

Part V

Chapter 2: The Relationship of the Church Abroad to Other Russian Émigré Churches

Since 1926/27, the Church Abroad has claimed to be the only legitimate heir to the Russian Church. In the preceding chapter, an attempt was made to describe the relationship between the Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate. Before the break between the émigré Church and the Mother Church, there was already a schism in the emigration.

As already set forth in detail, the Western European and North American Russian émigré communities, under the leadership of Metropolitans Eulogius and Platon, had already split off in 1926. Both groups, the Paris Jurisdiction and the North American Metropolia, now claimed to be the only representation of the Russian Church emigration. Although both Metropolitans Eulogius and Platon were agreed that they had more well-founded canonical claims to the leadership of their communities than the Synod in Karlovtsy, these two groups never united against the Church Abroad. A union of both these groups failed, presumably because Metropolitan Eulogius claimed, by right of the Patriarch's Decree of 22 April/5 May 1922, to have been entrusted with the care of "the communities outside of Russia"¹ and understood this to include all communities outside of the Soviet Union, thus, also those in North America; whereas Platon based his claim to the rule of the North American communities on the Patriarch's Decrees of 14/27 April 1922 and of September 1923.² There has been no lack of attempts in the course of history by both these groups to spread its jurisdiction to other territories. However, they avoided intruding upon each other's territory. Metropolitan Eulogius attempted to subject the communities in North Africa and Asia Minor as "Greater Europe" to his jurisdiction. Metropolitan Platon limited himself to the whole of America, the Far East, and Australia. To what extent both jurisdictions entered into

conflict over the claim to represent the Church emigration is not known. It is to be assumed that, at least since 1936, when the Metropolia reunited with the Church Abroad, the Paris Group likewise viewed the Metropolia as uncanonical, because the Metropolia was now part of the Church Abroad. There are no public statements on the stance of the Paris Group towards the Metropolia. It would certainly have been interesting if both jurisdictions' press of that time had attempted to reconcile their interrelationship. Such an attempt would also have been significant from the aspect of credibility in the canonical argument, because many teachers from the St. Sergius Institute and Paris clergy joined the Metropolia after 1945 and emigrated to the U.S.A. Their number included John (Shakhovskoi), who had joined Eulogius in 1931, and later the Metropolia; on both occasions he cited "important canonical reasons."³

The real conflict between the three Russian émigré Churches took place between the Church Abroad and the other two jurisdictions. Both in scope as well as in acridity, the strife between the Paris Jurisdiction and the Church Abroad predominated. This applies to the years when Metropolitan Eulogius was head of the Paris Jurisdiction. After his death in 1946, the conflict was greatly stepped down. The reason for this lay not so much with the person of Metropolitan Eulogius, but rather with the general development of the Paris Group, which lost much of its importance after World War II. This was because it lost almost all of its communities outside of France: in England, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany and North Africa many communities separated themselves from Paris and joined the Church Abroad and the Patriarchal Church. Thus, it lost almost all of its influence in England and Belgium after the communities there chose not to remain with Eulogius, but rather to join the Moscow Patriarchate, with which they united in 1945. There were further schisms in 1965 and 1970, when the Œcumenical Patriarchate released the Russian communities from its jurisdiction and then received them

again. This time, most of the parishes joined the Church Abroad. Besides this numerical setback, the Paris group also lost much of its former theological and spiritual importance. The most famous representatives of the St. Sergius Institute died in the 1940s; others immigrated to America and joined the faculty of St. Vladimir's Seminary. Yet it was not the loss of personnel alone that decreased the importance of this institution of learning. The Moscow Patriarchate's reëntury into the Church life of the West led to a situation in which the Church of Russia's theological and interconfessional talks could be conducted once again by the Patriarchal Church. Before 1945, St. Sergius Institute in Paris had for the most part fulfilled this function—at least with regard to the Protestant and Anglican Churches.

The real discussion with the Paris Group started in 1927. In an anonymous article, which appeared in that year, the author posed the question as to whether one could speak of a "schism" between Eulogius and Anthony in a canonical sense at all. He came to the conclusion that a schism only exists if a separation from the Universal Church takes place on dogmatic grounds and no sacramental community exists any longer. With the schism of the Russian Church, the author contends that this is not the case. This matter lies neither in a struggle over dogmatic questions, nor in a separation from other Orthodox Churches, including the Mother Church. The separation touches first and foremost upon questions of secular administrative importance. In the instance of a complete separation of individual hierarchs, one could not in any case speak of a schism, because both groups still remain part of the Universal Church and maintain communion with other Orthodox Churches.⁴

Even to the present day, the Paris Group, following this argument, has justified their submission to the Œcumenical Patriarch after they left Moscow's jurisdiction in 1931. At the same time, they accused the Church Abroad of being a schismatic Church because, the

anonymous writer alleges, in 1945 it left the Universal Church and the communion of other Orthodox Churches.

