Königstein, pp. 4-7.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup>*Suchasnist'* No. 1 (January), 1975, p. 108.

<sup>27</sup>*Spotkania* No. 16 (Autumn), 1981, pp. 84-87; *Glaube in der 2. Welt*, No. 4, 1982, pp. 128-130.

<sup>28</sup>*Spotkania, ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>29</sup>"Iz zhizni Ukrainiskoi katolicheskoi tserkvi", AS 4625, 30 April 1982; *Glaube in der 2. Welt*, No. 8, 1982, pp. 249-59.

<sup>30</sup>*Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*, No. 49, 1982, pp. 69-73.

<sup>31</sup>AS 4850; *Informationen und Berichte*, No. 6, 1983, pp. 1-4.

<sup>32</sup>AS 4806, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup>I. I. Myhovykh, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup>S. Tsvigun, "O proiskakh imperialisticheskikh razvedok", *Komunist*, No. 14, 1981, p. 98.

<sup>35</sup>See Poluk, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>36</sup> *Lyudyna i svit*, No. 7, 1982, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> *Lyudyna i svit*, No. 12, 1980, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> D. A. Yaremchuk and N. G. Romanyuk, "Rol' oblastnoi partiinoi organisatsii v ateisticheskomykh vospitanii trudyashchikhsya", *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, No. 28, 1981, p. 225; Poluk, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>39</sup> Poluk, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>40</sup> Yaremchuk and Romanyuk, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

<sup>41</sup> *Lyudyna i svit*, No. 12, 1980, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> *Stanovlennya i rozvytok masovoho ateizmu v zakhidnykh oblastiakh Ukrayins'koyi RSR*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup> Yaremchuk and Romanyuk, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

<sup>44</sup> *Lyudyna i svit*, No. 12, 1980, p. 59; A. Biskup, "Radiorupor uniats'kykh klerykaliv", *Zhovten'*, No. 11, 1982, p. 83.

<sup>45</sup> *Kul'tura i zhyttya*, 20 September 1981; *Radio Kiev*, for Ukrainians abroad, 21 April 1982.

<sup>46</sup> Reuters and AFP, 12 February 1983; see also RL 78/83, R. Solchanyk, "Ukrainian Catholic Activist Arrested", 14 February 1983.

<sup>47</sup> AS 4897.

<sup>48</sup> AS 4898.

<sup>49</sup> AS 4899.

<sup>50</sup> AS 4963.

<sup>51</sup> *Radyans'ka Ukrayina*, 28 June 1983.

<sup>52</sup> Tsvigun, *op. cit.*, p. 98; See also RS 115/83, Ivan Hvat', "Nekotorye itogi ateisticheskoi propagandy v pechati SSSR".

<sup>53</sup> P. K. Kurochkin, "Problemy nauchnogo ateizma v svete reshenii XXVI s'ezda KPSS", *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma* No. 28, 1981, pp. 6, 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Politicheskoye samoobrazovaniye* No. 12, 1982, p. 117.

<sup>55</sup> Ie. O. Nozhyn, "Front bez peremyr'ya", *Komunist Ukrayiny* No. 3, 1983, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> Myhovych, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>57</sup> Ales' Bazhko, "Pakruchastyya stsezhki bahaslova z Vadovits", *Polymya*, No. 4, 1981, pp. 141, 166.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>59</sup> N. O. Safronova, *Uniats'ka tserkva i fashizm*, L'viv, 1981, pp. 54-55.

<sup>60</sup> See *Ukrayins'ky Istorychny Zhurnal*, No. 2, Kiev, 1983, p. 155.

<sup>61</sup> B. Ya. Ramm, "Issledovaniye problem sovremennogo katolitsizma v literature 70-kh godov", *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, No. 28, 1981, p. 309.

## Appendix

### The Life of the Ukrainian Catholic Church

*This document was written in January 1980 by anonymous members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. At the beginning of the document, the Church's history is outlined in some detail from the time of its foundation to the present. The authors then describe the great hardships that the Church endures, and the suffering of many individuals and local churches in the villages of western Ukraine since 1946, when the Church was outlawed.*

The Ukrainian Catholic Church is one of the national churches belonging to the Universal Church of Rome and many centuries of ecumenical work by the Church of the Ukrainian people have brought it into existence. It has never officially lost or broken its unity with the Holy See, even after the Great Schism of 1054. However, as a result of historical events the link between the Ukrainian Church and the Holy See has

weakened. The Ukrainian Church suffered great impoverishment and in order to protect itself from complete collapse and to safeguard a genuine, free confession of the original faith (Catholic in essence, Orthodox in terminology), the Ukrainian hierarchy decided, after long consultation, to ask the Holy See to revive and juridically to strengthen the union of the Ukrainian Church with the Universal Church of Christ and to subject the Ukrainian Church to its head, the representative of Christ on earth, the Pope.

This union was documented at the Brest *Sobor* (Council) in 1596 and has come to be known historically as the Union of Brest. Since that time the reunited Ukrainian Catholic Church (which is sometimes referred to as "Uniate") has endured various forms of cruel persecution including disinformation, falsification, slander and physical violence. The aim has been to destroy the Union. The bloody persecutions which took place from 1795 to 1875 are well known. In many countries no vestige of the Union has remained as a result.

In western Ukraine, a land which came under the rule of Austria and Austro-Hungary after 1772, the Ukrainian Catholic Church was allowed to develop and even began to flourish. The inhabitants of western Ukraine (formerly so-called Halychyna or Galicia) used to profess and, to this day, still profess the Catholic faith and perform public worship according to the Eastern (Byzantine-Ukrainian) rite. Although the considered opinion in the Soviet Union since 1946 has been that there are no Ukrainian Catholics and that the population professes the Orthodox faith with official Orthodox clergy conducting worship according to the Eastern rite, this is only the official version of the actual situation. Only a minority consider themselves genuine Orthodox believers, while the rest of the population consider themselves Catholic (according to their conscience) and a substantial number remain loyal to the Holy See and are conscientious, practising Catholics. The so-called "Russian Orthodoxy" has been implanted in western Ukraine using terror and force.

This brief information about the church life of Ukrainian Catholics in western Ukraine cannot, of course, convey the problem in its entirety or the situation of the church at the present time, in 1980, and does not pretend to do so. However, facts

drawn from the actual situation will serve, to a certain extent, as the basis of information about our religious life and they also constitute a plea to all Catholics and to all people of "good will" for prayer on our behalf. In view of the persecution we need to keep our resolve that the cross of the Lord will lead us and enable us to endure every ordeal and keep us until the end in faith in Christ and His Church and in loyalty to Christ's deputy, the Holy Father, because if we are true to him we are true to Christ our Lord.

