

## Pracovní verze podkapitoly disertace

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### Two ways to God? – Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Czech Republic

I focus on two Churches in the Czech Republic – Greek Catholic and Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia<sup>1</sup>, who are visited predominantly by migrants. Although, there are no data available that would prove such a claim, it is based on observations of researchers (see Pavlíková & Sládek 2009, Leontiyeva 2005). Both Churches have different ancient and more recent histories which affect their rhetoric, current understanding of their purpose, their politics, their cross-border ties and ethnic/national composition of their followers. For that reason, I consider it to be necessary to mention, at least briefly, important facts about their histories.

#### *Greek Catholic Church*

Greek Catholic Church consist of the Eastern Catholic Churches which follow the Byzantine (Constantinopolitan) liturgical tradition and are thus in full communion with the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. Eastern Catholic Churches are autonomous, self-governing (*sui iuris*). Together with the Latin Church, they compose the worldwide Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> According to 2011 census there are 9, 927 Greek Catholics (ověřit) in the Czech Republic.<sup>3</sup> However, it is necessary to add another tens of thousands foreigners – with working permit and/or permanent stay, illegal workers and seasonal workers (mainly Ukrainians and Slovak). There are 25 parishes with 35 priests. /podle stránek ŘKC 20 farností a 25 kněží.

History of Greek Catholic Church in the Czech lands goes back to 1818 founded eparchy in Presov, Slovakia. In 1933 bishop Pavol P. Gojdič (Presov) founded parish in Prague.<sup>4</sup> In the first part of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ukrainians in CR were very active in maintaining and developing of their culture. They also supported Ukrainian effort to gain independence. After 20s when Ukrainian struggle for independency was defeated, more political refugees came. Thanks to president Masaryk, Czechoslovakia became the biggest political, scientific, cultural and

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<sup>1</sup> In the following text I will use the term Orthodox Church only for Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. If I after to another Orthodox Church, I will mention it specifically.

<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II proclaimed a new Apostolic Exarchate for Catholics of Byzantine Rite in the Czech Republic under the rules of the Apostolic See on March 13, 1996. (Source: <http://reckokat.cz/exarchat/eng/231.html>)

<sup>3</sup> This is a large increase compared to 2001, when there were 7675 Greek Catholics, according to census. (csu.cz – přesněji)

<sup>4</sup> <http://reckokat.cz/exarchat/eng/231.html>

spiritual centre of Ukrainians in Europe. Ukrainian press, journals, publishing houses, high schools and colleges, museums, associations and clubs – all of them were active in First republic period (Zilynskyj 2000, Zilynskyj, Kočík 2001). After the World War II, in 1950 communist government prohibited Greek Catholic Church and all of the Greek Catholics were officially claimed to be Orthodox. The Church remained underground until untying of condition in 1968 and subsequent renovation/restoration of the Church. After the fall of Iron Curtain, the Greek Catholic Church was fully renewed and in 1996 pope John Paul II founded apostolic exarchate in the Czech Republic.<sup>5</sup> According to censuses from years 1991, 2001 and 2011 the Church is growing every decade (which goes against the current trend of decrease among established Churches in the Czech Republic).

### *Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia*

The Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia is a self-governing body of the Eastern Orthodox Church that territorially covers the countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

After the Czech and Slovak Republics separated into independent republics in 1993, activity continued in each country as separate legal entities: in the Czech Republic as the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and in the Slovak Republic as the Orthodox Church in Slovakia, but canonical unity was maintained as the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.<sup>6</sup> Orthodox Church is also growing: from 19354 followers in census in 1991 to 23 053 followers in 2001. Numbers from 2011 census show decrease (20 628 followers), which is probably caused by the 2007 registration of new Orthodox Church – Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow patriarch prosecution (*podvorje*) and the whole Russia in Carlsbad, in parish with the temple of the foremost saints Peter and Paul (official title in Czech: *Ruská pravoslavná církev, podvorje patriarchy moskevského a celé Rusy v Karlových Varech, ve farnosti s chrámem svatých nejpřednějších apoštolů Petra a Pavla*), to which 5844 believers are registered (Mrázek & Vojtíšek ROK? In Dingir [http://www.dingir.cz/nove\\_registrace.shtml#8](http://www.dingir.cz/nove_registrace.shtml#8))<sup>7</sup> This Church operates only in Carlsbad and Prague, therefore is not included in my analysis.

In South Moravian region there are currently 1956 followers of Orthodox Church (one fourth of the number of Orthodox believers in Prague).

<sup>5</sup> <http://reckokat.cz/exarchat/eng/231.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pravoslavnacirkev.cz/historiecirkev.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Mrázek and Vojtíšek suggest that it is not a church which was registered, but specific institution of orthodox churches. It is the local prosecution of the Orthodox Church in the territory which belong to another jurisdiction. Although there were several opponent voices from within the Orthodox Church of Czech lands against the registration, it remains a prosaic fact that the registration was motivated mainly by property issues around the temple of saint Peter and Paul in Carlsbad.

In Czech lands the first autonomous Orthodox Church was formed in 1870s in Prague. Czechoslovak Church was created out of reformation movement in Catholic Church shortly after Czechoslovakia gained independence. The Second World War experience of disruption had influence on after-war relations with other religious groups. After WWII several fragmented orthodox groups joined together. Serbian Church asked Russian Orthodox Church to be taken under its wings and Alexij I. the patriarch of Moscow agreed. So was the united Orthodox Church established in 1946 temporarily as autonomous exarchate of Russian Orthodox Church.

In 1950 when Greek Catholic Church was forbidden in Czechoslovakia, all Greek Catholics were “assigned” to Orthodox Church. (Orthodox Church describes this as something that at least part of the Greek Catholics wanted – to be united with “the mother church”) (Zajímavé téma – pohledy obou církví na tuto událost ovlivňují další vývoj – jak je tomu dnes?). In 1951 Russian Orthodox Church provided autocephality to Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia (that is full autonomy).<sup>8</sup>

### *Two ways to God?*

The essential difference between both Greek Catholic Church and Orthodox Church is the fact that both of them adhere to different religious tradition, even though under the umbrella of Christianity. However, it is their more recent history that affects their current position not only on Czech religious market but also their cross-border actions. Until the World War II, both Churches had similar position in public. They derived (and still derive) their tradition and presence in Czech lands and Slovakia from saint Cyril and Methodius (Cyril, Metoděj) and consider themselves to be their successors. But Second World War changed their position.

Greek Catholic Church remained During the WWII the Orthodox Church was banished, its property confiscated and its bishop Gorazd was executed because of the help he provided to the parachutists who assassinated Reinhard Heydrich. Martyred rhetoric still remains strong in Orthodox Church. After the communist coup/revolution their connection with Russia (while only recently established as autonomous exarchate, still controlled by Moscow patriarchate) made them suspicious in the eyes of public. Their somewhat ‘privileged’ position during communist era can be best seen on the events of Prešov council (Prešovský sobor) in 1950 where Greek Catholic Church was banished and all of its followers were officially claimed to be Orthodox. While Orthodox Church (on its web pages) claims this ‘transfer’ of Greek Catholics under their influence to be something that at least part of the Greek Catholics wanted and as actual help for them, Greek Catholics talks about administratively staged process which led to their ban/prohibition (without blaming, at least explicitly the Orthodox Church). The stigma of pro-Russian Church accentuated after 1968 Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.pravoslavnacirkev.cz/historiecirkev.htm>

After the 1989 revolution and 1993 separation of Czechoslovakia both Churches continue to grow mainly thanks to migration. They remain different in size and also ethnic composition of those who visits them more or less regularly differs. There are no quantitative data that would show us the proportion of particular ethnicities or nationalities of believers; nevertheless we can draw the picture of religious make-up of both Churches from their web sites and proclamations of priest and other personnel (and observations?). It won't give us the precise numbers but I believe that it will help us to get the bigger picture. Even if the quantitative data would be available, the situation in both Churches is 'complicated' with the constant flow of seasonal (and often illegal) immigrants who move back and forth over the borders. They too visit churches when in the Czech Republic, usually irregularly, and they use some of the services (legal, social etc. or social capital churches can provide them (Pavlíková, Sládek 2009, Sedláčková 2010). Those could not be found in any statistics.<sup>9</sup>

Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia considers itself a multi-ethnic church formed by multiple national traditions. This steams from history – Orthodox Church was never ethnically bounded (unlike Greek Catholics) and even in Czech lands its believers were 'recruited' from multiple nationalities – especially after WWII and its merge with Serbian Orthodox Church (and other orthodox churches). This multi-ethnic rhetoric still remains present in the presentation of the Church itself. To the multi-ethnic composition of believers, Orthodox Church comments: "it is sometimes difficult, but at the same time rare, because it gives us the opportunity to show the width and universality of pure **Christian God news** and its openness towards all cultures." (Source: <http://www.pravoslavnacirkev.cz/historiecirkev.htm>, own translation).<sup>10</sup> Such situation is also mirrored in the language of services, although Czech and liturgical Slavonic (staroslověnština) prevail, masses are served also in Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Romanian, and English, depending on the particular churches (Greek, Ukrainian and Russian are most common in parishes).

Orthodox Church also maintains connection with other Orthodox Churches; for example – it organized collection for Serbian monastery Greek, brought relics of a saint from Ukraine, and organizes pilgrimage trips to Greece and Carpathians.

On the other hand, Greek Catholic Church appears to be more ethnically (or nationally?) homogenous. The officials of the Church declare that believers are composed mainly of Ukrainians and also, that even though the numbers from polls and census are not big; they provide services for hundreds or thousands of seasonal or illegal Ukrainian workers (najít přesně ZDROJ). The languages of services are Czech and Ukrainian. Greek Catholic Church

<sup>9</sup> In case of Ukrainian immigrants the number of those seasonal and illegal workers is estimated to several thousands (see for example Leontiyeva 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Orthodox Church welcomed the repatriation of so-called Volynian Czechs, people moved from Czech lands to the Volynia region in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century and were invited to repatriate after the WWII and at the beginning of 1990s. The question remains how many of Volynian Czech actually joined the Orthodox Church in Czech Republic as Volynia is region predominantly Greek Catholic (ZDROJ).

also celebrates religious holidays according to the both Gregorian (used in Czech Republic) and Julian (used in Ukraine) calendars.

Nevertheless, calling Greek Catholic Church in the Czech Republic an ethnic church (in the same sense that this concept is used in the Anglo-American context) is not accurate. In America, there are numbers of so-called ethnic churches (see for example Hagan, Ebaugh 2003) – churches that are formed within an ethnically homogenous community, usually immigrant, being the extended hand of the Church in the country of origin. Those churches maintain ties with their mother Church, who provides capital, clergy and other resources. This may be the example of Irish and Brazilian Catholics (Levitt 2007) in USA. Greek Catholic Church in the Czech Republic, although connected with Ukraine, is autonomous Church and is not visited only by Ukrainian. Being 'branch' of the Roman Catholic Church, it is part of world-wide, global and transnational network. However, its history is closely connected to relatively small geographical region, which is nowadays part of three countries - Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia, and it also remains intertwined with ethnicity (Mitrokhin 2001, Krindatch 2001)