

THE MEETING OF ORTHODOX BISHOPS IN KAZAN IN 1885: EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

A REUNIÃO DOS BISPOS ORTODOXOS EM KAZAN EM 1885: ASPECTOS EDUCACIONAIS E POLÍTICOS

EL ENCUENTRO DE OBISPOS ORTODOXOS EN KAZAN EN 1885: ASPECTOS EDUCATIVOS Y POLÍTICOS

Andrei Yuryevich MIKHAILOV¹
Alexander Anatolevich KHOKHLOV²

ABSTRACT: In this article, using the archival (Russian State Historical Archives) and published materials (church periodicals), they consider the activities of the conference of Orthodox bishops in Kazan (July 1885). The emphasis is on the educational and political aspects. The terminological study of the topic is carried out on the following subject: was the "Kazan conference of bishops" a regional council or a technical conference of bishops of neighboring provinces? Particular attention is paid to the political beliefs and personalities of the bishops and their initiative to hold this event (the initiative by the Bishop Dionisy (Khitrov) of Ufa), and the activities of experts - professors of theological academies and the practitioners of the Orthodox mission. They considered the main decisions of the meeting and the reaction of the supreme power to them on behalf of the chief prosecutor.

KEYWORDS: Educational aspects. Conciliar movement. Conference of bishops. Political aspects.

RESUMO: Neste artigo, usa-se o arquivo (Arquivo Histórico do Estado Russo) e os materiais publicados (periódicos da igreja), em que se consideram as atividades da conferência de bispos ortodoxos em Kazan (julho de 1885). A ênfase do estudo está nos aspectos educacionais e políticos. O estudo terminológico do tema é realizado sobre o seguinte tema: a "Conferência dos Bispos de Kazan" foi um conselho regional ou uma conferência técnica dos bispos das províncias vizinhas? É dada especial atenção às crenças políticas e às personalidades dos bispos e à sua iniciativa de realizar este evento (a iniciativa do bispo Dionisy (Khitrov) de Ufa), e às atividades de especialistas - professores de academias de teologia e os praticantes da Igreja Ortodoxa missão. Eles consideraram as principais decisões da reunião e a reação do poder supremo a elas em nome do promotor-chefe.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Aspectos educacionais. Movimento conciliar. Conferência dos bispos. Aspectos políticos.

¹ Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia. Senior Lecturer, Department of Russian history, Institute of international relations. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0215-0435>. E-mail: apunion@mail.ru

² Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia. Department of history, archeology and ethnology of Tatarstan, Institute of international relations. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2920-0287>. E-mail: a_radiance@mail.ru

RESUMEN: *En este artículo, utilizando el archivo (Archivos Históricos del Estado Ruso) y materiales publicados (publicaciones periódicas de la iglesia), consideran las actividades de la conferencia de obispos ortodoxos en Kazán (julio de 1885). El énfasis está en los aspectos educativos y políticos. El estudio terminológico del tema se realiza sobre el siguiente tema: ¿fue la "conferencia de obispos de Kazán" un consejo regional o una conferencia técnica de obispos de provincias vecinas? Se presta especial atención a las creencias políticas y personalidades de los obispos y su iniciativa para realizar este evento (la iniciativa del obispo Dionisy (Khitrov) de Ufa), y las actividades de los expertos - profesores de academias teológicas y los practicantes de la ortodoxia. misión. Consideraron las principales decisiones de la reunión y la reacción del poder supremo ante ellas en nombre del fiscal general.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Aspectos educativos. Movimiento conciliar. Conferencia de Obispos. Aspectos políticos.*

Introduction

“The first local Kazan conference” - this is how the official publication of the Kazan diocese describes the conference of bishops held in Kazan on 9-25 July 1885 (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885). This definition can be considered as the official interpretation of what happened in Kazan in the framework of the church policy by K.P. Pobedonostsev at this time. It is associated with the mythology of "conciliarity" in the intellectual space of the late empire, represented by various discourses from (neo) Slavophil and ecclesiastical to bureaucratic.

The main reasons for the convening of bishops' conferences in the regions were the reaction of the Holy Synod, headed by the chief prosecutor, to the conciliar movement, an attempt to lead it (KRAVETSKY, 2012) and the development of an optimal model of church governance (the ratio of bureaucratic and elective, and conciliar) at the beginning of the reign by Pobedonostsev (PASHKOV, 1999).