Soon after the death of the Primate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Metropolitan Andrii Sheptyts'ky, who died on 1 November 1944, preparation started for the "liquidation" of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. On 6 April 1945 a brochure labelling Metropolitan Andrii Sheptyts'ky was issued and on the night of 10 April 1945 the then Metropolitan of Galicia and L'viv, Bishop of Kamianets, who is now His Beatitude, Supreme Bishop, Cardinal Iosyf Slipyi, and six Ukrainian Catholic bishops were arrested. They included the following: Their Graces Iosafat Kotsylovs'ky, Hryhorii Lakota, Hryhorii Khomyshyn and Ivan Lyatyshevs'ky. Not until March 1946 was it reported that all the Ukrainian bishops had been sentenced by a military tribunal to long terms of imprisonment.

The L'viv *sobor*, convened on 30 March 1946, proposed the "liquidation" of the Union of Brest of 1596 and "reunification", the return of the Ukrainian people to the bosom of the Orthodox Church, to the original Orthodox faith.

Not a single word has been written about this and few people now remember that there were two historical distortions. Firstly, the L'viv *sobor* in 1946 was totally illegal. It had no authorisation to dissolve the Union of Brest of 1596, because, although the fact was hushed up, it was convened and headed by a mere archpriest during the lifetime of all seven Ukrainian Catholic bishops. At the above-mentioned *sobor*, in spite of all the church canons of the Eastern and Western Churches, not a single bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was present: all of them, headed by the Metropolitan, were imprisoned at that time because they had refused to "accept Orthodoxy", in other words they had refused to be forcibly attached to and subjected to the hierarchy of that government institution which is ruled by atheists and which has the audacity to call itself the

Russian Orthodox Church. They even refused to accept any honour and dignity from the Orthodox Church and remained loyal to the Holy See and the Holy Father, at that time Pope Pius XII. At the L'viv *sobor* in 1946 only archpriests, a few priests, individual laymen (who attended out of fear) and representatives of the authorities were present.

Secondly, a historical fact has been crudely falsified and left unmentioned, namely that the ancestral faith of the Ukrainian people is Catholic in essence, because it was adopted by Prince Volodymyr (Vladimir) in 988, that is, before the time of the Great Schism in 1054. At that time, although the terminology "Orthodox faith" was used, it was Catholic in essence, as Byzantium was subject to the Holy See and was in unity with the Universal Church. Of course, after thousands of years the "Orthodox faith" of the 9th and 10th centuries and the Orthodoxy of the 20th century, especially "Russian Orthodoxy", are very different from each other in essence. Therefore, it is time to relinquish this evil perversion of the facts, which uses analogous terminology, but reflects, at the present time, diametrically opposed concepts.

The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, said some very significant words about the origin of the ancestral faith of the Ukrainian people in his pastoral letter to Cardinal Iosyf Slipyi: "Faith in Christ in Rus' came from Rome through Byzantium!". But this question is a completely separate problem, which is only touched on here, because it sheds some light on the deep distortion of historical facts. After the *sobor*, from 1946, the liquidation of everything that was Catholic began. All monasteries (about two hundred houses) were closed, monks and nuns were dispersed. All priests who refused to accept Orthodoxy, about two thousand diocesan priests and clergy, had to tread the same road — the road to prison; and frequently — without any trial — exile to Siberia, to desolate regions where there were camps with harsh regimes. Not a single bishop nor a single monk belonging to the Ukrainian Catholic Church adopted Orthodoxy and therefore many of them were laid to rest for ever under the snows of Siberia. Of the Ukrainian hierarchy only the Metropolitan, His Beatitude Iosyf Slipyi, managed to stay alive and in 1963, after seventeen years incarceration in a prison

camp, he was released at the request and petition of the Holy See and many institutes and organisations. But even in Rome, the Supreme Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is given no peace and from time to time he is slandered in the press.

We must render their due to all members of the Ukrainian hierarchy who suffered for the sake of Christ, for "all were one", and quote a short extract from the encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *To the Eastern Church*:

Now let us turn with sorrowful attention to another people, dear to us all, the Ukrainian people . . . Especially we want to remember those bishops of the Eastern rite who were among the first to endure sorrow, grief and insults on behalf of the faith.

All Catholic parishes were forcibly liquidated. About five thousand churches and chapels were desecrated and profaned. Many parish priests did not "accept Orthodoxy" and suffered the same fate as the bishops and monks. However, the majority of parish priests are married clergy (there are married clergy in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, as permitted by the Eastern rite) who, fearing the consequences for their families, accepted Orthodoxy — they officially parted with the Holy See and subjected themselves to the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. (Moreover, many of them who are now pensioners or close to death send in official applications requesting that their "acceptance" of Orthodoxy be annulled and that they be regarded as Catholic priests.) Usually after an apostate priest "accepted Orthodoxy" he was restored to his parish, the parishioners followed their priest, to whom they were accustomed, and the parishes continued to function. Soon the parish churches in which apostate priests served were forcibly converted to Orthodoxy and the lay people had to be reconciled to "innovations". However, a section of the married clergy and laypeople, mainly in towns, but also in villages where believers were conscientious and well-informed Catholics (and there were some such families in almost every village), continued and still continue to remain true to the Holy See and the Pope. The clergy were subjected to repression and the laypeople were deprived of Catholic priests. The spiritual needs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church were satisfied and are still satisfied in officially-working Roman Catholic churches (where all public worship

is conducted in Polish) or they are served by Ukrainian Catholic priests under the threat of arrest.

The priests of the Ukrainian Catholic Church — both those who returned from exile and the newly ordained, who acquired the necessary knowledge and wisdom in conspiratorial conditions, all of them, to this day, have no official registration to carry out pastoral work. However, all are “registered” for persecution. For carrying out any aspect of pastoral work — confession, burial, etc., a priest is fined 50 roubles every time (at a time when the average monthly wage is approximately 70-90 roubles), and he is threatened with a prison sentence of seven years for carrying out pastoral work. For example, a priest named Dydych was fined 50 roubles three times for conducting burials. From time to time every priest is called to the office of religious affairs [sc. to the representative of the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) — *Ed.*] and is ordered to sign a document stating that he will not carry out any pastoral work. Of course such a priest will never sign, but because of this he is punished — some lose their residence permits, some are fined or dismissed from work. Moreover, all priests who are not of pensionable age have to work somewhere in a government institution. The majority work as watchmen, stokers, yard-keepers or odd-job men.

