

# The state regulation of the religion relations in Czechoslovakia on the example of the Orthodox community

## La regulación estatal de las relaciones religiosas en Checoslovaquia sobre el ejemplo de la comunidad ortodoxa

Maria S. BAYNOVA [1](#); Kozyrev MAXIM S. [2](#); Palekhova POLINA V. [3](#); Alexander V. PETROV [4](#)

Received: 05/07/2017 • Approved: 18/08/2017

### Content

[1. Introduction](#)

[2. Methodology](#)

[3. Results](#)

[4. Conclusions](#)

[Bibliographic references](#)

#### ABSTRACT:

The authors reviews the state regulations in the development of the Orthodox community in Czechoslovakia. Religious life in the Czech Republic is interesting also for the modern Russian researchers in respect of matters of church-state relations, restitution, law of religions. The issue of the return of church property is relevant for Russia, and compensation for religious organizations in the Czech Republic is of great interest. The article deals with the historical background of the formation of an autocephalous Church in Czechoslovakia.

**Keywords** public administration, religion politics, sociology of religion, The Czechoslovak Church

#### RESUMEN:

Los autores revisan las regulaciones estatales en el desarrollo de la comunidad ortodoxa en Checoslovaquia. La vida religiosa en la República Checa es interesante también para los investigadores rusos modernos en materia de relaciones entre la Iglesia y el Estado, la restitución, el derecho de las religiones. La cuestión del retorno de los bienes eclesiásticos es relevante para Rusia, y la compensación para las organizaciones religiosas en la República Checa es de gran interés. El artículo trata de los antecedentes históricos de la formación de una Iglesia autocéfala en Checoslovaquia.

**Palabras clave** administración pública, política religiosa, sociología de la religión, La Iglesia Checoslovaca

## 1. Introduction

Relevance of this article is that development of Orthodoxy in the Czech lands becomes an object of interest. The Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church takes origin from Sts. Cyril and Methodius. In the twentieth century it has been revived with the independent Czechoslovak

state, obtained autocephaly with a participation of the Moscow Patriarchate, and, more to the point, retained unity in spite of the separation of state into the independent Czech Republic and Slovakia. Providing autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia happened at hard time for the Russian Orthodox Church when church life was revived after the severe persecution and had to deal with not only the domestic shortage of priests and destroyed temples, but also external issues, i.e. help to the Orthodox Churches in war-ravaged European countries. Autocephaly question appeared in 2012-3 years again. However, the purpose of the article is not the consideration of events 'without delay', which can be properly evaluated only by opening all documents. The article deals with the historical background of the formation of an autocephalous Church in Czechoslovakia.

The article shows that the change of jurisdiction to the Russian parish in Prague was due to political reasons and political reasons influenced on the development of the Czechoslovak dioceses, but ultimately political influence extended in the context of cultural relations. Political developments put Czech and Slovak believers to choose the way of development of the Church, but the choice depended on the established church relations, missionary work, language space.

---

## **2. Methodology**

The most prominent researcher of the local churches is the professor of the Moscow Theological Academy – K.E. Skurat. He devoted the chapter IX in his book "History of the local churches" to the history of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia (Skurat 1994). Archpriest Vladislav Tsipin examines the process of granting autocephaly as a stage in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the twentieth century (Tsipin 1997). V.V. Burega studies the history of the Russian Orthodox parish in the Czech Republic that exerted its influence on the formation of an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia and on the development of the Czech Church in the 1940s (Burega 2003, 2006, 2011). Shkarovsky investigates the history of the Orthodox Church in the Czech Republic in the years of the Second World War, as well as Russian Church emigration in Czech lands (Shkarovsky 2008). They both: Burega and Shkarovsky worked on the biography of the first Czech metropolitan Eleutherius for the Encyclopedia of Orthodox Christianity. The work of Filipovich E. "The light of the Orthodox Christianity in the Czech lands and Slovakia" is for common readers. This work is of interest for the Russian researchers as it includes the list of sources of the Orthodox Church in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the Czech language (Filipovich 2009). Yu.V. Danilets studied the Orthodox Christianity in Transcarpathian Ruthenia introducing the theme of the activity of the Orthodox priests and archiereuses in Slovakia (Danilets 2010). We think that it is possible to include to the Russian resources the book of the Czech archpriest G. Novak, dedicated to the history of the Orthodox Christianity in the Czech Republic which was published in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" (Novak 1961, 1974) and became the basic source for preparing the Russian educational material on the history of the local churches.

