The Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR Under Gorbachev

Bohdan R. Bociurkiw

The Soviet occupation of eastern Poland under the terms of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in September 1939 brought under Moscow's rule the Galician Metropolitanate of the Greek Catholic Church—the largest subdivision of the surviving Uniate Church, which had been wiped out in the 19th century on the territories acquired by the Russian Empire as a result of the partitions of Poland. The preparations by the Soviet authorities for the eventual expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church into this “Piedmont” of Uniate Catholicism and Ukrainian nationalism were cut short by the outbreak of the German-Soviet war in June 1941.

In the summer and fall of 1944, the Soviet army not only recaptured eastern Galicia from the Germans but also occupied Carpatho-Ukraine with its Greek Catholic diocese of Mukachiv-Uzhhorod, and soon expanded Soviet hegemony over all adjacent territories where Ukrainian Uniates lived, namely, in Poland (part of the Peremyshl/Przemysł diocese and the Apostolic Administration for Lemkivshchyna) and in Czechoslovakia (the Priasiv/Prešov diocese). Thus, the Communist heirs to the Russian Empire for the first time had the opportunity to destroy Rome's remaining bridgehead to the Orthodox East, and simultaneously to strike at the most important cultural and institutional preserve of Ukrainian national identity in the newly conquered lands.

After some initial vacillation, Stalin ordered the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church and its forcible merger with the state-controlled Russian Orthodox Church. On April 11, 1945, the political police, the NKVD, brought under Moscow's rule the Galician Metropolitans of the Greek Catholic Church and the Apostolic Administrations of the Central and Eastern Europe of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

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1 Dating from 1156, the Halych diocese acceded to the Union of Brest in 1700 and, after Austria acquired Galicia in 1772 in the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was raised by Pope Pius VII in 1807 to the status of a metropolitanate comprising the eparchies of Lviv and Peremyshl and, since 1885, Stanislawów (renamed Ivano-Frankivsk in 1962). Under the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact, the USSR annexed Eastern Galicia to the San river, including the city and most of the diocese of Peremyshl (although the city returned to Poland in 1945).

2 For differing interpretations of the suppression of the Uniate Church in the Russian Empire, see T. Kostruba, Yk Moskva nyshchyla Ukrainsku Tserkву (How Moscow Destroyed the Ukrainian Church), Toronto, “Dobra Knyška,” 1961; Wasyi Lenczyk, The Eastern Catholic Church and Czar Nicholas I, Rome, Ukrainian Catholic University, 1966; E. Likowski, Dzieje Kościoła Unickiego na Litwie i Rusi w XVIII–XIX wieku (History of the Uniate Church in Lithuania and Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries), Warsaw, 1902, 2 vols.; M. O. Kovalovych, Istoriya vozjoyedennya zapadnorussiishkh usalov starikh vremen (History of the Reunification of the Western Ukrainian Uniates of Old Times), St. Petersburg, 1983, and Ivan Vlasovskiy, Narys istorii Ukrainsko pravoslavnoi tserkvy (Outline of the History of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church). Vol 3, New York—Bound Brook, NJ, Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA, 1961.

3 In 1941, the Moscow Patriarchate ordained an Orthodox bishop for Lviv. On its part, the NKVD sought unsuccessfully to recruit a prominent representative of “Eastern” orientation within the Greek Catholic Church, Fr. H. Kostelyk, to head a “reunion” campaign.


5 Upon the reoccupation of Galicia, the Soviet authorities assured the Greek Catholic Church of their good will and invited it in December 1944 to send a delegation to the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults in Moscow to discuss a modus vivendi. But while the Council’s chairman, I. V. Poliansky, was saying that the Uniate Church would enjoy freedom of worship, the delegation was presented by the Soviet high command with a demand to bring about the surrender of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army guerrillas and the nationalist underground in Western Ukraine. See P. Vassilev’s interview with M. Odintsov, "Uniates,” Argumenty i Fakty (Moscow), Oct. 7–13, 1989, pp. 6–7; Georgiy Rozhmov, "It Is We, Oh Lord,” Ogonek (Moscow), Sept. 16–23, 1989, pp. 8–9; and the unpublished memoirs of Cardinal Yosyf Slipyi, Spomyny: "Archivium Patriarchale Sanctae Sophieae (Rome). See also M. Odintsov, “Tribulations, 1939–54,” Nauka i Religiya (Moscow), August 1990, pp. 18–19.

6 Argumenty i Fakty, Oct. 7–13, 1989, p. 7. An outline of “reunion” measures was drafted for Stalin by the then Chairman of the Council for the
NKGB, arrested Metropolitan Yosyf Slipyi and four other bishops in Galicia.\(^7\) While the bishops and those clergymen who refused to "convert" to Orthodoxy were charged with assorted political crimes and sent to concentration camps, the secret police staged an allegedly "voluntary" movement for "reunion" with the Russian Orthodox Church.

An "Initiative Group for Reunion of the Greek Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church"\(^8\) installed by the NKGB made its appearance on May 28. On that date the Group issued two letters. The first was directed to the Soviet Ukrainian government, asking it to approve and recognize the right of the Group to carry out a "reunion" campaign.\(^9\) The secondmissive informed the Greek Catholic clergy that the Group had been created "with the permission of the state authorities" and that the latter "will not recognize any other administrative authority within the Greek Catholic Church."\(^10\)

On June 18, 1945, Pavlo Khodchenko, the republic’s Plenipotentiary of the Council for Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, replied on behalf of the Soviet Ukrainian government, recognizing the Initiative Group as the sole provisional organ of church administration, which is authorized to direct all affairs of the existing Greek Catholic parishes in the western oblasts of Ukraine and to carry out the task of reunion of the above parishes with the Russian Orthodox Church.\(^11\)

The Initiative Group was empowered "to settle with the government all legal matters concerning the administration of the Greek Catholic parishes." Ominously, the letter instructed the "Initiative Group" to forward to Khodchenko "lists of all deans, parish priests, and superiors of monasteries who refuse to submit to the jurisdiction of the Initiative Group of the Greek Catholic Church for Reunion with the Orthodox Church."\(^12\)

Khodchenko’s letter is the only official document confirming direct governmental involvement in the suppression of the Uniate Church. This action was in clear violation of the Soviet constitution and the existing legislation on religion.

The "reunion" campaign culminated in the "nullification" of the 1596 Union of Brest at the so-called Lviv Sobor in March 1946.\(^13\) Rather than publish a law banning the Uniate Church, the Soviet authorities chose to maintain the fiction that this Church "dissolved itself" and "ceased to exist."\(^14\) By 1949, the Greek Catholic Church in Carpatho-Ukraine (Transcarpathia) was also forced into the Russian Orthodox Church,\(^15\) and an analogous "reunion" was carried out in the Priashiv Uniate diocese in Eastern Slovakia.\(^16\) The Greek Catholic Church was abolished de facto in Poland in 1947–49,\(^17\) while the suppression of Uniates in Romania in 1948 also imposed Orthodoxy on some ten Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes in the area adjoining Transcarpathia.\(^18\)

\(^7\) The three "founding" members of the "Initiative Group" were the priests Havryli Khostynskii of Lviv (whom the Soviets had already courted in 1940), Antoniy Pelvetskyi of Stanislaviv, and Mykhail Melnyk of Drohobych. All three were apparently "broken" by the secret police, and all perished in circumstances suggesting liquidation at the hands of the police. See Bociurkiw, "The Suppression . . . .", pp. 102, 112, 115.


\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 20–24. The Initiative Group’s appeal prompted a group of Lviv clergy to address a letter of protest to V. M. Moiotov, rejecting the Group’s claims and demanding that the Church’s constitutional rights be respected, its bishops released, and, pending their release, the Church be governed by a canonical authority as provided by its rules; 300 priests reportedly signed this protest. The document is in Svoboda sumlinnya u bistovykiv. Pro vozvzedannya hreko-katolytskoi tserkvy z rosiskoyu pravoslavnoyu (Freedom of Conscience under the Bolsheviks. On the Unification of the Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church). n.p., Zakordonne Predstavnytstvo Ukrainskoi Holovnoi Vyzvolnoi Rady, Mar. 23, 1946, pp. 13–15.


\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) Bociurkiw, "The Suppression . . . .", pp. 103, 114–115, and Ivan Hrynokh, "The Destruction of the Ukrainian Catholic Church by the Russian Bolshevik Regime. Suchasnist (Munich), September 1970. For an "inside" account of the Lviv Sobor’s stage management by the secret police, see Rozhnov, loc. cit. It took the Sobor approximately six hours to "dissolve" the Union with Rome and to "vote" for "reunion" with the Russian Orthodox Church. See Dyannya Soboru, pp. 40–43. By hastily publishing the proceedings of the sobor, Kostelnik, Pelvetskyi, and Melnyk let slip first-hand evidence of the arbitrary and uncanonical nature of the gathering.

\(^13\) Markus, op.cit.

\(^14\) See Bociurkiw, "The Suppression . . . .", pp. 104–07.

\(^15\) See Dyannya Soboru, "The Suppression . . . .", pp. 104–07.

\(^16\) Markus, op.cit.

\(^17\) Markus, op.cit.

