

## Mother Russia by Luba George & Carol Greene

### The Pan-Slavic dimension emerges

*Fifth and last of a series on Soviet Russia's plans to mark the millennium of Russian Christianity by world domination.*

In the fourth column of this series, we traced the escalating hate campaign of the Kremlin and Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) against the Papacy. Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev's speech of June 14, 1984 at the Jan Hus Theological Seminary in Prague, Czechoslovakia, "On the Meaning of the Christianization of Rus and its 1,000th Anniversary," is worth noting in that context, as it defines the planned Millennium more broadly as a pan-Slavic, racist, Empire celebration:

"We the representatives of the ROC in your country always feel that we belong to one blood and soil—having deep ancient ties to Slavic scholars—the brother saints Cyril and Methodius. At present, we are united not only with the historical past but with present-day goals. . . . In 1988, the ROC is preparing to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of the Christianization of Russia. . . . The Christianization of Russia was an outstanding historic event not only in the history of our Church but our nation. It crowned the earlier labors of Cyril and Methodius. . . . For the ROC, it was the beginning of its official existence. It gave the spiritual meaning of the unity of Ancient Rus. It influenced the bettering of relations between the Kievan princes, helped unite the principalities and unite the realm, strengthened and expanded ties of Kievan Rus with many European rulers, above all with Byzantium and Bulgaria. . . . With Christianity, Russia took with it the developed forms of societal organization of Byzantium, its cultural and spiritual revival. It saw the emergence of the monasteries in Russia which be-

came centers of learning. . . . Monasticism is an unbreakable part of Russian life."

"The ROC is continuing its 1,000-year mission under new social conditions. The experience of our Church in socialist society has convinced us that no matter what the ideological differences between believers and non-believers are, being conscious participants in the new society gives us the opportunity to conduct our savior mission. Deriving from our Orthodox tradition, we will try to give our share toward securing and strengthening our security. . . . Our Church calls on and inspires its sons and daughters to continue and realize their patriotic and peace-making history."

Filaret's stress on the ROC's Bulgarian and Byzantine roots is important. The ROC, using such ties, has already announced plans for 1988 joint celebrations with brethren Orthodox Churches—which are to unite the entire Slavic and Byzantine Orthodox realm. For example, the millennium of the Christian Kievan Rus coincides with celebrations of the Russian Orthodox Monastery St. Panteleimon, in the Mount Athos complex in Greece.

Also this year, preparations to celebrate the 1,100th anniversary of the death of St. Methodius—a project launched by Todor Zhivkov's Bulgaria—are being coordinated and conducted by every single Warsaw Pact country with an Orthodox majority or a minority. When Gorbachov in his acceptance speech upon his appointment as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, stressed that the Soviet Union's "first command-

ment" is to strengthen the unity of Warsaw Pact countries, he was speaking not only from the political, economic, and military standpoint, but also from the deeper religious-cultural one.

By 1988, in the middle of Moscow, four kilometers away from the Kremlin, the Danilov Monastery will be the new headquarters of the Moscow Patriarchate. At a branch of the State Bank in Moscow, a special account was opened for the Moscow Patriarchate's use under the title, "Construction and Restoration of the Danilov Monastery of the City of Moscow." The monastery was built at the end of the 13th century under the first Moscow prince, Danilov, later canonized as the "Heavenly Protector Saint of Moscow Russia."

After the October Revolution, it was taken over by the state. Under the new political relationship, it was a residence for many Russian bishops, and until the death of Patriarch Tikhon, represented a modus vivendi between State and Church.

In August 1983, shortly before the shoot-down of the Korean Airlines jet, Danilov was officially returned to the Church. Soviet TV and radio prominently played up the event, including Patriarch Pimen's "thank you" message to Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov. *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* wrote: "[The Danilov Monastery complex] has waited for its time to come, and now, seven centuries after its foundation, it is going to become the spiritual center of the Russian Orthodox Church. . . . The rebirth of the Monastery of Saint Prince Danilov is a work of godly prophecy. . . . In a renewed form, this Holy Monastery, the cradle of the United Russian Nation-State, will be witness to the 1,000-year celebrations of the Christianization of Russia."