

Contribution to the Knowledge of Archbishop Sawatij's Activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia in the First Half of the 20th Century¹

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ABSTRACT: The historiographical problems also include the problem of the jurisdictional affiliation of Orthodox Christians in the territory of Czechoslovakia in the inter-war period, or the conflict between the Serbian and Constantinopolitan Orthodox Churches over the administration of the Orthodox community in the aforementioned territory. As a matter of fact, up to the present, both the Orthodox themselves and historiography have been tackling this problem with difficulties. They have mostly tried to solve it by one-sided preference of the one or the other side and have interpreted and evaluated the activities of both Orthodox factions, symbolized by the personalities of bishops Gorazd and Sawatij, accordingly. In this context, the need for a deeper knowledge of the life and work of archimandrite Sawatij (whose civil name was Antonín Vrabec), the most important figure of the early Orthodox Church after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, is also becoming urgent.

Keywords: Orthodox Church, Subcarpathian Ruthenia, Czechoslovakia, Patriarch Sawatij, 20th century

The Orthodox community in the territory of the Czech lands and Slovakia does not have deeper historical traditions in the meaning of the passage of this Church through the centuries. From a quantitative point of view, it has never been a large church community. It has always been rather a narrow group, comprising some tens of thousands of believers.² Very important for the vitality of Orthodoxy in the above mentioned territory were foreign influences: the involvement in religious life by the Orthodox Christians from other countries, the return of the Czechs of Volyn to their homeland after the World War II, the conversion of the former Uniats in Slovakia in 1950's after the prohibition of the Greek Catholic Church, and significant interferences by the Constantinopolitan, Serbian and Russian Orthodox Churches. Here should be seen one of the reasons for the lack of high-quality papers reflecting the history of Orthodox Christians in Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia (during the first Czechoslovak Republic).

¹ This paper is an output of the project of the GAČR, no. 409/08/0009.

² In 1910, there were 1,063 Orthodox faithful in the Czech lands. MÜLLER, Václav. *Náboženské poměry v Československé republice*. Praha : Státní nakladatelství, 1925, p. 84. According to the official reports, on the day of the declaration of autocephaly (1951), there were more than 300,000 Orthodox believers in Czechoslovakia. In 1981, on the 30th anniversary of the autocephaly, there were already only 90,000 Orthodox faithful. In 1991 this number even decreased to 53,000. After the censuses in the Czech and Slovak Republics in 2000–2001, the total number of the Orthodox in these two states was 73,416 (50,363 in Slovakia and 23,053 in the Czech Republic).

Another reason, in our opinion, is the problem of the jurisdictional affiliation of Orthodox Christians in the territory of Czechoslovakia in the inter-war period,³ or the conflict between the Serbian and Constantinopolitan Orthodox Churches over the administration of the Orthodox community in the aforementioned territory. As a matter of fact, up to the present, both the Orthodox themselves and historiography have been tackling this problem with difficulties. They have mostly tried to solve it by one-sided preference of the one or the other side⁴ and have interpreted and evaluated the activities of both Orthodox factions, symbolized by the personalities of bishops Gorazd and Sawatij, accordingly.

In this context, the need for a deeper knowledge of the life and work of archimandrite Sawatij (whose civil name was Antonín Vrabec), the most important figure of the early Orthodox Church after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, is also becoming urgent. It was him who, accompanied by his secretary JUDr. Miloš Červinka, established relations with Constantinople, or rather with the local Ecumenical Orthodox Church, and involved it in the history of the Czech, Slovak and Subcarpathian Orthodox faithful of at least the first half of the 20th century and, thus, unintentionally became one of the main actors of the above mentioned jurisdictional struggle between Constantinople and Belgrade.

The first historian to radically break the silence about Sawatij in the Orthodox Church (apart from the contemporary works by Vladimír Grigorič), seems to have been the current Metropolitan of the Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church, Christopher (Pulets). In 2000, he published a paper on Sawatij⁵ that does not only have features of synthesis, but also tries to provide new information, especially on the archbishop's activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Our intention is not to critically evaluate the article, because nothing is perfect. However, it will remain a fact that within the limited extent of the paper, he could not cope with all issues related to Sawatij's personality. In our opinion, the value of the portrait lies in the introduction of an important topic. Apparently, the author's motifs are not connected with an attempt at the rehabilitation of the archbishop's role in the history of the Church. In our opinion, Christopher's article is rather a result of his research activities in Greece and his contact with the Constantinopolitan Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, under new conditions of the freedom of research on the threshold of the 21st century, his paper constitutes a call for new scholarly investigation (not only in relation to the vладыka's personality).

³ Cf. MAREK, Pavel. K problematice budování české pravoslavné církve v období první republiky. In *Sborník prací FF BU - Studia minorae Facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Brunensis* 53. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 2006, pp. 95-113.

⁴ Cf., for example, ALEŠ, Pavel. Cesty k autokefalite. In *Pravoslavný církevní kalendář 1981*. Bratislava 1980, pp. 79-86; БУРЕГА, Владимир В. Проблема юрисдикции Православной Церкви в Чешских землях в 20. веке. In *Церковно-исторический вестник*, 2002, No. 9, pp. 154-185; БУРЕГА, Volodymyr. O kanonické jurisdikci Pravoslavné církve v českých zemích (1923-1925). In *Dobrý pastýř* (Brno), 2005, No. 10, pp. 22-25. The scholars' opinions were significantly influenced by the work ascribed to bishop Gorazd, entitled *Pamětní spis o právním postavení církve pravoslavné v RČS*. Praha : Církev pravoslavná v RČS, 1932.

⁵ Arcibiskup KRYŠTOF. Arcibiskup Sawatij a dějiny pravoslavné církve východního Slovenska a Podkarpatské Rusi. In *Pravoslavný teologický zborník*, 2000, Vol. 23, No. 8, pp. 124-146.

Therefore, the aim of our paper is a reflection of Sawatij's activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, based on the exploration of the archival sources of Subcarpathian Ruthenian (Ukrainian) provenance. We want our essay to be a sort of pendant to Christopher's knowledge and to contribute to an ultimate unbiased image of Sawatij's personality. Sooner or later, the inquiry should arrive at publishing a critical monograph, evaluating his life and work without prejudices and with a historic dispassionate attitude to the struggles that have been covered by the dust of oblivion.⁶

1. *Who Is Archbishop Sawatij (Vrabec)?*

In the first part of our paper we will, on the basis of the archival sources and secondary literature, briefly summarize the basic data on Sawatij. Thus we will make a necessary exposition to the core of the article, because a permanent place of Sawatij's activities were Prague and the Czech lands. We must outline the reasons for the transfer of Sawatij's pastoral activities to the east of the republic. Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which he had initially wanted to help consolidate a dismal religious situation, would eventually become the only territory (since the second half of the 1920's) over which he maintained a limited real influence, thanks to the existence of a group of his clerical adherents.

Antonín Jindřich Vrabec (3 February 1880–14 November 1959)⁷ was born in Prague (Žižkov) in a family who had converted to the Orthodoxy from Old Catholicism. His father was a member of the "Pravoslávna beseda" society. He passed the secondary school-leaving exam at the real secondary grammar school in Prague. In 1900–1903 he studied at the Orthodox seminary in the city of Ufa, Russia. Although he was not one of the gifted and successful students, rather the opposite is true, with the assistance and support of his influential friends he succeeded to enrol at the prestigious Spiritual Academy in Kiev (1903–1907).⁸ After difficulties, he eventually graduated and defended the scientific degree "candidate of theology".⁹ In 1907 he was ordained hieromonk (a monk who is also a priest) and sent as a missionary to the Czechs of the Volyn eparchy. Since 1909 he had devoted himself to teaching as a deputy director of the spiritual school in Klevan, Volyn; in 1911 he was appointed its director. In 1919 he became superior of the monastery in Meltse, Volyn, and in 1920 administrator in the Kovelsky Uyezd and at the same time rector of the spiritual seminary in Kholm. After World War I, which had brought new constitutional

⁶ Another step to this final goal is the following monograph: MAREK, Pavel - BUREHA, Volodymyr - DANILEC, Jurij. *Arcibiskup Sawatij (1880 - 1959). Nástin života a díla zakladatelské postavy pravoslavné církve v Československé republice. K 50. výročí úmrtí (1959-2009)*. Olomouc : Univerzita Palackého, 2009, 249 pp.

⁷ Cf. Národní archiv (NA) Praha, f. Ministerstvo školství a národní osvěty (MŠNO), sig. 47 VII, kart. 3907; GRIGORIČ, Vladimír. *Pravoslavná církev v Republice československé*. Praha : Nákladem Vladislava Čeracha, 1926, pp. 50-51.

⁸ One of his schoolmates was the future bishop of Nis, Dositheus, later his main rival in Subcarpathian Ruthenia and partner with whom he would negotiate the organization of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. Sawatij was supported by bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), with whom he had been in close touch since his studies in Ufa.

⁹ The topic of his dissertation *Svatý Prokop Sázavský* signalizes his interest in the Bohemian religious history.

and political realities, he did not feel comfortable in Volyn and tried to return to his homeland. He succeeded in his efforts in 1921. In Prague he served to the members of the Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox immigrant community. Simultaneously, step by step, he was also becoming closer with the Czech Orthodox who, via JUDr. Miloš Červinka (1863–1936), president of the Czechoslovak Orthodox Community (Československá obec pravoslavná) (hereinafter CSOC), were looking for a priest. The contacts culminated in June 1922 when the newly formed Czech Religious Orthodox Community (Česká náboženská obec pravoslavná) (hereinafter CROC) elected Sawatij bishop. After the Prague Orthodox community had failed to ensure cheirotonia from the Serbian Orthodox Church, it turned to Constantinople. There Sawatij received ordination from Patriarch Meletius IV (Metaxakis) in early 1923 and became the first Czechoslovak Orthodox archbishop;¹⁰ due to the fact that the Orthodox faithful from Subcarpathian Ruthenia claimed allegiance to the religious community in the territory of the historical Czech lands, too, Patriarch of Constantinople decided to appoint bishop Sawatij straight archbishop of Prague and whole Czechoslovakia. Having published a tomos, dated 6 March 1923 and introduced by the evocation of the memory of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, he established an Orthodox archbishopric in Czechoslovakia with three eparchies: those of Prague, Moravia and Carpatho-Russia (including Slovakia as well). He also set basic rules for the future Church and its organs and institutions. There is no doubt that the foundation of the Orthodox archdiocese in Prague became a highlight of the past efforts of the Orthodox organized in the CSOC and CROC. Within less than five years they had advanced from modest fraternal beginnings to the establishment of official church structures. Even though many of the latter were potentially envisaged, they did not still exist in reality.

It was no accident that Sawatij addressed his request for ordination and assumption of jurisdictional supervision over the Orthodox community in Czechoslovakia to Constantinople. It was a natural reaction to the systematic ignorance by the Serbian Orthodox Church, which, in the context of its jurisdictional claims to the territory of Czechoslovakia, seemed somewhat paradoxical; the Serbs paid all their attention to the newly formed Czechoslovak Church (hereinafter CSC). The leaders of the Serbian Church changed their mind only when it was clear that the Czechoslovak territory would be under the jurisdiction of the Church of Constantinople. The Serbian Orthodox Church's elites concluded that the objectives pursued in Czechoslovakia were threatened and the Church needed to make changes if it did not want to give up its positions. The shifts in acting of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the transition from the passive hovering and waiting to the deliberate offensive, did not, however, appear immediately and they did not arrive in the form of a visible series of clear accomplishments. When carefully following the development of the orthodoxy in our territory in 1923–1925, one can identify a series of approximately three attempts of the Serbian Church to win a dominant position in

¹⁰ Sawatij's ordination was recommended and approved by the synod of bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in Sremski Karlovci, headed by metropolitan Anthony. KRYŠTOF, *Archiepiskop Sawatij a dějiny*, p. 128.

Czechoslovakia (and to eliminate the influence of the Constantinopolitan Church) by the exercise of the jurisdictional supervision over the Orthodox community. In 1923 it bet twice on the personality of bishop Gorazd. However, he did not act consistently enough, hesitated and pursued other interests, too, some of them even having nothing to do with the Serbian Church. Eventually, the leaders of the Serbian Church concluded that Gorazd was not able to meet their expectations and started to focus more on the authorities of the Czechoslovak state. This trend had been evident since the late 1923 and it peaked in 1924 when an interstate agreement on a temporary jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church over the Orthodox in the Czechoslovak Republic was concluded between Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Belgrade, 12 January 1924). Until January 1924, the Czechoslovak authorities had respected and recognized the CROC, headed by archbishop Sawatij, and the Constantinople jurisdiction as a dominant Orthodox structure in Czechoslovakia. The Serbian Church's mission was perceived as assistance to the CSC from an allied state of the Little Entente. Having done no previous consultations with the Orthodox Church circles, i.e. logically, first of all, with archbishop Sawatij, the Czechoslovak state pledged in the concluded agreement to guarantee the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church over the whole territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, until the establishment of the Czechoslovak autocephalous Orthodox Church, and to enable the existence of a single Orthodox Church organization which would not enter contact with the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. Undoubtedly, it was an interference of the state in the internal affairs of the Orthodox in the time when the state authorities were declaring their disinterest in solving similar church matters. The state administration got Sawatij into the situation when a legally ordained highest representative of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia could not maintain contacts with his parent Church. In other words, the state presented Sawatij with a *fait accompli* and now it began to force him to make decisions contrary to his interests and, as time would show, almost unworkable. As a matter of fact, according to the proposal of the Serbian Church, the jurisdictional problem was to be solved on the basis of negotiations between the Serbian and Constantinopolitan Churches and the plan presumed the possibility of release from the existing jurisdiction for both Sawatij and Gorazd. The authors of the agreement calculated on the good will and obligingness of the involved, without having checked its feasibility.

The synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church entrusted the implementation of the interstate agreement of January 1924 to Dositheus, bishop of Nis, who had had a status of delegate of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia since 1920. He accepted this difficult task. It is hard to say to what extent Sawatij was informed about the content of the agreement; later he allegedly several times claimed that he did not know anything about any agreement between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Kingdom. On 4 July 1924 Dositheus appeared in Prague. He immediately met a number of influential figures, including ministers of Czechoslovak government, Russian bishop Sergius or the employees of Yugoslav embassy. The summer months of 1924 were then filled with the feverish efforts of and negotiations among

the involved.¹¹ Their main objective was to persuade archbishop Sawatij of the necessity to accept the Beneš-Janjić agreement of January 1924, concluded in Belgrade, which meant for him to break contacts with the Church of Constantinople and partly to deny Meletius' tomos: the pressure on Sawatij was aimed at removing the Constantinopolitan jurisdiction, while the existence of the archbishopric itself was not questioned and the state officials did not hide that in case of consent the archbishop would keep his position as head of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia. The analysis of available sources has shown that this plan also had an alternative for the case of Sawatij's refusal of the proposed solution. In such a case, the leadership of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia was to be entrusted to Gorazd, acting in the spirit of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Czechoslovak state, and Sawatij was to become a private person.

Key talks among Sawatij, Gorazd and Dositheus were held in Prague on 29 July 1924. Since there is apparently no record of the meeting, much has to be inferred. Sawatij probably formally accepted the agreement of January 1924. What was important was the fact that he agreed to create a single Orthodox Church organization in Czechoslovakia by means of integration of Gorazd's adherents¹² into the CROC. In this issue one can identify his shift of opinion. In addition, Sawatij accepted the proposal for settling the disputes over the jurisdiction through negotiations between the Serbian and Constantinopolitan Churches. Thus, he made it clear that he would conform to the decision of higher church authority; the same, however, had to apply to Gorazd. Both sides decided to keep their own jurisdictions until reaching a consensus between both Churches. As for Dositheus and Gorazd, they clearly failed in their effort to persuade Sawatij to switch to the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church and to win the latter the position of parent Church of the Orthodox in Czechoslovakia. We consider the commitment of the bishops to ask "their" Churches to release them from their jurisdictions to be Dositheus' and Gorazd's defeat, because it unilaterally applied only to Gorazd. The latter was to stay a bishop in Moravia, now Orthodox. There was, however, a condition of obtaining a so called release letter from the Serbian Church. Only on the basis of this letter he could be admitted as a full member to the CROC. The implementation of the above mentioned provision would have meant his transfer under the jurisdiction of the Church of Constantinople. The recapitulation of the contents of both agreements indicates that, on the one hand, they offered some solutions, on the other hand, however, they contained some provisions that would become a source of new differences.

