

**CONSTRUALS OF AUTOCEPHALY:
THE METROPOLIA, THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE,
AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA**

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**Thesis for the M.T.S. Degree
School of Orthodox Theology of the Faculty of Divinity, Trinity College
University of Toronto
June 10, 2020**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Dr. Alexander Rentel, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, for his kind help in facilitating access to the OCA archives at the Church headquarters in Syosset, NY, and to Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky for sharing his experiences at the time of the granting of the Tomos of autocephaly to the OCA. In addition, I wish particularly to thank Dr. David Wagschal of the Toronto School of Theology for his kind help and direction in sorting out the intricacies of Orthodox canon law and opening a “mentalité” understanding of what canon law is.

A very special note of deep gratitude is due to Alex Liberovsky, archivist for the Orthodox Church in America, who through his hospitality, generosity, and enthusiastic assistance as well as his extensive knowledge of the history of the OCA made an immeasurably positive contribution to the quality of this thesis. He brought many obscure original documents to my attention, as well as adding his own stories and memories.

My deepest gratitude is due to Professor Richard Schneider of the Orthodox School of Theology, Trinity College, University of Toronto. His patient assistance, enthusiastic support, and constructive direction are appreciated more than words can express.

I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada Foundation for their generous financial support during my studies.

The transliteration convention used within the text of this paper for foreign language sources is generally that of the American Library Association - Library of Congress, except where a commonly accepted English form already exists (e.g., “Moscow” rather than “Moskva”).

When quoting from source materials unless noted otherwise I retain the transliteration convention used in the original document.

Unless otherwise noted all translations are my own.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
II.	THE TOMOS: WHAT DID IT SAY?	10
III.	ECCLESIOLOGY.....	15
IV.	THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE AND AUTOCEPHALY	32
V.	THE METROPOLIA, FROM INFANCY TO ORPHANHOOD	46
VI.	THE FRONTIER.....	64
VII.	THE METROPOLIA: FROM ORPHANHOOD TO INDEPENDENCE	72
VIII.	CONCLUSION I. THE RECEPTION OF THE TOMOS:	106
IX.	CONCLUSION II. AUTOCEPHALY - WHAT DID IT MEAN?	124
X.	APPENDIX: TEXT OF TOMOS.....	137
XI.	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	142

CONSTRUALS OF AUTOCEPHALY: THE METROPOLIA, THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE, AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

I. Introduction

One of the most pressing and divisive questions within the Orthodox Church at the present time is the question of autocephaly.¹ The theological concept of autocephaly is historically multivalent: how it is achieved, who has the right, privilege, or authority to proclaim a church autocephalous and the process for the proclamation of autocephaly are highly controverted questions.² As in-depth case studies of the bestowal of autocephaly are rare, I will be examining the evolution of the idea of American autocephaly which resulted in the creation of the Orthodox Church in America³ as a test case. The problematic of my analysis is not about the facts, which are more or less known to historians, but about the “idea” of American autocephaly. In fact, as the thesis seeks to reveal, “ideas” might be more accurate; the divisiveness of which I spoke is a consequence of a competition of mindsets – *mentalités*, to use the concept of Jacques le Goff – among the principal actors in the events.

Missionaries sent by the Russian Orthodox Church arrived at Kodiak Island in Alaska on September 24th, 1794,⁴ and began to serve the Russian traders in Alaska as well as to evangelize

¹ The simplest definition would perhaps be “independence” or “independent self-governance.” There are, however, a host of other characteristics associated with autocephaly, which will be discussed in chapter two.

² See, for example, Andrzej Borkowski, “Autocephaly in the Light of the Preparations to the Pan-Orthodox Council.” *Elpis: czasopismo teologiczne Katedry Teologii Prawosławnej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku*, T.18 (2016): 165-170 and John H. Erickson, “Autocephaly and Autonomy.” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 60, no. 1-2 (2016): 91-110. The recent furor over the bestowal of autocephaly upon the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 2019 is a case in point.

³ The Orthodox Church in America is the ecclesial body which traces its origin to the missionaries sent by the Russian Orthodox Church to Alaska (at that time part of the Russian Empire) in 1794.

⁴ Gregory Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska (1794-1917)* (Kodiak, AK, St. Herman’s Theological Seminary Press), 16.

the native Alaskans.⁵ This mission progressively developed into a vicariate in Sitka, Alaska (1858), into the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska (1870), into the Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and North America (1900), and finally into "The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America under the jurisdiction of a hierarch of the Church of Russia" in 1907.⁶ In addition, the see was moved from Sitka in Alaska to San Francisco in 1872,⁷ and then to New York City in 1905.⁸

The life of the American Metropolitanate or "Metropolia," as the diocese became known following the Russian Revolution,⁹ was severely disrupted as a result of the Bolshevik revolution in 1918 and the ensuing persecution, bordering on destruction, of the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁰ Due to Bolshevik interference in Church life in Russia and the inability on the part of the Metropolia to maintain normal relations with its Mother Church in Moscow, as well as to

⁵ For a fuller examination of the exemplary evangelical work of these Russian Missionaries see the aforementioned *A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska* by Bishop Gregory (which includes an excellent bibliography) and *Orthodox Alaska: A Theology of Mission* by Michael Oleksa (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992).

⁶ "Letter of Patriarch Alexis to Patriarch Athenagoras" in Aleksii I, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. "Documents: The Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 15, no. 1-2 (1971): 60.

⁷ Seraphim Surrency, *The Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America, The Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America*. (New York: Saints Boris and Gleb Press, 1973), 21.

⁸ Surrency, 24.

⁹ Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church; The Establishment of an Autocephalous Orthodox Church*. (New York: Morehouse-Barlow, 1963), 89. The Russian diocese renamed itself the "Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America" at its Church Sobor (General Council) in Detroit in 1924, and was colloquially known as the "Metropolia" in distinction from the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile and the Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate. See chapters five and seven below.

¹⁰ In regard to the Bolshevik persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church the bibliography is vast. A convenient summary can be found in Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*. 2 vols. (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984)

attempts by members of both the “Living Church”¹¹ and the “Karlovci Synod”¹² to claim jurisdiction over the Metropolia, the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America took a decision at their Sobor (Church Council) in Detroit which took place from March 20th-22nd and April 2nd-4th 1924 to declare temporary autonomy.¹³ This decision resulted in a very anomalous canonical status for the Metropolia,¹⁴ which was only “regularized” in 1970.

On April 10th, 1970, the Patriarchate of Moscow issued a Tomos of autocephaly (“independence and self-governing status”) to the Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church in America.¹⁵ This event elicited great joy and brought great hope to many Orthodox believers in

¹¹ The “Living Church” was one of the left-leaning Churches in the Soviet Union supported by the Soviet government and used to sow confusion and discord among the Orthodox believers. Generally known as “Renovationists,” in seeking to “renovate” the Church they unilaterally changed or ignored many Orthodox canonical norms, allowing, for instance, bishops to marry. One of their “bishops,” John Kedrovsky, was sent to the United States where he attempted to take control of the Metropolia, and achieved a limited success, being awarded the property of St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York City by virtue of legal action in 1926. Regarding the Renovationists see “Leftist Schisms within the Russian Orthodox Church” in Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, especially 1:51-70. In regard to Kedrovsky’s activities in the USA see Surrency, 30-32.

¹² The “Karlovci Synod” was composed of bishops who had fled the Russian Empire after the Russian Revolution and formed a “Temporary Higher Russian Church Administration Abroad,” first in Constantinople in 1920, then moving to Sremski Karlovci in Serbia in 1921 from which the Synod received its name. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 1:113-133. Bogolepov, in *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, offers a detailed picture of the precise jurisdictional conflicts between the Metropolia and the Karlovci Synod in the chapter “The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad,” 57-88.

¹³ Surrency, A126.

¹⁴ “Autocephalous. . . churches are self-governing, transacting their own relationships with other Orthodox churches, and are the sole Orthodox jurisdictional authority on a defined geographical territory. . . Autonomous churches are chiefly distinguished by the fact that their primate is chosen by, or at least in consultation with, their “mother” church. Other limitations on their autonomy may also exist.” David Wagschal, “Ancient Laws in a Modern World: an Introduction to Orthodox Canon Law,” unit 6, case study 2, autocephaly. (Course notes, University of Wales, Lampeter, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, undated). I wish to thank Dr. David Wagschal for his kind help and direction in sorting out the intricacies of Orthodox canon law and opening a “mentalité” understanding of what canon law is. See also “Autonomy and the Means by which it is Proclaimed” in *Official Documents of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church*, <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/autonomy>. Though the Metropolia had declared itself autonomous, it in fact conducted itself as a fully autocephalous Church, electing its own bishops and primates, engaging in direct relationships with other Churches, etc. The reasons for, and results of, this anomalous canonical status will be examined in subsequent chapters.

¹⁵ Orthodox Church in America. *Tomos of Autocephaly*. New York, 1970.

North America.¹⁶ At the same time it caused confusion and consternation among other Orthodox faithful and hierarchs and elicited a negative response from several local Orthodox Churches in the United States and overseas, especially those of Constantinople and Greece.¹⁷ To this day the autocephalic status of the Orthodox Church in America (henceforth the OCA) is a contested matter within the Orthodox world, and is recognized only by the Churches of Moscow, Georgia, Poland, Bulgaria, and the Czech lands and Slovakia.¹⁸

The institution of autocephaly is on the one hand normative in regard to Orthodox Church polity,¹⁹ yet at the same time is so divisive, awkward, and slippery that its inclusion on the agenda of the Great and Holy Council which was held on Crete in 2016 ultimately proved

¹⁶ e.g. “The new Orthodox Church in America is the great sign of unity and hope for all Orthodox Christians in America. . . The formal establishment of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America as the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America is the crowning achievement of the long and difficult history of our Orthodox Church in the new world.” Orthodox Church in America, “Autocephaly” (pamphlet) (New York, NY: undated); “Enthusiasm for the formation of a national Orthodox Church here was expressed by the Rev. Paul Schneirla, a priest in the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and secretary of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas. . .” Betty Medsger, “Orthodox Merger Eased by Russians,” *Washington Post*, February 7 1970; “Sincere congratulations on the occasion of he (sic) recent accord reached between the Moscow Patriarchate and yourself. We are pleased and gratified to see this important step taken to unite American Orthodoxy,” telegram of 19 May 1970 from the Very Reverend Michael Daniel, Superior General of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement to Metropolitan Ireney of the OCA, accessed in the archives of the OCA. Examples could easily be multiplied.

¹⁷ See, for example, the Letters of Patriarch Athenagoras to Patriarch Alexis, Protocol Numbers 7 and 583, in Aleksii I, “Documents: The Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America,” 55-57 and 63-70; the negative responses of the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem as well as the very detailed negative response of the Church of Greece in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal with Formal Decisions and Opinions* (Orthodox Observer Press: New York, NY, 1972), 45-67; “Archdiocese Breaks with Metropolia,” *Hellenic Chronicle*, June 17th 1971; “A Crisis Avoided, A Polarization Revealed” *Orthodox Church*, December 1971. It is of note that only Churches within the Soviet Bloc countries accepted this decision uncritically. The aftermath of the proclamation of autocephaly will be studied in more detail in chapter five.

¹⁸ Cyril Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church: Towards Poststructural Ecclesiology* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017), 126. Notably, all these Churches were part of the “Soviet Bloc” in 1970.

¹⁹ “Autocephaly is one of the oldest institutions of the church and the most viable one. More than any other institution it has gone through multiple historical transformations without getting lost.” Cyril Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 88. Though Hovorun uses the word “institution,” this word reflects the canonical, cultural, ecclesiological, and political facets of autocephaly very incompletely and inadequately.

impossible.²⁰ Due to the lack of clarity within the canonical legislation of the Orthodox Church²¹ as well as specific historical exigencies, the conception or understanding of autocephaly has varied widely in different historic eras.²² This lack of clarity and the different conceptions of autocephaly (as well as the rights and prerogatives of traditional and recent autocephalous Churches) is at the root of the problematic reception of the autocephaly of the OCA.

Thus, the reception of the OCA Tomos has left in its wake the question “How was autocephaly being understood when it was being granted to the Metropolia/OCA.” In order to most effectively answer this question, it is necessary first to analyze the Tomos itself. The ecclesiological and canonical underpinnings of autocephaly, as well as an overview of how autocephaly was understood, bestowed, and practiced in the Orthodox Church until the beginning of the 20th century, will follow. What was the motivating factor behind the controverted and anomalous bestowals of autocephaly upon the Polish (1948), Czechoslovakian (1951), and American (1970) Orthodox Churches by the Patriarchate of Moscow? What was the vision and purpose of autocephaly as understood by the Metropolia/OCA? In answering these questions the reason that the Tomos elicited such a predominantly negative reaction on the part of most other Orthodox Churches will become clearer.

²⁰ Wagschal, “Ancient Laws in a Modern World: an Introduction to Orthodox Canon Law,” is a concise, objective, and thorough exposition of this lack of clarity. See also Borkowski, “Autocephaly in the Light of the Preparations to the Pan-Orthodox Council,” 168-69; and Erickson, “Autocephaly and Autonomy,” 109-10.

²¹ “. . . it would be difficult not to concur with this statement made by Ecumenical Patriarch Benjamin in 1937: ‘It is known... that concerning the manner in which the separation must occur and the manner of establishing the autocephaly of any part of the Church, none of the sacred canons provides direction or inkling.’ “Letter to Patriarch Nicholas of Alexandria, December 7, 1937,” in Apostolos Glavinias, *Orthodoxe Autokephalê Ekklesia tés Albanias* (Thessalonica, 1985): 63. Cited by Peter L’Huillier, “Accession to Autocephaly.” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 37, no.4 (1993): 298.

²² For a concise exposition of these various circumstances and construals see Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, chapter four: “Strongholds: Autocephaly,” 88-127

In the lead-up to, as well as the aftermath of the bestowal of the Tomos upon the OCA, three primary *mentalités* — the historical concept made fundamental by Marc Bloch and the *Annales* School, and given a critical-theoretical basis by Jacques le Goff²³ — were at play, if not in conflict: that of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Metropolia, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Though all three entities used the term “autocephaly,” it is clear that each conceptualized the term differently. To approach the history of OCA autocephaly through a *mentalité* lens is a daunting task; it is difficult to identify a personal mindset from official documents but these are almost the only primary sources currently accessible. Since few personal sources exist, how is it possible to discover what those involved at the time were thinking?

In order to determine the meanings of autocephaly as understood by those involved I will be analyzing primary sources such as documents, letters and personal accounts as well as popular and academic articles, books and publications. Certain of the primary sources and most of the secondary sources are to a greater or lesser degree polemical in character.²⁴ Especially important will be examination of historical works and documents describing the genesis and development of the Orthodox Church in North America, establishing the particular cultural characteristics of

²³ A *mentalité* is a world view, how the world is grasped, a mindset including assumptions and unconscious thought within a given culture; it is much deeper than simply “ideas” or “conscious values.” “Identifying *mentalities* requires reading texts or events through a combination of filters: linguistics, anthropology, psychology, history-of-ideas, and even “common sense,” leading to a grasp of the community’s assumptions about the world and how it works. As a critical methodology History of Mentalities offers deep cultural explanations for events rather than the older political positivism about “power” which is commonly found in most histories of the OCA. See Jacques Le Goff, “Mentalities: a New Field for Historians,” *Social Science Information/Information sur Les Sciences Sociales* 13.1 (Feb 1974): 81-97; a partial reprint is in Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, eds. *Histories: French Reconstructions of the Past* (New York: New Press, 1995). Also see Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. tr. Steven Rendall (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1984).

²⁴ See, for example, the exchange of letters between Patriarchs Athenagoras and Alexei in “Documents: The Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America”; Alexander Schmemmann, “The Canonical Position of the Russian Orthodox Church of North America,” *1953 Year Book of Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America*, (New York, 1953), 22-29; George Michalopoulos and Herb Ham. *The American Orthodox Church: a History of its Beginnings*, (Salisbury, MA: Regina Orthodox Press, 2003); and Panagiotes N. Trembelas, *The Autocephaly of the Metropolia in America*, (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Theological School Press, 1973).

the “American mindset” which had influenced, and developed within, the Metropolia. I will also be using theological and historical sources to situate the autocephaly of the OCA historically, socially, politically, and ecclesiologically. A close reading as well as contextualization of these texts will illuminate the motives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Metropolia in reference to the proclamation of autocephaly. An analysis of the various ecclesiological, political, cultural, and canonical factors which were at play both leading up to and in the aftermath of the bestowal of the Tomos will culminate in an exposition of what the term “autocephaly” meant (or appeared to mean) – for the Metropolia, for the Moscow Patriarchate, and for the other local Churches – once it was bestowed upon the OCA.

Generally speaking, Moscow’s granting of autocephaly to the OCA was found acceptable by the Churches of former Soviet Bloc states and unacceptable by the so-called “Greek” Churches (Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Greece), with the remaining churches taking positions somewhere “in between.”²⁵ The manner in which autocephaly was promulgated by the Moscow Patriarchate, received by the OCA, and understood by the majority of the other local Orthodox Churches contributed to (or perhaps only reflected?) a clarification of canonical, ecclesiastical, pastoral, political, cultural, and practical concerns and conflicts as understood by each of the parties, as well as a more “positional” stance on the part of the various North American Orthodox jurisdictions and their Mother Churches overseas towards the North American Orthodox Christian reality and each other. All of this was directly dependent upon what, in the given instance, autocephaly meant to those involved.

²⁵ “There are two major traditions of reading the history of autocephaly and inter-church organization. For convenience, these approaches may be termed ‘Greek’ and ‘Russian’, although both approaches have adherents outside of these ethnic groups. The approaches differ on all aspects of the question of autocephaly: who may proclaim it, its nature, and how the churches relate to each other. The nature of primacy, and particularly the privileges of the ecumenical patriarch, are especially contested.” Wagschal, “Ancient Laws in a Modern World,” 5.

What was intended by Moscow in giving autocephaly to the Metropolia? What was intended by the Metropolia in asking and receiving autocephaly? What did the other Orthodox Churches *think* was intended by this act?

In order to answer these questions we must begin by answering another: “what did the Tomos actually say?”

II. 1970. The Tomos of Autocephaly: What did it say?

Negotiations between the Metropolia and the Moscow Patriarchate in regard to the possible bestowal of autocephaly were held between 1963 and 1969.²⁶ These negotiations were completed on March 31st, 1970, with the signing of an agreement between the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America and the Moscow Patriarchate,²⁷ which culminated in the bestowal of the Tomos of autocephaly on April 10th of the same year.

The text of the Tomos²⁸ is generally legal and contractual in style and diction.²⁹ As the rationale for bestowing autocephaly the introduction of the document proposes the following reasons:

1. The Metropolia is the organic continuation of the Orthodox Church “planted on the American Continent” by the Russian Orthodox Church, and hence her “daughter.”
2. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) wishes to “normalize relations among the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions in America” and to “suppress scandalous ecclesiastical divisions”
3. The ROC desires “to build a peaceful and creative church life” and to “serve the welfare of universal, mutual cooperation.”
4. The Metropolia is “a mature ecclesiastical organism possessing all that is necessary for successful further growth.”³⁰

²⁶ Alexander Schmemmann, “Report on the preliminary negotiations concerning the establishment in America of the Autocephalous Church,” accessed February 17th 2020, <https://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/report-preliminary.html>.

²⁷ This agreement is appended to the text of the Tomos. (As a humorous aside, the final negotiations on March 31st were going on late into the night, and Fr. Schmemmann was adamant that the agreement must be signed before midnight. When asked why by the members of the Russian delegation he had to explain the American custom of “April Fool’s Day,” and that he didn’t want anyone hearing the announcement about autocephaly to think it was a joke! Related to this author by Alex Liberovsky, the archivist of the OCA on January 27th 2020).

²⁸ The full text of the Tomos is given in Appendix A.

²⁹ For example, section 2 is essentially a “definition” of autocephaly; section 3 consists of “exclusions”; sections 4 through 13 are pledges and clarifications regarding property, jurisdiction, etc.

³⁰ Orthodox Church in America (hereafter “OCA”), *Tomos*, 1 (introduction).

Autocephaly, as defined in the Tomos, consists of:

1. Independence and self-governing status, “with the right of electing her own Primate and all her bishops, without confirmation or the right of veto over such elections on the part of any other church organization. . .” (par. 2a)
2. Being governed by “her own Statute as accepted, augmented or amended from time to time by her own highest legislative and executive organ” (par. 2b)
3. “Maintain[ing] direct relations with all other Churches. . .” (par. 2c)
4. “Enjoy[ing] all the authority, privileges and rights usually inherent in the term ‘autocephaly’ in the canonical tradition³¹ of the Eastern Orthodox Church, including the right of preparing and consecrating Holy Chrism.” (par. 2d)³²

Despite granting the autocephaly, the document immediately goes on to exclude the episcopal cathedral and property in New York³³ as well as 43 parishes “desiring to remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia” from being transferred to the OCA (par. 3 - 6).³⁴ The Tomos then delineates the relationship between the parishes of the OCA and the Moscow Patriarchate, outlines the procedures for the changing of jurisdictions and the reception or transfer of clergy, indicates that the Moscow Patriarchate and

³¹ The difficulty with “autocephaly” in the canonical tradition will be examined in chapter 2.

³² OCA, *Tomos*, 1. Regarding the authority, privileges and rights which the Tomos alludes to I will show in the final analysis chapter that “usually inherent” is a red-herring rhetorical appeal to a concept which does not exist, and is prevented from existing by the clash of mentalities involved.

³³ On the loss of the New York Cathedral to the “Renovationist” Church see Constance Tarasar (Ed.), *Orthodox America, 1794-1976*, (Syosset, NY: Orthodox Church in America, 1975), 183-185; Megan Carlisle, *Creating an American Orthodox Archive: The Struggle for the Records of St. Nicholas Cathedral, New York City, 1926-27*, M.A. Thesis, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, 2014, 22; and Surrency, 31.

³⁴ OCA, *Tomos*, 2-3. In other words, the Patriarchate of Moscow retains jurisdiction over these parishes, which are on the same territory as the new autocephalous Church.

the OCA will “maintain sincere fraternal relations,” and abolishes the Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate together with its dioceses in the United States and Canada (par. 7 – 13).³⁵

In concluding, the newly established Church is named as “The Holy Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America,” the other local Churches are enjoined to “acknowledge her as such and to include her in the dyptichs³⁶ in accordance with the Canons of the Church,”³⁷ and the newly-proclaimed autocephalous Church is enjoined to

abide in brotherly relations with all the Orthodox Churches and their Primates as well as with their bishops, clergy and pious flock, who are in America and who for the time being preserve their *de facto* existing canonical and jurisdictional dependence on their national Churches and their Primates.³⁸

Taking the document at face value, the rhetorical impression is at first glance one of loving parental concern, with confidence in the ability of the daughter Church to manage its own affairs effectively and successfully, but at second glance one notices the authoritarian claim underlying the hope that the newly independent Church will somehow precipitate the unification of the various Orthodox jurisdictions coexisting in North America. In hindsight it should have been clear that the other Orthodox jurisdictions were not in America only “for the time being”

³⁵ OCA, *Tomos*, 3.

³⁶ Note: In the given instance “Dyptichs” (sic) refers to the list of all the autocephalous Churches and their primates with which a particular local Church is in communion. For a fuller explanation see “Diptych” in Vasile Mihai, *Orthodox Canon Law Reference Book*, (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2014), 162. It is highly relevant to my argument in the last chapter that the OCA includes the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Metropolitan of Greece in its current Diptychs even though neither recognizes the autocephaly of the OCA

³⁷ OCA, *Tomos*, 3.

³⁸ OCA, *Tomos*, 4.

but have virtually without exception³⁹ preserved their “existing canonical and jurisdictional dependence on their national Churches.”⁴⁰ Surrency, writing in 1973 (though his words are equally true today), sums up the situation as follows:

Suffice it to say that the events of the last two years (1971 and 1972) have not seemed to justify the optimism of those who welcomed the autocephaly as a major step in the unification of Orthodoxy in America in the immediate future nor has it justified the fears of those who opposed the autocephaly on the grounds that it would only bring about a greater fragmentation of an already fragmented American Orthodoxy.⁴¹

The unfulfilled hopes as well as the conflict and mistrust which followed the granting of autocephaly were due in no small part to the explicit and implicit assumptions on the part of the Metropolia and the other Orthodox jurisdictions in America and Canada as to what the Tomos actually meant. Did the Russian Church have the canonical right, as the first Orthodox Church which established a diocese in North America, to unilaterally bestow autocephaly upon what she claimed was her daughter church, and if so, on what grounds? Was it proper for the Russian Church to attempt the suppression of “scandalous ecclesiastical divisions” without reference to or consultation with other “mother churches?” And, given the fact that autocephaly until that time had invariably been bestowed upon *all* the Orthodox Christians within a particular

³⁹ Small Albanian and Bulgarian Orthodox dioceses joined the OCA in 1971 and 1977 respectively. See “Albanian Church Votes to Join OCA,” *Orthodox Church*, June-July 1971, and “History of the Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo,” accessed February 18th 2020 at <https://www.bdoca.org/2-uncategorised/23-history-of-the-bulgarian-diocese-of-toledo>. The “Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America” had come into the jurisdiction of the Metropolia in 1960. See Surrency, 106.

⁴⁰ A point that was forcefully brought home when various national churches nullified the near agreement of the SCOBA bishops at Ligonier in 1994. SCOBA, *A New Era Begins: Proceedings of the 1994 Conference of Orthodox Bishops in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.* (the Ligonier Resolutions of 1994) ed. George Bedrin and Philip Tamoush. Torrance CA: Oakwood Publ. for OPT Publications, 1996

⁴¹ Surrency, 9.

geographical territory or nation-state, how is it that the “mother church” could not only bestow autocephaly upon one single-among-many jurisdiction within a particular geographical territory, but also maintain its own parishes on that same territory as well? In order to answer these questions I will examine the theological concepts of autocephaly and ecclesiology, which will bring to light the internal conflicts within the Tomos itself and will explain the conflicts of interpretation of OCA autocephaly between the disputing parties.

III. Orthodox Ecclesiology: Hierarchy, Conciliarity, and Autocephaly

In order to understand the problematic nature of the OCA's autocephaly it is necessary to see how autocephaly was historically and canonically construed. The first difficulty concerns ecclesiology, the study of both the spiritual essence as well as the outward polity of the Church. As, however, noted by John Meyendorff, "In Greek Patristic Literature. . . there was, generally speaking, no systematic treatment of 'ecclesiology.'"⁴² In different eras various models of Church organization held sway: the metropolitan, the patriarchal, the monarchical, the Ottoman *millet*, the national.⁴³ In more recent times the approach to ecclesiology has tended to be less in terms of administrative or organizational structure and more in terms of spiritual and sacramental reality.⁴⁴ The tension between Church as institution and Church as mystery has been a constant in Orthodox ecclesiology.⁴⁵

In addition to the innate tension between Church as institution and Church as mystery, Orthodox ecclesiology sees the Church as simultaneously hierarchical and conciliar.

⁴² John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 79.

⁴³ Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 5.

⁴⁴ For example: "All the diverse sacraments and *sacramentalia* are based on the sacrament of all sacraments, the all-sacrament: the Church herself as Divine-humanity." Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2002), 273; "The Eucharist [is] the full and true manifestation of the Church in her redemptive and live-giving mystery. In unison with all of modern Orthodox theology, we can point to the principles of eucharistic ecclesiology as the foundation of the coextensive reality of Church and Eucharist." Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Mystery of the Church: A Course in Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. (Yonkers, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2012), 182; "It is certainly true that neither the identification of the Church with the Body of Christ nor the ultimate unity of the 'many' in the 'one' can be understood apart from the eucharistic word 'this is my Body.'" John D. Zizioulas, *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 147-148. Also see "Two Aspects of the Church" in Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1976), 174-195. In recent times this has become almost a core trend in Orthodox thinking because of the writings of Afanasiev, Schmemmann and Zizioulas.

⁴⁵ "For [Byzantine Christians] the Church was, first of all, a sacramental communion with God in Christ and the Spirit, whose membership. . . is not limited to the earthly *oikoumene* ("inhabited earth") where law governs society, but includes the host of angels and saints, as well as the divine head." Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 79.

In support of hierarchical polity we have St. Ignatius of Antioch's famous dictum, "Therefore, just as, without regard to the Father (being united with him), the Lord did nothing, either of himself or through the apostles, so you are to undertake nothing without regard to the bishop and the presbyters."⁴⁶ We find a similar statement in a contemporary source: "The bishop is the supreme bearer of ecclesiastical authority. . . the highest step of the hierosinis [priesthood] which the Lord established through His Apostles, the supreme shepherd of the local Church, and to his spiritual authority both clergy and laity are subject."⁴⁷ In stating that a bishop is "the supreme bearer of ecclesiastical authority" Androutsos is not completely accurate, for the ultimate basis of authority in the Orthodox Church is not hierarchical autocracy, but rather hierarchical conciliarity. "The principal supreme administrative authority of the entire Orthodox Catholic Church is the Ecumenical Council: the sum total of all bishops. . ."⁴⁸

In addition, the Church is composed not only of bishops, but also of the lower clergy and laity. It is in regard to this broader conception of who constitutes the Church that the decisions of the Moscow council of 1917-1918 were to have great consequences for the Metropolia. In fact this famous Moscow Council was quite likely influenced by ideas and practices from the Metropolia, as explained below, and elected Tikhon, the Metropolitan Archbishop of North America, as the first restored Russian Patriarch.

⁴⁶ Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians VII, in *The Letters: Ignatius of Antioch*, trans. Alistair Stewart. (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013), 47.

⁴⁷ Christos Androutsos, *Dogmatics*, 287 as quoted by John Karmiris in *A Synopsis of the Dogmatic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church*, trans. George Dimopoulos. (Scranton PA: Christian Orthodox Edition, 1973), 94.

⁴⁸ Karmiris, *A Synopsis of the Dogmatic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church*, 93.

During the preparation for the Moscow Council of 1917-18 one of the ideas which had gained traction within the Russian Orthodox Church was that of *Sobornost*⁴⁹ or conciliarity.⁵⁰ The very first paragraph on the Definition of the Moscow Council (I.I.1) states that the “. . . Local Council. . . is composed of bishops, clerics, and laity.”⁵¹ The idea of a broad “conciliar” conception of ecclesiastical polity, despite forceful voices to the contrary,⁵² was given full

⁴⁹ *Sobornost*, though usually translated as “conciliarity” or “catholicity,” has a much more deeply nuanced meaning. “For the Slavophiles who invented the neologism, *sobornost*’ was a notion that was both philosophical and theological. . . . For Alexis Khomiakov, it underlined, from an ecclesial point of view, the essentially collective dimension of the church and the fact that all Christians – laity, clerics and bishops – enjoyed the same rights. This acceptance of *sobornost*’ emphasized the fact that there is no difference between the teaching Church and the learning Church. In this context, the Church is *conciliar* not synodal. This concept was backed by the authority of the *Encyclical Letter of the Oriental Patriarchs (1848)*, ‘For us, the guardian of piety is the very body of the Church, that is, the people, who ever wish to conserve their faith intact.’ Hyacinthe Destivelle and Michael Plekon. *The Moscow Council (1917-1918): The Creation of the Conciliar Institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 18.

⁵⁰ Conciliarity, in the form of clergy-laity congresses, had already appeared in the newly emancipated Churches of the Balkan peninsula in the late 19th century, and an instance of such conciliarity of more ancient provenance can still be observed in the election of the primate of the Church of Cyprus, in which the general population of the island takes part. Cyril Hovorun, *Metaecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness*, (New York, NY: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2015), 85-86. In the Russian context the idea of conciliarity was especially emphasized and explored by the “Slavophiles,” a philosophic-theological movement in 19th/20th century Russia whose first great protagonist was Alexei Khomiakov. “The Slavophiles invoked the uniqueness of old Russian culture, which led them directly to the Orthodox tradition, representing the continuity and fullness of the original Church of Christ. . . The Slavophiles advocated a return to authentic Russian social, cultural and religious values, as exemplified in traditional Russian communal life and in Orthodoxy.” Paul Ladouceur, *Modern Orthodox Theology*. (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2019), 44-45. For an examination of the influence of Slavophile thought on the conciliar vector of the North American diocese see John F. Erickson, “Slavophile Thought and Conceptions of Mission in the Russian North American Archdiocese, Late 19th – Early 20th Century,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 55:3 (2012): 245-268.

⁵¹ Destivelle, 192.

⁵² One of those categorically against participation by anyone other than bishops was Archbishop Antony (Khrapovitsky). “The question of participation – and the mode of participation – of non-episcopal members in the council dominated the commission’s debates. In his memorandum, Metropolitan Antony spoke of a ‘special convocation of representatives of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with the participation of competent persons chosen from among clergy and laity’ . . . Archbishop Antony defended the idea of a purely episcopal council, basing his argument on multiple canonical references. Destivelle, 35-36, 38. See also Alexander Bogolepov *Church Reforms in Russia, 1905-1918, In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the All-Russian Church Council of 1917-1918*, Bridgeport: Publications Committee of the Metropolitan Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of America, 1966. Pospelovsky describes Archbishop Antony as a “staunch supporter of episcopal hegemony.” Dmitry Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, 1:31. Following the Bolshevik revolution Metropolitan Antony became primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (the “Karlovci Synod”), a rival ecclesiastical group with which claimed jurisdiction over and regularly came into conflict with the Metropolia, which will be discussed in chapter six.

support.⁵³ The Moscow council approved three decision making bodies within the Church: the Patriarch, the Holy Synod (composed only of bishops), and the Supreme Council composed of hierarchs, clergy, and laity (I.III.1).⁵⁴ In order to safeguard and honour the hierarchical dimension of Church polity specific provisions were put in place to undergird the responsibilities and privileges of the Patriarch in particular and the hierarchy as a whole.⁵⁵

Prior to the Moscow council broad conciliarity already played a vital role in the ecclesiological vision of the Metropolia,⁵⁶ and so, given the Russian roots of the Metropolia, it was natural that the broad episcopal, clerical, and lay conciliarity which was legislated at the Moscow Council in 1917-18⁵⁷ would be accepted as normative by the Metropolia at its All

⁵³ For a thorough examination of how this conciliarity was to be manifested at all levels of Church life see “The Conciliar Organization of the Church” in Destivelle, 73-123.

⁵⁴ Destivelle, 195 and 196n7.

⁵⁵ Destivelle, 193

⁵⁶ “In keeping with the ancient practice of the Orthodox Church, and in the spirit of American democracy, Tikhon suggested that the emerging immigrant church be allowed to adopt a conciliar form of administration. This was a most radical proposal given the state-dominated, clerical and bureaucratic Orthodox churches of Europe and the Middle East. Tikhon hoped that by having clergy and laity work together, the thorny administrative and canonical issues involved with the trustee control of immigrant parishes would find their resolution. . . . the missionary diocese initially held its first “All-American” council, composed of clergy and lay delegates, in February 1907, In Mayfield, Pennsylvania.” Mark Stokoe and Leonid Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America 1794-1994*. (Orthodox Christian Publications Center, 1995), 38. A possibility as yet unexplored in scholarship is that the ‘American model’ may have been brought to the all-Russian Council by Metr. Tikhon based on his experience of the American 1907 Council.”

⁵⁷ It is interesting to consider how much influence Bishop/Patriarch Tikhon’s American experience might have had in the decisions of the Moscow Council vis-à-vis broad conciliarity. In his reply to the questionnaire sent to all the Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1905 he suggests that greater participation by the lower clergy and laity in decision making could be beneficial for the Church: “The activities of the episcopal assemblies ought to be widened throughout Russia in all the sides of the life of the church parishes. . . . As to the material questions of money and economy some representatives of the laymen surely ought to be invited to take part in them. . . . If laymen take part in these assemblies they will be something like church conventions customary in America, . . . This participation of the lay element would give to the function of church life the character of a council, and also would tend to enliven it.” Tikhon (Patriarch), “View of Questions to be Examined by the Local Council of the Russian Church,” *Russian American Orthodox Messenger*, 24 November 1905, 74-75.

American Council in Detroit in 1924⁵⁸ and continues to be the operative ecclesiological model of the OCA to the present.⁵⁹

To fully grasp the anomalous character of the autocephaly of the OCA, the principle of territoriality is also of fundamental importance. Historically, following the apostolic age, Christian communities came to be organized according to the administrative structure of the Roman empire.⁶⁰ As noted by Hovorun, this resulted in episcopal oversight being transferred from a particular community to a particular territory.⁶¹ This “territorial” principle resulted in the well-known canonical precept of “one city, one bishop,” i.e., that there can be only one bishop in any

⁵⁸ The 6th point from the resolutions of the 1924 Detroit Sobor states that, along with the bishops of the Metropolia, a council of 3 priests and 3 laypeople will deal with “all the “questions indicated in the name of this Sobor, being guided by the resolution of the All-Russian Church Sobor of 1917 and 1918.” Surrency, A126. See also Alexander Schmemmann, “The Canonical Position of the Russian Orthodox Church of North America,” 23-26.

⁵⁹ See Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, <https://www.oca.org/statute>.

⁶⁰ See John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church 450–680 A.D.*, vol. 2, *The Church in History*, (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989), 40-42.

⁶¹ “The metropolitan model implied four radical shifts in the arrangement of the Christian church. First, communities were considered to belong to the imperial administrative territory. The church thus adopted the Roman principle of territoriality. This principle would become dominant in the later history of Christianity. . . . Second, for the first time the hierarchy among the bishops and among the communities became institutionalized. . . . These two shifts introduced a new rationale to the office of bishop, who became an official governing his territory. The third shift . . . was that the council of bishops became a regular institution.” The fourth shift was the resultant delegation of self-governance “by the local communities to the super-church or metropolis. . . . The shift to the metropolitan model was one of the most dramatic in the development of the church structures.” Hovorun. *Scaffolds of the Church*, 61-62.

one diocese or eparchy.⁶² This “one city – one bishop” principle proved to be one of the principal arguments used on behalf of the Metropolia to justify autocephaly,⁶³ as well as Orthodox unity.⁶⁴

And so I come to the question: what is autocephaly? As mentioned earlier, the simplest definition would perhaps be “independence” or “independent self-governance.” The word does not appear in the canonical literature of the Orthodox Church.⁶⁵ Autocephaly – in the sense of a bishop possessing complete spiritual and administrative authority and responsibility within his own particular community or territory – has existed, in one form or another, virtually from the

⁶² Canon eight of the First Ecumenical Council states that “. . . where there is a bishop or presbyter belonging to the catholic church, it is evident that the bishop of the church will hold the bishop’s dignity, and that the one given the title and name of bishop among the so-called Cathars will have the rank of presbyter. . . and so prevent there being two bishops in the city.” Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council*, vol. 1. (London: Sheed and Ward / Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 10. This principle was universally accepted within the Orthodox Catholic Church. For example, “A bishop’s jurisdiction is confined to his own diocese” (Apostolic canon numbers thirty four and thirty-five, canon nine of Antioch); “A bishop may not go into another diocese and ordain the faithful unless he receives a written invitation from the local bishop or Metropolitan” (canon thirteen of Antioch). See also canon two of the Second Ecumenical Council, Canon eight of the third, Canon 17 of the fourth, canon thirteen of Antioch, canon fifty-six of Carthage. See also p. 111n388 and Mihai, 77-78, 88.

⁶³ “It is indeed ironical that in America the *canonical subordinationism*, exalted by so many as the only source and guarantee of ‘canonicity’, is being used to justify the most uncanonical situation one can imagine; the simultaneous jurisdiction of several bishops in the same territory, which is a betrayal of both the letter and the spirit of the whole canonical tradition.” Alexander Schmemmann, “Problems of Orthodoxy in America: The Canonical Problem,” *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1964): 69. Schmemmann wrote two other articles which specifically addressed Orthodox Liturgical and Spiritual life in America: “Problems of Orthodoxy in America II: The Liturgical Problem.” *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (1964): 164-185; and “Problems of Orthodoxy in America III: the Spiritual Problem,” *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1965): 171-193.