\(^18\) Markus, op.cit.
The Greek Catholic Church within the post–World War II Ukrainian SSR had embraced four dioceses with 2,326 parishes and over 4,000 churches, and somewhere between 3.5 and 4 million faithful. Serving the Church were eight bishops and approximately 2,400 priests. The four dioceses maintained a theological academy, four diocesan seminaries with a total of 565 students, as well as 35 monasteries with 155 monastic priests and 347 brothers, and 123 convents with 979 nuns.

Nevertheless, the forcible “reunion” did not end the existence of the Greek Catholic Church. It survived within formally Orthodox structures as a “crypto-Uniate” Church, in the Gulag and places of exile, and in the underground in the West Ukrainian oblasts. Moreover, in the course of 1989–90, the church has been able to assert its right to a legal existence. How this came about and what this tells us about Mikhail Gorbachev’s policies will be the subject of this article.

The Uniate Church After Stalin

Stalin’s death in March 1953, the subsequent succession struggle, and Nikita Khrushchev’s “de-Stalinization” campaign had a profound effect on the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Within months of the dictator’s death, the primate of the Uniate Church, Metropolitan Yosyf Slipyi, whose eight-year sentence had ended in April 1953, was brought from a Mordovian camp to Moscow on the orders of Lavrentiy Beria, the secret police chief. Seeking to rally support in Ukraine and other non-Russian republics in his struggle for power, Beria mounted an attack on Russification in Western Ukraine. His emissaries began secret negotiations with Slipyi about the normalization of Soviet relations with the Vatican and the legalization of the Uniate Church in Western Ukraine. The talks with Slipyi were abruptly terminated with Beria’s arrest; and after he rejected renewed secret police offers to repudiate his allegiance to the Papacy in exchange for freedom and a high post in the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Slipyi was re-sentenced in absentia to an administrative exile in Krasnoyarsk Kray, where he remained in semifree status until his next arrest in 1958.

Meanwhile, as a result of Khrushchev’s dismantling of the Gulag empire, several hundred Uniate priests and monks were released from the camps and returned to Western Ukraine during 1955–56. Among them were two bishops, Mykolay Charnetskyi, who came back to Lviv, and Ivan Lyatyshevskyi, a Stanislaviv diocese

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1The Soviet figure of 2,326 Greek Catholic congregations as of July 1, 1945, based on data from the Party History Archives of the CC CPU, appeared in Ye. V. Safonova, Ideyno-vykhovna robota komunistychnoi partii sered trudyashchykh vyzvolenykh rayoniv Ukrainy v roky Velikoi Vitchyznyanoi Viyny, 1943–1945 rr. (Ideological-Educational Work of the Communist Party among Workers in the Liberated Counties of Ukraine in the 1943–45 Years of the Great Fatherland War), Kiev, Vydavnytstvo Kyivskoho Universitetu, 1971, p. 117. The total number of churches and faithful has been calculated by me on the basis of church registers for 1938–39 (Galicia and the Apostolic Administration for Lemkivshchyna) and 1944 (Transcarpathia), while taking into account the partition of the Peremyshl diocese by the postwar Soviet-Polish border.

2For brief biographies of the bishops, see endnotes to “The Suppression . . .”. The number of priests was calculated on the basis of church registers, based on data about the Greek Catholic clergy in Poland (provided in a March 18, 1948, report to Bishop Ivan Buchko in Rome from the Vicar General of the Peremyshl eparchy in Poland, Canon Vasyli Hrynky) and the 1947 church register of the Ukrainian Catholic clergy for West Germany.

3For details, see the statistical table in “The Suppression . . .” pp. 100–01.

4Metropolitan Yosyf Slipyi attempted intermittently to maintain contact during his imprisonments and exile. During the years 1945–54, a series of illegal Uniate priests served clandestinely as administrators or vicars in the three Galician dioceses, and since 1949, in the Mukachiv eparchy. Most of them were discovered eventually by the secret police.

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auxiliary bishop, who returned to Stanislaviv. Though prohibited from engaging in pastoral activities, they resumed their episcopal duties, eventually ordaining a number of priests. As many former Uniate priests who were serving as "Orthodox" pastors approached the bishops for absolution and readmittance to the Greek Catholic Church, Bishop Charnetskyi made a fateful decision in 1956 to receive them back secretly but to allow them to continue serving their flock within the Orthodox Church. In this way, the illegal Church, barred from openly serving its faithful, could maintain its presence in the formally Orthodox Church through a "crypto-Uniate" clergy, and even replenish to some extent its priests through "crypto-Uniate" seminarians from Ukrainian dioceses dispatched to study in Orthodox theological schools, especially in Leningrad.

De-Stalinization, as well as the re-emergence of the Greek Catholic Church in Poland, raised hopes during 1956–57 that the Uniate Church in Western Ukraine could be legalized. There was a flurry of petitions on behalf of legalization from the faithful, and even the repudiation of Orthodoxy in some parishes. These hopes were dashed by the publication, in December 1957, of a resolution adopted at a conference of deans of the Lviv diocese held at Pochaiv monastery in October. The resolution clearly indicated that the government position regarding the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church remained unchanged:

Rumors spread by Uniate fanatics and other opponents of Orthodoxy that the Union will be restored in the western oblasts are inventions of our enemies calculated to deceive both the non-reunited clergy and the believers . . . . The Union is a tool of the enemies of our Fatherland.

An even more unambiguous signal of the hardening Soviet line on the Uniate Church was the arrest of the exiled Metropolitan Slipyi, in spring 1958, on charges of illegal contacts with his clergy and transmission of his pastoral letters and other writings. After lengthy interrogations, the Metropolitan was sentenced in June 1959 at a closed trial in Kiev to seven more years of imprisonment.

A rapprochement between Pope John XXIII and Nikita Khrushchev in 1961–63 brought about, after complex negotiations, the release from imprisonment of Metropolitan Slipyi in late January 1963; he left Moscow for Rome on February 4, 1963, after secretly ordaining Vasyl Velychkovskyi as his bishop-exarch for Lviv. But the rapprochement did not improve the status of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, where repressions against the underground Uniate bishops and clergy soon resumed.

The relative improvement of Kremlin-Vatican relations coincided with the final phase of Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" of Soviet church policy. The main beneficiary of Stalin's new religious policy introduced during World War II—the Russian Orthodox Church—found itself at the end of the 1950's the main target of Khrushchev's antireligious campaign. By the time of his removal in the fall of 1964, many Russian Orthodox churches, monasteries, and seminaries had been closed down. In seeking to ingratiate itself with the Kremlin, the Moscow Patriarchate had reactivated—with the government's blessing—its role as a promoter and apologist for Soviet foreign policy. The Russian Orthodox Church joined the World Council of Churches in 1960 and initiated contacts with the Vatican. A central issue in the Patriarchate's relations with the Vatican became the illegal Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the USSR. It is safe to say that Moscow's maximal objective in this respect was the abandonment of the Uniates by the Papacy in order to achieve a "genuine" rapprochement between Russian Orthodoxy and Catholicism, while a minimal objective was maintaining the status quo and deterring the Vatican from bringing the issue of legalization of the Greek Catholic Church into the open. The Moscow Patriarchate, acting in this case as a surrogate for the Soviet

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24 Charnetskyi returned to Lviv in 1956 and died there on April 2, 1959, without having consecrated a successor. Lyatysheskyi returned to Stanislaviv in June 1955. Before his death in November 1957, he ordained Fr. Ivan Slezyuk as successor bishop of Stanislaviv.


29See Pravoslavnyi visnyk (Lviv), March 1957, p. 70, and July 1957, p. 255.

state, apparently hoped that closer relations with the Papacy would neutralize émigré Uniate pressures on the Vatican to espouse legalization as well as demoralize the underground Church in Ukraine. In both respects, the Patriarchate has scored some successes during the pontificate of Paul VI, which coincided with most of Leonid Brezhnev’s rule.

Seeking Legalization Under Brezhnev

Undeterred by a crackdown in 1965–66 on political dissent in Ukraine, the Greek Catholic clergy began since mid-1966 to test the limits of Soviet “toleration” by openly celebrating heavily attended liturgical services on Sundays and major feasts in unused churches in Western Ukraine. By August 1967, some 200 churches were thus “reopened” by Ukrainian Catholics in Galicia, and a number of the “reunited” Orthodox priests sought secret readmission to the Uniate Church.31

Yet, numerous petitions for the “registration” of Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes were being turned down by the authorities. In July 1967, the Lviv KGB and the oblast commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs told Bishop Velychkovskyi that:

- the activities of the Greek Catholic clergy (reopening of churches, public celebration of the liturgy, sermons) are against the law and would soon be severely punished;
- Greek Catholic congregations cannot be registered because the Greek Catholic Church was allied with the Germans, is treasonous, compromised, condemned by the people, and liquidated;
- individual Ukrainian Catholics can attend Roman Catholic churches;
- even under another name, e.g., as Catholics of Eastern Rite, the Uniates will not be registered and recognized, because there is no law authorizing such measures.32

Despite these warnings, the more activist clergy continued to hold church services in the open. The re-legalization of the Greek Catholic Church in neighboring Czechoslovakia in June 1968 (which was not retracted after the Soviet invasion in August) and the subsequent return to it of the overwhelming majority of parishes seized in 1950 by the state-supported Orthodox Church emboldened the Uniates in Galicia and prompted Cardinal Slipyi, the exiled primate of the Greek Catholic Church, to address a memorandum to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine in 1968 calling for the legalization of the Church.33 Soviet President N. Podgorny’s meeting with Pope Paul VI on January 30, 1969, also helped create false hopes for an imminent “breakthrough” in the Vatican-Soviet negotiations about legalization of the Greek Catholic Church.