When one look at the situation of the summer 1924 from an angle of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its efforts to gain a dominant position in Czechoslovakia,

¹¹ The main participants in the negotiations were Sawatij, M. Červinka, the Serbian bishop Dositheus, Gorazd, an official of the Ministry of Education, Václav Müller, and the Czechoslovak legate in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Jan Šeba.

¹² Originally, Gorazd was a bishop of the Czechoslovak Church, with cheirotonia of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He long believed that he would manage to theologically direct the whole Church at Orthodoxy. When he failed in his endeavours, he and a group of his adherents seceded from the Czechoslovak Church. As a result, there were de facto two Orthodox factions in the Czech lands. The first faction was represented by the structures of the Prague archbishopric, headed by Sawatij, the second one by the group of Gorazd followers with their centre in Moravia.

it is apparent that the bet on the assistance of the state authorities had brought in this phase only a limited success. Although the Church had managed to persuade the state authorities to conclude the interstate agreement, its content was largely remaining on paper and could not be put into practice, mainly because the state authorities entrusted the implementation of the interstate agreement to the representatives of church organizations. As a matter of fact, in practice, both Churches (Serbian and Constantinopolitan) competed with each other. Therefore, the negotiations necessarily had to result in compromise, but also in the feeling of certain dissatisfaction. The latter proved to be stronger on the part of the Serbian Orthodox Church who wanted to quickly reverse the fragile agreement and to arrange the situation according to its own ideas. Everything indicates that the charge of the development from autumn 1924 to November 1925, when a general meeting of the Orthodox Church in the Czech land was held in Česká Třebová, was taken by the state authorities, pushed from behind by the Serbian Church.

In autumn 1924, everything seemed to be in peace and quiet. Exactly in the spirit of the summer Prague agreement, Sawatij sought to unite the religious community through his activities in the Czech lands and Subcarpathian Ruthenia. The key process of integration of the Moravians flew smoothly without complications and resulted in the establishment of the Moravian-Silesian Eparchial Council (Moravsko-slezská eparchiální rada) with its headquarters in Olomouc. Sawatij kept informed his parent Church of Constantinople of current events. He won praise for acting wisely when negotiating with the representatives of the Serbian Church and he urged his superiors to resolve the jurisdiction issue with Belgrade. The relationships between Sawatij and Gorazd can be described as consolidated and nothing indicated any sort of conflict. The first signal of the processes hidden from the eyes of the public was the resignation of bishop Gorazd on 19 January 1925. We do not have any sources that could explain this step. What we know is that he took a holiday. He retreated and waited. We do not know what activities he was carrying out. We do not have any related sources and would have to speculate without evidence. In the half of March, the Moravian religious communities, which had always inclined to the Serbian Orthodox Church and wished its jurisdictional supervision, began to demand the convening of the general assembly of the CROC. The reason was the approaching expiration of the community authorities' three-year electoral term (in June). Sawatij's reaction was not negative. However, he pressed for the postponement of the meeting, especially in respect of the unclear position of bishop Gorazd whose relationship to the Serbian Church had not yet been resolved. On this basis, the tensions in the community very quickly escalated and resulted in the creation of an intrachurch opposition group who, with the approval of the Serbian Orthodox Church, filed a complaint about Sawatij and his leadership of the community with the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment (hereinafter MENE).¹³ In this context, a question arises why the complaint was filed with the state authorities and the problem was not tackled within the Church. Its gravity even increases when we realize that the opposition pointed to the mistakes, failings and misde-

¹³ NA Praha, f. MŠNO, sig. 47 VII, kart. 3915.

meanours which could shake the Church to its foundations and question its existence. Was this in the interest of the Church and its members? Was the complaint really filed with the pure intention to improve the functioning of the community, or was it a pretext serving other objectives? Was not there any inspiration from behind the scenes, real intention of which was not identified by the complainant? Before it united with the Moravians, the CROC had about 1,320 members and, besides Prague, its centres were in Táboř and Trhové Sviny. The Moravian communities existed in ten districts and had about 6,116 worshippers. Was it not an attempt to take the reins of the administration of the religious community and to enforce the changes that Sawatij had been refusing?

It is difficult to find answers to these questions. Nevertheless, it is a verifiable fact that the state authorities made use of the situation¹⁴ and arranged a personal coup in the CROC. As a result, Gorazd rose to the leadership of the community and Sawatij became, in the eyes of the state and most of the Orthodox connected with the CROC, a private person. This exchange of the persons was also accompanied by a jurisdictional coup - the community renounced the patronage of the patriarch of Constantinople and the supervision of it was taken over by the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The process itself of implementation of changes in the CROC went fast. The Ministry of Education inquired into the legitimacy of the complaint. After some discrepancies of legal nature, accompanying the establishment and mutual relation between the CSOC and CROC, had been confirmed, the authorities called on the leaders of the community to liquidate the Czechoslovak Orthodox Community. However, when Miloš Červinka, with dilettantism or negligence characteristic of him, did so, the Ministry of Education made an official administrator of the Czechoslovak Religious Orthodox Community a clerk, administrator Karel Eichler. The Ministry justified this step by claiming that by cancellation of the CSOC the church community had lost its governing body and Eichler's task would be to prepare the elections to the CROC to fulfil the letter of the law. Sawatij declared the whole, rather strange, situation illegal and immediately, on 8 August 1925, he filed a written complaint with the Presidium of Ministerial Council.¹⁵ Meanwhile, commissioner Eichler prepared a general assembly of the religious community. On 22

¹⁴ This assessment appears to be indisputable and well documented by the sources from the Ministry of Education that decided to make a "major cut" ("*řez většího slohu*") in "*the public interest*" ("*zájmu veřejném*"). This statement can be understood as a fulfilment of the Beneš-Janjic agreement of January 1924. One can also ask why after the identification of possible misconduct the problems were solved by the state through organizing the church assembly and the church authorities themselves were not called on to handle the situation. The measures taken by the state also facilitated the taking of office by the new administration. An official paid by the state stepped on the ground that, so far, had been labelled as private. If the authorities had in mind only the restoration of order in the sense of removing the poorly functioning administration of the community, they then indirectly paved the way for Gorazd and the powers behind him. In any case, they decided the direction of the further development of Orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia.

¹⁵ The complaint was filed by M. Červinka. However, his step was not correct because only administrative court was authorized to deal with this matter. Sawatij expected that this appeal would stop the process of the preparation of the community assembly. Of course, this did not happen because, from a legal point of view, the complaint did not exist.

November 1925, in Sawatij's absence,¹⁶ the latter elected a former Roman Catholic priest-Premonstratensian and minister, PhDr. Isidor Zahradník (1864–1926), its president and called bishop Gorazd to become its spiritual administrator. As late as on 23 March 1926, the Presidium of the Land Political Administration in Prague informed Sawatij on the results of the assembly of the representatives of the Orthodox communities of the Czech lands in Česká Třebová and suspended him as the head of the Orthodox in Czechoslovakia.¹⁷

Thus, in 1925, archbishop Sawatij was forced out of the leadership of the CROC and replaced by bishop Gorazd. Therefore, since the second half of the 1920's, he had concentrated on organizing the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. In the Czech lands only a handful of believers in Prague had remained faithful to Sawatij. There was also a group of Czech Old Catholics who claimed allegiance to him.¹⁸ All archbishop's attempts to re-establish his leadership position in the Czech Orthodox movement, made via judicial authorities, failed. In the years of the Protectorate, he tried to step in the tragic fate of the Jewish population, which became fatal to him. After having been reported to the Gestapo, he was arrested in May 1942 and sent to prison by the people's court. He was sent to the Pankrác prison and the Terezín concentration camp, and then to that of Dachau where he remained until the end of the war. Luck was on his side when he recovered from the spotted fever. He returned to Prague only in the late 1945. In 1946 he officially handed over the administration of those religious communities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia that had remained faithful to him, to Nestor, bishop of Mukacheve and Uzhhorod. Exhausted by the years of imprisonment and long jurisdictional fights, he was preparing for life in seclusion. In 1948 he renounced all his church dignities in favour of the Russian archbishop Yeleferi.¹⁹ He spent the last ten years of his life in the quiet spiritual service in the circle of loyal believers and, allegedly, under the supervision of the State Security.²⁰

2. Activities of Bishop Sawatij in Subcarpathian Ruthenia

The history of the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia in the 20th century is very complicated and contradictory. The restoration of the Orthodoxy is closely related to the histories of the villages of Iza in the district of Khust and Velyki Luchky in the district of Mukacheve. Austro-Hungarian governments, which were apprehensive about spreading Russophilism in the society and regarded the Orthodoxy as the "hand of Moscow", took actions against the eastern Christians. However, all these efforts ended in vain – the Orthodoxy would gradually expand to the whole territory of the present-day Transcarpathia and eastern Slovakia. After

¹⁶ Sawatij's behaviour, including his absence at the meeting – after all, he was a rightful spiritual administrator of the CROC – may seem to be incomprehensible passivity. We find explanation in the assumption that he and his adherents saw the whole situation as an absurd misunderstanding.

