

THE VATICAN'S TORPEDO AT THE UNITY OF EUROPE:

The Problem of the Unia at Front Stage¹

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(Translated from the Greek by Patrick G. Barker)

THE TUMULTUOUS developments in the socialist world from 1989 to the present have unveiled one of the strongest checks on the journey toward real European unification: the Papal Unia.

By “Unia” we mean a religio-political scheme which was devised by the “Roman Catholic Church” for the westernization and spiritual and political subjugation of the Orthodox East. Its beginnings can be seen already in the thirteenth century (at the Lateran Synod in 1215),² but its anti-Orthodox activity culminated in the false union synod of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439) and in the subsequent unsettling of Orthodox populations. The Unia works in practice by particularly insidious means: All of those Orthodox who are included in its bosom accept the dogmas of the Papacy (“primacy” and, since 1870, “infallibility”), but preserve their liturgical customs (language, liturgical typikon); as well, the clergy preserve their external [Orthodox] appearance. Needless to say, the aim of this “concession” is easy

¹ Reprinted from *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 246 (Jan.-Feb. 1992), pp. 8-11.

² Archimandrite Basil (K. Stephanides), *Church History* [in Greek] (Athens, 1959), p. 382.

to understand. It enables the Unia to act as a “Trojan horse” in the entrails of the Orthodox East.

I. The Unia did not remain a simple religious scheme, but was enlisted from the outset to serve the political goals not only of Rome (Papal power) or concomitantly the Vatican, but also of western Roman Catholic powers. That is, it assumed a rôle parallel to that of the Jesuits or analogous to that of the Protestant missionaries, concealing its political aims under the cloak of religion. It is a fact confirmed by historical research that the Unia perpetually lies in waiting, moving out rapaciously in Orthodox territory whenever Orthodox populations are preoccupied with any kind of internal problems of their own. His Eminence, Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev reminded me precisely of this in a conversation of ours in May 1989. “*Perestroika*” and the surprise which it provoked in the Slavic world gave the Unia an opportunity once again to emerge menacingly, but at the same time ominously, creating unbearable situations for the Orthodox populations of Eastern Europe. And this was not, of course, a matter of spontaneous and unexpected outburst. The Vatican, accustomed from ages past to such political activity, always has solutions ready for the “voids” being created in the East, eager to fill them at the appropriate moment, deploying for this purpose its most effective weapon against the East: the Unia. This text would be excessively long if we attempted, here, to analyze the Vatican’s activities behind the scenes in so-called “Macedonia,” in contemporary developments in Albania, and in the “Uniate” solutions which it has already prepared for these regions also.³

II. Consequently, it is not strange that the Orthodox people remain steadfastly negative toward the Unia. Its presence in the East reminds them above all else of the betrayal carried out by it, to the detriment of Orthodoxy and her people. St. Mark Eugenikos (†1444), in his famous encyclical “To Christians Everywhere in the Greek Fatherland and the Islands” (1440-1441), calls the Uniates “Greco-

³ See in this regard an article by K. Cholevas, “The Vatican, Macedonia, and the New Austro-Hungary,” in the periodical *Orthodoxos Typos*, March 1, 1991, p. 3.

Latins” and “half animal-like men,” “on the order of the centaurs in mythology.”⁴

It should be noted that the Unia has been functioning in recent centuries as a very well organized *agent provocateur* not only among the Orthodox, but also among the other Christians of the East (Copts, Armenians, Syro-Chaldeans, etc.). “In Eastern Europe the Unia became a wedge in the hands of the Latin-minded Polish and Lithuanians and the Hapsburgs to contend against Tsarism, the ‘protector’ of Orthodoxy, and to make up for losses resulting from the outbreak of Protestantism.”⁵ With the promise of absolute “protection” on the part of the European powers, economic assistance, and the use of public welfare agencies (schools, hospitals, etc.), the Unia set out unhampered in its proselytizing activities. This happens in our country [Greece] also. Especially in countries with which the Vatican has entered into diplomatic relations (“concordats”), the activity of the Unia is automatically intensified and strengthened.

III. But what is not taken into account, not only by those who are not specialists in these questions, but sometimes even by theologians, is that the Unia does not form a bridge between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, but consists of Eastern Christians, fully incorporated into Roman Catholicism, who simply preserve the Orthodox “rite,” so that they can deceive the Orthodox and more easily extend the influence of their base of power (the Vatican). The Uniates are Roman Catholics of the “Greek Rite,” and for this reason in the last century our people referred to them as “*Catolic*” and never “*Catholic*,” since in our ecclesiastical nomenclature the latter term means “Orthodox.” This has particular importance, because some Orthodox have of late proposed that, as a solution to the Uniate problem, the Uniates be “absorbed” either by the Roman Catholic Church or by the Orthodox Church. The Uniates, as I have said, are an independent rite of Roman Catholics (having their own liturgical customs), and their absorption by the Roman Catholic Church

⁴ J.N. Karmiris, *The Dogmatic and Credal Statements of the Orthodox Church* [in Greek] (Athens, 1960), Vol. I, p. 421.

⁵ See “The Uniate Problem, Yesterday and Today,” by the theologian A. Panotits, in the periodical *Ekklesiastike Aletheia*, February 16, 1991, p. 3.

is not a problem, since they belong to it! Their “absorption” by *Orthodoxy* is the problem, because then we would have a “return” to Orthodoxy which cannot take place so simply and spontaneously....

IV. The influence of the Unia is exercised today most obviously in the troubled countries of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. How many people know, for example, that the belligerent “Christians” of the Middle East, about whom the mass media frequently make such a fuss, are not Orthodox, but Uniates? Our political world and our people, too—chiefly those who are disposed to favor the West—are taken by the anti-Marxist politics of Roman Catholicism in countries like Poland, but overlook the adverse position—tragic, purely and simply—in which the Orthodox find themselves in these regions, oppressed by the Latins and, especially, by the Uniates. Indeed, with millions of Orthodox continually becoming Uniates, these Orthodox have recently been reduced to a small minority (e.g. scarcely 100,000 to 150,000 in Czechoslovakia).

The Uniate and Papist propaganda that is being promulgated in these countries today is ruthless and inexorable to the point that the Orthodox view the behavior of the Stalinist régime as more benevolent than that of the Vatican and the Unia towards them. There is no validity at all in the argument that the Unia “was attacked by the red violence of Communism and spent time in the catacombs,” something which rests on the assumption that the Uniates of Eastern Europe are characterized by an attitude of “resistance.” But can we forget the treacherous and unpatriotic rôle of the Unia in these countries? Because of the Vatican’s “concordat” with the Nazi régime, not only did the Uniates collaborate with the Nazi invaders, but they carried out horrible and bloody persecutions against the Orthodox—and these persecutions, unfortunately, are continued even today.

V. Indeed, it is not only a matter of the audacity with which the Uniates—reinforced by the presence of a multitude of Roman Catholics (clergy, monastics, and laity), who hasten *en masse* to support them—seize buildings, engage in social persecution against Orthodox, place them under moral pressure, and even annihilate them (Orthodox have already died in Ukraine); but it is also the relentless and methodical attempt that they make to falsify history in order to

lead the people astray and subjugate them. An egregious specimen of this Uniate propaganda was recently brought to me by a young Czech Orthodox, a graduate of the Theological School of Presov. His name is Jan Zozoulak and he came to Greece to pursue post-graduate studies at the University of Athens. Mr. Zozoulak handed me a photocopy of an article from the periodical *Doukla*,⁶ which is the most widely circulated publication in his country, entitled “Love and Understanding.” He translated part of it for me, in which we read:

... The Orthodox struggle to prove, by putting forth false information, that three hundred years ago everything belonged to them. They forget, however, that three hundred years ago they did not have even a single building, because the Greek Catholic⁷ Christians possessed everything that existed at that time.... A short while ago, we celebrated the millennium of the Christianization of Russia, which received the Christian faith in 988, when the Greek Catholic [read: Uniate] Church was more closely tied to Rome. The schism between the West and East began in 1054 (see the *Soviet Encyclopedia*⁸). No reasonable man can doubt that our Saints, the Apostles Cyril and Methodios, were Greek Catholics [read: Uniates], under the jurisdiction of Rome. They visited the Holy Father in Rome three times in order to assure him that their teaching was correct. The Pope consecrated them bishops and made them Archbishops for the whole of Panonia. If they had not belonged to Rome at that time, they would definitely have sought help in all of their difficulties and problems from the Patriarch of Constantinople. These are the facts and the truth. Anyone who does not believe them should learn history better....

VI. This is the text—a sample of contemporary Uniate propaganda in Czechoslovakia. Its implications take on enormous dimensions, since a factual response is almost fruitless, especially when the article in question cites the *Soviet Encyclopedia* on these matters! Consequently, the closing phrase, “he should learn history better,” borders on the comical, addressed as it is to unfortunate and mis-

⁶ No. 45, November 1990.

⁷ This is the name used there for Uniates.

⁸ This citation is in the article itself.

informed readers by an author who himself plumbs the depths of ignorance. But is it ignorance or odious propaganda? We are more inclined to believe the latter, since it is inconceivable that so many “mistakes” should be made. We hasten to note the following:

(a) We shall not, for the moment, take a position on the issue of to whom the disputed buildings in question belong. It is well known, however, that the Unia was forcibly imposed in Eastern Slovakia⁹ only from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and the Orthodox, as a result, who had already existed there for many years, certainly could not have lived as homeless people and as...wanderers.

(b) In 988 the “Greek Catholic” Church, that is, the Uniates, did not exist, except for the Latin Franks, whom “Byzantine” (Roman) missionaries had already been facing for a century.¹⁰

(c) The schism did not begin, but only became *official* in 1054. It was not a schism between West and East in general, but between the “Romans,” namely the Orthodox of East and West, and the Franks and “frankicized,” Western (former) Orthodox.¹¹

(d) Saints Methodios and Cyril—Greeks, brothers from Thessaloniki—were not “Greek Catholics” or Uniates, but Roman, that is, Orthodox, missionaries sent (in 862) by the “Byzantine” (Roman) Emperor of New Rome (Constantinople), Michael III and the Oecumenical Patriarch, Photios the Great, to the Western Slavs, in order to face the Frankish missionaries.¹²

(e) These Saints were in contact with (Old) Rome and they visited its Pope (Patriarch), since he was still Orthodox and held the same faith as the Eastern Patriarchs. The throne of Old Rome was to fall into the control of the Franks in the eleventh century (1046), and for this reason 1054 would be determined as the date of the schism.

⁹ See Christopher Pouletz (present Metropolitan of Moravia), *History of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia During the 19th and 20th Centuries* [Greek text] (Athens, 1986), p. 257.

¹⁰ Father John S. Romanides, “Saints Cyril and Methodios: Greek Representatives of the Latins to the Slavs Against the Franks,” in the periodical *Gregorios Ho Palamas*, 1971, pp. 273-281.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

¹² See Vlasios J. Pheidias, *Church History* [in Greek] (Athens, 1977), Vol. 2, pp. 107f.

(f) As I have already noted, Saints Cyril and Methodios—and only the latter became a bishop, while the former died young—not only had the support of Constantinople, but were also sent from there to the Slavs.

VI. That all of this is not a matter, however, of “ignorance” of history, but of concocted propaganda, is obvious from the symphony of the ideas of the journalist who authored this piece with the activities of the present Pope. The latter recently named Saints Methodios and Cyril “Patrons of Europe,” something that inspired enthusiasm in those who were ignorant of Vatican jargon and who did not understand its “words and ways.” The Pope, in the spirit of civilized “mutual recognition” as a basis for union, presented these Greek missionaries as Europeans and, as a result, bearers either of the same tradition as the West or of another tradition, but one parallel with it (a “sister”). Otherwise, he would never have declared them—as he would never declare St. Photios the Great, St. Gregory Palamas, or St. Mark Eugenikos—“patrons” of a post-Carolingian Europe!

To be sure, the holy Enlighteners of the Slavs, Methodios and Cyril, engaged in no greater spiritual combat than that with the anti-Orthodox and anti-Hellenic Frankish spirit, which menacingly invaded the Orthodox East in the ninth century. Moreover, their mission aspired precisely to check the spread of an alien Frankish Christianity, which the Pope represents today as a religio-political pinnacle of the “frankicized” West. This is why these two Saints can be regarded as anything but the spiritual forerunners of contemporary Europe and the papacy. Such a thesis constitutes the greatest blasphemy against their sacred memory.

Finally, the question which ultimately persists is why the Vatican directs and tolerates the Unia, especially in an era of theological dialogue with the East, and reinforces its propagandistic activity in the countries of the East, shooting torpedoes not only at theological dialogue, but also at European unification itself.¹³ For the activity of the Unia, which is unfolding so provocatively and brazenly, is bound to widen, above all, the chasm between Roman Catholicism and

¹³ See the justifiable reaction of the Orthodox, under the aegis of the Oecumenical Patriarch, in the periodical *Ekklesia*, February 15, 1991, pp. 83-84.

Orthodoxy and rekindle hatred and hostility. Appearances convince us, unfortunately, that the Vatican continues to view inter-Christian unity with the criteria and presuppositions of the era of the Synod of Ferrara-Florence.



Father Metallinos' insightful and pious article reinforces what we traditionalists have always said: that the ecumenical movement is motivated not by a desire for religious toleration and mutual understanding, but by political expediency. And the question is not just one of Vatican aims, but of Orthodox ecumenists, who have been so long silent and who have shown anything but tolerance to us moderate Old Calendarists. Eds.

Source: *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (1992), pp. 25-27.