⁶⁴ “The vision behind our autocephaly is the same today as it was in 1970 when our bishops wrote the following to the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America: ‘Conscious of being a local American Church, our Metropolitanate has often and publicly stated its belief that Orthodoxy cannot develop in America except in unity and independence. . . Today, as the Mother Church which established the mission 175 years ago solemnly recognizes our autocephaly, a threefold task opens up for us: the task of uniting all Orthodox Christians of America into one Church;—the task of witnessing freely to the true Christian faith in the whole world;—the task of growing spiritually from strength to strength through the prayers of holy Father Herman of Alaska.’” Metropolitan Theodosius (Lazor), “The Path to Autocephaly and Beyond: ‘Miles to Go Before I Sleep.’” Accessed March 17th 2020. <https://www.oca.org/holy-synod/statements/metropolitan-theodosius/the-path-to-autocephaly-and-beyond-miles-to-go-before-we-sleep>

⁶⁵ “. . . the core corpus of canons does not speak explicitly about autocephaly (or autonomy) as such – it is not a canonical institution in a very strict sense.” Wagschal, “Ancient Laws in a Modern World”, 3. See also John Erickson, “Autocephaly in Orthodox Canonical Literature to the Thirteenth Century,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 15, no. 1-2 (1971): 28-41.

beginning of Christianity.⁶⁶ Hovorun notes that “Autocephaly survived many transformations and crises,”⁶⁷ and that “In some periods of its history it almost vanished and in some it gained an extreme power. It took different forms and interpretations during its long historical journey.”⁶⁸

The first historical example of a Church being declared autocephalous is Cyprus.⁶⁹ Job Getcha states that “The principle of autocephaly is of ancient origin and goes back to the fourth century. It is based on Canon 8 of the Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus 431), which recognizes the right of the Church of Cyprus to direct its own internal affairs, up to and including the election and consecration of its own bishops and primate.”⁷⁰ The Church of Jerusalem was elevated to Patriarchal status at the council of Chalcedon in 451,⁷¹ resulting in six clearly recognized autocephalous churches: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Cyprus.⁷²

⁶⁶ “The idea of autocephaly appeared together with the first Christian communities. The apostolic communities were in fact autocephalous, that is, they were not obliged to give account before any other communities in regards to any questions. That is to say, they could do this, if they wished, but were not obliged to do so. Autocephaly gave all the communities equal rights.” Cyril Hovorun, “Autocephaly and its Ukrainian Case.” (“Ідея автокефалії виникла разом з першими християнськими громадами. Апостольські громади були фактично автокефальними, себто вони не були зобов’язані звітувати перед іншими громадами у жодних питаннях. Тобто вони могли це робити, якщо хотіли, але не були зобов’язані. Автокефалія робила всі громади рівноправними.” Архимандрит Кирилл Говорун, «Автокефалія та її український випадок.») https://lb.ua/society/2018/04/23/395913_avtokefaliya_ii_ukrainskiy.html. Accessed 23 February 2020.

⁶⁷ Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 88.

⁶⁸ Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 88 - 89.

⁶⁹ “If it has not been a continuous ancient custom for the bishop of Antioch to hold ordinations in Cyprus – as it is asserted in memorials and orally by the religious men who have come before the synod – the prelates of the holy churches of Cyprus shall, free from molestation and violence, use their right to perform thy themselves the ordination of reverent bishops for their island, according to the canons of the holy fathers and ancient custom.” Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, 68.

⁷⁰ Job Getcha “Can one justify the notion of a ‘national church’ from an Orthodox point of view?” *Sourozh* 83 (March 2001): 28.

⁷¹ Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, “Decree on the Jurisdiction of Jerusalem and Antioch,” *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, vol. 14 (The Seven Ecumenical Councils)*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 266.

⁷² For a more detailed account see John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989), 54-59.

From the fourth till the nineteenth centuries autocephaly was construed either on the basis of empire (Roman⁷³ or Russian⁷⁴) or canonical/ancient privilege (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Cyprus).⁷⁵ However, before culminating with the peace of Westphalia in 1648, and continuing through the 18th and 19th centuries, the concept of nation-state began to replace the concept of empire in political discourse, and the idea of a “national Church” along ethnic lines absorbed the referential meaning and the understanding of “autocephaly”.⁷⁶

After the French Revolution, during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Europe experienced a series of nationalist movements based on the principle that each ethnic community should have its own state. . . in parallel with

⁷³ In the given instance “Roman” describes both “Old Rome” and “New Rome” (i.e., Constantinople). “The fathers rightly accorded prerogatives to the see of older Rome, since that is an imperial city; and moved by the same purpose the 150 most devout bishops apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy see of new Rome, reasonably judging that the city which is honoured by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equalling older imperial Rome, should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her.” (Canon 28 of the fourth Ecumenical Council). Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, 100. “Under the Ottomans the Orthodox people were referred to as the *Millet-i Rum*, the “Roman People.” Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 70.

⁷⁴ Kyivan Rus’ received the Christian faith from Constantinople in 988, and thereafter became a metropolia of the Constantinopolitan Church. After the sack of Kyiv in 1240 AD, the centre of Church life moved northwards to Suzdal, and eventually to Moscow. The Muscovite Church elected and enthroned its own metropolitan in 1448, following the “apostasy” of Metropolitan Isidore of Kyiv at the council of Florence-Ferranza. In the early part of the 16th century the monk Philothei, writing to the Grand Prince of Moscow Basil III (reigned 1505-33) first proposed the “third Rome” theory – that old Rome fell because of heresy, second Rome (i.e. Constantinople) was destroyed by the Turks, and Moscow is the third and final Rome. Rulers in Muscovy appropriated the title “tsar” (“Caesar”) from the time of Ivan III (reigned 1462-1505), based on his marriage to the niece of the last Byzantine emperor. Ivan IV (“the Terrible”) was enthroned as “tsar,” thereby sealing the self-identification of Muscovy as the imperial successor to Byzantium. The self-proclaimed autocephaly of the Muscovite Church was finally recognized by Patriarch Jeremiah II in 1589 when, while in Moscow to collect money, he consecrated Job as Patriarch of Moscow. Following his return to Constantinople the Muscovite Church was proclaimed a Patriarchate. See Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1981), 102-109; Nicholas Zernov, *Eastern Christendom*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson: 1961), 139-141; and Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 104-110.

⁷⁵ The attempts to obtain autocephaly by the Bulgars in the 9th/10th centuries and the Serbs in the 13th/14th centuries were imperial, rather than statist, in their aspirations. In the Ottoman Empire the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem often resided in Constantinople and their dioceses were de facto within the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the imperial city. See Hovorun *Scaffolds*, 94-102.

⁷⁶ “The Peace of Westphalia in the seventeenth century created a new philosophy of territory with state sovereignty as its cornerstone. The Orthodox churches embraced this philosophy.” Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 5.

this movement there developed the concept of ‘national Churches’ whose principle, formulated at that time, was the establishment of a national Church which would bear the same name as the national State.”⁷⁷

Zabarah notes that “Historians generally distinguish two discursive patterns on how a certain polity is defined: the national discourse and the empire discourse,”⁷⁸ and goes on to observe that nation-states tend to have homogenous populations, while empires are multi-national; imperial borders tend to be blurry while national borders are fixed; empires tend to have an hierarchical structure while nation states tend toward a “bottom up” polity, etc.⁷⁹

The religious situation in the United States was unique and novel. The characteristics of empire and nation state were mixed: it was multi-national (a “melting pot”), yet democratic (a “bottom up” polity). The USA was not an imperial power (at least not in the Roman, Russian, or European colonial sense), and as opposed to both the imperial and nation-state models of European autocephaly it maintained a policy of separation between Church and state, with no established religion. Orthodox Christianity was confessed by a miniscule percentage of the population in the United States, and religious pluralism was the norm. How could autocephaly work, upon what could it be founded, given such an environment?

⁷⁷ Getcha “Can one justify the notion of a ‘national church’”: 26-27.

⁷⁸ Dareg A. Zabarah, “Autocephaly: A Delayed Transition from Empire to National State,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, Issue 33 (2012): 51.

⁷⁹ Zabarah, 51.

Greece unilaterally proclaimed its own autocephaly in 1833,⁸⁰ Romania in 1872,⁸¹ and Bulgaria in 1872.⁸² These unilateral declarations resulted in Constantinople breaking communion with each Church; at this stage we are witnessing the break between the imperial and the national model of autocephaly. Recognition of these autocephalies and the restoration of communion by the Ecumenical Patriarchate was only accomplished (more or less reluctantly) in 1850, 1885, and 1946 respectively. Serbia was the only newly independent state where this process went forward relatively peacefully, with autocephaly being both proclaimed and recognized in 1879.⁸³ Though organizing the Church on the basis of nationality or *ethnos* was condemned at the Pan-Orthodox Council in Constantinople in 1872,⁸⁴ the “national” or “nation-state” character of these newly autocephalous churches, as elucidated by Zabarah, was certainly marked.

Getcha argues that “Since the concept of a ‘national’ Church does not appear in the canonical tradition of the Church, it cannot be justified in Orthodox ecclesiology,”⁸⁵ yet in spite of this generally accepted principle, talk of “national Churches” has become common, even normative, in Orthodox discourse.⁸⁶ As an example we can cite a recent statement by Fr. Mykolai Danylevych, vice-chairman of the Department of External Affairs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate):

⁸⁰ Hovorun, *Scaffolds*,” 112.

⁸¹ Zabarah, 57.

⁸² Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 119.

⁸³ Aleksii I, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, “Letter of Patriarch Alexis to Patriarch Athenagoras ” in “Documents: The Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America,” 59.

⁸⁴ John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1981), 168-169.

⁸⁵ Getcha “Can one justify the notion of a ‘national church’”: 31.

⁸⁶ Such language is contained in the OCA Tomos itself, as per the block quote on page 12 above.

Among the Local Churches there are national and super-national churches. National Autocephalous Churches – these are in Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, Greece, etc. Super-national – these are the Moscow Patriarchate, which is active in more than 15 countries of the world, the Alexandrian Patriarchate, to which the countries of the African continent belong, the Church of the Czech lands and Slovakia, to which belong the parishes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Antiochian Church, which includes within itself Syria and Lebanon.⁸⁷

Paradoxically, although Getcha correctly notes that from a canonical standpoint the idea of a “national” Church is problematic, on a practical level this is the way all the “new” local Churches have in fact organized themselves. Is there a way to understand the phenomenon of “national” Churches in a way which is not “phyletistic?”⁸⁸ Getcha goes on to say that

In order to remain faithful to the Tradition of the Church, . . . it would be far preferable to use the concept of a ‘territorial’ or ‘local’ Church, i.e. one which represents the manifestation of the plenitude of the Church of Christ established in a specific place (whether city, province or country), but which remains in full communion with the Church of Christ spread throughout the universe. . . It is precisely on the basis of territoriality and of full communion in matters of doctrine and discipline that the notion of the ‘autocephalous’ Church was developed from the fourth century onwards. . . It is therefore in this sense of ‘territorial’ Churches that we should understand the notion of the ‘autocephalous’ Church.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Mykolai Danylevych, “The Question of Autocephaly is Ecclesiastical, not Political.” (Миколай Данилевич, “Питання Автокефалії церковне, а не політичне”), <http://news.church.ua/2018/06/21/stvorennya-paralelnoji-yurisdikciji-oznachatime-kinec-mrij-pro-jedinu-cerkvu-protiijerej-mikolaj-danilevich-pro-avtokefaliyu/> (accessed 10 February 2020). It is noteworthy that Danylevych does not cite the OCA as an autocephalous “Supernational” Church, though he is a member of the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, and the OCA has dioceses in Canada and Mexico as well as the USA. The omission of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a “Supernational” Church is especially noteworthy.

⁸⁸ “Phyletism” is the teaching, condemned at the Constantinople council of 1872, which maintains that ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be determined on an ethnic, rather than territorial basis. For a fuller account see Philip Walters, “Notes on Autocephaly and Phyletism.” *Religion, State and Society* 30, no. 4, (2002): 361-362.

⁸⁹ Getcha “Can one justify the notion of a ‘national church’”: 31. See also Panteleimon Rodopoulos, “Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law. The Phenomenon of Ethnophyletism in Recent Years.” <https://www.patriarchate.org/-/territorial-jurisdiction-according-to-orthodox-canon-law-the-phenomenon-of-ethnophyletism-in-recent-yea-1>. Accessed 13 November 2019.

The various ways autocephaly is understood or construed by particular theologians or churches can be gleaned from their writings as well as Church documents. According to Mihai autocephaly is a recognition of the “maturity” of a Church, it is limited to a particular geographical territory, and must be proclaimed by the Ecumenical Patriarch, following which it possesses the right to form its own synod of Bishops, elect its own primate, and to sanctify chrism.⁹⁰ Svitich, in relation to the first granting of autocephaly to the Polish Church in 1924, states that the will of the people and the consent of the government (of the particular nation state), the consent of the “mother Church,” and recognition by all the other autocephalous Churches are necessary.⁹¹ Erickson describes autocephaly simply as the “right to resolve all internal problems” and to “appoint its own bishops” without recourse to any other Church,⁹² while Bogolepov notes that autocephaly requires an adequate number of faithful, bishops and priests.⁹³

⁹⁰ “A church reaches its utmost maturity when all other autocephalous churches recognize it as autocephalous ; consequently, the Ecumenical Patriarch issues a *tomos* stating the church’s rights to set up a synod of bishops, to elect a primate. . . , to exercise ecclesiastical authority over a specific territory. . . and to sanctify the holy myrrh needed in the sacrament of chrismation.” Mihai, 63-64.

⁹¹ “Autocephaly can be carried out under four conditions: 1. The will of the people establishing the autocephaly of the Church, 2. The consent of the Church from which the new Church is separated, 3. The recognition of the new Church by the other autocephalous Churches, and 4. The consent of the government of the country in which the new autocephalous church is being established.” Alexander Svitich, *The Orthodox Church in Poland and Her Autocephaly*, (Buenos Aires, 1959), 19. («Автокефалия может быть осуществлена при наличии четырех условий: 1. Воля народа, создающего автокефалию Церкви, 2. Согласие Церкви, из которой выделяется новая Церковь, 3. Признание новой Церкви другими автокефальными Церквами и 4., согласие Правительства того Государства, в котором новая автокефальная Церковь учреждается (См. Варшавскую Польскую газету «Курьер Варшавский», от 5 февраля 1922 г.)» Александр Свитич, *Православная Церковь в Польше и Ее Автокефалия*. (Буенос Аирес, 1959), 19).

⁹² “In present-day usage, a church is termed autocephalous if it possesses (1) the right to resolve all internal problems on its own authority, independently of all other churches, and (2) the right to appoint its own bishops, among them the primate or head of the church, without obligatory expression of dependence on another church.” John H. Erickson, “Autocephaly and Autonomy.” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 60, no. 1-2 (2016): 93.

⁹³ “A part of the Orthodox Church claiming to be autocephalous must be sufficiently mature to organize its own ecclesiastical life; it must have a sufficient number of parishes and parishioners, the possibility of training new clergymen and a hierarchy canonically capable of making subsequent appointments of new bishops. . . If the number of ruling bishops of one Orthodox region is less than three, then this region cannot be proclaimed “autocephalous,” since it is canonically unable to provide new bishops for itself.” Bogolepov. *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 8-9.

Consolidating all of the above, the concept of autocephaly would seem to imply some combination of the following:

- a. A desire on the part of the people/Church of a particular territory to be autocephalous.
- b. The agreement of the “Mother Church” (the autocephalous Church under whose jurisdiction the “Daughter Church” finds itself).
- c. Recognition by all the other autocephalous Churches.
- d. The agreement of the government of the country/territory of the new autocephalous Church.
- e. The bestowal of a Tomos of autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- f. The limitation of the jurisdiction of an autocephalous Church to a particular territory.
- g. At least potentially⁹⁴ the right of the autocephalous Church to prepare its own Holy Chrism.⁹⁵
- h. The right to resolve all internal disputes without recourse to any other Church.
- i. The right to elect and consecrate its own primate and bishops.
- j. Maturity (presumably both spiritual and administrative) as well as sufficient resources (i.e., an adequate number of bishops, dioceses, and faithful), to organize and maintain its own “ecclesiastical life.”

According to the Tomos of autocephaly of the OCA (par. 2.c), an autocephalous church would also have the right to maintain direct relations with other local Orthodox Churches.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Most autocephalous Churches receive their Holy Chrism from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, though Chrism is consecrated by the Primate of the Patriarchates of Moscow, Serbia, and Romania. Pavlos Menevisoglou, “The Sanctification of Holy Chrism,” Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, accessed February 29th, 2020, <https://www.goarch.org/-/the-sanctification-of-the-holy-chrism>.

⁹⁵ As per, for example, paragraph 2d of the Tomos of autocephaly of the OCA.

⁹⁶ “In interjurisdictional relations, the primates of the autocephalous churches assumed all responsibility for maintaining communion between the local churches.” Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 91-92.

Pan-Orthodox discussions regarding the matter of autocephaly, conditions for its recognition and process of its proclamation, etc., was begun by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1930 with a conference at Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos, and continued at the Pan-Orthodox Conference on Rhodes in 1961, at the Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Councils in Chambesy in 1976 and 1993, and at the inter-Orthodox preparatory meetings in 2009 and 2011.⁹⁷ Though it was one of the topics identified for discussion at the Great Council which was held in Crete in 2016, this topic was dropped from the agenda before the commencement of the council.⁹⁸

In the absence of a clear, pan-Orthodox consensus on the conditions and process for the recognition of autocephaly, how would precedent (taking into account the historical examples, canonical norms, and principles identified at pan-Orthodox and pre-conciliar meetings such as they are) inform the question of how autocephaly has, and might be, granted?

Prior to 1948 the precedent is quite clear. Beginning with the accession to autocephaly of the Church of Greece in 1833/1850 a general pattern can be identified. The nation-state either extricates itself or is freed from imperial domination.⁹⁹ Political authorities in the nascent state, with a greater or lesser degree of support from the local Church hierarchy, seek to have their Church “freed” from ties to or the jurisdiction of a hierarchy located in the political jurisdiction of a foreign power which is either actually or potentially hostile, of a different nationality, or both.

⁹⁷ Borkowski, “Autocephaly in the Light of the Preparations,” 166-168.

⁹⁸ “[Autocephaly] has acted among other things as a political, ideological, and cultural phenomenon. It has adopted so many noncanonical and non-ecclesial connotations that it appears to have become paralyzed. This paralysis was manifest in the process of preparation for the ‘Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church.’ The church chose not to discuss at the council the procedure for granting autocephaly, in spite of the fact that it remains one of the burning issues in inter-Orthodox relations.” Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*, 127. See also p. 126n436.

⁹⁹ This took place in the United States in 1776, in Canada in 1967.

There is a greater or lesser degree of tension between those who wish to see their Church autocephalous and those who do not. Communion is usually broken between the “daughter Church” and the Patriarchate of Constantinople for a greater or lesser period of time, after which the autocephaly of the new local church is recognized, and a Tomos of autocephaly is bestowed upon the new Church by the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, following which relations are regularized among the newly-recognized autocephalous Church and all other Churches.¹⁰⁰

The involvement of governmental or ruling structures in this process is a matter of contention. Though the intrusion of secular leaders into ecclesiastical matters is, as a matter of principle, eschewed (at least officially) by all, the ruler or state authorities have historically played an important role in the attainment of autocephaly. As noted by L’Huillier:

In the East the decisive role of the ‘Basileis’ . . . was seldom questioned. According to the principle of harmony (συμφωνία) between *Sacerdotium* and *Imperium*, problems related to the formation, abolishment and adjustment of boundaries of large Church entities necessarily needed imperial involvement.”¹⁰¹

The “abolishment and adjustment of boundaries” noted by L’Huillier raises the question, “does autocephaly expand and contract with the borders of the given empire or country?”

¹⁰⁰ Such a process describes the accession to autocephaly of the Churches of Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia Poland, Albania and Czechoslovakia. See Chapter 4, “Strongholds: Autocephaly” in Hovorun, *Scaffolds of the Church*. The pattern was similar in the case of the autocephaly of the Church of Muscovy, the difference being that rather than being freed from imperial domination, the Muscovite Church claimed autocephaly based upon the “apostasy” of the Constantinopolitan Church in acceding to union with Rome at the council of Florence/Ferrara. See Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church*, 106-109.

¹⁰¹ L’Huillier, “Accession to Autocephaly”: 275. In more modern times “. . . all negotiations concerning the various “autocephalies” were conducted not by churches, but by states: the most typical example here being the process of negotiating the autocephaly of the Russian Church in the sixteenth century, a process in which the Russian Church herself took virtually no part. We must stress once more that this new ‘autocephalous’ church, as it appears in Bulgaria and later in Russia and in Serbia, is not a mere ‘jurisdictional’ entity. Its main implication is not so much ‘independence’ (for in fact it is usually totally dependent on the state) but precisely the *national* church, or, in other words, the church as the religious expression and projection of a nation, as indeed the bearer of a *national identity*.” Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 99.

Objectively speaking, the answer can only be yes. The self-declared autocephaly of the small, landlocked Grand Duchy of Muscovy in the 15th century covered only a small fraction of the “canonical territory” claimed by the Russian Orthodox Church today.¹⁰² Likewise, a cursory glance at the maps of the Kingdoms of Bulgaria in 1915 (which at that time still had access to the Aegean sea) or Romania in 1916 (which only included Wallachia and Moldavia) is proof that not only imperial, but other types of political involvement have contributed to the “canonical territory” of virtually all “national” autocephalous Churches.

Although the government of the United States of America did not request or demand autocephaly for the Orthodox Church in America from the “Mother Church” as was done by the governments of Greece, Bulgaria, etc.,¹⁰³ the Russian Orthodox Church/Moscow Patriarchate, following Metropolitan Sergii’s compromise with the Soviet regime in 1927¹⁰⁴ and especially Stalin’s rapprochement with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1943¹⁰⁵ was certainly acting under the aegis, and arguably at the behest, of the government of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ It is here that the

¹⁰² “The ROC currently sees itself as a multinational church with a wider territorial span than the current Russian Federation. Its canonical territory includes (with the exception of Georgia and Armenia) thirteen former Soviet Republics. Articles 1 and 3 of its statutes read as follows: (1) The Russian Orthodox Church is a multinational Local Autocephalous Church in doctrinal unity and in prayerful and canonical communion with other Local Orthodox Churches. [...] (3) The jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church shall include persons of Orthodox confession living on the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Latvia, Lithuania, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan and Estonia, and also Orthodox Christians living in other countries and voluntarily joining this jurisdiction.” Zabarah, “Autocephaly,” 55.

¹⁰³ Although notably it was at the request of the United States government that the Metropolia received under her canonical protection the Orthodox Church of Japan following World War II. “In an effort to prevent a Soviet presence in Occupied Japan through the Japanese Orthodox Church, the American military authorities encouraged the Japanese Orthodox to seek episcopal oversight not from Russia as it had in the past, but from the Metropolia. This episcopal oversight continued until 1970.” Stokoe, 69. This is especially meaningful insofar as the Orthodox Church of Japan was, like the Metropolia, a “daughter” of the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹⁰⁴ This will be discussed in chapter VII.

¹⁰⁵ This will be discussed in chapter IV.

¹⁰⁶ “In Eastern Europe outside Albania. . . the relations of Church and state followed a common principle, even in Poland until 1988-89. The Church governed itself with a variety of interference from the State – massive

question arises as to the manner in which the Patriarchate of Moscow, acting to a greater or lesser degree tacitly if not openly on behalf of the Soviet authorities, bestowed autocephaly upon the churches of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the American Metropolia. In the following chapter I argue that Stalin's strategic use of the Orthodox Church during and after World War II, the (re)bestowal of autocephaly on the Polish Church in 1948,¹⁰⁷ and the proclamation of Czechoslovakia's autocephaly in 1951 all point clearly to an instrumental and political use of the institution of autocephaly on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate. If this is in fact true, what could this tell us about the motivation behind or the nature of Moscow's bestowal of autocephaly upon the OCA?

interventions in Russia and Czechoslovakia, less everywhere else." Owen Chadwick, *The Christian Church in the Cold War*, (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 181. See also Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, especially 1:209-219; and Raymond Oppenheim, "Are the Furov Reports Authentic" in Geoffrey A. Hosking (Ed.), *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, (Edmonton, AB: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1990), 291-311.

¹⁰⁷ The Orthodox Church of Poland had already been granted autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1924. See full discussion in chapter IV.

IV. The Moscow Patriarchate and Autocephaly in the 20th Century

The Moscow Patriarchate's conception and use of autocephaly in the 20th century is directly related to its relationships with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Soviet state.

Fundamentally it is a result of the manner in which the historical and ecclesial prerogatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate were interpreted by the respective bodies, as well as the political – understood in both its ecclesiastical as well as its secular significance – aspirations of the Soviet Union/Moscow Patriarchate. All of these factors had a direct bearing on the bestowal of autocephaly upon the OCA, the manner in which it was done, and the consequences thereof.

After the fall of the Tsarist regime in 1917 and the subsequent victory of the Bolshevik forces in the former Russian Empire, the circumstances of the newly-restored Moscow Patriarchate changed dramatically. By all accounts, the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union was not only decimated, but almost completely destroyed between 1918 and 1939 as a result of Bolshevik persecution.¹⁰⁸ It was under these chaotic conditions that the first conflicts over jurisdiction and autocephaly in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and America occurred.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ “To put it briefly, as early as January 1918 the church was disenfranchised, deprived of the status of a juridical person, and along with that stripped of all her real estate, of all church buildings, schools, monasteries, residences for the clergy, bank accounts, as well as of the right to own any of these, of the right to teach religion . . . With varying intensity of terror and despite brief periods of respite the all-out destruction of the church continued through 1939, so that only several hundred functioning churches of all religions survived by 1940 on the original Soviet territory. Some 500 bishops, at least 40,000 Orthodox clergy, at least an equal number of monastics, plus unknown thousands of believers had been killed or had died in Soviet prisons and camps by the beginning of World War II.” Dimitry Pospelovsky, “Faith as Martyria” in *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Geoffrey A. Hosking (Edmonton, AB: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1990), 271-272. See also Karl Schlögel, *Moscow 1937*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, UK/Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 46-47 (demolition of churches and monasteries) and 486-487 (murder of believers, especially bishops and priests), and Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, vol. 1, chapters 1-5.

¹⁰⁹ There were also conflicts regarding the status of the Churches in Finland, Estonia and Latvia, as well as the Western European diocese “of the Russian Tradition” under Constantinople which was led by Metropolitan Evlogy. As none of these involved the question of autocephaly they will not be addressed in this paper.

The Polish state after WWI wished “to obtain the [Orthodox] church’s independence (autocephaly) from the newly re-established (and Soviet-dominated) Moscow Patriarchate. It accomplished this in 1924 after considerable maneuvering that included bypassing Moscow.”¹¹⁰ By 1921 Metropolitan Georgii (Jaroszewski), primate of the Orthodox Church in Poland, had requested autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate. This was refused by Patriarch Tikhon:

When the Polish ambassador in Moscow first raised the issue of the granting of autocephaly . . . His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon answered: ‘The Holy Canons of Our Church provide for autocephaly for individual independent peoples. If the Polish people, having recently gained sovereignty, were Orthodox and would ask for autocephaly for themselves, we would not refuse to do this, but to give autocephaly for heterogeneous Orthodox people living within the Polish state as members of national and religious minorities – We cannot permit this either on the basis of common sense or the holy canons. We have already given what is possible to the Orthodox in Poland - broad local church autonomy.’”¹¹¹

This statement by Patriarch Tikhon is very important, as it obviously relates to the situation of the “Orthodox people living as members of national and religious minorities” in North America as well.

¹¹⁰ “When political boundaries were redrawn in the wake of World War 1, nearly four million Orthodox Christians who hitherto had been under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church found themselves within the new Polish republic. Under heavy pressure from the Polish government, a reluctant hierarchy petitioned the patriarchate of Constantinople for autocephaly, which was quickly granted. Needless to say, the Russian Orthodox Church regarded this as unwarranted interference in its own internal affairs.” Erickson, “Autocephaly and Autonomy,” 102. See also Edward D. Wynot, “The Polish Orthodox Church” in *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War 1945-91*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (London: Routledge, 2010), 122.

¹¹¹ «В первый раз на представление Польского посла в Москве о даровании автокефалии . . . Святейший Патриарх Тихон ответил: «Священные Каноны Нашей Церкви предусматривают автокефалию для отдельных самостоятельных народов. Если бы польский народ, получивший недавно суверенность, был православный и просил бы автокефалию для себя, Мы бы ему в этом не отказали, но давать автокефалию для разноплеменных православных, проживающих в пределах Польского государства на положении национальных и религиозных меньшинств – Нам не позволяют ни здравый разум, ни священные каноны. Что возможно, то Мы уже дали православным в Польше – широкую поместно-церковную автономию». Свитич, *Православная Церковь в Польше*, 53-54. (Svitich, *The Orthodox Church in Poland*, 53-54.)

In April of 1922 Patriarch Tikhon was arrested and imprisoned, and a so-called “Church Committee” was formed in Moscow. In the second half of May of that year the Bishops in Poland met under the presidency of Metropolitan Georgii, and took this resolution: “Until the resumption of the activities of the Supreme Church Administration in Moscow headed by His Holiness the Patriarch, to decide all matters requiring resolution here and not to take any orders from the Church Committee illegally formed in Moscow.”¹¹² Following the imprisonment of Patriarch Tikhon the Polish government pushed harder and harder for autocephaly.¹¹³ The push for autocephaly was contentious, and the conflict between those who favoured remaining within the Russian Church and those who favoured autocephaly for the Polish Church became violent.¹¹⁴ After being released from prison, Patriarch Tikhon attempted to prevent the autocephaly from being proclaimed, characterizing it as “unlawful” and “uncanonical.”¹¹⁵ The

¹¹² «До возобновления деятельности Высшего Церковного Управления в Москве во главе со Святейшим Патриархом все дела, требуемые обстоятельствами, решать на месте и не принимать никаких распоряжений от незаконно образовавшегося в Москве Церковного комитета.» Свитич, *Православная Церковь в Польше*, 16. It must be noted that at this time there was great upheaval in the Russian Orthodox Church due to the support and recognition given to the “Renovationist” or “Living Church” by the Bolshevik authorities in Moscow. For a complete picture of the Church situation in Moscow during this time see Pospelovsky *The Russian Church*, 1:52-64, and Philip Walters “The Renovationist Coup: Personalities and Programmes,” *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, 250-270.

¹¹³ “Until 1924 Polish Orthodox bishops were nominally subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate and were included in the structure of the Russian Orthodox Church. But in 1924 the Polish Orthodox Church received its autocephality from the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Polish government not only sympathized with the separatists in the Polish Orthodox church but in fact played a decisive role in the separation.” W. Alexeev and T. Stavrou, *Great Revival*. (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1976), 150.

¹¹⁴ Metropolitan Georgii was assassinated by a disaffected Russian monk on February 8th 1923. Svitich characterizes the event as follows: “Metropolitan Georgii was killed by Archimandrite Smaragdus (Latyshenkov), the former Rector of the Kholm Theological Seminary, showing himself as avenger for the despoiled freedom of the Church.” Svitich, *The Orthodox Church in Poland*, 36. («Митрополит Георгий был убит архимандритом Смарагдом (Латышенковым), б. Ректором Холмской Духовной Семинарий, явившимся мстителем за поруганную свободу Церкви.» Свитич, *Православная Церковь в Польше*, 36).

¹¹⁵ After being released from prison, Patriarch Tikhon sent a letter to Metropolitan Dionysius in Poland on May 23rd, 1924, in which he expressed his concern and displeasure with what had transpired in Poland since 1922. This displeasure, and especially displeasure with the choice of the Polish hierarchy to accept autocephaly (which they [i.e., Patr. Tikhon and Metr. Sergei] regarded as “unlawfully” or “uncanonically” obtained) was also expressed by Patr. Tikhon’s successor, Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metr. Sergei in letters of 4 January and 22 October 1928. Svitich, *The Orthodox Church in Poland*, 54 – 59.

Polish Government finally turned to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which granted the Polish Church autocephaly on November 13th, 1924, on the basis of the fact that a) Poland was now an independent country with its own territory,¹¹⁶ and b) the Orthodox population of Poland (consisting mainly of Ukrainians and Belarusians) lived on the territory of what had been the Kyivan Metropolia, which had historically been under the jurisdiction of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate.¹¹⁷

With the onset of World War II and the invasion of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union the question of Polish autocephaly was further complicated. Dr. Seraphim Lade, an ethnic German, was consecrated bishop by the Karlovci Synod, and “immediately prior to the outbreak of war the Nazi leadership designated Seraphim the official head of all Orthodox in the Third Reich and its future territorial acquisitions.”¹¹⁸ Following the Nazi invasion Metropolitan Dionysius, Primate of the Polish Church, resigned his position in 1939, then rescinded his resignation in 1940.¹¹⁹ At this time most of the Orthodox believers of Poland lived on Soviet

¹¹⁶ As noted above on page 33 this principle was admitted to be valid by Patriarch Tikhon as well.

¹¹⁷ “The large Eastern Orthodox community in Poland . . . appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to grant autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Poland. On 13 November 1924 Patriarch Gregorios VII of Constantinople granted this petition, with a tomos which not only bestowed autocephaly on the church in Poland but also contained this significant paragraph: ‘It is written in history that the forcible separation of the Kievan metropolia together with its subordinated eparchies in Poland and Lithuania from our see, and its annexation to the church of Moscow, occurred contrary to the codes of canon law. By this act, all rights which pertained to the full ecclesiastical autonomy of the Kievan metropolitan, who had the title of exarch to the Ecumenical Throne, were completely abrogated.’ With these words the ecumenical patriarch reminded the Russian church that Moscow’s jurisdiction over the Metropolitanate of Kiev (including both Ukraine and Belarus) is disputable.” Serge Kelleher, “Orthodox Rivalry in the 20th Century: Moscow versus Constantinople,” *Religion, State, and Society*, Vol. 25, no. 2, 1997: 127. A similar dynamic, with claims and counter-claims to North America as its own “canonical territory,” took place between the Constantinopolitan and Moscow Patriarchates in the lead up to as well as the aftermath of the bestowal of autocephaly upon the OCA in 1970. This will be discussed in chapters VII – IX.

¹¹⁸ Wynot, *The Polish Orthodox Church*, 123.

¹¹⁹ “. . . in November 1939 Dionizy abdicated his office and transferred his hierarchical authority to Seraphim, on the grounds that the elimination of Poland as a sovereign state also effectively cancelled the autocephalous status of its Orthodox Church, which now passed under the jurisdiction of the German Orthodox Church. . . with active Ukrainian encouragement Dionizy recanted his abdication in September 1940 and, in an audience with Hans Frank,

territory, but following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 the Germans permitted the re-establishment of religious life on this formerly Soviet territory.

The overwhelming positive reaction of the local Ukrainian and Belarusian Orthodox populace to the German toleration of religious life, coupled with the material and moral support the Russian Orthodox Church offered to the Soviet war effort, resulted in Stalin changing his position on religion to one of support for the Church.¹²⁰ In addition, following the “liberation” of these western territories from German rule, he recognized the usefulness of the Church in re-integrating the (re)occupied territories of western Russia, Belarus’, Ukraine, and the Baltic states, as well as the potential of the Church as a tool for foreign influence.¹²¹ In 1943 Stalin “proposed the establishment of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (CAROC),” whose major task would be “to mediate the relations between the government and the patriarch.”¹²² As noted by Kalkandjieva: “The council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church was a creature of the NKVD. . . Its chairman became Georgii Karpov, a former NKVD colonel who had been in charge of the religious policy long before September 1943.”¹²³ On September 4th, 1943,

Stalin invited the only three Orthodox metropolitans functioning at that time on Soviet territory – Sergii (Stragorodsky), who was brought from Ulyanovsk only

head of the Polish occupation regime, persuaded him to dismiss Seraphim and confirm Dionizy as the lawful Metropolitan the renamed ‘Autocephalous Orthodox Church of the General Government.’” Wynot, *The Polish Orthodox Church*, 123. For Metropolitan Dionizy’s further dealings with both the Nazi regime as well as the Ukrainian Orthodox element see Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 1:236-237.

¹²⁰ For a more detailed exposition of this see chapters six (“The Church During the Second World War: Soviet Territory”) and seven (“The Church During the Second World War: German-occupied Territory”) of Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, vol. 1, and chapter two (“The Sergian Church in the annexed territories [September 1939-June 1941]”) in Daniela Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1948: From Decline to Resurrection*, (London: Routledge, 2015).

¹²¹ The use of its North American exarchate as well as the Metropolia as tools for foreign influence by the Moscow Patriarchate will be explored in chapters VII – IX.

¹²² Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1948*, 180-181

¹²³ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1948*, 184.

on the eve of this meeting and thereafter remained in Moscow, Nikolai (Yarushevich) and Aleksii (Simansky) of Leningrad – to discuss and arrange the conditions for a controlled but more solid existence of the Moscow Patriarchate.¹²⁴

This meeting resulted *de facto* in the restoration of the Patriarchate, under a new, symbiotic relationship with the Soviet state with the Church clearly in a subservient and servile position.¹²⁵

This subservience and servility will prove to be an important factor when, in the 1960's, the Moscow Patriarchate is forced to deal with the attempts by the North American Metropolia to regularize its canonical status while striving at the same time to maintain support a Soviet political presence and influence in America.

De jure, the reestablishment of the Patriarchate happened with the enthronement of Patriarch Sergii on September 12th, 1943, following what can only be termed his “snap” election on September 8th.¹²⁶ After the death of Patriarch Sergii in May 1944, Metropolitan Aleksii (Simansky) was elected Patriarch at the sobor (council) which took place from January 31st till February 2nd of 1945. This sobor also approved a new Church constitution “which differed considerably from the spirit and letter of the resolutions of the 1917-1918 Sobor and its legislation.”¹²⁷ The new governance structure gave the Patriarch wide powers and greatly

¹²⁴ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 1:201.

¹²⁵ See, for example, Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 1:200-219. Kalkandjeva notes that this about face on the part of the Soviet authorities was to some degree a result of the desire to improve the public image of the Soviet Union internationally. See chapter five of Kalkandjeva, *The Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1948*, 181-206.

¹²⁶ Kalkandjeva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 182-183. That the Church and the hierarchy were being used as a tool by the state is underscored by Pospelovsky: “Soon after the sobor, a division of functions among the three top hierarchs became evident: Metropolitan Nikolai became engaged in promoting Soviet foreign policy interests; Metropolitan Aleksii concentrated on patriotic appeals to the faithful, organizing collections for the needs of the armed forces and for war invalids, etc.; and Patriarch Sergii’s messages were mostly dedicated to moral-theological and pastoral issues.” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Orthodox Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 1:207.

¹²⁷ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church*, 1:210.

diminished the conciliar structures of the Church.¹²⁸ This, coupled with the fact that no major decisions could be taken without the “blessing” of the head of the CAROC, resulted in the Russian Orthodox Church returning to the Petrine status it had in the Russian Czarist Empire, being ruled de-facto by the *oberprocurator* for Religious Affairs on behalf of the government.¹²⁹ Henceforth, the Moscow Patriarchate reflected the Soviet Union’s relations and aspirations at home, in Europe, and in North America,¹³⁰ which was a major reason for the North American Metropolia’s reticence to agree to any type of administrative subservience to her. From this time onward many theologians and leaders in the Metropolia began to think about and advocate for a possible autocephaly of the American Church (see chapter VII).

During the 1940’s the Moscow Patriarchate endeavoured to position itself as the leader of the Orthodox world. Stalin suggested to Metropolitans Sergii, Nikolai, and Aleksii that they should organize an “Orthodox Vatican” in Moscow.¹³¹ Attempts initiated by the director of

¹²⁸ “The only permanent collegial body common to both structures [i.e., the 1918 and the 1945 Church statutes] is the Synod of Bishops, but even this body was much more authoritarian in structure than its 1917 predecessor.” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church*, 1:211. This act drove a further wedge between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Metropolia in North America, which adhered to the spirit and resolutions of the 1917-18 Sobor.

¹²⁹ “Professor Alexander Bogolepov concludes that the controlling authority of the state’s Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs (CROCA) is at least parallel to that of the prerevolutionary overprocurator of the Synod, with the important difference that the latter represented a state that was sympathetic to the Church, while the Soviet official represents a state at war with her.” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church*, 1:214.

¹³⁰ “The Russian Orthodox church was . . . encouraged to assume a position of leadership in the Orthodox world. But all this came at a price. The government strictly limited and closely supervised all church activities, and it regularly harassed believers. . . Soon after the war, as Soviet-style Communist governments were set up throughout Eastern Europe, much the same pattern for church life was imposed on the Orthodox Churches that came under their authority.” John H. Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America: A Short History*, (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 85.

¹³¹ In approximately 1943 “Kremlin strategists began to plan a Soviet expansion to secure their control over Eastern Europe. Therefore, the Russian Orthodox Church attracted their attention as an effective tool for its realization. It had the potential to play a considerable role not only in the Orthodox countries in this particular region, but also in other parts of the world where Russian Orthodox missions and parishes existed. Its main advantage was that Soviet political aims could be presented as purely religious. On these grounds, on September 4, 1943, Stalin made a clear offer to the leading hierarchs of the Sergian Church: ‘You have to establish your own Vatican.’ Although initially the notion of Vatican was used in its narrow meaning – that is, that Stalin meant a restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate as an institutional church center with necessary facilities, such as an ecclesiastical academy, library, printing house,

CAROC to organize a “World Anti-Catholic Council” in 1945, as well as an “8th Ecumenical Council” in 1948 where the “ecumenical throne” of Orthodoxy would be transferred from Constantinople to Moscow,¹³² were stymied at every turn by the “Greek churches,” who on canonical grounds insisted that only the Patriarch of Constantinople had the right to call pan-Orthodox meetings,¹³³ which in turn was characterized by the Russians as “Greek Papism.”¹³⁴ Ultimately, a celebration of the 500th anniversary of Russian autocephaly followed by a “pan-Orthodox forum” was held in 1948.¹³⁵ It was in the context of this highly politicized atmosphere that the autocephalies of Poland and Czechoslovakia were realized. Though each of these autocephalies was in its own way canonically anomalous,¹³⁶ they clearly served Soviet political goals within both the global community and the commonwealth of Orthodox Churches. Thus,

and other necessary units – it was soon transformed into a policy for establishing the Moscow Patriarchate as an institutionalized center of global Eastern Orthodox Christianity.” Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 180. See also Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church*, 1:202n18.