¹⁷ While after K. Eichler's taking over the governance of the CROC M. Červinka was removed from the office, archbishop Sawatij continued to be its spiritual administrator.

¹⁸ KRYŠTOF, Arcibiskup Sawatij a dějiny, p. 131.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Subcarpathian Ruthenia had been attached to the democratic first Czechoslovak Republic, the Orthodox Church was given an opportunity of free development. Due to the fact that in the times of Austria-Hungary this territory was a missionary area of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Orthodox faithful in Subcarpathian Ruthenia turned to it with a request for sending a bishop to help them with organizational issues. The synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church selected the bishop of Nis, Dositheus (Vasich). During his mandate for Subcarpathian Ruthenia (1921–1926), Dositheus visited the local eparchy several times and always briefly stayed with the faithful. Quite understandably, in connection with these visits the Orthodox began to desire for their permanent bishop. Part of the Orthodox priests in Subcarpathian Ruthenia attempted, therefore, to select an episcope from their own ranks (10 January 1921 and 12 July 1921). For a short time, father Alexis (Kabaliuk) found himself in this position. However, it was just an episode and the newly appointed “bishop” eventually bowed to Dositheus. This seeking of a bishop caused a split in the ranks of the clergy. Part of the priests did not accept nor recognize the Serbian bishop Dositheus. The opposition against the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church was led by hieromonk Bogolep (Tserkovnik), Yov (Voytishin) and the priest Georgii Kenyz who had been ordained by the Prague Russian bishop, Sergius (Korolyov). Coincidentally, at the same time, the Prague lawyer Miloš Červinka implemented the reorganization of the Czech Orthodox community in Prague and the Subcarpathian-Ruthenian “opposition group” entered contact with him.

On 1 March 1922, part of the clergy of Subcarpathian Ruthenia met Miloš Červinka in the village of Bedevlya in the Tyachiv district.²¹ Červinka’s mission was to gain support of the Ruthenian population for the bishop cheirotonia of archimandrite Sawatij. He succeeded in his task and the meeting’s participants worked out several copies of a protocol that was signed by the representatives of 18 Subcarpathian-Ruthenian villages (Kopashново, Tereblya, Chumalevo, Bushtyno, Steblivka, Sokyrnytsya, Krainykovo, Novobarovo, Bedevlya, Hrushovo, Ternovo, Hanychi, Neresnytsya, Dubove, Vil’khoverysya, Danylovo, etc.). The signatories included the priests Georgii Kenyz, Ivan Gaydur, Georgii Chopik, Ivan Babich, Andrei Ratsin, hieromonks Dositheus and Yov (Voytishin). The participants rejected the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church and requested granting cheirotonia to the bishop for the territory of Subcarpathian Ruthenia as well.²² The copies of the protocol were sent to the President of the Czechoslovak Republic, Tomáš G. Masaryk, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš, and to the patriarchs of the Constantinopolitan and Serbian Orthodox Churches.²³

In several days, Miloš Červinka visited Subcarpathian Ruthenia again and invited his supporters to the village of Bushtyno. The participants of the meeting signed a declaration expressing their desire for Sawatij to become their bishop.²⁴ We

²¹ *Незгоди в православній церкві*. In *Руська нива*, 23. березня 1922, р. 2.

²² Государственный архив Закарпатской области Берегово (hereinafter ГАЗО), Фонд 255, Опись 1, Дело 50, Лист 1-2.

²³ ГАЗО, Фонд 255, Опись 1, Дело 50, Лист 1-2.

²⁴ Загорск, Троице-Сергиева Лавра, Сергей (Цьока), иеромонах: *Православие и иноческая жизнь в Закарпатье в первой половине XX столетия*, 1960. Рукопись, р. 124.

believe that the support of the clergy and Subcarpathian Ruthenia's 18 villages contributed to the fact that Sawatij became bishop on 30 July 1922. The Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment confirmed the decision of the Prague meeting of the religious community.²⁵ On the same day, the notification of this act was sent to the Constantinopolitan and Serbian patriarchs, to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (hereinafter ROCA), Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) and to Metropolitan Eulogius (Georgievsky) who was in charge of the Russian Orthodox Church in northern Europe. From all these Sawatij received congratulatory telegrams.²⁶

After his ordination and promotion in Constantinople, archbishop Sawatij first arrived in Subcarpathian Ruthenia in September 1923. In 13–22 of the same month he visited Uzhhorod and the villages of Dubove, Kalyny, Vilchovce (Vil'khovytsya), Neresnytsya, Tereblya, Uhlya, Kopashново, Bedevlya, Bushtyno, Volovo, Russkoye a Tchaporci.²⁷ The report on his journey reads that *"during his trip he (archbishop Sawatij) tried to persuade the Orthodox peasants to calmly accept the new church provisions. If they become members of the independent Czech eparchy, they can rely on the assistance of the authorities."*²⁸ Another police report informed that *"in the interview Sawatij had said that any violence was a negative phenomenon [and he asked] the peasants to refrain from any shows of partiality in church matters."*²⁹ In the village of Bushtyno, Sawatij created an eparchial committee to administer the Orthodox communities. It was headed by Yoan Chernyavin, a priest of Nyzhniy Bystryy.

In Subcarpathian Ruthenia, a new situation occurred in 1923 when Sawatij invited the former bishop of Sevastopol, Benjamin (Fedchenkov), to help him administer the local eparchy. The Ruthenian population much benefited from the arrival of the Russian bishop and within a short period of time the latter succeeded to win the hearts and minds of a large part of the clergy, originally inclining to the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This was reflected in the letter of a group of the Orthodox clergy, sent to the patriarch of the Serbian Church, Dimitri, on 28 September 1923. In the letter, the priests expressed their hope that bishop Benjamin would soon become a spiritual father of all Orthodox faithful in Subcarpathian Ruthenia.³⁰ Their desires and predictions, however, ended in vain. From an anonymous source, dated 22 November 1923, we know that the Central Orthodox Committee in Uzhhorod did not recognize bishop Benjamin. Its head, Vladimir Gomichkov, said: *"If we recognize Benjamin as bishop, the difference between the Catholics and us will be only in the detail that Rome sends bishops to them and Prague to us."*³¹ The situation went so far that Benjamin did not even get a permission to enter the Orthodox church in Uzhhorod as well as at other places.

²⁵ Загорск, Троице-Сергиева Лавра, Кирилл (Поспешил), иеромонах: *Труды епископа Горазда (Павлика) по возрождению и укреплению Православия в Чехословакии*, 1959. Машинопись, р. 81.

²⁶ *Православный Русский Календарь на 1926 г.* Вышний Свидник 1925, р. 28.

²⁷ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1525, Лист 1.

²⁸ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1041, Лист 3.

²⁹ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1041, Лист 3.

³⁰ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1525, Лист 3.

³¹ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1041, Лист 3.

As for Benjamin's activities in accordance with Sawatij's intentions in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, on 1 November 1923 he called a meeting of the clergy to Uzhhorod. Approximately 150 participants included vice-governor, Peter Ehrenfeld, education officer, Josef Pešek, and archimandrite Alexis (Kabaliuk). The participants discussed the issues of the preparation of the young clerics, ensuring a church, etc. The main item on the agenda, however, was the matter of the confirmation of the constitution of the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Most of the delegates opposed it, because they thought that they would have given the state the opportunity to control the Church.³²

Benjamin's activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia and his help to Sawatij, however, did not last long. Under the pressure, exerted by the Serbian Church, he had to leave Czechoslovakia. After his departure, Sawatij took charge of the Church in this territory again. He was particularly aware of the fact that the future of the Church was closely connected with the issue of the education of seminarians. On 23 January 1923, the educational office of the civil administration of Subcarpathian Ruthenia issued the regulation no. 1360/23 on the basis of which theological courses were established in the village of Bushtyno in the Tyachiv district.³³ They were intended for young men of the age at least 17 years.³⁴ The first students took these courses in Bushtyno on 18 February–20 September 1923. There were 37 students enrolled in the course. However, only 24 of them passed the exam. The time of preparation of the students for ordination depended on their abilities. In some cases, the laying on of hands was held only three days after starting the course.³⁵ Initially, the organizers planned that the students would be taught according to the programme of the first four grades of the (lower) secondary grammar school, except foreign languages. However, these plans were not carried out and the courses offered theological and general educational subjects.