It is significant that the official press refers to the incident exclusively in terms of "conciliarity." The Kazan Congress of Bishops, like others in Kiev, Irkutsk and St. Petersburg (celebrations on the occasion of the anniversary of Metropolitan Isidor (Nikolsky) testified to the fact that

the Orthodox Greek-Russian Church is governed jointly, that it is a church, just as apostolic as it is cathedral, and that, consequently, the complaints that are often heard in the press against it are completely unfounded, as if bureaucracy reigns supreme in its administration; the most frequently repeated facts - the convocation of local councils in Kiev, St. Petersburg, and finally in Kazan, clearly testify that the true nature of church government is not a bureaucratic, but a cathedral (it is possible to move to another place) (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885).

And this is raised to the axiom of the Peter's synodal reform that “His Holiness The Synod, which in its meaning and purpose is a permanent council, governing the affairs of the Russian Church” (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885).

But what was this local council in the 1880-ies during the era of total control of the chief prosecutor K. P. Pobedonostsev over the church, who performed the policy of "secular clericalism" according to A.Yu. Polunov (POLUNOV, 1996).

Of course, this was not a council of a local church (in a neutral sense, dating back to antiquity) meaning that each aggregate of parishes headed by a bishop is a local church. It was not even a metropolitan cathedral, since the metropolitanate consisting of dioceses did not exist yet in the Russian church. Although the discussion of these issues was in the air and took place, most systematically, during the Pre-Council Presence (1905 - 1906) and the Local Council (1917 - 1918).

The cathedrals held in Kiev (1884), Kazan and Irkutsk (1885) and St. Petersburg (November 1884) took place under strict state control. The first, in fact, took the form of a dialogue between Metropolitan Platon (Gorodetsky) of Kiev and the chief prosecutor K.P. Pobedonostsev, the second was a dialogue between bishops with the participation of the head of the synodal chancellery V. K. Sabler, the third consisted in part of governors and officials.

Positively characterizing the activities of the chief prosecutor, the Moscow researcher Deacon D. Pashkov (now - archpriest) says that “the meeting conceived by K. P. Pobedonostsev Cathedral (A.M.) is more similar to the regional council of bishops” (PASHKOV, 1999) And he denies this, claiming that canonically regional, diocesan (from the diocese as a large region in the Roman Empire, ruled by the diocese, and splitting into even smaller administrative units), or civil power should not be represented, since it was a purely church event (PASHKOV, 1999).

It is possible to describe the meeting of bishops in Kazan in 1885 (as well as the meetings in Kiev, Irkutsk and St. Petersburg) in different categories - the bishops' congress, the bishops' conference, the regional council, the council of bishops, the local council of the regional church - but the following question arises: Are these meetings conciliar in the spirit of discussion or not?!

According to the analysis of the activities - the course and nature of the discussions - of these meetings - the greatest degree of conciliarity is present at the Kazan Congress of 1885. K. P. Pobedonostsev also considered Kazan meeting as the most successful of the meetings, whose activities he got acquainted with briefly during his visit to Kazan at that time (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885).

Apparently, the intentions to call these meetings as councils are based on a combination of at least three interpretations:

First, the desire of most of the bishops to carry out canonical restoration, that is, to overcome the synodal structure. One of the main elements of this was the phenomenon of "conciliarity" in the Russian Church, which was discussed by Slavophil and church journalism at that time. Most of the bishops advocated its implementation in practice, but all interpreted it differently.

Secondly, the synodal mythology that the Most Holy Synod is a permanent council, which goes back to the interpretation of the Synod by its founders in a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1723. Therefore, a regional council is the implementation of this principle on the ground.

Third, the script by K.P. Pobedonostsev on activating church-social life from above (church-social celebrations, the development of church-parish schools): to authorize the technical conference of bishops from above in order to intensify missionary activity among heterodox, Old Believers and foreigners and the reaction in the official synodal and diocesan press to call these conferences a local council ...

The combination of these three tendencies led to the fact that these meetings were discussed by contemporaries in the categories of reviving (neo-Slavophiles) or continuing (official synodal bureaucrats) "conciliarity". Modern researchers have partly followed the language of the source, inheriting this tradition of discussion.

Methods

The complex source of the study consists of both unpublished and published sources.

Unpublished sources include the case of the Kazan meeting of bishops in 1885 from the collection of the Russian State Historical Archives (RSHA, St. Petersburg) (RSHA, 1885).

