

CHAPTER 2

New Challenges during and after World War I (1914–1923)

The second period of Metropolitan Sheptytsky's activity covers three more or less distinct phases: his exile in Russia (1914–17), followed by a three-year period in Lviv, and finally a long voyage through western Europe and North and South America (1920–23). Despite a wide variety of difficulties and obstacles, the Metropolitan managed to remain active at this time, promoting the cause of church unity while in Russian exile and, after his return to Lviv, supporting independence, then again assessing the needs of Ukrainian Catholic communities abroad and seeking international economic and political assistance for Ukrainians in war-torn Galicia.

Compared with the other four major periods of Metropolitan Sheptytsky's life and activity treated in this study, the period 1914–23 yields few primary source materials. This is understandable in light of the Metropolitan's absence from Lviv for two three-year periods and the disruptions of the World War, which in Galicia were compounded by a Polish-Ukrainian conflict that prolonged the state of war until mid-1919.¹

In light of these factors and of the rapid change that was going on in eastern Europe, this second period, presented in a rather episodic fashion, is probably better regarded as a transitional phase than as a distinct stage in the development of Metropolitan Sheptytsky's ethical reflection on social and political reality.

1. Along with the relative paucity of documentary material, a further consideration in grappling with this period of the Metropolitan's social thought and activity is that, of the key documents available, two are pastoral letters that were collectively written and signed by all three Greek Catholic bishops. A legitimate question might be raised about the degree to which authorship of the collective pastoral letters may be attributed to Metropolitan Sheptytsky. Rather than pursuing at length the question of authorship, we treat these documents as joint statements, recognizing that behind them was a process of collective reflection in which the Metropolitan was directly and personally involved.

A recently published document has shed some light on the redaction process behind these collective pastoral letters and identifies the authors of some original drafts. See Andrii Krawchuk, "Konferentsiï Arkhyiereiv Ukraïns'koï Hreko-Katolyts'koï Tserkvy, 1902–1937," *Logos* 35, nos. 1–4 (1994): 429–518.

Exile in Russia

On 15 September 1914, the Russian forces occupying Galicia placed Metropolitan Sheptytsky under house arrest. Three days later, he was sent into exile in Russia. Until his release in March 1917 by the Provisional Government of Aleksandr Kerensky, Metropolitan Sheptytsky's social activity was limited to written representations to the Russian government, primarily on the matter of wartime Galician deportees in Russia.

One of the earliest such communications is a purported letter that was mentioned in the polemical Russian literature of the day. Prior to the revolution, Metropolitan Sheptytsky allegedly wrote to Tsar Nicholas I and "greeted the victorious Russian army, expressed happiness that Ukraine was finally united with Russia, and gave his assurances of loyalty to Russian ideals."²

Later, the Metropolitan wrote to the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs requesting a transfer to Tomsk or Minusinsk in Siberia, where other Ukrainians had been deported from Galicia; the transfer was denied.³

In March 1917, after the fall of the Romanov dynasty, the Russian Provisional Government declared an amnesty for political and religious prisoners, and Sheptytsky was freed. By that time, a Ukrainian governing body in Kyiv, the Central Rada (Council), had adopted the principle of national self-determination.

As the Russian occupation of Galicia wore on, military units rounded up Greek Catholic priests and members of the lay intelligentsia, then deported them to Russia and Siberia. Deported children were registered as Orthodox and educated in the Orthodox faith. Learning of this, Sheptytsky protested to Oberprocurator Vladimir N. Lvov, an official of the Holy Synod, against the forcible conversion of children and called for an investigation of those Russian Orthodox priests who, with Russian military assistance, had occupied Greek Catholic churches in Galicia and sent the local parish priests into exile in Russia and Siberia. However, this intervention yielded no result.⁴ Sheptytsky also made personal representations to ministries of the Provisional Government in Petrograd on behalf of tens of thousands of Galician deportees in Russia, among whom

2. Iu. D. Romanovskii, *Ukrainskii separatizm i Germaniia* (Tokyo, 1920), p. 8. For further discussion, see Appendix 1.

3. *Tsars'kyi Viazen', 1914–1917* (L'viv, 1918), p. 32.

4. *Tsars'kyi Viazen'*, pp. 31–32, 48. According to Korolevskij, Galician orphans were taken to a government school in Taganrog on the Black Sea. If they responded negatively to the question whether they were Polish, they were enrolled as Orthodox pupils and educated in the Orthodox faith. However, when the Metropolitan's objections came to the attention of the school's director, the matter was apparently resolved satisfactorily. Korolevskij, *Métropolitane André Szeptyckyj*, p. 142.

there were some eighty priests.⁵ But it was on the religious front that more dramatic changes began to occur.

Shortly after his release, Metropolitan Sheptytsky had a unique opportunity to address the issues of religious life and church-state relations in Russia. At the end of May, he convoked a sobor in Petrograd with the aim of organizing the Eastern-rite Catholic Church in Russia. The Metropolitan himself presided over the proceedings of the sobor, which was comprised of Russian Catholic priests, including the Exarch of Russia, Leonid Fedorov.⁶ Among other things, the sobor resolved to seek the legalization of the Greek Catholic Church in Russia. When the Russian government appeared unreceptive to that proposal, Metropolitan Sheptytsky intervened personally to argue the case. After the sobor, he met with members of the government. He reasoned that Russia had nothing to lose and everything to gain from contacts with the West and a rapprochement with the Western church. In addition, he reminded the Russian authorities that the Greek Catholic Church already existed within Russian boundaries, namely, in occupied Galicia. Finally, he referred to some of the guiding principles of the revolution:

In your slogans you called for freedom of religious beliefs; supposedly, therefore, you will not restrict or abrogate it, but will allow the Church that you took over to develop.... If in your thinking every people may develop freely in the faith of its choice, then what danger do you perceive in the fact that many 'Russians' want to be in unity with the Roman Church?⁷

The intervention was successful; the Russian Provisional Government granted the Greek Catholic Church equal status with the Roman Catholic Church.⁸ Its priests began to appear publicly at religious gatherings and Exarch Leonid Fedorov was invited by the government to attend deliberations on religious affairs of its committee on church-state relations.⁹ By the end of the year, the Provisional Government promulgated a Regulation for the Catholic Church in Russia.¹⁰

The resolutions of the sobor affirmed unity with Rome on fundamental issues (papal primacy, the truths of the faith, and saints canonized in the West were formally accepted), but at the same time they recognized the distinctiveness of the Eastern tradition in such areas as liturgy (no Latin forms would be accepted),

5. *Tsars'kyi Viazyn'*, p. 48.

6. Iosyf Slipyi, "Petrohrads'kyi Synod 1917 r.," *Bohosloviia* 9 (1931): 289-92.

7. *Tsars'kyi Viazyn'*, p. 54.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Slipyi, "Petrohrads'kyi Synod 1917 r.," p. 290; Korolevskij, *Métropolitte André Szeptyckyj*, p. 141.

10. Korolevskij, *Métropolitte André Szeptyckyj*, p. 141.