As in 1957, however, the prospect that the Uniate Church would emerge from the underground reportedly led the Russian Orthodox Church in 1968 to request that the state authorities forestall such a development.34 In October 1968, a new wave of repressions against the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church began. It culminated in the arrests and imprisonment of Bishop Velychkovskyi and two underground priests in 1968–69.35 In the countryside, vacant churches used for Ukrainian Catholic church services were either vandalized by the local authorities or turned over to various secular uses; a few were transformed into antireligious (actually, anti-Uniate) museums. In some localities, these actions provoked clashes between the militia and believers, and in a few cases, priests were roughed up or temporarily detained by the police. Heavy fines were levied on priests caught celebrating mass.36

This renewed repression of the Ukrainian Catholic Church coincided with Moscow’s attack on political dissent in Ukraine as the authorities became alarmed by the espousal of the Greek Catholic Church’s cause by Ukrainian dissenters. The early 1970’s also witnessed a marked upsurge in slanderous and intimidating anti-Uniate publications, many of them authored by KGB veterans of previous anti-Ukrainian campaigns.37

These new attacks divided the Uniate clergy as to the prospects for legalization of their Church. Some re-

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32In October 1968, the KGB searched the residences of bishops Velychkovskyi and Voodymyr Sterniuk and of underground priests, confiscating documents, archives, and funds, as well as liturgical and devotional objects. In January 1969, the KGB imprisoned Bishop Velychkovskyi; he was sentenced to three years of severe regimen camp. See Vilna Ukraina (Lviv) Dec. 14, 1969.
33In November 1969, the military had to be called to the village of Prynany (Sambir rayon), where the militia’s attempt to arrest a priest serving in a “closed” church had led to a major riot (Basilian Archives, Rome).
signed themselves to the idea that the regime would never recognize the Church and that any possible "compromise" solutions hinted at by the KGB officials in their recurrent interrogations of the activist clergy were really stratagems to subvert, divide, and demoralize the catacomb Church. Others kept searching for some modus vivendi, and hoped in particular for some Vatican-Moscow solution regarding the status of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, only to become discouraged when better Orthodox-Canadian understanding was interpreted by the local Russian Orthodox clergy as the Vatican's abandonment of the Union and its adherents.38

A number of Ukrainian Catholic petitions for legalization of the Church were addressed to the government in 1972–73, although fear of repressions made it difficult to collect many signatures. A petition, brought to Moscow in February 1973 by a delegation led by Fr. Volodymyr Prokopiv, had 1,200 signatures. According to Fr. Prokopiv, he was told in Moscow: "Why are you not registering your Church?... If you do not want a Latin [Roman Catholic] one, then register it as an autonomous body. But give us your credo, the conditions on which we can register it."39 A few priests were willing to accept the condition that "when the Catholic Church of Slavic Rite starts its activities, it will be subordinated to bishops appointed by the Pope in agreement with the Soviet government. The training of new priests [will be] in [Roman Catholic] seminaries in the Baltic [republics]. Other conditions [will be the same] as in the Catholic Church of the Roman Rite."40 Father Prokopiv's initiative to attempt registration on these terms did not find much support among the Uniate clergy, which viewed these proposals as but another attempt to split the Church from within.

The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in August 1975 marked an important step toward international monitoring of the Soviet observance of human rights, in particular the right to religious freedom. For the catacomb Uniate Church—the largest banned religious group in the USSR—the Helsinki process, with its regular review conferences and with the emergence of official monitoring bodies abroad and informal Helsinki groups within the USSR (the Ukrainian monitoring group was established in November 1976), opened the door to the internationalization of the Uniate cause. Beginning with the Belgrade review conference in the fall of 1977, the matter of the continued violation of the religious rights of Ukrainian Catholics was brought up directly or indirectly in US, Canadian, Vatican, and other Western speeches and documents—no doubt posing for the Soviet government the problem of how to remove the Uniate issue from the East-West agenda.

In late spring 1978, another attempt was made, apparently on suggestions from Soviet Ukrainian authorities, to seek recognition in the form of a "Roman Catholic Church of Eastern Rite." An initiative group drafted a statute for this Church, providing for Roman Catholic church services in either Church Slavonic or Ukrainian, and the restriction of the clergy's activities to liturgy and rites (finances and the administration of parish affairs were to be the domain of a lay parish executive committee as provided in the Soviet law on "cults").41 On June 5, 1978, this draft statute was submitted to the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.42 However, nothing came of this elaborate scheme, which—if it had been successful—would have bitterly divided the Church. Even if the authorities had not procrastinated with their response, uncertainties about the future direction of Vatican Ostpolitik may have soon doomed this project. On August 6, 1978, Pope Paul VI died. After the sudden death on September 29 of his successor, John Paul I, a Polish Cardinal, Karol Wojtyla, was elected to the See of St. Peter on October 16, 1978.

**John Paul II and the Moscow-Vatican Confrontation over the Uniate Church**

The accession of Pope John Paul II marked the beginning of a more supportive Vatican policy toward the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Soviet misgivings about the new Pope's intentions were confirmed by the publication of his letter to Yosyf Cardinal Slipyi, written on March 19, 1979, regarding the Millennium of the baptism of Kievan Rus' in 1988. In his letter, John Paul II underlined the continuing validity of the 1596 Union of Brest and paid homage to the Ukrainian Catholic episc-
The Papal letter to Slipyi, according to Hansjakob Stehle, "evoked dismay and apprehension" in the Vatican's Secretariat for Christian Unity, then headed by Cardinal Willebrands, and also provoked a hostile reaction from Moscow. Undoubtedly reflecting the Kremlin's views, the Moscow Patriarchate promptly postponed a theological colloquium with the Roman Catholic Church in Odessa and, on September 4, 1979, its foreign affairs spokesman, Metropolitan Yuvenality, wrote to Cardinal Willebrands threatening "public criticism" if Willebrands did not quickly communicate the "exact meaning" of the papal letter to Slipyi.¹⁴ Not reassured by Willebrands's diplomatic response, Moscow protested again after John Paul II convened an extraordinary world synod of Ukrainian Catholic bishops in spring 1980 and confirmed the synod's election of Archbishop Myroslav Lubachivsky as coadjutor with the right of succession to the aged Archbishop Major of Lviv, Yosyf Slipyi, thus assuring the continuity of the Uniate Metropolitane in Galicia.¹⁵

The Moscow-Vatican confrontation became more acute when the synod of Ukrainian bishops reconvened in Rome and adopted a resolution on December 2, 1980, declaring the "Lviv Sobor" canonically invalid, and null and void. (This position has always been maintained by the Ukrainian Catholic Church, but this time the synod's resolution was adopted in the presence of a papal representative, Cardinal Rubin, and so seemed to be backed by the authority of the Pope himself.) Upon the "unofficial" publication of this document, the Patriarchate dispatched Metropolitan Yuvenality to Rome and, when the latter failed to secure a papal repudiation of the resolution, Patriarch Pimen wrote to Pope John II on December 22, 1980:

I strongly entreat and urge you to initiate, without delay, such action as not only would grant no validity to this declaration but would also inform the churches that Your Holiness neither approves nor supports the direction selected by the Ukrainian Catholic bishops.¹⁶

The Patriarch's protest must have precipitated a major debate in the Curia over priorities in the Vatican's political and ecumenical relations with Moscow and the effect of Moscow's displeasure on the position of the Roman Catholic Church in the Soviet bloc. The Pope's reply was sent only on January 24, 1981, and bore the marks of being a compromise that was unlikely to satisfy either the Patriarchate or the Ukrainian Catholics:

The Holy See, standing firmly on the position that it always held in relation to the rights of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, regrets that communiqués appeared in the press, before I had occasion to study the documents. Therefore, the [Holy See] immediately notified all nunciatures in countries where there are Ukrainian Catholic communities of the fact that these texts have not received approval and therefore were devoid of any official character.¹⁷

The Patriarchate was not satisfied with the Pope's response. Yuvenality was relieved of his external relations post and, early in April, the two letters were unilaterally made public by the Patriarchate's Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations, presumably to embarrass the Pope before Ukrainian Catholics since Cardinal Slipyi had not been informed about the exchange.

The anti-Papal barrage in the Soviet press in spring 1980 left no one in doubt that John Paul II was perceived as a clever and dangerous enemy of world communism, that "having undertaken to renew the influence of the Catholic Church [in Eastern Europe], the Pope inevitably has taken the road toward the rehabilitation of its child—the Ukrainian Catholic Church,"¹⁸⁸ Reporting to an all-Union conference on nationality problems held in Riga in June 1982, a leading Communist party propaganda official from Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, voiced concern about the impact of the Pope's Eastern policy on believers in his republic:

There is a plan to resurrect the Uniate Church and to use it as a religious nationalist opposition . . . to unite all anti-Soviet elements under the protection of religion and to encourage religious dissent. . . .

