

Part I

Chapter 4

Church Development in the Years 1926–1928

The schism within the Russian Church in the emigration from 1926 and church developments in Soviet Russia during the years following Patriarch Tikhon's death have had a lasting influence on the further development of the Russian Church Abroad. The schism of the Western European and North American communities, and the differing appraisals of the policies of Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow, essentially determined the further development of the church emigration. In order to clarify the differences between the individual jurisdictions within the Russian Church, we shall henceforth distinguish between these jurisdictions: the Moscow Patriarchate, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, the Russian Orthodox Exarchate/Archdiocese in Western Europe (the Paris Jurisdiction), and the Russian Greek Catholic Orthodox Church in North America (the Metropolia).

The three Churches of the emigration were viewed as uncanonical by Patriarch Tikhon's successors, though this in no way hindered the Paris group from placing all its priests and bishops under the Patriarchal Jurisdiction for a time, or, after sixty years of discussion, the North American Metropolia from receiving "autocephaly" from Moscow, and thereafter (since 1970) being known as "The Orthodox Church in America and fighting for recognition as the fourteenth autocephalous Orthodox national church. The Church Abroad considered the Paris and North American groups to be schismatic and imposed a ban upon concelebration with the

episcopate and priests, a ban which was likewise reciprocated by both groups against the Church Abroad. The Moscow Patriarchate, i.e. the supreme ecclesiastical leadership of the Russian Church in the homeland, has considered the Church Abroad uncanonical since 1927. The accusations of the respective groups intensified over time to the extent that each individual group considered itself to be the only legitimate heir of the Russian Church and designates the other jurisdictions as “schismatic” (but never heretical). This also explains the fact that in receiving clergymen from one jurisdiction to another, only a formal release is required most of the time, accompanied by an ecclesiastical admission of repentance or penitence.¹

There was no lack of appeals calling for an end to the schism and to reestablish unity. Compromises abounded; thus Patriarch Alexis I proposed: “We shall restore to each bishop and clergyman the corresponding rank which he has held in the sacred service.” Many of the hierarchs who returned to the Moscow Patriarchate attained higher offices, such as Metropolitan Benjamin (Fedchenko), Metropolitan Seraphim (Lukianov), Metropolitan Nestor (Anisimov), and others.²

The opposing standpoints were and are, however, so diverse that no reunification has succeeded, with the exception of the American Metropolia, which was reconciled with the Church Abroad from 1936 to 1946. According to the Constitution of the Church Abroad, the reestablishment of full ecclesiastical unity can only be decided by a Council that includes the bishops of all parts of the Russian Church meeting in complete freedom. This doubtlessly genuine Orthodox principle of conciliar deliberations by the bishops on the future of the Russian Church has been impossible to realize thus far, and will not be realized as long as the Soviet government remains in power, keeping the Russian Church from having a free voice, from acting and speaking independently from the state and from the Communist Party’s control over the

expression of opinions.

Between the Church Abroad and the Paris Jurisdiction, as well as the American Metropolia, there was always an additional contradiction: the national versus the territorial principle. Archpriest George Grabbe (later Bishop Gregory) writes that one must separate the question of jurisdiction into the two following areas:

1. the area of the autocephalous Church, i.e., the territorial; and
2. the area outside this territory, i.e., the national.³

According to the territorial principle, all Orthodox believers, regardless of nationality, who live on the territory of an autocephalous Orthodox Church are subject to that Church. This principle was applied in the Russian Empire, where the Orthodox Estonians, Germans, Kirghiz, and Poles all belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church. The idea of establishing an Estonian Orthodox Church, a Belorussian Orthodox Church, or a Ukrainian Orthodox Church never manifested itself, from the canonical point of view, before 1917. This happened for the first time after the Revolution, when there were attempts to establish national states for the Ukrainians and Belorussians. The granting of autonomy or autocephaly to the Orthodox Churches of these nations could have been accomplished only by the Russian Church. The Patriarchate and the Church Abroad considered the founding of national Orthodox Churches in the Baltic States or in Poland to be uncanonical, and denied the Ecumenical Patriarchate's right to grant autonomy or autocephaly in these regions. In 1944, these Churches were absorbed by the Moscow Patriarchate.

Grabbe also maintains that the Russian parishes in Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Constantinople enjoyed a special status, which he terms "canonical hospitality," as recognized by Canon 39 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Indeed, he maintains that such refugee communities

do not constitute a parallel jurisdiction in any canonical sense. Their situation is more a matter of exercising the “law of love,” the benevolence of the national Church.