¹³² See chapter 9 of Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, telling entitled “Towards an Eighth Ecumenical Council.”

¹³³ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 321-322.

¹³⁴ “The chasm between Slav and Greek churches . . . was further aggravated by the trial of Russian and Bulgarian Athonite monks in Athens. As a result, the Russian Patriarch heaped his scorn for the Catholic Church on the Greeks. He stated: ‘Not only the Vatican but also the Greek prelates . . . are unifying themselves in a block to stop “the Slavonic danger” by any means. Thus we have to keep this in mind in the interest of our self-defense and to overcome this pressure by our strong unity. I am very sorry that the Patriarch of Constantinople assists the division in Western Europe and despite all my efforts to solve this question, he neither responds to us nor obeys us.’ The opening of an anti-Greek religious front allowed the Kremlin to strengthen the alliance of the Orthodox churches from “the camp of peace and democracy” by making use of conflicts that the Orthodox Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians, and Albanians had with the Patriarchate of Constantinople throughout the centuries. Still, this was not enough for the successful realization of the 1948 pan-Orthodox conference. The Russian church leader needed to present canonical arguments that he had the right to organize such a forum without the blessing of the Patriarch of Constantinople.” Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 324.

¹³⁵ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 328. Representatives of the “Greek” Churches only attended the celebration of the Russian Churches autocephaly, and did not participate in the forum.

¹³⁶ As will be shown it is highly questionable whether in a practical sense these declarations of autocephaly were even necessary.

politicization of the granting of a Tomos of autocephaly became the normal mentality for the Russian Orthodox Church well before the Metropolia's demands for independence in the 1960's.

Following World War II Poland lost most of its eastern – i.e., traditionally Orthodox Ukrainian and Belarusian – territories to the Soviet Union.¹³⁷ Politically, following the ascent of the Communist government, the post-war Polish regime strove to

convert the Orthodox Church into a pliable weapon against ... a hostile Roman Catholic Church ... equally urgent was the mandate from the Moscow Patriarchate for the return of the Polish Church to its canonical jurisdiction, which could then replace the 1924 'illegal' grant of autocephaly with the proper grant from the Moscow 'Mother Church.'¹³⁸

At the initiative of Patriarch Alexei, a plan was drawn up with Georgii Karpov (the head of CAROC) following consultation with the Soviet and Polish governments; an appeal was to be made on behalf of the Orthodox in Poland for the removal of Metropolitan Dionysius (ostensibly for his collaboration with the Nazis), and following his removal a temporary Church administration would be put in place which would “negotiate a new autocephaly with the Patriarchate of Moscow.”¹³⁹ Metropolitan Dionysius stepped down in June of 1947, his duties assumed by Archbishop Timothy of Białystok. Patriarch Alexii was prepared to (re)grant autocephaly to the Polish Church, provided a delegation from Poland visited Moscow, publicly repented of the “sin” of their “uncanonical” departure from the Russian Church, requested autocephaly, and accepted

¹³⁷ “Alterations to Poland's frontiers only worsened the post-war situation. They reduced the Orthodox establishment from over 4 million believers organized into 5 dioceses under 10 bishops to about 450,000 in 2 dioceses under 3 bishops.” In all, the Polish Orthodox Church lost 3 dioceses, 7 bishops, and approximately 87% of its faithful compared to 1939. Wynot, *The Polish Orthodox Church*, 123-24.

¹³⁸ Wynot, *The Polish Orthodox Church*, 124.

¹³⁹ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 317-318.

Moscow's right to choose the future primate of the Polish Orthodox Church.¹⁴⁰ In June of 1948 the Synod of Bishops of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church formally renounced the autocephaly granted by Constantinople in 1924 and requested autocephaly from Moscow. On the 22nd of June Moscow acceded to their request.¹⁴¹

Leaving aside any issues in regard to the meddling of civil authorities in Church governance, this grant of autocephaly was very anomalous for several reasons. As noted earlier by Bogolepov,

A part of the Orthodox Church claiming to be autocephalous must be sufficiently mature to organize its own ecclesiastical life; it must have a sufficient number of parishes and parishioners, the possibility of training new clergymen and a hierarchy canonically capable of making subsequent appointments of new bishops. . . If the number of ruling bishops of one Orthodox region is less than three, then this region cannot be proclaimed "autocephalous," since it is canonically unable to provide new bishops for itself.¹⁴²

The Polish Orthodox Church in 1948 had only two dioceses, and therefore only two ruling bishops. Following the resignation of Metropolitan Dionysius the election of a new primate was postponed "due to the underdeveloped structure of the church."¹⁴³ A third diocese was organized in 1949, and the Church was governed by a synod until 1951, when "the Synod sent a message to the Russian patriarch declaring that no one in Poland was worthy to fill the position of metropolitan of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church,"

¹⁴⁰ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 317-318.

¹⁴¹ Wynot, *The Polish Orthodox Church*, 125.

¹⁴² Bogolepov. *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 8-9.

¹⁴³ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 336.

following which the Moscow Patriarchate selected Archbishop Macarius of L'viv and Ternopil' as Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland.

The problematic aspects of Moscow's bestowal of autocephaly upon the Orthodox Church of Poland are obvious. Besides the collusion of the Moscow Patriarchate with the communist governments of the USSR and Poland it is clear that the Orthodox Church of Poland did not possess the minimum requirements for autocephalous status in 1948¹⁴⁴ in regard to bishops and dioceses, and that its structure was admittedly "underdeveloped."¹⁴⁵ The requirement that the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church renounce the autocephaly granted by Constantinople clearly appears to be an attempt by Moscow to disparage or even usurp the prerogatives of the Church of Constantinople.

Changing the changeables, a similar, instrumental use of autocephaly is obvious in the Moscow Patriarchate's activity in Czechoslovakia. The religious composition of Czechoslovakia was predominantly Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Greek Catholic (uniate).¹⁴⁶ While there were scattered Orthodox communities in certain areas (predominantly in the east) and Orthodox refugees from the Russian Empire found themselves in Czechoslovakia after the Bolshevik

¹⁴⁴ The fact that autocephaly "moves" with national borders was noted earlier. Here the question must be raised "if an autocephalous church no longer possesses the minimum requirements to function independently, how can it maintain autocephalous status? In the given instance, suppression of the autocephaly would seem to be the more logical choice. For the historical precedent of the accession to and suppression of the "first" autocephalies of Serbia (Ochid) and Bulgaria (Trnovo) see Aristeides Papadakis and John Meyendorff, *The Christian East & the Rise of the Papacy: the Church AD 1071-1453*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), 239-261; for the formation and suppression of the "autocephalous" Patriarchate of Sremski-Karlovtsi and Metropolitanate of Czernowitz within the Austro-Hungarian Empire see Erickson, *Autocephaly and Autonomy*, 101.

¹⁴⁵ Ironically, as a result of the annexation of territory by the Soviet Union.

¹⁴⁶ Tomáš Havlíček, "The Czechoslovak Orthodox Church." in *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War 1945-91*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (London: Routledge, 2010), 137. "Uniates" (also known as "Greek" or "Byzantine" Catholics) are Eastern-rite Catholics whose ancestors were Orthodox, but were "united" to the Roman Catholic Church. They follow the Orthodox liturgical and disciplinary practices (for example, they have retained a married priesthood) but are under the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome. For a general introduction to their history see Serge Keleher, *Passion and Resurrection – The Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine 1939-1989*, (L'viv: Stauropegion, 1993), 14-18.

revolution, the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia as such had its origins in a reform movement within the Roman Catholic Church, the members of which were ultimately received into Orthodoxy by the Serbian Patriarchate.¹⁴⁷ The Ecumenical Patriarchate also claimed jurisdiction in Czechoslovakia, which resulted in three autocephalous Churches claiming jurisdiction in Czechoslovakia: Serbia, Constantinople, and Moscow.¹⁴⁸

After World War II the Moscow Patriarchate asserted a claim to jurisdiction over the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia, which necessitated the transfer of its “canonical territory” from the Serbian Orthodox Church to the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁴⁹ This transfer took place around the time that the Yugoslav regime under Tito was splitting from Stalinist ideology in 1948.¹⁵⁰ Following the forced liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia on

¹⁴⁷ “In 1895 a Union of Catholic Clergy (*Jednota Katholickeho Dухovenstva*) aimed to reform the Catholic Church. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia on 28 October 1918, a general council of *Jednota* founded the Union of Czechoslovak Clergy in Prague. Entering into conflict with Rome, a radical group with the *Jednota* established the National Czechoslovak Church. . . on 8 January 1920. . . The Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Church received an unexpected letter from the Serbian Orthodox Church dated 1 December 1920 claiming that it was prepared to recognize the church as autocephalous. . . Fr. Mattias Pavlick was consecrated as a bishop for this church in Serbia on 25 September 1921, taking the name Gorazd. Following a split within the *Jednota* an entity called the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church was formed under the leadership of Bishop Gorazd.” Havlíček, “The Czechoslovak Orthodox Church,” 137.

¹⁴⁸ “The Czechoslovak Orthodox Church was not recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who sent Archbishop Savvatij in 1923 as spiritual leader of the Orthodox communities. Jurisdictional conflict remained through the interwar period” among the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Russian diocese under Metr. Eulogy and the German Orthodox Church under Abp. Seraphim, with whom Bishop Gorazd’s parishes were united. Havlíček, “The Czechoslovak Orthodox Church,” 137-138.

¹⁴⁹ “The Czech Orthodox Church is the youngest branch of the Slavic Orthodox churches. It arose in 1919-1920 and was under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Patriarchate.” *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1946 (1): 12. («Чешская Православная Церковь – самая молодая ветвь славянских православных церквей. Она возникла в 1919-1920 году и находилась в юрисдикции Сербской Патриархии. *Журнал Московской Патриархии* 1946 (1): 12). It is of special note that the Mukachevo diocese, which following the war had been incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, also had to be canonically transferred from the Serbian Orthodox Church to the Moscow Patriarchate, clearly proving that the entirety of Czechoslovakia had never been in the latter’s jurisdiction: “In particular, the decision of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the transfer to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Mukachevo diocese of Transcarpathian Ukraine was approved.” *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1947 (8): 8. (“В частности утверждено решение Священного Синода Сербской Православной Церкви о передаче в юрисдикцию Московской Патриархии Мукачевской епархии Закарпатской Украины. *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, 1947 (8): 8).

¹⁵⁰ “In the aftermath of the Cominform resolution of 28 June 1948, which marked the break with Moscow, [Patriarch of Serbia] Gavriilo was torn between fear of Soviet imperialism and traditional Russophilia. One the one hand, he

April 28th, 1950,¹⁵¹ its 350 parishes were incorporated into the Orthodox Church.¹⁵² In October of 1951 the “Czechoslovak Exarchate Council” requested autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate, and on October 10, 1951, the Moscow Synod took a decision to grant autocephaly to the Czechoslovakian “daughter” church. It reads:

“1. If the Exarchial council decides for the Czechoslovakian Church to become autocephalous, then the Patriarch [of Moscow] and the [Russian] Holy Synod bless this decision and give their full consent for the Czechoslovakian Orthodox Church to be declared autocephalous; 2. If His Higher Eminence, Metropolitan Elevation, is elected as a head of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia, then the Russian Orthodox Church with love will give him permission to take charge of the welfare of that Church.” Two months later, Czechoslovakian autocephaly was declared in Prague in the presence of church representatives from Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Antioch, and Alexandria. On December 10, Metropolitan Elevation was enthroned as the head of the new autocephalous church.¹⁵³

In the case of Poland the dynamic was one of granting autocephaly to a Church which admittedly did not possess the minimum requirements for autocephalic status. In the case of Czechoslovakia the dynamic was one of geographical expansionism which required the transfer of canonical territory from the Serbian Orthodox Church to the Russian Orthodox Church,¹⁵⁴

showed a certain degree of independence towards the Soviet Union and the Russian Orthodox Church, both of which he suspected of arrogant powerplay. His fears were quite substantiated – the Moscow Patriarchate forced the SOC to give up its jurisdiction of the Orthodox in Czechoslovakia, which in the Czech parts of the country dated back to Habsburg times. At the Pan-Orthodox meeting on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Russian autocephaly in July 1948, Gavriilo formally confirmed the transfer.” Klaus Buchenau “The Serbian Orthodox Church.” in *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War 1945-91*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (London: Routledge, 2010), 63.

¹⁵¹ Moscow’s perspective on the liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia can be found in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1950 (4): 19-20. The liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church was actively supported by the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church, especially Bishop Aleksis Dechtereov of Prešov. Havlíček, “The Czechoslovak Orthodox Church,” 139.

¹⁵² Havlíček, “The Czechoslovak Orthodox Church,” 139.

¹⁵³ Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, 337.

followed by the forced liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church (as had happened in Western Ukraine in 1946).¹⁵⁵ In both cases there was collusion of the government of the given state with the government of the Soviet Union, and of Soviet authorities with the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate. Ultimately the hierarchs who became the primates in Poland and Czechoslovakia came from the ranks of the Russian Orthodox Church, and were chosen by the Patriarchate of Moscow.

Both the Polish and the Czechoslovakian examples reveal with great clarity that the Russian Orthodox Church saw the granting of autocephaly as a political instrument, to be used in power struggles. This manifests itself yet again when we come to an explanation of the competing mentalities in the 1970 grant of an American Tomos to the OCA (See chapters VII-VIII). Since the Ecumenical Patriarchate had also claimed jurisdiction over at least part of the territory of Czechoslovakia, the actions of Moscow in declaring the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia autocephalous can easily, as with Poland, be interpreted as an attempt to usurp the prerogatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,¹⁵⁶ a theme which will become especially pronounced when the Moscow Patriarchate proceeds to grant autocephaly to the American Metropolia.

¹⁵⁵ On the liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine from the perspective of the Russian Orthodox Church see the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1946, volume 4, where all relevant documentation is published. From the perspective of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church see Kelcher, *Passion and Resurrection – The Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine 1939-1989*, 39-51.

¹⁵⁶ For a concise presentation of the genesis and vector of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia see: Томачинский Симеон, Шестаков Андрей, Бурга Владимир et al. (ed.). *Поместные Православные Церкви*. Издание Сретенского монастыря, Москва, 2004, стор. 117-119.

V. The American Metropolia: From Infancy to Orphanhood

As stated in the Tomos, in 1970 the Metropolia was recognized by the Moscow Patriarchate as a “mature organism.” The body which was granted autocephaly in 1970 had, over one hundred and seventy five years, developed its own identity. Every mature organism undergoes a process of development, during which it is influenced by many factors, both internal (genetic make-up or “nature”) and external (environment, social interactions, or “nurture”). Internally the Metropolia was clearly of Russian heritage, and notwithstanding early Russian Orthodox integration of native Alaskans, its greatest “growth spurt” still came as a result of people from “Carpatho-Ruthenia”¹⁵⁷ immigrating to the USA between 1880 and 1914. And it wasn’t an “only child.” During the Metropolia’s growth and development other Orthodox bodies were born and matured alongside it,¹⁵⁸ bodies also “ethnic” in origin, character, and composition. As a “mature organism” the Metropolia might have “married” or merged with another Orthodox jurisdiction, Russian or non-Russian. What factors contributed to the Metropolia’s self-conception as a unique, American ecclesiastical body, for which only autocephalic status could be its normative state?

The OCA’s “infancy narrative” takes place in Alaska.¹⁵⁹ Afonsky divides this narrative into three stages: 1743 till 1799 when *promishlenniki* (fur hunters) and merchants began

¹⁵⁷ “Carpatho-Ruthenia” or “Carpatho-Russia” was a generic term used to identify the territory inhabited by stateless slavs consisting of today’s Eastern Slovakia, south-east Poland, north-eastern Hungary, Transcarpathia, and Galician Ukraine who had emigrated to the United States from the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

¹⁵⁸ Constantinople transferred its jurisdiction over the Greeks in North America to the Church of Greece in 1908, then unilaterally transferred this jurisdiction back to itself in 1921 and formed the “Greek Archdiocese of North and South America in 1922 (see p.61n217 below). Other dioceses were formed along ethnic lines beginning with the Albanian and Ukrainian dioceses in 1918, see pp. 81-82n298 below.

¹⁵⁹ The most comprehensive history of the discovery, exploration, and evangelization of Russian Alaska is undoubtedly that of Metropolitan Clement (Kapalin) of Kaluga, *Православие на Аляске: ретроспектива развития в 1741-1917 гг.* (Москва: “Высшая школа,” 2014) (*Orthodoxy in Alaska: A Retrospective on its Development from*

exploiting the vast natural resources, 1799 – 1819 which encompassed the colonization of Alaska by the Russian-American Company, and 1819 till 1867 when the company’s activities moved northwest and into the heart of Alaska.¹⁶⁰ In 1794 a group of missionary monks from the Valaam monastery arrived on Kodiak Island.¹⁶¹ Their arrival was the result of “lobbying” by Gregory Shelikov, who approached both civil and ecclesiastical authorities with a request that a priest be sent to Alaska.¹⁶² Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg responded by recruiting an entire missionary team from the Valaam Monastery.¹⁶³

1741 – 1917. Moscow, “Vyschaia shkola,” 2014), as it incorporates archival and historical primary sources from Russia as well as materials and publications from North America.

¹⁶⁰ Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 5.

¹⁶¹ Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 12. They had, in fact, been preceded by a Father Vasiliy Sivtsov, who had visited Alaska with a geographical expedition in 1790-91: “The Yakut priest Vasiliy Sivtsov, who was part of the [expedition], reported to the Holy Synod that in 1790 and 1791 on the islands of Unalaska, Kanyaga and Kodiak, he baptized a total of 126 natives, some of which ‘had already adopted Christianity earlier from Russian *promyshlenniki*.’ Most of them were baptized on Unalaska Island, namely 92 Aleutians, and, notably, ‘according to the desire and at the request of the islanders themselves.’” Kapalin, *Orthodoxy in Alaska*, 108. (“Находившийся в составе последней якутский священник Василий Сивцов рапортовал в Святейший Синод, что в 1790 и 1791 гг. на о-вах Уналашка, Каянга и Кадьяк он крестил, в общей сложности 126 автохтонов, причем некоторые из них «уже приняли христианство ранее от русских промышленников» . Большинство из них были крещены на о-ве Уналашка, а именно — 92 алеута , причем, что примечательно, «по желанию и прозьбе островитян.» Капалин, *Православие на Аляске*, 108).

¹⁶² Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 18-19.

¹⁶³ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 23.

Whether the goal was primarily to establish a religious mission to the natives, or chaplaincy for the Russians,¹⁶⁴ or was primarily political or economic,¹⁶⁵ by all accounts the Christian missionary work was successful.¹⁶⁶ It is undeniable that on the part of the missionaries the ecclesial vision and direction for their work in Alaska was clear.¹⁶⁷ It is also clear that the political and economic interests of Russia and her agents were not always conducive to this

¹⁶⁴ “Summarizing the role of the Orthodox Church during the period of the opening of Alaska and the beginning of fishing and trapping activities on its territory, one cannot but notice that already at that time the Church defended the interests of the state in the Pacific North due to the fact that Orthodoxy is the core of Russian civilization and the spiritual foundation of Russian statehood. . . . the Russian state used the Christianization of the natives to gain a foothold in the border territories. The assimilation of the religious and moral norms of Orthodoxy prepared the consciousness of the natives for the reception of the principles of the socio-political system of the Russian Empire. The baptism of foreigners was not compulsory, but it reinforced their recognition of Russian citizenship. At the same time, Orthodoxy was an integral part of the way of life and the basis of the worldview of most pioneers and *promyshlenniki* who reached the shores of America. Due to this circumstance, the performance of divine services and church sacraments served as moral and spiritual support to the participants of overseas expeditions.” Kapalin, 110. («Подводя итог рассмотрению роли Православной Церкви в период открытия Аляски и начала промышленной деятельности на ее территории, нельзя не заметить, что уже в это время Церковь защищала интересы государства на Тихоокеанском Севере в силу того, что православие является стержнем русской цивилизации и духовной основой российской государственности. . . . Российское государство использовало христианизацию туземцев для закрепления на пограничных территориях. Усвоение религиозных и нравственных норм православия готовило сознание автохтонов к восприятию начал общественно-политического строя Российской империи. Крещение инородцев не являлось обязательным, но оно подкрепляло признание ими российского подданства. Вместе с тем православие было неотъемлемой частью образа жизни и основой мировоззрения большинства первопроходцев и промышленников, достигавших берегов Америки. В силу этого обстоятельства совершение богослужений и церковных таинств служило моральной и духовной поддержкой участникам заокеанских экспедиций.» Капалин, 110).

¹⁶⁵ “In the second half of the XVIII century an economic interest in the baptism of the natives appeared among the Russian *promyshlenniki*. As the number of game animals decreased, the hunting skills of local residents became more indispensable . . . A newly discovered document mentions that the Russians, for their part, provided their native’s godchildren with "all necessary things without hindrance." Saint Innocent wrote about the allegiance of the Aleuts to their godfathers and that this was a way of acquiring reliable suppliers of fur. Thus, Russian *promyshlenniki* had an economic interest in increasing the number of baptized natives.” Kapalin, 105. («Во второй половине XVIII в. у русских промышленников появилась экономическая заинтересованность в крещении туземцев. По мере снижения численности промысловых животных оправданным стало использование охотничьих навыков местных жителей. . . В недавно выявленном документе есть упоминание о том, что русские, со своей стороны, предоставляли своим крестникам туземцам «все надобные вещи беспрепятственно» . О верности алеутов своим крестным отцам и о том, что это был способ приобретения надежных поставщиков пушнины, писал еще святитель Иннокентий . Таким образом, русские промышленники были экономически заинтересованы в увеличении числа крещеных туземцев.» Капалин, 105).

¹⁶⁶ Afonsky notes that by 1795 the missionaries had baptized 6,740 natives, and 1,573 weddings were performed. *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 25.

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, the instructions to the leader of the mission team, Archimandrite Joasaph in Afonsky, *Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 22-23.

vision.¹⁶⁸ Oversight of both the government bureaucracy as well as the spiritual mission was delegated to the Russian American Company upon its founding in 1799,¹⁶⁹ and its head manager, A.A. Baranov, “became all-powerful, embodying in himself both civil authority and economic control.”¹⁷⁰ This resulted in greater exploitation, even abuse of the natives, leading to conflict between company authorities and the members of the spiritual mission when the latter stood in defense of the natives.¹⁷¹ This became a very important issue when the Metropolia/OCA was searching for its own identity in the 1960’s as an American Church, and looked back with pride on the ministry of these Russian missionaries among the autochthonous American people.

¹⁶⁸ “The policies of Shelikov and of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the goals of the Mission in America were mutually incompatible. Yet, (*sic*) Shelikov, who was a staunch member of the Church, regarded Christianization of the natives as a means of permanently consolidating the colonization of Alaska. The Holy Synod, although concerned for the interest of the Russian Empire, nevertheless conceived the chief aim of the religious Mission to be propagation of the Word of God among the newly enlightened natives. Thus, as is now well known, for at least the first twenty years, the interests and policies of the Russian American Company in Alaska and its treatment of the native people sharply conflicted with the ideals and activities of the first missionaries to Kodiak.” Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 32-33.

¹⁶⁹ “The first spiritual mission failed to fulfill the functions of state control assigned to it within Alaska and to protect the natives from the abuse of the Russians. In 1799, the RAC [Russian American Company] was established, which reflected the interests of the Siberian merchants and the tsarist bureaucracy and, in essence, unified them. With the creation of the RAC, the state transferred to it, among others, oversight of the clergy and the tsarist bureaucracy, which in essence amounted to their unification of the overseas territory. Now the monopoly company and not the spiritual mission was to represent the state interests of the Russian Empire in America.” Kapalin, 128. («Первой духовной миссии не удалось выполнить возложенные на нее функции государственного контроля в пределах Аляски и защиты автохтонов от произвола русских. В 1799 г. была учреждена РАК, отвечавшая интересам сибирского купечества и царской бюрократии и являвшаяся, в сущности, их объединением. С созданием РАК государство передало ей, в числе прочих, функции управления печества и царской бюрократии и являвшаяся, в сущности, их объединением заокеанской территорией. Теперь монополия компания а не духовная миссия должна была представлять государственные интересы Российской империи в Америке.» Капалин, 128).

¹⁷⁰ Afonsky 33-34. “The governor here is Baranoff, a man rich, and proud at that. He lives extravagantly and makes no effort towards any improvements here. You wouldn’t believe what showings-off we have here; one would hardly find the likes of it in any Russian town.” St. Herman of Alaska, “Letter no. 2, to Abbot Nazarius of Valaam,” *St. Herman*, (Ouzinkie, AK; St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1988), 159.

¹⁷¹ Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 34-39; Stokoe, 10.

With the death of Baranov in 1819 and the renewal of the charter of the Russian American Company in 1821 the spiritual mission was able to expand its ministry.¹⁷² The period from 1821 until the sale of Alaska to the USA in 1867 was characterized by Church growth, consolidation, and further missionary activity. As St. Herman was the cardinal figure of the first mission generation, St. Innocent (Fr. John Veniaminov) was the next great personality in the evangelization of the North American continent. Following his service in Alaska as a missionary priest, he was subsequently consecrated bishop (1840), and ultimately was raised to the highest position in the Russian Orthodox Church as Metropolitan of Moscow (1869).¹⁷³ As a result of his pastoral ministry and translation work in Alaska as well as his episcopal support and influence in Russia, the Orthodox Church in Russian Alaska flourished.¹⁷⁴

If the Alaskan mission was the “infancy narrative” of the Metropolia/OCA, the baby’s first years were spent in a home where the parents (i.e., the Russian American Company and the missionaries) often quarreled. The early childhood, however, was peaceful and stable. This stability was disturbed by the sale of Alaska to the USA and the transfer of the episcopal see

¹⁷² “Under its new 1821 charter, the Russian-American Company had to provide and support enough priests and other church workers to serve the religious needs of its far-flung North American holdings. But these provisions might have remained a dead letter had it not been for a new zeal for missions within the Russian Orthodox church. Governmental reforms were stressing the multinational character of the Russian Empire, and the church responded by sending missionaries to the many tribes of its eastern territories, devising alphabets for the native languages, translating scriptures and service books, and training native clergy. The North American colonies were among the beneficiaries of this program.” Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 27. See also Afonsky 42.

¹⁷³ St. Innocent served in Alaska from 1824-1839. For a comprehensive presentation of the life and achievements of this exceptional individual see Paul Garret, *St. Innocent, Apostle to America*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979).

¹⁷⁴ “From 1840 to the end of the Russian period in 1867, the Orthodox Church in Alaska grew from four churches and four priests to a position where there was a Bishop’s Cathedral, nine regular churches, 35 chapels, nine priests, and two deacons. . . and up to 15,000 faithful Russians, Aleuts, Thlingits (*sic*), Athabascans and Eskimos.” Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 64.

from Alaska to San Francisco, a move from one type of frontier to another, which will be discussed in chapter VI and analyzed in the conclusion.

The sale of Alaska to the USA in 1867 was arguably the second greatest crisis in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in North America. Though the diocese was now to receive financial support directly from the Russian government,¹⁷⁵ it lost much in the way of valuable human resources, as few clergy and virtually no Russians remained in Alaska.¹⁷⁶ For their part, the Orthodox natives became the target of proselytizing activities on the part of mainly Protestant American missionaries,¹⁷⁷ while Orthodoxy and Russian culture were at best tolerated, if not openly discriminated against, by the American authorities.¹⁷⁸ In 1870 the Synod of the

¹⁷⁵ Until this time it had been receiving subsidies from the Russian American Company. For a summary of the financial support which the diocese received between 1867 and 1917 see Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 79.

¹⁷⁶ Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 76.

¹⁷⁷ “The unique character of the situation of the Russian spiritual culture in Alaska is that after the sale of its overseas territory Russia continued to support the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church for half a century within its [new] borders. It was precisely during this period that the native Orthodox flock was, on the one hand, under pressure from heterodox missionaries, and on the other, had the support of the Orthodox clergy.” Kapalin, 271. [“Heterodox” is a term used by certain Orthodox writers to draw a clear distinction between Orthodox and all other Christian Churches and teaching. While its use may be value neutral, it can also be a clear indicator of “other” or “not us”]. («Своеобразие распространения русской духовной культуры на Аляске заключается в том, что после продажи своей заокеанской территории Россия в течение полувека поддерживала деятельность РПЦ в ее пределах. Именно в этот период православная туземная паства, с одной стороны, испытывала давление инославных миссионеров, а с другой — поддержку православного духовенства.» Капалин, 271). The fact that the Russian missionaries “baptized the native culture,” as opposed to “civilizing” the natives (i.e., demanding that the natives conform to European cultural norms, as was the case with most Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries throughout the Americas) became a matter of great pride for the Metropolia/OCA. This is clearly shown in the tenor of such works such as Oleksa’s *Orthodox Alaska: A Theology of Mission*, Garret’s *St. Innocent, Apostle to America*, and others. It is certainly likely, if not certain, that the idea of “baptizing the culture” as a part of the historical memory of the North American Russian diocese helped contribute to its self-identity as an American Church for American people.

¹⁷⁸ “In the first months after the transfer of the Alaska territory the federal government took steps to familiarize its inhabitants with the English language and the US Constitution, accompanied in parallel by criticism of tsarist Russia.” Kapalin 272. («В первые же месяцы после передачи территории Аляски федеральное правительство предприняло шаги по ознакомлению ее жителей с английским языком и Конституцией США, параллельно сопровождавшиеся критикой царской России . . .» Капалин, 272.). This critical attitude toward all things Russian endured, to the point that over twenty years later Bishop Vladimir (Sokolovsky, who served as Bishop of Aleutian Islands and Alaska from 1888 till 1891) was characterized in the American press “as the official representative of not only the Russian Orthodox Church, but also the Russian monarchy. In his personality and behavior they saw a pattern of ‘Russian barbarism and despotism.’” Kapalin 273. («Епископ Владимир

Russian Orthodox Church created the “Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska” (notable, because this involved the creation of a church structure on the territory of a different sovereign state¹⁷⁹), and because of the trying circumstances of the Church in Alaska, as well as the opportunities present in California, the episcopal seat was moved to San Francisco in 1872.¹⁸⁰

At the time of this move there were only three parishes in the contiguous United States, in New Orleans,¹⁸¹ San Francisco,¹⁸² and New York,¹⁸³ and over the following eighteen years there seems to have been little if any missionary work conducted within the United States either to Americans or indigenous people.¹⁸⁴ Though the uninterrupted “missionary vision” of the

(Соколовский) возглавлявший в эти годы Алеутскую епархию, был порицаем американской прессой как официальный представитель не только РПЦ, но и российской монархии. В его личности и поведении видели образец «русского варварства и деспотизма.» Капалин, 273. See also Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska* 76 ff. and Stokoe, 19.

¹⁷⁹ “The Russian imperial government approached this proposal with great caution. They felt that the establishment of an episcopal see, which would be on United States territory, but subordinate to the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, would amount to interference in the internal affairs of another state.” Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 78.

¹⁸⁰ “The Holy Synod of the Church of Russia established the new diocese of the Aleutian Islands on 10 June 1870. Shortly after his arrival in Alaska, Bishop John (Mitropolsky) requested that the see be moved from Sitka to San Francisco. This request was undoubtedly based upon the fact that most Russians had left Alaska. In 1872 the Holy Synod granted the request.” Thomas E. FitzGerald, *The Orthodox Church*, (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1995), 22.

¹⁸¹ “One of the first Orthodox parishes in the continental United States was organized in New Orleans in 1864 by a group of Greek cotton traders under the direction of Nicholas Benakis, the local consul of the kingdom of Greece.” John H. Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 37. Afonsky notes that when Archbishop Vladimir (Sokolovsky) visited New Orleans in 1888 or 1889 he visited this church, “whose pastor, Archimandrite Misail, was Greek, although he commemorated as ecclesiastical head the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.” Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 83.

¹⁸² “The first Orthodox parish in San Francisco was officially established by the decree of the Holy Synod of September 20, 1868.” Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 77.

¹⁸³ The parish was established in 1870 and died out by 1881. For an overview of Bjerring’s life and work see Erickson, “Slavophile Thought and Conceptions of Mission in the Russian North American Archdiocese,” 257-260.

¹⁸⁴ I have not been able to find any record or mention – whether official or anecdotal - of organized mission activity directed at native Americans on the part of the Russian Missionary Diocese/Metropolia in the “lower 48.”

Russian diocese is a meme constantly encountered in more popular historical narratives of the OCA,¹⁸⁵ the years between 1872 and 1890 were clearly years of stagnation.¹⁸⁶

The Russian Church, whose authority over the American mission was undisputed at that time, had not maintained the same active interest in the Christianization of the natives of Alaska as it had shown in the time of Archbishop Innocent, nor had it any creative vision or working plan for the expansion of the mission in the United States.¹⁸⁷

An objective evaluation of the state of the diocese in 1889 offers reason to believe that were it not for the so-called “return of the uniates” beginning in 1890 it is quite possible that the Russian Mission might have died out on American soil.

The foundation of Orthodox Christianity in the continental United States was established during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. During this time, the focus of Orthodoxy dramatically shifted from Alaska to the major cities of the continental United States. The principal cause of this was the massive influx of immigrants from Greece, Asia Minor, Carpatho-Russia, and other parts of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ “It is especially important to underline the *missionary* beginning of the Russian Orthodox Church in America, for it always determined her further growth and development of church life in the New World.” Alexander Schmemmann, “The Canonical Position of the Russian Orthodox Church of North America,” 22.

¹⁸⁶ As noted below, the diocese in 1890 numbered only 22 churches in Alaska and one in San Francisco.

¹⁸⁷ Dimitry. Grigorieff, “The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America,” *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 5, no. 1 - 2 (1961): 8. To be sure, the vast size of the USA may have provided a “frontier,” but size and difficulty of communication also made it a huge geographic obstacle for pastoral work by a tiny clerical staff. The transcontinental railroad was only opened in 1869. In addition, America was aggressively hostile to natives in the era of the Indian wars.

¹⁸⁸ Fitzgerald, 23.

The growth of the “mission” from 1890 onward was clearly not due to the Russian diocese finding and gathering a flock, but rather due to a flock finding the Russian diocese.¹⁸⁹

As is well documented, Father Alexis Toth, pastor of St. Mary’s Greek-Catholic Church in Minneapolis, was rebuffed and denied faculties by the local Roman Catholic bishop upon his arrival in 1889, following which he and his parish approached Bishop Vladimir in San Francisco, and were received into the Orthodox Church on March 25th 1891.¹⁹⁰ As a result of the activity of Fr. Toth and other like-minded former Greek-Catholic priests, the “culturally insensitive, heavy-handed demands of the Roman Catholic bishops,” and the papal decree *Ea Semper* in 1907 which required celibacy for Greek-Catholic clergy in America, well over a hundred and fifty parishes and over one-hundred and fifty thousand faithful left Catholicism and joined the Russian mission by 1917.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ “The official United States government census figures reflect the dramatic development that occurred in the Russian Orthodox diocese. In the census of 1890, the diocese claimed to have 22 churches in Alaska and one in San Francisco. In the census of 1906, the number of parishes had risen to 59. Ten years later, in 1916, the diocese claimed to have 164 churches. Perhaps as many as two-thirds of these parishes were located in the northeastern part of the United States and consisted of former Eastern Catholics.” Fitzgerald, 30.

¹⁹⁰ “A respected professor of theology in Transcarpathia, a consecrated priest, and a widower, Toth arrived in Minneapolis in 1889 to serve as the pastor of the local Greek Catholic parish. But because he had been married, the Roman Catholic archbishop excommunicated him. Unable to gain redress and convinced that the ancient Byzantine traditions of his rite, which Rome had recognized, were being trampled, Toth and his 365 parishioners made a dramatic decision in 1891 – they went over to Orthodoxy. In the following decades, tens of thousands of Lemko, Transcarpathian, and Galician immigrants, urged on by the well-financed Russian Orthodox Mission in America, opted for membership in the Russian Orthodox church. By 1914 they constituted the overwhelming majority of the Orthodox in the United States, and Alexis Toth was hailed as the “father of Orthodoxy” in that country.” Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 542. See also Tarasar, *Orthodox America*, 50-51.

¹⁹¹ The actual numbers cited differ greatly: “By 1917, some 163 Carpatho-Russian communities with more than one hundred thousand faithful had entered the Russian missionary diocese.” Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 46; “Within a quarter of a century (1891-1917), 163 Catholic parishes and over 200,000 Ukrainians joined the Russian Orthodox Church.” Shevchenko Scientific Society, *Ukraine, a Concise Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 1,109; Afonsky (*History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska*, 91) gives the following numbers for the Russian diocese in 1917: For the Russian diocese itself: 306 churches and chapels/242 clergy/100,000 parishioners with up to twice that number of unregistered adherents; a Syrian-Arabic Mission (32 churches/30,000 parishioners), Serbian Mission (36 churches/150,000 parishioners), Albanian Mission (3 churches/30,000 parishioners). In any case, there can be no doubt in regard to the magnitude of the transference of allegiance from Catholicism to Orthodoxy on the part of large numbers of Greek-Catholics.

Another incentive for Eastern Catholics to join the Russian Orthodox Church was financial.

This movement was financed by the Tsarist government and the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg. The objectives were political as well as proselytizing; to Russify the immigrants from the Austrian part of Ukraine and thus neutralize the increasingly anti-Russian attitudes in the homeland and of the immigrants.¹⁹²

With this influx of immigrants the mentality of the diocese could not help but change. “Massive immigration was transforming what had begun as a small mission *to* America into a large but fragmented collection of ethnic parishes intent on giving newcomers a shelter *from* America.”¹⁹³ These communities (as well as the Greek, Romanian and Bulgarian parishes which starting in the 20th century were not within the jurisdiction of the Russian diocese) were primarily self-focused; for them, “missionary” work was neither feasible nor imaginable. As to unity, Fitzgerald notes that “while these ethnic parishes served the immediate needs of the immigrants and their children, they did little to promote cooperation and unity among all the Orthodox.”¹⁹⁴ Given the circumstances, how could it be otherwise?

“It was during the tenure of Archbishop Tikhon (1898-1907), the future Patriarch of Russia, that the diocese came of age.”¹⁹⁵ With St. Herman and St. Innocent, Archbishop (Saint)

¹⁹² *Ukraine, a Concise Encyclopedia*, 1,109. In the town of Ambridge, Pennsylvania, Holy Ghost Russian Orthodox parish (<http://www.holyghostoca.org/parish-history.html>) as well as Ss. Peter and Paul Rusyn (Ukrainian) Greek-Catholic Church were founded in 1907 (*Yesterday, Today, and Forever*, 100th Anniversary Memorial Book, self-published), both of them by immigrants from the same Galician/Transcarpathian/Lemko regions. One of the factors which drew people to the Russian Orthodox Church was the fact that it could depend on financial support from Russia, while the Greek-Catholics had to bear the entire burden of supporting the priest and parish themselves (as related to the author by elderly parishioners). It must also be borne in mind that the Russian Empire was the enemy of Austria-Hungary during World War I.

¹⁹³ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 41. For an examination of how trustee ownership impacted the parish-bishop relationship see p. 68n246.

¹⁹⁴ Fitzgerald, 32.

¹⁹⁵ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:281.

Tikhon (Bellavin) is one of the three most important and influential figures in the history of the Russian Orthodox mission in North America. The changing cultural dynamic of his diocese, the existence of Greek, Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox parishes which had few or no official jurisdictional ties to the Russian diocese,¹⁹⁶ and the ecclesial mentality of the Orthodox faithful in the contiguous United States which was quickly assimilating itself to that of the surrounding Protestant ecclesial culture¹⁹⁷ were realities which Tikhon faced. These realities did not disappear, but continued to grow and develop, and it is quite likely that Bishop Tikhon, along with Ss. Innocent and Herman, came to be perceived as one of the seminal figures in the history of the Metropolia/OCA because faced with a similar reality decades later, the wisdom and practicality of his response was recognized and understood by the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Metropolia in the lead-up to the granting of autocephaly.

Bishop Tikhon “initiated a series of dramatic changes,”¹⁹⁸ including the consecration of auxiliary bishops for Alaska (1903) and for the Arab parishes of the diocese (1904), moving the diocesan headquarters from San Francisco to New York (1905), founding a seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1905), and St. Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania

¹⁹⁶ “Evidence indicates that the Russian Orthodox diocese recognized that the Greek priests and Greek Orthodox parishes were not part of its jurisdiction. On the parish listings of the Russian Orthodox diocese for 1906, the Greek Orthodox parishes are not included. Furthermore, the document notes that in addition to the listed clergymen, ‘there are several Greek priests who are under the Metropolitan of Athens but who, so far as Episcopal Ministrations are concerned, call upon the Orthodox Archbishop of North America.’ While this statement is ambiguous, it does indicate that the Russian Orthodox diocese recognized that the Greek priests in America were not fully under its jurisdiction. In this regard, it should also be noted that the Greek parishes were not listed among those belonging to the Russian Orthodox jurisdiction in lists published in 1911 and 1918.” Fitzgerald, 34. See also Stokoe, 32-33, 50, and Surrency, 94-95, 99-100.