Under the influence of enemy propaganda, the Catholic clergy has intensified its activities. The for-

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¹⁵Ibid., p. 382. The colloquium was eventually held in March 1981. Archbishop Volodymyr Sternuik has served since 1972 as Exarch in Lviv of the Archbishop Major.
¹⁷Ibid., p. 113.
¹⁸Ibid., p. 113.
mer Uniate clergy has been attempting to psychologically prepare the believers to demand the resumption of activities by the Uniate Church. A policy has been initiated of preparing new Uniate priests and monks from among the youth. \(^{49}\)

Krawchuk informed the conference that the authorities in Ukraine had launched a massive program of propaganda and administrative countermeasures to combat the Vatican-supported "nationalist-clericalist" subversion in Ukraine, involving the party and state agencies, the media, mass organizations, the Council on Religious Affairs, and, implicitly, the local Russian Orthodox Church.

Renewed Drive for Legalization

The closing years of the Brezhnev era and the transitional regimes of Yuriy Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko witnessed a tightening of police-state controls, an attack on all forms of dissent, and an escalation of the so-called counterpropaganda against such alien influences as nationalism, Catholicism, religious fundamentalism, Zionism, and American imperialism. While "patriotic" rapprochement between the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church was gradually taking place, the banned Ukrainian Catholic Church was exposed to another wave of repressions. During the first half of 1980, three Uniate priests were murdered, and in early 1981, three other priests were imprisoned. \(^{50}\) At the same time, new and more sophisticated efforts were undertaken by the Soviet secret police to penetrate, manipulate, and divide the underground Church and to undermine its credibility abroad through disinformation.

However, it was also in the early 1980's that some younger and more politicized elements among the Ukrainian Catholic laity and clergy mounted new efforts at publicizing abroad both the Uniates' predicament and their attempts to secure a re-legalization of the Church. In September 1982, an "Initiative Group for the Defense of the Rights of Believers and the Church" was formed under the leadership of Yosyf Terelia. After the latter was arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in December 1982, the leadership of the Group passed to Vasyl Kobryn, who was in turn imprisoned in November 1984 and sentenced to three years of forced labor. Beginning in early 1984, the Initiative Group began to circulate an irregularly appearing bulletin, "The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Ukraine," put together for the most part by Yosyf Terelia. \(^{51}\)

One of the reasons for the emergence in what were most inhospitable conditions of the movement for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was the activists' sense of a deepening crisis in the catacomb Church. The source of this crisis was the aging and dying of those of its clergy who had been educated in "normal" conditions—before the suppression of the Church—and who could not be replaced in the same numbers by equally prepared younger priests. Another concern was that during nearly 40 years, more and more "crypto-Catholics" who were attending Orthodox churches—served now by a new generation of Orthodox priests who had not been raised in the Uniate tradition—were gradually becoming estranged from the Ukrainian Catholic Church and might not return to it unless it emerged from the underground and secured recognition for itself from the regime.

Meanwhile, on September 7, 1984, Cardinal Slipy died in Rome. He was succeeded, as planned, by Archbishop Myroslav-Lubachivsky, who was named Cardinal by Pope John Paul II on May 25, 1985. Before long, Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to leadership in the Soviet Union and the unfolding struggle over his economic reforms (perestrojka) triggered a series of political concessions. During 1986–87, nearly all Ukrainian religious and political prisoners were released, and they provided the backbone of the revived movement for human, national, and religious rights in Ukraine.

As the fear of massive political reprisals gradually receded, the catacomb Church became bolder and more visible, prodded into testing the limits of Gorbachev's reforms by the revived Initiative Group that was reorganized in late 1987—after Terelia's departure for Canada—as the Committee for the Defense of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, headed by a recently released political dissident, Ivan Hel. \(^{52}\) The Committee began to publish an uncensored journal, Khristyans'kyi holos (Christian Voice), replacing "The Chronicle." Taking advantage of glasnost', the Ukrainian Catholic activists organized a campaign for the restoration of the Church's status quo ante 1945, held public religious


\(^{50}\) Zinkevych and Lonchyna, op. cit., pp. 661–62.

\(^{51}\) ibid., pp. 651–65
The millennium of the baptism of Kievan Rus’ was solemnly celebrated in St. Peter’s in Rome in July 1988.

—Marta Kolomayets / The Ukrainian Weekly

services for large numbers of Uniate believers, especially at pilgrimage sites, collected petitions calling for the reopening of the Ukrainian Catholic churches and the complete rehabilitation and legalization of the Church, and invited publicized confrontations with the authorities over the constitutional right of Ukrainian Catholics to worship. Enlisting support from non-Ukrainian human and religious rights dissidents in the Soviet Union, the Committee also began supplying Western media with written, recorded, and videotaped evidence both of the large-scale grass-roots support for the re-legalization of the Greek Catholic Church and of the repressive countermeasures adopted by the Soviet authorities.

In early August 1987, a group of Ukrainian Catholic clergy, monastics, and laymen, including Bishops Pavlo Vasylyk and Ivan Semedi, declared that they were “leaving the underground” and called upon the Pope to “promote by all possible means the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR.” Before long, other Ukrainian Catholic bishops joined in the demand for legalization, including Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk of Lviv, and Bishop Sofron Dmyterko of Ivano-Frankivsk. With Pope John Paul II repeatedly speaking out on behalf of the Ukrainian Catholics in the USSR, great hopes were associated with the forthcoming celebrations of the Millennium of Christianity of Rus’-Ukraine. The Pope, who celebrated the Millennium with the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy and pilgrims in Rome in July 1988, made his future visit to the USSR conditional on his ability to make a pastoral visit to the Ukrainian Catholic Church and exacted a symbolic price for sending a high-ranking delegation to the Millennium celebrations in Moscow and Kiev: an official meeting between Cardinals Agostino Casaroli and Wilbrands and a delegation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church led by Bishops Fylymon Kurchaba and Pavlo Vasylyk, which eventually took place in Moscow on June 10.

But the Soviet authorities in Moscow and especially in Ukraine, who have long denied the existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, rebuffed the initiatives for its legalization. Soviet spokesmen have been arguing, not very consistently, that legalization is an internal matter for the Russian Orthodox Church, which opposes any changes in the status quo in Western Ukraine. Alternatively, officials have been claiming that the “so-called” Ukrainian Catholic Church is not a religious entity but a “purely political,” “nationalist,” “separatist” organization, and hence ineligible for “registration,” or that the Uniate Church would not be legalized unless it repudiated all “nationalist” Ukrainian Catholic lead-

See ibid., January through March 1988.
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...ers abroad and local nationalist "extremists," and "proved" its "loyalty" to the state.55

The Russian Orthodox Church—it’s own status dramatically improved since 1987—has been actively lobbying at home and abroad against the reversal of Stalin’s prohibition of the Greek Catholic Church and, of course, against the surrender by the Moscow Patriarchate of its forcibly "reunited" dioceses and parishes in Galicia and Transcarpathia. Indeed, since the fall of 1988, Soviet authorities have reacted to the drive for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church by transferring over 700 hitherto "closed" Uniate churches in the countryside to hastily-formed Orthodox "twenties" in the predominantly Greek Catholic communities.56 At the same time, new repressive decrees against "unauthorized" public gatherings and demonstrations were adopted in the summer of 1988 and were applied against the Ukrainian Catholic clergy and lay activists, subjecting them to extremely high fines and administrative detentions.

It was widely expected (as various Soviet officials intimated in 1987–89) that the forthcoming new law on the freedom of conscience would legalize the Ukrainian Catholic Church. However, in May 1989, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev announced at a news conference in Lviv—in the presence of the chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs in Ukraine, M. P. Kolesnyk—that the new law would not "reanimate" the Union and suggested that "Ukrainian Catholics" should attend the working churches. A legalization of the Uniate Church, he argued, would merely provoke Uniate-Orthodox clashes.57

Legalization Drive Radicalizes

Responding to Metropolitan Filaret’s declaration that the Ukrainian Catholic Church would never be legalized, four bishops and 10 of its priests addressed an appeal to Gorbachev on May 16. In it, they rejected the political charges against the Church, declared their support for Gorbachev’s reforms, and requested the Church’s legalization. A delegation led by bishops F. Kurchaba, S. Dmyterko, and P. Vasylyk flew to Moscow for a promised meeting with the Supreme Soviet Presidium on May 17. When they were denied such a meeting, the bishops and priests staged a hunger protest in Moscow that attracted foreign TV and press coverage. The next day, the delegation was received by an official of the Presidium to whom the delegates gave the petition for Gorbachev. After the delegation’s departure on May 19, rotating groups of Ukrainian Catholics staged hunger protests in Moscow for four months.58

The hunger strikes in the center of Moscow were combined with public religious services and the lobbying of Ukrainian deputies to the USSR Congress of People’s Deputies, four of whom unsuccessfully tried to raise the issue of the Uniate Church’s legalization at the Congress sessions. The actions by Ukrainian Catholics in Moscow not only attracted international publicity but also support from Russian Orthodox dissidents and democratic circles.59 However, the biggest achievement of the Ukrainian Catholic hunger strikers in Moscow was the sympathetic publicity they received from the reformist Moscow News. Having first reported on their "pray-in" in the capital on June 11, Moscow News followed up an angry reaction to this report from Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev with a point-by-point rebuttal of his charges against the Uniate Church. For the first time ever, a Soviet newspaper challenged the official version of the "reunion of Uniates" and charged that the Russian Orthodox Church "consistently supported Stalin’s repressive measures against the followers of the Uniate Church." The author of the commentary, Sergey Filatov, urged the Russian Orthodox Church to return the Cathedral of St. George in Lviv to its rightful Uniate claimants, observing that "attempts to continue a repressive policy against the Uniates threaten to aggravate social tension, interethnic conflicts, and to complicate the USSR’s relations with other countries."60

The legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church—which would seriously undermine the position of the

57See Ogonek, Sept. 7, 1989, Keston News Service (Keston College, Kent—hereafter, KNS), No. 327, June 8, 1989, and Literyatura Ukraina (Kiev), June 29, 1989. The Ukrainian Catholic demonstrators in Moscow were supported by a number of Russian Orthodox believers, including Frs. G. Yakunin and G. Eidelstein, and, among public figures, most prominently by the late Andrey Sakharov, whose speech at the Congress of People’s Deputies was interrupted by Gorbachev before Sakharov could make his appeal for legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Representatives of the banned “True Russian Church” also showed their solidarity.
Russian Orthodox Church in Western Ukraine and was therefore bitterly opposed by the Moscow Patriarchate and Volodymyr Shcherbytsky’s party machine in Ukraine—had by May-June 1989 apparently caused division among Soviet policy-makers, delaying the adoption of the long-awaited “Law on the Freedom of Conscience” and contributing to the replacement of Konstantin Kharchev by Yuriy Khristoradnov as chairman of the USSR Council for Religious Affairs.\(^{61}\) Kharchev made his position on this issue clear after his removal from the CRA chairmanship:

_In the spirit of the Vienna accords, one must finally resolve the problem of the Uniates. To the state, all churches are equal. There should be no favorite churches and no stepchild churches. We cannot recognize the Uniate Church, even if we proceed from the legislation of 1929; there is no alternative. And one must now think how to secure politically this step—so that it would not lead to destabilization and a confrontation between supporters of the two churches._\(^{62}\)

A similar view was expressed by the Foreign Ministry spokesman on human rights, Yuriy Kashlev, who had headed the Soviet delegation to the Vienna conference:

_In any faith has every right to be registered. In disputes about the Uniate Church the old internal problem between Catholics and the members of the Orthodox Church is transferred to the sphere of the state’s rights and duties. But the state must solve this problem without delay because, under certain circumstances, it may turn into a serious abscess._\(^{63}\)

The major event that helped to weaken the opposition to legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was an unprecedented public demonstration in Lviv on September 17, 1989, in which, by official Soviet accounts, “more than 100,000 adherents of the illegal Ukrainian Catholic Church took part.”\(^{64}\) Similarly large demonstrations were held in other West Ukrainian cities. The movement for legalization headed by Ivan Hel had been reinforced by the Ukrainian urban intelligentsia, which was organized in various informal associations, including _Rukh_, the Popular Movement for Restructuring in Ukraine.

On September 20, Shcherbytskyi and Viktor Chebrikov—the two hardliners who were certain to oppose any relaxation of the party’s nationality and religious policies in Ukraine—were removed from the Politburo, and four days later Shcherbytskyi was replaced as first secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine by Volodymyr Ivashko. The Central Committee plenum on October 18 reflected a deepening uncertainty in the Ukrainian party leadership about the future status of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.\(^{65}\) Of special importance in exploding the long maintained official myth about an allegedly “voluntary reunion” of the Greek Catholics with the Russian Orthodox Church in March 1946 were the articles in the mass circulation _Ogonek_ in late September 1989 and in the early October issue of _Argumenty i Fakti_.\(^{66}\) These revelations shattered the pretense of canonicity of the Russian Orthodox Church in Galicia and Transcarpathia and were widely perceived as a sure portent of a policy shift in Moscow.

As tensions mounted in Galicia over the future of the local Russian Orthodox Church, the Lviv parish of SS. Peter and Paul declared itself part of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) on August 19, 1989. It was soon followed by two other city parishes and eventually several hundred congregations in Galicia.\(^{67}\) Though the authorities initially threatened administrative sanctions, they did not actually carry out their threat, either because of their wish to avoid confrontations with the parishioners and the local _Rukh_ organization that extended its support to the UAOC as well, or because the officials saw the Autocephalists as “a lesser evil” than the Uniates. Most likely, the authorities expected this development to cause division and"

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\(^{62}\) _Ogonek_, No. 44, October 1989.

\(^{63}\) _Moscow News_, Nov. 5, 1989.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., Sept. 24, 1989. The more likely total was 150,000. See _KNS_, No. 334, Sept. 21, 1989.


\(^{66}\) Rozhov. loc. cit., pp. 6–8 (Ogonek’s print run at the time was 3.3 million); and P. Vasylev’s interview with M. Odintsov, “Uniaty,” _Argumenty i Fakty_, Oct. 7–13, 1989. At the time, the newspaper had a print run of 22.1 million.

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strife in the Ukrainian national movement and to deflect energies of the Autocephalists and the Uniates from combating the Russian Orthodox Church to combating each other. On October 22, Bishop in the Russian Orthodox Church Yoann Bodnarchuk (a native Galician), who had just been granted a leave from his Zhytomyr see, accepted the leadership of the Autocephalous Church.66

On October 29, 1989, the Ukrainian Catholics peace-fully took over the Transfiguration church (the largest church in Lviv), led by its young assistant pastor Yaroslav Chukhnyi.66 Until the return of the Lviv Cathedral of St. George, in August 1990, the Transfiguration Church in effect became the center of Ukrainian Catholicism in Galicia. To demonstrate the continued strength of the popular demand for the restoration of the Uniate Church, another mass demonstration of well over 100,000 believers was organized on November 26, a week before Gorbachev’s meeting with Pope John Paul in Rome.70

Qualified Recognition of Eastern Rite Catholics

Since the warming of Soviet-Vatican relations in the early 1960’s, the Holy See has raised the issue of Ukrainian Catholic rights in numerous direct and indirect contacts with Soviet leaders, but without getting a satisfactory response. John Paul II’s long-standing demand for legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was once again conveyed to the Soviet government in June 1988 when a high-level Vatican delegation led by Cardinals Casaroli and Willebrands attended Russian Orthodox celebrations in Moscow of the Millennium of the baptism of Kievan Rus’. It was not until August 1989 that Gorbachev responded to the Pope’s 1988 proposals. This led to the initiation of a series of exchanges between the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate, on the one side, and the Holy See, on the other. In line with Gorbachev’s position that the Uniate issue must be resolved by consensus between the Vatican and the Moscow Patriarchate, the latter proposed a “solution” (conveyed in Patriarch Pimen’s letter of August 16, 1989, to the Pope) that was unacceptable to the Holy See: a de facto dissolution of the Uniate Church by having those Uniates valuing their Eastern rite more than Catholic dogmas join the Orthodox Church,71 and absorbing into the Roman Catholic Church those valuing their adherence to Catholicism more than the Eastern rite. This was the same formula as the one advanced by Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and his government patrons in May, except that by August it seemed that the newly formed Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church would pull away from the Greek Catholic Church the first category of Uniate believers. Moscow’s strategy apparently meant to take advantage both of a historical “fault line” in the Greek Catholic Church between its “Eastern” and “Roman” orientations and of the accumulated frictions between the Vatican establishment and the autonomist (“Patriarchal”) movement in the émigré Ukrainian Catholic Church.

A compromise formula was devised during the October 19–21 visit to Moscow by Archbishop Angelo Sodano, the Vatican’s Secretary for Interstate Relations, who met with Gorbachev, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, and Yuriy Khristoradnov, chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs. The Holy See was assured that the new law on freedom of conscience and religious organizations would legalize the Ukrainian Catholic Church, but the Soviet side insisted that the practical aspects of legalization be resolved through agreement among the Holy See, the Soviet government, and the Moscow Patriarchate in the context of closer ecumenical dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Churches.

The Pope’s insistence on the recognition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR was reiterated in his reply to Patriarch Pimen’s August letter, delivered to the Holy Synod by Cardinal Willebrands and his successor as president of the Pontifical Council for Promotion of Christian Unity, Archbishop E. Cassidy on November 1. The Moscow Patriarchate, however, merely agreed with the government that “Catholics of Eastern Rite” should have the right to worship legally. The question of their “access to churches” and other unresolved problems were to be left to future negotiations between the Vatican and the Patriarchate. This, in essence was the “final” position of the Russian Orthodox Church communicated to the Pope in Patriarch Pimen’s message brought to Rome by Metropolitan Yuvenalii on Novem-

66Bodnarchuk was immediately stripped of his hierarchical status (as were the priests who joined the Autocephalous Church) by the Russian Orthodox Church. “Resolution of the Holy Synod of the Rus’ Orthodox Church on November 14, 1989,” Pravoslavnyi visnyk, February 1990, pp. 2–4.
67Episcopal Conference of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lviv, Postup (Winnipeg), Nov. 19, 1989.
68KNS, No. 339, Nov. 30, 1989. The local authorities, fearing that the planned demonstration might end in a Greek Catholic seizure of St. George’s cathedral, negotiated with Ivan Hel before the event to prevent conflict. The demonstration ended with a religious service near the cathedral and the adoption of appeals for full legalization of the Church. See Lyudyvina i svit, February 1990, p. 31.
On December 1, 1989, in the Library Hall of the Vatican Palace, Pope John Paul II meets with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

—TASS from Sovfoto.

