

The Tyranny of Russian Ecclesiology

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In the grand tapestry of Orthodox Christianity, the Muscovite church's insatiable expansionism strives to assert authority over the entire ecclesiastical and political realm. Since the 15th century, this far-fetched narrative has utilized deceit to undermine canonical ecclesiology. As in modern Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarch seeks to delegitimize the local Church, thereby making their desired territory available for ecclesiastic invasion. The Moscow Patriarchate's trajectory toward apostasy has reached its culmination, prompting Orthodox observers, theologians, and historians to grapple with deciphering and clarifying for the layman an understanding of the Moscow Patriarchate's problematic evil conduct.

A conspicuous derivative of Moscow's ecclesial abuse is their audacious claim to be "the rightful heir to Orthodox leadership." Embedded in this assertion is a language replete with falsehoods and deceit. An heir, by definition, is "legally entitled to the *rank* of another on that person's death." Yet, when did the thrones of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem meet their demise? Quite the opposite unfolded – they flourished as part of the Great Nation, the Great Church of Christ.

The Muscovite church consistently avoids adherence to canonical law and abuses its spiritual authority. She heavily depended on the political power wielded by ruling entities such as the czarist, Stalinist, and current Putin regimes. This alliance with political forces transforms the Church into a tool for oppressing the population rather than serving as a source of spiritual guidance.

The Church, aligned with the Kremlin, aims to expand its influence by seeking to conquer and control territories deemed as barbarian, displaying an insatiable appetite for expansion and disregarding canonical law. Moscow's approach involves labeling certain regions as "barbarian," providing a perceived legitimacy for Russian ecclesiastical conquest. This strategy has historical precedence, evidenced by Moscow's past uncanonical "missionizing" efforts in Asia and North America.

Despite the oppressive constraints imposed by the Ottoman Empire on the Rum Millet, the Great Church of Christ has thrived under excruciatingly constricting conditions. From the 15th to the 19th centuries, the Churches of the Great Nation, namely Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Cyprus, experienced remarkable growth and spiritual development under the umbrella of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In doing so, they embodied and secured the sacred essence of the Great Church of Christ and safeguarded the Traditions of the church fathers, in contrast to the Russian alterations and innovations to the Church's inheritance.

The consistently abusive Russian Church, ego-driven by opportunism, boldly asserted its autonomy, departing from canonical law at every self-serving opportunity, as in the unilateral alteration of its title to the Metropolitan of Moscow and all of Russia. This action signaled the beginning of the Russian Church's self-isolation, accompanied by an irrationally detrimental Russkiy Mir mentality. Russia's ecclesiastic abuses extended beyond heretics or enemies of the faith, encompassing anyone perceived as a threat to the Russkiy mir mentality.

Case in point: Michael Trivolis was born around 1475 in Arta, then part of the Ottoman Empire; Michael hailed from a noble family with connections to the fallen Byzantine emperor in Constantinople. His father, Manuel, held the title of Archon Voivode. Michael became a monk, taking the name Maximos. He embarked on his educational journey on the island of Corfu under the tutelage of John Moschos and John Laskaris. Later, he joined Laskaris in Florence during the 1490s and continued his studies across Italian cities such as Bologna, Florence, Ferrara, Milan, Padua, and Venice, all infused with scholars who fled Constantinople.

In 1515, Rus' Grand Prince Basil sought a monk from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to translate religious texts. His All Holiness Theoleptus I decided to send the energetic Maximos from Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos in 1518. After years of labor, in 1525, a Russian sobor accused Holy Maximos of nonconformism and heresy. Consequently, Maximos was exiled to the Volokolamsk Monastery, confined to a dungeon without the right to correspond. False allegations continued during a new sobor in 1531, resulting in a ban on receiving communion for the next two decades.

Despite combined efforts from the Patriarchs of the Great Nation, including appeals from the Ecumenical Patriarch, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, attempts to negotiate Maximos' release with Russian authorities proved futile. Maximos ultimately fell asleep in 1556 at the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra in Sergiyev Posad. Saint Maximos the Greek's memory is commemorated on January 21st in Orthodox churches worldwide.

Despite this and numerous other crimes against Orthodoxy, in 1589, Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremias II officially recognized Moscow's canonical status, favoring it by raising Job to the dignity of a patriarch.

The preferential treatment given to the local metropolitan of Moscow originated from a situation involving manipulation and coercion. Specifically, this involved the blackmail and imprisonment of the Ecumenical Patriarch, who was subjected to house arrest in Moscow until he consented to Russian demands. The Russian Church continues to employ, to this day, a strategy characterized by coercion and threats across diverse situations, maintaining a consistent approach to exerting influence and control.

Amidst the wars and tumult of 1685, ecclesiastic territories within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were temporarily transferred from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Moscow Patriarchate. The historical record attests to Moscow's failure to adhere to the terms of this transfer, reflecting a persistent pattern of the MP breaking agreements. Nevertheless, the legitimate Russian Patriarchate's existence was relatively brief. In 1721, Peter the Great dismantled the legal ecclesiastic institution, the "Moscow Patriarchate," and in its place, he established a Western-style bishop's college, modeled after the College of Cardinals, which eventually evolved into a Synod-based church administered by a lay director or Ober-Procurator.

Under Peter's rule, a new ecclesiastic educational system addressed the often insufficient education of local priests and monks. However, the enlightened curriculum, heavily influenced by the West with an emphasis on Latin language and subjects, came at the cost of limited exposure to liturgical Greek heritage, Eastern Church Fathers, and Slavonic church languages. Despite formal education, training monks and priests for ministry to a Russian-speaking population could have been more comprehensive.

During this era, a distinctive form of Russo-centric ecclesiastic education emerged, representing a significant departure from the ancient Hellenic idealism traditionally associated with Eastern Rome. This marked a profound shift in 1600 years of Orthodoxy towards de-Hellenization, where the influence of classical Eastern Church traditions began to wane from the ancient Hellenic heritage to a Russkiy Mir mentality. What distinguished this period was the unprecedented phenomenon of Russian culture actively shaping the development of the church, a departure from the historical norm where the church typically played a pivotal role in informing and influencing the culture. This shift reflected a departure from the ancient roots of Eastern Orthodoxy and the emergence of a unique, ethnically grounded Orthodoxy, redefining

the dynamics between the church and culture. This restructuring of the Orthodox ethos included a neo-classical influence evident in iconography, architecture, and music and even extended to ancient Orthodox centers through transmission from Mount Athos. The infiltration of this deleterious mindset by Russky Mir has had far-reaching consequences. Yet, in recent decades, efforts to expunge these principles from the authentic phronema have been evident worldwide, except within Russia.

This St Petersburg Synod persisted until 1917. Significantly, a considerable number of bishops, lacking canonical lineage extending beyond Moscow's defined canonically legitimate borders, came together to convene the infamous All-Russian Local Council. They established an innovative, structured Patriarchal administration in an autonomous decision-making process. The former American Archbishop Tikhon assumed leadership, but the Council's work and decrees were stifled in Russia with the ascendancy of the Bolsheviks. This marks a somber chapter in Orthodoxy as the Russian Church grapples with its ties to the Soviet state, characterized by unsuccessful post-revolution ecclesiastical reforms and relentless attempts by the Communist regime to suppress or control the Church.

The selfless acts of Christian martyrs, the challenges posed by a lack of unified Church authority, and the internal conflicts among Russian church movements —such as the Living Church, Church Abroad, Catacomb Church, ROCOR, and others— are intricate aspects of this historical narrative. The complication deepened with the usurpation of Church power by Metropolitan Sergius in 1927. Additionally, the Church's active engagement in the cult of Stalin further adds complexity, ultimately leading to the establishment, orchestrated by Stalin himself, of the present-day Russian "Patriarchate" in 1943. The first Simulacrum Patriarch installed by Stalin was Sergios, followed by Alexy I, Pimen, Alexy II, and Cyril.

The Russian Church adopted a distinctive approach to inter-Orthodox interaction, characterized by unilateral declarations that labeled nonconformists as impostors and subjected them to anathema. Indeed, the non-dogmatic application of schism is acknowledged as a distinctive characteristic unique to the Russian Orthodox tradition. With a simple stroke of the pen, Moscow labeled all bishops who opposed them as non-canonical, a Russian stratagem. As a reminder, in recent years, the simulacrum patriarch of Moscow Cyril extended this illegitimate unilateral approach to declare entire global communities, including the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the churches of Cyprus and Greece, and selected bishops as heretics. This craftily devious and lamentably illicit ecclesiastical maneuver not only falsely legitimized Cyril's unlawful expansion but also effectively consolidated the

establishment of exarchates, thereby significantly amplifying Russia's geopolitical influence across the globe. Truly unworthy!

"There is no deadlier weapon in the armory of the Church than the weapon of anathema, which casts heretics out of the Church and places them, unprotected by the Church's blessing, before the throne of God's fearsome justice."

The unjust exploitation of anathema is considered a deeply sinful act and is deemed incomprehensible by a Patriarchal Synod except in dogmatic matters. From my perspective, an official synodal act involving the denial of truth, ridicule, misinterpretation, or any effort to diminish fellow autocephalous churches warrants a formal denunciation. The act of leveraging the gravity and importance of the Church's anathemas to justify an ecclesiastic invasion and fratricide is inherently satanic in nature.

Ultimately, the ancient churches, bound by the obligations of the Ecumenical Councils, are obliged to assess the standing of the Russian Church and its influence on Traditional Orthodox ecclesiastic conduct. These overtly anti-Orthodox Russkiy Mir leanings mandate reevaluating Moscow's title "patriarch" and arriving at a decision, establishing a sacred Russian church by legitimate Orthodox standards rather than a fratricidal one established by Stalin.