CHAPTER 9

The Twentieth Century, HI: Diaspora and Mission

JURISDICTIONAL DIVISIONS

IN the past Orthodoxy has appeared, from the cultural and geographical point of view, almost exclusively as an 'eastern' Church. Today this is rapidly ceasing to be so. Outside the boundaries of the traditional Orthodox countries there now exists a large Orthodox 'dispersion', its chief centre in North America, but with branches in every part of the world. In numbers and influence Greeks and Russians predominate, but the 'diaspora' is by no means limited to them alone: Serbs, Romanians, Arabs, Bulgarians, Albanians, and others all have a place.

The origins of this Orthodox diaspora extend some way back. Russian missionaries first settled on the North American continent in 1794; and some time earlier than this, in 1677, the first Greek Church was opened in London, in the then fashionable district of Soho. It had a brief but troubled career, and was closed in 1682. Henry Compton, the Anglican Bishop of London, forbade the Greeks to have a single icon in the church and demanded that their clergy omit all prayers to the saints, disown the Council of Jerusalem (1672), and repudiate the doctrine of Transubstantiation. When the Patriarch of Constantinople protested against these conditions to the English Ambassador, Sir John Finch, the latter retorted that it was 'illegal for any public Church in England to express Romish beliefs, and that it was just as bad to have them professed in Greek as in Latin'![1] When the Greeks next opened a church in London

1. See E. Carpenter, *The Protestant Bishop,* London, 1936, pp. 357-64.

in 1838, they were fortunately not subject to these irksome restrictions.

But if the fact of an Orthodox diaspora is not itself new, only within the last sixty years has it attained such dimensions as to make the presence of Orthodox a significant factor in the religious life of non-Orthodox countries. Even today, as a result of national and jurisdictional divisions, the influence of the diaspora is not nearly as great as it might otherwise be.

The most important single event in the story of the dispersion has been the Bolshevik Revolution, which drove into exile more than a million Russians, including the cultural and intellectual *elite* of the nation. Before 1914 the majority of Orthodox *emigres,* whether Greek or Russian, were poor and little educated - people travelling west to trade or to look for work. But the great wave of exiles after the Revolution contained many men qualified to make contact with the west on a scholarly level, who could present Orthodoxy to the non-Orthodox world in a way that most earlier immigrants manifestly could not. The output of the Russian emigration, particularly in its first years, was astonishing: in the two decades between the World Wars, so it has been calculated, they published 10,000 books and 200 journals, not counting literary and scientific reviews. Today the Russian emigration is outnumbered by the Greek, and the Greeks, too, have begun to play an active part in the intellectual life of their adopted countries: in the United States, for example, a number of Greeks hold academic posts and a 'Hellenic University' is now being established at Boston.

The Greek diaspora, as we have seen, is under the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Russian diaspora is divided ecclesiastically into four groups or 'jurisdictions':

(1) *The Synod of the Russian Church in Exile* (also known as 'the Russian Church Outside Russia', 'the Karlovtzy Synod', the Synod') - over 17 bishops, perhaps 250 parishes.
(2) *The Moscow Patriarchate* - about 10 bishops, perhaps 70 parishes.

(3) *The Russian Archdiocese of Western Europe,* under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (also known as the 'Paris jurisdiction') - a bishops, perhaps 40 parishes.
(4) *The Orthodox Church in America* (until 1970 'The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America', 'The Metropolia'; no longer solely Russian) - 12 bishops, 550 parishes.

The story of Russian jurisdictional divisions is both tragic and complicated, and it can only be summarized briefly here. On 20 November 1920 Patriarch Tikhon, doubtless foreseeing that he would be imprisoned and deprived of the free exercise of his office, issued a decree authorizing Russian bishops to set up temporary independent organizations of their own, should it become impossible to maintain normal relations with the Patriarchate. After the collapse of the White Russian armies, over a million Russians found themselves in exile, including many priests and several bishops. It was clearly impossible for the Patriarch to supervise the religious life of the exiles, and so the bishops outside Russia applied the conditions of Tikhon's 1920 decree. In 1921, at the invitation of the Patriarch of Serbia, they held a Council at Sremski-Karlovci (Karlovtzy) in Yugoslavia, at which a temporary ecclesiastical administration for Russian Orthodox in exile was worked out. Supreme control was vested in a Synod of bishops who were to meet annually at Karlovtzy; an Administrative Board was also set up, comprising representatives of the clergy and laity.

The decisions of the Karlovtzy Council of 1921 were at first accepted by every Russian bishop at that time outside the borders of Russia. But Tikhon, on 5 May 1922, issued a decree abolishing the Administrative Board, and ordering Metropolitan Evlogy to work out a new scheme for the Russian Church abroad. Evlogy (1864-1946), the Russian bishop in Paris, was Exarch in western Europe; he had attended the Council of 1921 and signed the decisions. When he issued this decree, Tikhon was already in communist hands, so that there is some reason to believe he was acting under pressure and unable to express his true mind. Evlogy and the other

bishops at the Karlovtzy Synod of 1922 duly worked out a new administration for the Russian Church in exile. Tikhon made no protest against these arrangements, and the Karlovtzy bishops claimed that he accepted the new constitution. Sergius, Alexis, and Pimen, however, have several times condemned the Karlovtzy administration, and the Moscow Patriarchate continues to the present day to regard it as entirely illegal and uncanonical. The Synod, for its part, does not recognize as valid the elections of Patriarch Sergius and his successors; and it has ignored the condemnations published by Moscow, looking upon them as political documents devoid of any spiritual authority. Between the wars the Synod met regularly at Karlovtzy; after the Second World War it moved to Munich, and since 1949 its centre has been in New York. The Synod was headed at first by Antony (Khrapovitsky), formerly Metropolitan of Kiev; from 1936 until 1964 the presiding bishop was Metropolitan Anastasy; the present head is Metropolitan Philaret. In the last fifteen years this group has become increasingly isolated from the rest of the Orthodox Church.

A small number of *emigre* Russians, instead of recognizing the Karlovtzy administration, preferred to remain in direct contact with the Moscow Patriarchate, thus forming the second of the four jurisdictions mentioned above. This group has never been large (very few clergy in exile were willing to comply with the demand of Sergius in 1927, and to provide a written statement of loyalty to the Soviet regime); but in 1945 several bishops and parishes in western Europe joined this Moscow jurisdiction.

The two remaining groups were formed by bishops who at first supported the Karlovtzy Synod, but who left it in 1926. The Paris jurisdiction owed its origin to the Russian Exarch in Paris, Metropolitan Evlogy. At first, as we have seen, he cooperated with the bishops at Karlovtzy, but after 1926 he ceased to attend the Synod. Then in 1930 he was disowned by Sergius because he prayed for the Christians under persecution in Russia (Sergius held that there were no persecuted Christians in Russia). Finding himself isolated, in 1931 Evlogy placed

himself and his parishes under the spiritual care of the Ecumenical Patriarch. In 1934 Evlogy was privately reconciled to Metropolitan Antony, and in the following year he went to Karlovtzy for a special 'reunion' conference, at which the schism between him and the Synod was healed; but he subsequently renounced this agreement. Eventually, in 1945, shortly before his death, he submitted to the Patriarch of Moscow. But the great majority of his flock did not feel able to follow him, and remained under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch. So matters continued until 1965, when the Patriarch of Constantinople - acting apparently under Russian pressure - suddenly announced that he could no longer continue his Russian Exarchate; and he recommended its members to join the jurisdiction of Moscow. This, not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority were unwilling to do, and they chose rather to constitute themselves into an independent group. In 1971 they were received back into the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Finally there is the fourth group, the North American Metropolia. After the Revolution, the Russians in America stood in a slightly different position from the *emigres* elsewhere, since here alone in the countries outside Russia, there was a regularly constituted Russian diocese before 1917, with a resident bishop. Metropolitan Platon of New York (1866-1934), like Evlogy, separated from the Karlovtzy Synod in 1926; he had already - in 1924 - severed contact with the Moscow Patriarchate, so that after 1926 the Russians in the United States formed *de facto* an autonomous group. At the 'reunion' conference in Yugoslavia in 1935 Platon's successor, Metropolitan Theophilus, rejoined the Karlovtzy jurisdiction. In 1946, however, at the Synod of Cleveland, a division occurred among the Russians in America. Five of the nine bishops present at this Synod, and a minority of the delegates from the parishes, decided to remain subject to the Karlovtzy-Munich group under Anastasy; but the other four bishops (including Theophilus himself), with a large majority of the parochial delegates, decided to submit to the Moscow Patriarchate,

on condition that the Patriarchate allowed them to retain their 'complete autonomy as it exists at present'. At that time the Patriarchate was unable to consent to this. In 1970, however, the Moscow Patriarchate granted the Metropolia not just autonomy but autocephaly, declaring it to be the 'Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America' (the 'OCA'). But this grant of autocephaly has not yet been recognized by Constantinople, or by most of the other Orthodox Churches. The present head of the OCA is Metropolitan Theodosius. The OCA has not only Russian but Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian parishes.

The Russian Church in Exile is strongly critical of the submissive attitude adopted by Church authorities in Russia today towards the atheist government; so are many members of the Russian Archdiocese of W. Europe and the OCA. Often it is claimed that the differences between Russian groupings in emigration are primarily political, that the Russian Church in Exile is 'white' or 'Tsarist', the Moscow Patriarchate 'red', and the other two somewhere in between. This is a very misleading way of looking at the matter. Certainly the Russian Church in Exile venerates the memory of Emperor Nicholas II, and its members hope that God may one day allow a Christian government to be restored in Russia; but it refuses to submit to the Moscow Patriarchate not for political but for religious reasons. The basic question at issue is this: How should the Church and the Christian bear witness, when confronted by a militant atheist government? And that is not a political but a spiritual problem.

WESTERN ORTHODOXY

Let us look briefly at the Orthodox communities in western Europe and in North America. In 1922 the Greeks created an Exarchate for western Europe, with its centre in London. The first Exarch, Metropolitan Germanos (1872-1951), was widely known for his work for Christian unity, and played a leading part in the Faith and Order Movement between the wars. In 1963 this Exarchate was divided into four separate dioceses, with bishops at London, Paris, Bonn, and Vienna;