On the bases of the mentioned above materials, some other researches and the official information from the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" the authors tried to generalize the background for the formation of the autocephaly of the Church in the Czech Republic analyzing the history of the parishes in the Czech lands and Slovakia and to determine the different social and cultural influences on the prehistory of granting autocephaly in the Czech Republic, which exerts influence on the current development of the Orthodox Church in the Czech lands and Slovakia.

The analysis of the historical background is given in the chronological order in order to study the opinions and investigations of the researchers.

Reviewing the researchers, we can see the political peculiarities first. The interest to the Slavic unification, the confrontation between Russia and Austria-Hungary during the First World War had engaged the Orthodox Christians in the opposition to the state. At the same time, there were also the non-political influences such as visits of the Russian travelers to health resorts and their necessity in Orthodox Divine service. The Russian churches were built in the health

resorts in Cote d'Azur. However, it was Austria-Hungary where these actions were perceived as the unification of the Slavs and the violation of the unification of the nations in the empire. Secondly, the revival of Orthodoxy was sparked not so much by Russia as by other countries of Eastern Europe. The priests from Russia, Serbia, and Rumania were taking pastoral care over the first Orthodox Christians. Novak writes that it was 'Romanian priests who were secretly caring for the religious needs of the Orthodox Czechs' (Novak, 1961: 60) but there is no more detailed information on it. However, the total number of Orthodox Christians was far from high. Filipovich gives the data on the census of 1910s which shows that there was more than one thousand of Orthodox Christians in Czech (Filipovich 2009: 75).

The period of the Orthodox Church in the independent country of Czechoslovakia has the key importance for characterizing state regulation of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. That is exactly the reason why we specify in such a detailed way the works devoted to this period. They can be contingently divided into three groups. We can refer to the first group of researches dedicated to the Russian immigrants in Prague, which describe the religious life of the Russian Orthodox community. The Russian community remained autocephalous till the determined time and it was taken under the pastoral care of the emigrated Russian archiereuses. The Russian community built a church, founded printing office without participating directly in the life of the Czech Church. The second group includes the researches devoted to the Orthodoxy in Slovakia, where there was established an independent diocese. The third group involves investigations on the development and formation of the orthodox Czech community in Prague. Some of them overlap with the Russian community.

Burega devotes his book to the canonical state of the Russian parish. Burega mentions the problem between the Russian Orthodox parish and Czech archbishop Savvaty. Archbishop Savvaty was trying to include the Russian community in his jurisdiction. Metropolitan Eulogy gave order to welcome archbishop Savvaty to his new position as an archbishop in Constantinople but to remain canonically subordinate to the Russian Orthodox Church. Burega writes: 'archbishop Eulogy thought that from now on the Russian churches in Czechoslovakia were the metochions of the Moscow Patriarchate' (Burega 2011). In 1923 bishop Sergey (Korolev) became the prior of the Russian Orthodox community in Prague.

That was exactly one of the problems, which influenced on the formation of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. These uneasy relationships between archbishop Savvaty and the Russian immigrants caused seemingly insignificant events, which led to the discord between the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the autocephaly of the Church in Czechoslovakia. Religious persecution in the USSR influenced on the canonical state of the Russian parish in Czechoslovakia, which was changed several times. However, Burega writes that the parish perceived itself as a part of the Russian Orthodox Church, the alteration of the canonical status was not taken as really fundamental (Burega 2011).

Shkarovsky devoted several researches on the Russian immigration. First is the work on the Russian church immigration in Czechoslovakia. He gives statistics on the number of immigrants from Russia, generalizes materials on the activity of Sergey (Korolev) who had been a bishop of Bielsk before he came to Prague (Shkarovsky 2008). Shkarovsky writes about disagreements between bishop Sergey and Savvaty (Vrabetz). Shkarovsky's article on immigration in Serbia includes an interesting material about Orthodox development in Czechoslovakia. The Russian immigrated priests were among the missionaries from Serbia in Slovakia although they also were acting independently. Shkarovsky notes discords between well-educated immigrants of the Russian Orthodox Church out of Russia (ROCOR) and the Serbian Orthodox Church on the activity in Carpathian Ruthenia (Shkarovsky 2008: 123). ROCOR established monastic brotherhood in Lodomirov (Slovakia) with a printing office. Serbian Patriarch Varnava expressed his doubts about the necessity of brotherhood's activity on the canonical territory of the Serbian Church, but in 1939 Vladimir, bishop of Muchkachevo-Pryashevky admitted the right of the printing office to continue its activity under the control of ROCOR. At the same time in 1920s

the Russian immigrants in Slovakia were under the pastoral care of the priests sent by metropolitan Eulogy.

