

## Mother Russia by Luba George

### Perestroika and the Muscovite empire

*The Church is steering the cultural side of the "new thinking," to celebrate the literary heroes of Russian imperial expansion.*

At a press conference concluding the Second East-West seminar on "The Theology of Peace" in Budapest Dec. 14-19, Orthodox Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk was asked, "What effect do perestroika and glasnost have on the Church in the U.S.S.R.?" Archbishop Kirill, formerly rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy, replied that perestroika and glasnost were, in effect, products of the Church.

The impact of relations between the Church and Gorbachov's "new thinking" was in the "reverse direction," he stated. The Soviet state "finds its source in traditional Russian spiritual values as expressed in traditional Russian culture. . . . These, in turn, have their source in Russian Orthodoxy."

This was no empty boast. The Soviet state is now following the Church in reviving Russian imperial historiography, especially the works of Karamzin, S. Solovyov, and V.O. Klyuchevsky—all 19th-century proponents of the Holy Alliance/Holy Russia idea (see *EIR*, Jan. 15, 1988).

The latest to be revived is Vasilii Osipovich Klyuchevsky (1841-1911), a contemporary and collaborator of Fyodor Dostoevsky, the author of the Russian *Mein Kampf*, *Diary of a Writer*.

"The young generation of the late fifties to the present has grown up without the history of Klyuchevsky, and we have reaped the bitter fruits of this," Academician Konstantin Kedrov complained in the Soviet government paper *Izvestia* Jan 6. Kedrov's

lengthy piece, "Our Contemporary Vasilii Klyuchevsky," stated that it is crucial to restore "Russian pride" and "national-consciousness," but without "vulgar Russian chauvinism."

Arch-Russian chauvinist movements like the "notorious" Pamyat (Memory) society, argues Kedrov, are not what will secure the love of Russian youth for Russian culture. Pamyat is a function of the "vacuum" existing today in Russian history and culture. By contrast, the preachings of historians Karamzin, Solovyov, and Klyuchevsky, "possessed a visionary spirit. They are the best antidotes to nationalistic and nihilistic intoxication. . . . We need Great Russians who go forward and not backward," sums up Kedrov's message.

The 1,000th anniversary of the Christianization of Holy Rus provides a perfect opportunity for Russian "history, religion, and culture" to be reviewed "in a new way," he stated.

The campaign to revive Klyuchevsky began last year, when the Moscow Patriarchate's journal issued a call for the publication of his works. Klyuchevsky, like his teacher S. Solovyov, came from a family who for generations had served the Church. "V.O. Klyuchevsky contributed much to Russian history. . . . His works are inseparable from the history of the Russian Orthodox Church," wrote the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (No. 2, 1987). "V.O. Klyuchevsky, just as his great contemporary, F.M. Dostoevsky, never separated the social ideals of the Russian people from

national righteousness."

Klyuchevsky celebrated the mystics of Russian imperialism, the "good men of Old Russia." They were, says the *Journal*, "The restorers of the Russian motherland," Saints Alexei of Moscow, Sergei of Radonezh, Stephan of Perm, Patriarch Germogen, "a fearless fighter for Orthodoxy against the alien invaders, the Poles." In other words, the "heroes" of "Holy Russia," who in battles and diplomatic intrigue helped expand the Russian Empire.

Said the *Journal*, they were responsible for the "mustering of the Russian lands round Moscow; the opening up of the new lands in Northern Russia, the conversion of the heathens beyond the Volga, and the concentration of the political-military forces of the nation."

The *Journal* calls Klyuchevsky and Dostoevsky the two writers who most contributed with their "social sermons" to Russia's "moral and national revival," by working for the overthrow of the Old Empire, to eliminate the Western influences that had permeated Romanov Russia.

The last writings of Klyuchevsky, (*Essays and Speeches*, 1913) have a haunting quality when viewed with a knowledge of what today's leadership is striving to accomplish regarding Russian national rejuvenation. He wrote: "One of the distinguishing features of a great nation is its ability to rise again after the fall. However hard its abasement, the hour will come when it will gather its scattered moral forces and embody them in several great men, who will lead the nation to its temporarily abandoned straight path of history. . . ."

"And now, 75 years after his death, we must master the great historical lesson, which the name of V.O. Klyuchevsky reminds us of."