During searches which take place for no specific reason and at any time, the militia and KGB workers remove literally everything that is necessary to or connected with pastoral work: prayer books, books, vestments, sacred objects for worship services, not to mention gold chalices, patens and pyxidia (monstrances\*). After such a raid it is impossible to carry out a service or to perform other pastoral duties.

We, Ukrainian Catholics have no rights. We do not exist in the Soviet Union, despite the fact that article 52 of the new Constitution of the USSR guarantees citizens of the USSR the right to profess any religion and to perform religious worship . . . This right is evidently included to decorate the Constitution and that is all. And every show put on for various delegations, wonderfully presented, concerning “freedom of conscience” is simply eye-wash . . . We are fully answerable for these words — life itself

\*Boxes in which the Host is kept after consecration — *Ed.*

bears them out. Until now, despite several attempts, despite three years of constant petitioning concerning the registration of a religious community of Ukrainian Catholics (in the village of Mshana, Horodok district, L'viv region) by the Council for Religious Affairs of the USSR, despite several promises “to resolve the issue positively”, up until now, at the beginning of 1980, we do not have a single officially registered holy place (church) nor even a single house of prayer. We “do not exist”. We are maliciously persecuted and for thirty years they have tried to make us forget everything Catholic, they have tried to force us to turn into atheists or, as a last resort, into “Russian Orthodox lay-people”. The enforced liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, of the Catholic faith in western Ukraine, has continued for more than thirty years. From time to time we are threatened “you will never see the churches of Sheptyts'ky”; they have systematically assured us that “the union was forcibly imposed on the Ukrainian people by Polish barons and the Vatican”, and that it is “hateful to the Ukrainian people” and that “Volodymyr (Vladimir) adopted the Orthodox faith”; all articles, books and brochures skilfully distorted the facts, insinuating contemporary Orthodoxy into the understanding of the Orthodox faith and frequently the only conclusion to be drawn from what one reads is that there has always been a Catholic West and an Orthodox East. Since many families do not have any books, catechisms, prayer books or other sources of knowledge about Christian faith and truth, undoubtedly such falsification is extremely harmful to the population.

However, no matter how much they try “successfully to introduce atheist propaganda” it always comes down to the fact that recently people's interest in religion has grown. Evidently people are sick of atheism and materialism, according to the words of Saint Augustine: “Our hearts find no peace until they rest in Thee, O God”.

In our country some of the churches are closed because there is a shortage of parish priests or there have been cases where lay-people have boycotted a “registered” priest and he has had to leave the parish. In these closed churches believers keep things in order, provide the necessary church utensils and meet for communal prayer on Sundays and feast days; and in May, June and October they even meet every day in order

to sing a litany to the Holy Virgin and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to say the rosary together. They sing the liturgy themselves (the choral parts) and sometimes they manage to celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy and to share the necessary Holy Sacraments. Over the last two to three years an "offensive" on these Catholic churches has begun. Because people pray in these churches believers are persecuted, the churches are destroyed and turned into warehouses or closed. Representatives from the local authorities (the militia, the KGB and party and executive committees) arrive in cars, often armed and with alsatians and they set the dogs on people no less than the German fascists did and turn the churches into battle fields. This is what happened in the village of Mshana, Horodok district, L'viv region. Without any warning on the part of the local authorities, at 10 a.m. on 8 December 1977 four cars full of militia men, KGB agents and representatives of the regional authorities and armed individuals with dogs came tearing up to the church. It was impossible for the believers to approach as dogs were set on them and they were beaten. The church was brutally vandalised, all altars were completely broken, pulpits and seats (special long benches) and banners were broken and the iconostasis was torn from the wall. Everything was taken from the church — even the empty repository for the bread and wine. Everything that could be taken was taken from the church — vestments, priests' cassocks, chalices, monstrances, all the church utensils including table-cloths, napkins, towels (decorated with Ukrainian national embroidery), all the bits and pieces, and the icons. The believers appealed to the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR (in Moscow). First of all the delegation of believers were shouted at and beaten, then, on the next day, they were allowed to speak and were promised that the question would be "considered". Even the documents for the registration of a religious community were accepted. Then admittedly these documents "went missing" and they had to send officially, by registered letter, copies of the personal data of the "dvadsatka" — twenty believers\* — and an application for registration of a religious community. Although they have been waiting for three years — "it's like getting blood out of a stone" — the affair has not been resolved. More than a hundred

different letters, requests and documents have been written, delegations of believers have already been eleven times to the CRA, to the People's Procuracy, MVD\*\* and other competent bodies. The believers are either sent off to the Orthodox Church — the only "Ukrainian Church" or the authorities promise a great deal and do nothing. One of the tricks was the promise of the CRA that the religious community would be registered "if believers rejected the jurisdiction of Cardinal Slipyi". No one signed such an application or document. In the past, delegations have been told that even if the Pope supported their efforts the government "would never register a church which is under the jurisdiction of Slipyi since he is the enemy of the Soviet State because he worked with German fascists and in general the Catholic Church is hostile to the Soviet State . . ."

It is very difficult to reconcile such statements with article 52 of the new Constitution of the USSR where it is written in black and white that "citizens of the USSR have the right to profess any religion". They should be consistent and write "any religion except the Catholic", otherwise keep to article 52 and not make such absurd public statements.

Laymen in the village of Mshana handed in an official application and all the necessary documents, including the personal data of twenty believers, the so-called *dvadsatka*, necessary for official registration of a religious community of any denomination. The CRA did not accept the application and documents when they knew that believers were asking to register a community of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, although such a church exists and this is its accepted title (throughout the world). After constant harassment and petitions a "concession" was made and the documents were accepted only when the believers wrote that they wanted "to register a religious community of the Roman Catholic Church of the Eastern rite". Despite visits by several commissions from Moscow and Kiev, the church in the village of Mshana is still closed and has been converted into a warehouse —

\*Under Soviet law, at least twenty believers living in the same place have to assume responsibility for a church and its contents before an application to register a building for worship can be made — *Ed.*