Gorbachev’s meeting with Pope John Paul II on December 1, 1989, symbolized above all the rapprochement between the Kremlin and the Vatican. While the Pope reiterated his desire that Catholics of both Latin and Eastern rites be free to practice their religion, Gorbachev assured John Paul II that under the forthcoming law on the freedom of conscience all believers would enjoy religious freedom. Agreement in principle was reached to establish diplomatic relations between the two sides, and the Pope accepted Gorbachev’s invitation to visit the Soviet Union. Arguing that an outright legalization of the Uniate Church would cause inter-religious clashes in Western Ukraine and create tension with the Moscow Patriarchate, Gorbachev declined to assume direct governmental responsibility for resolving the problem of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, leaving this issue to be worked out through an intensified “ecumenical dialogue” between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican.73

On December 1, 1989, the Novosti Press Agency and the media in Western Ukraine carried a brief “Declaration of the Council for Religious Affairs attached to the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR,” dated November 20. The Novosti dispatch from Lviv called the CRA “Declaration” a “de-facto recognition of the rights of the hitherto underground-existing Ukrainian Catholic Church (UCC), which had been prohibited by the Lviv Church Sobor in March 1946.”74 However, the actual text merely stated:

subject to their unconditional observance of the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR and the legislation on cults, Greek Catholics may enjoy all rights which are provided by the law on religious associations in the Ukrainian SSR... All cult structures seized illegally by the believers should be returned to the local soviets of people’s deputies. The transfer of these buildings to religious associations will be realized in accordance with established procedure. Questions of the registration of these or other religious congregations will be decided in accordance with the will expressed by the believers themselves.75

To ascertain the preferences of the believers—continued the “Declaration”—referenda will be conducted when necessary, possibly involving independent observers. In the meantime, “any attempts to influence the choice of confession by the believers are, in the Council’s opinion, inadmissible.”76 While the “Declaration” clearly attempted to slow down the dynamics of the re-establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the subsequent commentary by the chairman of the Ukrainian CRA, M.P. Kolesnyk, made clear that the Council did not recognize the corporate, canonical structure and the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, but only the right of “groups of believers” to apply for government


74Actually, the “Declaration” was first read on Lviv TV by the oblast Council for Religious Affairs plenipotentiary, Yuriy Reshetlyo. On December 4, Ivan Hel and the committee’s legal adviser, Mykola Muratov, stated that they considered the “Declaration” as falling short of the full legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the entire USSR, criticized the proposed “referenda” as open to governmental manipulation and distortion, and demanded the return of churches belonging to the Greek Catholic Church before 1946, and a political rehabilitation of the church by the authorities. See KNS, No. 340, Dec. 14, 1989, pp. 17-18.

75Lyudnya i svit, January 1990, pp. 8-9.

76Ibid.
The immediate response of Ukrainian Catholic believers to the belated and limited promise of legalization was to take over their former churches from the Russian Orthodox Church. By early January 1990, over 120 churches had been reclaimed in Galicia; by the end of the month, the number had increased to 230 churches in the Lviv and Ternopil dioceses, and 140 in Ivano-Frankivsk diocese. By June, according to Ukrainian Catholic sources, 803 churches were taken over by the newly formed, though still mostly unregistered, Uniate parishes in the Lviv diocese, some 500 in the Ivano-Frankivsk eparchy, and 12 in Transcarpathia. Some 370 Orthodox priests had joined the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Galicia. This raised the number of Uniate clergy there to 767, including 186 monastic priests. By June, a total of 1,592 Greek Catholic congregations were formed in Galicia, reclaiming 1,303 churches. For theological seminars that were yet to be restored, 485 candidates for priesthood had been selected from a larger number of applicants. Approximately 700 nuns were active in the Greek Catholic Church in West Ukraine. In the same period, about 500 Orthodox parishes joined the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church.

The mass takeover by Ukrainian Catholics of their former churches evoked a flurry of protests from the Moscow Patriarchate, Exarch Filaret of Kiev, and Orthodox bishops in Western Ukraine. They charged the Uniates with the use of "violence" in the "illegal seizure of churches," "intimidation" of Orthodox believers, and "persecution" of the Orthodox clergy—accusations that were instantly publicized by some Soviet media. Spokesmen for the Russian Orthodox Church appealed to Gorbachev and to law enforcement agencies for protection and help against the "nationalist," "separatist extremists" in Galicia, who allegedly masterminded and exploited for their own political ends the Uniate resurgence that, the Patriarchate warned, was leading to a religious "civil war." Under these circumstances, the Patriarchate argued, no referenda could be carried out fairly to determine the believers' preferences.

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77"The Way Out of a Blind Alley," ibid. Kolesnyk's comments to answer the Committee in Defense of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of exploiting the Uniate problem, deliberately obstructing the normalization of the religious situation in Western Ukraine, and inflaming anti-Orthodox sentiments. In another interview published in February 1990, Kolesnyk further clarified the government’s position vis-à-vis the Church:

"I think that . . . there is no need to determine whether the Lviv sobor was canonical, whether it had the right to decide these or other questions . . . the Russian Orthodox Church rejects the Union, does not recognize this artificial symbiosis. Why should then the government authorities intervene in this strictly theological question? Therefore, we are registering Greek Catholic congregations as new religious associations . . . the church in our country is separated from the state; therefore we have no right to interfere in its internal affairs, including the proceedings of church sobors . . . The Council on Religious Affairs will not register those congregations which exist illegally, which themselves seize cult structures, and which arouse hostility on religious grounds."

78The immediate response of Ukrainian Catholic believers to the belated and limited promise of legalization was to take over their former churches from the Russian Orthodox Church. By early January 1990, over 120 churches had been reclaimed in Galicia; by the end of the month, the number had increased to 230 churches in the Lviv and Ternopil dioceses, and 140 in Ivano-Frankivsk diocese. By June, according to Ukrainian Catholic sources, 803 churches were taken over by the newly formed, though still mostly unregistered, Uniate parishes in the Lviv diocese, some 500 in the Ivano-Frankivsk eparchy, and 12 in Transcarpathia. Some 370 Orthodox priests had joined the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Galicia. This raised the number of Uniate clergy there to 767, including 186 monastic priests. By June, a total of 1,592 Greek Catholic congregations were formed in Galicia, reclaiming 1,303 churches. For theological seminars that were yet to be restored, 485 candidates for priesthood had been selected from a larger number of applicants. Approximately 700 nuns were active in the Greek Catholic Church in West Ukraine. In the same period, about 500 Orthodox parishes joined the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church. The mass takeover by Ukrainian Catholics of their former churches evoked a flurry of protests from the Moscow Patriarchate, Exarch Filaret of Kiev, and Orthodox bishops in Western Ukraine. They charged the Uniates with the use of "violence" in the "illegal seizure of churches," "intimidation" of Orthodox believers, and "persecution" of the Orthodox clergy—accusations that were instantly publicized by some Soviet media. Spokesmen for the Russian Orthodox Church appealed to Gorbachev and to law enforcement agencies for protection and help against the "nationalist," "separatist extremists" in Galicia, who allegedly masterminded and exploited for their own political ends the Uniate resurgence that, the Patriarchate warned, was leading to a religious "civil war." Under these circumstances, the Patriarchate argued, no referenda could be carried out fairly to determine the believers' preferences.

79"The Way Out of a Blind Alley," ibid. Kolesnyk's commentary apparently sought to answer the Hel Committee's critical reaction to the CRA "Declaration."


81According to the information presented by M. P. Kolesnyk at the US Peace Institute conference on June 20, "over 800" former Russian Orthodox parishes in Ukraine joined the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The total includes Transcarpathia.

82Radyanska Ukraina reported that the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church has 1,043 parishes, all but 10 of which are in Galicia.

83For the Russian Orthodox Church's refutation of these charges, see commentary by M. P. Kolesnyk, "Ukrainian Catholics Reject Orthodox Church's Charges," KNS, No. 341, Jan. 11, 1990. Following a November 9 refutation of the TASS report on alleged violence in the takeover of the Transfiguration Church by Cardinal Lubachivsky (see a release by the Press Office of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the same date), extensive documentation (including a videotape) supporting the Ukrainian Catholic Church's refutation became available. Representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate did not dispute the Greek Catholic refutation when it was presented by the Ukrainian Catholic bishops at the Vatican–Moscow Patriarchate bilateral commission meeting on January 16, 1990, in Moscow. Meanwhile, the chairman of the Committee for the Defense of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ivan Hel, activist Stepan Khmara, (footnote continued on p. 15)
In the meantime, in anticipation of further Vatican-Moscow negotiations about the future of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, its supporters, representing a wide spectrum of Lviv intelligentsia and informal organizations, held a conference on “The Juridical-Legal Status of Religious Organizations in Conditions of Re-structuring” on January 10, 1990. The gathering issued a “Declaration” spelling out the terms on which the Greek Catholic Church should be legalized:

- the Greek Catholic Church should be politically rehabilitated;
- the Church should have the rights of a juridical person restored to it, and accordingly, all its property, including churches, art treasures, relics, and cathedrals, should be returned;
- the 1946 Sobor should be declared a violent, anti-constitutional act of Stalinism;
- the hierarchical structure of the Church should be restored and recognized;
- conditions should be created to allow for theological seminaries, publication of religious literature, religious instruction of children, access by the clergy to the sick, imprisoned, homeless, kindergartens, and old age homes;
- in case of dispute over it, a church building should be given to the majority in a parish, but services for the minority should be scheduled in it. The minority in a parish may restore inactive churches, or build new ones for its own use.  

The “Declaration” accused the Soviet media and the Russian Orthodox Church of spreading disinformation about alleged religious violence and “seizure” of churches by Uniate believers; the document declared the interpretation of registration procedures by the CRA plenipotentiaries to be “illogical and provocative” and charged the “administrative apparatus” with deliberate obstruction, as none of the 158 Catholic parishes that had applied for registration had yet been registered.  

Participants in the January 10 conference also wrote a memorandum for the Moscow meeting of the Vatican and Moscow Patriarchate delegations, reiterating the demands of the “Declaration,” calling for the return of St. George’s Cathedral, and warning that failure to address the grievances of the Ukrainian Catholics would result in a “radicalization” of the popular mood in Western Ukraine.  

On January 23, the first local council of bishops, clergy, and representatives of believers of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Galicia and Transcarpathia met in Lviv to condemn and declare null and void the “so-called Lviv Sobor” of 1946, reaffirm the Church’s canonical integrity and unity of its hierarchy, and to formulate the Church’s desiderata in terms similar to those in the January 10 “Declaration.”  

Meanwhile, Vatican and Russian Orthodox Church delegations met in Moscow from January 12 to 17 and produced “Recommendations on the Normalization of Relations Between the Orthodox and Catholics of the Eastern Rite in Western Ukraine,” which were apparently acceptable to the Soviet government and were subsequently ratified by the Pope and the Russian Orthodox Synod of Bishops. The agreement was bound to disappoint the Uniates by failing to recommend the full recognition of their Church and to acknowledge the existence and authority of the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy in Western Ukraine. The “Recommendations” stated:

In the wish to pursue and intensify the efforts toward unity, it would be very desirable that the establishment of a hierarchical structure for Eastern Rite Catholics in Western Ukraine be the subject of contacts between our Churches in order to avoid giving the impression of opposing one hierarchy to another.  

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Footnotes:
1. Memorandum Regarding the Meeting of Vatican-Moscow Delegations, Novyi shvyakh (Toronto), June 9, 1990. The memorandum was apparently presented to a member of the Vatican delegation, Archbishop Myroslav Marusyn, during the Moscow meeting in mid-January.
3. Information Service, Vol. 71, 1989, Nos. III-IV, pp. 130–34. First to publish the communiqué and “Recommendations” of the January meeting was RATAU (the official news agency of Soviet Ukraine). See Pravda Ukrainy, Feb. 6, 1990, which reported that the agreement was ratified by the Pope on January 25, 1990. It is worth noting that the Information Service published together with the “Recommendations” a letter from Archbishop E. Cassidy conveying to the Moscow Patriarchate the Pope’s approval of this document, dated February 19, 1990, but the letter also mentions the Holy See’s reservations about “historical judgments” in the accord (presumably about the 1596 Union of Brest) and possible reinterpretations of certain parts of it. Cassidy’s letter was conceivably a reaction to Uniate disapproval of the Vatican’s seeming retreat from its previous insistence on the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.
Meeting in spring 1990 of the Quadripartite Commission for the resolution of practical problems arising in the course of normalizing relations between the Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. On the left side are representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; on the right, are representatives of the Vatican and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

The most important recommendation of the Moscow meeting involved the creation of a joint quadripartite commission for the resolution of practical questions emerging in the process of normalizing relations between the Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholics. The commission was to include representatives from the Holy See, the Moscow Patriarchate, and the Orthodox as well as the Greek Catholics from Western Ukraine. A particularly urgent task of the commission was to “regulate the situation in churches occupied by the Catholics of the Eastern Rite without the consent of local congregations or prior to the Uniate community’s registration.”

When the quadripartite commission assembled in Kiev on March 6, the Vatican was represented by Archbishop Myroslav Marusyn (Secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches) and Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan Stepan Sulyk of Philadelphia, while the elderly Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk of Lviv and Bishop Sotfron Dmyterko of Ivano-Frankivsk were summoned at the last moment to represent the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine. According to Archbishop Sterniuk, the delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate and its Ukrainian Exarchate quickly took control of the commission’s agenda and skillfully manipulated the proceedings and the subsequent visit to Western Ukraine so as to isolate and alienate the two Uniate representatives from Western Ukraine.

On March 13, Sterniuk walked out of the quadripartite commission’s meeting in protest over the Moscow Patriarchate’s refusal to concede that the 1946 Lviv Sobor was invalid and to recognize the canonical, corporate nature of the Greek Catholic Church and its hierarchy. The action of Sterniuk and his 14 demands that the Commission refused to consider were endorsed on March 17 by the other Uniate bishops in Ukraine. It may well have been part of the Patriarchate’s strategy to split the Catholic side in the Commission and to place the blame for the delay of legalization squarely on the shoulders of the Uniate episcopate and their “extremist” lay entourage.

\(^{90}\) Information Service, Vol. 71, Nos. III–IV, 1989, p. 133. In the communiqué prefacing the “Recommendations,” the two delegations referred to the Eastern Rite Catholics’ “possibility of organizing their ecclesiastical structures within the Roman Catholic Church.” This formulation seemed to confirm what some Autocephalist polemicists have been saying, namely, that the “Polish Pope” is replacing the Greek Catholic Church with a “Polish Kościół (Latin Church).”

\(^{91}\) Dacko and Tomashek, loc. cit., pp. 7–9.

\(^{92}\) Ibid.

\(^{93}\) For Sterniuk’s 14 points and the Ukrainian Catholic bishops’ declaration endorsing his walking out from the quadripartite commission, see “Declaration of the Bishops of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine on the Negotiations of the Quadripartite Commission on Relations between the Orthodox and Catholics,” Leninska molod (Lviv), Mar. 23, 1990.
The breakdown of the quadripartite commission had several immediate consequences. It stepped up the confrontation between the Ukrainian Catholics and the adherents of the Moscow Patriarchate over the churches in Galicia, especially St. George's Cathedral in Lviv, the historical center of the Greek Catholic Church. The Patriarchate escalated its anti-Uniate campaign, and formed together with other pro-regime supporters a “Republican Committee for Defense of the Rights of Believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.” Seeking to pacify the increasingly restive Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Pope summoned all bishops in Ukraine and in the diaspora for a two-day meeting in Rome on June 25–26, to review the ecclesiastical situation in Western Ukraine and to explain the Holy See’s negotiations with Moscow.

Meanwhile, the Soviet authorities in Kiev and Moscow continued to procrastinate with the registration of the Ukrainian Catholic congregations and to block the “leasing” of once Uniate churches to these congregations. According to Ukrainian Catholic bishops, by June nearly 1,600 Ukrainian Catholic congregations in Galicia had applied for “registration,” but most of these applications were returned by the Kiev Council for Religious Affairs on the grounds that the forms were improperly filled out. To make matters even more difficult, in April 1990 the authorities introduced new registration forms.

**A Changed Public Climate**

Meanwhile, the revival of civil society, its growing politicization, and the rapid growth of the national democratic movement could not help but affect the religious situation in Ukraine. The most important stimuli to political mobilization of Ukrainian society were the elections to the USSR Congress of People’s Deputies in early 1989 and the direct, and less manipulative, elections to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet and the lower-level soviets in March 1990. Suddenly, articulators of national, cultural, linguistic, and religious demands discovered that they could influence the resolution of these demands through the deputies they had elected and, to some extent, even through the communist officials against whom they voted. This was particularly true in Western Ukraine, where the democratic bloc won overwhelmingly.

The new popularly-elected local and oblast authorities adopted immediate measures to break the deadlock over the legalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Thus, on April 25, the new ivano-Frankivsk oblast soviet of people’s deputies passed a resolution “On the Basic Principles [Governing] Relations of the Organs of State Power in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast to the Existing Confessions, and on Ensuring the Free Development of Religious-Ecclesiastical Life in Subcarpathia.” While confirming the principle of equality of all denominations before the law and endorsing democratic referendum procedures in resolving local conflicts over church buildings, the oblast soviet ruled that: (1) the resolutions of the so-called “Lviv sobor” of 1946 are invalid; (2) local government organs are authorized to assign to Uniate congregations churches that Uniates had used prior to 1946; and (3) disputes over those church buildings cannot be resolved without the consent of the clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. These principles were meant to apply until the adoption of a new law on the freedom of conscience by the USSR and Ukrainian supreme soviets.

The accelerating process of change in Ukrainian politics, however much it was braked by the still dominant conservative forces in the Ukrainian party-state apparatus, had to affect yet another conservative institution—the Russian Orthodox Church. By 1989, the leadership of the Exarchate found it necessary to make some token concessions to the Ukrainian language and, in January 1990, the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church was given another name, “the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.” After the June 1990 Local Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church...
The Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USSR

voiced its concern over the Church’s losses in Western Ukraine to the Uniates and the Autocephalist “schismatics,” the newly elected Patriarch Aleksey II of Moscow and a special commission of the Holy Synod visited Ukraine. In response to Soviet Ukraine’s declaration of sovereignty on July 16, the Russian Orthodox Church granted a “self-governing” status in October to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which, however, remains an integral part of the Moscow Patriarchate. The resurgence of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church—though, so far, largely confined to Galicia—represents, in the long run, a much greater challenge to the Russian Orthodox Church than the revival of the Greek Catholic Church, because the Autocephalous Church is bound to spread in the traditionally Orthodox parts of eastern Ukraine.