¹⁹⁷ “The new American parishes differed from those of the Old World in an important way – they often had a keen sense of their independence from outside supervision by church authorities. With little knowledge of Orthodox canon law but great awareness of how most American Protestants organized their church life, the immigrants emphasized the independence of the local parish.” Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 43.

¹⁹⁸ Stokoe, 35.

(1906).¹⁹⁹ In addition, “A complete translation of the principal Orthodox church services was begun, and English began to be used in a number of parishes.”²⁰⁰

Much attention has been paid to Bishop Tikhon’s “prophetic vision” for a unified Orthodox Church in North America. As an example, Leonid Kishkovsky writes:

A document written by Archbishop Tikhon in December 1905 reveals the maturity and clarity of his prophetic vision for the Orthodox Church in America. In response to a questionnaire sent to all diocesan bishops of the Russian Church by the Holy Synod as part of the preparation for the long-awaited Council of the Church of Russia, Archbishop Tikhon outlined his ideas on the structure of the Orthodox mission in North America. He proposed that the diocese should become an exarchate of the Russian Church – but an exarchate possessing great autonomy. He suggested, parenthetically, that the question of autocephaly might be considered. It seemed clear to him that the process begun in 1903 and 1904 with the consecrations of Bishops Innocent and Raphael ought to be continued. The newly-established Serbian mission he proposed to make into a vicariate centered in Chicago. The Greek communities, he wrote, should be organized along the same lines as the Syrian and Serbian missions and should also be headed by a bishop. He saw the need for autonomy and independence in matters affecting only the internal life or structure of each national dioceses or vicariate, and also the necessity for a common mind, expressed through decisions of the bishops meeting in council under the presidency of the archbishop, in matters of common and general concern.²⁰¹

Bishop Tikhon’s “vision,” as articulated by Kishkovsky, was both innovative and canonically irregular; innovative in that it sought to maintain a unified territorial episcopal synod, but irregular insofar as the bishops of the synod would have had overlapping territories.

¹⁹⁹ Stokoe 35-39; Surrency 24-26. In addition, the name of the diocese was changed to the “Diocese of the /Aleutian Islands and North America” in 1900, and the episcopal seat was moved from San Francisco to New York in 1905. Afonsky, 97-98.

²⁰⁰ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:281.

²⁰¹ Leonid Kishkovsky in *Orthodox America*, 93-94. See also Surrency, 25-26 and Stokoe 35-38.

Tikhon's idea seems to clearly contradict both the "territorial principle" whereby one bishop is responsible for *all* the faithful in a given geographic territory, as well as the 1872 Constantinople council condemnation of "phyletism" insofar as dioceses would be formed according to ethnic, rather than geographical, determinants.²⁰²

One of the most intriguing suggestions, mentioned by Kishkovsky and found in other sources as well,²⁰³ is that Tikhon's ultimate vision for the American diocese would be that of an autocephalous Church. The Russian version of Tikhon's report to the Synod in 1905 reads as follows:

Жизнь въ Новомъ Свѣтѣ по сравненію со старымъ имѣеть свои особенности, съ которыми приходится считаться и здѣшней Церкви, а посему этой послѣдней должна быть предоставлена бо́гшая автономія (автокефальность?), чѣмъ другимъ русскимъ мѣтрополіямъ.²⁰⁴

The received English translation, however, reads as follows:

Compared with the life in the old country, life in America has its peculiarities, with which the local orthodox church is obliged to count, and that consequently that it ought to be allowed to be more autonomous than other metropolitan districts of Russia.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Regarding the territorial principle and phyletism see chapter II above.

²⁰³ "Tikhon publicly stated his belief that the emerging immigrant church would eventually possess the institutional and spiritual maturity to develop into a truly American body. At that future time the Orthodox in America would naturally require administrative independence (*autocephaly*) from the Russian Church." Stokoe, 39; "In his report to the Preconciliar Commission and to the St. Petersburg Synod, Archbishop Tikhon prophetically requested that the archdiocese be granted autocephaly, or at least wide autonomy from the Russian Church." Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 2:281.

²⁰⁴ «No. 25, преосвященнаго Тихона, архієпископа Алеутскаго и Сѣверо-Американскаго, от 24 ноября 1905 года. Суждения по вопросамъ, предложеннымъ къ разсмотрѣнію на Помѣстомъ Соборѣ всероссійской Церкви,» 531.

²⁰⁵ "Views of Questions to be examined by the Local Council of the Russian Church," *Russian Orthodox American Messenger*, March Supplement, 1906, 69.

As can be seen, “Автокефальность” – Autocephaly – is given in the Russian text in parentheses with a question mark following the word “autonomous,” but is missing from the English text.

While it might be supposed that Archbishop Tikhon envisioned autocephaly as an eventual status for the American Church, the assertion that he *requested* autocephaly for the American diocese, based on the above text, is dubious.²⁰⁶ It becomes even more dubious given his response when, as Patriarch, he refused to bestow autocephaly upon the Polish Orthodox Church, stating that “To give autocephaly for heterogeneous Orthodox people living within the Polish state as members of national and religious minorities – We cannot permit this either on the basis of common sense or the holy canons.”²⁰⁷

If it is true that Tikhon did envision autocephaly for the American Church, how would he have understood the concept of autocephaly? This is an especially interesting question when considered in parallel to the question of how Kishkovsky, Stokoe, and others understand autocephaly from a “post-Tomos” perspective.²⁰⁸ There can be little doubt, based upon Tikhon’s response to the questions of the Holy Synod in 1905, that he envisioned autocephaly as a manifestation of the unity of the various ethnic Orthodox groups in America under one synod of bishops, an acceptance of “multiculturalism” which looks almost Canadian²⁰⁹ rather than American. This is almost diametrically opposed to the post-Tomos reality of one autocephalous

²⁰⁶ The fact that Kishkovsky in the cited text as well as others who, like him, interpret Tikhon’s response as a “request” for autocephaly tells us more about their mindset than it does about Tikhon’s.

²⁰⁷ «Давать автокефалию для разноплеменных православных, проживающих в пределах Польского государства на положении национальных и религиозных меньшинств – Нам не позволяют ни здравый разум, ни священные каноны.» Свитич, *Православная Церковь в Польше*, 53-54. See also p. 33n11.

²⁰⁸ See chapters VIII and IX below.

²⁰⁹ For a summary of the genesis and legislation regarding the idea of multiculturalism in Canada see: https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/200920E

diocese in America, with autocephaly being accepted or understood as a means towards, rather than a manifestation of, unity.²¹⁰

Another dubious although common assertion is that until the founding of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America in 1922 there was jurisdictional unity in North America, with all Orthodox parishes and clergy under the jurisdiction of the Russian Bishop.²¹¹ Fitzgerald,²¹² Surrency,²¹³ Pospelovsky,²¹⁴ Stokoe,²¹⁵ and Tikhon himself (“The Greeks of this country also wish to have their own bishop and have entered into communication with the Synod of Athens on this subject”²¹⁶) all witness to the fact that the

²¹⁰ “The newly created Orthodox Church in America is dedicated exclusively to the growth and development of Orthodoxy in America. Having received an official release from its Mother Church, it will strive to build Orthodox unity in America with full respect for, but in full independence from ethnic or political interests of the various immigrant groups.” Dimitry Grigorieff, “The Orthodox Church in America from the Alaska Mission to Autocephaly.” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1970): 197. See also p. 20n64. A fuller discussion of this issue will be offered below.

²¹¹ “It is beyond any question that Orthodoxy was planted in America at the end of the 18th century by the Church of Russia. Following a Mission, the first diocese of the Russian Church on the American continent was established in Alaska in 1848 to be later moved, first, to San Francisco and, in 1906, to New York City. The territory of that Diocese covered the entire North American continent (Alaska, United States, Canada) and until 1922 its jurisdiction included Orthodox faithful of all ethnical backgrounds: Greek, Syrian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian etc. . . In canonical terms it means that the Russian Church established its jurisdiction in America and, conversely, that the entire American territory was in the jurisdiction of the Russian Church.” Alexander Schmemmann, “Report on the preliminary negotiations concerning the establishment in America of the Autocephalous Church,” <https://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/report-preliminary.html>; “Orthodox unity. . . existed – administratively and canonically – before 1921, when all Orthodox of various national backgrounds were united in one single canonical Church of America.” John Meyendorff, *Orthodox Church* (editorial), January, 1970; “In 1913. . . all Orthodox Christians in America of all nationalities were members of one and the same Church.” *Autocephaly, a Door to the Future*. Examples could be multiplied.

²¹² “Throughout the period of great immigration [1890-1920], there was very little contact between the Greek parishes and the Russian Orthodox Archdiocese. Although some authors have maintained that all Orthodox in America accepted the authority of the Russian bishop prior to 1921, there is not sufficient evidence to support this claim.” Fitzgerald, 33-34.

²¹³ Surrency, 99-101.

²¹⁴ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:282.

²¹⁵ Stokoe, 32-33.

²¹⁶ Tikhon, “Views of Questions,” 68-69.

narrative of a primordial jurisdictional unity among all the Orthodox of North America under the Russian episcopate is questionable at best.²¹⁷

Ultimately, there was no way for Tikhon to “canonically” deal with the situation in America,²¹⁸ and his response was above all pastoral and realistic.²¹⁹ In this vein, his most revolutionary step was arguably the decision to involve lower clergy and laity in Church governance and administration, a decision which was both theologically sound²²⁰ as well as eminently practical.²²¹ This culminated in the first “All-American Council” composed of both

²¹⁷ The issue of the “Greeks” is especially important here, as it involves canonical issues which relate to the claims of the Patriarchate of Constantinople over all lands which are not part of the territory of an autocephalous Church, political issues which impacted upon the relationship between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century, and political issues within the North American Greek community itself. “The Patriarchate of Constantinople . . . claimed to have ultimate jurisdiction over the developing Orthodox Church in North America in virtue of canons and precedents reaching back to the fourth century. However, the Patriarchate temporarily transferred its jurisdiction over the so-called diaspora in America to the autocephalous Church of Greece in 1908. While the difficulties in the parishes in America may have contributed to the decision, it appears that the Turkish government had become concerned with anti-Turkish activities of the Greek immigrants in the United States. . . . However, from 1908 to 1918 the Church of Greece undertook no major action to unify and direct the parishes in the United States. While many believed that the synod of the Church of Greece would provide America with a resident bishop, none was sent. Some believed that the synod took no action because of the influence of Lambros Coromilas, who was the Greek ambassador to the United States. He was accused of viewing religion as a “medieval hindrance” and of wanting the church to remain “headless” so that he could become the unquestioned leader of his compatriots in the United States.” Fitzgerald, 27. See also Surrency, 100. The “anti-Turkish activities of the Greek immigrants in the United States” would have a direct parallel in the anti-Soviet activities of the clergy and members of the Metropolia between 1924 and 1970, which will be examined in chapter VII.

²¹⁸ For a concise overview of the canonical, historical, theoretical and political/sociological reasons for this see Wagschal, *Ancient Laws in a Modern World*.

²¹⁹ It is interesting to consider whether one of the reasons that his memory is held in such esteem within the OCA is precisely because of his creative pastoral response to an irregular situation.

²²⁰ Since the time of Peter the Great the Russian Orthodox Church had been governed by a “Holy Synod.” Over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries Church reform movements, as well as the “Slavophile” movement, were propagating the idea of “conciliarity” or “*sobornost*”. For a concise overview of this history see Destivelle, 5-19. Suffice it to say that Tikhon’s ideas in regard to conciliar governance were not novel or unheard of. “By the time that St. Innocent Veniaminov offered his recommendations for the future of the Russian Orthodox mission in America [~1867], Slavophile thought, especially in its inclusive form, was penetrating Russia’s theological academies and in turn influencing the Church’s clerical leadership.” Erickson, *Slavophile Thought*, 255.

²²¹ “Tikhon hoped that by having clergy and laity work together, the thorny administrative and canonical issues involved with the trustee control of immigrant parishes would find their resolution.” Stokoe, 38.

clerical and lay delegates in Mayfield, Pennsylvania, in February of 1907, and though the council itself has been described as a failure,²²² the fact of its occurrence is undoubtedly important.

Tikhon returned to Russia in 1907 and was elected Patriarch at the Moscow Council of 1917-18, in which representatives of the American diocese participated. A “conciliar” governance model, which included the participation of lower clergy and laity, was approved.²²³ This model was similar in its approach to that which Tikhon had endorsed in America, and although the Bolshevik persecution of the Church prevented this conciliar model from being implemented in Russia, it was adopted as normative and adapted for use in the Russian Metropolia in North America²²⁴ as well as in the Russian diocese under the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Western Europe.²²⁵

The North American diocese had been receiving substantial financial subsidies from the Russian Empire, which upon the demise of the tsarist regime were suspended in 1917.²²⁶ This

²²² “St. Tikhon Bellavin brings a priest who is under the authority and protection of the Holy Synod of Russia to serve as a bishop for Arab speakers – St. Raphael Hawaweeny. This decision would have been followed by others of a similar nature had the 1907 Sobor at Mayfield not been a failure. Even among Slavs [there was] no agreement to the proposal that various ethnic-linguistic groups operate under the omophorion of the bishop in charge of the Russian Mission.” Fr. Anthony Roeber, “Autocephaly: The OCA, the Greek Archdiocese, & Antioch,” (lecture handout, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Yonkers, NY, 30 January 2020).
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/autocephaly_the_oca_the_greek_archdiocese_and_antioch

²²³ “The Definitions and Decrees of the Sacred Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of 1917-1918.” Destiville, 191.

²²⁴ “If in Russia itself many decisions of the [1917-18 Moscow] Sobor were not carried out, (persecution began and the Church of Russia prepared to be the witness of Christ with the blood of martyrs), then in America the Sobor brought its full fruit. It became the last gift and blessing to the American flock from the Mother-Church.” Schmemmann, “The Canonical Position of the Russian Orthodox Church of North America,” 23.

²²⁵ Destiville, 166-173.

²²⁶ “The breaking of ties with the Russian Church after the October Revolution of 1917, also brought a great financial crisis to the Church in America. The sum of 89,930 rubles, in 1900, was to sustain the Central Administration consisting of one bishop, 23 parishes, and a few Church schools. The same amount in 1917 was set aside to maintain five bishops, over 410 parishes, a seminary, a woman’s school, publications and many other institutions, as well as priest’s salaries. . . revolution in Russia permanently cut off any kind of financial help to the North American Diocese.” Gregory Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in America 1917-1934*, (Kodiak, AK: St. Herman’s Theological Seminary Press, 1994), 25.

lack of financial support, ethnic tensions within the diocese itself,²²⁷ and the precarious, persecuted position of the “Tikhonite” Church in the Soviet Union²²⁸ caused great stress and confusion within the North American diocese,²²⁹ which resulted in the diocese declaring itself “temporarily autonomous” at a general council in Detroit in 1924.²³⁰

The Russian mission/diocese in North America had over the course of one hundred and thirty years experienced success and failure, growth and stagnation. It had developed a unique *phronema*, combining Russian Orthodox mores and tradition, American freedom and democracy, Eastern European and Palestinian immigrant culture, all on the periphery of various borders or frontiers. In searching for a concept which might be useful in identifying the unique character of an American understanding of autocephaly, one possibility is the idea of a frontier. Is it possible that the realities of “frontier” life, broadly construed, influenced the self-consciousness or even the identity of the Russian mission diocese?

²²⁷ See Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:282.

²²⁸ This will be addressed in chapter VII.

²²⁹ See Stokoe, 58-61.

²³⁰ “In 1924 the members of the original missionary church in America, called the Metropolia, declared itself to be a self-governing metropolitanate until such time as order could be re-established and normal communications with the Russian Mother Church could be resumed.” *Autocephaly, a Door to the Future*. For the decisions of the 1924 Detroit Council see Surrency, A126, point 2 of which is the appeal of the Sobor to Metropolitan Platon “to head the administration of the Church and to rule it first with the cooperation of the existing Council of Bishops and Diocesan Council and to elaborate in speedy order a plan for the permanent administration of the American Church for the future, which, in agreement with the foundation of Orthodoxy, must be organized upon the basis of elected Sobors.” Pospelovsky notes that “Metropolitan Platon’s election had Patriarch Tikhon’s backing, originally transmitted verbally through several reliable persons travelling from Moscow to America.” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:283-284. Though “Metr. Platon did not preside and was not the Chairman of the Sobor” because he “did not want to be accused of unduly influencing the deliberations of the Sobor and therefore absented himself” (Surrency, 30-31) it is interesting to consider whether or not the idea of declaring the American diocese temporarily autonomous originated with or was encouraged by Patriarch Tikhon, and comprised part of his verbal message to Metropolitan Platon.

VI. From Frontier to Frontier to Frontier

The Russian Mission was in some sense always “caught between two worlds.” In Alaska these were the worlds of Russian and Native Alaskan culture. In California, and then New York, the divide was between the Russian Orthodox cultural and religious tradition over and against the predominant American culture. Internal “frontiers” appeared, between the parishioners of the small multi-cultural diocesan parishes and the numerically greater Carpatho-Russian and Galician uniate immigrants, the members of the Russian Orthodox diocese and the Greek, Middle-eastern and Slavic Orthodox dioceses which were founded in the 20th century on American soil, and finally between the “convert” and “cradle” Orthodox.

The clearest way in which to understand these “two-world divides” in terms of competing mentalities, which eventually led to the expectation and demand for autocephaly in the Metropolia/OCA, is to use the concept of “frontier.” The “Frontier Thesis” proposed by Frederick Turner,²³¹ which identified a subtle yet undeniable role in the formation of the American mindset, plays a similar role in identifying the psychological development of the mission diocese. For the latter, though, its influence was doubled, since Siberia, then Alaska, was the frontier of the Russian Empire, and this eastward frontier movement through Russia finally encountered the westward frontier movement in the United States.²³² When in 1870 an episcopal see was founded on United States territory,²³³ and especially after the transfer of the

²³¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill: 1893). Reprinted from ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE YEAR 1893, Copyright 1893, American Historical Association. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/empire/text1/turner.pdf> (accessed 25 November 2019).

²³² Stokoe fittingly refers to the Aleutian Islands and Alaskan Coast as Russia’s “‘Wild East,’ much like . . . the American ‘Wild West.’” Stokoe and Kishkovsky, 6.

²³³ Afonsky, *History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska (1794-1917)*, 78. The Alaska territory had been sold to the United States in 1867.

see to San Francisco in 1872,²³⁴ the American “frontier mentality”²³⁵ melded with its Russian counterpart. Both the American and Russian pioneers had the opportunity to establish new beginnings in an undeveloped space, in the context of independence, reinforced by “freedom” and the absence of European cultural constraints and mores. This sense of freedom and possibility became a part of the “ambient culture” of the Russian diocese.²³⁶

Turner notes that “The American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier – a fortified boundary line running through dense populations. The most significant thing about the American frontier is that it lies at the hither edge of free land.”²³⁷ Hovorun expresses the same idea from an ecclesiological perspective: “The rationale of a frontier is not to protect the territory inside, but to expand and to cover as much uncultivated land as possible. This metaphor relates to the dynamism of mission, which constitutes an intrinsic feature of the nature of the church.”²³⁸ The juxtaposition of Hovorun’s and Turner’s observations in regard to frontier offer an insight into the developing self-consciousness of the Mission Diocese/Metropolia:

In the settlement of America we have to observe how European life entered the continent, and how America modified and developed that life and reacted on

²³⁴ Stokoe and Kishkovsky, 15.

²³⁵ Regarding the “frontier mentality” see Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.”

²³⁶ “Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people – to the changes involved in crossing a continent . . . and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life.” Turner, 1. Though the American frontier crossed the continent from west to east, these words could easily be applied to the Russian mission, whose Russian institutions were certainly “compelled to adapt themselves” to circumstances which were different in Alaska, in the contiguous States, and as we will see, through time.

²³⁷ Turner, 1.

²³⁸ Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 10.

Europe. Our early history is the study of European germs developing in an American environment. . .²³⁹

The advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines. And to study this advance, the men who grew up under these conditions, and the political, economic, and social results of it, is to study the really American part of our history. . . .²⁴⁰

First, we note that the frontier promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people.²⁴¹

But the most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe.²⁴²

As noted in the previous chapter, the American transformation of European life, the waning influence of Europe (i.e., Russia and the other “motherlands”), composite nationality, and democracy all became formative elements in the development of the unique personality of the mission diocese. Hovorun argues that a frontier mentality is in fact necessary for any Church which wishes to be in a proper relationship to “the world:”

An internally stratified Church with developed administrative structures has a tendency to be centripetal and autarkic. It often considers itself in parallel to, not in the world, where it is called to go and preach. . . The mentality of sharp-cut borderlines extrapolates itself from within the church to its borderlines that separate it from the world. An alternative to the mentality of sharp cut borderlines is the open mentality of frontiers. Frontiers are a key image to understanding what the church is in its nature and how it is related to the world.²⁴³

²³⁹ Turner, 2

²⁴⁰ Turner, 3

²⁴¹ Turner, 5

²⁴² Turner, 6

²⁴³ Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 163; see also page 74.

Hovorun's conception of the "ecclesial frontier mentality" grasps clearly the driving force behind the Church's activity in Alaska, but after the diocese moved to the continental United States, and especially after it received an influx of "Carpatho-Russian" as well as other Slavic and non-Slavic immigrants into its fold, the "American Frontier" which served to take disparate peoples and unite them into single *ethnos* came squarely up against an "ethnic wall" of faithful and parishes who identified themselves primarily in terms of nationality, and only secondarily in terms of faith.²⁴⁴ This "ethnic wall" was characteristic of Turner's description of a European frontier, "a fortified boundary line running through dense populations." This was one of the factors which caused Archbishop Tikhon to attempt to resolve the problem of the "ethnic frontier" by organizing parishes and dioceses on the basis of nationality, rather than geographically.

Grigorieff paints a bleak picture of the state of affairs within the Russian diocese in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and his analysis of the problems involves points of conflict between the American and European mentalities, as well as the way the immigrants were adapting and being integrated into American society and culture, specifically in regard to the ideas of freedom and democracy.²⁴⁵ While parishioners engaged with American culture, the clergy tended to remain isolated, not wishing to learn English nor to integrate into society.

²⁴⁴ As discussed in the preceding chapter.

²⁴⁵ "In order to understand all these complexities which arose at that time, one must realize several important facts about the Orthodox people in this country: 1) the impact of the American way of life and of the American conception of democracy on the Orthodox (or former uniate) immigrants who came here from non-democratic environments; 2) their generally low intellectual and educational level; 3) the very inadequate education of the priests; 4) the complete religious freedom in America — loyalty to churches based on free will only; 5) the presence of some political refugees among Orthodox immigrants, associated with the leftist movement in Russia; 6) old national sympathies, prejudices and hatreds brought here from the old countries." Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 14.

The rigidly conservative makeup of the Russian clergy [was] caused by their specific upbringing and education. This made it difficult for them to integrate themselves into a foreign milieu. Many Russian priests, upon their arrival in a foreign country, instead of learning the language, culture and customs of the people of that country, would hide in the ghettos of their parishes and would shut the door to the outside world.²⁴⁶

This lived dichotomy between the lives of the parishioners and the lives of the clergy²⁴⁷ often resulted in conflict, whether over philosophical or political ideologies such as socialism²⁴⁸ or because the clergy were critical of “disobedient” members of their flock.²⁴⁹ “Progressive”

²⁴⁶ Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 8. It is easy to imagine, given Grigorieff’s description of the disconnect between the culture of the laity and the culture of the clergy, how Bishop Tikhon and other church leaders might seek a more conciliar model for Church governance. Such a model would give the episcopate and clergy an opportunity to affirm the “democratic spirit” of the faithful while maintaining some degree of control or direction over parish or eparchial activities. Given the American mentality, which grew out of a denial of the divine right of kings, on the mottos “no taxation without representation” and “all men are created equal,” it is difficult to imagine how a monarchical or hierarchical “top down” model of governance could easily be imposed. This is especially true in the legal context of trustee ownership, i.e., where church property was legally owned by the parishioners, not the bishop. This point, in the context of the Russian mission diocese, cannot be overemphasized. One of the motivating factors behind the transfer of allegiance from uniatism to Orthodoxy among the Carpatho-Russians and Galicians was that when a Greek-Catholic community built a church, the Roman Catholic (and later Greek-Catholic) bishop would demand that the property be registered in the name of the Catholic diocese, i.e., the Catholic bishop. Rather than do this, many of the communities “returned to Orthodoxy.” For a characteristic example of how this played out in the Star/Wostok district in Alberta in Canada, where the law-suit over the property was appealed all the way up to the privy council in London, England, see Paul Yuzyk, *The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada 1918-1951*, (Ottawa, Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 1981), 37-40.

²⁴⁷ This is not to deny that there were bishops and priests who did make the effort to engage with American society and culture, just as there were faithful who tried to maintain their European culture and retained a more traditional, hierarchical understanding of authority in the Church.

²⁴⁸ “People who belonged to leftist political organizations were disposed against religion and church. They organized antireligious meetings and severely attacked the Church, her hierarchy and clergy, in their press.” Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 15.

²⁴⁹ “My presence here among rude and feelingless former uniates I consider meaningless ... Lately they have shown insincerity, hypocrisy, lack of confidence and animosity towards the priest. All that became clear at the wedding of Andrey Yakoubich, who had requested your Grace's permission for marriage, but was denied it... (the Roman Catholic priest) also refused, then they exchanged vows according to the American law in court. The wedding party was interrupted by a fight and shooting... At night they drove a barrel of beer to the doors of the rectory (to mock the priest), which was found by the policemen in the morning...” Letter of October 17th, 1906, by the Monk-Priest Gregory of Hartshorne, Indiana Territory as quoted Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 14.

political and religious views combined in the nascent “Renovationist” movement²⁵⁰ which became a competitor for the parishes and faithful of the Metropolia in the 1920’s.²⁵¹ American democratic values may well have formed the idea in the minds of Orthodox parishioners that they should possess a voice in the governance of Church much as they did in American political life, which in turn may well have contributed to the formation of Bishop Tikhon’s conciliar vision for Church governance. With time the processes of acculturation and assimilation continued the work of the “American frontier” as elucidated by Turner,²⁵² so that in 1976 Fr. Thomas Hopko could write

members of the Orthodox churches, both lay people and clergy, have accepted the fundamental religious structure of American society, but also that they have accepted a way of understanding, experiencing and living their church membership which is determined by the doctrines and practices of the “American way of life” and not by the traditional doctrines and practices of their own Church.²⁵³

In its adulthood, the Metropolia/OCA clearly embraced a “non-centripetal and autarkic” approach to its mission on an official level, and responded critically to those Churches or

²⁵⁰ [From the *Russky Golos* newspaper of November 5th, 1917] “A meeting of the ‘progressive party’ of the Orthodox clergy took place in New York City on October 31. Rev. John Kedrovsky was the chairman of the meeting. They decided to propose radical church reforms to the coming Sobor, e. g., married bishops, permission for second marriages for priests.” Grigorieff goes on to say “It is interesting to observe that these reforms which were carried out by the “Living Church” in Russia only several years later were already in 1917 proposed in America by Rev. J. Kedrovsky, who later became a bishop of the Living Church in New York.” Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 17-18.

²⁵¹ The Renovationist movement will be discussed in the next chapter.

²⁵² For a cursory overview of the cultural assimilation of the children and grandchildren of immigrants see Stokoe, 87-92. It must be borne in mind that cultural, social, and economic frontiers are just as real as territorial frontiers.

²⁵³ Thomas Hopko, “Orthodox Christianity and the American Spirit,” in *All the Fulness of God: Essays on Orthodoxy, Ecumenism and Modern Society* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), 150.

jurisdictions which were more or exclusively concerned with caring for “their own” faithful²⁵⁴ while eschewing unity as a function of mission and witness.²⁵⁵ But the ethnic principle did not die, whether it be “Russian,” Romanian,” “Albanian,” “Bulgarian,” or “American.”²⁵⁶ Those who sought Orthodox unity were up against this “ethnic principle,” which did not diminish even when missionary outreach did begin to succeed in attracting “American” converts to Orthodoxy little by little.

The tension between the “European” and “American” frontiers is no less real today than it was in 1964 when Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote these words:

The situation in America is radically different from the whole historical experience of Orthodoxy. Not only the Orthodox Church was brought here by representatives of various Orthodox nations, but it was brought as precisely the continuation of their national existence. Hence the problem of canonical or ecclesiological unity, which as we have seen is a self-evident requirement of the very truth of the Church, encounters here difficulties that cannot be simply reduced to the solutions of the past.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Trustee ownership of parishes, whereby parish property is held “in trust” by elected members of the parish and is not vested in the diocese or the Bishop himself could easily be understood as contributing to a mentality of “otherness” or “not belonging.”

²⁵⁵ “Why is [autocephaly] not being received by all Orthodox Christians in America? . . . The one real answer is found in the strong nationality bonds, that long umbilical cord that reaches across the Atlantic and connects us with “Mother” over there. . . We witness in our actual parish lives that the life we have together as members of the Body of Christ through the Holy Eucharist, . . . must in fact make an uneasy and even unwanted accommodation to the preference we have for ‘our kind of people.’” Fr. Vladimir Berezonsky, “American Orthodox Autocephaly for Today and Tomorrow”, *Orthodox Church*, May 1971. See also the relevant comments of Alexander Schmemmann in “A Crisis Avoided, A Polarization Revealed,” *Orthodox Church*, December 1971.

²⁵⁶ This can easily be confirmed by a quick perusal of the parishes and dioceses within the OCA itself which include “Russian,” “Bulgarian,” “Albanian” etc. in their titles, <https://www.oca.org/directories>.

For an argument against using ethnic identifiers for parishes see Fr. John Parker, “Autocephaly and Evangelism” (lecture, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Yonkers, NY, January 30 2020, https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/autocephaly_evangelism). Accessed on April 7th 2020.

²⁵⁷ Schmemmann, “The Canonical Problem,” 77.

The influence of and reaction to these three frontiers – the Russian, the American, and the “ethnic” – was a major contributing factor to the development of the mind-set of both the faithful and the leadership of the Metropolia.

VII. From Orphanhood to Independence

Following the Russian Revolution “the Orthodox Church of North America had to face the consequences of abandonment by its Mother Church,”²⁵⁸ and was left an orphan. As noted by Afonsky, “The struggle by the North-American Church for survival was waged on a number of fronts during the critical period from 1917 – 1934,” among which he identifies the “Living Church”²⁵⁹ till 1933, followed by the Moscow Patriarchate from 1933 onwards. He also notes the establishment of the “Karlovtsy Synod in Exile” which “persistently has tried to subjugate the Orthodox Church in America to its authority.”²⁶⁰

The diocese was forced to contend not only with these “Russian” actors, but also, beginning with the establishment of the Greek Archdiocese in 1922, with competing Orthodox jurisdictions in the new world, accusations of dubious canonical pedigree from Russian and other Orthodox Churches, financial pressures, a flock which was becoming more and more culturally and psychologically “American,” and political/patriotic issues as a result of the cold war. Such obstacles could easily be overpowering for such an isolated body. Had the orphan, over the

²⁵⁸ Gregory Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in America 1917-1934*, 7.

²⁵⁹ The “Renovationist” or “Living Church” was a renewal movement driven mainly by the “white” (i.e. married parish) clergy within the Russian Orthodox Church, primarily socialist and populist in orientation. It promulgated democratic-conciliar administration, the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, services in vernacular Russian, and accepted a married episcopate – a clear violation of canonical norms. The leaders were subservient to the Soviet authorities, who used this Church to “divide and conquer” the Orthodox population, pitting it against the “Tikhonite” patriarchal Church. The Renovationist movement in the Soviet Union was not completely quashed until 1943, when Stalin offered state support to the Patriarchal Church. Pospelovsky, however, contends that “The Renovationist Church has died, but not without trace. Alas, only the ugliest legacy of Renovationism survived in the postwar Patriarchal Orthodox Church: that which some critics have called ‘adaptation to atheism.’” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Orthodox Church under the Soviet Regime*, 1:69-70. For an in-depth exploration of the genesis and leadership of the movement see Walters, “The Renovationist Coup: Personalities and Programmes,” 250-270 and Dimitry Pospelovsky, “The Renovationist Movement in the Orthodox Church in the Light of Archival Documents,” *Journal of Church and State* 39 no. 1, 1997, 85-105. For a broader historical perspective on the Renovationist Church see Chapter 2, “Leftist Schisms within the Russian Orthodox Church” in Pospelovsky, *The Russian Orthodox Church under the Soviet Regime*, especially 1:45-70.

²⁶⁰ Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in America 1917-1934*, 7.

course of its life, acquired the internal resources necessary to weather these storms, grow, and develop? If so, what would it develop into?

If healthy and stable parish or church life can be described as “peaceful and well-ordered,” the description of the situation of the North American diocese in 1924 was, conversely, “chaotic.” The immediate pressures of Bolshevik persecution and manipulation by the Church in Russia, years of anti-church agitation by socialist elements in the USA, financial troubles, a lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of certain clergy, the renovationist attempt to take over the North American diocese²⁶¹ and the impossibility of communication with the Patriarchate in Moscow all contributed to ecclesial confusion and disarray.²⁶² During this chaotic period, in an attempt to bring order out of this chaos three councils were held: in February of 1919,²⁶³ in November of 1922,²⁶⁴ and at Detroit in 1924, where

The American Diocese of the Russian Church deprived of normal communications with the Mother Church proclaimed, in compliance with directives issued by Patriarch Tikhon, its "temporary self-government", until the normalization of its relationship with the Mother Church (Detroit Sobor, March-April 1924). This was the beginning of a de facto independent life of our church which after the tragical crisis provoked by the Russian Revolution, not only recovered but gradually grew into a well-established national church.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ See, *inter alia*, Megan Carlisle, “Creating an American Orthodox Archive: The Struggle for the Records of St. Nicholas Cathedral, New York City, 1926-27.”

²⁶² See note 230 above.

²⁶³ In Cleveland, at which Bishop Alexander was elected “Archbishop of America and Canada.” Surrency, 29.

²⁶⁴ In Pittsburgh where, following the resignation of Archbishop Alexander, Metropolitan Platon was elected “Metropolitan of All America and Canada.” Surrency, 29-30.

²⁶⁵ Schmemmann, “Report on the preliminary negotiations,” 1b. See Surrency A126 for the text of the Sobor resolutions.

The decision of the Metropolia to declare itself temporarily autonomous was fateful insofar as the diocese became a “free individual,” not under the authority of any other ecclesial body. It was, for all intents and purposes, a “declaration of independence.”²⁶⁶

Metropolitan Platon had been canonically elected in 1922 as Metropolitan of the North American Diocese,²⁶⁷ but “Platon’s appointment to America obviously displeased the Soviet government” as he had been a vocal and active opponent to the Bolsheviks.²⁶⁸ This resulted in a second directive from Patriarch Tikhon in 1924 removing him from office.²⁶⁹ There is little doubt that the appointment of Platon in 1922 was canonically valid.²⁷⁰ It is also undoubtedly

²⁶⁶ In reality, the Metropolia to a large degree conducted itself as an autocephalous Church. As early as 1963 Bogolepov notes that “There are two distinguishing marks of an autocephalous Church: (1) The right to resolve all internal problems on its own authority, independently of all other Churches, and (2) The right to appoint its own bishops, among them the head of the Church.” Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 8. Throughout its history the Metropolia did resolve its internal problems on its own and did elect and appoint its own bishops and primate.

²⁶⁷ Surrency, “Alleged Ukaz of Patriarch Tikhon to Metr. Platon,” A124. For the background of this contested election see Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:283-284.

²⁶⁸ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:285.

²⁶⁹ Surrency, “1924 Ukaz of Patriarch Tikhon to Metropolitan Platon,” A125. “The decree of Patriarch Tikhon about the dismissal of Metropolitan Platon in 1924 was not accepted by the North American Metropolia for several reasons - a successor had not been appointed for America to whom the see could be transferred and the decree was promulgated under obvious pressure from the communist government. There is information about a private letter of Patriarch Tikhon, which ordered Metropolitan Plato not to leave America.” (see: Archives of the Kremlin. The Politbureau and the Church 1922-1925. M.; Novosibirsk, 1998. Book 2. C. 514). Andrei A. Kostriukov. “The Granting of Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America in the Light of the Documents of Church Archives.” *Bulletin of the St. Tikhon Orthodox Humanitarian University. Series II: History. History of the Russian Orthodox Church* 3, no. 70 (2016): 94n6. (“Распоряжение Патриарха Тихона об увольнении митрополита Платона в 1924 г. не было принято Североамериканской митрополией по ряду причин — в Америку не был назначен преемник, которому можно было бы передать дела, указ появился под явным давлением коммунистической власти. Есть сведения о частном письме Патриарха Тихона, которое предписывало митрополиту Платону не оставлять Америку” (см.: Архивы Кремля. Политбюро и Церковь 1922–1925 гг. М.; Новосибирск, 1998. Кн. 2. С. 514). Андрей А. Кострюков, “Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке в Свете Документов Церковных Архивов.” *Вестник Православного Свято-Тихоновского Гуманитарного Университета. Серия II: История. История Русской Православной Церкви* 3, no. 70 (2016): 94n6.)

²⁷⁰ “Patriarch Tikhon made the appointment of Metropolitan Platon orally through Mr. Colton, a representative of the U. S. A., who was in Moscow, in the presence of Rev. Theodore Pashkovsky, who later became Bishop of Chicago with the name of Theophilus, and after the death of Metropolitan Platon succeeded as the ruling archbishop. After his release from the prison, Patriarch Tikhon confirmed this oral appointment by the Ukaz dated September 29, 1923. The authenticity of this Ukaz was under question. However, the authenticity of this Ukaz is confirmed now by an article of A. Kazem-Bek about the court-case of St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York printed in the

true that the decision to remove Platon was politically motivated.²⁷¹ The appointment and attempted dismissal of Metropolitan Platon were a foreshadowing of the nature the relationship the Metropolia and the Russian Orthodox Church/Moscow Patriarchate were to have for decades to come.

The first attempt by an external body to take control of the Metropolia was made by the “Renovationist” Church.

Using collaborators in the “Living Church” movement, such as the defrocked American priest Kedrovsky, the Communist authorities in Russia attempted through the American courts to seize 116 Orthodox churches in the United States from the American diocese. In desperation, the Fourth “All-American Council” (1924), under Metropolitan Platon’s leadership, proclaimed the American diocese to be “temporarily self-governing,” and thus “independent” of the Russian Church. The Council justified this highly irregular move by citing a 1920 decree by Patriarch Tikhon allowing “self-governance” to those dioceses separated from the Patriarchate by shifting military or political boundaries. Yet even this drastic action did not prove to be a fully effective legal defense against Communist-inspired depredations. In 1925, the American courts awarded the diocesan cathedral in New York to Kedrovsky and the “Living Church.”²⁷²

Journal of Moscow Patriarchate 1957, No. 6.” Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 20. See also Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:283-284.

²⁷¹ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:285-287. Pospelovsky suggests that the Karlovci Synod had been infiltrated by the GPU (Communist secret police). “Thus, at the height of his [Metr. Platon’s] struggle against the Renovationists he was being stabbed in the back simultaneously by the Soviets and by the Karlovcians. Was this a mere coincidence, or was there a GPU agent in the center of the Karlovci Synod? . . . it is difficult to believe in mere coincidence. It is more likely that Karlovci was not immune to GPU agents at the time.” 2:286-287. Whether Pospelovsky’s insinuation that the Karlovci Synod had been infiltrated by the GPU or not is true, his statement offers a clear example of the suspicion which was wide-spread in Russian émigré circles as far as real or potential Soviet influence or infiltration within the ranks of the Russian émigré Church or community were concerned.

²⁷² Stokoe, 60. See also Carlisle, *Creating an American Orthodox Archive: The Struggle for the Records of St. Nicholas Cathedral, New York City, 1926-27*. For a concise account of the attempt by the Renovationists to assume control of the North American diocese see Surrency, 31-32. As to the “self-governance” decision of the 1924 All-American Council, Grigorieff states that it “was in absolute conformance with the decree of Patriarch Tikhon dated November 20, 1920, No. 362, issued by the Holy Synod and Higher Church Council. This document contained ‘instructions to the Diocesan Bishop in the event that a given Diocese be severed from the highest Church Administration, or in case the latter’s activity stops.’ It was provided in part that ‘if the highest Church Administration...would for any reason discontinue its church-administrative activity,’ the diocesan bishop, either with the bishop of neighboring dioceses or, if that were not possible, alone, should ‘assume the full hierarchical power’ and ‘do everything possible to regulate the local church life, and if necessary... organize the diocesan administration suitable to conditions created,’ Other paragraphs provided for continuation of such local administration of the church, if the discontinuance of activity of the highest Church Administration ‘should acquire a

The Renovationist court victory was pyrrhic, insofar as no significant number of parishes left the Metropolia for the Renovationists,²⁷³ and the movement effectively ended on American soil with the formation of the Russian Patriarchal Exarchate in 1934.²⁷⁴

The conflict between Metropolia and the “Karlovci Synod” (“the Synod”) also known as the “Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia” (ROCOR)²⁷⁵ was of greater import and longer duration. “The Synod” was composed of bishops who had fled the Russian Empire following the Bolshevik takeover. They organized themselves in Istanbul under the aegis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which gave them permission to offer pastoral care to Russian refugees.