The writings of the contemporary Ukrainian historians claim that the archbishop Sawatij's activities were funded by the Czechoslovak government.³⁶ We believe that there was such support, but only in the early 1920's. It can be documentarily proved that the theological courses in Bushtyno were paid from the state funds.³⁷

While until 1924 the tensions between the clergy of both jurisdictions in Subcarpathian Ruthenia can be described as latent, after the conclusion of the above mentioned interstate Belgrade agreement of January 1924, open confrontations began. On 17 July 1924 the chancellor of archbishop Sawatij, protopresbyter M. Červinka, issued a circular addressed to the Orthodox priests-missionaries in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. It read that the rumours about the recognition of the Serbian jurisdic-

³² ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1041, Лист 4.

³³ Архив Мукачевско-Ужгородской епархии Мукачево (АМУЕ), Разпоряжение о открытии пастырских курсов. Школьный отдел в Ужгороде, 23. I. 1923 г.

³⁴ Чешские власти не дают успокоится Православной церкви в Карпатской Руси. In *Церковна Правда* 1925, сентябрь, p. 63.

³⁵ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1041, Лист 6.

³⁶ ПАЛИНЧАК, Николай. *Державно-церковніе отношения на Закарпатье и в Восточной Словакии в 20 середине 30-х годов XX века*. Ужгород 1996, p. 43; ГАВРИИЛ (Кризина), игумен: *Православная церковь на Закарпатье (век XX)*. Киев 1999, p. 59.

³⁷ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1041, Лист 4-5.

tion in the Czechoslovak Republic were false. The author of the letter claimed that archbishop Sawatij continued to have full powers over the Orthodox communities in Czechoslovakia.³⁸

On 2 October 1924 a meeting of the clergy of both jurisdictional affiliations took place in Khust. Although the priests expressed their wish to go over under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church, the decision of the assembly was only formal. The letter of protoiereus Y. Chernyavin to archbishop Sawatij reads: *“Dositheus cannot be trusted and the role of Your Highness is to emphatically polemize with him, to summon up all Your strength and drive him out, he demoralizes our clergy and people... Therefore, I advise You (pardon me), Excellency, to: inform the government and keep demanding Dositheus’ removal...; immediately come here...; elect consistory (temporary); reveal Dositheus’ lies... We have to work, work and work. We have to unite, otherwise the dark powers will win.”*³⁹ When archbishop Sawatij found out that he was losing support among the clergy in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, he took measures. On 25 February 1925 he removed protoiereus Y. Chernyavin from the position of the president of the eparchial committee and, at the same time, instructed protoiereus Dimitri Vladykov to organize the election of new head of the committee.⁴⁰ Eventually, hieromonk Bogolep was selected for this position.

What contributed to the further escalation of the conflict were the results of the Česká Třebová synod of the Czech Orthodox Church of 22 November 1925. We already know that the synod elected Gorazd (Pavlík) bishop and decided to accept the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. On 26 February 1926 Commissioner Karel Eichler confiscated from Sawatij and protopresbyter M. Červinka all government documents, possessions, archives and registry of the Czech Religious Orthodox Community – all powers were transferred to bishop Gorazd and synodal committee.⁴¹ While Sawatij lost his power and position in the Czech lands, he still had a comparatively high number of adherents in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. In his message dated 2 April 1926, archbishop Sawatij tried to assure the priests and the faithful that the issue of the legitimacy of his power was being successfully solved at the level of patriarchs of the Serbian and Constantinopolitan Churches.⁴² Sawatij denounced the activities of K. Eichler and bishop Gorazd and did not recognize their power. In the circular letter one can find an assertion that bishop Gorazd was working on creation of the “living Church”.⁴³ At the same time, Sawatij exhorted the clergy and the faithful, under the threat of excommunication, not to enter any contact with the Serbian bishops. He called for an ecclesiastical trial with Gorazd and Dositheus and proposed to deprive them of their positions.⁴⁴ On 13 April 1926 he excommunicated all priests who assisted Gorazd with the consecration of the church in the village of Neresnytsya in the Tyachiv district in the early days of the

³⁸ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1525, Лист 5.

³⁹ АМУЕ – письмо протоиерея Ивана Чернявина к архиепископу Савватию (Врабец) от 3. 10. 1924 г.

⁴⁰ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 7, Дело 1848, Лист 2.

⁴¹ КИРИЛЛ (Поспишил), иеромонах. *Труды епископа Горазда*, р. 86.

⁴² ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 1, Лист 2.

⁴³ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 1, Лист 2.

⁴⁴ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 1, Лист 3.

month.⁴⁵ In the following message, dated 15 April 1926, archbishop Sawatij claimed that *“the enemies of the Church had seized control over the whole economic and internal life of the Orthodox Church.”* He wrote that *“the church dignitaries collected signatures against a handover of the Church of St. Nicolaus in Prague from the Russian to the Ukrainian hands...”*⁴⁶

Sawatij's activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia could be stopped neither by the legal actions by the supporters of the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church nor by an official government ban. On 6 November 1926 the police constable of the Rakhiv district, Dvořák, reported to the provincial government: *“On 31 October bishop Sawatij of Prague arrived at Nyzhnya Apsha to consecrate an Orthodox church. On 30 October 1926 at 5.10 p.m. Sawatij, accompanied by an unknown person, appeared in Teresva. After having some rest, he continued by peasant waggon to Nyzhnya Apsha – settlement of Valegrad. After his arrival there at one o'clock at night, he stayed overnight at the Orthodox priest L. Gazii's. At 8.00 a.m. he started the consecration of the new church. The ceremony lasted until 1 o'clock. There were about 2,000 people from Nyzhnya Apsha and neighbouring villages. After the ceremony, Sawatij stayed as a guest at the priest L. Gazii's until 1 December 1926. On that day he departed by peasant waggon to Teresva, arriving there at 11.17 a.m. Then he continued by train to Prague.”*⁴⁷ This detailed report of the Czech official is an evidence that the activities of archbishop Sawatij in Subcarpathian Ruthenia were controlled by the government.

On the basis of the Belgrade agreement, the Serbian Orthodox Church approached the organization of the religious life in the eparchy. The unacceptable and compromised bishop Dositheus was in Subcarpathian Ruthenia replaced by a new delegate, the bishop of Novi Sad and Backa, Ireneus (Circic). Already the latter's arrival provoked a sharp reaction from Sawatij. In his message dated 2 February 1927 the archbishop wrote that Ireneus had not come to Subcarpathian Ruthenia as a shepherd, because his sphere of activity was Serbia. He tried to persuade the clergy and the faithful that Ireneus' activities would not bring unity and peace but, quite the contrary, they would even deepen the division. Sawatij asked the faithful not to carry out bishop Ireneus' orders.⁴⁸

These appeals did not remain without response in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. For instance, on 4 April 1927 a priest of the village of Kushnytsya, hieromonk Sergii (Marushka), announced that he did not recognize bishop Ireneus and submitted himself only to archbishop Sawatij.⁴⁹ According to the report of the priest of the village of Ternovo, Georgii Rusinko, dated 9 February 1927, in the Tyachev district Sawatij was supported by archimandrite Bogolep (Tserkovnik) of Bedevlya and by the priests: I. Babich (Dubove), Georgii Bedzir (Kalyny), I. Kiveshligetii (Hanychi), G. Nosa (Neresnytsya), S. Stoika (Kryva),⁵⁰ V. Nesukh (Tereblya), I. Babinets (Dulovo), V. Nemesh (Uhlya), V. Krialo (Chumalevo), hieromonk Nikolay (Madar)

⁴⁵ ГАЗО, Фонд 63, Опись 1, Дело 598, Лист 53.

⁴⁶ ГАЗО, Фонд 63, Опись 1, Дело 598, Лист 54. I.e. against a handover to Gorazd's hands.

⁴⁷ ГАЗО, Фонд 63, Опись 1, Дело 598, Лист 68.

⁴⁸ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 599, Лист 15.

⁴⁹ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 599, Лист 26.