The national principle applies only in the diaspora, i.e., in areas outside the territory of a national Church. The Church Abroad bases itself on this principle. This means that there is a close bond between the Church and people. The Church Abroad is composed of all those of Russian nationality regardless of territorial considerations. However, “Russian nationality” is not narrowly defined to ethnic Russians alone, but to mean all those baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus, the jurisdiction of the Russian Church Abroad cannot be limited to a certain geographical area, but rather extends worldwide to care for all those who belong to the Russian Church, i.e., all those faithful who were baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church. The emphasis on “Russian nationality” also finds expression in the fact that even today the usage of Church Slavonic prevails in the majority of the Church Abroad’s parishes. In those places where a mission has been established within an indigenous community, allowances are made to permit the local language to be used in Divine Services and, if possible, to educate and prepare native speakers for the priesthood. It is on this basis that the Church Abroad never considered submitting itself to the Ecumenical Patriarch, because, as the “Russian Orthodox Church Abroad,” it has always formed an integral part of the one Russian Church, and has even been considered as such by the Moscow Patriarchate, which in its appeals for union addresses the “Russian flock” in the emigration, by which is meant the Church Abroad.

The Ecumenical Patriarch’s claim of jurisdiction over those who dwell in “barbarous lands,” i.e., non-Orthodox countries, was repudiated by the Russian Church before the Revolution, which had by then established communities in Western Europe, governed by the Metropolitan of Saint Petersburg, and had even created dioceses in America, China, and Japan.

The Church Abroad has continued to uphold this standpoint, as did the Patriarchal Church after its reentry into the church life of the Orthodox diaspora in the West.

The Paris Jurisdiction had made the Ecumenical Patriarch's principle its own, that the Orthodox Church, as a truly ecumenical Church above all ethnic and national divisions, can be divided along regional lines. Consequently, bishops have jurisdiction over a particular territory without consideration of ethnicity or nationality. The Patriarch of Constantinople stands as the first bishop among equals, having oversight over those faithful who live outside the territory of a national Church.⁴ That Constantinople itself has not always maintained this principle can be seen in the establishment of the "Russian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western Europe," which exists as a national diocese for the Russian Orthodox faithful within the "Greek Orthodox Metropolia of France."⁵ Similar special national situations also exist in the "Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America," where "Carpatho-Russian," "Ukrainian," and "Albanian" dioceses existed or still exist.⁶ The Russian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western Europe under the jurisdiction of Constantinople (Paris Jurisdiction) has for the most part preserved its Russian character, as was clearly expressed in negotiations with the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1971. In submitting itself to Constantinople, the Paris Jurisdiction has clearly recognized the territorial principle.⁷ This territorial principle is seen most clearly in the North American "Metropolia," which has since 1924 -- with an interruption from 1936-46 -- striven to be the local Orthodox Church in North America, to which all the Orthodox in North America of various nationalities should belong. The Metropolia achieved at least a partial success in 1970, when it was granted autocephaly by the Moscow Patriarchate.⁸

It is not the purpose of this work to investigate the canonicity of the individual jurisdictions. This must wait for a work on canon law. In the current study of church history, this

problem can only be touched upon. In the years since the schism of 1926, numerous works have been published which strive to prove the canonical legitimacy of the individual Russian jurisdictions. These works vary greatly in their arguments, but they have one trait in common: they were written by representatives of the respective jurisdictions and always pursue the goal of portraying their own jurisdiction as the blameless party in the schism, and those in the other jurisdictions as falsely interpreting the canons. Unfortunately, this has led to a hardening of divisions and to the deepening of disunity.⁹

The Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration entrusted the administration of the Western European Russian communities to Metropolitan Eulogius in the years 1920-22. As Metropolitan Eulogius himself writes, the Patriarch's Decree No. 424 of 26 March/8 April 1921 confirms the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration's previous appointment. In any case, transferring the Western European communities to him was a provisional measure until such a time as a regular administration by the Metropolitan of Saint Petersburg would again become possible.¹⁰ After Patriarch Tikhon's decree of May 1922, in which the Patriarch dissolved the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, this appointment remained valid, retaining, however, its provisional character.