These refugee bishops, having acquired from the Patriarchate permission to create a “commission,” started to call themselves the High Church Administration Abroad; and the gathering of these bishops they suddenly called the Synod of Bishops, under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky]. This completely new Church organization began to attribute to themselves authority, not only over the refugees and soldiers, but also over the long-established North American Diocese with its own canonical authority.²⁷⁶

protracted or even permanent character.’ A diocesan bishop is advised to divide his see into several dioceses, to give suffragan bishops full rights, and to name new bishops. Finally it was provided that ‘all measures that were taken locally in accordance with the present instructions ...must be submitted for confirmation later to the Central Church Authority when it is re-established.’” Grigorieff, *The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America*, 22.

²⁷³ “Well over 90% of the Orthodox faithful and clergy adhered to Metr. Platon for the following reasons: his appointment by Patriarch Tikhon, his confirmation as Ruling Hierarch in 1922 and 1924, and finally the not unimportant fact that he had been the Ruling Hierarch of the North American Diocese from 1907 till 1914 and therefore was personally known to a majority of the clergy and to very many of the laypeople.” Surrency, 32.

²⁷⁴ Grigorieff, “The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America,” 31-32. Upon the formation of the exarchate St. Nicholas Cathedral was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchal Church. For the canonical implications of the formation of the exarchate from the standpoint of the Metropolia see Schmemmann, “Problems of Orthodoxy in America: The Canonical Problem,” 72.

²⁷⁵ For a historical overview of the formation and activity of the ROCOR see Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 1:113-133 and 2:255-279.

²⁷⁶ Gregory Afonsky, “A Documented Historico-canonical Outline of the Orthodox Church in America.” *Yearbook and Church Directory of the R.O.G.C. of N. America for 1968*. Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America, 1968, 54.

After having moved to Serbia (and settling in Sremski Karlovci, hence the name), this “Synod,” due to its non-territorial nature, its interference in political issues, and its meddling “in the activity of other dioceses and even autocephalous churches” was, as a “self-appointed group,” in 1924 censured by the Synod of Bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and forbidden to continue its activity.²⁷⁷ Alexander Bogolepov²⁷⁸ dedicates over thirty pages (by far the longest chapter) of his *Toward an American Orthodox Church* to the “Synod,” quite categorically stating that because they “recognize no territorial limits” and do not adhere to the resolutions of the 1917-18 Moscow Sobor,²⁷⁹ and because the group included only one diocesan bishop yet claimed jurisdiction over the territory of canonically established dioceses,²⁸⁰ the Synod was, as asserted by the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria as well as the Archbishop of Athens, “an anticanonical institution which had no right to claim authority over all of the Russian parishes abroad.”²⁸¹

The “anticanonical institution” constantly put pressure on the Metropolia to “knuckle under.” Whether by ecclesial sanction or the organization of a parallel church structure,²⁸²

²⁷⁷ For the relevant document see Afonsky, “A Documented Historico-canonical Outline of the Orthodox Church in America,” 54-55.

²⁷⁸ Professor Bogolepov had been expelled from the Soviet Union in 1922, and after spending the intervening years in Europe arrived in America in 1951. He taught Canon Law, Church Slavonic, and Russian at St. Vladimir’s Seminary in New York. His biography can be accessed here: http://orthodoxcanada.ca/Alexander_Alexandrovich_Bogolepov.

²⁷⁹ Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 57-58.

²⁸⁰ A Synod requires at least three diocesan (ruling) bishops. See Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 65-68.

²⁸¹ Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 82.

²⁸² “In March of 1927, the Bishops' Synod in Karlowitz suspended Metropolitan Platon and appointed Bishop Apolinarius in his place. Thus another parallel church was organized in America.” Grigorieff, “The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America,” 27.

whether through journalistic attacks²⁸³ or “pretensions” to ecclesiastical jurisdiction,²⁸⁴ the Synod was unrelenting in its condemnation of the Metropolia/OCA.²⁸⁵ While the relationship between the two bodies was characterized by a pronounced political element, both the psychology of the Metropolia’s flock²⁸⁶ as well as its ecclesial self-understanding²⁸⁷ were insuperable obstacles to any type of reconciliation let alone submission to the “Synod” by the Metropolia.

Notwithstanding the short-lived attempt of the “Renovationists” or the persistent attempts of the “Synod” to impose their authority over the Metropolia, it was the relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate, the “Mother Church,” which was the most important and most problematic for the North American diocese. Demands by the Moscow Patriarchate that the clergy and laity of the Metropolia make pledges of loyalty to the Soviet regime, as well as suspensions and ecclesiastical sanctions imposed upon the clergy and faithful of the Metropolia by the

²⁸³ See, for example, Joseph Pishtey, “From the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America” and “The Synod in Exile and Historical Truth” (Editorial), *Orthodox Church*, June, 1970.

²⁸⁴ See, for example, Archbishop Leontiy, “Regarding the Pretensions of the Hierarchs of the Group Called ‘Karlovtian’ or ‘the Synod.’” *Russian American Orthodox Messenger*, September, 1947, 137-138. (Архиепископъ Леонтиѣ, «Къ Претензіямъ Архіереевъ Группы Именуемой «Карловацкой» или Синодальной,» *Русско-Американскій Православный Вѣстникъ*, Сентябрь 1947, 137-138).

²⁸⁵ This situation was only resolved when the ROCOR reconciled with the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007.

²⁸⁶ “To the majority of Orthodox Americans, mostly of West Ukrainian descent, a group of monarchist émigré bishops from the Russian empire sitting in Yugoslavia meant absolutely nothing.” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 2:291.

²⁸⁷ “There is a great psychological difference between the local American-Russian Church and the Diocese of the Bishops' Synod Abroad. The difference remains until now the same as it was in time of Metropolitan Platon and his rival Archbishop Apolinarius. The Church of Metropolitan Platon and its present head Metropolitan Leonty has realized itself as the local church, brought here more than 150 years ago by the Russian missionaries, but now deeply rooted in the American soil. It understands its mission as rooting this church even deeper and spreading its message wider. It understands its task as a permanent assignment given by God to work in this Lord's vineyard of this continent. The bulk of members of this church consists of immigrants who came to this country before the Russian Revolution, and second and third generations Americanized. The majority of clergymen have spent most of their lives in this country.” Joseph Pishtey, “From the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America,” *Orthodox Church*, June-July 1970.

Patriarchate, both contributed to an impasse from which the only escape, for Moscow as well as for the Metropolia, was the proclamation of the Metropolia's autocephaly.

Following the death of Patriarch Tikhon in 1925 Metropolitan Sergii (Stragorodsky) assumed control of the Patriarchate, and proceeded to issue what Alexeev and Stavrou characterize as "The most controversial document in the history of the Russian Church under Soviet rule."

The document, dated 29 July 1927, was addressed to the pastors and the flock. It was an announcement of his [Metr. Sergii's] "official loyalty" to the regime, which meant formal capitulation of the Orthodox Church to the godless government. Going beyond mere civil obedience to the authorities, the Church under Sergii became an active collaborator with the Soviet state.²⁸⁸

While Pospelovsky offers a more nuanced and less critical appraisal of this letter,²⁸⁹ its political impact upon the Metropolia (and the Russian émigré community in general) was profound, especially since Metropolitan Sergii went on to demand such a pledge of loyalty from the Russian Orthodox clergy outside of the Soviet Union.²⁹⁰ Over the course of the coming decades

²⁸⁸ Alexeev and Stavrou, 21.

²⁸⁹ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 1:109-110.

²⁹⁰ "As could be expected, he [Sergii] then appealed to the émigré clergy to redefine their attitudes toward the motherland and chided them for their past attitude which had made it impossible for his predecessor to obtain recognition from the regime. It was clear that the soviet government demanded from the émigré clergy as well as from Sergii a written promise of loyalty." Alexeev and Stavrou, *Great Revival*, 21-22.

demands for such loyalty pledges from the Metropolia would be repeated in one form or another, most notably in 1933²⁹¹ and in 1945.²⁹²

Ecclesiastical censure was another tactic used by the Moscow Patriarchate in an attempt to gain control of the Metropolia. As noted above, Metropolitan Platon had been “allegedly” deposed by the “alleged” Patriarchal ukaz of January 16th, 1924,²⁹³ and was (again?) suspended by Metropolitan Sergii in August of 1933.²⁹⁴ In November of 1934 Platon’s successor, Metropolitan Theophilus, was elected Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic

²⁹¹ In 1933 Bishop Benjamin of the Moscow Patriarchate was sent to the United States to investigate the church situation there. While in the US, he met with Metr. Platon of the Metropolia, and Metr. Platon through Bishop Benjamin requested permission to consecrate a new bishop. “Metr. Sergius indicated his willingness to do so but that before he together with the Sacred Synod could give formal permission it would be necessary for Metr. Platon to give his pledge of “loyalty” which was required of all Hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate whether or not they lived within the borders of the Soviet Union. (It should be said here, parenthetically, that there has been a great dispute in émigré circles as to the propriety of the loyalty pledge. By enemies of the Moscow Patriarchate it is always described as a ‘pledge of loyalty to the Soviet power’ and while it may or may not be in order for Hierarchs within the Soviet Union to make such a pledge, it is clearly unacceptable for Hierarchs living outside the Soviet Union who are not Soviet citizens. . . In fact both Metr. Sergius and Bp. Benjamin were quite flexible in terms of how the ‘pledge’ was worded but the intent was clear: Metr. Sergius felt that he and the Hierarchy within the Soviet Union could not be compromised and be accused of harboring anti-Soviet and disloyal thoughts on the basis of what hierarchs in communion with the Moscow Patriarchate were saying or doing which might be in any way construed as being antagonistic to the present government in Russia. . .). Metr. Platon told Bp. Benjamin that he would have to think the matter over. The next weekend was the traditional pilgrimage at St. Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania and at the Pontifical Divine Liturgy during the sermon delivered by Metr. Platon himself, he declared that he had to face the choice of ‘preaching communism from the pulpit’ or being temporarily independent and that for him the latter was the only acceptable alternative.” Surrency, 43.

²⁹² The Metropolia was invited to send delegates to the Moscow Sobor in 1945. “They presented the American petition, which amounted to two requests: for their acceptance into the fold of the Moscow Patriarchate; and for the retention of complete autonomy and administrative independence from the Moscow Patriarchate.” Moscow responded with “patriarchal ukaz number 94 (February 1945) stipulating . . . (1) that a sobor would meet the same spring in America under the chairmanship of Archbishop Aleksii of Yaroslavl. . . (2) that the sobor would elect a metropolitan for America, subject to patriarchal confirmation. . . (3) that all the clergy and laity of the Metropolia pledge to abstain from all anti-Soviet activities; and (4) that all contacts with the former Karlovci Synod be broken forever. . . In response, the Council of Bishops of the Metropolia, in its May 1945 session, declared reunification with the patriarchate on these conditions to be impossible. . .” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:293-94

²⁹³ Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime*, 2:285-286.

²⁹⁴ Kostr̆ukov claims that the official split between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Metropolia happened in 1933 when Metropolitan Platon refused to offer his oath of loyalty to the Soviet regime. Kostr̆ukov, “The Granting of Autocephaly,” 95.

Church of North America at its fifth All-American Council, notwithstanding the fact that “On January 5, 1933, the Moscow Patriarchy issued a decree suspending Metropolitan Theophilus, and purporting to prohibit him from performing divine service ‘until either he repents or the ecclesiastical court shall have rendered a decision.’”²⁹⁵ Subsequent to this act, the Moscow Patriarchate established an exarchate for North America in June of 1934,²⁹⁶ resulting in three competing “Russian” ecclesiastical bodies claiming jurisdiction on the continent, the Moscow Patriarchate, the “Karlovcy Synod,” and the Metropolia, with the Metropolia having far and away the greatest number of parishes and faithful.

Though the Metropolia was of “Russian” provenance, a fundamental difference between it and the other Russian groups was its self-conception as a peculiarly North American body. This mentality manifested itself both culturally and politically (as evidenced by the inability to reconcile with the competing demands of either the “Synod” or the Patriarchate) and contained within itself the seed of the notion of a united, multi-ethnic North American Church.

The idea of one, united Orthodox Church in North America had existed at least since the tenure of Bishop Tikhon. Following the establishment of other “overseas” or “ethnic” jurisdictions and episcopates in North America (Albanian in 1918, Bulgarian in 1938, Carpatho-Russian in 1937, Greek in 1922, Macedonian in 1968, Romanian in 1929, Serbian in 1922,

²⁹⁵ Grigorieff, “The Historical Background of Orthodoxy in America,” 32. As a measure of the heavy-handedness of the Moscow Patriarchate towards the bishops and faithful of the Metropolia, see «Грех Против Матери Церкви» (“A Sin Against the Mother Church”) in the July 1950 issue of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* by A. Vedernikov. This ten page “necrology” of Metropolitan Theophilus offers a long list of his “sins” (he “called himself the Metropolitan of all America and Canada, and headed there a sizeable part of the Orthodox parishes which had broken off from unity with the Mother Church of Russia . . . and died under ecclesiastical sanction as a violator of the canons which safeguard Church unity”), as well as those of Metropolitan Platon and the American Metropolia in general insofar as they refused to accede to the demands and headship of the Moscow Patriarchate. A. Ведерников, «Грех Против Матери Церкви,» *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, no.7 (1950): 68-78.

²⁹⁶ Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 52. See also Schmemmann, “Problems of Orthodoxy in America: the Canonical Problem,” 71-72.

Syrian in 1936, Ukrainian in 1918 with another Ukrainian diocese being formed under the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1937, etc.),²⁹⁷ and with some of these jurisdictions later splitting into separate “American” and Patriarchal (polemically regarded as “pro-communist”) dioceses,²⁹⁸ the perceived need for unity, both on practical as well as theological grounds, only became more acute. Prior to 1970 there were three conscious attempts at creating some type of unified body, the “Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America” (HEOCACNA) in 1927, the “Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America” (the “Federation”) in 1943, and the “Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas” (SCOBA) in 1960.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Surrency, 92-114. For a cursory listing of the Orthodox jurisdictions present in America in 1970 see Alexander Schmemmann, “A Meaningful Storm: Some Reflections on Autocephaly, Tradition and Ecclesiology,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 15, no. 1-2 (1971): 3-4.

²⁹⁸ For example, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America was formed in 1951, and the “Free Serbian Church” was organized in 1963, both ostensibly on the grounds that they did not wish to be dependent upon hierarchs in a communist controlled country. Surrency, 106 and 109. Erickson notes that after World War II “The Russian Orthodox church [i.e. Moscow Patriarchate] was . . . encouraged to assume a position of leadership in the Orthodox world. But all this came at a price. The government strictly limited and closely supervised all church activities, and it regularly harassed believers. . . . Soon after the war, as Soviet-style Communist governments were set up throughout Eastern Europe, much the same pattern for church life was imposed on the Orthodox Churches that came under their authority.” He goes on to note that this resulted in a split within the national churches in the diaspora, similar to what happened with the Russian Church after the Bolshevik revolution, with one faction stressing the “importance of remaining faithful to the mother church” while the other faction “maintained that the church and its leaders were being unacceptably manipulated by the Communist state, to the point that the integrity and freedom even of the church’s American diocese were in danger.” Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 85-86

²⁹⁹ I purposely do not include the attempts of Archbishop Tikhon to set up “ethnic vicariates” as this was clearly not an attempt to unify existent Orthodox bodies but rather to organize varied ethnic parishes under the aegis of the Russian diocese. A “unity” of all the Orthodox in North America within Russian jurisdiction may quite likely have simply been assumed on the part of the Russian diocese, but the *de facto* independence of Greek and other parishes, the vague relationship which these independent parishes maintained with their “mother churches” in Europe and the Middle East, and the almost nonexistent record of any communication between the Russian diocese and these “mother Churches” with the goal of establishing an uncontested, officially recognized jurisdiction in North America all point to a practical acceptance of the *status quo*, which later developed into a multitude of ethnic jurisdictions. See Fitzgerald 27-34; Surrency, 99; and George Papaioannou, “The Diamond Jubilee of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: 1922-1997.” *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 45, no. 1-4 (2000): 221-223.

In one sense the HEOCACNA foreshadowed what was to come with the autocephaly of the OCA, insofar as it involved the self-proclaimed formation of an “autocephalous” jurisdiction - one of whose stated goals was to unite existing Orthodox jurisdictions in North America - by the bishops of another Church (in this instance the Metropolia) who maintained their own separate jurisdiction in the same geographical territory within the greater context of a continuing multiplicity of ethnic jurisdictions.

The foundational idea of the HEOCACNA was essentially the model of Archbishop Tikhon, to provide for “the organization and establishment of an independent, autonomous, and autocephalous Orthodox Church in and for America” which would “safeguard the rights and interests of each national or linguistic group in Orthodoxy in America by giving each of them representation on the permanent governing Holy Synod.”³⁰⁰ It was established by the Bishops of the Metropolia with Bishop Aftimios of the Syrian diocese as its primate;³⁰¹ the parishes of the Syrian diocese would then form the nucleus for this new “autocephalous” Church, which would

³⁰⁰ “Constitution of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America with Related Documents of the North American Holy Synod.” (Brooklyn, NY: Division of Publications, *The Orthodox Catholic Review*), 1928, 4.

³⁰¹ See Surrency 32-36. What is of especial interest is that though the HEOCACNA was founded by the Metropolia, the Metropolia’s Eparchial Council was very quick to make it clear that it would not be part of the HEOCACNA. On March 28th, 1928, at the regular meeting of the Metropolia’s Eparchial Council, the following decision was taken: “In connection with the announcement of the Autocephaly of the American Orthodox Church, to publish on behalf of the Eparchial Council the following explanation: With this we proclaim for common information, that the [existence of the] American Orthodox Church does not affect the position of the Russian Orthodox Church in North America. It was proclaimed autocephalous by the Syro-Arabians, who made up a branch of our Church here in America and who have now found it necessary, with the agreement of our Episcopate, to announce an Orthodox Church in America. The Russian Orthodox Church continues to be in the same position as it was, and will continue to remain in America and Canada.” (“Въ связи съ состоявшимся объявленіемъ Автокефалія Американської Православной Церкви опубликовать отъ имени Епархіального совѣта слѣдующее разъясненіе: Симъ объявляется для всеобщаго свѣдѣніе; Православная Американская Церковь не касается положенія Русской Православной Церкви въ Сѣверной Америкѣ (*sic*). Она объявлена автокефальной Сиро-Арабами, которые составляли вѣтвь нашей Церкви здѣсь въ Америкѣ и которые теперь нашли нужнымъ, съ согласія нашего Епископата, объявить Православную Церковь въ Америкѣ. Русская Православная Церковь какъ была, такъ въ томъ же положеніи и остается въ Америкѣ и Канадѣ.”) Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, “Minutes of the Eparchial Council,” 28 March 1928. OCA Archives, Syosset, NY.

coexist with the Russian, Greek, and other jurisdictions, primarily with the goal of serving the needs of the “Americanized” Orthodox population, whose parishes (of whatever jurisdiction) could request transfer into the HEOCACNA.³⁰² As noted by Erickson, “The ‘American Orthodox Catholic Church’ [Bishop Aftimios] attempted to establish won few followers and lasted only a few years.”³⁰³

The next attempt at unity was the “Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America.” This “Federation” was organized in 1943 in order to obtain recognition of Eastern Orthodox clergy from the government of the United States so that they might be exempted from military service and serve as military chaplains.³⁰⁴ This attempt was more successful, most likely due to the fact that its activity was of a practical nature which benefitted almost all the Orthodox groups in the USA without either impinging upon the prerogatives of any single jurisdiction or attempting to achieve their unification, administrative or otherwise. It did, however, offer the Moscow Patriarchate another opportunity to put pressure on the Metropolia.

During the two years of its existence the federation succeeded in gaining for Orthodox clergy the same draft-exempt military status that Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish clergy enjoyed, but it did not significantly improve Orthodox unity in America. At the insistence of the resident bishop of the Moscow patriarchate,

³⁰² Constitution of the HEOCACNA, 44-45.

³⁰³ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 78. Over the course of two years Bishop Aftimios proceeded to alienate the Russian bishops with whom he came into open conflict in 1929. He fared no better with either the Greek or Syrian bishops. This “Church” came to an especially ignominious end when in 1933 the fifty-two year old Bishop Aftimios married a twenty-one year old Syrian girl and then refused to resign his episcopacy. Though his assistant bishops attempted to continue, the HEOCACNA was effectively dead by 1934. For a more detailed account see Dellas Oliver Herbel, “A Lesson to be Learned: Fr. Boris Burden’s Failed Attempts to Foster Orthodox Jurisdictional Unity in America,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2012): 317-334, as well as Surrency, 32-42.

³⁰⁴ Surrency, 47. Until that time only the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths were legislatively recognized as “Christian” by the United States armed forces.

membership in the federation was limited to jurisdictions with a direct association with a mother church in the Old World. This excluded the large Metropolia.³⁰⁵

One of the primary factors contributing to the demise of the Federation was undoubtedly the “freedom” felt by the laity in the organization of Church life in America. A layman, the Buffalo lawyer George E. Phillips, after having been instrumental in the legal and legislative aspects of having Orthodox Christianity recognized by the Selective Service Board of the USA, presented himself as the “Acting Chancellor” of the Federation and was publicly referred to as the “Lay Head” of the Orthodox Christians of the United States while admitting to being a communing member of both the Episcopal as well as the Orthodox Churches. This understandably elicited a negative response on the part of the Orthodox hierarchs, resulting in the retraction of their blessing and a quick death for the Federation.³⁰⁶ No further attempts at unity were made until 1960.

Following World War II and through the 1950’s, the cultural assimilation of the children of the first Orthodox generations, the immigration of hundreds of thousands of refugees who had fled from communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the US government’s attempt to

³⁰⁵ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 79.

³⁰⁶ For a more complete history of the Federation see Herbel 328-333 and Surrency 47-52.

“Americanize” them,³⁰⁷ as well as the “Red Scare”³⁰⁸ resulted in two important dynamics impacting the Metropolia, one cultural, the other political.

Culturally, a very particular “American religious *phronema*” had developed, which Thomas Hopko describes as follows:

Religion in general, and belief in God in particular, have come today to be strictly and exclusively “private matters” – the “religion of your choice” – with the result being that members of the various faiths have come to believe that even their participation in their own particular religion is to be understood and practiced on their own terms rather than on those of the specific religious community to which they belong.”³⁰⁹

The children and grandchildren of the earlier immigrants who had not left Orthodoxy regarded themselves, first and foremost, as Americans or Canadians.³¹⁰ Conversely, recent immigrants

³⁰⁷ “Americanization” programs “were developed as an education program for new immigrants. McGrath [Earl J. McGrath, Commissioner of Education for the US Government, 1948-1953] described these Americanization programs by writing ‘Now the most obvious type of education which these newcomers need is concerned with Americanization, with our way of life, our morals, our every-day habits and customs, our democratic processes of living, working, and playing together.’ Although the programs were originally designed to integrate new immigrants, most American students went through some form of an Americanization program.” James B. Rogers and J. Wesley Null. “Attacking Communists As Commissioner: The Role of Earl J. McGrath in the Red Scare of the 1950’s.” *American Educational History Journal* 36, No. 1 (2009): 65.

³⁰⁸ The “Red Scare” began after World War II during the Truman presidency in the USA, and was based upon the fear that the Soviet Union was attempting to foist communism upon the United States. “In 1949, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky stated on a public stage, ‘We shall conquer the world, not with atom bombs, but with something the Americans cannot produce—with our ideas, our brains, and our doctrines.’ The conventional wisdom of the day was that the Soviet Union would take advantage of the destitution around the world to spread the message of Communism, thereby increasing their physical size, economic strength, and general manpower. By 1947, President Truman had already enacted the Truman Doctrine, which stated that the spread of Communism needed to be contained so that America could defend itself.” Rogers and Null, 58. The “Scare” resulted in the suspicion or persecution of any person or organization suspected of “having Communist or front connections, indoctrinating the young with alien principles, or holding views that aided the Communist cause or contributed to forms of moral decay associated with the advance of communism.” Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 30.

³⁰⁹ Hopko, 153.

³¹⁰ “Following Hanson’s immigrant thesis (‘What the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember’), the ethnic churches were revitalized by the ‘Third generation,’ which first appeared in the Orthodox churches during the general American return to religion in the 1950’s. . . It was the ‘third generation’ that encouraged the institutional changes require to combat ongoing generational losses.” Stokoe 89-90.

had cultural and emotional ties to the “old country,” and especially in a religious sense felt a responsibility to maintain the religious culture of their homeland,³¹¹ especially if the Church in their homeland was being persecuted by a militantly atheistic regime.³¹² This often resulted in a clash between “old country” and “new world” cultures within Orthodox dioceses, parishes, and families.

Politically, within the context of the “Russian” Orthodox of the new world, the Patriarchal Church was clearly understood to be under Communist control, the ROCOR was unequivocally “anti-Communist”³¹³ and the Metropolia self-identified as a North American body, though it continued to claim some type of “spiritual” unity with the Moscow Patriarchate, even though sacramental communion had been broken.³¹⁴ Within the political context of the Red Scare, however, even a perceived connection with the Soviet Union or Communism was problematic for any group or individual, organization, or Church, in the USA.³¹⁵ The Metropolia

³¹¹ For an overview of some of these cultural and linguistic issues see Stokoe, 87-94

³¹² Stokoe writes that “Unlike the other Orthodox bodies, which continued to receive at least some immigrants on a yearly basis, the Metropolia did not.” Stokoe, 95. This claim is not entirely accurate. Many post World War II refugees and immigrants attended Metropolia parishes for a variety of reasons.

³¹³ As well as “Monarchist.” At the first émigré clergy-laity conference of the ROCOR which took place in November of 1921, Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), the leader of the Karlovician group, invited “thirty monarchists straight from their political conference in Bad Reichenhal, Bavaria, where they had set up a Higher Monarchist Council,” who “forced on the assembly [i.e., the clergy-laity conference] a resolution setting up as an aim of the newly established émigré Church the reestablishment of the Romanovs as autocratic tsars of Russia.” Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 1:116-17.

³¹⁴ For example, “At a meeting of the Council of Bishops [of the Metropolia] held in October [of 1947] it was decided. . . To continue prayerful mention of the suffering Russian Church in the person of her first Hierarch, the Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.” Surrency, 58.

³¹⁵ “In the early days of the Cold War, Americans were worried only about those with some direct affiliation to the Communist party. They soon, however, became worried about anyone who might be linked to Communism in any way, despite how tenuous or thin this connection may have been. The increasingly expansive definition of “Communist” came to include, for example, Americans with a Slavic background, former members of Communist groups, or even social democrats. Over time, as the paranoia of the Cold War grew, the American people began to worry about anyone who might hold Communist sympathies. This term meant different things in different parts of the country, but often came to include anyone who was different, a dangerous situation for any minority group.” Rogers and Null, 64.

was in a difficult position: on the one hand, it had acceded to the request of the US authorities in post-war Japan to receive the Japanese Orthodox Church under its pastoral care³¹⁶ and adamantly refused to submit to any type of administrative subordination to the Moscow Patriarchate,³¹⁷ yet it was legally and colloquially identified as the “Russian” Orthodox Church and continued to commemorate the Patriarch of Moscow at the Liturgy.

There can be no doubt that this hyphenated Russian-American identity was challenging for the Metropolia. During the early and mid 1950’s official suspicion of anything that might even remotely be associated with communism or the Soviet Union reached the level of what can only be described as paranoia,³¹⁸ and though the mid-50’s was the high water mark of the Red

³¹⁶ “In an effort to prevent a Soviet presence in Occupied Japan through the Japanese Orthodox Church, the American military authorities encouraged the Japanese Orthodox to seek episcopal oversight not from Russia as it had in the past, but from the Metropolia. This episcopal oversight continued until 1970.” Stokoe, 69. The Metropolia’s extension of episcopal oversight to the Japanese Orthodox Church was clearly uncanonical, as admitted in the Agreement of November 28th 1969 between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Metropolia: “The Metropolia will end its temporary jurisdiction in Japan through the appropriate appeal of the Japanese Church to Metropolitan Ireney, the head of the North American Metropolia, insofar as the American Metropolia does not have a canonical basis for jurisdiction in Japan.” (“Митрополия прекратит свою временную юрисдикцию в Японии по соответствующем обращении Японской Церкви к Митрополиту Иринею, главе Северо-Американской Митрополии, поскольку эта юрисдикция не имеет в Японии канонических для Американской Митрополии оснований”). “Соглашение между делегациями Московского Патриархата и Северо-Американской Митрополии, достигнутое на второй официальной встрече 28 ноября 1969 года в Токио, по вопросу образования Автокефальной Православной Американской Церкви”). “The Agreement between the delegations of the Moscow Patriarchate and the North-American Metropolia reached at the second official meeting on November 28th 1969 in Tokyo on the formation of the Autocephalous Orthodox American Church,” November 29th, 1969. Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³¹⁷ See, for example, “The Patriarchal Ukase of February 16, 1945” published by the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America and signed by all the members of the Metropolitan Council of the Metropolia and dated July 19th, 1945. The final paragraph of this six page document, which is a response to the Ukase of the Patriarch of Moscow of February 16th 1945, reads as follows: “The substance of the Ukase, as well as its tone and all of the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the issuance of the Ukase, suggest the high-handed methods of an autocratic bureaucracy. The American Church is flourishing in the atmosphere of democratic freedom. It was no fault of the American branch of the Russian Orthodox Church that by force of circumstances it was compelled to establish its own church administration. It was no fault of the American Church that the Patriarchate laid a suspension on it because its clergy declined to give a pledge of loyalty to the Soviet power. It is an American Church and an American Church it must continue to be.” OCA Archives, Syosset, NY

³¹⁸ The most well-known “champion” of such “anti-communist” activity is undoubtedly senator Joseph McCarthy, but “Other pursuers of communism kept busy even at the peak of McCarthy’s notoriety. Investigating unions, churches, and the entertainment field, HUAC [House Unamerican Activities Commission] questioned over 650 witnesses in 1953–54.” Fried, 173. Fried also offers several examples of the ridiculous lengths to which investigators went in order to uncover “communists,” such as “In late 1954, the plight of Wolf Ladejinsky became

Scare, anti-communist feeling and rhetoric continued to be a part of the American cultural landscape through the 1960's and beyond.³¹⁹

The perceived need for Orthodox unity was again beginning to be widely recognized by the 1950's – and not only by the Metropolia.³²⁰ By the early 1960's pressure was mounting toward the formation of a unified Orthodox Church in North America and the regularization of the canonical situation of the Metropolia from three different quarters: from within the Metropolia, from the Moscow Patriarchate, and from SCOBA.

public. A land reform expert who served ably in Japan, Ladejinsky was seeking to transfer from the State Department to the Department of Agriculture, but the Secretary of Agriculture found him to be a security risk. He had relatives in the USSR who, it was claimed, enabled Moscow to hold sway over him. Indeed, it was even suggested that his anti-Bolshevik writings proved he was under Soviet control. These postulates sparked criticism in the press and Congress. The situation was resolved in 1955 when another agency, the Foreign Operations Administration, employed Ladejinsky's talents in crisis-ridden Vietnam . . . The Military Personnel Security Program earned demerits too. Many men received unwelcome draft notices only to face disciplinary proceedings based on their lives prior to induction. Some whose loyalty was impeached were kept in uniform but assigned meaningless duties; many received unfavorable discharges. The activities that flagged a GI's file typically occurred in his teens, but in one case, the inductee's age at the time of his alleged subversion was eight. In other cases, three soldiers encountered trouble because their stepmothers assertedly belonged to the CP [Communist Party]. Another was said to have a Communist mother-in-law who was 'lying low' but was soon to become active again. In fact, she had died in 1940, when the draftee was ten—a decade before he would meet his wife." Fried, 180-181.

³¹⁹ See, for example, Verne Lyon, "The History of Operation CHAOS," *Covert Action Information Bulletin* 34, Summer 1990): 59-62, which describes the domestic surveillance activities of the CIA CHAOS program in the United States between 1959 and 1974.

³²⁰ ". . . the last of those old Orthodox generations is rapidly passing away. Their sons and grandsons, and their daughters are coming to the field. And this new generation is American born. They speak good English but bad or no Greek, Serbian, Russian, Romanian, Syrian or Albanian. No wonder. For they are American citizens. They went to American schools. Many of them were in the American Army. They have grown in conformity with the American standard of living. Their hearts are not divided between two countries. They are naturally American and they mean to remain Americans. Accordingly, they have some demands respecting the Church of their fathers. They wish that the English should replace national languages in church services. They desire to hear sermons in English. This is quite a legitimate desire. . . Also a day may not be far off when there will be a United Orthodox Church in America, which will include all the present Eastern national Churches in this country, a Church with one central administrative authority. . . when by God's providence the time is ripe for the accomplishment of such a unity, I dare not doubt that the venerable heads of all our Orthodox churches in Europe, Asia and Africa always led by the Holy Spirit, will give their blessing for the organization of a new and autonomous sister Church in America." Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, sermon, *The Orthodox Church*, Feb. 1969. (The attribution states that this sermon was delivered in New York 25 years ago, i.e., in 1944, but this cannot be true, as Bishop Nikolai was imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp at that time, and did not arrive in the USA until 1946. See the "Life of St. Nikolai Velimirovic," Orthodox Christian Information Centre, <http://orthodoxinfo.com/general/stnikolai.aspx>).

“A new phase in the quest for Orthodox unity in America began in 1960, with the creation of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA).”³²¹ Surrency describes the ten years between the formation of SCOBA and the declaration of the autocephaly of the OCA as a period of “Consultative Unity.”³²² This body, composed of hierarchs of the “canonical” Orthodox jurisdictions of North and South America,³²³ was able to cultivate a substantial unanimity of thought among themselves as well as practical cooperation among the various Orthodox jurisdictions. All the bishops to a greater or lesser degree agreed upon the need for unity and autonomy (if not outright autocephaly) among and for the Orthodox jurisdictions in the Americas.³²⁴

While the desire for Orthodox unity in North America appears to have been genuine and wide-ranging, the particular pressures and interests of the individual members of SCOBA were varied and occasionally in conflict.³²⁵ The organization served as an opportunity for the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople to press their claims. Moscow’s position was that “The regularization of relations between all the Orthodox jurisdictions and the achievement of Eucharistic communion among them is an indispensable and categorical precondition for the constitution of a single Church administrative organ for all the American Orthodox.”³²⁶ This was

³²¹ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 92-93

³²² Surrency, 61-77.

³²³ For the Constitution of SCOBA see Surrency A141-145; for an example of the complications resulting from the use of the word “canonical” in the title see the letter of Bishop Dositheus of the Moscow Patriarchate in Surrency, A146-147.

³²⁴ Resolution Presented by Metropolitan Philip to the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas, “Minutes of Special Meeting,” May 19th, 1970, 10-11. OCA Archives, Syosset, NY.

³²⁵ For examples of such interjurisdictional conflicts see Surrency, 71 and 74.

³²⁶ “As has become known, the members of the Standing Committee of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas, to which the American Metropolia belongs, has recently discussed the possibility of organizing a common Synod for all the Orthodox Churches in America which should administratively be at the head the future

again a pressure tactic on Moscow's part, since it officially regarded the Metropolia as schismatic. The Ecumenical Patriarchate's attitude was more measured and inclusive:

The existence of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) was and hopefully is the proper and pragmatic way in which Orthodoxy in America may naturally mature and unite toward One Church. The Ecumenical Patriarch blessed this endeavor by recognizing as canonical all the Orthodox hierarchs of this conference. For the Ecumenical Patriarch to have recognized only his own as canonical, would have implied that those not

united Orthodox Church of America. The topic of the paths and perspectives of American Orthodoxy is becoming increasingly relevant. It is quite natural that some of the Orthodox Churches in America, having ties with their autocephalous Churches in their homeland, turned to their hierarchs with relevant reports on this issue. In the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate for the month of December 1965, following upon the report of Ioann, the Metropolitan of New York and the Aleutian Islands and Exarch of N. and South America, a resolution of the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate was published which we cite, in view of general interest, without abbreviations '... The proposal for the creation of a Synod of Orthodox Bishops of America in the form as it was set forth at the meeting of the Conference of presiding bishops on March 30th, 1965, is considered unacceptable, for it, as it were, legitimizes all the violations of the sacred canons, which persist among the Orthodox bishops in the U[nited] S[tates of] America and generally on the American continent. The regularization of relations between all the Orthodox jurisdictions and the achievement of Eucharistic communion among them is an indispensable and categorical precondition for the constitution of a single Church administrative organ for all the American Orthodox. At the same time, there is every reason to hope that, having Eucharistic communion among themselves, in the future the Almighty Lord, who in His power guides the times and seasons, the jurisdictions of all the local Orthodox Autocephalous Churches will form one Holy Autocephalous Church, about which at this time the Mother-Churches should have the necessary preliminary discussion among themselves.'" (Protocol No. 44). "On the Question of the Creation of One Orthodox Church in America," *Russian-American Orthodox Messenger*, March, 1966, 45. ("Какъ стало извѣстно, члены постояннаго Совѣщанія Православныхъ Каноническихъ Епископовъ въ Америкѣ, въ которое входитъ и Американская Митрополія, въ послѣднее время обсуждали возможности организациі общаго для всѣхъ православныхъ Церквей въ Америкѣ Синода который и долженъ былъ бы возглавить будущую единую Православную Церковь Америки административно. Тема о путяхъ и перспективахъ американскаго православія становится все болѣе актуальной. . . Совершенно естественно, что нѣкоторые предславители Православныхъ Церквей въ Америкѣ, имѣющіе связи со своими автокефальными Церквями на ихъ родинѣ, обратились къ своимъ киріархамъ съ соответствующими докладами по этому вопросу. Въ журналѣ Московской Патріархіи за декабрь мѣсяцъ 1965 г. опубликовано постановление Синода Московской Патріархіи по докладу Митрополита Нью Йорскаго и Алеутскаго Іоанна, Экзарха С. И Южной Америки, которое мы и приводимъ безъ сокращенія ввиду общаго интереса '... Предложеніе о созданіи Синода православныхъ епископовъ Америки въ томъ видѣ, какъ оно было изложено на засѣданіи Коференціи прав. епископовъ 30 марта 1965 г., считать неприемлемымъ, ибо оно какъ бы узаконяетъ всѣ нарушенія священныхъ канонівъ, имѣющія мѣсто среди православныхъ епископовъ въ С. Ш. Америки и вообще на американскомъ континентѣ. Урегулированіе взаимоотношеній между всѣми православными юрисдикціями и достиженіе евхаристическаго общенія между ними является непремѣннымъ и категорическимъ предварительнымъ условіемъ устроенія одинаго для всего американскаго Православія административнаго церковнаго органа. Въ тоже время есть всѣ основанія надѣяться, что, имѣя между собой евхаристическое общеніе, въ будущемъ, во время угодное положившему времена и лѣта во своей власти Господу Вседержителю, юрисдикціи всѣхъ Помѣстныхъ православныхъ Автокефальныхъ Церквей образуютъ одну Помѣстную Автокефальную Церковь, о чемъ въ соответствующее время Церкви-Матери должны будутъ имѣть между собой потребное предварительное обсужденіе.' (Жур. No. 44).» «Къ Вопросу О Созданіи Единой Православной Церкви Въ Америкѣ.» *Русско-Американскій Православный Вѣстник*, Март 1966, 45).

recognized were uncanonical and schismatic, a supposition which could have destroyed the unity and the harmony of the family of Orthodox Churches starting at the very top.³²⁷

Surrency suggests that by the late 1960's the Metropolia had four options for regularizing its canonical status: 1) Negotiating with the Ecumenical Patriarchate; 2) Submitting to the canonical authority of the Moscow Patriarchate; 3) Continuing to proclaim its own canonicity under the aegis of SCOBA with the hope that SCOBA would somehow become a "provisional synod;" or 4) Declaring "the Metropolia autocephalous on its own authority stating that all the requirements for such status had been met and that sooner or later its canonical autocephaly would have to be recognized by all Orthodox Churches since it would have gathered in all Orthodox *who truly wanted to be* 'American Orthodox' without any ties with a 'foreign Church.'"³²⁸

The Metropolia had unilaterally sought to achieve recognition from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the mid-60's. Given the intransigence of Moscow this was a natural step, as there had been some degree of contact between the Metropolia and the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the previous decades,³²⁹ and several of the leading priests of the Metropolia (e.g., Frs. Florovsky, Schmemmann, and Meyendorff) had previously been clerics of the Western European Russian diocese under Constantinople. As recounted by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann,

³²⁷ Isaiah Chronopolas, "Understanding Autocephaly from the Viewpoint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate." *Orthodox Observer* Year XXXVII, No.611 (February 1971): 18.