⁵⁰ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 599, Лист 1 об.

of Krychovo and M. Saleichuk (Kolodne).⁵¹

At the end of 1927 bishop Ireneus had to leave Subcarpathian Ruthenia. In April 1928 his position was taken over by the bishop of Raska and Prizren, Seraphim (Jovanovic). It was him who most consistently opposed the activities of archbishop Sawatij in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. On 20 May 1928 Sawatij ordained in Prague a deacon Ilya Semedi for the village of Lukovo.⁵² Seraphim responded to Semedi's arrival at the village with irritation, he protested against it and on 12 June 1928 he filed a complaint with the church office of the civil administration of Subcarpathian Ruthenia. The charge reads: *"We categorically insist on taking necessary measures by the civil authorities of the Republic in order to stop the illegal activities of archbishop Sawatij which lie in ordaining priests and calling himself the archbishop of the whole Czechoslovakia, which implies an expansion of his authority over Subcarpathian Ruthenia - and this contradicts the status quo. He unlawfully appeals to the authorities to support the deacons and priests ordained by him and he enters contacts with our Orthodox communities. Such illegal actions of archbishop Sawatij cause public nuisance and confusion in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. With ordinations of priests similar to those performed by archbishop Sawatij, one can expect several hundreds of illegitimate priests without church communities who will turn to the cadre of proletarianized clergy."*⁵³ The bishop also demanded that Sawatij's office be closed and he wanted to prohibit M. Červinka to act on the archbishop's behalf.

At the same time, on 28 June 1928, archbishop Sawatij issued a message addressed to the Orthodox clergy and the laymen. In the message he accused the priests of the Serbian jurisdiction of disturbing the peace in the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. *"One cannot expect anything from the Serbian jurisdiction. All bishop Dositheus, bishop Ireneus and Dr. Damaskin had promised a lot, but they did not deliver on their promise and did nothing. Bishop Seraphim will not help either because he acts uncanonically."*⁵⁴ In reply to this message, on 20 July 1928 bishop Seraphim wrote in his letter addressed to the MENE in Prague: *"Please, make it categorically prohibited for archbishop Sawatij to interfere in the affairs of our eparchy, to issue any messages or appeals addressed to the Orthodox faithful in Subcarpathian Ruthenia and Slovakia and to contact them in church matters in general."*⁵⁵ In the following letter, dated 14 July 1928, he claimed: *"One of the most serious barriers to running our eparchy are the activities of archbishop Sawatij and the persons around him. Either personally or via his officials, Archbishop Sawatij issues various regulations for the clergy or the faithful of our eparchy. He ordains priests or deacons, for which, as it is known from the case of the priest Boishko, he takes money. He issues messages for all our faithful in which, according to the testimonies of our priests, he anathematizes those priests who claim allegiance to our jurisdiction and appeals to them not to submit to us. We ask the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment to order Archbishop*

⁵¹ ГАЗО, Фонд 151, Опись 13, Дело 599, Лист 9.

⁵² ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 262, Лист 9.

⁵³ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 262, Лист 5.

⁵⁴ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 262, Лист 12.

⁵⁵ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 262, Лист 11 об.

*Sawatij to stop his activities in our eparchy and to divest him of all his duties.*⁵⁶

On 3 October 1928, the MENE in Prague sent a letter to the president of the provincial government in Uzhhorod. The Ministry was trying to find out the details of the bishop Seraphim's stay in Prague. *"In the interview with the minister, bishop Seraphim said that archbishop Sawatij interfered in the affairs of the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. He demanded that Sawatij be forbidden to travel to Subcarpathian Ruthenia and meet the clergy."*⁵⁷ In addition, Seraphim advised the minister to turn to the Belgrade government with the request to influence Sawatij's activities via Constantinople. In early December 1929 bishop Seraphim wrote to the provincial government in Uzhhorod: *"In the village of Chumalevo Ilarion Ribar appeared. He claims to be a hieromonk and celebrates church services. We do not consider Ribar to be a priest and we ask the provincial government to remove him from Chumalevo or to prevent him from interfering in the church life of the Orthodox community and from celebrating services."*⁵⁸

The conflict situations also continued in the early 1930's when Josif (Cvijovic), bishop of Bitola, was selected to become the exarch-administrator of the Subcarpathian Ruthenian Orthodox Church. He arrived in Ruthenia on 21 December 1930 with the intention to stop the jurisdictional fight. On 23 April 1931 he filed a complaint with the MENE in Prague. The letter contains the information of archbishop Sawatij's activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. In order to prove Sawatij's disruptive and destructive conduct, Josif provided the Ministry with the following evidence: *"1) Sawatij took priest Ivan Jakub of Lysychovo, who had been dismissed, under his protection and allowed him to celebrate church services; 2) He sent his priest to the village of Dubove and appointed him deacon; 3) He ordained deacon Luka Bonya in the monastery and left him there; 4) He sent his clergyman to Korolevo; 5) He keeps meeting the priests who are submitted to him, e.g. Georgii Kenyz of Kopashново and father Feodosii (Horvat) of Nižný Sineriv (Synevyr), he persuades them and ask them to persuade others as well that he will soon take over the administration of the whole Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia."*⁵⁹ In this context, bishop Josif demanded that the Ministry take measures to prevent Sawatij from his illegal activities within the borders of the Subcarpathian Ruthenian Orthodox eparchy.

In Subcarpathian Ruthenia, consistent support to archbishop Sawatij was given by those Orthodox monasteries and sketes that had been established by him. First of all, it was a nunnery in Chumalevo and the sketes in Dubove, Dubrivka, Kopashново and Tereblya. However, in 1928 the Skete of Ioan Predtechi in Dubove, administered by archimandrite Bogolep (Tserkovnik), went over under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. As for the numbers of members in individual monasteries, in Tereblya there were 19 persons, in Dubove ten, in Dubrivka three, in Chumalevo about ten and in Kopashново about six persons.

In 1931 the synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church established the eparchy of Mukacheve and Prešov. All Orthodox communities in Subcarpathian Ruthe-

⁵⁶ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 262, Лист 10-10 об.

⁵⁷ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 5, Дело 17, Лист 33.

⁵⁸ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 142, Лист 92.

⁵⁹ ГАЗО, Фонд 2, Опись 2, Дело 263, Лист 105 об.

nia and eastern Slovakia became its members. The first bishop of Mukacheve and Prešov became Damaskin (Grdanicki). He administered the Orthodox communities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia until 1938 when he was substituted by bishop Vladimir Rajic.

The documents related to Sawatij's activities in Subcarpathian Ruthenia in 1931-1938 have not been found. The situation changed only in 1938 when Subcarpathian Ruthenia was granted an autonomous status and its own government. At that time, there were at least 12 clergymen who supported Sawatij. The first reports date back to the end of October. On 25 of the same month, the issue of *Novaja Svoboda* (New Freedom) newspaper printed two materials on Sawatij's arrival in Subcarpathian Ruthenia (in that time the parallel name "Carpathian Ukraine" was also in use). In the article titled "Archbishop Sawatij in the Carpathian Ukraine", the author notes that archbishop Sawatij "is temporarily staying in Kopashново, one of the famous Orthodox villages in our country. Vladyka Sawatij was heartily welcomed by all Ukrainian people who rejoiced in his presence among them."⁶⁰ The second article is richer in content and it informs about the relationship between the eparchy's leadership and the new authorities. "There were manifestation festivities of the Orthodox Church in Kopashново. Yesterday, vladyka Sawatij served his first archiereus Divine Liturgy. The whole village, both the elderly and young, came to welcome their shepherd. The joy of the peasants peaked when vladyka prayed at the main door for the faith keeping Carpathian Ukraine and its government [...] Assisted by ten priests, archbishop Sawatij celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the presence of the members of the synodal committee who had come from Khust. There were two choirs singing during the Divine Liturgy - one of the nuns of Chumalevo and one of Kopashново [...] Further, vladyka granted the members of the synodal committee an hour's audience. Archbishop voiced his gratitude to the Ukrainian people for expressing their brotherly love and devotion to the state of the Czechs and Slovaks in difficult times and he fervently welcomed the Carpathian Ukraine and declared his readiness to serve here God and to support the government."⁶¹

Further, it has been found out that on 23 November 1938 the prime minister of the Carpathian Ukraine, Augustyn Voloshyn, saw archbishop Sawatij, "the interview with him lasted 40 minutes and addressed the issues of the Orthodox Church in the Carpathian Ukraine. After the interview with the prime minister, archbishop Sawatij received an editor of *Novaja Svoboda* and expressed great satisfaction with the fact that the prime minister had had great understanding for the needs of the Orthodox Church in the Carpathian Ukraine."⁶² On the same day, 23 November 1938, the members of the synodal committee, which had been established to administer the priests, supporters of Sawatij, Yakov Zozulya, Mykhayl Boyko and the priest Mykhayl Kenyz, asked the government of the Carpathian Ukraine to recognize the jurisdiction of the Church of Constantinople and to confirm a new provisional con-

⁶⁰ Архиепископ Саватин на Карпатской Украине. In *Новая Свобода*, 25. ноября 1938, p. 3.