The Russian immigration of 1920s in Prague attracts attention with its scale and the presence of well-known cultural workers, many of whom contributed in the development of the Orthodoxy. The philosopher and theologian Sergei Bulgakov became professor of Church Law and Theology at the school of law of the Russian Research Institute in Prague in 1923 (see Baynova, 2016: 1414). Nevertheless, we should note that in spite of its name the Russian immigration did not include only the Russians. There were some ethnic Ukrainians and Germans born in the Russian Empire among them. The immigrants did not have an unitary Orthodox organization. They separated because of divergent views on the political events in the USSR. We conclude that the Russian immigrants contributed to the development of the Orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia but they were not initiators of the movement for the autocephaly and they did not have distinct jurisdiction.

There are Skurat, Novak, Filipovich who write about the main part of the formation of an autocephalous Church – Czech Orthodox community. Novak writes about the activity of the 'Czech Orthodox parish in Prague' founded in 1918, as well as about its transformation into official religious congregation established by the state in 1922. (Novak 1961: 60). Archimandrite Savvaty, a Czech, who had studied in Russia and serviced in Volinsky diocese, became the head of this parish. On 4 March 1923, The Ecumenical Patriarch Meletos IV ordained Savvaty as a bishop and an archbishop of 'Prague and all Czechoslovakia'. Skurat extensively investigates the rise of the Czechoslovak Church that consisted of the Catholic priests standing for the reform of Catholicism (Skurat 1994:151). Church services were conducted in Czech language. But there was no unity of sentiment at all. On the one hand there were ideas of confluence with the Orthodox Church, on the other – pullulation of Yan Gus's teachings based on his heritage and even cultural globalization. As a result of the discussion in 1921 the congregation of Czechoslovak Church accepted Orthodox Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and applied to the Serbian Church for ordaining bishops. The Christians in Czech and Slovakia were inclined more to the Serbian Church as it was closer to them in geographical and national sense and because they had missionary connection with it. That was the reason to the Czechoslovak Church and Orthodox Christians of Slovakia erstwhile committed to Orthodoxy for inclining to the Serbian Church. The researchers explore the key moment that is still considered to be a source of discord on the question of the autocephaly of Czech Orthodox Church in the following way. Skurat underscores (Skurat 1994: 151-153) that in September 1921 the former Catholic priest Matey Pavlick became a monk and gained a name Gorazd in Serbian monastery, and on 25 September 1921 was his ordination as a bishop of Moravia and Silesia. Dmitry (Pavlovich), the Patriarch of Serbia and Antony (Khrapovitsky), the metropolitan of Kiev and Galitsiya conducted it.

The Orthodox Czech bishop was appointed by the Serbian Church in 1921. Nevertheless it was the Czechoslovak Church which had a following opinion that was prevailing: to create a new religious movement with the global cultural ideas instead of following Orthodox Christianity. At that time the Serbian Church broke off the collaboration with it and bishop Gorazd with his disciples came under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. It was exactly that time when bishop Savvaty was ordained.

The question of interaction between the Czech Orthodox parishes and the Czechoslovak Church is scarcely considered in Russian sources. We have mentioned above the discords determined by Shkarovsky. Although it is possible to find the reason of Savvaty's ordination in Constantinople in the memorials of metropolitan Eulogy and the book of Filipovich. Czech Orthodox parish, founded earlier in 1928, didn't cooperate with the Czechoslovak Church from the very beginning as it had chosen the direction of its development which was not connected with the Orthodox Christianity. Why did the Orthodox parish applied for ordaining a bishop exactly in Constantinople? Some moments are clarified in the memorials of the Russian metropolitan Eulogy (Georgievsky) who characterizes Savvaty's activity. According to

metropolitan Euvlogy Savvaty was dreaming of becoming a prior of the parish in Prague. However the Russian community was not on good terms with him and he changed the direction of his activity. Under support of Chervinky Savvaty drew up a petition for forming an independent Czech Church (Georgievsky 1994).