Published sources include the publications about the Kazan Congress of Bishops in official federal and regional publications. The first include the articles in the "Church Bulletin" (Resolutions of the meeting of the reverend bishops in Kazan, 1886; Rules on the organization of missions and on the way missionaries and pastors of the church act in relation to schismatics and sectarians, 1888), "Church Gazette" (GURYEV, 1884), "Moskovskiye Vedomosti" (On the meeting of bishops of the Volga region and some adjacent dioceses in the city of Kazan, 1885), "Orthodox Interlocutor" (Acts of the bishops of the Orthodox Greek-Russian Church..., 1885), the second are represented by the Chronicle (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885)

and the articles (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885) in the official publication of the Kazan diocese - "News of the Kazan diocese."

The historiography of the issue is presented both by generalizing works on the history of synodal Orthodoxy in the late Russian Empire (1860-1917), and by the works directly on the bishops' meetings of the 1880-ies.

The first include the works by I.K. Smolich (1996), D.V. Pospelovsky (1995), S.L. Firsov (2002) and V.A. Fedorov (2003).

The second include an article by A. Pashkov (Pashkov, 1999) and a section in the book about missionary work in post-reform Russia by A.V. Kravetsky (2012).

Results and Discussion

The Kazan meeting of bishops in 1885 was held on 9-25 July 1885 under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Kazan Pallady (Raev) and was apparently devoted to the main holiday of Kazan and the entire Volga region - the Appearance of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God (8 July 1885). On 7 of July, all the conference participants arrived in Kazan. Among them were seven bishops: Bishop of Ufa Dionysius (Khitrov), Bishop of Astrakhan Eugene (Shereshilov), Bishop of Perm Ephraim (Ryazanov), Bishop of Simbirsk Barsonofy (Okhotin), Bishop of Saratov Pavel (Vilchinsky), Bishop of Orenburg Benjamin (Smirnov), Bishop of Ekaterinburg Nathanael (Leandrov) and Bishop of Sarapul Tikhon (Troitsky-Nonebin).

For professional discussion and expertise of such important issues as the Old Believers, non-Russian and secondary churching of those already baptized in the official church - which were on the agenda - the following experts in these areas were involved: teachers of theological academies - Archimandrite Anthony (Vodkovsky), an orientalist, an Islamic scholar and a translator of foreign languages Professor Nikolai Ivanovich Ilminsky, Orientalist and Islamic scholar Archpriest Evfimy Alexandrovich Malov, prominent experts in Old Belief Nikolai Ivanovich Ivanovsky (Kazan Theological Academy) and Subbotin Nikolai Ivanovich (Moscow Theological Academy), Buddhist expert Vasily Vasilyevich Mirotvotsev and Orientalist and Islamic scholar Mikhail Alexandrovich Mashanov, and the practitioners - the inspector of the Chuvash schools of the Kazan and Simbirsk provinces Ivan Yakovlevich Yakovlev, the director of the Central Baptized Tatar school - priest Timofeev Vasily Timofeevich.

The ceremonial opening of the council meetings took place on 9 July 1885 in the cross church of the bishop's house (Three saints of Kazan). Before the opening of the sessions, the

inspector of the Kazan Theological Academy Archimandrite Anthony (Vodkovsky) read out the decree of the Holy Synod on the convocation of a council of bishops in Kazan (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885). After that, the chairman of the cathedral, Archbishop Palladiy, addressed the members of the cathedral with a welcoming speech, in which he noted the importance of bishops' councils for the Russian Church, pointed out the need for personal meetings of bishops among themselves, and at the end of the speech declared the session of the conference open (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885).

The following questions were announced as necessary for the conciliar discussion of the archpastors:

- 1) the questions concerning the religious and moral state of the Orthodox flock in the Volga dioceses;
- 2) the issues related to the split and measures of its weakening;
- 3) the issues of mission among foreigners.

For a detailed discussion of issues, the council formed 3 commissions, whose task was to develop preliminary the text of the provisions for its subsequent discussion at the general meeting.

The procedure of the council was as follows: during the first half of the day there were general meetings of the council, and "commission" in the evening. In this mode, the council met until 25 of July, when the council meetings were closed. 21 meetings took place in total, of which 12 were general and 9 were commissioned. The general editing of resolutions was held at the general meetings on 23 and 24 of July (RSHA, 1885).

Chief Prosecutor K. P. Pobedonostsev, who spent only a few days in Kazan (from 11 to 14 of July), did not take part in the council meetings. He communicated with the bishops personally. However, he was represented by V.K. Sabler at all general meetings, - the manager of the office of the Holy Synod (KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, 1885).

Summary

Kazan meeting of bishops during 1885 in the context of bishops' congresses of the 1880-ies was of the most practical nature, both in terms of the range of issues discussed and the degree of resolution implementation. Convened initially on a foreign issue, it expanded its agenda to the Old Believers' problem and the issue of the churching of Orthodox by birth.

The congress of bishops in Kazan during 1885 was most similar to a church (council) meeting, and not to a bureaucratic, technical conference by the nature of the discussions, the

degree of free and fruitful participation of bishops and experts. This congress marked the beginning of the council movement in late imperial Russia.

The Bishops 'Congress of 1885 can be considered an important milestone in the development of the conciliar movement in late imperial Russia, since of all the bishops' conferences it showed most vividly in practice the possibility of meeting, uniting and coordinating bishops on pressing problems of the region, thereby transferring the idea of a council from theoretical to practical aspect. The bishops' meeting formulated the position of the Russian Church on the most important issues of our time (churching, attitudes to secularization, to new modern ideologies, foreigners, Old Believers) on behalf of an authoritative regional group of bishops.

Interpreting the essence of the event in Kazan, one can talk about it in different categories - conference, meeting, congress of bishops of the Volga region. That is the main thing to keep in mind when characterizing the meeting of bishops that took place for the first time since the establishment of the Synod, which had a two-century history.

It is obvious that the church policy by K.P. Pobedonostsev at the beginning of the Chief Prosecutor's Office (early 1880-ies), with his desire to intercept the initiative of the “conciliar movement” during the beginning of the reign by Alexander III, together with his striving to activate church and social life from above (church and social celebrations, the development of parish schools) led to the following. He authorized a technical conference of bishops from above to intensify missionary activity among heterodox, Old Believers and non-Russians, which began to be called a “local council”, both in the perception of bishops and in the official synodal and diocesan press.

Conclusions

The main decisions of the Kazan meeting of bishops in 1885, according to the scheme adopted therein, can be divided into three groups: 1) the problem of enlightenment of newly baptized Volga foreigners; 2) the Old Believer issue; 3) the issue of the churching of Orthodox by birth.

1. The issue of enlightening the newly-baptized Volga foreigners was the central issue, about which the bishops' meeting was convened.

Before discussing the problem, the bishops stated that

the foreigners are distinguished by deep piety, childlike simplicity of faith, devotion to God and deep veneration of His saints; but at the same time, they

have more remnants of pagan beliefs than Russians in general. Their religious and moral condition is less satisfactory. If the religiosity of Orthodox-Russians is often only purely external, then it rarely extends beyond external appearance among foreigners (Resolutions of the meeting of the reverend bishops in Kazan, 1886).

The bishops concluded that Christianity among foreigners exists in the format of dual faith, in the form of synthesis with paganism. Numerous examples were given: the Mari sacrifice animals, besides the divine service in the church.

During the discussion, the bishops decided to support the systems by N.I. Ilminsky fully, aimed at the Christianization of the foreign population (Mari, Tatars, Mordovians etc.) in their national language and the priests of their origin.

The expert at the meeting was N.I. Ilminsky. Referring to the experience of Western missionaries, he proposed to involve baptized foreigners in the mission more actively. The meeting fully supported the teaching of foreign languages in seminaries, as well as the idea of enlightening foreigners with national cadres of priests from Tatars, Chuvash, Mari, Udmurts, etc.

It should be borne in mind that the congress of bishops took place during the development and testing of the system by N. I. Ilminsky. It is clear that the approval and support of his system by the regional congress (council) of bishops was of decisive importance for the adoption of this system, aimed at the education of foreigners.

2. The longest discussion was caused by the issue of the attitude towards the Old Believers, who were considered the most important threat to the official church in the Volga region.

The bishops considered it is necessary to improve the following points:

1. to include a number of subjects related to missionary work among schismatics (Old Believers) in the course of seminary education, such as the history of schism, etc.;
2. to establish a deeper and more meaningful study of the liturgical language in parish schools with a view to a more dignified and serious worship;
3. to activate printed propaganda: distribution of anti-Old Believer books and leaflets to parishioners, assembly of missionary libraries;
4. Conduct interviews with Old Believers. To do this, it is necessary to organize the training of professional anti-Old Believer missionaries for the dioceses in the Moscow Nikolsky Monastery;
5. They decided to hold regular missionary conventions to coordinate and consolidate the efforts of local missionaries. It was decided to hold the first of these congresses in 1886;

6. Particular emphasis was placed on unity of faith as a compromise option for the reunification of the Old Believers with the official synodal church. Unity was seen as the main way of joining the Old Believers, since "Orthodoxy and unanimity constitute one Church" (Resolutions of the meeting of the reverend bishops in Kazan, 1886).

7. The Bishops' Congress proposed to facilitate the transition to community of religion: to abolish the rules of 1832, according to which only those who had not been in communion with the Orthodox Church for several decades could pass into unanimity.

8. The issue of the churching of Orthodox by birth was discussed by the bishops in the format of the secondary education of the urban population, already baptized, well-educated, but rapidly secularizing under the influence of the ideas of positivism. The bishops considered the cycles of sermons to be the most successful way of their churching, which, according to the modern scholar A.V. Kravetsky were "connected systematic conversations" (KRAVETSKY, 2012).

Also, clergymen (not only priests, but also deacons) were ordered to conduct public lectures in conjunction with the concerts of sacred music to attract the public. Particular attention was paid to work with young people, with children who were instructed to be introduced to church singing. It was recommended that parents, together with their children, analyze the plots of the Gospel story discussed at school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

Acts of the bishops of the Orthodox Greek-Russian Church, who gathered in the God-saved city of Kazan during July 1885. Orthodox interlocutor, p. 7-21, April, 1886.

FEDOROV, V. A. **The Russian Orthodox Church and the State.** Synodal period of 1700-1917. M.: Russian panorama, 2003. 480 p.

FIRSOV, S. L. **The Russian Church on the Eve of Changes (mid 1890-ies - 1918).** M.: Christian Russia, 2002. 623 p.

GURYEV, P.V. **Meeting of archpastors of the Orthodox Russian Church**, which was held in Kiev (1884) and in Kazan and Irkutsk (1885). PCV. - 1905. - No. 47. - pp. 2009 - 2014; No. 48. p. 2083 - 2088; No. 49. p. 2129 - 2133. n.d.

KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY. About the meeting of the bishops of the Volga region and some adjacent dioceses in the city of Kazan (Memoirs of an eyewitness). **News of the Kazan diocese**, published at the Kazan Theological Academy, [S. l.], p. 559-569, 1885.

KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY. On the end of the meetings of the former cathedral in Kazan. **News of the Kazan diocese**, published at the Kazan Theological Academy, [S. l.], n. 16. p. 542-545, 1885.

KAZAN THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY. Stay in Kazan of His Excellency, Mr. Chief Prosecutor of the Holy Synod, the member of the State Council and the Committee of Ministers, Actual Privy Councilor Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev. **News of the Kazan diocese**, published at the Kazan Theological Academy, [S. l.], p. 539-542, 188.

KRAVETSKY, A. G. **Church mission in the era of change (between preaching and dialogue)**. M.: [s. n.], 2012. 711 p.

On the meeting of bishops of the Volga region and some adjacent dioceses in the city of Kazan (Memoirs of an eyewitness). **Moscow news**, [S. l.], n. 226, 1885.

PASHKOV, D. deacon. Councils of bishops with K.P. Pobedonostsev. **Theological Collection, IV**, [S. l.], p. 265-293, 1999.

POLUNOV, A. Yu. Under the rule of the chief prosecutor. State and Church in the era of Alexander III. **Afterword by L.G. Zakharova**. Moscow: Airo-xx, 1996, 141 p.

POSPELOVSKY, D. V. **Russian Orthodox Church in the XX-th century**. Moscow: Republic, 1995. 511 p.

Resolutions of the meeting of the reverend bishops in Kazan. **Church Bulletin**, [S. l.], n. 3, p. 59-66, 1886.

RSHA. **F. 796. FA 166. C. 1486**. The case of the decisions of the meeting of the bishops in Kazan (1885). (August 17, 1885 - November 7, 1903). 210 sh.

Rules on the organization of missions and on the way missionaries and pastors of the church act in relation to schismatics and sectarians. **Church Bulletin**, [S. l.], n. 28, p. 175-182, 1888.

SMOLICH, I. K. **The history of the Russian Church (1700-1917)**. In 2 volumes - Part I. - M.: Publishing house of the Valaam monastery, 1996. 799 p.

How to reference this article

MIKHAILOV, A. Y.; KHOKHLOV, A. A. The meeting of orthodox bishops in Kazan in 1885: Educational and political aspects. **Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional**, Araraquara, v. 26, n. esp. 5, e022190, 2022. e-ISSN:1519-9029. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22633/rpge.v26i00.17405>

Submitted: 13/02/2022

Required revisions: 26/06/2022

Approved: 28/10/2022

Published: 30/11/2022

Processing and editing by Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação - EIAE.

Correction, formating, standardization and translation.

Total or partial reproduction is prohibited without due credit.