³²⁸ Surrency, 83-84 (emphasis my own). The role played by the will of the faithful is important, for it implies that the desires of those who do not wish to be "American Orthodox" or who do wish to maintain ties with a "foreign Church" would be equally valid. This is not a canonical or ecclesiological argument, rather a reflection of the "American religious *phronema*" described by Hopko above.

³²⁹ Citing a letter from Archbishop Alexander to Metropolitan Platon of 10 April 1930 from the archives of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Fitzgerald writes that "As early as 1930, the Metropolia received its sacramental chrism from the Patriarchate of Constantinople by means of the [Greek] archdiocese." Fitzgerald, 102.

In 1965, shortly after the election of Metropolitan Ireney as Primate, a commission of some thirty members, which included bishops, priests, theologians and laymen, was entrusted with studying the problem [of the lack of canonical recognition] in all its aspects and preparing a solution. The commission unanimously came to the conclusion that the “temporary self-government” be brought to an end and that the needs of our Church as well as canonical order, required that at the next All-American council our Church should eliminate the term “Russian” from her self-definition and proclaim herself the permanent local Orthodox Church in America. . . . In May 1966, by the order of our Holy Synod, I visited the late Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul. He received me with his truly unique warmth and love, invited me to his table, blessed me with a pectoral cross, but as to the “American problem” his stand was adamant: “You are Russians, go to your Mother Church, for no one can solve your problem except the Russian Church. . . .” This was shortly after the Ecumenical Patriarchate, under pressure from Moscow, discontinued unilaterally its jurisdiction over the Russian Exarchate in Western Europe.³³⁰

For the Metropolia, especially in the context of SCOBA, the issues of unity and canonical recognition were virtually inseparable. As argued forcefully by Schmemmann,³³¹ given the intransigency of the Moscow Patriarchate and the refusal of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to offer the Metropolia canonical recognition, “regularization” of the Metropolia’s status by means of submission to a foreign patriarchate was neither canonically desirable nor practically possible.³³² In order to overcome this obstacle the Metropolia’s canonical “case” rested on two fundamental

³³⁰ Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *Orthodox America*, 263. This response was obviously not what the Metropolia was hoping for, but was understandable, as the request put the Ecumenical Patriarchate in a no-win situation: by receiving the Metropolia under its protection it would give the Moscow Patriarchate grounds to accuse it of interfering in its own internal (i.e. Moscow Patriarchate) affairs; if it did not receive the Metropolia it would be perceived as indifferent or weak, for though it claimed to have jurisdiction over all lands which were not part of the territory of an autocephalous Church, it refused to act.

³³¹ “It is indeed ironical that in America the *canonical subordinationism*, exalted by so many as the only source and guarantee of ‘canonicity’, is being used to justify the most uncanonical situation one can imagine; the simultaneous jurisdiction of several bishops in the same territory, which is a betrayal of both the letter and the spirit of the whole canonical tradition. Schmemmann, “The Canonical Problem,” 69.

³³² “The return of the American Church to the canonical leadership of the highest church authorities in Russia is impossible – for reasons both practical and canonical. In practice, the existence of two very different and often contradictory social structures in America and Russia, and the fundamental distrust we have towards any instruction issued from communist countries, make submission to the Moscow Patriarchate virtually inconceivable.” Letter of Metropolitan Ireney to Patriarch Athenagoras, Nativity of Christ 1966, 4. Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

principles: that each geographical territory should have its own local Church, and that all the faithful of that territory should be under one united synod of bishops.³³³

The three individuals most responsible for shaping, propagating, and publicizing the Metropolia's "case" for recognition were undoubtedly Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, Fr. John Meyendorff, and Professor Alexander Bogolepov. In *Toward An American Orthodox Church*, (1963) and his other writings³³⁴ Bogolepov outlined the historical and canonical precedents for the establishment of a new local church, with special emphasis on the practical situation facing Orthodoxy in America in general and the Metropolia in particular. Frs. Schmemmann and Meyendorff were more broadly influential, making Metropolia's case both in their popular and academic writings, as well as through their active engagement with other Orthodox jurisdictions in meetings and associations such as SCOBA.

While Bogolepov's writings are arguably the most balanced in their approach,³³⁵ Schmemmann and especially Meyendorff tended to be more polemical. Both were respected theologians and academics who brought all their erudition and influence to bear on the goal of

³³³ "The Holy Canons clearly stipulate that there should be only one church authority in each district. (First Ecumenical Council, Canon 8; Second Ecumenical Council, Canon 2; Sixth Ecumenical Council, Canons 20 and 29). This unity reflects the very nature of the Church, which knows no national, racial, or linguistic barriers; that, in the words of the 34th Apostolic Canon, 'The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them, and recognize him as their head, and do nothing which exceeds their authority without his consent. . .', and that 'neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all.'" Letter of Metropolitan Ireney to Patriarch Athenagoras, Nativity of Christ 1966, 4-5, Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³³⁴ See especially his "Conditions of Autocephaly," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 5 no. 3 (1961):11-37.

³³⁵ Though he, too, could be very polemical, as witnessed by his chapter on the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, *Toward An American Orthodox Church*, 57-88.

establishing a local Orthodox Church in North America.³³⁶ Meyendorff's popular articles³³⁷ are generally quite categorical in their tenor: he insists that unity is long past due³³⁸ and pushes for unification as quickly as possible,³³⁹ employing a sharply rhetorical tone.³⁴⁰ He laments nationalism and the lack of "churchly consciousness,"³⁴¹ decries the absence of ecclesiological, canonical and administrative order in America,³⁴² and contends that of all the Orthodox

³³⁶ See Paul Meyendorff, "Fr. John Meyendorff and the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2011): 335-352, and Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*. Both were very active participants in the negotiations which took place leading up to the bestowal of the Tomos of autocephaly in 1970.

³³⁷ "In 1965, Fr John was appointed editor of the new Metropolia newspaper, *The Orthodox Church*, a position he held until his retirement in 1992. As editor of this monthly publication he wrote numerous editorials calling for Orthodox unity, and later defending the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) after this was granted in 1970." Paul Meyendorff, "Fr. John Meyendorff and the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America." 335-336.

³³⁸ "Patriarch Tikhon spoke of a united Orthodox Church in America as 'an obvious canonical necessity' in 1906. Patriarch Meletios of Constantinople envisaged it in 1922. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich readily accepted the idea twenty years ago. . . Let us, therefore, stop saying that the question is raised 'too early.' In fact, it can rather be said that we are at least fifty years late." John Meyendorff, "Too Early" (May 1968) in *The Vision of Unity*, (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), 33.

³³⁹ In the March, 1966 issue of *The Orthodox Church*, for example, he wrote: "The progression of American Orthodoxy towards organizational unity is much too slow. While the vast majority of clergy and laity are ready for it, the movement is hampered by apathy, and also by the conscious ill-will of an influential minority." John Meyendorff, "Towards One Orthodox Church in America," in *The Vision of Unity*, 19.

³⁴⁰ "As the organic continuation of the great missionary work performed since 1794 on this continent, the Metropolia is given by its Primate the task of fully realizing its calling to become the American Church together with all those who have **no other goal than the progress of the Church as such, and of Orthodoxy as such**. This task must become the major point of the Agenda of the All-American Council (Sobor), forthcoming in 1967. Our Church in America possesses the blessed and God-given opportunity to speak and to act **for the Truth itself**" (emphasis my own). John Meyendorff, "Towards an American Orthodox Church" (January 1967) in *Vision of Unity*, 22.

³⁴¹ "The Russian Church went through the tragedy of persecutions, followed by internal divisions; the Church in America lacked a leadership which would not be challenged; the "Mother Churches" of the various national groups wanted to "keep control" over their American branches, and in America itself nationalism and prejudice between the various groups prevailed over their desire to be together. All this was due to the fact that **nobody was concerned with the Church itself**" (emphasis my own). John Meyendorff, "Unity of Orthodoxy" (February 1965) in *Vision of Unity*, 15.

³⁴² "The reasons [for Orthodox unity in America] are spiritual, canonical and practical. Spiritually, it is obvious that when we confess our belief in "One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church," this belief is meant to be the guiding principle of our lives. . . the Church must be one. . . Canonically, the rules and canons of *all* churches strictly forbid the existence of parallel ecclesiastical organizations on the same territory. Practically, the Orthodox witness in this country will be immensely strengthened if the three million Orthodox pray and work together ; if other are able

jurisdictions in the USA only the Metropolia is seriously interested in actually being an American Church.³⁴³

Father Alexander Schmemmann expressed a genuine affection for America,³⁴⁴ and had a deep sensitivity towards its distinctive cultural identity.³⁴⁵ He recognized that the unique situation of Orthodoxy in Western Europe and North America required a unique solution,³⁴⁶ and was deeply committed to achieving both canonical order in the new world³⁴⁷ as well as canonical recognition for the Metropolia, which he hoped might happen “by degrees,” under the aegis of SCOBA.³⁴⁸ Father Schmemmann was undoubtedly one of the most important and influential

really to see in us the One True Church. . .” “Unity of Orthodoxy” (February 1965) in John Meyendorff, *Vision of Unity*, 16.

³⁴³ “Who can deny that, among the Orthodox in America, there is a widespread consensus about the necessity of establishing a unified canonical structure, one Orthodox Church of America. However, the other ecclesiastical bodies and jurisdictions have *originally* defined their mission and purpose in national terms. The Metropolia has the exclusive privilege of having been established *originally* as an American Church.” “The Future of our Church,” (June/July 1967), John Meyendorff, *Vision of Unity*, 23.

³⁴⁴ “Two hours in front of the television watching Carter’s inauguration. . . I am impressed by America and I am genuinely delighted by the simplicity of the whole ceremony, which makes it truly symbolic. Here is what makes America truly great.” Alexander Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983*. Trans. Julia Schmemmann, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000), 143.

³⁴⁵ “. . . America is *different* from everything else in the world and because it is different, it is threatening. Just by touching it, America changes and – in some way – disintegrates any perception, any structure of life. The essence of that threat is not only that America carries in itself a different way of seeing and doing things and offers change that always produces resistance, but essentially America proposes *change* as a method of life. . . This is something that cannot be understood or accepted by all others – whether rich or poor, civilized or not. And these “others” cannot be understood by Americans because an American perceives life itself as continuous change.” Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann*, 245-46.

³⁴⁶ “The answer to this question is in the doctrinal and canonical tradition, but only if we look for its depth and truth, and not for petty and legalistic ‘precedents’ of a situation that has none.” Schmemmann, “The Canonical Problem,” 79.

³⁴⁷ “If there was any commitment which was constant in [Fr. Schmemmann’s] life already in France, it was the hope that the uncanonical overlapping of ‘jurisdictions,’ which was the single most obvious obstacle to Orthodox witness in the West, would be replaced by local Church unity in conformity not only with canons, but with the most essential requirements of Orthodox ecclesiology.” John Meyendorff, afterword of *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann*, 349.

³⁴⁸ “Fr. Schmemmann expressed the belief that the best way to unify Orthodoxy in America would be “unity by degrees” or perhaps it would be better to say ‘unity by stages’ which would be achieved in the following manner: a) The canonical unification of the episcopate for which a framework already exists: SCOBA; b) transformation of

Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, and his intellectual acuity coupled with his untiring commitment to the goal of the establishment of a local Orthodox Church in North America were to a large degree responsible for the bestowal of the Tomos in 1970.³⁴⁹

For SCOBA³⁵⁰ there were two paths to unity and independence for the Church in America: official recognition by the Patriarchate of Constantinople of the primates of all the American Orthodox dioceses as a “provisional synod” which would then work towards full independence, or the agreement of all the primates of the various patriarchates to release their North American dioceses so that they might themselves form a united Church.³⁵¹ As to why this second approach failed, Fitzgerald notes that

“. . . two reasons seem to predominate. . . First, many of the mother churches were simply reluctant to relinquish any authority over their particular dioceses. Despite the clear witness of the traditional principles of ecclesiology, many of the mother churches believe that their diocese were made up of “their people,” and they had legitimate authority to care for them. The mother church was usually unwilling, therefore, to lose the support that came from the daughter diocese in America. Second, there often was no clear consensus within the jurisdiction itself. Within each jurisdiction, some argued for greater unity. Yet, the movement toward greater unity was opposed either overtly or covertly by others who preferred to maintain the distinctive character of their jurisdictions.³⁵²

SCOBA into the canonical center of American Orthodoxy by having SCOBA petition all the autocephalous churches to be officially recognized as ‘The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America’ with the Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch as ex officio the president of the Synod and with each national jurisdiction represented on the Synod by one Bishop.” Surrency, 67.

³⁴⁹ “The two architects of the autocephaly of the American Church were Metropolitan Nikodim from side of the Russian Orthodox Church and Father Alexander Schmemmann from the side of the Orthodox Church in America. Poyarkov, Juvenaly, *A Man of the Church*, (Moscow: Raritet, 1999), 177. («Двумя архитекторами автокефалии Американской Церкви были митрополит Никодим со стороны Русской Православной Церкви и отец Александр Шмеман со стороны Православной Церкви в Америке.» Ювеналий Поярков, *Человек Церкви*, (Москва, изд. Раритет, 1999), 177.)

³⁵⁰ For a useful history of SCOBA between 1960 and 1970 see Surrency, 61-77.

³⁵¹ SCOBA, “Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops, New York, (May 19th, 1970), 9-17. Accessed at the Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³⁵² Fitzgerald, 99.

SCOBA's attempt to organize itself as a proper Synod and request the recognition of the Church of Constantinople, as well as the Metropolia's unilateral overtures to Constantinople for recognition, both alarmed Moscow, which did not want to "lose" the Metropolia - and influence in America - to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.³⁵³ It was this movement by SCOBA and the Metropolia towards Constantinople, as well as Moscow's own problems with its North American Exarchate, that caused Moscow to reverse course vis-à-vis the Metropolia.

The Moscow Patriarchate refused reconciliation with the North American Metropolia on her own terms [i.e. according to the terms of the Metropolia] for a long time. By the late 1960s, the situation had changed. In Moscow they began to fear that the North American Metropolis would proceed to draw closer to Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. Under these conditions the Moscow church authorities made concessions to the North American Metropolia. Besides this, after the Khrushchev anti-church reforms it was not advantageous for the Moscow Patriarchate to maintain their American parishes. The leadership of the Russian Church considered that the transfer of these parishes to the American Church would solve many problems, including financial problems.³⁵⁴

³⁵³ "In 1968 the Greeks took an official resolution for the unification of Orthodoxy in America under one autonomous Synod, which would be under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. In September of 1968 this was reported to a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate by the Archpriest John Meyendorff. A convention of the Greek Archdiocese (in Athens) – he wrote – had passed an official resolution in favour of the unification of American Orthodoxy under an autonomous Synod within the jurisdiction of the C[onstantinopolitan] P[atriarchate]. They are flirting with us, and . . . we cannot resist them, because besides them we have no friends. Similar information was reported to Metropolitan Nikodim, who stated that Constantinople planned to unite all the structures found in America into one All-American Church. This information forced the Moscow Patriarchate to urgently resolve the American issue." Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 98. ("В 1968 г. Греки приняли официальную резолюцию за объединение православия в Америке под единым автономным Синодом, который будет подчинен Константинополю. В сентябре 1968 г. об этом сообщил представителю Московской Патриархии протоиерей Иоанн Мейендорф. Конвенция греческой архиепископии (в Афинах), — писал он, — приняла официальную резолюцию в пользу объединения Американского Православия под автономным Синодом, находящимся в К[онстантино]П[ольск]ой юрисдикции. Они с нами заигрывают, и <...> нам невозможно им давать отпор, пока, кроме них, у нас нет друзей. Подобная информация была и у митрополита Никодима, который констатировал, что Константинополь планирует объединить все структуры, находящиеся в Америке, в единую Всеамериканскую Церковь. Эта информация заставила Московскую Патриархию срочно решать американский вопрос." Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке," 98).

³⁵⁴ Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 93. ("Московская Патриархия долгое время отказывалась от примирения с Североамериканской митрополией на ее условиях. В конце 1960-х гг. ситуация изменилась. В Москве стали опасаться, что Североамериканская митрополия пойдет на сближение с Вселенским Патриархом Афинагором. В этих условиях московская церковная власть пошла на уступки Североамериканской митрополии. Кроме того, после хрущевских антицерковных реформ Московскому

The Moscow Patriarchate had experienced increased state pressure since the accession of the Khrushchev regime, which negatively affected its life both within and outside of the Soviet Union.³⁵⁵ For the Moscow Patriarchate their American parishes were a burden in several ways: politically, anti-Soviet activity and statements by members of the Metropolia³⁵⁶ (which claimed to be an integral part of the Russian Church) could not help but elicit a negative response from the Soviet authorities; economically, the Patriarchate did not have the resources to support their overseas parishes; and finally in terms of ecumenical or external church relations, the low educational and spiritual level of the Russian diasporal clergy resulted in a poor reputation for the Moscow Patriarchate on the part of other Christian and non-Christian bodies.³⁵⁷

Патриархату было невыгодно содержать свои американские приходы. Руководство Русской Церкви считало, что передача этих приходов в Американскую Церковь решит многие проблемы, в том числе и финансовые.” Кострюков, “Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке,” 93).

³⁵⁵ “The administration of N.S. Khrushchev dealt a strong blow to the Russian Church. The number of parishes of the Russian Church was reduced by half, and anti-church reforms seriously exacerbated the Moscow Patriarchate’s financial position. There was no way to help their foreign parishes, which eked out a miserable existence.” Kostriukov, “The Granting of Autocephaly,” 99. (“Сильный удар по Русской Церкви нанесло правление Н. С. Хрущева. Количество приходов Русской Церкви уменьшилось вдвое, а антицерковные реформы серьезно ухудшили и финансовое положение Московской Патриархии. Не было возможности оказывать помощь своим зарубежным приходам, которые владели нищенское существование.” Кострюков, “Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке,” 99). For a detailed picture of what the Church endured under the Khrushchev regime see chapter 10, “New Trials: Khrushchev’s Attack on the Church,” in Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, 2:327-363.

³⁵⁶ As just a small example of such anti-communist statements, see *Orthodox Church*, November 1969, no. 11, “Voices from Russia” (protest against the arrest of the church author A.E. Krasnova-Levetin) 169-170 or December 1969, no. 12: “From the book of Archpriest D. Konstaninov *The Persecuted Church*” (where he discusses the fate and reality of the Orthodox church in the USSR) 190-192. For an earlier example of very pointed anti-communist prose see the September, 1947 issue of the *Russian American Orthodox Messenger* (Русско-Американский Православный Вѣстник, in Russian), pages 136-137, where, in a short article describing the relationship between communism and atheism, besides “being wary of spies” and circulating atheistic literature far and wide, the final point reads “If you are not a convinced atheist you cannot be a good communist and a faithful Soviet citizen. Atheism is irrevocably tied to communism. These two ideas are the foundation of Soviet power.”

³⁵⁷ “The situation was complicated by a personnel crisis. The Moscow Patriarchate trusted neither Orthodox Americans nor Russian emigrants. And therefore there was no one to choose for leadership positions in the Exarchate. Metropolitan Nikodim [Rotov, head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate 1959-1972] noted the extremely low educational level of the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate in America, in stark contrast to Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy. The only educated priest, according to Metropolitan Nikodim, had a tarnished reputation of a moral and canonical nature. According to Metropolitan

Already in 1958 there had been talk of disbanding Moscow's North American Exarchate and transferring its parishes to the Metropolia.³⁵⁸ Given the resources available, the political expectations placed upon the Church by the Soviet leadership, the fact that the North American parishes were a "burden" upon the Patriarchate³⁵⁹ and the poor reputation of the exarchate clergy,³⁶⁰ it is not surprising that Metropolitan Nikodim could regard the abolition of the exarchate as a win-win situation for both Moscow and the Metropolia.

Nikodim, the level of Moscow's clergy in America was so low that only the level of the 'self-consecrated' Lipkivskyite clergy was lower [The Archpriest Basil Lypkivsky was consecrated in 1921 in Kyiv, Ukraine, at the Sobor of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which had broken ties with the Moscow Patriarchate. The episcopal consecration was performed by priests and laity, rather than by other Bishops, which was a grave contravention of canonical norms. A more damning condemnation coming from the lips of a Russian Orthodox hierarch can hardly be imagined]. According to the head of the DECR, the clergy of the exarchate were extremely ineffective, and the funds received by the patriarchal parishes from Moscow did not bring benefit." Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 99. ("Ситуация осложнялась кадровым кризисом. Московской Патриархии не доверяли ни православные американцы, ни русские эмигранты. А потому возможности выбрать ставленников у руководства Экзархата просто не было. Митрополит Никодим отмечал крайне низкий образовательный уровень духовенства Московской Патриархии в Америке, резко контрастировавшего с римо-католическим и протестантским клиром. Единственный образованный священнослужитель, по словам митрополита Никодима, имел подмоченную репутацию морального и канонического характера. Уровень московского духовенства в Америке, по оценке митрополита Никодима, был столь низким, что ниже были только украинские самосвяты-липковцы. По мнению главы ОВЦС, духовенство Экзархата действовало крайне неэффективно, а средства, поступающие патриархийным приходам из Москвы, не приносили пользы." Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке," 99).

³⁵⁸ "According to Archpriest Stefan Lyashevsky (at that time clergyman of the Moscow Exarchate in America), already in 1958 the Moscow Patriarchate began planning for the abolition of the Exarchate. In 1963 a decision was taken to have these communities finance themselves, which caused great discontent among the parishioners and was implemented with great difficulty. The Patriarchal Exarch of America, Metropolitan John (Wendland), advocated for the release by the Moscow Patriarchate of these parishes and their transfer to the American Church, which would receive legal status." Kostriukov. "The Granting of Autocephaly," 99. ("По свидетельству протоиерея Стефана Ляшевского (в то время клирика московского Экзархата в Америке), курс на упразднение Экзархата Московская Патриархия взяла еще в 1958 г. В 1963 г. было принято решение финансировать эти приходы за счет общин, что вызвало большое недовольство прихожан и проходило с большим трудом. Патриарший экзарх Америки митрополит Иоанн (Вендланд) высказывался за избавление Московской Патриархии от американских приходов путем их передачи Американской Церкви, которая получит законный статус." Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке," 99).

³⁵⁹ Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 98. (Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке," 98).

³⁶⁰ This was one of the concerns of the Metropolia during the preliminary negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate. "Archpriest I. Skvir noted that among the clergy of the exarchate are many "scandalmongers," who are unacceptable for our faithful people in view of outrages they committed in the past". ("Прот. И. Сквир заметил, что среди духовенства Экзархата много «скандалистов», которые неприемлемы для нашего верующего народа ввиду их прошлых безобразий"). "Отчет о встрече специальной комиссии Митрополии с митрополитом Никодимом 21 января 1968 (*sic*) года в его комнате в отеле «Нью-Йоркер»." (Report on the

The head of the DECR believed that there was no reason for the continued existence of the Exarchate. For relations with the UN and for ecumenical contacts a representational presence at the St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York, where a sufficient number of clergy could be accommodated, would suffice. This legation would not be troubled by petty parish concerns, and so would be able to concentrate on political issues. “The abolition of the Exarchate will not only not reduce our activity in the USA, but, on the contrary, may increase it.”³⁶¹

An added incentive for Moscow to regularize its relationship with the Metropolia was the recognition that the latter would never place itself under Moscow’s jurisdiction, and that it would eventually achieve canonical recognition – if not from Moscow, then from Constantinople. By granting autocephaly to the Metropolia the Moscow Patriarchate could make the Autocephalous Church its partner and retain some influence upon it.³⁶²

meeting between the special committee of the Metropolia with Metropolitan Nikodim on January 21st 1968 (*sic*) [The meeting actually took place in 1969, as noted on page 2 of the report] in his room at the ‘New Yorker’ hotel’). (21 January 1969). Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³⁶¹ Kostriukov, “The Granting of Autocephaly,” 100. (“Глава ОВЦС считал, что в дальнейшем существовании Экзархата нет смысла. Для связей с ООН и для экуменических контактов достаточно иметь представительство в Нью-Йорке при Никольском соборе, где можно держать какое угодно количество клириков. Это представительство не будет загружено мелочными приходскими заботами, зато сможет сосредоточиться на вопросах политических. «Упразднение Экзархата не только не снизит нашу активность в США, но, наоборот, может ее повысить», — писал митрополит.” Кострюков, “Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке,” 100).

³⁶² “In Moscow they looked at the situation realistically and were obliged to admit that the North American Metropolia had left the jurisdiction of the Russian Church for good. There was no longer any hope of controlling American Orthodoxy. In addition to this it was understood that the North American Metropolia would in any case receive canonical status – if not from Moscow, then from Constantinople. This latter option did not suit Moscow at all. The reception of this status from the Greeks (for example, in the form of an autonomous metropolia along the lines of the Western European exarchate) would drive the American Church farther away from Moscow and would mean that the chance to influence the new autonomous Church would be lost. Conversely, the granting of autocephaly by the Moscow Patriarchate could make the American Church an ally, with the possibility of some influence upon her.” Kostriukov, “The Granting of Autocephaly,” 100. (“В Москве реально взглянули на ситуацию и были вынуждены признать, что Североамериканская митрополия ушла из ведения Русской Церкви навсегда. Надежды контролировать американское православие больше не было. При этом было понятно, что Североамериканская митрополия все равно получит канонический статус — если не от Москвы, то от Константинополя. Последний вариант Москву совершенно не устраивал. Получение этого статуса от греков (например, в качестве автономной митрополии наподобие Западноевропейского экзархата) отдалило бы Американскую Церковь от Москвы еще больше и означало бы, что шанс влиять на новую автономную Церковь будет потерян. Наоборот, предоставление автокефалии Московским Патриархатом могло сделать Американскую Церковь союзницей с возможностью некоторого влияния на нее.” Кострюков, “Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке,” 100).

Although the Moscow Patriarchate officially regarded the Metropolia as a schismatic body until April of 1970,³⁶³ the practical situation for the Patriarchate made it possible if not necessary for Moscow to negotiate with the Metropolia. It was this practical situation, encompassing all the factors identified above, which allowed Fr. Alexander Schmemmann during the negotiations to respond to Metropolitan Nikodim's³⁶⁴ proposal of autonomy directly and firmly with the words "'we expect more,' that is, autocephaly."³⁶⁵

³⁶³ "In the 1950's and 1960's the Moscow Patriarchate regarded the North American Metropolia as a schismatic body, and so the behavior of the representatives of the Patriarchate was sometimes extremely undiplomatic. There is testimony that the head of the DECR, Archbishop Nikodim (Rotov) told Metropolitan Leonty (Turkevich) of the Metropolia in 1961 that he considered it to be a schismatic structure. The situation did not change after the election in 1965 of the next primate of the Metropolia – Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish)." Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 95. ("В 1950–1960-х гг. Московская Патриархия отзывалась о Североамериканской митрополии как о расколе, причем поведение представителей Патриархии было иногда крайне недипломатичным. Сохранилось свидетельство, что глава ОВЦС архиепископ Никодим (Ротов) в 1961 г. прямо сказал главе митрополии митрополиту Леонтию (Туркевичу), что считает его структуру раскольничьей. Не изменилась ситуация и после избрания в 1965 г. следующего главы митрополии — митрополита Ириней (Бекиша)." Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке," 95). In January of 1970 Archbishop Jonathan (Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in North America) in his letter to the clergy and faithful of the Exarchate, notes that the Metropolia is "presently in schism." Archbishop Jonathan, Patriarchal Exarch, "Letter to the Clergy, Church Committees and Faithful of the Patriarchal Exarchate," (2 January 1970), 1. Accessed in the Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³⁶⁴ As noted earlier, Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) was the chairman of the Department of External Affairs for the Patriarchate of Moscow, and with Fr. Alexander Schmemmann is regarded as one of the architects of the autocephaly of the Metropolia/OCA.

³⁶⁵ "During the 1960s the American clergy sought to establish relations with the Moscow Patriarchate, but in vain. This was largely due to the fact that autonomy within the Russian Church wasn't acceptable for Orthodox Americans. During a meeting with the head of the DECR of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), the representative of the North American Metropolitan Archbishop Alexander Schmemmann directly and firmly said: 'We are counting on more,' that is, on autocephaly. (*Chelovek Tserkvy*, 179). Neither did Metropolitan Ireney hide the desire for autocephaly. On January 3, 1968, he wrote to Patriarch Alexei I that the return of the American Church to the subordination of the Moscow Patriarchate is impossible. The main reason given by the metropolitan was that the social system in Russia was very different from the American social system. According to the hierarch, the Communists are not trusted in America, and therefore the American Church will never have the trust of the American people if it is subordinated to Moscow. . . According to the canons, each region should have its own hierarchy, and subordination to an 'overseas' hierarchy (in the given instance the Moscow Patriarchate) will cast a shadow on the American Church as 'alien' to the [American] people and state. Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 95-96. ("В 1960-е гг. американское духовенство попыталось наладить отношения с Московской Патриархией, но тщетно. Во многом это было связано с тем, что автономия в рамках Русской Церкви православных американцев не устраивала — во время встречи с главой ОВЦС Московского Патриархата митрополитом Никодимом (Ротовым) представитель Североамериканской митрополии протоиерей Александр Шмемман прямо и твердо сказал: «Мы рассчитываем на большее», то есть на автокефалию (Человек Церкви 179). Не скрывал стремления к автокефалии и митрополит Ириней. 3 января 1968 г. он писал Патриарху Алексию I, что возвращение Американской Церкви в подчинение Московской Патриархии невозможно. Главной причиной митрополит называл социальный строй в России, резко

In January of 1969 representatives of the Metropolia met unofficially with Metropolitan Nikodim in the New Yorker Hotel, where the groundwork was laid for official discussions about an agreement between the two bodies regarding autocephaly for the Metropolia.³⁶⁶ Two weeks later, at a meeting in Syosset on February 3rd, the initial draft of an agreement between the Metropolia and the Patriarchate was approved.³⁶⁷ Subsequently, at the first official meeting between the Metropolia and the Patriarchate on August 24th and 25th of 1969 a preliminary agreement was reached, including the following points: “1) On the canonical requirements of the proposed autocephaly; 2) On maintaining the canonical dependence of some parishes upon the Moscow Patriarchal throne after the proclamation of autocephaly and of Orthodoxy in Japan; 3) On the order and procedure for the proclamation of autocephaly; and 4) About the communication of this to the other Orthodox autocephalous Churches.”³⁶⁸ The agreement was

отличающийся от американского. По словам иерарха, коммунистам в Америке не доверяют, а потому никогда не будут доверять и Американской Церкви, если она подчинится Москве. . . По канонам, в каждой области должно быть свое священноначалие, а подчинение священноначалию «за морем» (в данном случае Московской Патриархии) бросит на Американскую Церковь тень, как на «чужую» для народа и государства.” Кострюков, “Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке,” 95-96).

³⁶⁶ Report on the meeting between the special committee of the Metropolia with Metropolitan Nikodim on January 21st 1968 (*sic*) [The meeting took place in 1969, as noted on page 2 of the report] in his room at the ‘New Yorker’ hotel.” (21 January 1969). (“Отчет о встрече специальной комиссии Митрополии с митрополитом Никодимом 21 января 1968 (*sic*) года в его комнате в отеле «Нью-Йоркер”). Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³⁶⁷ “Minutes of the consultation of the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church of America (the Metropolia) on the approval of the ‘Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.’” (3 February 1969). (“Протокол, совещания предславителей Московского Патриархата и Русской Православной Греко-Кафолической Церкви Америки/Митрополии/ по вопросу об утверждении ‘Автокефальной Православной Церкви в Америке’”). Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³⁶⁸ “The Agreement between the delegations of the Moscow Patriarchate and the North-American Metropolia reached at the official meeting on August 24-25 1969 in Geneva on the formation of the Autocephalous Orthodox American Church.” (August 26th, 1969), (“Соглашение между делегациями Московского Патриархата и Северо-Американской Митрополии, достигнутое на официальной встрече 24-25 августа 1969 года в Женеве, по вопросу образования Автокефальной Православной Американской Церкви”). Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY. The reference to Japan in point 2 is a result of the Orthodox Church in Japan coming under the jurisdiction of the Metropolia following WWII. See p. 88n316. As an aside, it is interesting to note that one of the members of the Moscow delegation was the newly-ordained Hieromonk Kirill Gundyayev, the current Patriarch of Moscow.

approved by the greater synod of the Metropolia on September 17th and by the Moscow Synod on November 17th, and the outstanding issues, i.e., the status of Moscow's Exarchate parishes and the Church in Japan following the proclamation of autocephaly, were resolved at a meeting in Tokyo on November 28th 1969.³⁶⁹ The upcoming proclamation of autocephaly was publicly announced in February of 1970.³⁷⁰

By the late 1960's the Metropolia possessed a viable diocesan and metropolitan structure, it was recognized as a legitimate Orthodox Church by virtue of its membership in SCOBA and the concelebration of its hierarchs with the hierarchs of other Orthodox Churches.³⁷¹ Moscow in turn had done everything possible to prevent the official recognition of the canonicity of the Metropolia, which was still under the "black cloud" of Moscow's suspensions and ecclesiastical sanctions. In the context of the cold war the Metropolia, as an American Church with historical ties to Russia, could not help feeling politically, culturally, and ecclesiastically besieged, and there was little hope of obtaining canonical recognition or achieving Orthodox unity under the aegis of SCOBA.

At the same time the Moscow Patriarchate realized that the Metropolia was never going to submit to its jurisdiction, and it was not in Moscow's interests to have the Metropolia enter the orbit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. There was no way for the Moscow Patriarchate to maintain

³⁶⁹ "The Agreement between the delegations of the Moscow Patriarchate and the North-American Metropolia reached at the second official meeting on November 28th 1969 in Tokyo on the formation of the Autocephalous Orthodox American Church." (November 29th, 1969). ("Соглашение между делегациями Московского Патриархата и Северо-Американской Митрополии, достигнутое на второй официальной встрече 28 ноября 1969 года в Токио, по вопросу образования Автокефальной Православной Американской Церкви"). Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

³⁷⁰ "Russian Orthodox Church Gives Independence to Branch in US." *New York Times*, February 7th, 1970; "Orthodox Merger Eased by Russians." *Washington Post*, February 7th, 1970.

³⁷¹ Bishop Mark and Bishop Silas of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, for example, concelebrated at the consecration of Bishop (later Metropolitan) Theodosius (Lazor) of the Metropolia on May 6th, 1967, at the Metropolia Cathedral in New York City, which precipitated a "vigorous protest" on the part of Patriarch Alexei of Moscow to Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople. Surrency, 81.

a direct relationship with the Metropolia without the potential of retaliation from the Soviet authorities for the anti-communist activities of the Metropolia's clergy and faithful, and the Exarchate parishes in North America were admittedly a useless burden for the Patriarchate.

The easiest resolution to all these problems for both sides seemed to be autocephaly. . . of a sort. If autocephaly was to be declared, what would it look like? How would this concept be understood by Moscow? By the Metropolia? By Constantinople?

VIII. Conclusion I. The Reception of the Tomos.

The reception, as well as the denial, of the OCA's autocephaly by the wider Orthodox Church remains an unresolved problem till today. The reasons are both internal and external to the Metropolia/OCA and the text of the Tomos itself. Externally, the process and manner of the proclamation of autocephaly were highly controverted, while the Tomos itself is plagued by internal contradictions. While claiming that the goal was "the normalization of relations among the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions in America"³⁷² and in order to "suppress scandalous ecclesiastical divisions,"³⁷³ autocephaly was granted to only one jurisdiction among many on the North American Continent.³⁷⁴ Further, the Tomos legislates the formation of a parallel exarchate (i.e. "Patriarchal" parishes)³⁷⁵ on the territory of the new autocephalous Church, which is clearly not "in accordance with the divine and sacred Canons and the ecclesiastical practices and customs of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church inherited from the Fathers," as claimed in the Tomos.³⁷⁶ Politically, the bestowal of autocephaly upon the Metropolia can easily be seen as another attempt by the Moscow Patriarchate to press its pretensions for primatial (or at least equal) privileges within the commonwealth of Orthodox Churches over and against those of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as it had with Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Autocephaly resolved the old problem of the Metropolia's relationship to the Russian Orthodox church, but it created a new problem. Constantinople, together

³⁷² Tomos, introduction, paragraph 2.

³⁷³ Tomos, introduction, paragraph 3.

³⁷⁴ Tomos, article 1.

³⁷⁵ Tomos, article 3, as well as article 5 of the agreement. For a discussion of the canonical problem of multiple bishops administering the same territory see p. 20n62 in reference to canon 8 of the 1st Ecumenical Council.

³⁷⁶ Tomos, introduction, paragraph 3.

with the other Greek-led churches (Alexandria, Jerusalem, Cyprus and Greece), refused to recognize the Metropolia's new status and name. They argued that only a pan-Orthodox council of ecumenical standing or the patriarch of Constantinople, acting as "first among equals," could establish a new autocephalous church. Moscow's unilateral actions in America therefore were illegitimate . . . The Russian proclamation of the OCA's autocephaly touched off a storm of controversy in the Orthodox world that still has not completely subsided. . .³⁷⁷

This "storm of controversy" erupted almost immediately within the conference of American Orthodox bishops,³⁷⁸ and taking into account all points of view it is easy to understand how a crisis ensued. Schmemmann asserts that the result was a polarization of positions within SCOBA between what he calls the "Constantinopolitan Block" (*sic*) over and opposed to the representatives of the OCA and the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Antiochian dioceses.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America: A Short History*, 97.

³⁷⁸ The minutes of the Special Meeting of SCOBA held on May 19th 1970 reflect the confusion and uncertainty of what the OCA's autocephaly meant for SCOBA in particular and American Orthodoxy in particular. At one point there were three different seconded motions on the floor (pp. 11 – 16), with the following agenda items eliciting particular confusion or uncertainty: The announcement of the proclamation of the OCA's autocephaly; Bishop Kiprian's letter which stated that the OCA would in the future be represented by the Chairman of the OCA's external affairs department, rather than the primate (p.7); The study and planning commission report on the proposal which had been prepared for an American Synod composed of the primates/hierarchs of the existent jurisdictions, with the jurisdictions retaining internal autonomy but putting canonical matters, external affairs, the election of the primate, etc. within the competency of the Synod; and the status of this proposal following the proclamation of autocephaly (p. 9-10). A resolution proposed by Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) stating "Whereas this unilateral decision by the Patriarchate of Moscow in regard to the Russian Metropolia will not administratively unite all national Orthodox jurisdictions in North America" (p. 10) clearly underlined the fact that one of the stated goals of the Tomos of autocephaly, i.e., unity, had not been met, nor was even on the horizon. Bishop Victorin [the Bishop of the North American Romanian Orthodox diocese within the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Romania] protested the "uncanonical" reception of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America into the Metropolia in 1960, stating that "before any recognition or establishment of Canonical relationship of the Metropolia with the other Orthodox jurisdictions in America is made, we should exclude any precedence or further non-canonical interference in the internal affairs of the other Canonical Orthodox jurisdictions in America." He goes on to say that the Metropolia "should release the Romanian parishes from its jurisdiction" (pp. 17-21), clearly emphasizing the uncomfortable relationship between certain of the component dioceses of SCOBA. SCOBA, "Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops," May 19th, 1970. OCA Archives, Syosset, NY. See also Surrency, 74-76.

³⁷⁹ Schmemmann, "A Crisis Avoided, a Polarization Revealed," *Orthodox Church*, December 1971.

The roots of this crisis lie in the historical and canonical privileges accorded to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and in the political pretensions of the Patriarchate of Moscow.³⁸⁰ Two arguments form the basis of Moscow's "right" to proclaim the OCA autocephalous: first, the contention that because the Russian Orthodox Church had sent missionaries to North America before any other Orthodox Church it had exclusive jurisdiction over all the Orthodox in the new world, and second, Moscow's interpretation of the canonical legislation referencing extra-territorial jurisdiction for autocephalous or local churches.

Though the basis of the first contention, that whereas

'The Russian branch of the Orthodox Catholic Church has the oldest and most numerous establishment of Orthodox Catholic faithful and churches in America and by reasons of its first evangelization of American natives and its century of sole Orthodox Mission Hierarchy in America, it is canonically responsible for the care and development of, as well as authority over, Orthodoxy in America.'³⁸¹

is at best highly dubious,³⁸² these arguments were used by both the OCA,³⁸³ as well as the Moscow Patriarchate both in the lead-up to, as well as the aftermath of, the bestowal of

³⁸⁰ For an examination of this crisis from the standpoint of the OCA/Moscow Patriarchate see Alexander Schmemmann, "A Meaningful Storm;" from the standpoint of the Greek Archdiocese/Patriarchate of Constantinople see *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 9 – 28.

³⁸¹ Surrency, 34 (quoting from the statement of the council of Bishops of the Metropolia prior to the founding of the HEOCACNA in 1927).

³⁸² For a thorough historico-canonical argument against this supposed "principle of prior historical presence" see the response of the Church of Greece in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 22.

³⁸³ "It is beyond any question that Orthodoxy was planted in America at the end of the 18th century by the Church of Russia. Following a Mission, the first diocese of the Russian Church on the American continent was established in Alaska in 1848 to be later moved, first, to San Francisco and, in 1906, to New York City. The territory of that Diocese covered the entire North American continent (Alaska, United States, Canada) and until 1922 its jurisdiction included Orthodox faithful of all ethnical backgrounds . . . In canonical terms it means that the Russian Church established its jurisdiction in America and, conversely, that the entire American territory was in the jurisdiction of the Russian Church." Schmemmann, "Report on the preliminary negotiations concerning the establishment in America of the Autocephalous Church," paragraph 1a. See also Meyendorff, *Vision of Unity*, 40: [The] "Church of Russia . . . was the first to establish a canonical diocese here in 1870 and which thus became the Mother Church of American Orthodoxy. . ." Examples can easily be multiplied.

autocephaly. Regarding the latter, Metropolitan Nikodim’s statement at his meeting with the Metropolia representatives in Tokyo in November of 1969 is characteristic:

1. The Holy Orthodox Church considers and has always considered her canonical unity to be based upon the firm principle of the unity of the hierarchy and the unity of the local structure. In every place, all believers make up a single church body, headed by a single hierarchy, and through it they are united with the Universal Church.
2. In North America [this unity] was manifested from the very beginning by the Russian Church, which brought to America the light of Orthodoxy and until 1922 united all the Orthodox of America under its hierarchy.
3. The Russian Church could not and cannot repudiate its canonical rights arising from this, for this would be a violation of the universal church tradition.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ “The Agreement between the delegations of the Moscow Patriarchate and the North-American Metropolia reached at the second official meeting on November 28th 1969 in Tokyo on the formation of the Autocephalous Orthodox American Church.” November 29th, 1969. Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY. (1. “Св. Православная Церковь всегда мыслила и мыслит свое каноническое единство, как основанное на твердом принципе единства священноначалия и единства поместного устройства. Во всяком месте все верующие составляют единое церковное тело, возглавляемое единым священноначалием, и через него они соединены с Церковью Вселенской.” 2. В Северной Америке с самого начала единство это осуществлено было Русской Церковью, принесшей в Америку свет Православия и об’единявшей до 1922 года под своим священноначалием всех православный Америки.” 3. “От своих вытекающих из этого канонических прав Русская Церковь не могла и не может отказаться, ибо это означало бы нарушение Вселенского церковного предания.” “Соглашение между делегациями Московского Патриархата и Северо-Американской Митрополии, достигнутое на второй официальной встрече 28 ноября 1969 года в Токио, по вопросу образования Автокефальной Православной Американской Церкви”). Metropolitan Nikodim expressed the same conviction that the Russian Church had every right to proclaim the Metropolia autocephalous based upon its first having brought Orthodoxy to the new world at the January 21st and February 3rd meetings with the Metropolia representatives, as indicated in the minutes of the respective meetings. As to the canonical basis for such a claim, Stokoe is the only author who actually references canons: “Following the provisions of the Council of Carthage (AD 419), . . . responsibility for Orthodox communities in a new land is given to that Orthodox Church which initiates missionary work in it. . .” Stokoe, 23. While Stokoe’s courage in striving to support this position is admirable, a perusal of the canons of the Council of Carthage does not reveal any legislation which would support the contention that the first Church to evangelize a particular territory outside the realm of an autocephalous Church *ipso facto* has “squatter’s rights” for laying a claim to the given territory and any subsequent Orthodox Church which might appear there: “In the year 418-19, all canons formerly made in sixteen councils held at Carthage, one at Milevis, one at Hippo, that were approved of, were read, and received a new sanction from a great number of bishops, then met in synod at Carthage.” New Advent, “Council of Carthage,” <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3816.htm>. Accessed on May 13th 2020. Of the 138 canons included in this compilation, the closest one comes to finding a canon which supports this claim is canon 98 (Greek cii): “It seemed good that such peoples as had never had bishops of their own should in no way receive such unless it had been decreed in a plenary council of each province and by the primates, and with the consent of the bishop of that diocese to which the church belonged.” The canon clearly references territory which was *within* the territory of that diocese or province. If such a principle actually did exist the Moscow Patriarchate would have violated it by demanding and receiving the territory of the Czechoslovakian Church from Serbia (cf. pages 39-41 above). Perhaps the fact that no one else attempts to support this “canonical right” by actually quoting any canons simply reflects the fact that no such canons exist.

The claim by the Patriarchate of Moscow that North America was its “canonical territory” led to a fear on the part of the other North American dioceses that the OCA, following the transfer of Moscow’s “canonical rights” to her, would attempt to draw parishes and faithful away from or assert its authority over the other American Orthodox Churches.³⁸⁵ Although the OCA resolutely and consistently denied this allegation,³⁸⁶ it endured and has continued to be promoted in certain circles,³⁸⁷ contributing to polarization rather than conciliation.

Ultimately the cardinal question of the conflict was “who has the responsibility for organizing a Church outside of the ‘canonical territory’ of an autocephalous Church?” By far the most important and significant argument in favour of Moscow’s right to proclaim the Church in North America autocephalous is based upon its own interpretation of canon 3 of the second ecumenical council, canon 8 of the third, and especially canon 28 of the fourth ecumenical

³⁸⁵ “By calling on other jurisdictions to sever themselves from their mother Churches and adhere to the newly called Orthodox Church in America, they took liberties that are not theirs, in fact, they invaded Churches and incited insurrection against one’s established order.” Nicon D. Patrinos, “Prologomena” in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 22. “This canonical debate [about the autocephaly of the OCA] shields a more subtle fear, shared among most jurisdictions, that the establishment of the American-based, English-speaking, missionary, multi-ethnic OCA represents a catalyst for the creation of an eventual ‘American Orthodox Church’ that would, over time, increasingly draw parishioners away from the ethnic churches. For the patriarchates abroad, the creation of an American church threatened to weaken cultural ties to the ethnic homelands, as well as diminish much-needed financial support. As such, the OCA was seen by many in North America and abroad as a challenge to the very existence of the ethnic churches.” Stokoe 100-101.

³⁸⁶ See, for example, “To All Orthodox Christians in America,” *Orthodox Church*, November 1970, and the letter of Archbishop Kiprian, found on page 7 of the minutes of the May 19th, 1970 SCOBA meeting.

³⁸⁷ “As the first, authentic Orthodox presence in North America, the Metropolia *had the right to demand the subjection of all other ethnic jurisdictions.*” Michalopoulos and Ham, *The American Orthodox Church: a History of its Beginnings*, 148 (emphasis my own). This book is in general very polemical, and the research behind it can only be described as spotty. The authors, for example, claim on page 123 that the bishops of the ethnic dioceses of the OCA are the ruling bishops of regional dioceses but that the bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate only serve their own ethnic group, whereas in fact, while all these bishops serve “ethnic” dioceses, the bishops of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese have clearly delineated territorial boundaries while the OCA bishops do not. The authors claim that the “archdiocesan seat” of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA is in Pittsburgh (page 134) and that the services of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada are conducted “completely in Slavonic,” (page 135), presenting as “facts” claims whose inaccuracy, with a minimum of research, could easily be proven. Given such haphazard scholarship one wonders how much of this text is worthy of credence.

council, which Constantinople interpreted as giving itself, i.e., the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the exclusive privilege of founding and organizing Churches in territories which lie outside the territory of other autocephalous Churches.³⁸⁸

Though the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR held diametrically opposed positions regarding each other's ecclesiastical legitimacy, it was from the ranks of the ROCOR that Moscow recruited its most ardent ideologue in its canonical struggle against the Ecumenical Patriarchate – Sergii Troitskii.³⁸⁹ Troitskii sought, on canonical grounds, to discredit or diminish

³⁸⁸ For the three canons mentioned, see Tanner Vol. I, pp. 32, 68, and 99-100; Tanner p. 68 identifies canon 8 of Ephesus as “Decree.” See also New Advent, “Council of Chalcedon.” Canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council reads as follows: “Following in all things the decisions of the holy Fathers, and acknowledging the canon, which has been just read, of the One Hundred and Fifty Bishops beloved-of-God (who assembled in the imperial city of Constantinople, which is New Rome, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius of happy memory), we also do enact and decree the same things concerning the privileges of the most holy Church of Constantinople, which is New Rome. For the Fathers rightly granted privileges to the throne of old Rome, because it was the royal city. And the One Hundred and Fifty most religious Bishops, actuated by the same consideration, gave equal privileges (ἴσα πρεσβεία) to the most holy throne of New Rome, justly judging that the city which is honoured with the Sovereignty and the Senate, and enjoys equal privileges with the old imperial Rome, should in ecclesiastical matters also be magnified as she is, and rank next after her; so that, in the Pontic, the Asian, and the Thracian dioceses, the metropolitans only and such bishops also of the Dioceses aforesaid as are among the barbarians, should be ordained by the aforesaid most holy throne of the most holy Church of Constantinople; every metropolitan of the aforesaid dioceses, together with the bishops of his province, ordaining his own provincial bishops, as has been declared by the divine canons; but that, as has been above said, the metropolitans of the aforesaid Dioceses should be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, after the proper elections have been held according to custom and have been reported to him.” New Advent, “Council of Chalcedon,” <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3811.htm>, Accessed 20 May 2020. “The Ecumenical Patriarchate has, and continues to maintain, that canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council . . . grants it exclusive control over the diaspora. More specifically, canon 28 states that Constantinople will administer the ‘barbarian nations,’ that is, those which are outside of the ‘Ecumene’ of the Roman Empire. Using this canon in the present context of the New World, Constantinople has come to interpret it as having given its patriarchate the ability to control and administer any Orthodox jurisdictions outside the boundaries of the established jurisdictions of the current autocephalous Orthodox Churches, whose territoriality of jurisdiction is clearly described in the patriarchal tomes of their autocephaly. The patriarch of Moscow, however, blatantly disagreed. Moscow claimed that the ‘barbarian nations’ mentioned in the canon only refer to those ‘barbarians’ within the territory of the canonical jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarch, and not outside, as in the case of the diaspora. Instead, Moscow argues that each autocephalous Church has the right to establish a jurisdiction in a non-Orthodox territory if that particular Church was the first to establish a mission there.” Alexander Dragas. “The Autocephaly of the OCA: History, Arguments, and Aftermath.” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 61, no. 3-4 (2016): 169-70.

³⁸⁹ Troitskii (1878-1972) was a very prominent Russian canonist and canon law professor who taught in Russia and participated in the Moscow Council of 1917-18. Following the Bolshevik revolution he fled Russia and at first adhered to the Karlovci Synod, though he later transferred his allegiance to the Patriarchate of Moscow, teaching canon law in Paris, Belgrade and Moscow. He was an extremely prolific author, as well as a very ardent opponent of the extra-territorial rights of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. For an in-depth presentation on his life and work see Ириней Середний, «Профессор С.В. Троицкий; Его Жизнь и Труды в Области Канонического Права», *Богословские Труды* XII (1974): 217-247. (Ireney Serednyy, “Professor S.V. Troitskii; His Life and Work in the Area of Canon Law,” *Theological Works* XII (1974): 217-247).

Constantinople's leading position within Orthodoxy.³⁹⁰ Following World War II the Soviet authorities, at the behest of the Patriarchate of Moscow,³⁹¹ brought Troitskii to Russia from Serbia specifically to prove, on the basis of canon law, that Constantinople did not have any canonical "rights" over the diaspora.³⁹² Though in the given instance his arguments were directed against Constantinople's right to have declared the churches of Estonia, Finland, and Czechoslovakia autonomous in 1923 and the Church of Poland autocephalous in 1924, and

³⁹⁰ "Such [canonical] arguments had been developed by the Karlovci Synod before World War II. They were advanced by its leading experts of canon law Yurii Grabbe, Sergii Troitskii, and Konstantin Nikolaev during the Second All-Abroad Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (1938). The council condemned the spread of Constantinople's jurisdiction over dioceses that had belonged to the prerevolutionary Russian Orthodox Church as well as the entire interwar policy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate regarding the Orthodox population in Eastern Europe. Especially strong was the criticism of K. Nikolaev, who introduced the term 'Greek papism.'" Kalkandjjeva 324. It is not out of the question that these arguments were developed as a reaction to the negative position taken by Constantinople vis-à-vis the canonicity of the Synod (see page 77 above).

³⁹¹ Kalkandjjeva, 316, 325, 340n42.

³⁹² "The famous Russian canonist Sergii Troitskii, . . . was highly valued by the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate . . . In November 1947, the Russian theologian published his study on 'The Limits of the Authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople over the 'Diaspora.'" According to it, the heads of the five ancient patriarchates were often exposed to the temptation of worldly powers and 'only conciliar consciousness, enlightened from above, can put an end to this alien spirit.' The first victim of this temptation was the Roman Church, which 'apostatized from the unity of the Ecumenical Church.' The Church of Constantinople was also inclined 'to put herself above the other autocephalous churches, converting the primacy in honor inherited from the Roman Church into the primacy of authority.' . . . He stated that the ecumenical status of the Patriarchate of Constantinople did not give him a primacy of authority but only of honor. On these grounds, this scholar rejected claims of any canonical right of the Patriarch of Constantinople to intervene in affairs that concerned territories and jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. According to Troitskii, the Ecumenical Patriarch had to limit his activities within the borders of contemporary Turkey. The Russian theologian also argued that the expansion of Constantinople's jurisdiction in the past had no canonical grounds, but was a result of 'favorable political events.' At the same time, Troitskii's plea omitted some important aspects of the issue of church jurisdiction. He did not touch the principle of church economy, which had been used by the Orthodox Church many times as a tool to compensate for the gaps between the distant time when the ecumenical councils codified the Orthodox canons and their modern applications. Neither did he discuss the question of who was to take care of those Orthodox communities that had lost their contact with the mother church, as had happened to parts of the Russian Orthodox Church after the Bolshevik revolution. Finally, he also kept silent about the godless nature of the Soviet regime and its disastrous effect on Russian diaspora." Kalkandjjeva, 325. There is reason to believe that Troitskii might have been under pressure from the Soviet authorities. Bernard le Caro notes that Archbishop Antony (Bartoshevich) of the ROCOR had studied under Professor Troitsky in Belgrade and had great respect for him. "After the war, this renowned expert of canon law [Troitsky] wrote books and articles directed against the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Archbishop Anthony averred that these texts were written out of fear of persecution by the communist regime and did not reflect the actual opinion of the author." Bernard le Caro, "A Brief Biography of Archbishop Anthony (Bartoshevich, +1993) of Geneva and Western Europe," http://www.synod.com/synod/engdocuments/enart_vlantonyzhenevsky.html. Accessed on May 15th 2020.

equally directed towards supporting the supposed “right” of Moscow to replace the throne of Constantinople as the “first among equals” within the Orthodox world,³⁹³ they applied equally well to the question of the Metropolia twenty years later, given Moscow’s claim that North America was its “canonical territory.”

Troitskii proposed four main arguments against Constantinople’s position, summarized by Dragas as:

1. *Autocephaly*: The notion that each local Church is autocephalous when its leaders, who are ordained by Christ, then ordain their successor Bishops. No local Church (i.e. Constantinople) can interfere in the affairs of another Church (i.e. Moscow) . . .
2. *Third Rome*: The 19th century concept that Moscow (Third Rome) and its tsar became the God-ordained protectors of Orthodoxy after Constantinople abdicated its position through its betrayal of Orthodoxy in the Synod of Florence and as a result was enslaved to the Turks.
3. *Greek Papism*: The notion that Constantinople still seeks to dominate all the independent Orthodox Churches in order to create an Orthodox Papacy. . .
4. *Primacy of Authority*. The theory that canon 3 ECII only gave Constantinople “*primacy of honor*” which Constantinople reinterpreted to mean “*primacy of authority*” over all the Orthodox Churches. In reality, they argued that Canon 28 ECIV, which repeated Canon 3 ECII on the “*primacy of honor*,” purposefully restricted the jurisdiction of Constantinople to the Churches of Asia, Pontus and Thrace.³⁹⁴

³⁹³ See chapter 9 of Kalkandjieva, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, telling entitled “Towards an Eighth Ecumenical Council.”

³⁹⁴ Alexander G. Dragas, “The Constantinople and Moscow Divide: Troitsky and Photiades on the Extra-Jurisdictional Rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,” *Θεολογία (Theologia)* 88, no. 4, October-December (2017): 139-140.

Troitskii's contentious article³⁹⁵ drew a response from Emmanuel Photiades of the Chalki School of Theology in Turkey,³⁹⁶ in which Photiades counters Troitskii's arguments on both canonical as well as historical grounds. Dragas, who characterizes Troitskii's arguments as "unfounded,"³⁹⁷ summarizes Photiades contravailing arguments as follows:

First, that the obviously reasonable concentration of both sides on the term *barbarian-Βαρβαρικά*, which is connected with the term *nations-ἔθνη* (Troitsky), or with the term *territories-μέρη-ἕδαφη* (Photiades), is not sufficient for a convincing support of the one or the other interpretation, i.e. based on the differentiation of "nations" or "territories". . .

Second, that the fundamental canonical principle of the territorial description of ecclesiastical jurisdictions was overlooked, but this defeats the hypothesis of Troitsky which integrates the bishops of barbarian "nations" into the territorial regions of Asia, Pontus and Thrace, even with the incorrect understanding of his purposeful interpretation of the Canons 9, 17 and 28 ECIV. . .

Third, that neither was the "primacy of honor" of the Patriarchate of Constantinople taken into account, although it was recognized by Canon 3 ECII (381) and provided the Archbishop of Constantinople with the canonical privilege of synodal activities beyond the limits of his own territory even before the acquisition of the broadest territorial jurisdiction of Asia, Pontus and Thrace and the Canons 9, 17 and 28 ECIV (451). . .

Fourth, that it was not duly assessed that this privilege not only was strengthened by Canon 28 ECIV, but that it was sanctioned without oppositions in subsequent ecclesiastical practice until today, and this is why the Church of Russia, for example, repeatedly appealed to the Constantinople Patriarchate in order to deal with serious internal issues, such as the installation and the abolition of the

³⁹⁵ Сергей Викторович Троицкий, "О Границах Распространения Права Власти Константинопольской Патриархии на 'диаспору,'" *Журнал Московской Патриархии* 11, Ноябрь (1947): 34-45. (Sergei Viktorovich Troitskii, "The Limits of the Authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople over the Diaspora," *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 11, November (1947): 34-45). <http://archive.e-vestnik.ru/page/index/194711606.html>. Troitskii then followed this article with another dealing explicitly with the question of autocephaly: Сергей Викторович Троицкий, "О Церковной Автокефалии." *Журнал Московской Патриархии* 07, Июль (1948). (Sergei Viktorovich Troitsky, "Regarding Church Autocephaly." *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 07, July (1948)). <http://archive.e-vestnik.ru/page/index/194807584.html>.

³⁹⁶ ΦΟΤΙΑΔΗΣ, ΕΜΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ, «Εξ Αφορμής ἑνός Ἀρθροῦ,» ("on account of an Article"), *Ορθοδοξία* 23, 1948, 210-40 (in Greek).

³⁹⁷ Dragas, "The Constantinople and Moscow Divide," 186.

Moscow Patriarchate (1589, 1590, 1593, 1720), or the manner of adjudicating the crisis related to Patriarch Nikon of Moscow (1663-1666, etc.).³⁹⁸

Troitskii continued his crusade against “Eastern Papism” through the 1960’s in the lead-up to the proclamation of the OCA’s autocephaly, protesting in a letter to Metropolitan Nikodim of the Moscow Patriarchate the 1965 decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to release its Western European Russian diocese:³⁹⁹ “The theory of the subordination of all the rights of the diaspora to this Patriarch is a new manifestation of Greek megalomania, contrary to both the Word of God and the canons.”⁴⁰⁰ Moscow clearly had no intention of honouring any claims made by Constantinople regarding what the Russian Church could or could not do vis-à-vis its “daughter” Church in North America.

Immediately prior to and following the declaration of autocephaly letters were exchanged between the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople.⁴⁰¹ Once the text of the Tomos and agreement became public, specific objections were raised by the “Greek”

³⁹⁸ Dragas, “The Constantinople and Moscow Divide,” 186-187.

³⁹⁹ “In 1965, patriarch Athenagoras (Spyrou) of Constantinople excluded from his jurisdiction the Exarchate of Russian Orthodox Parishes of Western Europe which was ruled by archbishop Georgy (Tarasov). In patriarch Athenagoras’ proclamation, there was advice for archbishop Georgy to go over under the authority of patriarch of Moscow Alexy I. It might have seemed that this event was an important victory of Moscow diplomacy. However, contemporaries, S. V. Troitsky among them, paid attention to the formulations of the proclamation of Constantinople Patriarchy. According to these formulations, Constantinople established its rights upon the diaspora in the whole world. Troitsky in his letter to Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), head of the Department for External Church Relations, makes a point that these claims of Constantinople are unfounded.” See A. A. Kostriukov, “‘Physician, Heal Thyself’ (Luke 4:23). Professor S.V. Troitsky Against the ‘Eastern Papism’ of Constantinople.” *Bulletin of the St. Tikhon Orthodox Humanitarian University. Series II: History. History of the Russian Orthodox Church* 87 (2019): 147. (А. А. Кострюков, “‘Врачу, Исцелися Сам’ (Лук 4:23). Профессор С.В. Троицкий Против ‘Восточного Папизма’ Константинополя.” *Вестник ПСТГУ. Серия II: История. История Русской Православной Церкви*. (2019). Вып. 87: 147).

⁴⁰⁰ “Теория подчинения этому Патриарху всех прав диаспоры является новейшим проявлением греческой мегаломании, противной и Слову Божию, и канонам.” Kostriukov, “Physician, Heal Thyself,” 144.

⁴⁰¹ Patriarch Athenagoras’ letter was dated January 8th, 1970; Patriarch Alexei’s reply was dated 17 March 1970. See Aleksii I, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. “Documents: The Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America,” 42-80.

Churches,⁴⁰² whose negative response, as noted in the letter of the Church of Greece, mainly rested upon four arguments: 1) the “Russian immigrant Church . . . is only one of the Orthodox Churches in America,” and not the largest; 2) its faithful comprise only one-sixth of the Orthodox population, with the Greek archdiocese encompassing more than twice the number of faithful; 3) the question of Church order in the diaspora was to have been decided by the “soon to be convened pan-Orthodox Synod”; and 4) the declaration of autocephaly was unilateral, “lacking in brotherly spirit,” and therefore could be the cause of even more division.⁴⁰³

A more thorough rebuttal to the claims of Moscow and the autocephaly of the Metropolia was offered by Panagiotes Trembelas of the University of Athens School of Theology in 1973.⁴⁰⁴ In his book length study⁴⁰⁵ the author elucidated the various arguments in support of the Constantinopolitan understanding of autocephaly in greater depth, refuting Moscow’s arguments on both canonical and practical grounds.⁴⁰⁶ Though his arguments were

⁴⁰² For the official responses of the Alexandrian, Antiochian, and Constantinopolitan Patriarchates as well as the more detailed response of the Church of Greece see *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 45-67.

⁴⁰³ *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 66.

⁴⁰⁴ Panagiotes N. Trembelas, *The Autocephaly of the Metropolia in America*. For a pointedly negative assessment of Trembelas’ book see John Efstratios Rexine, “Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1975): 57–64.

⁴⁰⁵ Previously only short articles, letters, and essays had been published or circulated.

⁴⁰⁶ Trembelas’ main arguments can be summarized as follows: 1. Autocephaly is bestowed on a Church which includes *all* the Orthodox faithful of a particular country; 2. The OCA does not qualify as autocephalous because: a) only the Metropolia was granted autocephaly and b) the Moscow Patriarchate retained its own parishes in North America; 3. The Moscow Patriarchate does not have jurisdiction in North America (i.e., North America is not Moscow’s “canonical territory”); 4. The autocephaly of the OCA was bestowed unilaterally by the Moscow Patriarchate, without prior consultation with or the agreement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; 5. The three Russian jurisdictions were in “full schism” one with another; 6. The Moscow Patriarchate granted autocephaly with “the approval of the Soviets” – his argument is that anti-Christian state authorities were “pulling the strings;” 7. The decision to grant autocephaly, given the pastoral/canonical situation in America, was premature; 8. The bestowal of autocephaly did not in fact change the canonical landscape at all, it was self-contradicting. Trembelas, *The Autocephaly of the Metropolia in America*.

neither novel or original, his rhetoric tended towards the polemical,⁴⁰⁷ and in spite of his occasional inaccuracies,⁴⁰⁸ Trembelas presented the anti-autocephaly arguments clearly and concisely. He reiterated a criticism first made by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in its response to the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1971,⁴⁰⁹ viz., that the Tomos is more akin to “an agreement of commercial transaction” than a proper ecclesiastical document:

On the one hand, the Metropolia remains separated from Moscow, bargaining since 1946 the restoration of canonical relations with the Patriarchate of Moscow in exchange for the autocephaly. On the other hand, the Patriarchate of Moscow grants this autocephaly after securing to herself all her properties. . .⁴¹⁰

Interestingly, the ROCOR, whose theologians had first attacked the jurisdictional claims of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the diaspora, saw the Tomos in a similar light,⁴¹¹ with the addition of a patriotic/political/nationalistic Russian element.⁴¹² The recurrent appeals of the

⁴⁰⁷ See, for example, *The Autocephaly of the Metropolia in America*, 15-16.

⁴⁰⁸ His claim on page 24, for example, that the word “Greek” in “Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic” is an admission of the predominance of Greek faithful within the church is false, as in the given context “Greek” refers to rite, not nationality, and at least until the end of the 20th century was used ubiquitously by Orthodoxy Slavs, both Orthodox and uniate, to indicate that they followed the Byzantine liturgical tradition.

⁴⁰⁹ Response of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 51.

⁴¹⁰ Trembelas, *The Autocephaly of the Metropolia in America*, 18.

⁴¹¹ At its Sobor in 1974, the ROCOR issued an appeal to the Metropolia, in which they “extend a brotherly hand to begin looking for ways” to overcome their divisions (i.e., reconciliation between the OCA and ROCOR), and ask: “Were you [i.e., the Metropolia] not aware . . . that any ecclesiastical act including the promotion of a Patriarch pleasing to the godless and the granting of autocephaly, *just like any civil act*, totally depends on the God-hating authorities?” ROCOR, “Appeal of the Third Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile to the American Metropolia,” 2. Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY. Emphasis mine.

⁴¹² “We, the members of the Third Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile. . . turn to you, children and grandchildren of those who, like us, came from the bosom of the Russian Church, our common Mother . . . The land of the fathers and the Russian Church have not become empty phrases to all of you . . . Is it not time for us to recall that we are all children of the Church of Russia and that we have all come from her bosom, from the ‘land of the fathers’ – if not personally, then in the persons of our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers?” ROCOR, “Appeal of the Third Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile to the American Metropolia,” September 1974. Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY. It is interesting to note that the well-known author and dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn is quoted in this appeal as frequently as Holy Scripture is.

ROCOR⁴¹³ to the Metropolia are an excellent example of the tug-of-war between and among canonical, political, and cultural arguments, as well as what might be termed “ecclesiastical *realpolitik*.”⁴¹⁴ In a letter from Metropolitan Philaret (the primate of the ROCOR) to Metropolitan Ireney of the Metropolia in January of 1970 (when the upcoming bestowal of autocephaly had become known) he writes that by recognizing the Patriarch of Moscow as the legitimate head of the Russian Orthodox Church the Metropolia brings upon itself

. . . terrible condemnation. If the Moscow Patriarch is the legal head of the Russian-American Metropolis, then in such a case all the sacraments and prayers of the Russian-American Metropolis are graceless, spiritually invalid and lead to judgement and condemnation, for suspension by legitimate church authority is spiritually binding in accordance with the word of Christ to the Apostles: “whatever you bind to earth, it will be bound to heaven, and what you loose on earth will be loosed to heaven” (Mt. 18.18). If, however, the Russian-American Metropolia now accepts from the Moscow Patriarch the removal of the suspension and autocephaly, by this very fact it admits that until now it has been under this suspension, and will enter into communion with traitors to the faith, and into spiritual solidarity with them. This will create a number of very difficult questions regarding the validity of their sacraments during this entire period.

In order to avoid this terrible spiritual path, the Eminent Bishops of the Russian-American Metropolia must stop any communication with the Moscow Patriarchate, which is not free in its activity and is not a true representative of the Russian Orthodox Church from the moment that Metropolitan Sergei entered into an agreement in 1927 with the godless Soviet regime.”⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ Which characterized itself as the “only free part of the Russian Orthodox Church.”

⁴¹⁴ In the eyes of the ROCOR, the OCA’s involvement with Moscow Patriarchate was *prima facie* evidence that the OCA was collaborating both ecclesiastically and politically with the “godless Soviet regime.” On the other hand, this did not prevent the ROCOR from appealing to these same “traitors” to sever their ties with Moscow and unite with the ROCOR.

⁴¹⁵ Letter of Metropolitan Philaret (ROCOR) to Metropolitan Ireney (Metropolia), 8/21 January 1970. (“. . . страшное осужденіе. Если Московскій Патріархъ для Русско-Американской Митрополіи является законнымъ главой, то въ такомъ случаѣ всѣ таинства и молитвы Русско-Американской Митрополіи безблагодатны, духовно-недѣйствительны и приносятся въ судъ и въ осужденіе, ибо запрещеніе законной церковной власти духовно связываетъ по слову Христову Апостоламъ: «что вы свяжете на землѣ, то будетъ связано на небѣ; и что разрѣшите на землѣ, то будетъ разрѣшено на небѣ» /МѠ. 18,18/. Если же Русско-Американская Митрополія теперь приметъ отъ Московскаго Патріарха снятіе запрещенія и автокефалію, то тѣмъ самымъ признаетъ, что до сихъ поръ была подѣ этимъ запрещеніемъ и войдетъ въ общеніе съ измѣнниками вѣрѣ и духовно съ ними солидаризуется. Это создастъ рядъ очень сложныхъ вопросовъ, касающихся дѣйствительности ихъ священнодѣйствій за время всего этого періода. Для того, чтобы

From the standpoint of human logic, Metropolitan Philaret's admonition and arguments are reasonable. How could the Metropolia, with its suspended and anathematized bishops and "uncanonical" status, dare to "bargain" with the Patriarchate of Moscow, and how was it that the Moscow Patriarchate felt it within their own interest to negotiate with this schismatic group as if it were a legitimate ecclesiastical body?⁴¹⁶

The newly autocephalous OCA had pledged itself to the goal of the unity of all the Orthodox in America under one united hierarchy. Leaving aside the small Albanian and Bulgarian dioceses that joined the OCA in 1971 and 1977 respectively no other dioceses joined the new church,⁴¹⁷ and the idea of unity waned,⁴¹⁸ but never completely disappeared. In 1994,

избѣжать этого страшнаго духовнаго пути Преосвященнымъ Архіереямъ Русско-Американской Митрополіи надлежить прекратить какое бы то нибыло общеніе съ Московской Патріархіей, которая не свободна въ своихъ дѣйствіяхъ и не является подлинной представительницей Русской Православной Церкви съ того момента, какъ Митрополитъ Сергій вошелъ въ соглашеніе въ 1927 г. съ совѣтской безбожной властью. . .” Митрополитъ Филаретъ къ Митрополиту Иринею, 8/21 января 1970 г.). Archives of the OCA, Syosset, NY.

⁴¹⁶ With Metropolitan Philaret suggesting at the same time that the Metropolia should not negotiate with the Moscow Patriarchate, which is itself schismatic!

⁴¹⁷ Of all the other “American” jurisdictions, the Antiochian Archdiocese under the leadership of Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) undoubtedly had the greatest possibility of uniting with the OCA. See “Syrian Church Endorses Move for Orthodox Unity” in *The Orthodox Church*, October 1969. Anthony Roeber notes that there might have been a real possibility for the Antiochian Archdiocese to come into unity with the OCA were it not for the fact that at the time the Antiochians were split into two factions, one based in New York and the other in Toledo, Ohio. This split was not healed until 1975. In addition, the election of a new Patriarch in 1970 whose interest was directed more towards “Arab Orthodoxy” and the unification of all the Syro-Arabbians in North America was not conducive to a consideration of the amalgamation of the Antiochian Archdiocese with or within the OCA. Anthony Roeber, “Autocephaly: The OCA, the Greek Archdiocese, and Antioch.”

https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/autocephaly_the_oca_the_greek_archdiocese_and_antioch. In 1983 John Meyendorff wrote of the continued attempts to find “possible ways as to how the future united Church could allow for the preservation of ties between the Patriarchate of Antioch and those who cherish it – and intend to continue doing so - as their Mother Church, while becoming an integral part of a united Church structure in America.” John Meyendorff, “A Fifth Step,” *Vision of Unity*, 78. For a popular treatment of Metropolitan Philip's vision for Orthodox unity in America see *Again Magazine* 24, no. 4, December (2003).

⁴¹⁸ “In 1960, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America had joined the Metropolia. Soon after the OCA became autocephalous, the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and the Bulgarian Orthodox Diocese also joined. The OCA had begun to recreate the multiethnic character of the Russian church's North American missionary archdiocese in the days before the Communist revolution had split the archdiocese into rival groups. . . the autocephaly of the OCA did not spark wider unity among the Orthodox jurisdictions in America. In fact, practical cooperation between the jurisdictions declined. The OCA in the 1970's and 1980's proved no more able

the bishops of SCOBA met in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, and adopted a statement supporting the idea of Orthodox unity in the new world.⁴¹⁹ Due to various factors, most especially the response of the old world Patriarchates, this appeal fell upon deaf ears.⁴²⁰

An important event which demonstrated the insular character and ethnic mentality endemic to the Orthodox jurisdictions in the new world was the request by the Antiochian Archdiocese in North America for “Self-rule” (autonomy), which was granted by the Patriarchate of Antioch in October of 2003.⁴²¹ Along with the OCA, the Antiochian Archdiocese had been very active in Orthodox outreach and evangelism to the general American public, and the Antiochian Archdiocese was vital and growing. Given the historically close ties between the Syrian/Antiochian Archdiocese and the Metropolia/OCA, the answer to the question of why the Antiochian Archdiocese chose to seek autonomy under Antioch rather than autocephaly with the OCA can only lie in a divergence of mentality regarding what might be the most effective way to “bring Orthodoxy to America.” While Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Archdiocese was an ardent advocate for Orthodox unity⁴²² and autocephaly in North America⁴²³ he rationalized the new autonomous status of his Archdiocese by claiming that it was necessary because of a

than SCOBA had been in the 1960’s to bring about the full unity of Orthodox Christians in America.” Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 98.

⁴¹⁹ Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, “Statement on the Church in North America,” Antiochian Village, Ligonier, PA, November 30 - December 2, 1994. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070405102134/http://www.antiochian.org/1088>

⁴²⁰ Kishkovsky offers a useful summary of the decisions and result of this meeting in “Reflections on American Orthodoxy,” Stokoe, *Orthodox Christians in North America*, 130-133.

⁴²¹ For the text of the proclamation see *The Word* 47, no. 9, November (2003), 4. <http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/Word200311.pdf>

⁴²² “The unity of Orthodoxy in our country is inevitable because it is the will of God.” Metropolitan Philip (Saliba), “An Exclusive Interview with Metropolitan Philip,” *Again Magazine* 25, vol. 4 (2003), 5.

⁴²³ “I envision an autocephalous Orthodox Church which would put an end to all this uncanonical chaos in North America.” Metropolitan Philip, “An Exclusive Interview,” 8.

supposed lack of vision on the part of the OCA⁴²⁴ on the one side, and the Antiochian Archdiocese's "coming out of the ethnic ghetto" on the other.⁴²⁵ If the goal was an American autocephalous Church which was not "in an ethnic ghetto," why did Metropolitan Philip/the Antiochian Archdiocese feel that joining the OCA was not an option?

While the Greek Archdiocese and the Antiochian Archdiocese tested the strength of their ties with their respective mother churches, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) maintained its independent, or autocephalous, status, but with diminished vigor. The recent reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia with the Russian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate has raised questions about the OCA's future role on both the national and the international level.⁴²⁶

George Demacopoulos,⁴²⁷ in a talk given in January 2020 for the Christian Rights and Freedom Institute, argued in favour of Orthodox unity in the USA for political and evangelical reasons. He argued that politically, a united American Orthodox Church hierarchy speaking with one voice would gain greater leverage and influence in their dealings with legislators, politicians, etc. For both external reasons (i.e., to make the Church more "user friendly" and approachable for non-Orthodox) as well internal reasons (because all the faithful, especially the children, speak English in their daily life and the vast majority of faithful marry outside the Church) he argued that parishes need to transition to the exclusive use of the English language for liturgical services, as the non-Orthodox enquirers, spouses, and children will have a greater chance of

⁴²⁴ "I do not know if the Orthodox Church in America has a clear vision for the future." Metropolitan Philip, "An Exclusive Interview," 5.

⁴²⁵ "I thank God that the Antiochian Archdiocese is no longer an ethnic ghetto." Metropolitan Philip, "An Exclusive Interview," 5.

⁴²⁶ Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, 108. The author refers to the reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia with the Patriarchate of Moscow. Since this reconciliation in 2007 the ROCOR has functioned as an autonomous non-geographically delineated diocese in communion with the Moscow Patriarchate.

⁴²⁷ Demacopoulos is a professor at and co-founder of the Orthodox Christian Studies Centre at Fordham University in New York, and a member of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

being liturgically engaged if the services are in English. His statements are very interesting in that he is an American Greek Orthodox theologian repeating some of the same arguments made by the Metropolia/OCA, the only difference being that he sees unity happening under the aegis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as only Constantinople has “universal jurisdiction” and is not bound to a particular nation-state or culture.⁴²⁸

While the proclamation of autocephaly solved political and economic problems for the Moscow Patriarchate, and clarified the canonical status of the Metropolia (at least as far as Moscow and the Orthodox Churches of the Soviet satellite states were concerned), it caused new problems for all the Orthodox bodies in North America. The expectation that the other Orthodox jurisdictions in America would join the new autocephalous Church was clearly unrealistic. Even the Moscow Patriarchate did not demand that its own parishes join the OCA, but rather maintained a “non-exarchate exarchate” of parishes in North America - and when push came to shove, notwithstanding its “vision of unity” for Orthodoxy in America, the Metropolia acquiesced to this extremely anomalous canonical situation. Autocephaly did not lessen the multiplicity of jurisdictions in America, it only contributed to greater tension and conflict between and among them. The lack of agreement upon and consistency in the application of the canonical principles regarding autocephaly⁴²⁹ – especially in the case of the Moscow

⁴²⁸ George Demacopoulos. “The Future of Orthodox Christian Unity in the United States.” Lecture, Christian Rights and Freedom Institute, St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, Naples, FL, January 18, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3OihM4_R64&feature=youtu.be&utm_source=Archons&utm_campaign=8ff25f517d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_18_09_59&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7e7094bcca-8ff25f517d-250150529

⁴²⁹ As one example, Bogolepov in 1963 states that “The opinion that the Mother Church alone is entitled to grant autocephalous status not only has not basis in the canons reviewed, but is also inconsistent with the principles of Orthodox Canon Law.” Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church*, 26. In March of 1970, however, “this very Professor proclaimed that the appeal to the Mother Church for autocephaly was irreproachable ecclesiologically and could not be considered uncanonical.” Trembelas, 19. (Trembelas cites Bogolepov’s “The Historic Way of the American Metropolia” from *The Orthodox Church*, March, 1970; and *Istinya* 16 (1971) page 40 as sources. Due to library and archive closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to access these source documents).

Patriarchate - led to a situation in which the various jurisdictions grew farther apart, rather than closer together. If autocephaly is the right path for the church in North America, the argument can be and was made that the proclamation of autocephaly for the OCA was the right thing, but at the wrong time and in the wrong way.⁴³⁰

Otto von Bismarck famously stated that “Politics is the art of the possible, the attainable — the art of the next best.” If his statement is correct, the reception of autocephaly by the Metropolia from the Moscow Patriarchate was certainly a “political” success for both bodies, though a practical and ecclesiastical failure for the Church as a whole.

⁴³⁰ “Should all this be interpreted as signifying that our position is unequivocally against administrative unification of the existing separate Orthodox jurisdictions? Not necessarily. But its mode and time if not properly appreciated could prove restrictive and, perhaps, prohibitive factors.” Archbishop Iakovos, “Diversity of Origins, Identity of Belief,” in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 11.