Many years later, writing in his memoirs, Metropolitan Eulogius expresses himself unclearly, claiming that in the Patriarch's Decree No. 347 of 22 April/5 May 1922, ecclesiastical authority over the diaspora had been transferred to him alone.¹¹ In fact, the decree simply confirmed Metropolitan Eulogius in his position as administrator of the parishes in Western Europe. Metropolitan Eulogius, in his memoirs, equates the administration of the Russian parishes in Western Europe with authority over the entire diaspora.¹² Furthermore, he indicates that the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, after its dissolution, was supposed to work out a

“new plan for church administration.” The Patriarch’s aforementioned decree did not in any way touch upon this last point. Metropolitan Eulogius, however, presumably later interpreted it in this manner in order to justify his continuing involvement in the new order.

Furthermore, Metropolitan Eulogius’s plan to establish four metropolitan provinces with autonomous rights [trans., Far East, Western Europe, North America, and Eastern Europe] under the supreme authority of the Council of Bishops and the Synod of Bishops was, as mentioned, vetoed by the Council, although a limited autonomy was granted to the Western European province in 1923. Metropolitan Eulogius later viewed even this very autonomy of the Diocese of Western Europe alone as a distortion of the Patriarch’s wishes.¹³ If Metropolitan Eulogius saw the decision of the Council of Bishops in 1923 as a contravention of the authority of the Patriarch, then the questions arise: Why did Metropolitan Eulogius not call this uncanonical behavior to the attention of his peers? How could he have justified his attendance at the Council of Bishops in the following year? He writes that since the Council of 1923 there was an “ecclesiastical struggle” against him. Why then did he consult the Synod of Bishops? He did so, for example, when, in April of 1924, the Synod nominated Archimandrite Tikhon as vicar Bishop for Western Europe, with his see in Berlin, at Metropolitan Eulogius’s suggestion; the Synod consecrated Tikhon bishop in the same month. In that the All-Russian Council of 1917/18 legislated that only the supreme authority of the Church has the right to create new dioceses or vicariates, Metropolitan Eulogius must have still recognized the Karlovtsy Synod of Bishops as the supreme ecclesiastical administration, at least for the emigration. The fact that he considered the Karlovtsy Synod of Bishops competent to approve and enact the creation of a new vicariate within his own autonomous diocese indicates logically that he must have equated the authority of this institution with that of the Patriarch. Thus, the Council of Bishops of 1924,

in which Metropolitan Eulogius took part and whose competence he recognized, exercised its authority with the creation of the Berlin vicariate.

Another example is when Metropolitan Eulogius later requested the approval of the Synod to create another vicariate: in October of 1924, a vicariate for the Diocese of Western Europe was created in Prague, to be headed by Bishop Sergius (Korolev)¹⁴ of Bely. The Council created a third vicariate in Cannes in April of 1924, to be headed by Archbishop Vladimir (Tikhonitsky, the successor to Metropolitan Eulogius in 1946).¹⁵ Archbishop Vladimir was to head this vicariate with the full authority of a diocesan bishop; Metropolitan Eulogius contested this.

In connection with the creation of the vicariate of Cannes and the full (diocesan) authority of its bishop, a dispute between Metropolitan Eulogius and the Synod of Bishops arose. Metropolitan Eulogius maintained that the Synod was not allowed to have much say in the administration of the Diocese of Western Europe, and its authority could not extend to the appointment of a vicar bishop empowered to rule independently of him. The Synod doubtlessly wanted to dismantle the autonomy which Metropolitan Eulogius had built up. This had already been attempted at the Council of 1924, but had failed.

Thus, the Council in June of 1926 met under unfavorable conditions. In North America the forces that strove for an autonomous status and desired the Synod of Bishops to provide merely a “moral” oversight were gaining the upper hand. The ultimate goal was autocephaly. These aims became clear after the “Council of Detroit” in 1924.¹⁶ Metropolitan Eulogius feared for the survival of his diocesan autonomy. In addition, there were difficulties over the establishment of the Saint Sergius Theological Institute in Paris, founded at the initiative of Metropolitan Eulogius, which was awaiting the approval of the Synod to begin its academic

work, and which received financial support from the YMCA, which the Council was about to condemn as “masonic.”¹⁷

The unity of the Russian Church Abroad shattered in the face of these questions. After Metropolitan Platon had presented the decisions of the “Council of Detroit,” there was a proposal to discuss “general questions in connection with the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.” Metropolitan Eulogius refused to enter this discussion and left the Council in anger over the course of the debate on the proposal to limit the autonomy of the dioceses, probably without intending thereby to cause a break, as his written questions presented to the Council on the next day seem to indicate. Metropolitan Platon declared his solidarity with Metropolitan Eulogius’s step and refused to sign the minutes of the session.¹⁸