Euvlogy supposed that Savvaty applied to Constantinople as the Russian congregation rejected Savvaty as a prior. Filipovich gives another version: the Orthodox community in Prague elected as a Primate and applied to the Serbian Church to ordain him as a bishop of Prague. The Serbian Synod responded that there was no opportunity to ordain a bishop for one small parish. After it Savvaty together with Chervinka, his assistant, went to Constantinople without any agreement with the parish (Filipovich 2009: 90-91).

Although Filipovich does not mention a distinct source of this information, he gives only a general list of sources to the whole Chapter on 1920s – this is the collection of Czech author J. Šuvarsky, devoted to bishop Gorazd which was published in 1979, and the series of articles written by archbishop Sergey (Korolev) and brought out in 2003. However, Filipovich's view on this situation seems to be logical. Savvaty showed independence without getting support of the parish and came to Constantinople to gain the rank of the bishop, and Patriarch's actions in ordaining bishop seem to have political character. The Constantinople did not take any measures on development of the Orthodox Christianity in Czechoslovakia, on the support of a newly formed diocese or missionary work. In 1923 that was the exact way of rising discords between the Serbian Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Constantinople on question of the church jurisdiction on the territory of Czechoslovakia.

We can assess the fact of ordination of archbishop Savvaty in Constantinople as a political decision. The solution of the problem was also political. In the biography of hieromartyr bishop Gorazd, Burega considers the negotiations between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Czechoslovakia on the question of canonical belonging of the Orthodox parishes to Czechoslovakia (Burega 2006: 88-92). In the beginning the government of Czechoslovakia supported archbishop Savvaty. However, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes considered the territory of Czechoslovakia as a canonical part of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the cooperation between the Czechs and Constantinople raised concern. As the result of negotiations at the country level, the authorities of Czechoslovakia refused to keep contacts with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Serbian Church offered its support in forming the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia with the prospect of gaining autocephaly, but with the condition that bishop Gorazd comes out of unorthodox Czechoslovak Church and archbishop Savvaty leaves the jurisdiction of Constantinople.

It was in 1924 when the question of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia had been discussed with the support of the Serbian Church as well. However the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia should have been unified, developed for gaining autocephaly, and it was necessary to resolve the question with jurisdictions.

Skurat and Filipovich consider the development of the Orthodox parish after 1924. Bishop Gorazd with the Christians from his diocese transferred to the Orthodox parish in Prague with bishop Savvaty at the head. However, Savvaty remained under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. The negotiations between the Serbian Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Constantinople did not take place. In 1925, the Orthodox religious community of Prague elected Gorazd as a prior and archbishop Savvaty was deprived of this position. In 1925, the Czech religious community of Prague came to the decision to accept the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. In 1929 the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the government bodies of Czechoslovakia asserted the charter of the Czech diocese and bishop Gorazd was elected as its head. An independent Czech diocese emerged under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. Novak and Burega write about the activity of bishop Gorazd, acquisition of a church on Reslova street, drawing up the catechesis on the one hand, and lack of the financial resources on the another hand (Novak 1961: 61, Burega 2006: 90). The Czech community in Prague had Divine Service in Orthodox church in Olshanskaya cemetery and the relationships with the Russian

community improved.

There were different ways that led to the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia, and then there disagreement on the church jurisdiction between the Serbian Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Constantinople arose. Constantinople used to be the historic centre of the Orthodox Christianity in Moravia. Nevertheless in 1920s the Czech Orthodox Christians inclined more to the Serbian Church which had conducted active missionary work on the territory of Czechoslovakia even before this. A considerable role in the process of forming church organization played Czechs professing Orthodoxy. The Orthodox Christianity in Czechoslovakia was multinational, and it was one of the determined features which played a significant role hereafter. The immigrants from the Russian empire participated in different religious organizations of Czechoslovakia. There was the Russian community on the territory of Czechoslovakia which was under the jurisdiction of Moscow and then Ecumenical Patriarchate, and there was also monk community in Ladomirov that belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia.

The Orthodox Russian and Czechoslovak parishes appeared under the supervision of the Orthodox Church outside of Russia. The repressions against the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia and the martyric death of Bishop Gorazd in the time of occupation are the examples of struggle with the Nazism, which reveals the moral development of the Orthodox parish. At the same time it is a considerable detriment, loss of the most prominent members of the Church. All researchers note heroism of the Czechoslovakian clergymen but the Church in Czechoslovakia deprived of its leaders.

