

intellectual climate of the day had been Marxists until the Revolution of 1905. Insofar as some of them maintained or discovered a religious worldview, they were largely indebted to the work of the recently deceased religious philosopher, Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900). It was he who, like a sort of Russian Schleiermacher, appealed to the intellectual masses to return to the traditional, although slightly modified, faith of the Russian Church. Solov'ev had introduced a concept that would strike a chord in the literary movement called Russian Symbolism, and ignite a spark that would create a blaze in Russian religious philosophy. To the degree that it resonated with the *avant guard*, it was firmly rejected in traditional religious sectors. Beginning in 1876, Solov'ev wrote about a personified notion of Divine Wisdom, called Sophia after the Greek word for wisdom. Although many writers made occasional use of this motif of the Divine Sophia, none developed it like the political economist Sergei Bulgakov. As the founder in 1905 of the Moscow Religious Philosophical Society, Bulgakov urged an assessment of Solov'ev's thought from a variety of disciplines in an attempt to offer an alternative to the materialist and positivist assumptions in Russia that fuelled the popular acceptance of Marxism. This intellectual society that the Bolsheviks dissolved, proved to be fertile ground for these dissenters, many of whom would be exiled. It was arguably the key centre in which a new self-identity was formed in the years before Bolshevism.<sup>2</sup> It gave these intellectuals at least a loose sense of unity that sustained them throughout the many heated controversies into which they were thrown in the years that followed their exile. Most of those who were exiled in 1922-1923 settled in Paris within a few years.

In the Russian Orthodox diaspora the various efforts to reshape a collective religious identity, as redefined in the 1917-18 All Russian Reforming Council, was the creation of organized intellectual groups, often called "brotherhoods." The largest movement was the pan-European Russian Student Christian Movement, begun in 1924 at the initiative of Bulgakov; it held conferences and published a mostly Russian-language theological journal called "Le Messenger – Вестник. According to the recently published *Orthodox Encyclopedia*, by the Orthodox Patriarchate of Russia, there were two main types of Orthodox brotherhoods. The first type engaged in activities such as publishing literature, charity work, and lay education, while the second was concerned with discussing and addressing the intellectual problems faced by the church and its members in the western context.<sup>3</sup> Bulgakov and a young medievalist named

Vladimir Lossky became prominent leaders of separate brotherhoods in Paris; both fit generally into the second type, but incorporated some elements of the first.<sup>4</sup> Lossky is best known for his 1944 summary of Eastern Orthodox theology in his essay entitled the *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.

What follows here is a comparative analysis of the aims and activities of these two brotherhoods including their relationship to various ecclesial hierarchies and the respective involvements of their leaders, Bulgakov and Lossky. Of course the complexity of the entire religious scene in the Russian Orthodox circles of post-WWI Paris can not be fully served by an exposition of these two brotherhoods alone, since there were others in existence. Nevertheless, the definitive clash between the two in 1935, in a controversy called the "Sophia affair," demonstrates how leadership and authority were understood in the exile community in the early years of communist Russia. Vladimir Lossky instigated the controversy by successfully convincing the *locum tenens* of the Patriarch of Russia to summarily condemn Bulgakov's doctrine of the Divine Sophia.<sup>5</sup>

### *Bulgakov and Братство Святой Софии*

After the dissolution of the Moscow Religious Philosophical Society in 1918, Bulgakov moved south to the Crimea where he taught for two years at the University of Simferopol. From the ashes of the relatively open intellectual forums in the pre-Soviet era, there arose a more covert means for Russian intellectuals to communicate and debate the problems of their fast changing society. According to Vasilii Zenkovskii the Brotherhood of the Divine Sophia – The Wisdom of God (hereafter, Brotherhood of St Sophia) was already conceived in 1919,<sup>6</sup> although it is uncertain whether any meetings were held until after 1922 when the emigrations began.

The life and activities of the Brotherhood of St Sophia began with Bulgakov's initiative and concluded at his death. That is not to say that its sole purpose was to rally around or support Bulgakov's theological project. The brotherhood had already been conceived prior to the emigration of most of its members at a time when crucial changes were being made to the status and relationship of the Church with the new post-Revolution government.<sup>7</sup> At the time when it was initiated the brotherhood was not centred around discussions of Sophia or sophiology exclusively,