In the appeal of the Third Pan-Diaspora Council of the Church Abroad to the Russian Archdiocese in Western Europe (Paris Jurisdiction) the following argument for the establishment of Church unity was made: “We maintain that one of the reasons that led to our separation indubitably lay in the fact that you are always concerned about attaining recognition of your ecclesiastical existence from the whole of the Orthodox world and have believed that the pallium of the Patriarch of Constantinople guarantees you this . . . Viewed from your standpoint, we find ourselves bereft of official recognition by the whole Orthodox world (which, however, has never officially expelled us) since the last War and are in a canonically irregular position, having committed an error. Let us assume for a moment that this is true. We, however, perceive the uncertainty of your own situation, that you yourself do not enjoy recognition from anyone except the Patriarch of Constantinople. Think back on that sad moment when, a few years ago, the Patriarch, without regard for any circumstances, left its Russian Exarchate of Western Europe in the care of the Patriarch of Moscow, which caused grief, confusion and consternation in your midst.⁵ ... Are you safe from similar surprises in the future? Is it not possible to draw the following conclusion from all of this: through the Patriarch of Constantinople, you are recognized by all the Orthodox world, yet for the same reason you are dependent upon unforeseeable, and possibly undesirable, actions of the Patriarchate.⁶

It has always been its freedom that the Church Abroad has furnished as its main argument, independent of all other conditions, in order to be able to speak and act in the interests of the Church of Russia and of "true Orthodoxy." The Church Abroad stands upon the conviction that, in holding fast to the unity of the whole Church of Russia, it functions as part of

the Universal Church. The Patriarchate also takes part in this grace; even if the leadership of the Church is compromised, the Church of Russia still remains a member of the Universal Church. Therefore, the Church Abroad does not need official recognition by the Orthodox world in order to be part of the Universal Church. The Church Abroad also does not seek this recognition because its canonical existence was vouchsafed by Patriarch Tikhon's Decree of 1920, which "also guarantees our membership in the Church of Russia tried by suffering."⁷

The opponents of the Church Abroad use its isolation within the Orthodox world as the main argument that the Church Abroad is a schismatic group. About that, all the opposing viewpoints—the Patriarchal Church, the Paris Jurisdiction and the American Metropolia—are agreed.⁸

In the conflicts between the émigré groups, each has tried to trace the "canonically legitimate path and the ecclesiastically legal existence" back to Patriarch Tikhon. Thus, the writings of the disputant parties are all basically concerned with justifying their existence by Patriarch Tikhon's various decrees.⁹ Certainly, it is here that the external causes that led to the schism among the three Churches lie. They should not, however, be presented as the only causes of the schism, thereby overestimating their significance. The real causes for the complete split of the three émigré groups should not be sought in canonical disputes alone. If one considers that all three parts can be traced back to the one Church of Russia of 1918, and all highly venerate the head of this Church, Patriarch Tikhon, the question raised is simply this: What so alienated these Churches from one another that appeals to reestablish Church unity, if they are published at all, are basically doomed to failure?

This was demonstrated, for example, during the Third Pan-Diaspora Council of the Church Abroad in 1974. The Council published appeals to the OCA and the Russian

Archdiocese in Western Europe to reestablish Church unity. While the First Hierarch of the OCA, Metropolitan Irenaeus answered the First Hierarch of the Church Abroad directly, Archbishop George (Tarasov) of the Paris Group answered only indirectly. In a communiqué to the faithful of the Archdiocese he assigned Bishop George (Wagner) to reply to the Council's appeal indirectly. The publisher of "The Herald" (Paris) himself considered it appropriate that this communiqué to the clergy and laity of the Western European Archdiocese was, at the same time, to be regarded as the answer to the Council."¹⁰ These appeals all contained conciliatory words, yet all three Churches remained steadfast in their known convictions and justified anew their stance of rejection. A readiness to continue the dialogue was not discernable. Whereas the Paris Group placed the necessity of relations with the Œcumenical Patriarchate, the Mother of the Russian Church, at the crux of their argument, Metropolitan Irenaeus defended the newly-obtained autocephaly and rejected the reproach that they were dependent upon the Moscow Patriarchate through the granting of autocephaly. Also, "after receiving autocephaly we will never be silenced about the Russian Church, which is tried by suffering".

The diverse evaluations of the ecclesiastical policies of Metropolitan Sergius and his successors deepened the canonical differences within the Russian émigré Churches. After Metropolitan Eulogius and his parishes joined Metropolitan Sergius, the Church Abroad saw this as "a betrayal" of the Russian Orthodox Church of Patriarch Tikhon. It remains incomprehensible to the Synod how a Russian bishop, living in freedom, could unite with the captive part of the Russian Church. The accusations that a reconciliation with the Patriarchal Church is equivalent to silence about the persecution of the Church and the faithful in the Soviet Union have persisted until the present day. Eulogius's joining Metropolitan Sergius was therefore always condemned.¹¹ The sharpening of the ecclesio-political style received coverage in the

émigré press, where ecclesiastical questions were increasingly forced into the background and political ones into the fore. Over the course of time, there was more and more concern over how to appraise the Soviet regime and what course the Church leadership in Russia had to take.¹²

After Metropolitan Eulogius was suspended from serving by Metropolitan Sergius on account of disobedience, there was a general closing of both conflicting émigré standpoints. A reunification of the separated Churches no longer seemed to be impossible. Metropolitan Eulogius himself designated the year 1934 as "conciliatory." During the reunification talks and shortly before, Metropolitan Anthony stressed that the misfortune of the schism in no way had its roots in the personal relationship between the two metropolitans. They had never "been in a state of enmity" and had always felt a "feeling of deep friendship" towards one another.

Certainly these words were sincerely meant and corresponded to Metropolitan Anthony's attitude. In his memoirs, Metropolitan Eulogius also speaks with particular warmth of his meeting with Metropolitan Anthony.¹³ According to sources available to us today and the impressions gleaned by Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) (as secretary, he took part in all negotiations), Eulogius seems, however, to have been under the influence of a wealthy and influential faction in Paris, which did not want the restoration of Church unity under the direction of the Synod of Bishops. It says much that Eulogius' participation was a result of the more general opinion within the emigration, which at this time desired unity.¹⁴

Moreover, that the personal relationship, despite all disagreements, was good and remained so, may perhaps also illustrate the fact that after the death of Metropolitan Eulogius in 1946, Metropolitan Anastasius served a panikhida (memorial service) and consoled his successor, Archbishop Vladimir over his death.¹⁵ Archbishop Vitalis (Maximenko) behaved likewise upon the death of Metropolitan Theophilus in 1950. He held a panikhida at Holy Trinity

Monastery. Archbishop Tikhon (Troitsky) had paid the ailing metropolitan a sick call and after his death served a panikhida at the cathedral in San Francisco.*¹⁶

Indeed, these steps of reconciliation at the end of a short period made a new reunification in North America seem possible. The different interpretations of the ecclesio-political events in the Soviet Union since 1941 had led to a closing between the Metropolia and the Patriarchal Church, with a simultaneous alienation between the Metropolia and the Church Abroad. This ultimately led to the renewed schism of the Metropolia. After the negotiations with the Patriarchate failed, there was again a closing between the Metropolia and the Synod. After the Synod moved to the U.S.A., Archbishop Leontius (the successor to Metropolitan Theophilus) visited Metropolitan Anastasius. At this meeting, the latter proposed that relations between the two groups be set on a new basis "without the old dispute over canonical questions," bearing only "the spirit of brotherly love in Christ." The aim of these new relations was supposed to be the complete restoration of fellowship in prayer. Differences existed only in the evaluation of the Moscow Patriarchate. Leontius set forth his Church's stance, and indicated that only the Metropolia had the right to care for the faithful in America. He also proposed that all the faithful and all the clergy who emigrated to America from Europe should join the Metropolia.¹⁷ In practice, Leontius' proposal amounted to this: he would be able to accept a union with the Church Abroad under the condition that the latter withdraw from America. Under these circumstances, both Churches would be able to continue as regional émigré Churches and form a spiritual union in place of an administrative one.

At this point in time, the Metropolia was acting, however, out of a certain weakness: the negotiations with the Patriarchal Church from 1943-46 led to the separation of many of its parishes, which then joined the Patriarchate. Though the Patriarchate only had about six parishes

in 1945, it suddenly had 50 parishes in the summer of 1947!¹⁸ Some 65 parishes had joined the Synod. That meant a loss of almost one third of all its parishes. In addition to this, after 1945 the great majority of all émigrés entering from the Far East and Europe joined the Church Abroad.

With the election of Metropolitan Leontius as the new First Hierarch of the Metropolia, the principal proponent of autocephaly reached the pinnacle of the Metropolia. It was not vouchsafed him to see the granting of autocephaly, but under his leadership negotiations with the Patriarchal Church were carried on from 1961, resulting, ultimately in the granting of autocephaly in 1970. That these negotiations were spread out over almost 10 years shows that the Patriarchate had not decided upon the course lightheartedly. It dissolved its "Exarchate of North America," yet the unique situation existed, whereby over 60 of its own parishes remained on the territory of an autocephalous Church. This circumstance was similar to the situation in Eastern Europe, where the local Orthodox Churches had allowed the Russian émigré communities autonomous administration, and even their own dioceses, after World War I. The only difference was that in the earlier instance it involved real refugee communities, which were granted the status of guests, whereas in the U.S.A. refugees and émigrés had established all the parishes and the OCA understood itself to be the heir to these parishes.

The "semi-autocephaly" leaves many questions open, which the Patriarchate may actually have brought about by this step. Moscow probably hoped that an OCA, standing on its own, having received autocephaly from Moscow, would possess enough power of attraction to draw everyone into it. This would have led to a weakening of both the Church Abroad and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in that the majority of the faithful of this Patriarchate today live in the U.S.A. The weakening of the Church Abroad was probably the uppermost consideration, because the possibility of a union between the Church Abroad and the Metropolia could never be entirely

ruled out. A unified Church would not have been in Moscow's interests. With the Patriarchate of Constantinople, there were likewise many splits. A group of these divisions resulted in the parishes of the Paris Jurisdiction belonging to Constantinople. If Constantinople had released these parishes from its jurisdiction under pressure from Moscow, then it must have also used the breaks from Moscow, which resulted from the granting of autocephaly, to again receive the Western European Russian communities into its jurisdiction.¹⁹

The Church Abroad protested against the granting of autocephaly. It even sent a delegation, headed by Bishop Laurus (Skurla) and Archpriest G. Grabbe, to the Independence Day (July 4th) celebrations at St. Tikhon's Monastery. They brought a message from Metropolitan Philaret, in which he set forth his standpoint, that autocephaly would be uncanonical because Patriarch Tikhon had given charge of the North American communities to the Church Abroad. The representatives of the Metropolia refused to discuss this message.²⁰

With the granting of autocephaly, hope for the reestablishment of Church unity in North America seems to have been lost. Thus, the Third Pan Diaspora Council of the Church Abroad, in its appeal to the OCA, at first proposes collaboration: "We stretch out our hands to you as brothers, in order to seek ways to change the sinful Church schism. What we always desired to attain in this regard—be it collaboration, be it common help for the captive part of the Russian Church, be it our complete reunification—anything would be better than the situation in which we find ourselves now."²¹ In his reply to this epistle, Metropolitan Irenaeus²² welcomes the desire to overcome the schism and promises that, on his Church's part, they are prepared to "do everything that is required of them to reestablish the unity of faith and love between us." As the first step on this path, he sees the restoration of unity in prayer, above all else, in the most holy sacrament, the Eucharist."²³

Since these conciliatory words, nine years have passed. A rapprochement has not been forthcoming. Indeed, a hardening of both positions has taken place. The OCA is still trying to obtain recognition of its autocephaly in the Orthodox world. This has been refused time and again by a part of the Orthodox Churches—most notably those headed by the Œcumenical Patriarch.

The Church Abroad rejects the OCA today most of all for its modernism. For example, the parishes may decide, by voting, whether they want to follow the Old or New Style Calendar. Another example of this modernism was the elevation to metropolitan of the First Hierarchy, Metropolitan Theodosius. This did not take place in a church, but rather in a large assembly hall. Within the Church Abroad, this brought about vehement disapproval.²⁴ Criticisms are, however, also forthcoming in the matter of innovations that disturb the substance of Orthodox piety and tradition. Many parishes have shortened the duration of the Liturgy to 40-45 minutes, because the traditional two-hour long divine services are "too much of a demand upon the faithful."²⁵ Many of the faithful rejected autocephaly as well as this modernism. Various former Metropolia communities joined the Church Abroad. Archbishop Ambrose (Merezhko) of Pittsburgh, an opponent of autocephaly, joined the Church Abroad because he rejected autocephaly and mistrusted too great a closening to the Moscow Patriarchate.²⁶

For more than two decades there have been no further relations with the Paris Jurisdiction. In 1961, there was an attempt to restore Church unity. An appeal for unity was made by well-known representatives of Russian spiritual life, joined in by various social organizations, and sent to Metropolitan Anastasius and Archbishop George (Tarasov).²⁷ Both hierarchs assured them that the establishment of unity was in their hearts. As the first step towards this, again the establishment of a communion of prayer was deemed necessary. There

was a joint service for the consecration of a Russian chapel in the St. Raphael Home for the Elderly, at which Bishop Anthony of Geneva for the Church Abroad and Bishop Methodius of Campanien for Paris concelebrated.²⁸ No other mutual steps followed this modest beginning.

In addition to these other two Russian Churches, there are two other Orthodox groups, which the Church Abroad considers to be in schism from the Russian Church, and which the Church Abroad, the Patriarchal Church, the Metropolia and the Paris Jurisdiction all reject. These are the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Belorussian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

The Ukrainian Autocephalists, like the Russian Church Abroad, are represented worldwide and have their own dioceses in North and South America, where about 130,000 faithful live, who are cared for by 3 bishops, 116 priests and 10 deacons. They also have their own dioceses in Australia (2,000 faithful), England and Western Europe (France, FRG and Austria) (4,000 faithful),²⁹ where there are also another two bishops. In addition to these Ukrainian autocephalists, there is another group in Canada called the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, which came into existence in 1918 and consisted of former Uniates. In their four Canadian dioceses, there are approximately 90,000-100,000 faithful.³⁰ This Church is independent and does not belong to the aforementioned Ukrainian Autocephalous Group. The Ukrainian Autocephalists trace their existence back to the national Church developments of 1918/19 in Ukraine, when a part of the Orthodox clergy and faithful wanted to separate from the Church of Russia and set up their own Church administration. Because these autocephalic strivings led to the total rejection of the Church of Russia, at a Church assembly in 1921 the Ukrainian Church declared itself autocephalous and consecrated from their midst, without the assistance of bishops, "Archbishop" Basil (Lypkivsky) as Metropolitan and First Hierarch of the

Ukrainian Autocephalous Church. In 1930, 30 "bishops" already belonged to this Church. Although the Soviet regime first promoted these strivings, just like the many other Church schisms, because they led to the weakening of the Patriarchal Church, after 1927 they turned against it brutally. By 1930, the Church was destroyed; its "bishops" and clergy had disappeared into concentration camps. [Trans., Lypkivsky himself was arrested and perished there; his writings were almost all destroyed in a bombing raid during the War.] This group was schismatic and heretical, and was known as the "self-consecrated" [Trans., "samosvyatsy" in Russian] because the consecrations of bishops and ordinations of priests were done in an uncanonical manner, by their own devices, and because autocephaly was self-proclaimed. Its clergy were placed under an anathema, and its faithful were excommunicated. Nonetheless, this Church existed around the world and had its own churches, parish schools, and charitable institutions. There were no seminaries.³¹

The Belorussian Autocephalous Church came into existence through a schism from the Belorussian Autonomous Orthodox Church, which had existed during the German occupation of Belorussia.³² While the latter had worked closely with the Church Abroad and strove only for an autonomous administration (similar to Ukrainian developments), wanting to remain under the jurisdiction of the Church of Russia, the autocephalists wanted to establish a national Church. Except for Bishop Paul (Melevtsev), the entire Belorussian clergy joined the Church Abroad at the Council of Bishops of 1946. The First Hierarch, Metropolitan Panteleimon (Rozhnovsky), who was 89 years old in 1946, no longer exercised his office at this time and lived in Camp Schliessheim near Munich, where he cared for a small Belorussian community. He was close to the Church Abroad and maintained warm contacts with it.

A part of the nationalist Belorussians, who also strove for governmental independence, separated from the autonomists and founded the Autocephalous Belorussian Church, whose First Hierarch was Sergius (Okhotenko), in Constance. About the composition and size of this Church, little is known. In the early 1950s, it was supposed to have had 33 parishes in the U.S.A. and Canada.³³

The Church Abroad also has no official relations with this national Church group, and considers them to be schismatic, like the Ukrainian autocephalists.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33