---

### **3. Results**

Novak takes into consideration the historical aspects, reveals the influence of the Russian Orthodox community in 1945. Burega and Shkarovsky investigate the backgrounds of autocephaly inside the Czechoslovak Church. Filipovich and Shkarovsky reveal political aspect.

Shkarovsky studies the after-war state of the Orthodox parishes in Czechoslovakia (Shkarovsky 2008). The Orthodox Christians did not have a bishop in the Czech Republic after the liberation of the Czech Republic from the German invaders. In 1945 there was an attempt to apply to the Serbian Church but it was in vain as there was lack of bishops in Serbia dilapidated with war. Filipovich writes about the letter to the Serbian Church. Filipovich writes: 'since summer 1945, there is an idea of changing the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church' (Filipovich 2009: 116). On 27 July 1945 the question of the church organization became the subject of conversation between the representatives of the Czech Orthodox Christians and The President of Czechoslovakia E. Benesh. The President was speaking about the religious character of the question on the church organization and it has nothing to do with politics, however he mentioned that it may be desired to apply to the Russian Orthodox Church, at this 'the main aim of all the efforts of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia should be independence (autocephaly)' (Shkarovsky 2008: 225). Burega analyzes the conversation between the President and the Czech Christians. He shows that the aspirations of the Christians and the political leadership coincided with each other (Burega 2003: 202). The idea of autocephaly of the Church was discussed in Czechoslovakia already before the war, and after the war it was necessary to establish all over again the national institutions, including Church.

At the same time metropolitan Euvlogy returned back under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in August 1945, and in September the clergy subjected to Metropolitan Euvlogy came back to the Moscow Patriarchy in compliance with 'The Provisions of the West European Exarchate of Russian tradition' (Novak 61: 72). In October 1945 Photios, archbishop of Orlov, was sent to the Russian Christians in Czechoslovakia by the Patriarch Alexius. Novak writes: 'The Russian clergy and the believers came back under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchy which they left under different historical circumstances...' (Novak 61: 72). Under such term as 'circumstances' we should understand not only immigration after the Revolution and the Civil War but also the internment of the Orthodox

priests by the German occupation troops from the Baltic States.

Shkarovsky writes that the visit of Archbishop Photios played a significant role at coming to the decision on coming Czech Orthodox under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchy (Shkarovsky 2008: 225). The Archbishop had meeting with the Slovak Christians. In the course of his visit Archbishop Photios considered it to be important to unify all orthodox Christians on the territory of Czechoslovakia.

Novak gives the information on the diocesan assembly of the clergy and the believers of the Czech diocese in Olomouc on 8 November 1945. The diocesan assembly took the decision to ask the Serbian Church for agreement on leaving its jurisdiction, and to apply to the Russian Church to take the Church of Czechoslovakia under its jurisdiction. The Russian Church was also asked to send an arch-pastor. They sent a request to allow them to leave the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. The diocesan assembly underscored in its request the importance of the Russian Church for the Czech lands, the part of the Orthodox parishes intended to come under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchy, and the Czech Church should have determined their jurisdiction in order not to allow the separation of not so great number of believers (Novak 61: 72).

The decision of the Russian community to return to the Moscow Patriarchy was rather significant in the life of the Czech community. After the repressions against the Czech Orthodox Christians during the war we may suppose that the number of the Orthodox Christians decreased. As a result, merger of the parishes would be rather logical. Kostryukov extensively analyzes the question on joining the West European Exarchate of Russian tradition to the Moscow Patriarchy. Although it was underscored in the article that the Metropolitan Euvlogy as well as some other representatives of the West European Exarchate thought that 'the it was a temporal measure to take the West European parish under the omophorion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate'(Kostryukov 2013: 76), and Constantinople would not impede them transfer to Moscow Patriarchy. Nevertheless the Constantinople Patriarch did not did not haste to release the Russian parishes, and after the death of Metropolitan Euvlogy in 1946 the parishes in France again were subjected to Constantinople. As the result, the question on the jurisdiction was not clarified for the Russian parishes as well, and as Kostryukov notes the Moscow Patriarchate did not pay much attention to it (Kostryukov 2013: 83).