⁶¹ Православный архиепископ Саватий молится за Карпатскую Украину. In *Новая Свобода*, 25. ноября 1938, p. 4.

⁶² Архиепископ Саватий у премера влады. In *Новая Свобода*, 27. листопада 1938, p. 8.

stitution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.⁶³ Enclosed was the text of the provisional constitution, signed by the above-mentioned persons.

In accordance with the constitution, a plan of reorganization of the Orthodox Church and of creation of the "Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolis" on the basis of the tomos of Patriarch Meletius (Metaxakis), dated 6 March 1923, was to be implemented. The Church was to maintain the canonical connection with Constantinople. The Ukrainian Orthodox metropolis in the Carpathian Ukraine was to constitute a part of the Czecho-Slovak archbishopric with which it was to be connected via metropolitan; the latter was to hold office until death. In order to administer the metropolis, a metropolitan administration was established. It consisted of: 1) an office headed by a chancellor; 2) a metropolitan committee, consisting of the metropolitan, the president of the committee and six members delegated by the metropolitan committee;⁶⁴ 3) a spiritual court; 4) a metropolitan assembly whose members were all spiritual metropolises and one delegate of each church community or monastery. The main administration was conducted by the chancellor, circular presbyters, parochs and igumens of monasteries.⁶⁵ The church communities, monasteries and metropolises obtained the rights of legal personalities and could acquire movable and immovable properties, found secular and spiritual schools and associations, publish magazines, etc.⁶⁶ Ukrainian became an official language for keeping records. The founders of the "Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolis" were the church communities in the villages of Kopashново, Dubove, Voloskoje (now Podgornoye), Kolo-chava, Horb, Korolevo and the monasteries in Chumalevo, Dubrivka and Dubove. Archbishop Sawatij was proclaimed the first metropolitan.⁶⁷ On 29 December 1939 the synodal committee called through the *Novaja Svoboda* on the former clergymen and those with theological education to turn to it and send their brief curriculum vitae.⁶⁸ On 31 December 1938 the first plenary session of the synodal committee, attended by about one hundred persons, took place in the Koruna pub in Khust. The participants dealt with the following issues: 1) Building the Church organization; 2) Attitude to other Churches; 3) Administration issues; 4) The budget; 5) The issues of education of the clergy.⁶⁹ Ing. Nikolay Kushnirenko presented a paper on "The Orthodox Church in the Past and Its Tasks Today" and Dr. Yakov Zozulya had a lecture on "The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Service of National Revival of the Carpathian Ukraine." The editor of the *Novaja Svoboda* wrote: "We learn from the papers that there are two Orthodox Churches in the Carpathian Ukraine - the first, Ukrainian, numbers 20,000 believers, and the second, Serbian, has 100,000 faithful. The Serbian jurisdiction is canonically illegal and arose here as a political organization, supported by the government. It also follows from the papers that the Serbian bishops terrorize the Ukrainian clergy, even today they still follow the regulations of Fentsik and

⁶³ ГАЗО, Фонд 109, Опись 1, Дело 461, Лист 6.

⁶⁴ ГАЗО, Фонд 109, Опись 1, Дело 461, Лист 7.

⁶⁵ ГАЗО, Фонд 109, Опись 1, Дело 461, Лист 7 об.

⁶⁶ ГАЗО, Фонд 109, Опись 1, Дело 461, Лист 8.

⁶⁷ ГАЗО, Фонд 109, Опись 1, Дело 461, Лист 8 об.

⁶⁸ *Новая Свобода*, 25. декабря 1938.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

*other traitors of the people. The appointment of bishop Vladimir Rajic is unconstitutional, because the Prague government authorized his designation on 12 October 1938 in the time when the government of the Carpathian Ukraine was already in existence and the latter has authority in these matters. Most of the Orthodox communities under the Serbian jurisdiction would be delighted to return to the Ukrainian national Church. However, due to the fact that the state has not recognized its jurisdiction so far, they have to endure the terror of the Serbian bishops and foreign agents.*⁷⁰ After the presentation of the papers, the participants of the session elected a deputation who paid visit to the Prime Minister A. Voloshyn, minister Julius Revay and the head of the Ministry of Cult and Education, Augustin Stefan. All three officials assured the delegates of their full support. The participants also elected a new synodal committee. Its members became: president – Andrei Burkatskii, director of the civic school; vice-presidents – igumen Nikolay (Mader) of Dubove and Fedor Magei of Kalyny; legal advisor – lawyer Yakov Zozulya of Khust; chancellor – Nikolay Kushnirenko, official of Khust; inspector – priest Mykhayl Kenyz; members – Ivan Pikhlo, doctor of Khust; hieromonk Seraphim (Brodi) of the village of Voloskoye (now Podgor-noye); Vasilii Brendzey, mayor of Kopashnovo; Mykhayl Ferenchuk of Lypcha, director of the civic school; Peter Petenko, teacher in Neresnytsya; priests Yakov Borovskii of Khust; Alexander Blistiv of Khust, circular administrator of Karpatska Sich; Alexei Sich of Khust; Ivan Rarich of Dubove.⁷¹

The *Novaja Svoboda*, in the article titled *На свет Божий! Украинская православная церковь на службе национального возрождения* (Let It Be Brought to Light! The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Service of National Revival) described the work of the conference as follows: “Yesterday, the capital of the Carpathian Ukraine hosted the Orthodox Ukrainians. The hall of the Sechovoy cafe was busy from early morning. The morning trains were bringing and on foot were coming peasants in vuy-oshakh, secular priests and “the hats”,⁷² clerks, engineers, in a word, people of all professions. The audience also includes igumens in hats and a couple of ladies. Next to the front door, there are two men as security guards. The presidium, led by director Andrei Burkatskii, is coming onto the stage and the session begins. Everybody is standing up and sings in chorus “King of Heaven”. Director A. Burkatskii is greeting the guests and says that the Orthodox Ukrainians meet today freely and without fear, with full support of the society and government, which they have never managed to do during the last fifteen years of the existence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The old regime artificially drove the Orthodox movement into the hands of the enemies of the national revival of the Ukrainian people, into the hands of the Moskals and Moscow emigrants.”⁷³

The efforts made to establish the new Church were also connected with the agitation in favour of the Ukrainian National Union (hereinafter UNU). In early February (1 February 1939), the *Novaja Svoboda* appealed for accession to the commit-

⁷⁰ На свитло Божье. Украинская православная церковь на службе национального возрождения. In *Новая Свобода*, 1. января 1939, p. 2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² I.e. monks.