\*\*Ministry of Internal Affairs — *Ed.*

it was first of all a television factory, but now bales of paper are stored in the church. The persecution continues. The majority of lay-people have been fined the sum of ten roubles more than once, but the following inhabitants were fined fifty roubles each: Hurka (Bosa) Anna, Chornen'ka Mariya, and the Mykhailyshyn couple, Mykhailo and Anna. It does not concern anybody that Anna Mykhailyshyn is bringing up nine children and does not have a pension or any other means of support to pay the fine. Citizens Duda Ol'ha and Oliyarnyk Anna were summoned to appear before the district [committee]. One of these women had travelled with a delegation of believers to Moscow and she thought possibly it was as a result of this that she had to appear there. The women went to Horodok, the district centre, but from there they were not allowed to go home but were put in prison for 15 days for "hooliganism". As it turned out their "hooliganism" was attributed to the fact that one of them had dared to travel to Moscow, but the other woman, who was ill and old, had tried to defend the church at the time of the second incident in the spring of 1979 (together with other lay-people). At the beginning of 1979 all the televisions were removed from the church and the believers hoped that soon the church would be returned to them, the more so because they had been promised more than once in Moscow and in Kiev that the question would be settled. But to their disappointment, one day they saw, once again, bales of paper being off-loaded into the church under the surveillance of armed people. The lay-people tried to clarify why, when there had been no solution (either positive or negative) they were loading industrial products into the church and once again turning it into a warehouse. Physical force was used against them. Most of the lay-people were old ladies and they were thrown into the dirt, their hair was pulled out of their heads with pieces of skin attached, and people were beaten. The local authorities said that they were doing this to "keep order", because it is forbidden to gather for prayer in a religious community that is not officially registered, but on the other hand they stubbornly refused to register that particular religious community of Ukrainian Catholics.

Believers are persecuted because they want to pray . . . to pray in their church built in 1771 by their ancestors, and because of their demand that this place, which is dear

to their hearts, should not be turned into a warehouse. No one is demanding the impossible . . . only the registration of this community, petitioning for official registration for the third year now. Give the lay-people their church . . . and then this "freedom of conscience" which article 52 of the new Constitution so loudly proclaims would exist in fact — that is all they want. How much longer must we wait for this to happen? This is how the situation really is with regard to "freedom of conscience" in western Ukraine according to the new Constitution of the USSR.

In the village of Kolodyntsa (Kamenka-Burhs'ka district, L'viv region) the church was destroyed, electrical equipment was torn from the walls and after the destruction excrement was left on the altar.

In the village of Nadorizhna (Tlumach district, Ivano-Frankivsk region) a divisional police inspector, a representative of the KGB and the chairman of the village *soviet* burst into the church one day. They started to suffocate an eighty-year-old woman and demanded the key from her. The woman was cleaning up the church at the time and really did not have the key (because another woman had taken her there). A young man, Slavyk Hyrnchuk, heard the screams of the old woman and ran to the scene. They were both arrested, locked up in prison and then fined fifty roubles each and released. But when the elderly woman asked in some bewilderment where she could get such a sum of money to pay the fine, they told her "Go and get it and pay". The old woman actually had to go begging in order to collect the money to pay the fine. No ways or means are left untried to force Catholics to pray in Orthodox churches. In 1979 the village *soviet* drew up a fictitious list of believers — twenty people from the village of Muzhylovychi, apparently requesting registration as an Orthodox parish and the appointment of an Orthodox priest. This was done with only one aim — to prevent the Catholic villagers of Muzhylovychi from meeting for prayer in their Catholic church.

Article 52 of the new Constitution guarantees the right to profess any religion and to perform religious cults. But in reality the situation is as follows. In the village of Nadorizhna the believers are served by Bishop Vasylyk. At Eastertime in April 1979, from Good Friday throughout Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, that is from 20-24 April 1979, the



church was guarded by the militia, representatives of the KGB and party and executive committees from almost every district. The forest where the church is situated was "combed" more than once in such a way that there was no question of the bishop or the priests making their way through to the church. They snatched the baskets of believers hurrying to the Church, which contained food to be blessed. The contents of the baskets were thrown into the forest and trampled underfoot. Butter, sugar, sausages and decorated eggs were scattered — all these had been intended for consecration. Those who were not caught ran away as quickly as possible. In order not to leave people without any Easter gifts and without a service of worship a service was conducted in the home of a layman and the consecration of the gifts took place. Each person hurriedly prepared the products that still remained in time for the consecration.

The church door was barricaded with so much iron, tin and nails that it was impossible to open it. Because they were afraid that the church would be profaned during an attack by the militia, the believers did not open it, but sang Matins around the closed church building. The situation was no better during the Christmas festival. On 6-7 January\* 1979 the church was surrounded by militiamen. No one was allowed to go near the church. The Christmas service was held in private homes and only on 13 January was it possible for believers to hold a service in the church.

In the village of Vyshni Hai, near Drohobych (L'viv region) a sacristan was summoned two weeks before the festival and warned that there was to be no service whatsoever in the church. Subsequently, all the church utensils had to be handed over to the Orthodox parish church in the village of Nyzhni Hai, because the [Ukrainian Catholic] church was designated for use as a warehouse. Hearts were exhausted with sorrow and the lay-people wept during the service of consecration of the gifts, which they had managed to hold under cover of night.

Nowadays, the church is raided from time to time by the militia, representatives of the authorities who intend to take control of the

church and turn it into a museum. Several times a [military] escort has come. However, the lay-people hold an almost constant vigil, just as the Zaporozhian Cossacks once patrolled the steppes during the Tatar invasion. If there is any danger they raise the alarm by an agreed signal. Everyone who is able to gathers at the church with various domestic and agricultural implements — hoes, brooms, scythes, pitchforks, shovels — in order to defend their church. The lay-people offered to collect the money necessary to build a museum on the condition that the church built by their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and intended for prayer, should not be interfered with by the authorities. However, militia raids of twenty to thirty men continue. The last such invasion took place four days before Christmas, at the beginning of January 1980.

One cannot fail to agree with the lay-people's proposal. If the government does not already have the money to construct a building then it should agree with the local people to erect a modern purpose-built building at their expense, and leave the church in peace. Evidently such a decision, if taken, would correspond with the spirit of article 52. The local people would get a fine museum and there would be no need for a "fight over the church". However, these facts confirm the true state of affairs with regard to "freedom of conscience", the freedom to practise *any* religion.

In the village of Vilshanytsya near the small district town of Yavoriv (L'viv region) at Easter time, on 21 April 1979, an old Basilian church and a chapel in the forest were surrounded by militia. In a number of places, at the approach to the churches, ambushes had been laid for the priest, Iosafat Kavatsiv. However, the believers managed to notice this in time and, at the last moment, literally twenty to fifty metres from the village (approximately half a kilometre from the church) they warned the priest of the danger. Under cover of night they managed to avoid the danger, although two police cars were sent in pursuit with twenty militiamen. The believers took advantage of the moment when none of the armed men around the church remained and they sang Matins and consecrated the gifts with water from the well in the chapel of the Mother of God. In the village of Holobutiv (Stryi district, L'viv region) during Matins representatives of the

\*Christmas is celebrated on 7 January by the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which follows the old-style (Julian) calendar — *Ed.*

authorities, the militia and KGB arrived in disguise and attended the service with the aim of arresting the priest. However, the lay-people quickly identified the intruders, realised what they were intending to do, and pressed them back outside towards the fence. The priest, dressed as a woman, left the church without being caught.