In the meantime, on August 19, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church officially repossessed its historic St. George’s Cathedral in Lviv, and, on November 1, the adjoining metropolitan’s palace. In September, archdiocesan seminary classes began in Rudno, near Lviv, with some 250 students; another 47 seminarians are studying in Drohobych. In Ivano-Frankivsk, about 300 theology students have been attending improvised lectures. The Basilian monastic order opened a small seminary with some 70 candidates, and a novitiate in its Krekhiv monastery.

Amidst a continuing Orthodox-Uniate tension, delegations of the Vatican and the Moscow Patriarchate met again in Moscow on September 10, and were subsequently joined by the three Greek Catholic bishops and their Orthodox counterparts. But on September 14, the Russian Orthodox delegates walked out of the talks after the Catholic side unanimously rejected their claims to the now Uniate churches in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk. Soon after, a tripartite oblast inter-church commission in Lviv fell apart after the UOC and UAOC representatives withdrew from it, alleging that the local authorities favor the Greek Catholic side in the allocation of church buildings. Meanwhile, the Archbishop Major of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Myroslav-Ivan Cardinal Lubachivsky announced that he plans to visit his flock in Ukraine next spring.

Conclusions

Gorbachev’s political reforms (rather than any specific new nationality policy on his part) made it ultimately impossible to maintain his newly won international credibility without making concessions on a long-standing human rights issue—the ban of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. However, concerned as they are about the interdependence of religion and nationalism in Western Ukraine, the Soviet authorities have chosen to abstain from government action to correct the wrong, and to resort to the time-tested method of “ecumenical dialogue” between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican. They hoped thus to minimize the losses to the Russian Orthodox Church and to maximize the government’s influence on the nature, structure, and hierarchy of the hitherto underground Church so as to isolate it as much as possible from the increasingly powerful Ukrainian national-democratic movement in Galicia and its supporters abroad. The authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church may have welcomed the emergence of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Galicia as a way of turning a Russo-Ukrainian ecclesiastical struggle into an intra-Ukrainian religious conflict. The largely cosmetic Ukrainization of the Kiev Exarchate seems to have been motivated by concerns about the Autocephalist challenge, and by the need for some accommodation with the growing political power of Rukh and its allies. These concessions on the part of the state and the Moscow Patriarchate offered “too little, too late” to the

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100Radyanska Ukraina, Nov. 4, 1990.
101The Council for Religious Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR published an announcement (Radyanska Ukraina, May 16, 1990) recognizing the right of Orthodox religious communities to determine which ecclesiastical authority (the Moscow Patriarchate or the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church) to recognize, and stating that the latter “may be created at a duly convened synod or congress.” On June 5–6, 1990, an “All-Ukrainian Sobor of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church met in the Kiev House of Cinema in the presence of seven bishops and 547 delegates from the clergy and laymen. It adopted statutes, determined the diocesan organization of the church, proclaimed an “All Ukrainian Patriarchate,” and elected in absentia Metropolitan Mystyslav Skrypnyk as Patriarch of Kiev and All Ukraine, and Metropolitan Yoann Bodnarchuk as the Patriarch’s locum tenens. See Larysa Lokhvytsia, Literatuma Ukraina, June 21, 1990. According to the Ukrainian CRA Chairman Kolesnyk, the authorities recognized the synod and its decisions (Kolesnyk’s remarks at Washington, June 20, 1990). However, Patriarch Mystyslav was refused a Soviet visa until October. After his arrival in Ukraine on October 20, he was received by L. M. Kravchuk, the Soviet Ukrainian head of state, and treated initially with courtesy in the official press. But following an October 26 confrontation between the UAOC supporters and those of the ROC/UOC over St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, Radyanska Ukraina published on November 4 a lengthy diatribe against Skrypnyk and, indirectly, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, the authorities provided both St. Andrew’s and St. Sophia’s cathedrals in Kiev for two-day ceremonies (November 17–18) of enthronement of Mystyslav as the UAOC’s Patriarch of Kiev and All Ukraine. The enthronement ceremony was attended by Kolesnyk which signified the republican government’s recognition of the UAOC and its Patriarch. The Ukrainian Weekly, Nov. 25, 1990.
103The Ukrainian Weekly, Nov. 18, 1990; conversation with Ivan Hrechko of Lviv, Nov. 15, 1990.
104Svitlo, November 1990, pp. 368–69.
106Novyi Shlyakh (Toronto), Nov. 24, 1990.
Ukrainian Catholic Church and its mass constituency in Western Ukraine. They have thus failed to prevent the takeover of once Uniate churches by the Ukrainian Catholics and have limited the hoped-for capacity of the Vatican to subdue the explosive mixture of long-standing religious and ethno-national grievances.

The sweeping victory of the Rukh-dominated Democratic Bloc in local and oblast elections in Western Ukraine in March 1990 has offered the Greek Catholic Church an alternative political venue for satisfying its demands, and simultaneously deprived the Russian Orthodox Church of privileged treatment by local government.

The much reworked draft law “On the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” was finally approved by the USSR Supreme Soviet and promulgated by President Gorbachev on October 1, 1990. Its provisions bear the marks of a compromise between progressive reformers who wanted this law to reflect international human rights norms, and the conservative ideological and security establishments who have insisted on continuing state control and manipulation of institutional religion. Most of the articles are devoted to the still far-reaching state regulation of religious statutes and organizations through the old system of “registrations” (permits) for those religious groups that seek the status of a juridical person (including property rights), and for religious centers, monastic and theological institutions, etc. As in the past, ambiguous wording and extensive, overlapping powers of republican and central authorities leave too much room for administrative arbitrariness, interference, discrimination, and political manipulation. The law’s provisions that are likely to ease the situation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church include the ending of an obligatory registration for local groups of believers, as long as they do not seek a person-in-law status; the right to appeal administrative rulings to courts; and a special provision for those religious groups whose religious center lies outside the Soviet Union (an agreement between the Soviet government and such a foreign center as, e.g., the Vatican, would apparently replace the registration of the given religious groups’ statutes).

Glasnost’ and democratization have made it possible for the Ukrainian Catholic Church to leave the catacombs, yet Gorbachev’s indecisiveness on nationality problems and his reluctance to alienate the Russian Orthodox Church and its conservative supporters in Ukraine resulted in belated half-measures that merely deepened the Uniates’ distrust of the Kremlin’s motives. At the same time, the course of the Vatican-Moscow negotiations has created doubts about the Vatican’s capacity to press the Kremlin and the Patriarchate for a full recognition and restoration of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. In frustration, the Uniates proceeded to take back many of their confiscated churches without waiting any longer for administrative fiat or decisions from above, and as the largest constituency in Galicia, they have turned to the newly elected organs of people’s power to complete the unfinished task of the Church’s legalization.

\(^{107}\)Pravda, Oct. 9, 1990.
The Future of the KGB

Amy W. Knight

The Soviet political police, known today as the KGB (Komitet po Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti—Committee for State Security), has always had a special relationship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Ever since Lenin created the infamous Cheka in 1917, a political police has served as the "sword and shield" of the party, or, more precisely, of the party leadership. As the party gradually extended its dominance over newly conquered regions, it relied heavily on the coercive might of the police to incorporate them into the Soviet state or create puppet regimes. When Gorbachev became party leader in March 1985 he inherited a vast, highly-centralized police apparatus that extended throughout Eastern Europe. Today, almost six years later, this police empire is crumbling, and its mainstay, the CPSU, is losing its grip. The communists have been swept out of power in most of Eastern Europe, party organizations in the Soviet republics have declared their independence from Moscow, and the CPSU leadership has formally given up its political monopoly. What do these developments portend for the KGB? Will it share the fate of its surrogate police organizations in Eastern Europe, which were dismantled after the demise of the communist parties there?

It has been one of the paradoxes of perestrojka that despite the substantial progress toward a freer and more democratic system, the KGB has maintained a highly visible presence in the Soviet Union. Indeed, it has retained greater political status than have other institutions, such as the military. This can be explained by the fact that Gorbachev, like earlier party leaders who also lacked a public mandate, has had to rely on the KGB for support. Now that the party has lost authority, and Gorbachev's claims to the country's leadership rests primarily on his position as president of the Soviet Union, the future of the KGB is becoming even more closely bound to his personal political fortunes. But the insistent demands of the reformers and the growing movement of the Soviet republics toward independence are outpacing Gorbachev's own program and challenging the prerogatives of a strong, centralized secret police. Gorbachev will find it increasingly difficult to maintain his association with this organization without losing his credibility as a reformist leader. In short, the KGB may be crucial to maintaining Gorbachev's rule as popular discontent mounts, but it is also a serious political liability for him. How Gorbachev deals with this problem will have a tremendous impact not only on the future of the KGB as an institution but also on the course of political change in the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev's Strategy Toward the KGB

Gorbachev decided early in his tenure as party leader that he could ill afford to seriously weaken the KGB at a time when he was introducing potentially destabilizing changes within the system, changes that were bound to give rise to discontent in many quarters. And

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*Emphasizing this bond, Lenin once declared that "a good Communist is at the same time a good Chekist [a Cheka employee]." As quoted in George Leggett, The Cheka, Lenin's Political Police, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 351*