⁷³ На свитло Божье. Украинская православная церковь...

tees of the representatives of the Serbian jurisdiction and for joining the UNU.⁷⁴ On 3 February 1939, the author of the article titled *Православных никто не преследует* (Nobody Persuades the Orthodox) claimed that the Orthodox were also on the election lists of the UNU. They included Mykhayl Tulek (vice-president of the UNU), Ing. Leonid Romanyuk, Mykhayl Marushchak of Bychkov and Vasilii Shchobey of Vilchovce.⁷⁵ On 6 February 1939 a pre-election conference of the priests supporting Sawatij was held in Khust. It was attended by 13 clergymen and six laymen. The attendees agreed to support the UNU in the coming elections and they adopted an appeal which reads as follows: *"Dear brothers and sisters, Orthodox peasants! Do not forget that the Orthodox is the same Ukrainian as the Greek Catholic. Remember that our first fighters for the Orthodoxy, as early as before the World War I, would secretly go to Kiev to recover new strengths and hope. Today, through the high Carpathian Mountains, we are equally connected by our minds and hearts with the Ukrainian people. Twenty years ago, the Orthodox said that they wanted to live in the state of the Ukrainians. In 1919 the Orthodox Iza went with our blue-yellow flag to the Khust congress to express its Ukrainian will. For the past 20 years, the Prague centralists have been deluging our people and have fragmented it into the dozens of factions, and the Hungarian traitors, the Bródys and Fentsiks, have kept deceiving it with insincere Moskal Russophilism and have been tearing us from the people's course. Brothers and sisters! There are also deceivers in our lands who try to make us believe that, after the elections, the Orthodox faith and Church will not have the same rights as before. These rumours are completely untrue! Drive away such liars, they are confidential servants of the traitors. Our Ukrainian government has already many times told the representatives of the Orthodox Church as well as the laymen that the Orthodox faith was enjoying full rights in the Carpathian Ukraine! On the candidate lists, there are also the Orthodox, in our first Diet, there will be Orthodox deputies who will represent the interests of the Orthodox faith and Church. The vice-president of the UNU is the Orthodox Mykhayl Tulek of Bychkov who, as early as in 1920-1925, fought and still fights for our sacred Orthodox Church and, as a deputy, will do anything for it in our first Diet. Do not forget, brothers and sisters, that the great part of the Ukrainian nation is Orthodox and in the Carpathian Ukraine our Orthodox faith and Church must not be exposed to any wrongs."*⁷⁶ The message titled "To the Orthodox People of the Carpathian Ukraine" was signed by: for the Orthodox faithful Dmitri Simulik, Iza, participant in the Marmaros process; Nikolay Kushnirenko, Yakov Zozulya, Alexander Blistiv, Andrei Burkatskii, Yurii Bolosh. For the Orthodox clergy father Vasilii Sokol, igumen Feodosii (Borshosh), igumen Nikolay (Mader), f. M. Kenyz, f. V. Mandzyuk, f. V. Popp, f. Mykhayl Burkalo, f. Ivan Krichfalushi, f. Ivan Dobosh, f. Borovskii, hieromonk Ilarion (Rybar), f. Tsutskov, f. Georgii Grinio.⁷⁷ The message had a great impact on the Orthodox population and on 12 February 1939, when the elections were held, 80-85% voted for the UNU. The only exception was Iza where most people were opposed to the Union.

⁷⁴ *Новая Свобода*, 1. февраля 1939.

⁷⁵ *Новая Свобода*, 3. февраля 1939.

⁷⁶ Православный народ Карпатской Украины! In *Новая Свобода*, 8. февраля 1939, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Новая Свобода*, 8. февраля 1939.

Sawatij's then engagement did not get exhausted by the efforts to establish the new Church. A new situation occurred in March 1939 when Hungary approached the military occupation of the whole Transcarpathia. The idea of creating an autocephalous Orthodox Church began to mature in the government circles. Archbishop Sawatij was to become a key figure in the implementation of this project. As early as in 1938 the Hungarian Ministry of Cult and National Enlightenment became interested in Mykhayl Popov. The latter met minister P. Teleki who ensured him that the tomos of autocephaly could be obtained from the Constantinopolitan patriarchate via Sawatij.

When the Serbian Subcarpathian Ruthenian bishop Vlarimir (Rajic) moved his residence to Khust,⁷⁸ he authorized igumen Averkii (Taushev) to administer the eparchy in the occupied territory.⁷⁹ He learned that a clergyman M. Popov was dwelling in Budapest and he invited him to his eparchy. In some time, however, he was informed that Popov had been dismissed. Therefore, Rajic prevented him from holding church services. At the same time, M. Popov, at the command of the Ministry of Cult and National Enlightenment, entered contact with the supporters of archbishop Sawatij in Transcarpathia. He found special support in the head of the consistory of the Mukacheve eparchy, Mykhayl Doroslan, and in the secretary of archbishop Sawatij, Yevgenii Yakub.⁸⁰ At first, M. Popov negotiated with Sawatij's adherents: father I. Dobosh, father M. Kenyz and hieromonk Sergii (Marushka). These supported the idea of the autocephalous Church in Hungary.⁸¹

When there were about 20 parochias in Subcarpathian Ruthenia willing to join the Hungarian autocephalous Church, the Hungarian government charged Sawatije to appoint Popov administrator. On 9 November 1939 archbishop wrote to Popov about his intention to name him bishop or vicar-general of the Orthodox Church in Hungary.⁸² Subsequently, on 26 September 1940, he issued a decree by which Popov became the administrator of the Orthodox Church in Hungary. At the same time, the latter was elevated to the high dignity of protopresbyter.⁸³ During his stay in the residence of archbishop Sawatij in Prague, M. Popov was charged with a task to unite into one eparchy all communities in Hungary and Transcarpathia that were not under the influence of bishop Vladimir (Rajic).

On 5 October 1940 Sawatij sent a letter to Patriarch Benjamin of Constantinople and asked him to ordain Popov a bishop for the Orthodox Church in Hungary. He justified his request by explaining that the Hungarian government required its

⁷⁸ On 26 November 1938.

⁷⁹ ХЛАНТА, Алексей - ОФИЦИНСКИЙ, Роман. Про один из закарпатоукраинских эпизодов международного религиозного контекста. (Деятельность Михаила Попова, администратора Мукачевской православной епархии в 1938–1944 гг.) In *Украина на международной арене в XX веке. Ужгород* : Патент 2000, p. 62.

⁸⁰ Архив Управления Службы безопасности в Закарпатской области (AUSB) Ужгород, Арх. Криминальное дело № 1753-С. (Якуб Е.Д.), Лист 13.

⁸¹ In 1939, there was also a meeting with the leading figures of the Serbian jurisdiction in Subcarpathian Ruthenia - Alexis (Kabaliuk) and Matvey (Vakarov). AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М.М.) (7. 4. 1947–16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 91.

⁸² AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М.М.) (7. 4. 1947-16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 360.

⁸³ AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М.М.) (7. 4. 1947-16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 370.

own autocephaly.⁸⁴ On 12 April 1941 Hungarian regent Miklós Horthy appointed M. Popov the “administrator of Greek-Eastern Hungarian and Greek-Eastern Ruthenian church units”.⁸⁵ The activities of M. Popov and archbishop Sawatij were funded by the Hungarian government. From November 1940 Popov received the congrua of 412 pengos per month from the Ministry of Cult and Public Education. After the confirmation of his function of administrator, he began to receive an additional salary of 1,040 pengos per month.⁸⁶ On his first visit to Prague, M. Popov was given 6,000 pengos in cash. On his own initiative, he gave part of this money to archbishop Sawatij. In 1942 the latter personally turned to the Ministry of Cult and National Enlightenment with a request for material support. Minister Sándor Jezszenszky provided him with 2,000 pengos. However, he refused to pay Sawatij a monthly salary.⁸⁷

Further development of the situation was influenced by the fact that the Germans wanted to subordinate all Orthodox Churches in their territory and in the territories of their allies to the Berlin metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade).⁸⁸ From the letter of M. Popov to hieromonk Vasilii (Pronin) of 15 January 1943 we learn that in the first half of January 1943 Seraphim (Lyade) visited his residence in Budapest. Popov writes that the metropolitan arrived at his invitation as a guest of the Hungarian government.⁸⁹ On 11 January 1943 they met each other and considered the issues of the activities of the Orthodox Church in Hungary. It is possible that they also talked about the change of Popov's jurisdiction, because on 30 May 1942 archbishop Sawatij was imprisoned by the Germans on the basis of an alleged offense, as he had baptized Jews.⁹⁰

Sawatij's activities in the Subcarpathian Ruthenia after 1938 should be qualified as controversial.

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⁸⁴ AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М.М.) (7. 4. 1947-16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 391.

⁸⁵ *Budapesti Közlöny*, 13. aprilis 1941, p. 1.

⁸⁶ AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М.М.) (7. 4. 1947-16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 93.

⁸⁷ AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М.М.) (7. 4. 1947-16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 109.

⁸⁸ He was under the jurisdiction of the Karlovac synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. ДАН-КО, Осип. Православная церковь на Закарпатье. In *Закарпатье под Угорщиной 1938 – 1944 гг. Упор. и предисл. Василия МАРКУСЯ и Василия ХУДАНИЧА*. Ужгород : Гражда, 1999, p. 175.

⁸⁹ AUSB, Арх. Криминальное дело 1411-С (Попов М. М.) (7. 4. 1947-16. 8. 1947 гг.), Лист 232.

⁹⁰ Православная церковь Чешских земель и Словакии: <http://ric.orthost.ru/europe/sc/mp/6/>