In the village of Hradiivka (Hoshany), Horodok district, L'viv region, near the town of Rudky, believers are served by a Ukrainian Catholic priest named Osyp Roman. Over a period of six days, from 19 to 24 April 1979, the church was surrounded by militia, members of the KGB and local party and executive committee members from almost the whole district. The church door was padlocked. The believers forced their way up to the church three times and broke the lock, but they did not open the church in order to protect it from profanation in the event of a raid by the militia. So the believers gathered together away from the church and started to sing songs of mourning portraying the suffering of Christ and also the fact that Jesus called them not to weep for Him, but to weep for themselves and their children. It is possible that this had an effect — it is not known. After a while the authorities left the church and believers were able to sing Matins around the closed building and consecrate the gifts. In this same village, four days before Christmas, the administrators of the collective farm, together with representatives of the local authorities, organised a meeting. At the meeting they warned that there were to be no worship services and that there was no question of inviting a Catholic priest. The liturgy was celebrated in Sochel'nyk during the day on 6 January 1979: from 7 p.m. throughout the whole night until morning the militia and representatives of the district party and executive committees did not leave the church. The lay-people sang Christmas carols and even invited everyone to stay with them to see "what it was they were doing to break the law". Why are they persecuted? What are they guilty of — praying and singing carols? Only in the morning did the "commission" leave the district.

Even the official working Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church do not have much more freedom. In L'viv Cathedral\* spiritual help is given to the

Ukrainian Catholics and as a result the parish priest is summoned periodically to the authorities. Once even the priest Galanewicz of blessed memory received a punishment — he was forbidden to take any services for a month. He did not celebrate the Holy Liturgy and did not confess believers or give them the eucharist. The priest prayed in his sacristy that the Lord would shorten the days of difficult testing, when secret agents followed him from morning to night to see if they would be able to close the church completely for some tiny infringement. However, the priests taught the lay-people brotherly love, because the ferment of hatred between Poles and Ukrainians was smouldering all the time.

Orthodox priests are forbidden to give Holy Communion to children and young people under 18. As for the Orthodox Church in Russia, it is a most exceptional institution since its leading representatives are atheists and the clergy have to carry out all their instructions. For this reason all baptisms, weddings and funerals are carefully registered and the authorities are informed: then believers are subjected to persecution for their religious views. Children are even persecuted for giving their parents a Christian burial; even if the parents left such a request in their will, the children are punished all the same. Therefore, in order to avoid various troubles, clearly not everyone decides openly to profess their faith and views.

In the Orthodox academies and seminaries, according to one of the students, threequarters of the candidates training to become presbyters [*sic*] are convinced atheists, KGB workers, whose task is to compromise religion, to spy, etc.

Children are forbidden to go to church. From time to time raids are organised by the Komsomol. There are patrols of teachers, which do not allow children into church at festivals. At school afterwards children are "re-educated" to become atheists. Often during feast days all people entering and leaving church are photographed.

Children in the first and second classes are given so-called anonymous questionnaires (but of their anonymity witness the following: if someone returns an incomplete form or one expressing the "wrong" point of view, it has to be corrected immediately). The children write down what is dictated by their teacher. At times, at seven to eight years of age, they do not even

\*Roman Catholic with Polish as the language of service — *Ed.*

understand what they write: that they themselves and their parents are not believers and do not practise any religion at all and that there are no icons at home. Afterwards these questionnaires are used as evidence to show world public opinion that Soviet citizens are atheists.

Such splendid things are taking place in the Year of the Child — in 1979. The situation among students is no better. Since it is very difficult to get into an institute of higher education and even into secondary specialised education (such as a technical institute or a college), it is often not possible without paying a great price. The majority of students consider that one can, in all conscience, remain a believer, but deny this in writing for the sake of peace. If someone decides to write the truth and declare his views openly, they start to re-educate him. They attach such a person to some teacher or other and pester both of them until the person being re-educated declares that he is an atheist. People think, therefore, that such persecution is superfluous and there is no need to endure it, since the result has to be the same in any case — atheism. In order to prevent unnecessary nervous strain people keep quiet about their convictions. Priests are undoubtedly against this solution, but even they do not instruct people to fight against this “elemental misfortune”. People have to study and educate themselves individually. Teaching religion is punishable as a violation of the law on religious cults. In every library and club there are shelves of atheist literature, but religious books are banned. The needs of believers cannot even be satisfied by private production — some people copy out texts, some take photographs, some make copies. The business of catechising the population is complicated by the fact that many people do not know Polish (even among the Polish population, for example, in the regions of Vynnytsya and Kiev) although in Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa the Bible is printed in Russian.\*

The complicated position of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is becoming more and more difficult for the following two reasons: firstly there is a hostile attitude towards Ukrainian Catholics on the part of

some Roman Catholic priests (mainly Poles). They consider the Ukrainian Catholic Church to be totally invalid, heterodox, not Catholic, of a lower category. There have even been some rare cases where Roman Catholic priests have refused to hear confession or have condemned believers, among them Ukrainian Catholics, for taking part in services and receiving Holy Communion from the hands of Ukrainian Catholic priests (and this even though they have detailed information about the general state of affairs and sometimes are privately acquainted with a given Ukrainian Catholic priest and know his orthodox stance). It is possible that these unhealthy tendencies, which are simply a form of chauvinism, are strengthened by admonitions from outside. Not long ago, a group of Polish Catholics from Poland visited L'viv Cathedral (the Roman Catholic Cathedral). They were indignant that Ukrainian Catholics visited and participated in services at the Cathedral and they even advocated that all Ukrainians should be “driven from the church so as not to sully the cathedral with their presence”. But it remains a fact that if it were not for the sacrifices of these “savages” not a single Roman Catholic Church would have survived until now because the Poles rarely go to church — they do not admit this although they recognise that it is true. They prefer to remain silent. It is a good thing to reflect on all this. Is it worthy of any dignified person to act in a chauvinistic way instead of showing genuine brotherly love in Christ towards Catholics of another nationality and especially Catholics who are persecuted, who have no church, no rights as Catholics and who, because they are Catholics, do not want to fall away from the Christian Church.