The Council, however, continued its deliberations. On the following day, Archbishop Innocent of Peking’s plan to give the Church Abroad autocephalous status was discussed. Further, the Council decided that henceforth the name of Metropolitan Antony should be mentioned in divine services after Metropolitan Peter (Patriarchal *locum tenens* since the death of Patriarch Tikhon). This decision, which was intended to be binding upon all Russian churches in the emigration, was of the greatest significance, in that it was equivalent to the acknowledgement of Metropolitan Antony as First Hierarch of the Church Abroad. In addition to this, the assembled episcopate discussed the legitimacy of the successor to the Patriarch in Russia (see below).

On the following day, the YMCA was condemned as a freemasonic organization of an anti-Christian character¹⁹; however, under the influence of Metropolitan Antony Archbishop Apollinarius, Bishop of San Francisco, of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, this characterization was later changed to an “interconfessional organization of a Christian

character.”²⁰

Concerning Metropolitan Eulogius, it was decided that he and his vicar bishops should provide explanations as to whether they recognize the Council of Bishops and the Synod of Bishops as the sole spiritual authority, or consider themselves as a canonical jurisdiction, possessed of the right to lead the Russian Church in the emigration. Metropolitan Eulogius was still recognized as a member of the Synod of Bishops until such time as he renounced the Council and the Synod in written form. The Synod requested a written response within one month; otherwise, an ecclesiastical court would be convened. In addition to this, the Synod posed a series of questions to Metropolitan Eulogius, including why he had provided a special status for his vicar bishops; why he had opened the Theological Institute in Paris before the Synod had accepted the Institute’s constitution; why he had forbade his parishes -- against the directives of the Synod -- to send delegates to the Monarchist Congress in 1926; and why he had, over the course of five years, administered his diocese with the help of a diocesan council chosen by him, which was neither elected nor authorized by the Synod of Bishops.²¹

The Council also decided that in order to strengthen an orderly church life in Germany, and in view of the schismatic tendencies of the “Living Church” (the “Renovationist Church”) in Germany, the vicariate of Berlin should be transformed into an independent diocese. An epistle was sent to all the parishes in Germany, informing them that they were to be part of the Berlin Diocesan Administration and no longer part of the one in Paris.²²

A similar epistle to that sent to Metropolitan Eulogius was dispatched to the Russian bishops in America. They were given five months to answer whether they considered the Council of Bishops and its executive branch, the Synod of Bishops, to be canonical, and whether they recognized their legal and administrative authority. In addition, they were to relate their

position on the vote for or against the autocephaly decided upon by the so-called “Council of Detroit.”

Immediately after his arrival in America, Metropolitan Platon characterized the Synod as uncanonical in an epistle to the faithful in North America. This epistle was signed by four out of five of his vicar bishops: Bishops Amphilochius of Alaska, Theophilus of Chicago, Aftim (Euthymius) of Brooklyn, and Arsenius of Winnepeg. Bishop Apollinarius (Koshevoi) of San Francisco alone refused to sign. The break was complete, and the schism of the North American Diocese was an accomplished fact.²³

On 28 June/11 July, an answer arrived from Metropolitan Eulogius, challenging the Councils’ right to transform the Berlin vicariate into an independent diocese. These measures necessarily resulted in enmity and division among the faithful. The Synod’s handling of the situation constituted interference in his diocese and seemed to be a contravention of the Patriarch’s established order [trans., according to Eulogius]. Subject to the Council’s agreement, Metropolitan Antony replied to this letter saying that in the past they had acted in the same way in other dioceses: the creation of the diocese of Kuban, Rostov, Sukhumi, the Aleutians, Harbin, and Kamchatka were all against the will of the ruling diocesan bishop and were recognized by Patriarch Tikhon. How could one question this recognition? Metropolitan Eulogius had no right to assume that the Patriarch, were he still alive, would veto the creation of a new German diocese. Furthermore, Metropolitan Antony accused Metropolitan Eulogius’s fellow bishops of a series of interferences in parishes not under their jurisdiction, in Australia, the Jerusalem Mission, and Finland.