IX. Conclusion II. Autocephaly – What Did It Mean?

The ongoing controversy about the exact canonical status of the OCA is a result of the lack of consensus within the Orthodox world regarding the answer to one question: How was the concept of autocephaly understood when it was bestowed upon the Orthodox Church in America? How did/do the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople as well as the OCA perceive the meaning of this autocephaly? What canonical, ecclesiological, political, and cultural elements were at play in these varying construals of autocephaly, and how were these various facets or elements understood, utilized, or exploited by those involved – and to what end?

A fundamental problem in answering these questions is the lack of personal sources, which hinders my ability to discover the *mentalité* of those involved. What is available for research is all within the rhetorical framework of “public documents” – official church letters, public journalism and tendentious essays, the Tomos itself, reports – and the absence of documentation from the “private sphere” – personal letters, diaries, reports of conversations, and so on – makes the task of discovering the world-views, the personal understanding, of the key participants in the granting of the Tomos very hard to uncover. In regard to the Moscow Patriarchate, Kostriukov observes that ultimately

There is no answer to the important question: why did the Moscow Patriarchate, which had previously made strict demands and imposed ecclesiastical sanctions upon the North American Metropolia, make such wide concessions in 1970? The problem in studying this question is that information about the preparation for and facts of the bestowal of autocephaly is at this time practically inaccessible, except for the official publications in the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate.⁴³¹

⁴³¹ Kostriukov, “The Granting of Autocephaly,” 93. (“Нет ответа и на важный вопрос: почему Московский Патриархат, ранее предъявлявший Североамериканской митрополии жесткие требования и налагавший прещения, в 1970 г. пошел на широкие уступки. Проблемой в изучении этого вопроса является то, что информация о подготовке и обстоятельствах предоставления автокефалии в настоящее время почти

This lack of personal primary sources requires the use of the hermeneutic principle of documentary analysis, to glean underlying reasons and motivations from the text of official documents, correspondence, and the popular, polemical, and academic writings which were published prior to and in the aftermath of the 1970 proclamation of autocephaly. While personal correspondence in regard to this issue quite likely existed, where it might be as well as whether access to it would be permitted is an unknown factor in this research.⁴³²

Notwithstanding these limitations, this thesis still maintains the premise that the entire narrative of the growth and development of the Russian Metropolia in North America, and the declaration and the aftermath of its autocephaly, is more than a political history of events, but rather a record of the clash of *mentalités*.

Moscow's understanding of autocephaly was primarily political. It used the "institution" of autocephaly instrumentally, employing it as a political tool (both in regard to international as well as inter-Orthodox relations).⁴³³ Moscow's attempts to frame autocephaly in canonical

недоступна за исключением официальных публикаций в Журнале Московской Патриархии." Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке," 93).

⁴³² Alex Liberovsky, the archivist of the OCA, related to the author of this thesis that several years ago while touring the State Archives of the Russian Federation (Государственный архив Российской Федерации) he noticed in the finding aids that the files about "America" or "USA" from the Council for Religious Affairs (Совет по делам религий) from the mid 60s to early 70s were designated "classified". He inquired with archive personnel if this was an error and if access to these files could be obtained, and was given the impression that declassification could be requested, but this would be a long and complicated process (personal conversation with the author, January 29th 2020). Likewise, the only copies of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate available on line encompass the years 1943 – 1954, and 2010 – 2020, with nothing available between 1955 and 2009: <http://www.jmp.ru/?archiv>.

⁴³³ "The main reason for granting autocephaly to the North American Metropolia was directly related to the confrontation between the Russian and Constantinopolitan Churches. The uncertainty of the politics of the Ecumenical See, caused by its difficult situation, on the one hand, pushed the North-American Metropolis towards the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other hand, just when Constantinople began to move towards the creation of its own united Church in America, the Moscow Patriarchate began at an accelerated pace to resolve the issue of American autocephaly, forgetting about all previous disagreements [with the Metropolia]." Kostriukov, "The Granting of Autocephaly," 102. ("Главная же причина предоставления автокефалии Североамериканской митрополии была напрямую связана с противостоянием между Русской и Константинопольской Церквами. Неопределенность политики Вселенского Престола, вызванная его тяжелым положением, с одной стороны,

terms, given its historical vector of first recognizing Constantinople's right to unilaterally recognize or bestow autocephaly,⁴³⁴ then arrogating to itself the right to unilaterally bestow autocephaly,⁴³⁵ and finally intransigently clinging to the principle that only *all* the local churches acting together are competent to proclaim autocephaly⁴³⁶ clearly demonstrate not only inconsistency but a strategic use of canonical interpretation in order to achieve specific secular and ecclesiastical goals, whether these involve divesting itself of troublesome and financially draining parishes in North America, preventing the Metropolia from coming into the orbit of Constantinople, attempting to gain influence within the largest "Russian Orthodox" body in the

подтолкнула Северо-американскую митрополию к Московскому Патриархату. С другой стороны, как только Константинополь начал претендовать на создание своей собственной единой Церкви в Америке, Московский Патриархат стал ускоренными темпами решать вопрос американской автокефалии, забыв все прежние разногласия." Кострюков, "Дарование Автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке,"102).

⁴³⁴ Having accepted autocephalous status unilaterally from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and uncritically accepting Constantinople's proclamations of autocephaly for the Balkan Churches in the 19th century.

⁴³⁵ As was done with Moscow's unilateral declarations of autocephaly for the churches of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and America, notwithstanding the problematic nature of each of these acts from a canonical perspective. For a comprehensive presentation of how the Moscow Patriarchate claimed to understand its right to declare "daughter Churches" autocephalous, see the letter of Patriarch Alexei to Patriarch Athenagoras in the May, 1953 issue of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. АЛЕКСИЙ, Божию милостию ПАТРИАРХ МОСКОВСКИЙ И ВСЕЯ РУСИ, АФИНАГОРУ, СВЯТЕЙШЕМУ АРХИЕПИСКОПУ КОНСТАНТИНОПОЛЯ — НОВОГО РИМА И ВСЕЛЕНСКОМУ ПАТРИАРХУ 7 Марта 1953. *Журнал Московской Патриархии* 05, Май (1953): 4-8.

⁴³⁶ "The answer to the quest for a canonical declaration of the autocephaly of a local Orthodox Church cannot be separated from the established and authorized by the Ecumenical Councils canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church. This follows from the minutes of the discussions on this matter both of the meetings of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Committee (Chambésy 1993, 2009 and 2011) and also of the 4th and 5th Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences (Chambésy 2009, 2015). These discussions confirmed the serious contradictions regarding the presuppositions and the criteria for the declaration of the autocephaly of a given local church. This established canonical tradition was unanimously accepted, not only regarding the presuppositions but also the agreement of the autocephalous Church from which the new autocephalous local church will be detached. The agreement of all the other autocephalous Churches is ascertained through the communication of the ecumenical patriarch with their primates and with his signing of the appropriate patriarchal tome of the new autocephalous Church. The only disagreement regarding the relevant text which was prepared by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Committee (Chambésy 1993) was expressed by the representative of the Church of Russia, Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk, today Patriarch of Russia, who intransigently insisted that the patriarchal tome of autocephaly must be signed by all the Primates of the Orthodox autocephalous Churches. This claim, however, stands in full contradiction to the unilateral granting of autocephaly to the OCA by the Russian Church as neither the ecumenical patriarch nor the primates of the existing autocephalous Orthodox Churches signed the OCA tome. It is exactly for this reason that the issue of autocephaly was not included in the Agenda of the Great and Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church (June 17-26, 2016), but was postponed for a future meeting of this synod." Dragas, "Autocephaly of the OCA," 201-202.

new world,⁴³⁷ or pushing forward an agenda which would see the Moscow Patriarchate replace Constantinople as the “first among equals” in the commonwealth of Orthodox Churches.

In contrast, why did Constantinople react negatively to the Metropolia’s request for autonomy, especially after it had granted autocephaly to the Church in Poland in 1924 notwithstanding the fact that the great majority of Poles belonged to the Roman Catholic, rather than the Orthodox Church? And why was the reaction of the “Greek Churches” to Moscow’s bestowal of autocephaly upon the OCA so negative?⁴³⁸

Constantinople’s perspective on autocephaly was based more particularly upon ecclesiological, canonical, and pastoral concerns. During the 1960’s both the members of SCOBA as well as the Ecumenical Patriarchate assumed that the question of the “diaspora” would be addressed in a conciliar manner at a soon-to-be-convened pan-Orthodox meeting in which all the Orthodox Churches would be involved. This conciliar consciousness was also behind Constantinople’s decision not to receive the Metropolia under its jurisdiction.⁴³⁹ By

⁴³⁷ “It would be very naïve on our part to believe that that Patriarchate of Moscow granted autocephaly to the Metropolia for the sole purpose of giving them a footing of canonical legitimacy, and not, at the same time, attempting to extend their influence outside the mere ceremonial activities of their Church within the Soviet Union; and that the Soviet government saw nothing, knew nothing, and did nothing. But just the same it will be very naïve on the part of the leadership of the Metropolia to believe that the Patriarchate of Moscow gained nothing from this magnanimity toward them, or that the Soviet government had no part in having one of their arms stretched from Siberia down to the Gulf of Mexico.” Patrinos, “Prologomena” in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 20

⁴³⁸ “Our Holy Church being in complete accord with the views contained in Your valued Letters, utterly denounces the anti-canonical, novel, and self-invalidating Autocephalous (*sic*) of the Russian Metropolia in America and considers it non-existent and never proclaimed, and the Tomos as never have been issued.” Letter of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the Patriarch of Constantinople, *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 51.

⁴³⁹ “The Metropolia leadership sought persistently the jurisdictional sanction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in any form that could prove satisfactory to existing conditions in America. But finally the Ecumenical Patriarchate refused to extend its spiritual aegis – if not jurisdiction – over the Metropolia from fear that this could be interpreted by the Patriarchate of Moscow as a usurpation of rights. . . the present Ecumenical Patriarch did not believe that even a groundless complaint on the part of the Church of Russia would at this time contribute to peace nor would it promote the Great Orthodox Synod under study now and hoped to be convened *before long*. He would rather have the whole question of the Orthodox jurisdictions in the diaspora discussed and decided upon by this great Synod.” Patrinos, “Prologomena” in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America*, 19.

unilaterally declaring the Metropolia autocephalous the Moscow Patriarchate subverted this conciliar process.⁴⁴⁰

Canonically, Constantinople had been consistent in its interpretation of canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and the other canons which give the Ecumenical Patriarchate the right to “oversee” the Orthodox Church in lands outside the territory of an autocephalous Church.⁴⁴¹ Though this “right” is controverted, as evidenced by Moscow’s frequent challenges, these very challenges testify to fact that these canons are regarded as normative within the commonwealth of Orthodox Churches, though the arguments challenging Constantinople’s position are occasionally confusing if not confused.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ This subversion has continued till today, as evidenced by Moscow’s refusal to participate in the Great Council on Crete in 2016. For a study of the role of autocephaly in this subversion see Borkowski, “Autocephaly in the Light of the Preparations to the Pan-Orthodox Council.” For a general history of the long, convoluted history of the preparation for this council see Viorel Ionitã, “The Participation of the Local Orthodox Churches in the Preparatory Process of the Holy and Great Synod – Prerequisite for the Reception of its Decisions,” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Theologia orthodoxa* 62, no. 1 (2017): 5-16.

⁴⁴¹ The most thorough and comprehensive treatment of the canonical rights and privileges of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is that of Metropolitan Maximos of Sardēs, *The Oecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church: A Study in the History and Canons of the Church*, (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1976).

⁴⁴² As an example of this confusion we can cite John Meyendorff. In the space of two pages he writes: “There is no controversy in the Orthodox Church concerning the origin *and the nature* of the ‘primacy of honor’ and the ‘privileges’ (πρεσβεία) of the ‘ecumenical patriarch’ of Constantinople; he then goes on to say that “The position of ‘second in rank’ has been granted to Constantinople not for any theological reason, but for a purely pragmatic one; it was the new capital of the Empire;” and then states that “. . . the actual role of the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople in universal Orthodoxy has, indeed, become a matter of debate. . . the controversy is not about the origin or the very existence of the primacy, but about its practical application five centuries after the fall of Byzantium and one century after the end of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans and the Middle East. The debate simply cannot be brought to a fruitful conclusion unless everyone acknowledges the rather obvious fact that both the Byzantine and the Ottoman empires do not exist anymore. . .” John Meyendorff, “Contemporary Problems of Orthodox Canon Law,” in *Living Tradition*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1978), 110, 111, and 112 respectively (emphasis mine). By making the specious claim that the controversy surrounding the rights and privileges of Constantinople is due to the imperial pretensions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Meyendorff undercuts his own argument, especially since in the middle of this catena, on page 111, he writes “. . . contemporary Constantinople’s . . . primacy can be justified by arguments opposite to those which originally created it. There is no Orthodox emperor in Istanbul, and this is why Constantinople’s bishop could exercise a useful and fully independent ministry of coordination and arbitration, if he were given the means of doing so.” Perhaps the operative word would not be “means,” but “opportunity.” If Moscow had waited for a pan-Orthodox council to definitively resolve the questions of the “diaspora” and the process and procedure for proclaiming autocephaly (and it must be added, if Moscow had actually participated in the Great Council which was held on Crete in 2016, which participation would have suggested at least an element of good will on Moscow’s part) Constantinople would quite like have *had* the opportunity to “coordinate” and “arbitrate” the questions involved.

The canonical principle of “one city-one bishop,”⁴⁴³ i.e., that all the Orthodox Christians of a particular locality, province, territory, or in contemporary terms nation state - should be united under one hierarchy which is organized on the basis of territoriality rather than ethnicity is espoused by all the parties in this dispute. While both Moscow and the Metropolia claimed that autocephaly would be a path to the incarnation of this canonical principle in America, the Ecumenical Patriarchate claimed to be acting with pastoral discretion – *oikonomia* – in addressing the multiplication of jurisdictions in the “diaspora.”⁴⁴⁴

While disagreeing in their interpretation of the canons, Moscow and Constantinople were united in their “old world” mentality.⁴⁴⁵ Though couched as a canonical problem, the deeper roots of the conflict over autocephaly lie in a pervasive but unspoken ethno-phyletism, and hence a clash of cultures: not only “Greek” versus “Russian,”⁴⁴⁶ but more particularly old world

⁴⁴³ For a discussion of this principle see pp. 19-20.

⁴⁴⁴ “The existence of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) was and hopefully is the proper and pragmatic way in which Orthodoxy in America may naturally mature and unite toward One Church. The Ecumenical Patriarch blessed this endeavor by recognizing as canonical all the Orthodox hierarchs of this conference. For the Ecumenical Patriarch to have recognized only his own as canonical, would have implied that those not recognized were uncanonical and schismatic, a supposition which could have destroyed the unity and the harmony of the family of Orthodox Churches starting at the very top [it is worthy of note that while Metropolia was regarded as schismatic by the Moscow Patriarchate, it was regarded as fully canonical by the Ecumenical Patriarchate]. It is hoped that we in America are mature enough to prevent such a catastrophe which is now more than ever a possibility.” Isaiah Chronopolas, “Understanding Autocephaly from the Viewpoint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,” 18.

⁴⁴⁵ For an analysis of how the relationship between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow has developed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union see Lukasz Fajfer and Sebastian Rimestad, “The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow in a Global Age: A Comparison,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10, no. 2-3 (May–August 2010): 211-27.

⁴⁴⁶ “Religious culture is the real cause that keeps the Orthodox Churches apart in America, beginning with theological attitudes and general perspectives and interpretations, through ceremonial diversity to the point of confusion, down to the understanding and practicing Orthodoxy on the level of the average believer. . . today, more than ever before, we are faced on the priestly as well as on the laity level, with at least two divergent attitudes and interpretations of that which we call Orthodoxy, the Russian Orthodox and the Greek Orthodox. And if any one believes that these things are of no significance, he should attend two liturgies on a Sunday, one in a Greek Church and another in a Russian. He should make his business to listen for a few Sundays to one of the better Greek preachers and for a few Sundays to one of the better Russian preachers. He is bound to realize that there is something more specific than appearances to each Church; their whole thought processes are different as are their

preservation versus American frontierism. As noted in chapter six, Turner's concept of "frontier" reveals an underlying factor in the formation of the American mentality.⁴⁴⁷ From an ecclesial perspective, as noted by Hovorun, "The rationale of a frontier is not to protect the territory inside, but to expand and to cover as much uncultivated land as possible. This metaphor relates to the dynamism of mission, which constitutes an intrinsic feature of the nature of the church."⁴⁴⁸ These American and ecclesial conceptions of the frontier as a periphery from which expansion can occur⁴⁴⁹ are diametrically opposed to Turner's description of the European idea of frontier, "a fortified boundary line running through dense populations." The reality that many Orthodox parishes coexist, often in close geographic proximity, under different bishops and patriarchates in many medium to large cities in North America, with a primary *raison d'être* of ministering to the needs of "their own" people fits Turner's description of a European frontier very well. Where the European frontier is internal, the new world frontier is external, both in terms of territory as well as of mentality. America offered new possibilities for the European and Middle-Eastern immigrants:

What draws a person to America is the possibility of having one's own individual fate. Once you have tasted it, it becomes impossible to be just a Finn or a

individual approach to the very nature of Orthodoxy. This, without mentioning the lack of readiness on the part of the Orthodox clergy to understand each other's attitudes and practices. This, again, without mentioning other types of Orthodoxy peculiar to other Orthodox jurisdictions." N.D. Patrinos, "New Horizons for American Orthodoxy," *Orthodox Observer* 611, February (1971): 6-7.

⁴⁴⁷ This is not to say that those involved at the time were conscious of possessing such a "frontier" mentality, but rather to say that Turner reflectively identified this concept based upon his analysis of the American frontier culture, and I am arguing that the concept formed part of the basis for the American world-view or mindset.

⁴⁴⁸ Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 10.

⁴⁴⁹ An example of the laudable "new world frontier" mentality of many members of the clergy and laity of the OCA is Fr. John Parker's lecture "Autocephaly and Evangelism," which was presented at St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York, January 30th 2020, on the occasion of the Father Alexander Schmemmann Lectures celebrating the 50th anniversary of the reception of the Tomos of Autocephaly:
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/autocephaly_evangelism.

Frenchman: in other words, to be determined once and for all. . . New traditions are steadily generated in America; Europe's traditions, having lost their genuine character, are collapsing.⁴⁵⁰

The opponents of OCA autocephaly were motivated, often explicitly, by an attempt to oppose that collapse, even in the new world.

Two dynamics arise from American uniqueness: one of possibility, the other of fear. Faced with novel or challenging situations, people often respond by retreating into familiar places, communities, or patterns of behaviour. In this vein, a common tendency within and among the Orthodox faithful and communities of North America has been to regard faith and ethnic culture as a refuge from “the world.”⁴⁵¹ The other tendency, as reflected in the life and thought of Patriarch Tikhon and Father Schmemmann, involves recognizing and embracing the new possibilities “America” offers. “The answer to this question [of how to achieve the unity of the Orthodox Church in the diaspora while respecting ethnic or cultural sensitivities] is in the doctrinal and canonical tradition, but only if we look for its depth and truth, and not for petty and legalistic ‘precedents’ of a situation that has none.”⁴⁵² Even the common use of “diaspora”

⁴⁵⁰ Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann*, 88-89.

⁴⁵¹ “The American cultural revolution which began a few years ago [this was written in 1972] has reduced to rubble all that was considered to be indigenous in the domain of family life, personal relationships, and the citizen to state weave. It has broken the vertebrate of society, the family, and has penetrated the shallowness of pseudo-democratic ideals by destroying institutions and by leaving the roof of the human soul without supporting pillars. As with all revolutions, this one too failed to convince the most responsible from among the citizenry about the paradise of disorderly personal and communal experience. It, this, pushed people to seek refuge in old patterns of thought and behavior that were thought to have retreated to final obscurity in the face of post-war American disestablishment. Religion, as always, together with its cultural mechanics by which it becomes personal living, provided a direly needed support not only by the permanence of its values, but by the order inherent in its cultural expressions. Ethnic and religious legacies in American society are now sought after as a bulwark of social sanity and as the source again from which a new American culture is hoped to generate in the future. Thus, there can be no more unrealistic call to the Orthodox Churches possessing such a rich and far-reaching ethnic heritage than the call to abandon it and put on, instead, a cloak of Americanism just for the sake of the name.” Patrinos, “Prolegomena,” 23.

⁴⁵² Schmemmann, “The Canonical Problem,” 79.

rather than “immigrant” reflects the old-world mentality behind keeping parishes, and jurisdictions, ethnic.

Thus, for Moscow, autocephaly was construed primarily in political terms. Constantinople construed autocephaly in terms of (its own) canonical privilege, conciliar order, and a particular ecclesiological vision. The OCA’s conception of autocephaly was both broader and vaguer than either:

Conscious of being a local American Church, our Metropolitanate has often and publicly stated its belief that Orthodoxy cannot develop in America except in unity and independence, in conformity with the project of Patriarch Tikhon. Today, as the Mother Church which established the mission 175 years ago solemnly recognizes our autocephaly, a threefold task opens up for us:

- the task of uniting all the Orthodox Christians of America into one Church
- the task of witnessing freely to the true Christian faith in the whole world
- the task of growing spiritually, from strength to strength, through the prayers of the holy Father Herman of Alaska⁴⁵³

The “threefold task” identified in this encyclical, which since then has been reiterated by Metropolitan Theodosius⁴⁵⁴ among others, can be described as vague and presumptuous. While striving to facilitate unity is a concrete goal, other American Orthodox jurisdictions, especially those associated with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, regarded unity under the aegis of the OCA as unacceptable or even threatening (this was true even for the Russian Patriarchal parishes!). As to “witnessing freely to the true Christian faith in the whole world,” what was preventing any other Orthodox body from doing so? And as for “growing spiritually, from strength to strength,

⁴⁵³ “Encyclical Letter of the Great Council of Bishops [of the OCA] to the Orthodox Faithful.” SCOBA minutes, 19 May 1970, 4.

⁴⁵⁴ This can be found in Metropolitan Theodosius’ plenary address, “And Miles to Go Before I Sleep,” given at the 11th All-American Council in Chicago in July of 1995. See p. 20n64.

through the prayers of the holy Father Herman of Alaska,” while this phrase sounds very uplifting and pious, Orthodox believers are always called to “grow spiritually, from strength to strength,” and while Father Herman should rightly be revered as a great saint by all Orthodox Christians, we must remember that he was a Russian monk, ministering to Russian nationals, on Russian territory.⁴⁵⁵

In the 20th century the Metropolia was trying to define itself internally and externally. What did it mean to be an “American” Orthodox Church? Which foreign patriarch, if any, should have authority over the Metropolia? Should the Metropolia rule itself? Should the name be changed? In the midst of all these questions, members of the Metropolia looked backwards into history, to earlier bishops like Tikhon (Bellavin, 1865-1925), and to the early Alaskan missionaries. They searched for a version of history that could fortify them in the present, connect them to the past, and inspire them to move into the future.⁴⁵⁶

The bestowal of autocephaly upon the Russian Metropolia in North America neither resolved any canonical or ecclesiological problems nor united the disparate ethnic Orthodox jurisdictions in the new world. It neither resulted in, nor proceeded from, any objectively canonical normative principle or polity. Autocephaly, for the OCA, was primarily a cultural reality. It was the result of the desire of Orthodox believers who wished to have a “non-

⁴⁵⁵ The exaltation of St. Herman can also be seen as an aspect of “mentalité.” The American Church needed an American saint. But does the fact that the territory upon which St. Herman ministered is now part of the USA make him “American?” One could make a similar argument in regard to such well-known “Russian” saints as Vladimir and Olga, Antony and Theodosius of the Caves, Job of Pochaiv, etc. They lived on the territory of what is now Ukraine, consequently they are obviously Ukrainian, not Russian saints, are they not? Such an approach diminishes the reality that sainthood and holiness are universal, not ethnic, in character. It is telling that Meyendorff even goes so far as to class Alaska as a “national ethnic group”: “Without any unhealthy triumphalism, it can be said that significant progress was achieved already: the initial pattern for integrating national ethnic groups into a canonically unified structure was clearly defined (*cf.* the status of the Romanian, Albanian, Mexican and Alaskan dioceses in the OCA).” John Meyendorff, “Orthodox Unity: Where do we Stand?” in *Vision of Unity*, 68-69.

⁴⁵⁶ Megan Carlisle, “Signifying Autocephaly: A Semiotic Analysis of the Orthodox Church in America and Her Archive in the 20th Century” (Master’s Thesis, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Yonkers, NY, 2015), 17-18.

hyphenated” American Orthodox identity.⁴⁵⁷ For the OCA as an institution autocephaly was certainly a recognition of its maturity as a Church as well as a recognition of its self-identity, and served as the foundation for a vision or *raison d’etre* of an “American” Orthodox Church by and for people living in the new world.⁴⁵⁸

Unity – the universally acknowledged canonical principle that a unified body of believers in a particular territory should be under a unified episcopate – was the one “canonical” argument which ultimately could be made by the Metropolia/Moscow Patriarchate, but in the given instance it could only be an aspirational argument. As noted over and over again, the reception of autocephaly by the OCA from the Moscow Patriarchate did nothing to lessen even by one the number of Orthodox jurisdictions in the new world, and with minor exceptions did nothing to foster administrative unity among these same jurisdictions. If anything it resulted in the delay, rather than the facilitation, of canonical Orthodox administrative unity in North America.

The influence of the American religious mindset on the genesis and culmination of this process cannot be underestimated. Though the Orthodox have always publicly espoused a “high” ecclesiology, counterposing their own supposed unity over and against the fragmentation of the Protestant Churches, Vigen Guroian argues that the Orthodox in North America have in practical terms accepted a “denominationalist” approach to church polity, and that such a polity,

⁴⁵⁷ “We will not create a new ‘denomination,’ called ‘American Orthodox,’ but we will all be one in the ‘Orthodox Church of America.’ This Church will undoubtedly preserve, wherever necessary, various liturgical languages and traditions, . . . and it will of course, welcome Americans, who do not desire to identify themselves by any other national adjectives.” John Meyendorff, “An ‘American’ Church” in *Vision of Unity*, 36.

⁴⁵⁸ Although the institutional aspect was, as always, a two edged sword, as reflected in a journal entry of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann from 1982: “So we have apparently reached what we were dreaming of. We have achieved the reduction of the Church to successful bureaucracy, administration, to a paper waterfall, . . . A vicious circle – ‘bureaucratization of charisma.’ After a breath of fresh air that seemed to blow over our Church, normalization has begun.” Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann*, 315-16.

grounded primarily upon cultural and national factors, dooms Orthodoxy in the new world to irrelevance at best, and could quite likely lead to its decline and disappearance.⁴⁵⁹

The controversy over the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America highlighted the different conceptions of autocephaly, the political and cultural tensions, and the conflicting canonical and ecclesiological presuppositions and pretensions of various Churches and Patriarchates, which at the deepest level stemmed less from competing principles of ecclesiology and more from competing mentalities and the vision of what is “church” which they promoted. Leaving aside the worldly temptations of influence and power, the essential problem resulted from the uniqueness of the American Orthodox situation, which, as noted by Schmemmann, had no precedents.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁹ Vigen Guroian, "The Orthodox Presence in America: Its Meaning and Its Prospects," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 58.1 (2014): 25-40

⁴⁶⁰ Schmemmann, “The Canonical Problem,” 79. It is very interesting that Patrinos, in considering this unprecedented situation, hints that the ethnic principle is at least benign, and may in fact be a useful approach toward “multi-national” parallel jurisdictions in the new world: “When our canon law experts speak about whether our present pluralistic jurisdictional authority is canonical or not, they should keep in mind conditions that generated canonical enactments rather than to blindly insist on their unconditional enforcement irrespective of the reality of a particular situation today. The one district – one bishop rule sprang from a particular reality prevalent at the time within the Byzantine empire. And the reality which pressed for a rule of this kind was the result of prevailing socio-economic and political conditions. Besides the prevailing language and culture was the same for all at that time, and spiritual and national sentiments were of the same origin and nature for all members of a particular congregation. Under such uniform conditions, the presence of two bishops within the same bishopric would create division and could hardly contribute to the education of the people in the ways of Christ

Here, however, we have had not even one serious entanglement in all of our history in this country, when two or more bishops of varying ethnic derivations serving within the same area had harsh words with one another, let alone quarreled. This because the interests of each ethnic group cannot conflict with those of any other: on the contrary, they gradually begin to coincide but as yet they have not become that much identical as to no longer require their separate hierarchies.

All this means that our present situation of separate episcopates is not as sinister as some want to present it, it is not scandalous and not canonically abominable. It is the dictate of reality and as such it is legitimate and obviously beneficial to the groups concerned and to the whole Orthodox Church. It should definitely not be used as the scapegoat of all of our failures as regards our obligation toward working for an ascertained future of Orthodoxy in this country.” Patrinos, “Prolegomena,” 25. Patrinos’ statement that “we have had not even one serious entanglement in all of our history. . . when two or more bishops of varying ethnic derivations serving within the same had harsh words with one another, let alone quarreled” is contentious at best, as evidenced by the frequent conflicts within SCOBA over the “uncanonical” transfer or reception of parishes and clergy from one jurisdiction to another. See pp. 90n326 and 107n378.

At present, leaving aside the handful of Eastern European countries whose Churches are autocephalous and whose population is in the majority Orthodox, Orthodox Christianity is a minority religion in a religiously pluralistic world. The American Orthodox experience is at present not uniquely American, but rather a world-wide phenomenon. What “deeper truth” might be present in the “doctrinal and canonical tradition” Fr. Schmemmann references which would enable autocephaly to be “reinvented” in a way which would make it relevant in a globalized, religiously pluralistic world?

“I believe in one, holy, catholic (“*sobornal*”) and apostolic Church.”⁴⁶¹ It seems that the best, perhaps only, possibility moving forward would be a serious attempt to manifest the oneness of the Church by applying the principle of *sobornost*’ (conciliarity)⁴⁶² at all levels of Church governance as well as in all locales. Such a *sobornal* mentality was promulgated at the 1917-18 Moscow Council and embraced by the Metropolia/OCA as normative. As noted by Hovorun, autocephaly is one of the “oldest and most viable institutions” of the Church, and “survived many transformations and crises.”⁴⁶³ The different – even competing – understandings of the character of the autocephaly of the OCA attest to its fluidity as a concept, and the conflict engendered by these various construals of autocephaly indicate that a this “institution” is quite likely again in need of reinvention.

⁴⁶¹ Nicaean Creed

⁴⁶² For a fuller meaning of *sobornost*’ see p.17n49

⁴⁶³ Hovorun, *Scaffolds*, 88.

Tomos of Autocephaly

Tomos

**ALEXIS, by the Mercy of God
Patriarch of Moscow and of All-Russia**

For a number of years, the Russian Orthodox Church has observed with maternal love and concern the development of the Orthodox Church which she planted on the American continent. In the last few decades she has sorrowfully witnessed the unfortunate appearance there of a pluralism of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, a temporary phenomenon, and by no means a permanent norm of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Church in America, since it is contrary to the nature of Orthodox canonical ecclesiastical unity.

The Holy Russian Orthodox Church, striving for the good of the Church, has directed her efforts toward the normalization of relations among the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions in America, particularly by negotiating with the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, concerning the possibility of granting autocephaly to this Church in the hope that this might serve the good of the Orthodox Church in America and the glory of God.

In her striving for the peace of Christ, which has universal significance for the life of man; desiring to build a peaceful and creative church life, and to suppress scandalous ecclesiastical divisions; hoping that this act would be beneficial to the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ and would make possible the development among the local parts of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of such relations which would be founded on the firm ties of the one Orthodox Faith and the love that the Lord Jesus Christ willed; keeping in mind that this act would serve the welfare of universal, mutual cooperation; taking into consideration the petition of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Metropolitanate of North America, which expressed the opinion and desire of all her faithful children; acknowledging as good for Orthodoxy in America the independent and self-sustaining existence of said Metropolitanate, which now represents a mature ecclesiastical organism possessing all that is necessary for successful further growth. Our Humility together with the Sacred Synod and all the venerable Hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have signified their agreement in writing, having examined the said petition, in sincere love grant autocephaly to the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, that is, the right of a fully independent ordering of church life in accordance with the divine and sacred Canons and the ecclesiastical practices and customs of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church inherited from the Fathers; for which purpose this Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos is directed to His Beatitude, IRENEY, Archbishop of New York, Primate of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, Metropolitan of All-America and Canada, by which we announce:

1. The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in North America is confirmed and proclaimed an Autocephalous Church and named "The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America";
2. By "autocephaly," which is confirmed in this decision, it is understood that the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America shall:
 - a. be independent and self-governing with the right of electing her own Primate and all her bishops, without confirmation or the right of veto over such elections on the part of any other church organization or representative of the Eastern Orthodox or any other confession;

- b. firmly and inalterably preserve the divine dogmas, being guided in her life by the sacred Canons of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ and governed in accordance with her own Statute as accepted, augmented or amended from time to time by her own highest legislative and executive organ;
 - c. maintain direct relations with all other Churches and confessions, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike;
 - d. enjoy all the authority, privileges and rights usually inherent in the term “autocephaly” in the canonical tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church, including the right of preparing and consecrating Holy Chrism.
3. The following are excluded from autocephaly on the territory of North America:
- a. St. Nicholas Cathedral and its possessions, located at 15 East 97th Street in New York City and the accompanying residence; and also the immovable possessions in Pine Bush, New York, together with buildings and edifices which might be constructed in the future on this land;
 - b. Parishes and clergy in the U.S.A. which at present are in the Patriarchal Exarchate and which desire to remain in the canonical and jurisdictional care of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia – these parishes, desiring to remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and excluded from the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America are the following:
 - 1. St. Nicholas Church, Brookside, State of Alabama
 - 2. St. Demetrius Monastery, Bellflower, State of California
 - 3. Christ the Savior Church, Berkley, State of California
 - 4. St. Nicholas Cathedral, San Francisco, State of California
 - 5. Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, San Francisco, State of California
 - 6. Our Lady of Kazan Church, San Diego, State of California
 - 7. Resurrection Church, Chicago, State of Illinois
 - 8. Dormition Church Benld, State of Illinois
 - 9. Holy Trinity Church, Baltimore, State of Maryland
 - 10. St. Elias Church, Battle Creek, State of Michigan
 - 11. St. Innocent Church, Detroit, State of Michigan
 - 12. St. Michael the Archangel Church, Detroit, State of Michigan
 - 13. Church of St. Andrew the First-Called Apostle, East Lansing, State of Michigan
 - 14. Holy Trinity Church, Saginaw, State of Michigan
 - St. John Chrysostom Church, Grand Rapids, State of Michigan
 - 15. House Chapel of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Westtown, State of New York
 - 16. St. Demetrius Church, Jackson, State of Michigan
 - 17. St. Nicholas Church, Bayonne, State of New Jersey
 - 18. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Elizabeth, State of New Jersey

19. Three Hierarchs Church, Garfield, State of New Jersey
 20. Holy Cross Church, Hackettstown, State of New Jersey
 21. Sts. Peter and Paul Church; Passaic, State of New Jersey
 22. St. John the Baptist Church, Singac (Little Falls), State of New Jersey
 23. St. Olga Church, Somerset, State of New Jersey
 24. St. Mark Chapel, State of New York
 25. Church of St. George the Great Martyr, State of New York
 26. Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, on the estate of Pine Bush, State of New York
 27. St. John the Baptist Chapel, Bronx, State of New York
 28. Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, Amsterdam (Wolf Run), State of Ohio
 29. St. Stephen Church, Lorain, State of Ohio
 30. Nativity of Christ Church, Youngstown, State of Ohio
 31. St. Nicholas Church, Chester, State of Pennsylvania
 32. St. Nicholas Church, Edinboro, Pageville, State of Pennsylvania
 33. St. Nicholas Church, Reading, State of Pennsylvania
 34. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Mount Union, State of Pennsylvania
 35. St. Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre, State of Pennsylvania
 36. St. Andrew the Apostle Church, Philadelphia, State of Pennsylvania
 37. St. Michael the Archangel Church, Philadelphia, State of Pennsylvania
 38. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Scranton, State of Pennsylvania
 39. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Burgaw, State of North Carolina
 40. St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Tampa, State of Florida
 41. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Manchester, State of New Hampshire
 42. Church of St. George the Great Martyr, Buffalo, State of New York
- c. All parishes and clergy in Canada, which presently constitute the Edmonton, Canada Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate (they all desired to remain in the jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch).
4. St. Nicholas Cathedral and its possessions and residence, and also the property in Pine Bush, New York, shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through a person representing him in the rank of Presbyter.
 5. Parishes and clergy in the U.S.A. which remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through one of his vicar bishops; not having a title of the local American Church, especially appointed for this, and until such time as these parishes express their official desire to join the Autocephalous Church in America in the manner described below.

6. Parishes and clergy which at this time constitute the Edmonton, Canada Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate and remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through one of his vicar bishops not having a title of the local American Church, especially appointed for this, and until such time as these parishes express their official desire to join the Autocephalous Church in America in the manner described below.
7. The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America shall have exclusive spiritual and canonical jurisdiction over all bishops, clerics and laymen of the Eastern Orthodox confession in continental North America, excluding Mexico, and including the State of Hawaii who are presently part of the Metropolitanate, or who shall later enter the Metropolitanate; and over all parishes which now belong or later shall be accepted into the Metropolitanate, excepting the entire clergy, possessions and parishes enumerated in Paragraph 3, points a,b,c.
8. The Moscow Patriarchate shall not lay claim to either spiritual or canonical jurisdiction over bishops, clergy and laymen of the Eastern Orthodox confession, or over parishes mentioned in Division 1, Paragraph 7, and by the present yields to the Metropolitanate, all jurisdiction to which she has laid claim on the above mentioned territory (Paragraph 7); excepting the entire clergy, possessions and parishes enumerated in Paragraph 3, points a,b,c.
9. The changing of jurisdictions by parishes which are in the canonical care of the Moscow Patriarchate after the proclamation of the Metropolitanate's autocephaly shall occur on the initiative of the parishes themselves and after bilateral agreements in each concrete case between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Autocephalous Church in America.
10. The Moscow Patriarchate shall not receive into its care in North America any clerics without written release or any parishes except parishes from uncanonical ecclesiastical organizations in Canada; and shall not canonically permit clergy and parishes remaining in its care to enter any of the Orthodox jurisdictions but the jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.
11. The Patriarchate assures the parishes remaining in its care of its readiness to defend their status as parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also defend the enumerated parishes from attempts to change their present status without a free expression of their decision without the written agreement of the Moscow Patriarchate.
12. The Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Autocephalous Church in America shall maintain sincere fraternal relations, in which they should be guided by the bilateral agreements, signed by His Eminence, Metropolitan IRENEY, and by His Eminence, Metropolitan NIKODIM, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, on March 31, 1970.
13. The Exarchate of North and South America, together with the dioceses in the U.S.A. and Canada which comprised it, is abolished.

Confirming the Autocephaly of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, we bless her to call herself The Holy Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America; we acknowledge and proclaim her our Sister Church, and we invite all local Orthodox Churches and their Primate and their faithful children to acknowledge her as such and to include her in the dyptichs in accordance with the Canons of the Church, the traditions of the Fathers and ecclesiastical practice.

The newly-established local Orthodox Autocephalous Church in America should abide in brotherly relations with all the Orthodox Churches and their Primate as well as with their bishops, clergy and

pious flock, who are in America and who for the time being preserve their de facto existing canonical and jurisdictional dependence on their national Churches and their Primate.

With profound, sincere joy, We announce this to the Fullness of the Church and We do not cease thanking the All-Gracious Almighty God, who directs all in the world by His right hand for the good and the salvation of mankind, for the successful and final formation of Autocephaly, and we entreat the all-powerful blessing of God upon the younger Sister in the family of local Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

May the Consubstantial and Life-creating and Undivided Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, acting on Its own wondrous providence, send down on the Archpastors, Pastors and Faithful Children of the Holy Autocephalous Orthodox American Church Its heavenly, unfailing help, and may It bless with success all her future endeavors for the good of the Holy Church.

Signed in the city of Moscow, April 10, 1970.

1. ALEXEI, Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia

Members of the Holy Synod:

1. Metropolitan of Krutitsy and Kolomna, PIMEN
2. Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, NIKODIM
3. Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia, Exarch of the Ukraine, PHILARET
4. Metropolitan of Orel and Briansk, PALLADY
5. Metropolitan of Alma-Ata and Khazakstan, IOSIF
6. Metropolitan of Yaroslavl and Rostov, IOANN
7. Archbishop of Irkutsk and Tchita, VENIAMIN
8. Archbishop of Ufa and Sterlitamak, IOV
9. Archbishop of New York and the Aleutians, Exarch of North and South America, IONAFAN
10. Bishop of Kishinev and Moldavia, VARFOLOMEY
11. Bishop of Tula and Belev, IUVENALY
12. Bishop of Chernigov and Nezhinsk, VLADIMIR
13. Bishop of Smolensk and Viazmia, GEDEON
14. Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan of Tallin and Estonia, ALEXEI

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