The second tragedy is an internal one. At the present time the Catholic Bishop of L'viv, Sternyuk,\* under threat of excommunication, is forcing Catholic priests to refer, during church services, to the term “Orthodox Christians”, a term which is an archaism from the liturgical texts of the 4th to 9th centuries when the Eastern Church called itself “Orthodox” although it was, as mentioned above, Catholic in essence. Perhaps there are places where this term can be used without causing harm and it can “bear witness to the spiritual affinity between the Ukrainian Catholic Church

\*This refers to use by Ukrainians of the services of Polish Roman Catholic clergymen and literature due to the lack of Ukrainian Catholic priests and books — *Ed.*

\*Underground Ukrainian Catholic — *Ed.*

and the Eastern Church", but in our present conditions the use of the term "Orthodox" does irreversible and unnecessary harm, and even causes some lay-people to turn away from the faith. At the present time in our country the term "Orthodoxy" has only one meaning — "not Catholic", "betrayers of the Christian Church", "spy". The term "Orthodox" cannot be used either by a genuine Russian Orthodox priest or by an apostate priest officially acting as a priest and, at the same time, by a Catholic priest who is persecuted precisely because he has refused to "accept Orthodoxy" that is — remain true to the Universal Christian Church. Deep-thinking and zealous priests do not fulfil this absurd direction of the bishop, but timid ones obey and cause such harm that the lay-people "look for true Catholics", even among Ukrainian Catholic priests who do not refer to this unfortunate term. We all diligently ask the Lord God to enlighten the minds of those who do not want to understand that it is time to return the term "Orthodox" used in the Ukrainian Catholic Church to the history archive. The culture of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is sufficiently "Eastern, original and beautiful" without it. In addition the spirit of ecumenism will be closer and more relevant without such artificial applications of the word "Orthodox" which serve only to divide Catholics.

We have already asked and continue to ask all Catholics and all people of good will to pray for us. We do not know how far our requests penetrate beyond the boundaries of our State, but it is evident that to some extent they reach you and we are grateful for voices raised in our defence — our persecutors occasionally have to lend an ear to them. However, they are very crafty and of late they have changed their tactics. They pretend that the Catholic Church is not harmed by anyone, but they wage a campaign against us with all their force, intending, at any price, to defame the Catholic Church and in particular the Ukrainian Catholic Church and to represent it as an enemy working with German fascists. Thus, in the second half of 1979 a campaign flared up as a result of an incident concerning an Italian priest, Bernardo Vincenzo, supposedly travelling with a delegation to visit Ukrainian Uniate priests and in particular to His Grace Iosafat Fedoryk. He came from a priest named Ivan Ortny'sky who lives in West Germany, and allegedly had a large sum of money for "subversive work".

Cardinal Slipyi was implicated in the affair. A press conference was organised and a scandal instigated by the media — press, radio and television — about the anti-Soviet activities of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in cooperating with German fascists and continuing to act as an enemy of the people.

Perhaps this hastened the death of His Grace Iosafat Fedoryk, who died on 28 December 1979.

By creating a fuss the local authorities in western Ukraine are trying to dampen the zeal of believers making legal demands for registration of religious communities of Ukrainian Catholics in the villages of Mshana, Horodok district and Zavadiiv, Styri district, both in the L'viv region. Official applications and documents and personal data have been submitted from the believers in those villages. This is a truly brave step because some of those who signed the applications have jobs at the present time and they know that they are laying themselves open to persecution and the possible loss of their jobs.

However, religious life in the Catholic parishes continues. Every month, and sometimes two or three times a month, there is a service of worship and a Eucharist in every Catholic church. During Lent the priests do not manage to hear confessions from everybody and occasionally on an ordinary Sunday or on a feast day there is not always sufficient time to hear all the confessions. The Holy Liturgy always ends with the singing of a litany to the most Holy Virgin or to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a supplication. During Lent the meditation on the suffering of Jesus during the Stations of the Cross is conducted with great ceremony. The childrens' favourite services are the Eucharist and the Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. During the procession with the Holy Sacraments little angels arrayed in white dresses throw flower petals high up into the air, to the infant Jesus, and walk in the procession together with all those gathered around the church singing the eucharistic hymns and responding to the liturgical chants (troparia) appointed for the festival. The practice of honouring the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the first Fridays [of each month — *Ed.*] has become very dear and beloved to many believers, especially since the shortening of the period of the eucharistic fast to one hour made it possible for many to receive the holy sacraments (irrespective of the fact that the Liturgy may

be celebrated during the day or from time to time during the late evening or night).

By the closed church in the village of Mshana, where the lay-people gather for prayer in the heat of the sun or during the frosts, for the third year in succession on Christmas night or Christmas Eve the Infant Jesus is born on the altar under the bare sky just as he was in Bethlehem, bringing us Ukrainian Catholics not only his grace but also rejoicing at the birth of Christ and strength for the victorious Resurrection. We thank all those who help us by

their prayers and voices of support. May God bless you all.

Pray, brothers, Catholics of the whole world and all people of good will, that the Almighty will lessen our trials and give us strength to endure all suffering for the glory of God and in confirmation of the words of Jesus Christ: "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against [the Church]". (Matthew 16, 18).

January 1980

*Translated from Russian by  
Lorna Bourdeaux*

## The Initiative Group to Defend the Rights of Believers and the Church

*News reached the West this spring of the formation last September of an Initiative Group to defend the rights of Uniate believers and the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The conditions described in the preceding document mean that it comes as no surprise that Ukrainian Catholics should decide to take this step. It is the first such initiative known of among the Ukrainian Uniates, and the time picked for it is scarcely propitious. Other unofficial groups formed in the Soviet Union during the 1970s to protest against violations of the rights of other believers in several major denominations have been severely repressed by the authorities, and many of their most active members imprisoned or forced to emigrate. It is scarcely likely that the KGB will take a more tolerant attitude to this new group in Ukraine, particularly as they live in a region little frequented by westerners. The second document tacitly acknowledges this fact when it points out that the unhappy fate of the Ukrainian Catholics has to a large extent been due to the lack of response in the West to their plight.*

To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Kiev  
from citizen of the so-called  
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,  
Iosyf Terelya

### *Declaration*

On 9 September 1982 in Ukraine the "Initiative Group for the Defence of the Rights of Believers and the Church" was founded. I was elected president of the Initiative Group. Fr Hryhorii Budzinsky

was elected secretary, and two other priests, Frs Dionisii and Ihnat, and a believer, Stefaniya Petrash-Sichko, joined the group. This was the response of Ukrainian Catholics to the growing repression of our Church. From now on all information on the Ukrainian Catholic Church will be brought to the attention of the world — the Catholics of the world must know, and, remember, the circumstances in which we live.