The bishops of the Western European Diocese answered this letter in August. They indicated that their canonical hierarch was Metropolitan Eulogius, who recognized the Council

and the Synod as more a spiritual than a canonical authority. He would not deny the canonical character (i.e., an administrative and legal jurisdiction) which these institutions possess, but would like only to make certain that it is understood that these provisional institutions had not received their canonical confirmation from the central Russian ecclesiastical authority (the Patriarchate) and, therefore, can exercise no jurisdictional force. The bishops continued that they indeed recognized a canonical authority, that of the Patriarch and his *locum tenens*. Thus, the provisional power of the Council and the Synod should take into consideration the autonomy of Metropolitan Eulogius's diocese, which is based on the decree of the Patriarch.²⁴

This response was signed by Metropolitan Eulogius, Archbishops Seraphim,²⁵ and Vladimir, and Bishops Sergius and Benjamin. They avoided taking a clear-cut stand like the bishops in America had, but this was characteristic of Metropolitan Eulogius's group, which did not want and could not dispute either the canonicity of the Council or of the Synod, since Metropolitan Eulogius had on the whole agreed with all the decisions of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, the Council, and the Synod. Presumably, Metropolitan Eulogius wanted to avoid a break, which, however, still came about when Metropolitan Eulogius suspended Bishop Tikhon from serving and warned him that he was acting uncanonically.²⁶ The situation became more critical when, at Metropolitan Eulogius's request, Archpriest Prozorov of Berlin, who had been suspended from serving, was again permitted to serve. Metropolitan Eulogius did not comply with the Synod's request for him to submit himself to the Synod in November, and therefore he was judged to be in violation of the canons and suspended from serving. In turn, Metropolitan Eulogius broke off relations with the Synod.²⁷

Metropolitans Eulogius's and Platon's severance of relations with the Church Abroad was closely connected with attempts to accomplish a far-reaching decentralization and the

creation of individual provinces whose administration would be entirely transferred to the diocesan bishop. Besides Metropolitans Eulogius and Platon, the bishops in China and Manchuria attempted with various proposals to create their own ecclesiastical provinces. Archbishop Sergius (Tikhomirov) of Japan spoke out against the creation of such autonomous provinces.²⁸ In contrast to Metropolitans Eulogius and Platon, the hierarchs in the Far East were not striving to weaken the Karlovtsy Synod, but rather to simplify the administration. Their faithfulness to the Synod was never in doubt, because they had, among other things, proposed that Metropolitan Antony should be the nominal head of the autonomous province. From the hierarchs in the Far East also originated the idea of granting the Church Abroad an autocephalous or autonomous status. This was vetoed, however, because the Church Abroad desired to preserve the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church.²⁹

There were various attempts to make the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad fully independent before 1926/27. These plans always concerned the unity of the Church Abroad, which basically was not questioned even by Metropolitan Eulogius, who held to a “moral unity.” However, in North America the hierarchs – and the clergy and laity even more – strove for an autocephalous American Church from the very beginning. The 200,000 or so believers in France were primarily Russians who had left their country in consequence of the Civil War and thus were émigrés in a more narrow sense, whereas in North America the majority of the faithful had willingly emigrated before 1914. The émigrés who left between 1918 and 1920 considered the emigration as enforced and transitory, and dreamed about returning home to Russia. The pre-1914 emigrants had left their homeland in search of better living conditions and hardly thought about returning to their old homeland. Thus, the bond between them and the Russian Church Abroad was essentially less intimate. Besides this, a new problem had developed in these

emigrant communities: the youth had grown up in America and had been assimilated well, speaking English better than the language of their fathers. With the influx of Orthodox believers from Asia Minor and the former western provinces of Russia, these became mixed language parishes, and progressively lost their national Russian character. Understandably, these parishes also strove to introduce the use of English in Divine Services. Thus in North America after 1917/18, there were two types of Russian parishes: the emigrant parishes, made up largely of former Uniates, who desired to settle in America permanently; and the communities of more recent émigrés who saw the United States only as a temporary homeland. The latter group remained faithful to the Church Abroad after 1926.

Since the Revolution, the situation of the Patriarch and the Russian Church had been altered by political events. The new rulers spared no effort to weaken the position of the Church, whose unity was equally threatened by the national ecclesiastical developments in the Ukraine and Belorussia and by splits in its own ranks. As long as the Patriarch and the Holy Synod in Moscow were not hindered in the exercise of their office, attempts at schism met with little success. However, the Patriarch was placed under house arrest in 1922 and then imprisoned. When, within a few weeks, fifty bishops united themselves to the various groups of Renovationists, such as the “Living Church”; these schismatics were able to give the appearance that the Patriarch had transferred his official duties to them and had resigned.³⁰

The threat of arrest hung over Patriarch Tikhon in the spring of 1922. As already mentioned, in early May, the Patriarch declared the Supreme Russian Ecclesiastical Administration Abroad dissolved, probably to meet the accusations connecting him with the “White Guard monarchist émigrés.” Metropolitan Antony, as well as Metropolitan Eulogius, described this decree as “doubtless written under the influence of the Bolsheviks . . . by a third

person. . . who merely presented it to him to sign.” In fact, it is known that, on the very day on which Decree No. 347 ordered the Supreme Russian Ecclesiastical Administration Abroad to dissolve, the Patriarch was under house arrest by the GPU.

The authenticity of two other extremely important documents allegedly signed by Patriarch Tikhon has also been brought into doubt by recent historical research. These are the Patriarch’s statement of 3/16 June 1923, which was intended to lead to his liberation, and the Patriarch’s testament of 25 March/7 April 1925. Both documents are apparently signed by the Patriarch, but are at the same time written in the style of the atheist Soviet regime.³¹

In the statement in June of 1923, the Patriarch distanced himself from his earlier epistles, though not invalidating them, mentioning the following documents: the epistle on the occasion of the Treaty of Brest, the epistle of January, 1918, which excommunicated the communists, and his decree on the occasion of the requisition of church valuables to help the starving. The Patriarch excused his attitude then as a result of his “pre-Revolutionary upbringing and education,” and recognized that he should eliminate the influence of his anti-Soviet company. He confirmed to the masses that his arrest was a consequence of his anti-Soviet activities and concluded with the words: “At the same time I declare that I shall no longer be the enemy of the Soviet regime. I am disassociating myself finally and expressly from those abroad as well as from the internal monarchist -- White Guard -- counterrevolution.” This letter is conspicuous in that it is not only a total departure from his earlier declarations but also has “a style which is not characteristic of an Orthodox hierarch, but rather more readily of a Soviet functionary.”³²

Naturally, the Soviets were not satisfied with these attainments and strove relentlessly to subjugate the church administration. The unexpected death of Patriarch Tikhon on 25 March/7 April 1925 brought distress to the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church. The

Soviets successfully exploited this opportunity to attribute to the deceased Patriarch a highly questionable “Testament,” which subsequently became the basis of a new policy of the Church towards the regime. The following outlines the essence of the thoughts expressed in the Testament:

1. The Soviet regime is a genuine people’s regime and therefore firm and unshakable;
2. Every agitation against it, therefore, is to be condemned;
3. A special commission should be set up to investigate and, if necessary, remove “from the leadership of the Church those archpastors and pastors, who persist in their errors and refuse to confess and repent before the Soviet rulers;”
4. The activities of the hierarchs living abroad should be subjected to a strict investigation, to try them in absentia, inasmuch as they refuse to suspend these activities and return to the homeland;
5. “Without any compromises in matters of Faith, we must be upright in our civil relations with the Soviet regime.”³³

The authenticity of the document was in question from the very beginning and was considered falsely attributed to the Patriarch.³⁴ Yet, even if the document had been genuine, the church emigration would have had to ask itself what shape its future relationship with the Patriarchate should take, after the leader of the Russian Church could have so succumbed to pressure that he was prepared to issue such a statement; or else that the rulers through extortion and deceit could so manipulate future church policies in whatever direction they pleased.

However, before expounding on this problem, the further development of the Russian Church in the homeland should be briefly discussed. Patriarch Tikhon had made arrangements for an administration of the Patriarchal See in the event of his death: “In the event of our repose

our rights and duties as Patriarch, until the lawful election of a new Patriarch, should be temporarily assumed by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril. Should he through some circumstances be unable to take over the aforementioned rights and duties, then these should be assumed by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Agathangelus. Should it be impossible for this Metropolitan, then these Patriarchal rights and duties should be transferred to the Most Reverend Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa.”³⁵

This arrangement was validated and signed by the fifty-nine bishops who took part in the Patriarch’s funeral. These hierarchs confirmed the authenticity of the document and went on to state: “In that neither Metropolitan Cyril nor Metropolitan Agathangelus, who are both presently outside Moscow, is in a position which would allow him to take up the duties mentioned in this document, we recognize that the Most Reverend Metropolitan Peter. . . must take on the duties of Patriarchal *locum tenens* in fulfillment of the wishes of the late Patriarch.”³⁶

In view of the difficult situation of the Church in Russia and the constant threat of arrest, Metropolitan Peter, in turn, composed a document, in which he regulated the transfer of the administration in the event of his arrest. He named the following three substitutes: Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Metropolitan Michael, Exarch of the Ukraine, and Archbishop Joseph of Rostov. However, he stated, “The commemoration of my name as the patriarchal *locum tenens* remains obligatory.”³⁷ Thereby Metropolitan Peter clearly expressed that he, like the late Patriarch, was the legitimate leader of the Russian Church until the election of a new Patriarch. Shortly thereafter he was arrested. The official duties were taken over by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), who was a deputy of the Patriarchal *locum tenens*. He carried out the official duties for barely a year and was arrested in December of 1926. Contributing to his arrest, among other things, was a letter to the émigré bishops, written in a friendly and personal tone

and employing a mode of speech entirely different from the alleged testament of the Patriarch, with its stark condemnation of the émigré bishops. Metropolitan Sergius indicated in his letter that he could not interfere in the disputes of the bishops abroad, in that he did not know “what persons and which bishops belonged to the Synod, nor what authority they have.”³⁸ However, he recommended that the bishops establish a higher authority for the settling of disputes, and in the event that this could not be achieved, the émigrés should subject themselves to the local Orthodox Churches.

The Church Abroad recognized Metropolitan Peter as a legitimate *locum tenens* of Patriarch Tikhon and commemorated him as its head until his death in 1936. After his death, Metropolitan Cyril was commemorated until 1941, the year of his death.³⁹ He was considered to be a legitimate *locum tenens* to Patriarch Tikhon, in that his right to succession could be traced back to the Patriarch’s will, which the hierarchs who had taken part in the burial of the Patriarch had accepted. They denied Metropolitan Sergius’ right to successor status, in that he was only a deputy *locum tenens*. For his part, Metropolitan Sergius considered Metropolitan Cyril⁴⁰ to be uncanonical from 1930, when he put him on trial before an ecclesiastical court made up of his so-called “temporary Synod,” which condemned him. Metropolitan Sergius had no right to do this in the eyes of the legitimists. This view was also shared by the renowned expert on canon law, Professor Troitsky, who upon his return to the Soviet Union after 1945, renounced all his earlier works.

The Church Abroad rejected Metropolitan Sergius inasmuch as he had taken an uncanonical course from 1927. This began with Metropolitan Sergius’s infamous Declaration of 16/29 July 1927.⁴¹ In this Declaration, Metropolitan Sergius acknowledged the Soviet government as the legitimate government in Russia and condemned any opposition to it. He

demanded complete submission to the government by the clergy and the faithful. He also demanded this of the clergy abroad, from whom he required a written declaration of loyalty. In the event of their refusal, he threatened the hierarchy and the clergy with excommunication from the Patriarchal Church. This Declaration triggered indignation not only among the bishops, but also among the faithful. In the homeland, numerous hierarchs (such as Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, and dozens more) broke off fellowship with the administration of Metropolitan Sergius. After this, a legal existence was impossible for them, so they retreated underground and continued as the “Catacomb Church.” Much has been written in the West about the existence and size of the Catacomb Church. Its existence can certainly not be denied. Establishing the Catacomb Church’s size and the number of its faithful would certainly benefit from serious scholarly study.⁴² The Church Abroad considered the Catacomb Church to be its true sister Church in Russia, in that the Patriarchal administration headed by Metropolitan Sergius had acted entirely uncanonically and compromised with the Soviet regime.⁴³

With his Declaration, the dictatorship of Metropolitan Sergius began. Though the Declaration was signed by few other bishops, Sergius had his way. Another serious violation was that Metropolitan Sergius ordered that his name be commemorated in all churches. This directive, dated 27 December 1936, was published without a communiqué on the death of Metropolitan Peter.⁴⁴ Thereby Metropolitan Sergius made it known that thenceforth he was to be Patriarchal *locum tenens*. He had no right to this, however, so long as Metropolitan Cyril was still alive. The “election” of Metropolitan Sergius as Patriarch in 1943 was also considered uncanonical, in that he was elected by a mere eighteen bishops, while at this time there were still approximately one hundred other bishops under arrest. Therefore, Sergius’s election represented a violation of canonical order and of the Council of 1917/18, which provided that the Patriarch

had to be elected at a general Church Council. It can be concluded that Metropolitan Sergius did not possess the trust of the whole episcopate, but rather only that of a small minority who had capitulated to the government. “Thus began in the Church a hitherto unheard of epoch of dictatorship by the First Hierarchy, which has been in force until the present day in the Moscow Patriarchate.”⁴⁵

On 27 August /9 September 1927, the Synod of Bishops expressed its policy regarding Metropolitan Sergius’ Declaration. This letter, circulated to all the faithful, was signed by Metropolitan Anthony, Archbishops Theophanes and Seraphim (Lukianov), and Bishops Sergius, Gabriel, Hermogenes, Theophanes, and Seraphim (Sobolev). The bishops declared their severance of relations with the church administration in Moscow on the grounds that relations with it were no longer possible since the canonical leadership of the Church of Russia had been suppressed by the authorities: Metropolitan Peter had been arrested, and Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangelus were exiled from Moscow. Furthermore, the letter stated that the severing of relations meant that the Church Abroad, until the restoration of normal relations and the “liberation of our Church from persecution by the godless Soviet authorities,” would administer itself in agreement with the Holy Canons, the decisions of the Council of 1917/18, and the decree of the Patriarch dated 7/20 November 1920 (No. 362), with the help of the Synod of Bishops and the Council of Bishops. The Russian Church Abroad would remain an inseparable part of the one Russian Orthodox Church. It would commemorate in its Divine Services Metropolitan Peter, the Patriarchal *locum tenens*. Metropolitan Sergius’ exclusion of the bishops and clergy of the Church Abroad from the ranks of clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate as desired by the Soviet government was seen as an uncanonical act. The petition of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod to certify the legitimacy of the Soviet regime is decidedly to be rejected as an uncanonical

demand and as most harmful for the Church in Russia as well as abroad.⁴⁶

This letter explicitly defined the future stance of the Church Abroad towards the Moscow Patriarchate. To the present day, the Church Abroad considers itself to be an organic part of the Russian Church and proceeds from the oneness of the Russian Church. The Church Abroad considered itself, however, as the free part, and the Moscow Patriarchate as the captive part. Which of the two parts, over the course of history, has acted in accordance with the Holy Canons can only be decided by a future Council of the whole Russian Orthodox Church meeting in complete freedom, free from state interference.

That Metropolitan Sergius's demand for loyalty to the Soviet regime was in practice not feasible for the clergy abroad can be seen in the example of Metropolitan Eulogius and his bishops, who initially acquiesced. After their break with the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Eulogius and his vicar bishops – Archbishop Vladimir (Tikhonitsky) and Bishops Sergius (Korolov) and Benjamin (Fedchenko) – joined Metropolitan Sergius. Metropolitan Eulogius was named exarch for the Moscow Patriarchate. Bishops Seraphim (Lukianov) and Tikhon (Liashchenko) broke with Metropolitan Eulogius and placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Synod of Bishops.

Metropolitan Eulogius and his clergy complied with the demands of Metropolitan Sergius and refrained from any participation in anti-Soviet activities. After the wave of the persecution of the Church had reached a peak in 1930 in the Soviet Union, protests and prayer services for the persecuted Church in Russia began among Western Christians. Metropolitan Eulogius was unable to avoid such services; he did not wish to lose face entirely. When he attended one such prayer service, which was held by the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, Metropolitan Sergius protested against this act. Metropolitan Eulogius answered the

Metropolitan’s complaint by maintaining that the service was not a political demonstration, but rather a religious act. A few weeks later Metropolitan Sergius removed Metropolitan Eulogius from his office and suspended him from celebrating the Divine Services because of his disobedience. Metropolitan Sergius named Archbishop Vladimir as Metropolitan Eulogius's successor. At a diocesan meeting convened by Metropolitan Eulogius, Metropolitan Sergius’s order was debated, and it was unanimously decided to ignore his directive. As a result, Metropolitan Eulogius had to decide the future jurisdictional status of his communities. This was to change more than once up until the present day. The Western European parishes of the Paris Jurisdiction have belonged, in turn, from October of 1920 to July of 1926, to the jurisdiction of the Karlovtsy Synod of Bishops; then from August of 1927 to 1930, to the Moscow Patriarchate; from February of 1931 to May of 1945, to Constantinople; in September of 1945, for a brief time, again to Moscow; then for almost fifteen months as “an autonomous archdiocese”; from March of 1947 to 1965, to Constantinople again, which this time Constantinople released under duress from Moscow; from 1965 to 1970, the communities were again an autonomous diocese; and since 1970 they have been again under Constantinople.⁴⁷

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