Exile, Hospitality, Sobornost: the Experience of the Russian Émigrés

ANDREW LOUTH
Professor Emeritus, Durham University, UK

The exile of members of the Russian intelligentsia not acceptable to the Bolsheviks can be seen as one of the unintentionally creative events of the last century for Orthodox theology. In exile, the Russians had to make sense of their experience of Orthodoxy, no longer at home in the place where they found themselves—for most of them, Paris. The political structures of Tsarist Russia, which had provided a scaffolding for the Russian Orthodox Church, had been removed, and with that an institutional sense of the Church as existing in *symphonia* with the State: an ecclesiology that went back, ultimately, to the emperor Constantine's conversion and the close relationship between Church and State, envisaged by Justinian's *Codex* and *Novels*. Some, especially Fr Afanasiev, looked back behind the Constantinian settlement and evolved an ecclesiology that drew on the Slavophil sense of *sobornost'*, interpreted in terms of the eucharist as the event of the Church, the influential 'eucharistic ecclesiology'. Exile encountered hospitality offered by Western Christians interested in, and sometimes attracted to, Orthodoxy, two examples of which being the short-lived *colloque* convened by Nicholas Berdyaev and the Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain, and the still existing Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. Exile was, however, for many a traumatic experiences, causing great suffering, and however much diaspora was seen as an opportunity, there remained for many a deep nostalgia for the loss of Holy Russia.

In his essay, 'Two Cities', the Polish poet and essayist Adam Zagajewski makes a distinction between what he calls the settled, the emigrants, and the homeless. He explains the difference between these three categories thus:

> Settled people die where they were born; sometimes one sees country homes in which multiple generations of the same family lived. Emigrants make their homes abroad and thus make sure that at least their children will once again belong to the category of settled people (who speak another language). An emigrant, therefore, is a temporary link, a guide who takes future generations by the hand and leads them to another, safe place, or so it appears to him.
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> A homeless person, on the other hand, is someone who, by accident, caprice of fate, his own fault, or the fault of his temperament did not want—or was incapable in his childhood or early youth of forging—close and affectionate bonds with the surroundings in which he grew and matured. To be homeless, therefore, does not mean that one lives under a bridge or on the platform

> of a less frequented Metro station (as for instance, *nomen omen*, the station Europe on the line Pont de Levallois—Gallieni); it means only that the person having this defect cannot indicate the streets, cities, or community that might be his home, his, as one is wont to say, miniature homeland.[1]

I quote this to open up the notion of exile or diaspora that forms one pole of the subject of this paper: the diaspora created in the 1920s by the expulsion of the non-Communist intellectuals from the Bolshevik republic. I suppose most of them are to be classified as emigrants, who became settled in the country of their reception and whose children grew up and settled there. My little experience of people in this category suggests that it is not as tidy as Zagajewski suggests. Although 'settled', the children (and grandchildren and great-grandchildren) of these emigrants often preserve a sense of dual belonging; they have not become settled in anything like the sense of those whose families have the roots of long-established settlement. They hanker after their origins, and those origins form part of their sense of who they are.[2]

The third category, to which Zagajewski assigns himself—the homeless—is a very broad category and might be thought to characterize much modern society in the West. Even I, who could not be more English, could be categorized as homeless in Zagajewski's sense: like many children born in the middle of the last century, my parents moved about, so that I cannot indicate streets or a community that belong to my 'miniature homeland'. And this category embraces many of the emigrants, too, especially if they emigrated as children, for even if they turn out to be real emigrants in Zagajewski's sense, whose children have settled, they are unable to point to the streets, the neighbourhood, that unequivocally constitute their 'home'.

The point of these preparatory remarks is to suggest that in looking at the experience of exile or diaspora and its impact on the thought of the Russian émigrés, especially in Paris, we are not looking at a tiny, limited phenomenon, but one that has resonances in many who do not think of themselves as exiles, but whose experience embraces something of that condition, so far as their own sense of their place in the world is concerned.

The other pole of this paper is the notion of *sobornost´*, which has become a key term in the understanding of human community, and in particular, ecclesial community—the sense of being a church—in modern Orthodox theology, and which was profoundly influenced by the thought of the Russian émigrés who made their home in Paris in the middle years of the last century.

The notion of *sobornost´* was one that the émigrés brought with them from their homeland: it is one of the key terms of Slavophil thought, so we must begin by

[1] Adam Zagajewski, *Two Cities* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 3–4.

[2] To take one example out of hundreds, see the book by Fr Alexander Schmemann's son, Serge, *Echoes of a Native Land* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997).

showing how the notion emerged in the nineteenth century.[3] Aleksei Khomiakov, along with Ivan Kireevsky, one of the first Slavophils, sometimes argued that, while Western Christianity was heir to three traditions—of Hebrew religion, Greek philosophy, and Roman law—Slav Christianity, or Orthodox Christianity, was heir to only two of these traditions—Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy (a very questionable position, given the importance of law in the Emperor Justinian's reforms). This meant, in particular, that the Slavs had no real grasp of the notion of an individual, something Khomiakov regarded as embedded in Roman law. For him it was the notion of the individual, cut off from the organic community to which human beings should properly belong, that was the root cause of the problems of the West—problems that had been introduced into Russian society by the reforms of Peter the Great and made worse during the reign of Catherine the Great. In truth, it seems to me that Khomiakov and his Slavophilism were not as uniquely Slav as he thought. Many thinkers throughout the Western world were alarmed at the corrosive effects on human society of industrialization and urbanization, which they felt destroyed natural communities, and reduced human beings to interchangeable units—individuals identified by a factory number or by their place of residence in some faceless flat. Andrzej Walicki calls Slavophilism 'an interesting variant of European conservative romanticism',[4] which was something to be found throughout Europe in the nineteenth century; an English example would be Coleridge, with whom it would be profitable, I think, to compare Khomiakov. Khomiakov looked back to the Russian village, with its church, the great house and its lands, ruled by a village council in which all members of the village participated. Such a society was an organic community; it was not made up of independent individuals but was rather a society in which its members found their identity by belonging. It was an example of the 'one and the many': the one and the many balancing each other, neither reducible to the other. There was a good deal of romanticism about the village life of the Russian peasants, summed up by such romantics in the folk proverb: 'Doing anything in common is good, even dying'.[5]

The 'one and the many'—the *hen kai pan*—was a central issue in the movements in German philosophy that followed in wake of Kant and sought to restore the sense of organic unity of knower and known that Kant had severed: movements characterized as 'Idealism'. For all the anti-Westernism implicit in Slavophil thought, it was, in truth, deeply in debt to the currents of German Idealist philosophy, especially the thought of Schelling. What was important for Slavophils like Khomiakov and Kireevsky was that for them the reconciliation of the one and the many was rooted

[3] As a matter of fact, the term *sobornost´* (as well as the term 'integral knowledge', *tsel´noe znanie*) is not actually found in the writings of the Slavophils, Khomiakov and Kireevsky. See Robert Bird in *On Spiritual Unity: a Slavophile Reader* (Hudson, NT: Lindisfarne Books, 1998), 8 and n. 1.

[4] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 160.

[5] Quoted by Donald Nicholl in the chapter 'The holy folk' in his *Triumphs of the Spirit in Russia* (London: DLT, 1997), 195.

in God the Holy Trinity, in which unity and the manifold are already united, and that this complementarity of the one and the many was characteristic of the cosmos created by God, and in particular of the Church, at least in its Eastern Orthodox manifestation. Khomiakov used the Slavonic word that translated the Greek *katholikos* in the creed—*soborny*—to characterize the way in which the Church held together the one and the many. The word *soborny* is derived from the verb *sobrat´*, to gather together, and I suggest it was a careful attempt to render the root meaning of *katholikos*, which is derived from the expression *καθ' ὅλον*, meaning something like 'to take as a whole'. For what is characteristic of the Orthodox Church, according to Khomiakov, is precisely that the whole body of believers is gathered into a single whole; together they form a unity without having their freedom suppressed. Reconciling freedom and unity was a problem that Schelling had wrestled with, as part of the problem of the One and the Many, which is perhaps why Schelling—of all the German Idealists—came to be so attractive to the Slavophils. The *soborny* nature of the Orthodox Church, which later Russian thinkers came to call by the abstract noun *sobornost´*, was something that Khomiakov contrasted with what he found in the Western Churches: in his view, Roman Catholicism achieved unity at the price of freedom, whereas the Protestant church sacrificed unity in the interests of freedom. Only in the Orthodox Church and her *sobornost´* could be found both unity and freedom: a union freely embraced and a freedom that did not itch to tear apart unity.

This sense of an organic unity, rooted in Christ and his body the Church, in which believers found their identity through faith in the One Christ and through belonging to the One Church—a belonging expressed in the sacramental life of the Church and the mutual concern of all members, living and departed, human and angelic, for one another—reaches back behind the clash of authority and freedom that marked the Reformation to an understanding of the Church more characteristic of patristic thought. Much of Khomiakov's thought was brought to expression through his acquaintance with William Palmer, an Englishman and an Anglican deacon, who made his way to Russia in his quest to promote the unity of the Church. Palmer and Khomiakov exchanged letters, and Khomiakov wrote for him a short ecclesiological treatise, *The Church is One*.[6] In that treatise he expresses very beautifully the meaning of *sobornost´*, the way in which the individual finds his true reality in union with others in the Church, in contrast to the destructive solitude that characterizes reliance on one's self:

> We know that when any one of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in

[6] W. J. Birkbeck, *Russia and the Universal Church*, vol. 1 [the only volume published] (London: Rivington, Percival, and Co., 1895) contains Khomiakov's correspondence with Palmer and includes, as the final chapter, Khomiakov's treatises *The Church is One*, which is more easily obtainable elsewhere (see next footnote).

> unity with all her other members… Wherefore no one can rest his hope on his own prayers, and every one who prays asks the whole Church for intercession, not as if he had any doubts of the intercession of Christ, the one Advocate, but in the assurance that the whole Church ever prays for all her members. All the angels pray for us, the apostles, martyrs, and patriarchs, and above all, the Mother of our Lord, and this holy unity is the true life of the Church…[7]

Khomiakov's notion of *sobornost´* has philosophical, political, or sociological roots; he is thinking of (his idealized view of) the Russian village; nothing much is added to the notion in its application to the Church.

Let us now turn to the other pole of the title: the experience of exile, or diaspora, in particular the theological reflection of the Russian émigrés in Paris between the two World Wars. Much water had flowed under the bridge of history between Slavophils and our émigrés, not least the Communist revolution, and preceding that the long period of talk about reform of the Church that culminated in the Moscow Synod or *Sobor* of 1917/18. This aimed to bring an end to the long period of ecclesiological distortion that had been created by Peter the Great's promulgation of the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* of 1721 and the suppression of the Patriarchate. In the view of many of the émigrés, this *sobor* had been a lost opportunity, but it had provided a forum for some serious thought about how the Church should be organized and consequently provoked some ecclesiological reflection (distilled in dialogue form in Bulgakov's *Beneath the Ramparts of Cherson*[8]).[9] The Moscow *Sobor* had taken place under the shadow of the flight of Minerva's owl; even as it restored the patriarchate to its position in the imperial *symphonia* model, the Communist Revolution was embarking on a process that would lead to persecution intended to exterminate the Church altogether. In the diaspora, the Russian émigrés found themselves among Western Christians who were often very welcoming. This forced them to articulate their sense of identity as Russian Orthodox Christians. Some, certainly, did this in a spirit of nostalgia, with an evocation of Holy Russia, now lost, but for many of them something much deeper was involved. They found themselves discovering a sense of the unique spirit of Orthodox—and especially Russian Orthodox—theology and life. This was an enormously contentious issue: there were those who wanted to continue the tradition of theological-cum-philosophical reflection that had marked the later years of the nineteenth century—Fr Sergii Bulgakov was the

[7] Alexey Stepanovich Khomiakov, *The Church is One*, with an introduction by Nicolas Zernov (London: The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1968), 38–9 (There is also a translation of this treatise in *On Spiritual Unity*, 31–53).

[8] Serge Boulgakov, *Sous les ramparts de Chersonèse*, trans. Bernard Marchadier (Geneva: Editions ad Solem, 1999).

[9] See the discussion in Hyacinthe Destivelle, *Le concile de Moscou (1917–1918)*, Cogitatio Fidei 246 (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 263–78.

leading figure among these. Others, notably Fr Georges Florovsky, were convinced that this tradition was bankrupt and that a radically fresh start was needed, which Florovsky called 'Christian Hellenism' or the 'Neo-Patristic synthesis'. There also emerged a sense—uniting in some ways those otherwise opposed—that the fundamental issues between Orthodox and Western theology could be found in the hesychast controversy of fourteenth-century Byzantium, with St Gregory Palamas as the champion of Orthodoxy, a sense that in some way built on the tradition of what one might call 'Philokalic' theology that had emerged in the nineteenth century. In another way there was a widespread sense that the heart of Orthodoxy could be found in Russian culture, as depicted in the nineteenth-century literature, not least the novels of Dostoevsky; one could place alongside this the 'Philokalic' theology of the popular work then (in the 1920s) soon to be translated into English as *The Way of a Pilgrim*.[10]

What concerns us is the more specifically ecclesiological reflection we find in the Russian diaspora. There is a sense—made more acute by the perceived failure of the Moscow *Sobor*—that the Constantinian, or Eusebian, tradition of *symphonia* between Church and State was bankrupt, that its understanding of the Church was fundamentally flawed, that Orthodox theology needed to dig more deeply for an authentic ecclesiology. In articulating their sense of what was wrong with Eusebian ecclesiology, the Russians drew on ideas that were becoming the conventional wisdom in the rapidly developing field of New Testament and early Church scholarship. This (largely Protestant) scholarship also enabled the Russian émigrés to articulate their difference from Catholicism—differences that had been elided by the theology of the so-called Symbolic Books of the seventeenth century that had formed the basis of seminary theology in nineteenth-century Russia, all dismissed by Florovsky as a 'pseudo-morphosis' characteristic of the 'Babylonian captivity of [Orthodox] theology'.[11]

In this search for an ecclesiology more deeply rooted in early Christian experience before the compromises of the post-Constantinian period, the Russians—pre-eminent among whom was Fr Nicholas Afanasiev, Professor of Church History at the Institut St-Serge in Paris—turned to the New Testament and the earliest Christian Fathers, especially St Ignatios of Antioch.[12] Here, in contrast to the relatively fixed

[10] *The Way of a Pilgrim*, translated by R.M. French (London: Philip Allan, 1930). Later expanded with *The Pilgrim continues his Way* (London: SPCK, 1954). Walter Frere, in his preface, remarks, 'They suggest a comparison with the matchless folk tales of Leo Tolstoi; and they do not suffer by such a comparison.' But see now *The Way of a Pilgrim*, trans. Anna Zaranko, introduction and notes Andrew Louth (London: Penguin Books Random House, Penguin Classics, 2017), reissued in the 'black' format, 2019.

[11] See Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, vol. 1, trans. Robert L. Nichols (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1979), 85 ('pseudomorphosis'), 121 ('Babylonian Captivity'). I owe these references to Sr Seraphima (Dr Julia Konstantinovsky).

[12] Expressed most fully, and rather later on, in his *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Vitaly Permiakov (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). His most influential work was an article, 'The Church which preside in Love', in *The Primacy of Peter in the Orthodox Church* (London: Faith Press, 1963),

structures of the post-Constantinian Church, they found a situation that was fluid, with traditions still establishing themselves, and still varying from place to place, from local church to local church. Patterns of ministry and ideas of the Church were still evolving. The first point Afanasiev emphasizes is that it is the whole people of God, the whole *λαός*, that is priestly, sharing in the royal priesthood; priesthood does not refer to a ministerial elite, but to the whole people of God. In the post-Constantinian Church, seen as an imperial-wide structure, there rapidly developed a tendency to focus on the structures of ministry, especially on what was (much later) to be called the episcopal 'hierarchy'—using, or misusing, a word coined by the author of the Corpus *Areopagiticum* in the sixth century. On the contrary, in the New Testament and early Christian writings, it is the local community of the baptized that is the Church. This applies even to the expression 'the Catholic Church', *ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία*. The Eusebian model had more or less taken it for granted that this meant the 'universal Church', the whole institution of which 'local churches' were parts or members or branches. But this is not—so contemporary scholarship (then—as well as now) maintained[13]—what the New Testament meant by the Church, nor St Ignatios, in whose epistles the expression 'Catholic Church' is first found. There the word 'church' designates the local church, but not the local church apart from other local churches; rather it is the case that the whole Church, the 'Catholic Church', the Body of Christ, is found in every local church. Local churches are not members or constituents of the universal Church, they are manifestations of the whole Church, found whole and entire in every church, in every place. With Ignatios, this sense of the Catholic Church existing whole and entire in each place is articulated as the community gathered together with its bishop to celebrate the Eucharist, to form a eucharistic assembly: 'wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; just as wherever in Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church' (*Ad Smyrn*. 8.2). So emerged what was to be called 'eucharistic ecclesiology' that has come to characterize most twentieth-century Orthodox theology and been widely influential—on both the decree *Lumen Gentium* of the second Vatican Council and on ecclesiological reflection within the World Council of Churches. A top-down model with local churches seen as branches of the universal Church has been replaced by a model in which the local community articulates the reality of being the Church, being in Christ, something realized in all local Christian communities, gathered together under their bishops. The unity among the local churches is not a matter of agreement; it is constituted by the fact that each of them is the whole Church, and manifest in a sense of solidarity, articulated, when necessary, by the gathering together, a *synodos*, of the bishops.

57–110 (French original: Neuchatel [Suisse]: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1960), 7–64.

[13] See, for instance, the article on ἐκκλησία by Karl Schmidt in the *Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, III (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938), 502–39.

What Afanasiev is doing here is reconceiving the notion of *sobornost´* in a more strictly ecclesiological context, rather than in the philosophical, sociological context of the Slavophil notion. The most striking difference is the role of the Eucharist, all but absent from Khomiakov's understanding of *sobornost´*.

There is something else, too. As a matter of history, actual reflection among Russian émigrés on the Ignatian model of ecclesiology over against the Eusebian was the consequence of the experience of diaspora or exile. It seems to me, however, that most Orthodox in practice regard the Ignatian model as a temporary ecclesiology for the diaspora: eventually there are to be 'local' Churches in the countries of Western Europe that will return to the Eusebian model as the Orthodox communities settle down in the West.

The New Testament, however, gives little support to this idea of settling down, with the Church becoming part of the political structures of the world, as it came to be with the Eusebian and Justinianic ideal of *symphonia*. When the Apostle Paul says to the Ephesians that they are no longer 'strangers and foreigners' (*ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι*), he means that that is precisely what they are in this world, but that the hidden reality of their existence is that they are 'fellow-citizens of the saints and members of God's household' (Eph. 2:19). Similarly, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, those who live by faith are 'strangers and pilgrims on earth' who are in search of their 'homeland' (Heb. 11:13, 14), while 'here we have no abiding city, but seek one to come' (Heb. 13:14). The author of the second-century *Epistle to Diognetus* reaffirms this, saying of Christians that 'they live in their own countries, but as foreigners; they share in everything as citizens, but dwell everywhere as strangers; every foreign country is theirs and every country foreign' (*Diog. 5.5*). Christians have, over the centuries, settled down and made towns and countries their homes, but these words remind us that at a deeper level, we can never settle down in this world. Perhaps there is some fundamental betrayal involved in the Church accepting a place in this world, as if here it had found its 'ancient homeland', that 'ancient homeland' towards which we look from afar, according to St Basil, when we turn east to pray.[14] Maybe Christians are meant to be 'homeless', in Zagajewski's sense.

Let us now come to hospitality. In some ways, this can be seen as a counterpart of exile: as we have seen, the Russian émigrés in Paris experienced hospitality on the part of the Catholic (and Protestant) theologians and philosophers who welcomed them. An example, to which we shall return, is the so-called 'Berdyaev Colloquy', which must have been the context in which some of the ideas just discussed about what it meant to be Russian Orthodox in Paris were developed. In trying to explore the experience of hospitality, some caution is needed. What we know most about is a small number of intellectuals—the kind of people who frequented the Berdyaev Colloquy—but these were hardly typical. They constituted a tiny elite, members of

[14] Basil the Great, *De Spiritu Sancto* 27.66 (PG 32:192A).

the educated upper class who were fluent in other languages than Russian, especially French, which had been almost as familiar to many upper-class Russians as their native tongue, if not more so. This group of intellectuals, expelled from Russia by Lenin and Trotsky's decree at the end of 1922, amounted to no more that 220 (the number of non-Marxist intellectuals on Lenin's list), of whom about 70 were dispatched on the 'Philosophers' Steamship' (actually two ships which left Petrograd in the autumn of 1922; others, including Sergii Bulgakov, were deported from Odessa later).[15] However, the total number of Russians who found themselves in Paris and its environs—expelled from Russia or in flight—was much, much larger, probably amounting to around 200,000. Many of these Russians found the experience of diaspora totally disorientating. When Mother Maria in the twenties and early thirties visited the mental asylums of northern France seeking out Russia émigrés, she discovered many Russians whose total disorientation bereft of their native land had led them to be classified as mentally ill and confined to asylums. There was nothing wrong with them, she discovered, save that, unable to communicate, they had withdrawn into themselves and had been taken to be mentally ill.

Many others coped only a little better. Let me give you two examples. In her obituary notice for Vladyka Vitaly (Ustinov), later the Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, the Russian historian, Nadieszda Kizenko, comparing Vladyka Vitaly's experience of Paris with that of his predecessors, the Metropolitans Antonii Khrapovitskii, Anastasii Gribanovskii, and Philaret Voznesenskii, remarked:

> Vladyka Vitaly's predecessors had all known more security than he had, and received a more solid theological education. This foundation gave them a sense of the inherent strength of their position, and a certain generosity and largeness of vision. To Vladyka Vitaly, by contrast, Russia, and Orthodox Christianity, were not huge, millennium-old, stable entities that could be taken for granted; they were instead under both overt and covert attack on every front, by the Bolsheviks first and foremost. It was the Bolsheviks and all who worked with them who had destroyed what had been the Russia of his ancestors. Economically straitened France in the 1920s and 1930s, moreover, was hardly a haven of friendliness or opportunity to outsiders, even to those who had learned the language as children and had done military service. (The contemporary phrase *sale étranger*—dirty foreigner—is emblematic.) People who were even slightly older than Vladyka Vitaly might dream nostalgically of their earlier homes as they sought new ones. He, by contrast, went from military service to working for an English company to the St Serge Theological Institute in Paris—with some success, but with little inner fulfil-

[15] See Lesley Chamberlain, *The Philosophy Steamship: Lenin and the Exile of the Intelligentsia* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 13–170.

> ment. To him, the only home left, and the only body he could serve with all his heart, was the closest exemplar of his family's ideals and the best living link to the Russia he remembered—the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.[16]

My other example is Metropolitan Antony Bloom's father. Before the Revolution he had been a diplomat. The Revolution and the collapse of the Imperial system called in question his whole life and impressed on him the responsibility his class bore in all this; he refused to make a new life and eventually, in Paris, he sought only the lowliest of jobs and lived as a virtual recluse an 'austere and impoverished life… for the peace of his own mind… whatever financial hardship his wife and son had to endure'.[17]

For the intellectual elite, or at least some of them, things were much better; many spoke French, and indeed other European languages, though most of them were happier writing in their native tongue. Quickly journals were established, in which they could publish, notably *Put´*, 'The Way', founded by Nicolas Berdyaev, and also Russian language publishers, especially the YMCA Press.[18] Other ways of communicating among themselves, and potentially with others, were set up, notably the 'Colloque', usually associated with Berdyaev's name, though established by him and his on-off friend, the Catholic lay philosopher, Jacques Maritain, where thinkers, both Russian Orthodox and Catholic (and also, to begin with, until the Vatican expressed its disapproval, Protestants), met together, gave papers, and discussed philosophical and theological issues. The Catholics, at such meetings, one may imagine (I do not know of any source of real evidence), were interested in expressing their own ideas and finding out more about the philosophical and theological ideas of the Russians; for the Russians themselves, it must have been more a matter of expressing, in a novel context, what they thought was philosophically and theologically important, and in this they were talking as much to themselves as to their Western European interlocutors. Exploring reminiscences of this colloque might seem a profitable way to discover something of the experience of hospitality on the part of its Catholic members, but, though it is often referred to, very little evidence of what happened seems to have survived. There seems to have been no minutes taken, and even in Jean-Luc Barré's long biography, *Jean et Raïssa Maritain*, the colloque gets barely a mention.[19]

[16] *Sobornost* 30.1 (2008): 72–84, at 75.

[17] Gillian Crow, *'This Man of God': Impressions of Metropolitan Anthony* (London: DLT, 2005), 24. It was not only Boris Eduardovich who experienced such alienation; it was the experience of the young Andrei Bloom and his mother: see Avril Pyman, *Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: A Life* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2016), 8–15.

[18] For *Put´*, see Antoine Arjakovsky, *La Génération des penseurs religieux de l'émigration russe* (Kiev-Paris: L'Esprit et la Lettre, 2002).

[19] Jean-Luc Barré, *Jean et Raïssa Maritain* (Paris: Perrin, 2012; first printed Fayard, 2009), 258–9, 380: these are all the (unrevealing) references that I could find.

The only example of hospitality that bore much fruit, and that we know of, seems to be the foundation of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. As the title of the fellowship suggests—for St Alban is the proto-martyr of Britain—the fellowship was concerned with relationships between the British, in fact mostly English, and to be precise, Anglicans (members of the Church of England) and the Russian émigrés. The leading spirit behind this fellowship was Nicolas Zernov and his wife Militsa. Nicolas himself was a writer, though mostly a writer about others and a popularizer. He was a deeply humble man, and was content to be thought of—as he presented himself—as one who had moved among the great figures of the Russian emigration, people such as Father Sergii Bulgakov, to whom he was close, and others such as Fr Georges Florovsky, as well as the musician and composer, Nikolai Medtner, to whom he was also close. His own theological work he played down, though he was a contributor to *Put´*, and—as is evident from Arjakovsky's study—one of the early advocates of Eucharistic ecclesiology. The work he is known by concerns the Russian tradition to which he belonged, which he made known in the West, mostly in English, for he settled in England after the Second World War, when he was appointed to the Spalding Lecturership in Eastern Orthodox Culture at the University of Oxford, where he remained until his death in 1980. His works are generally regarded as works of popularization, and therefore tend to be neglected; nevertheless we should remember that the widely used expression, the 'Russian Religious Renaissance', is drawn from the title of one of the most valuable of his books, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century*.[20] Our concern with Nicolas is with his involvement in the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. Involved with it from the beginning, though not actually the founder, he became secretary of the Fellowship in 1934, and by the time he relinquished the position in 1947 on his appointment to the lecturership in Oxford, the membership had grown from less than 350 to over 1,250. Also, under his leadership, the journal of the Fellowship had become more established and adopted the name by which it is still known: *Sobornost* (originally *Sobornost´*, it lost its soft sign with number 3 of series 7 in summer 1976).[21]

The Fellowship was in some ways an anomalous body. The first encounter between the Russia émigrés and the West had been with Catholic theologians and philosophers through the Berdyaev–Maritain colloquy. So far as I know, the only Anglican who ever attended the colloquy was the theologian and, as he liked to call himself, 'Christian sociologist' V.A. Demant, but he had, to my knowledge, little or nothing to do with the Fellowship.[22] The Fellowship was essentially a ma-

[20] Nicolas Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* (London: DLT, 1963).

[21] On the journal of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, see now Aidan Nichols, OP, *Alban and Sergius: the Story of a Journal* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2018).

[22] Not quite: Demant reviewed Berdyaev's *Spirit and Reality* in *Sobornost*: see Nichols, *Alban and Sergius*, 141. Now almost forgotten, there has been a recent revival of interest in V.A. Demant in Poland, where there has been published a collection of sermons made by Demant himself: Vigo Auguste Demant, *Not One World, but Two: A Miscellany of Preachments*, ed. Sławomir Nowosad (Lublin: Learned Society of

nifestation of ecumenism. The Orthodox Church had adopted a positive attitude to ecumenism from the time of Patriarch Joachim's call for engagement between the Churches in the early 1920s—one of the events that contributed to the ecumenical movement and the eventual establishment of the World Council of Churches. Similarly, the Anglican Church was open to, indeed for the most part enthusiastic about the movement towards unity between the Churches, regarding itself as ideally placed to facilitate such ecumenical endeavour. In contrast, the Vatican was very wary about ecumenism from the beginning until Vatican II and the decree, *Unitatis redintegratio*; it was this anxiety about ecumenism that led to the final extinction of the colloquy Berdyaev and Maritain had promoted. Furthermore, Nicolas had spent time in England, in the end working for an Oxford D.Phil., which he gained in 1932, so he was already aware of the Church of England, and especially of the more Anglo-Catholic side of the Church (his initial links had been with the monastic Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, which had been pioneering in exploring relationships with the Orthodox Churches). So it was that there blossomed a movement, a fellowship, that sought to engage primarily between the Church of England and the Orthodox émigrés in Paris. The annual conference of the Fellowship—originally a leisurely affair, lasting three weeks—was a venue where Orthodox thinkers met a group of mostly interested Western Christians. In the early days, Fr Sergii Bulgakov gave lectures, later on Fr Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, even once, I think, Myrrha Lot-Borodine. Friendships developed between those who attended these conferences—especially between the Lossky family and, first, the Anglican Donald Allchin, and later with Timothy Ware (now Metropolitan Kallistos). It was from members of the Fellowship that the official Anglican-Orthodox Conversations were to emerge.

What are we to make of this expression of hospitality? To begin with it was immensely fruitful, not least for expanding the horizons of the Anglican Communion. In the long term, I am not sure. As the ecumenical climate has become more chilly, the Fellowship has found itself looking for a role. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that from the 30s to the 60s, it provided a place where Orthodox and Western Christians could meet, listen to each other, and share, without compromise to their identity.

To close, I want to return to more critical reflections on how the Russians responded to the challenge of exile. Just how far did the experience of exile lead them to embrace an ecclesiology that transcended the Justinianic notion of *symbiosis* between Church and State? It seems to me that, on a closer look, Russians found it difficult to think through the changes demanded by accepting diaspora as the normal and desirable state of Christians: in the world, though not of it, so that, in the words of the second-century *Epistle to Diognetus* already quoted, 'they live in their own countries, but as foreigners; they share in everything as citizens, but dwell

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everywhere as strangers; every foreign country is theirs and every country foreign'.[23] Let us take the case of Bulgakov. Several times in his sermons, preached during the last period of his life, when he was Dean of the Institut St-Serge in Paris, he reflected on the condition of Russians living in exile. In a sermon preached shortly after his arrival in 1925 on 1 October, the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God (*Pokrov* means both protection and veil in Russian), Bulgakov considered the importance of this feast for the Russians (for, although the historical origin of the feast belongs in Constantinople, it is in Russia that the feast became popular).

> The Russian land has come to love the day of the Protection of the Mother of God, manifested to a Slav in distant Constantinople. However, not there but in the faraway midnight land did people come to sing joyously and glorify the veiling of the world by the Mother of God… Now in their great sorrow, the Russian Orthodox people cover themselves with the veil of Protection. She manifests her love to the chosen of this people. She has revealed to them her face…[24]

A few years later in 1933, on the centenary of the death of St Seraphim of Sarov, Bulgakov reflected on the destruction of the saint's shrine by the Bolsheviks, and especially the laying waste of the community of nuns St Seraphim had established at Diveevo, the place where 'the feet of the Mother of God had stepped'. How can this be, he asks? How is it that the 'promises of the saint appear not to have been fulfilled'? Bulgakov responds by affirming that the promises refer 'not to the visible and palpable indestructibility of the place of the Mother of God, but to a spiritual, transcendent, and transhistorical reality'. Even though everything tangible is destroyed, 'nevertheless there will remain in the world that light of Tabor from the Holy Spirit which was manifested through him in the Russian land'.[25]

In a deeply moving way, Bulgakov retained a vision of the Russian land and the Russian people, which was only intensified by the experience of exile.[26]

[23] *Epistle to Diognetus* 5.5.

[24] Sergius Bulgakov, *Churchly Joy*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2008; Russian original: 1938), 12 (translation slightly modified).

[25] Bulgakov, *Churchly Joy*, 50.

[26] Some of the material in this essay has already appeared in print in two articles of mine: 'The Experience of Exile and the Discovery of *Sobornost'*', *Logos: a Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56.1–2 (2015): 277–87; 'Experience of and Reflection on Hospitality among Russian Exiles', *Communio Viatorum* 58 (2016): 136–45.