There was no problem with the jurisdiction in the Muckachevo-Przashevsky diocese. Novak writes that priests in Slovakia stood for joining the Russian Church (Novak 1961: 62). Danilets writes that in 1945 bishop Vladimir agreed to give the Russian Church the jurisdiction over the diocese, and the Holy Synod of the Serbian Church came to the decision to transfer the Muckachevo-Przashevsky diocese in the Russian Orthodox Church. Bishop Vladimir was the head of the delegation of the Serbian Church in Moscow where on 22 October the diocese officially came under the jurisdiction of Moscow Patriarchy in compliance with 67th Rule of The Councils of Carthage(Danilets 2010: 27). The part of the Czech Orthodox Christians and one diocese subjected to the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church canonically came under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchy.

Having left the diocese in Slovakia bishop Vladimir could transfer to the Czech lands.

The discussion of the question about the Czech Orthodox Christians in Moscow became known due to the documents from Russia. On 10 January 1946, the delegation of the diocesan assembly of the Czech lands in Moscow delivered to Patriarch Alexius the decision taken on 8 November 1945. The request was considered at the Holy Synods session held on 11 and 14 January (Perepiska 1946). It was discussed that since the end of the nineteenth century the Czech Orthodox Christians were supported by the Russian Church but the First World War and following events impeded them to develop further. The request of the Czech Orthodox Christians to the Moscow Patriarchy was caused by the political situation unfolded in the East Europe after the war and the traditional connection of the Czech Orthodoxy with Russia, and also the parishioner in the Czech lands for whom the Russian Church was more familiar than the Serbian Church. Burega considers the discussions of objections of the Serbian Church,



which all were rather formal (Burega 2003: 206). Filipovich also notes about the suggestion of the Czech delegation to unify the parishes in different jurisdictions of Czech and Moravia (Filipovich 2009: 121). Taking into account the transit of the Russian parishes in the Moscow Patriarchy and one diocese in Slovakia they had taken the decision on creating unified Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia with a temporal autonomous exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Alexius I signed the determined conditions for acceptance of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchy. It was supposed that problem of jurisdiction would be solved in agreement with the Serbian Church, the autonomous and the liturgical Charter drawn up by bishop Gorazd (Novak 1961: 72). Here is expressed hope not only for successful development of the Church in Czechoslovakia but also for autocephaly (Novak 1961: 73).

Novak underscores support and understanding which the Serbian Church showed (Novak 1974: 52). After the negotiations the bishops' council of the Serbian Church agreed that the Moscow Patriarch Alexius I should send a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church for the temporal leadership over the Czech diocese. Although Burega notes that the Serbian Church did not agree to change the jurisdiction but gave the right to lead to the Moscow Patriarchy (Burega 2003: 206). By the decision of the bishops' council on 15 May 1948, the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia left the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church and the formal alteration of the jurisdiction was confirmed that way.

The archbishop of Prague Eleutherius (Vorontsov) from Russia led the Czech Orthodoxy alone. Russian bishop Sergey was subject to him and lived in Prague but he was appointed as an archbishop of Vienna on 7 June and left Czechoslovakia. Archbishop Savvaty retired and according to some sources he could hand over his responsibilities to archbishop Eleutherius (Burega and Shkarovsky 2006: 284). The Orthodox Parishes of different jurisdictions were unified under the leadership of the exarch from the Russian Orthodox Church in such a way.

Then we can find the investigation of the development of the Czechoslovak Church in the works written by Shishkin, Novak, Filipovich (Shishkin 1946: 31-47, Novak 1961: 72, Filipovich 2009: 120-121). They note that the amount of the believers increased due to the Uniats. It allowed establishing four dioceses. Filipovich underscores that the return of the Uniats to the Orthodoxy took place under the influence of the Russian community in Ladomirov. "At the same time there were not only the clergy and the believers but also some political figures at the Council in Pryshevo...the question was solved with the voting. More than two-thirds of the Uniats signed the manifest on the conversion to the Orthodox Christianity" (Filipovich 2009: 121).

Filipovich supposes that the participating political figures had worsened the situation (Filipovich 2009: 120-121). The Uniats agreed to converse to the Orthodox Christianity due to the missionary work of archbishop Eleutherius, and after their joining the Orthodox Church the former Uniate priests were subjected to the repressions what made them martyrs and disappointed the former Uniats. Burega notes that 'the natural process was accelerated by the authorities on political grounds that made a serious church problem later' (Burega 2001).

The religious position of the state in time when Czechoslovakia became communist is noteworthy. Despite the antireligious character of the ideology religious organizations in Czechoslovakia were supported by the state. By the Law 'On the state financial support of churches and religious communities' 1949 The Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia gained equal rights with other churches and financial support of the state (Skurat 1994: 154) that allowed to make a conclusion - the authorities of Czechoslovakia support this aspiration to autocephaly (Karmanov, 1961: 70). At the same time the Russian resources on the history of the Church do not reflect the moments of alterations of the political course, resignation of President Benesh, rise of the communists with K. Gotvald at the head. Here there are two key questions. First, the process of gaining autocephaly was started with the cooperation of President Benesh. Second, the communists stated financial supporting for the religious organizations. It was impossible in the USSR. The exarchate in Czechoslovakia was in better conditions than its new Russian



Orthodox Church.

The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate published the report on the visit of the metropolitan Nikolay of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relationship, to Czechoslovakia in February 1950 (Nikolay Mitropolit 1950: 11). There he met the statesmen of Czechoslovakia, including A. Chepichko, the justice of minister and minister of church affairs.

On 2 October 1951, bishop's council of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia came to issuance on autocephaly and request to the Moscow Patriarchy. The favorable development of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia allowed His Holiness Alexius to bless autocephaly (Dorofey Mitropolit 1974: 47). All bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church sent their signatures under the Decision of the Synod to the 23 November 1951, and the Act was signed in the Moscow Patriarchy. The representatives of Antiochian, Georgian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Polish and Albanian local churches arrived in Prague (Nikolay Mitropolit 1952: 42). Consequently, the support of autocephaly was mostly stipulated by the representatives of those local churches which were in the area of influence of the USSR. On 8 December 1951 protopresbyter N. Kolchitsky announced the Act of the Russian Orthodox Church on granting autocephaly.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople did not accept the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia in 1951. The Russian Orthodox Church recognizes this claim as unreasonable. The Moscow Patriarchate took charge of the Church in Czechoslovakia with the consent of the Serbian Church which had established the diocese in Czechoslovakia on canonical basis. That is exactly the reason why granting autocephaly to the Church of Czechoslovakia by the Russian Orthodox Church is canonically justified.

---

## 4. Conclusions

The Czech lands and Slovakia went through a long way beginning from the first Christian sermon and ending with the emergence of independent church organization under the influence of different cultural traditions. The politicians interfered into the church life but the determinative factor was the appeal of the parish to the certain national and cultural tendencies. The disagreement between the parishes of the Orthodox Church and Czechoslovak Church caused the problem with the church jurisdiction. That was the time, when the congregations used to be rather small and not all of them took the decision on denomination but the formal occasions were conducted. The discord with the jurisdiction took place particularly in the Czech lands. After the emergence of Mukachevo-Pryashevsky diocese in Slovakia the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church no doubts arose. This problem was in diocese of Prague in spite of the political regulations. The official authorities interfered in the church organization several times: the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the government of Czechoslovakia. Political will and the stance of the authorities played a significant role in 1945-51. It would be wrong to believe that it was only politics what determined the church organization. The Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia had its own way to autocephaly - through the parish development, sermon, and heroism during wartime. The emigrants from Russia exerted a very significant influence on the development of the Orthodoxy. They were not just travelers or tourists as it was before the First World War. The immigration flow was rather considerable. The Russian priests serviced in the Czech parishes, Czech Christians could attend Russian churches. Although at the beginning the immigrants had their communities separated from the Czech ones. There was also the division among immigrants according to the jurisdiction. That is why we should not conclude that it was exactly the Russian immigrants who determined the development of the Orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia.

In 1945, joining of the Russian immigrants to the Moscow Patriarchate played a considerable role. The political situation was favorable for the Moscow Patriarchate as well. We may make a supposition that interests of the Serbian Church were not taken into account. When Bishop Vladimir arrived to Prague the parish did not acknowledge him as a new head of the diocese in Prague. The Serbian Church did not intend to excite a discord on the jurisdictions and its

actions served the interests of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the diocese in Prague came under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate after the diocese in Slovakia had transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church. It was in many senses a determinative factor. One jurisdiction for both dioceses was in the interests of the believers in Czechoslovakia as a unified state. The merger of the dioceses under the jurisdiction allowed to develop the Church and to come to independent governance. The unification of believers of different nationalities, of Czech and Russian parishes, increased the number of believers in the Church. All these events, such as unification of the dioceses and the Russian parishes were realized under the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate. That was the reason why the Russian Orthodox Church granted autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia. The autocephaly of the Church was justified. It allowed the Church of Czechoslovakia to become not only the basis of the autocephalous governance but to take responsibility for the church organization. The Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church has managed to keep unanimity during the dissolution of the state and it should create the foundation for resisting modern discords.

---

## Bibliographic references

- Baynova, Maria S., Evstratova, Tatiana A., Petrov, Alexander V., Petrova, Ariadna A., Volchenkova, Olesya A. (2016). 'Modern Transformation of Labor Culture and Aesthetics in the Light of Sergei Bulgakov's Religious Philosophy.' *The Social Sciences*, 11: 1414-1421.
- Burega, V.V. (2001). *Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia* <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/orthodoxchurches/39544.htm/> Accessed 26 June 2017.
- Burega, V.V. (2003). 'Czechoslovak Orthodox Church: the path to the autocephaly. 1945-1951. in: *Vlast' i Cerkov' v SSSR i stranah Vostochnoy Evropy*. 1939-1958. Moscow: 200-219.
- Danilets, Ju.V. (2010). Pastoral work of Bishop Vladimir (Raich) in Transcarpathia before and during the Second World War. *Vestnik Permskogo universiteta*. 1: 21-29.
- Dorofey, Mitropolit. (1974). 'Indelible impression.' *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 4: 47.
- Filipovich, E. (2009). *Light of Orthodoxy in the Czech Republic and Slovakia*. Praga: Russkaya tradiciya.
- Georgievsky, V. (1994). *The path of my life. Memoirs of Metropolitan Eulogius (Georgievsky)*. Moskva: Moskovskiy rabochiy.
- Karmanov, E. (1961). Decade of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 11: 66-71.
- Kostryukov, A.A. (2013). On the history of the reunification of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Western European Exarchate of passes in the post-war years (1945-1946). *Vestnik Pravoslavnogo Svyato-Tihonovskogo gumanitarnogo universiteta, Seriya 2: Istoriya*. 6/55: 72-84.
- Nikolay, Mitropolit. (1950). The delegation of Russian Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 4: 10-18.
- Nikolay, Mitropolit. (1952). In Czechoslovakia, at church celebrations. *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 1: 41-48.
- Novak, G. (1961). The Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 9: 57-83.
- Novak, G. (1974). Orthodox in Czechoslovakia and the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate. *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 4: 51-53.
- Shishkin, A. (1946). About the Orthodox church life Czechoslovakia. *Jurnal Moskovskoy Patriarhii*. 11: 31-47.
- Shkarovsky, M.V. (2008). Russian church emigration to the Czech Republic. *Prihod*. 10: 51-63.
- Skurat, K.I. (1994). *History of Orthodox Churches*. Moskva: Russkie ogni.

*The correspondence Patriarch Alexy and G.G. Karpov.* (1946). Pismo № 69.

[http://statearchive.ru/assets/files/Pisma\\_patriarha\\_1/1946.pdf/](http://statearchive.ru/assets/files/Pisma_patriarha_1/1946.pdf/) Accessed 26 June 2017.

Tsipin, V. (1997). *History of the Russian Church 1917-1997*. Moskva: Izdatelstvo Spaso-Preobrazhenskogo Valaamskogo monastyrya.

*World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2017.* (2017), International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO. 24.

---

1. Associate Professor, Department management and administration, Russian State social university, Moscow, Russia, [mbainova@gmail.com](mailto:mbainova@gmail.com)

2. Associate Professor, Department management and administration, Russian State social university, Moscow, Russia, [max-han@yandex.ru](mailto:max-han@yandex.ru)

3. Professor, Department of management and administration, Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia, [ppalehova@gmail.com](mailto:ppalehova@gmail.com)

4. Professor, Department of Sociology, Saint-Petersburg State University, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, [petroval4@yandex.ru](mailto:petroval4@yandex.ru)

---

Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015

Vol. 38 (Nº 57) Year 2017

[Index]

[In case you find any errors on this site, please send e-mail to [webmaster](mailto:webmaster)]

©2017. revistaESPACIOS.com • ®Rights Reserved