We have one aim only — LEGALISATION! Equality with all other groups in the Soviet population. Despite the declarations and prognoses of some party members, we are living, growing and triumphing. The trials and persecutions suffered by Catholics in Ukraine have strengthened us even more in the faith, and have given us the opportunity to sound the depths of God's providence. I can state without exaggeration that there is nothing greater than to die, a Catholic, in a communist prison. He who loses fear, gains truth and hope. That is why we believe that the Kingdom of God is coming, and shall have no end.

I have been charged with fanaticism and all the sins of unbelieving people. But those who accuse me forget that the Catholic Church is the loving, tolerant Church, the universal Church. The idea of Jesus Christ is one of the most revolutionary ideas in the course of the last twenty centuries.

"Christ died for us . . . we are justified by his blood" (Romans 5, 9) — and we must remember this and live accordingly. Where

the blood of the Saviour is not acknowledged, there is, and must be, destruction and death.

And although today the forces of evil are still strong, we Catholics believe and know

that all evil will have its end, as it had its beginning — we live in a time of perpetual revolution. And so we follow Him, who told us: "Behold — I have conquered the world!" Amen.

I. TERELYA

To the President of the Central Committee of German Catholics,\*  
Herr Hans Maier.

"But I say unto you, on that day  
it will be more tolerable for  
Tyre and Sidon than for you".

Matthew 11, 22

While a man has the strength to rebel and to protest he is still alive. My personal fate is closely linked to the fate of my nation. The fate of Ukraine is an unending Golgotha; but every ordeal has its end, and we are waiting for the end of our way of the Cross, our "Calvary": after that — resurrection!

I am 39 years old and have spent 18 of these years in prisons, camps, and psychiatric prison hospitals of the vast communist empire. My great crime is that I am a Christian. Every Christian should know that communism is not the result of the natural historical development of mankind, but is a distortion of the human way of life, the catastrophic destruction of Christian humanism. And so we have the right of rebellion, the right given to us by our own human nature, the rebellion of man against concrete injustice, which leads to an understanding of the essential meaning of his own existence. We as Christians cannot sacrifice the truth for an ephemeral peace with communism. Not long ago a certain person who calls himself a Christian — I am referring to Billy Graham — said publicly that no one is persecuted for being a Christian in the USSR. It is not at all surprising that Billy Graham, to the delight of Satan, turned his back on his true fellow-believers. We have here a classic example of religious atheism — the root of the matter lies not in individuals who wittingly or unwittingly play into the hands of the powers of darkness. Today we are faced with the question what are we living for? Where are we going? The fanaticism of unbelief which has become the new moral standard in so-called "socialist

society" has been the ruin of mankind; man has thought up for himself endless mass oppression. A wall of hatred has been built, which has made the road of Christianity a perpetual Golgotha.

Today every Catholic knows that our Church is oppressed and suffers persecution at the hands of the tyrants of the communist regime. The thorny path now trodden by the Ukrainian Catholic Church leads our people towards Love, towards the purpose of Christianity throughout the world — the Kingdom of God. International rivalry and strife should disappear in the way of unity shown in the new commands of Jesus Christ. We, Catholic Christians, cannot be passive observers of the destruction of the world.

Communism has so maimed the world that it has left the remains of the culture of our fathers — poetry, music, architecture, art — in a worse state than lost cultures. That is why living together is impossible — we cannot, we have no right to sacrifice the truth for an ephemeral peace with communism. [ . . . ]

The Ukrainian Catholic Church was and still is an underground church. Just think — twenty centuries and part of the human race still worships Christ secretly. I still don't know why they arrested me but that they did arrest me and may even kill me — that is solid fact. Two months ago Lieutenant-Colonel Mykhailo Mykhailovych Dzyamko from the district headquarters of the KGB in Trans-Carpathia announced "we are handling this case with kid gloves. No one's going to find any clues. They're beginning to get a bit worried and make some fuss about it in the West." This is the face of "humane" communism. In order to frighten me my younger brother, Boris Terelya, was killed on 10 June 1982. The murder was sanctioned by the Trans-Carpathian district authorities of the KGB. Immediately after the murder a terror campaign against my family began, searches, slander, threats . . . KGB agents told my

\*In West Germany — *Ed.*

mother, Margarita Hlykar, that it was the elder son's turn next. What called for this hatred and cruelty towards me on the part of the KGB? My "guilt" lay in the fact that I openly showed opposition to the "authorities" — my wife and I openly went to Church (Roman Catholic, since our own church has been exterminated). As from 1980 the local authorities, with the help of KGB agents in cassocks (Orthodox priests and holy fathers) began the deliberate destruction of all architectural monuments in Ukraine — and all this in the name of the struggle against the Uniates.

In 1980 the church in the village of Rossosh, in Svalyavsky region, burned down — the foundations remained, and miraculously, the bell-tower survived intact. But the authorities would not permit the local Christian community to rebuild the church. As a result, on 20 June, election day, the whole village stayed at home and did not go out to vote. So the authorities faithfully promised the inhabitants that the village would be given permission to rebuild the church. And what happened? After the elections they cynically announced that the Soviet authorities had forbidden the building of churches. It is a road to nowhere, this path taken by the unbelievers, their hands red with human blood. All Catholics should remember that the man who fired on the incumbent of the Holy See in Rome, Pope John Paul II, was a fascist trained by the Moscow KGB. When did the fascist/communist alliance begin? The answer is that they are both seeking out the same enemy, and that enemy is the Jews.

Vicious anti-semitism has now become one of the features of the Soviet citizen's moral code. It is fashionable to hate the "Yids" and the main thing is, no one will judge you or criticise you for it.

In January 1982 I was told during one of my "chats" with the high-ranking officials in the republic headquarters of the KGB:

Well now, Iosyf Mykhailovych — Did Carter help you or didn't he? Carter's gone and we're going to be buying grain [from them]. You see, you shouldn't be looking for enemies there — the enemies are people like Sakharov, Ginzburg and so on. Think about it — you could be useful to your country. Why associate yourself with the "Yids"?

And at the end of the "talk" he added:

The wheels are in motion now and no one's going to stop them.

This is a standard phrase on the lips of any agent of the KGB of the USSR! Having established the myth of the invincibility of the present state of affairs, the regime coolly crushes any display of opposition, putting despair in its place and presenting the situation as they wish it were and not as it is.

Memory turns our thoughts to history. The year 1789 was the forerunner of what we now see in the mighty communist empire. And if the perpetrators of Thermidor destroyed each other it was only because no one openly aided them from abroad. Moscow's modern-day extremism continues to survive only because it is sustained by the millions allowed in credit by unprincipled people in the free world.

Inhumanity, egocentricity, falsity — these are the foundations of present-day communism.

The rulers in Moscow are implementing a policy of destruction, they are driving the people to despair, and despair leads people to succumb to Satan. Moscow is constantly stirring up the terror of nuclear war.

And so Catholic Christians must be thoughtful and critical in their interpretation of the cries of the Moscow propagandists about future nuclear war, for which, they say, it is essential to prepare, because the capitalists are obviously preparing for it. The ones who are shouting loudest about peace are at the same time conducting an aggressive war, and that is thanks to the fact that the Christian world is too passive.

The fact that our Church is today an underground church, that a part of the Catholic Church is clearly outlawed, rests largely on the conscience of the West.

The official "agents" of the communist government tell us: "Go over into the Orthodox Church". But why? For what reason? Do we Ukrainian Catholics really have to discover God's truth only in the Russian Orthodox Church, or do we still have a natural right to confess our faith in God according to our national spirit? [ . . . ]

And it is not just a question of a new form of Russian imperialism, as some people think. The problem is far more serious. We are faced here with an unprincipled and cruel enemy of all mankind, an enemy whose aim is the destruction of love. But the Russian nation itself is enslaved like others in the vast empire. If the Ukrainians had

been in the majority, then today we would be talking about Ukrainisation, just as we talk about Russification.

[. . .]

If in the West the first person to become a communist had been put in prison simply for reading Marx, and treated the way com-

munists treat us in prison, then undoubtedly the number of "ideologists" of a bright future would have been severely reduced.

Head of the Committee of  
Ukrainian Catholics in Ukraine.

IOSYF TERELYA

*Translated from Russian by Carolyn Burch*

*Soon after announcing the formation of the Initiative Group to defend the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Iosyf Terelya was arrested. The circumstances are described in the document below. It was written by Yelena Sannikova, an Orthodox Christian from Moscow, who has been active in helping victims of injustice in the USSR, particularly the disabled. In 1981 she was detained for examination in a psychiatric hospital; she was released and told that she was healthy but that if she continued her "activities" she could quite easily lose her mind.*

10 February 1983

To His Holiness Pope John Paul II

Your Holiness:

I appeal to you to intercede on behalf of a wonderful person, a Catholic, the Chairman of the Committee of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (UCC) and of the Committee to Defend the Rights of Believers in Ukraine, Iosyf Mykhailovych Terelya.

For more than thirty years, the UCC has been banned by law and forced to exist underground. The authorities deal harshly with priests, persecute believers, and do everything to put an end to its existence. But, in spite of all that, the UCC exists.

The fate of Iosyf Terelya is a clear example of the fate of a Catholic persecuted by the government only because he is an honourable, brave man and a true Christian, accepting any deprivation or torment in the name of good and love, and prepared to lay down his life for his friends.

More than half of Terelya's life has been spent in jails, camps and prison psychiatric hospitals. He has undergone unbelievable torments. But nothing can break him. Each time, returning to freedom, he began his noble work — the work of a Christian, a member of Christ's Church, a fighter for truth and justice and a preacher of the word of God.

The last time, Terelya returned from the Dnipropetrovsk Special Psychiatric Hospital, which is famous for the terrible sadism

of its physician-jailers and unbearable conditions of confinement. His health was already seriously damaged. But he again took up the difficult work of a son of the persecuted Church; arranged to get believers religious literature; organised help for political prisoners and aid for the poor, sick and suffering; headed the Committee of the UCC. A witness to the pitiless persecution of believers, he, together with several other equally brave persons, created the Committee to Defend the Rights of Believers in Ukraine in September 1982 and was elected its chairman.

The KGB followed him constantly, threatened him, called him in for interrogations, arranged open, round-the-clock surveillance of his house and arrested him again on 24 December 1982.

He was formally charged with parasitism, a purely Soviet concept clearly demonstrating the character of our system. Each person must officially be part of the government service. If not, he is a parasite, a criminal. In any civilised country if a man cannot find suitable work, he receives unemployment compensation; with us, he must take the first job that comes along or go to prison [. . .]

Iosyf Terelya was prepared to accept any job, but the authorities deliberately prevented him from working in his village of Dovhoye, Irshavs'ky district, Trans-Carpathian region. Not one organisation would hire him, and he had to earn a living by private, hired work. In November 1982 the authorities warned him that he would be arrested for parasitism if he did not find work in one month. To find work, Terelya had to leave a pregnant wife and five-year-old daughter and work in another town, L'viv. However, the authorities trailed him there, and the organisation which had agreed to hire him refused to do so at the last moment.

Then he was arrested.

For many long days, Terelya's wife had no news. She, a weak woman in her eighth



month of pregnancy, had to turn to the investigation divisions of the district and regional procuracies to seek her husband. She found him, at last, in the Uzhhorod Investigation Prison.

Terelya was formally charged with parasitism. But the Irshavs'ky District Procurator authorised searches of his effects and the confiscation of religious literature and human rights material. On 3 February 1983, I was contacted about the Terelya case. The search was like a robbery. The searchers came late in the evening, broke down the door to my apartment, searched it all night and did not even put their names on the protocol (written report) of the search. Only by their actions could one guess they were KGB. A large quantity of human rights literature, books, letters, addresses and even my manuscripts were taken. What does all this, one asks, have to do with a case of parasitism? Information reaching me from Ukraine says that Catholics were searched and religious literature seized as part of the Terelya case.

Thus, the authorities do not conceal that the accusation of parasitism is just a pretext for convicting Terelya for his religious and human rights activities. Moreover, there is reason to fear that his case will be turned into a political one. If the penalty for parasitism is two years, that of the political article is ten years in jail and five in exile. They also may subject him again to a psychiatric examination during which KGB agents in white gowns will make a fake diagnosis and send him for an indefinite period to a psychiatric hospital.

Will he survive these trials — in poor health, with a weak heart, already having had a heart attack?

One can say almost with certainty that spiritually he will survive, physically he will not. He will not leave there alive.

Your Holiness: it is not for me to say how dear your voice is to us and how greatly supportive your every word is. I believe that with your tremendous authority you not only can snatch another victim from the executions, but you also can support Iosyf Terelya and all those persecuted children of your Greek Catholic Church.

I myself do not belong to the Catholic Church. I am Orthodox. But all the same, I am worried and afraid for the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church which may suffer the same fate as the Russian Orthodox Catacomb Church, cruelly destroyed in the bloody years of the Stalin terror. My motherland is Russia. And precisely for this reason I am so disturbed by the events in Ukraine, united to Russia by one fate, one unhappiness, one pain.

In worry and concern not only for the life of Iosyf Terelya, but also for the fate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church and all the Ukrainian people, once again I beg you, save Iosyf Terelya.

YELENA SANNIKOVA  
MOSCOW

*Adapted from a translation by the Human Rights Commission of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians*