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REPORT ON CONVERSATION WITH ARCHPRIEST  
VITALY BOROVVOY OF THE RUSSIAN PATRIARCH-  
ATE DURING THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Introductory Note: This report, written by Walter Dushnyck, editor of The Ukrainian Quarterly and The Ukrainian Bulletin, is based on a three and a half hour conversation, held on Wednesday, October 30, 1963 at the "Columbus Restaurant" in Rome. The interview was sought by Mr. Dushnyck through the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which is headed by Augustine Cardinal Bea, and it was arranged by Rev. John F. Long, S.J., an American Jesuit, who is secretary to Msgr. J. Willebrands, Secretary to Cardinal Bea. This report was written from notes made immediately after the meeting was over.

1. Language of Conversation: Immediately after the telephone contact was made with Msgr. Borovoy the question arose in what language should the meeting be held, and when a proposal came to use the English, Russian, French, Ukrainian or Polish language, Msgr. Borovoy insisted that the conversation be conducted in Ukrainian. Thus the conversation was conducted in Ukrainian, but at times, especially when Msgr. Borovoy got excited, he switched to Russian, which evidently was easier for him than Ukrainian.

Although a series of questions was prepared beforehand, the conversation was free enough and eventually all the questions were exhausted and covered.

2. Nationality of Msgr. Borovoy: At the outset of the meeting Msgr. Borovoy said that he was a Byelorussian, and not a Russian, that his wife and son also considered themselves to be Byelorussian. Yet the Russian language was the spoken language in their home. He stated that he was from Western Byelorussia and before 1939 attended the University of Warsaw and studied under such Ukrainian professors as Dr. Alexander Lototsky, Prof. Dmytro Doroshenko and Prof. Ivan Ohienko (now the Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolitan in Winnipeg, Man., Canada). He knows well modern Ukrainian history, including both the history of the Ukrainian Catholic and the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches.

3. The Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Council: Msgr. Borovoy stated that the Russian Orthodox Church is keenly interested in the Ecumenical Council. He believes that the presence of non-Catholic observers at the Council is a very beneficial step for both Catholics and non-Catholics. Further rapprochement between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican will depend on the general policies of the New Pope and the general tenor and attitude of the Council Fathers. He iterated that the Russian Orthodox Church recognizes the Pope as "the first Bishop of Christianity," but is vehemently opposed to several doctrinal positions of the Catholic Church, such as the doctrine of Papal infallibility, "arbitrariness," "totalitarianism" of the Catholic Church, and the like. The Russian Orthodox Church wants to be on "a par" with the Roman Catholic Church. He believes in the usefulness

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of the Council, providing that the present Pope, Paul VI, will follow in the footsteps of Pope John XXIII.

4. Release of Metropolitan Joseph Slipy: In reply to a question as to his role in the release of Metropolitan Joseph Slipy, Archbishop of Lviv, Ukraine, from 18-year confinement in Soviet jails, Msgr. Borovoy replied that he recommended the release of the Ukrainian prelate to the Patriarch in Moscow, and the recommendation was accepted. He added that he risked his own career by proposing the release of the Ukrainian Metropolitan.

5. Denounces Union with Rome: Msgr. Borovoy, in discussing the history of the Ukrainian Church, said that the Union of Brest (1596) was forcibly imposed on Ukraine and Byelorussia by Poland and that it was an instrument of Polish imperialism; he sees no bright future for the Catholic Church in Ukraine and Byelorussia and, Russia proper. Although he was against the union with Rome, he said, he was and is against the forcible conversion of Ukrainian Catholics to Orthodoxy. In 1945-46, he stated, this conversion occurred in Western Ukraine, but although the Soviet government had a lot to do with it, there "was a spontaneous movement" among the people toward Orthodoxy.

6. "Poles Are Not Your Brothers": In discussing the history of the Union of Brest, Msgr. Borovoy bitterly denounced Poland and the Poles saying that "the Poles are not the brothers of Ukrainians and Byelorussians, but their enemies; it is Russians who are brothers of Ukrainians and Byelorussians." He stated that any Ukrainian church or political orientation relying on the help of Poles will meet with utter disaster in Ukraine. Msgr. Borovoy also assailed the Ukrainian emigration in the United States and Canada which, he said, wants to "liberate Ukraine with American dollars."

7. Return of Metropolitan Slipy to Ukraine: In replying to how he interprets Metropolitan Slipy's statement that he (Slipy) will or wants to return to Ukraine, Msgr. Borovoy declared that his return depends entirely upon Metropolitan Slipy himself, which, by implication, meant how he conducted himself as a Soviet citizen outside Ukraine. He went into a long harangue and made sarcastic remarks that Metropolitan Slipy had already found such advisers and mentors as Prof. Volodymyr Kubyovych of Paris. He also was sarcastic about the announced plans for the establishment of a Ukrainian Catholic University in Rome, and the conference of the Ukrainian Christian Movement which was held at that time in Rome with some 50 Ukrainian intellectuals taking part in it.

8. Restoration of Ukrainian Catholic Church: Asked for his opinion as to whether the Soviet government will restore the Ukrainian Catholic Church in western Ukraine (destroyed in 1945-46), Msgr. Borovoy was hesitant and gave neither a positive nor a negative reply. He said that this step would depend on three conditions:

a) Whether there are in Ukraine people who would willingly and openly admit that they were Catholics;

b) Whether they would have courage to register as Catholics and demand that a Ukrainian Catholic administration be approved by the

Soviet government;

c) The willingness of the Soviet government to restore the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

9. The Ukrainian Patriarchate: Asked for a comment on the propos of Metropolitan Slipy at the Ecumenical Council for the creation of a Ukrainian Patriarchate in Kiev (the Kiev-Halych Patriarchate), Msgr. Borovoy had no comment, although he said that the Moscow Patriarchate would undoubtedly be not in favor of such a new body. He said that to have two patriarchates (Catholic and Orthodox) in one country creates antagonistic feelings! (He mentioned the tense relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch).

He went further and said that there are now four candidates for the metropolithan throne in Kiev: a ) the present Metropolitan on Kiev Ioan (Msgr. Borovoy described him as a "Russian and completely, utterly incapable of administering the archdiocse, and who, through negligence and mismanagement contributed to the closing of the ecclesiastical seminary in Kiev); b) Metropolitan Ilarion of Winnipeg; c) Metropolitan Ioan Theodorovych of Philadelphia and d) Metropolitan Joseph Slipy, the first three being Orthodox and the latter Catholic. Msgr. Borovoy stated that the Russian Orthodox Church would undoubtedly be opposed to the establishment of a Ukrainian patriarchate.

10. Why No Ukrainian Orthodox Church? He further stressed that the Russian Orthodox Church does not recognize the Ukrainian Orthodox Church inasmuch as it claims the whole former Kievan metropolitanate as its own heritage. There are no separate Ukrainian or Byelorussian Orthodox Church organizations. He said that he told the Patriarch of Moscow that an Orthodox Metropolitan in Kiev should be a Ukrainian and not a Russian. He said further that there is a Ukrainian Orthodox Church (with the Ukrainian language) in Kiev, and in all Orthodox church in Ukraine priests and bishops use more of the Ukrainian language rather than the Church Slavonic language.

Msgr. Borovoy also explained that the affair of the Pochaiv Monastery in Volhynia, Ukraine, was due to Abbot Sebastian's black market speculations and corruption of state officials rather than to a deliberate anti-religious policy of the Soviet government.

11. The Position of the Russian Orthodox Church: Msgr. Borovoy stated that the position of the Russian Orthodox Church is very precarious: the church has no auxiliary organizations, cannot conduct any social action, maintain school and orphanages or do any other charitable work which is done by the church in the free world. He said that there were many Orthodox bishops in jails and prisons in the USSR.

12. Russification: In reply to a question regarding the Russification of Ukraine, Msgr. Borovoy said that the Russification process is spontaneous, inasmuch as the Soviet government is interested in the economic development rather than in the national problem. The populations transfers are made to suit the economic needs, he added. He explained that in the XVth, XVI and XVIIth centuries

it was the Ukrainians and Byelorussians who brought culture to Muscovy, now the process is reversed and the Russians think that they are bringing new culture to Ukraine and Byelorussia.

He declared that Ukraine exists, and it will never be modelled upon the image of a refugee Ukraine, and he again excitedly denounced the "futile efforts of Ukrainians in America and Canada to liberate Ukraine."

13. Western Ukraine: Msgr. Borovoy was very bitter in denouncing Western Ukrainians (Catholics) for their alleged intolerance and exclusive nationalism. He said that they never can rule Ukraine, because they are very anti-Russian and "don't understand the psychology of Eastern Ukrainians" and cannot get along with the Russians.

14. Ukrainian Catholic Bishops in the Free World: Msgr. Bobovoy was also very bitter about the fact that in his opinion he was "completely ignored and snubbed" by all the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops who attended the Ecumenical Council. He named such prelates as Metropolitans Hermaniuk and Senyshyn, Archbishops Buchko and Bukatko, and Bishops Borecky and Sapelak. "All are avoiding me," exclaimed Msgr. Borovoy, "as if I were an anti-Christ." He made one exception: he praised Bishop Nicholas Elko, Exarch of Pittsburgh for Catholics of the Byzantine rite of Carpatho-Ukraine, who he said was very cordial to him and treated him with friendship and consideration.

Msgr. Borovoy was also critical of Archbishop Mstyslav Skrypnyk of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States who was enroute to Rome as a Ukrainian Orthodox observer at the Ecumenical Council, and added that Archbishop Mstyslav's political past was an impediment to his church career.

15. The Ukrainian Catholic Church in the Diaspora: Msgr. Borovoy said that the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the diaspora seems to be well organized, although the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, he said, is split into several groups. He persistently repeated that "you cannot bring your church to Ukraine from America," and that the Ukrainian people must be left to their own particular pattern of progress and development "even if this is not what you in America would like to see for your country of origin."

16. Query on S. Bandera: Msgr. Borovoy also asked whether it was true that the alleged killer of Stepan Bandera had defected to Western Germany and whether he actually confessed the killing of the Ukrainian nationalist leader. He said that he heard something to that effect but was not sure, or rather, he wanted to have more details about the case.

He took two copies of The Ukrainian Quarterly and The Ukrainian Bulletin, and gave two addresses to which Ukrainian publications could be mailed, and another address for personal communications and letters, if such are intended.

In parting, Msgr. Borovoy stated that "Ukraine will find its own

road, and that neither Kennedy, Khrushchev, Slipy, Borovoy or Dushnyck can do anything about it."

He asked for continuous contact and said that he was flying to Moscow next day to report on the following:

- a) Does the present Pope continue the line of Pope John XXIII?
- b) Does the second session of the Ecumenical Council contribute to the relaxation of international tension;
- c) What Metropolitan Slipy has been doing since his release and arrival in Rome on February 9, 1963.

Msgr. Borovoy said that he had met and talked with Metropolitan Slipy since his (Borovoy's) arrival for the second session of the Ecumenical Council.

INTERVIEW WITH MSGR. J. WILLEBRANDS,  
SECRETARY OF CARDINAL BEA

On Tuesday, November 5, 1963 an impromptu interview was arranged with Msgr. J.G.M. Willebrands, Secretary to Cardinal Bea, head of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. The questions raised during the interview were as follows:

- a) The restoration of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine;
- b) The creation of a Ukrainian Patriarchate;
- c) The attitude of the Russian Patriarchate toward the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the proposed Ukrainian patriarchate.

In essence, Msgr. Willebrands reported, of the record, the following:

The release of Metropolitan Slipy from Soviet jails and concentration camps occurred with the knowledge and approval of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is assumed in the Vatican that both the Soviet government and the Moscow Patriarchate in releasing Metropolitan Slipy gave the understanding that they may be amenable to the restoration of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine. The USSR, on the whole, Msgr. Willebrands stated, is undergoing vast internal changes, and the Soviet government is trying to accommodate the Catholic Church, and there is a hope that it will restore the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

As to the establishment of a Ukrainian patriarchate in Kiev, he was not certain whether it is historically correct, as Kiev is the seat of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, not of Ukrainian Catholicism. But, if Metropolitan Slipy returns to Ukraine, he should return as a recognized head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. He warned that in the event of the restoration of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine, it should not become a tool of Ukrainian political parties or groups, inasmuch as the Soviet

secret police is still very strong, and all the efforts of the Vatican may be brought to nil if the Ukrainians would give it a cause for the dissolution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church again.

He intimated that top-notch negotiations are going on, although he is not taking part in them, but he asserted that the climate is very appropriate now for the re-establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine.