

Religion within the Ukrainian Populist Credo: The Enlightened Pastor Mykhailo Zubrytsky

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Galician Ukraine lost one of her toilers—"stone cutters," one of those who first among us smashed the cliff of superstitions, obscurantism, and Ruthenianness. From among the Ukrainian clergy there came forth one who was its adornment, a model of a spiritual father of his parishioners. A character as pure as a tear, [as] hard as steel, deep of knowledge, [and with] the industriousness of a bee—these were the characteristics of the soul of the deceased. An elder with youthful determination, with young, exuberant thoughts, who went forth with the spirit of the times, who did not remain in the rear, [and] who did not like backwardness. Because of this, all who knew the deceased surrounded him with deep respect, because of this he was an idol to his parishioners, and, as a dean [in Berehy Dolishni], a worthy leader of the surrounding clergy.¹

Obituary for Father Mykhailo Zubrytsky, 1919

In his recent account of the fate of the Levytsky family, five siblings of whom were killed by Nazi or Soviet authorities while serving in the Ukrainian nationalist underground during the Second World War, the journalist Orest Leshchyshyn devotes considerable attention to their maternal grandfather, Father Mykhailo Zubrytsky (1856–1919). Praising his accomplishments as a scholar in the fields of history, literature, ethnography, and folklore, Leshchyshyn asserts: "But above all he was a true servant of God, who cared about his parishioners as his own children, and was a true patriot."² Almost a hundred years after the death of the long-time priest (1883–1914) of the Boiko village of Mshanets, Leshchyshyn chose the criteria that many in former Eastern Galicia have used since the mid-nineteenth century in evaluating the clergy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC): the interconnectedness of God's work and national work, and the pastor as a paternal leader of his flock.

Paradoxically, both the vision of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky in leading and reinvigorating the UGCC from 1901 to 1944 and the Soviet persecution of that church and Ukrainian national activities in 1939–41 and 1944–89 have in many ways maintained the link between church and nation. Sheptytsky's vision—to

¹ *Ukraïns'kyi holos* (Peremyshl), 1919, no. 15 (4 May), 3.

² Orest Leshchyshyn, *Vid temriavy do svitla* (N.p., n.d.), 22.

maintain the primacy of Christian values through the support of national aspirations—delayed the secularization of society and the church’s withdrawal from national and cultural activities. The Soviet authorities embarked on radical anti-religious campaigns promoting secularization and ultimately banned the UGCC. Yet their policy of forcing the Ukrainian Greek Catholics to join the Russian Orthodox Church made them permit a greater presence and latitude for religious practice in the Galician oblasts than in other areas of the Soviet Union, and their concomitant attacks on Ukrainian “nationalism” and the UGCC re-enforced the link between the two in the popular imagination, thereby enabling both to return simultaneously and in consort with each other when the Soviet Union imploded in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Hence one still finds in contemporary Ukraine and among the descendants of Father Zubrytsky’s parishioners voices that hold up the national-Populist priest as a model clergyman.³

Mykhailo Zubrytsky was born in the Carpathian mountain village of Kindrativ and, except for his *Gymnasium* studies in Drohobych, his theological studies in Lviv, and his seminary studies in Peremyshl, lived almost his entire life in remote areas of the Galician Ukrainian countryside, far from the cities that were the centres of political and cultural life. Aside from a trip to Karlsbad to take the cure (1905) and his arrest and detention during the early phase of the First World War that brought him to Slovenia (1914–16), almost all of Father Zubrytsky’s life was spent in the overwhelmingly Ruthenian populated upland areas of Peremyshl Eparchy. Yet, in contrast to most clergymen, he was well known in Ukrainian cultural and political life. His renown came because of his contacts with Ivan Franko, Volodymyr Hnatiuk, Fedir Vovk, Zenon Kuzelia, and other scholars, his involvement in the Shevchenko Scientific Society as a full member (from 1904), his political candidacies for the Galician Ukrainian Populists (*narodovtsi*), and, after 1899, his participation in the Ruthenian (later Ukrainian) National Democratic Party. Zubrytsky’s isolation in location did not segregate him from the world beyond the village in which he was vitally interested, and through his contacts with ethnographic museums in Basel and Vienna, the Society of Austrian Ethnography, Slovenian scholars such as Leopold Lenard, and Czech scholars such as František Řehoř, he brought the cultural, spiritual, and political life of his people to that world’s attention.

Today Father Zubrytsky is known among ethnographers, historians, and folklorists because of the scores of scholarly articles he wrote on the Boiko region and the numerous ethnographic and folkloric publications in which the materials he collected were published.⁴ Yet for any student of later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Eastern Galicia, the hundreds of newspaper articles the clergy-

³ See the special issue of *Slovo “Prosvity”* (Staryi Sambir), no. 102 (March 2008) dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Father Zubrytsky’s birth, especially the lead article by Myron Yadzyn, “Hidno poshanovanyi zemliakamy,” recounting the sermon of Bishop Yulian Voronovsky of Sambir and Drohobych at the celebrations in Mshanets.

⁴ On his contribution to ethnography, see R. F. Kyrchiv, *Etnohrafichne doslidzhennia Boikivshchyny* (Kyiv, 1978), 61–66. For his writings, see Mykhailo Zubrytskyi, *Zibrani tvory i materialy u tr'okh tomakh*, vol. 1, *Naukovi pratsi*, ed. Frank Sysyn et al. (Lviv, 2013).

man penned are an entree into the issues of the day and the world of the Ukrainian villager.⁵ In understanding Zubrytsky and his mindset, we also have the advantage of a few dozens of his preserved letters to Ivan Franko, Volodymyr Hnatiuk, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, and other prominent Ukrainians, the diary he kept during the First World War, and his notes in 1918 during the Polish-Ukrainian War.⁶ Of utmost importance is the manuscript of his autobiography up to the year 1896.⁷

Like all autobiographies, that of Father Zubrytsky is a selective presentation of his world view and activities that cannot be assumed to represent his state of mind

⁵ Many of his writings may be found in the footnotes to Hryhorii Dem'ian, "Malovidomi storinky zhyttia i naukovoï pratsi Mykhaila Zubryts'koho," *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 223 (1992): 172–96. Dem'ian compiled a bibliography of 343 of Zubrytsky's works, which Vasyl Sokil is editing for publication. On Zubrytsky's biography, see Roman Horak, "Fenomen sil'skoho sviashchennyka," *Dzvin*, 2001, no. 9: 117–29. Also see the tributes to him in *Boikivshchyna: Istorii ta suchasnist'. Materialy istoriko-narodoznavchoï konferentsii "Mynule i suchasne Boikivshchyny", iaka vidbulasia u m. Sambori 6 bereznia 1996 roku z nahody 140-rychchia vid dnia narodzhennia Mykhaila Zubryts'koho* (Lviv, 1996), 1–9. Zubrytsky's writings are frequently cited in Andrii Zaiarniuk, *Idiomy emansypatsii: "Vyzvol'ni" proiekty i halyts'ke selo u seredyni XIX stolittia* (Kyiv, 2007).

⁶ Most of the diary was published in H. V. Dem'ian and L. D. Kantsedal, "Mykhailo Zubryts'kyi i ioho slovens'kyi shchodennyk," in *Pytannia tekstolohii: Dozhovtneva ta radians'ka literatura. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'* (Kyiv, 1989), 209–44. A fragment from the entry for 23 May 1916 is published in H. Dem'ian, "Natsional'no-derzhavnyts'ke spriamyvannia diial'nosti Mykhaila Zubryts'koho," *Vyzvol'nyi shliakh* (London), 1997, nos. 4: 487–95 and 5: 581–95. This article also contains Zubrytsky's notes from 6 November to 21 December 1918. Fifteen of his letters to Franko were published in Roman Horak, "Lysty Mykhaila Zubryts'koho do Ivana Franka," *Naukovi visnyk Muzeiu Ivana Franka u L'vovi* 4 (2004): 286–307. O. Dei and M. Moroz contributed six of Franko's letters to Zubrytsky to *Ukraïns'ke literaturoznavstvo* (Lviv), issue 1 (1966) 147–50; and four of them were published in the Soviet edition of Franko's *Zibrannia tvoriv*, vol. 50 (Kyiv, 1986), 216–18, 261–62, and 300–301. Six of Zubrytsky's letters to Hnatiuk (17 December 1903, 23 October 1904, 25 April 1907, 1 January 1911, 17 February 1912, 5 May 1917) are preserved in Lviv at the Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, manuscript division, fond 34, spr. 226. Hryhorii Dem'ian prepared the collection "Lysty Volodymyra Hnatiuka do Mykhaila Zubryts'koho," *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 223 (1992): 293–308. Six of Zubrytsky's letters to Oleksander Barvinsky (5 March, 5 May, and 11, 17, 23, and 25 September 1895) are also in the Stefanyk National Scientific Library, Barvinsky fond 1262. The Central State Historical Archive in Kyiv, fond 1235, has sixteen of Zubrytsky's letters (1897–1911) to Mykhailo Hrushevsky. Two of his letters in German to Eduard Hoffmann Krayer (12 April and 4 July 1911) are in the archives of the Museum der Kulturen in Basel. In "Lysty Volodymyra Hnatiuka do Mykhaila Zubryts'koho," 307, n. 37, Dem'ian reported that twelve of Krayer's letters from Zubrytsky's personal archive were in his possession.

⁷ Page references in the text of this article are to this autobiography. It is preserved in the Vasyl Shchurat collection at the Stefanyk National Scientific Library, fond 206, papka 27, spr. 122 (30 ark.); Vasyl Sokil has prepared it for publication. Much of the material on Zubrytsky's early life is in his memoirs "Lisy i pasovys'ka" (Spomyny)," *Literaturno-naukovi visnyk* 52 (1910): 503–13. For additional information on his arrival in Mshanets, see the introduction to Mykhailo Zubryts'kyi, "Selo Mshanets Starosambirs'koho povitu: Materialy do istorii halyts'koho sela," *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 70, bk. 2 (1906): 114–67.

and influences on him in each stage of his development up to the age of forty. His unpublished manuscript also seems to have been intended for readers who had interests in scholarship, probably in support of his membership in the Shevchenko Scientific Society, and were adherents of the Ukrainian national movement. It must be assumed to have been written with the usual attention to the recipient and to self-censorship. Yet the autobiography constitutes a remarkably rich source on the formation and intellectual and social life of a late nineteenth-century clerical and national leader. For our purposes it can serve as the central source for discussing the formation of Zubrytsky's religious world view and vision of the UGCC and its clergy.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, voices were raised in the UGCC, the Vatican, and among the Roman Catholic and Polish critics of the UGCC clergy that the latter had devoted too much attention to national work and community organizing and too little to religious education and instilling Catholic consciousness. Reforms of the Basilian Order initiated in 1882 under Jesuit supervision and the insistence that a celibate clergy was preferable in the church were aimed at correcting these perceived failings. In essence these policies tended to break the link between the clergy and the lay intelligentsia and to seek to form a clergy that would not be as closely integrated into village life. At the same time, the rise of anticlericalism propagated by the Ruthenian Radical Party, founded in Galicia in 1890 under the influence of Mykhailo Drahomanov, and the conflicts over sacramental fees that many priests had with their parishioners, in part because of their need for additional revenue to provide for their families, undermined clerical influence. These tendencies moved the clergy away from their centrality in national politics (whether Ukrainian Populist or Galician Russophile) and made some clergymen wary of the enlightening role their stratum had played, spawning the new or educated peasants who challenged their position.⁸ The Ukrainian Populist clergy had to consider whether they had imported into Galicia the anticlerical and rationalist views that had flourished among Ukrainophiles in the Russian Empire.⁹ At the same they came under attack from the Galician Russophiles, who labeled them radicals who were not truly or primarily interested in church and dogmas.¹⁰ In answering these challenges the activist Populist clergy called for even greater engagement with society.

⁸ On the clergy in this period, see Bernadetta Wójtowicz-Huber, "*Ojcowie narodu*": *Duchowieństwo greckokatolickie w ruchu narodowym Rusinów galicyjskich (1867–1918)* (Warsaw, 2008); it devotes disproportionate attention to the Russophiles.

⁹ On the church in this period and the critique of the Greek Catholic clergy, see John Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia* (Montreal and Kingston, 1999); and Andrew Sorokowski, "The Lay and Clerical Intelligentsia in Greek-Catholic Galicia, 1900–1939," special issue on Ukrainian church history of *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 26, nos. 1–4 (2002–2003): 261–90.

¹⁰ In 1901 Zubrytsky responded to such attacks on him and other Galician Populist clergy by the Russophile newspaper *Halychanyn*. See his "Kil'ka sliv z nahody staty 'Dila' p. z. 'Lytsemiry,'" *Dilo* (Lviv), 17/30 March 1901.

The conflicts of the late nineteenth century would seem to have had little resonance in the relatively backward mountain areas of Staryi Sambir and Turka counties, the primary region of Father Zubrytsky's activity. The first school in Mshanets was not opened until 1892 (and initially did not develop well), and Zubrytsky established the Prosvita reading room there only in the same year. While our image of Mshanets and the surrounding area comes predominantly from Zubrytsky himself, the conflicts he depicts are those between backwardness and enlightenment, with the added factor that in his later writings he portrays the Rus-sophiles, or *katsapy*, in neighbouring villages as being among the backward elements. Yet in many ways the priest, who had in his view enlightened Mshanets and turned it into a leading village in the mountain region, was furthering the pattern seen earlier in other parts of Galicia.

In Mshanets the tendencies to anticlericalism and challenging religion appeared in the more radical situation after the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the failed struggle for Ukrainian independence (and after Zubrytsky had left Mshanets). One of the children Father Zubrytsky christened in 1890 would become the Communist activist and writer Andrii Voloshchak, and in the 1930s Mshanets would have an active pro-Communist (albeit national in orientation) and anticlerical faction. The interwar UGCC priests were not leaders in Zubrytsky's mould, and though it would be hard to imagine his equal, the interwar politicized village no longer seemed to look to the priest for leadership and criticized a number of pastors not only for the sacramental fees they demanded but also for not opposing the Polish regime decisively enough. Even though the OUN group and the many supporters of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in the village in the 1940s viewed the church and its rites as integral to Ukrainian society, they no longer looked principally to its pastor for guidance in national, social, and even moral issues.¹¹

Much in Father Zubrytsky's autobiography would uphold the criticisms of those who saw the Ukrainian Populist clergy as not placing religion and confession at the core of their work. Zubrytsky, though on his mother's side the great-grandson of a priest, Father Andrii Neronovych, did not spring from the priestly clans among which vocation came as a hereditary choice. Though of petty-gentry status (albeit not fully recognized), he came from poor mountain villagers who had to struggle for existence. His father was illiterate, but his determination that his son should not be so disadvantaged initiated the long odyssey that Mykhailo undertook to finish a *matura* (p. 4). Priests such as Father Volodyslav Ilnytsky of Yasinka Masova, the parish to which Kindrativ belonged, and Zubrytsky's relative Father Yakiv Neronovych of Rozbir Okruhlyi near Yaroslav (Polish: Jarosław) are important in helping Zubrytsky throughout this story. But in the end it is his father who argued most persuasively that his son should not study at the Philosophy Faculty at Lviv University but should go to the seminary and study in the Theology Faculty, for the priesthood was a surer profession for a poor boy (p. 16).

¹¹ On Zubrytsky's role as a modernizer and on his later period, see Leonid Heretz, "The Formation of Modern National Identity and Interethnic Relations in the Galician Ukrainian Highlands: Some Findings of a Local/Oral History Project," in *Tentorium Honorum: Essays Presented to Frank E. Sysyn on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Olga A. Andriewsky et al (Edmonton and Toronto, 2010), 199–218.

In describing his courses and reading, it is history, literature, and politics on which Mykhailo Zubrytsky lavished his attention. We know he had already purchased Taras Shevchenko's works while in the fifth class of his *Gymnasium* (p. 16). At the Greek Catholic seminary he had access to a broad selection of literature and periodicals, including most major secular and religious journals and newspapers.¹² We find out in his autobiography that the seminarians even gained access to the socialist Galician Populist journal *Svit*. Questions of national identity were hotly disputed, and Zubrytsky mentions that some of the seminarians probably were antagonistic to *Vestnik Evropy* and *Russkoe bogatsvto* because they published Mykhailo Drahomanov's Ukrainophile ideas. Yet the growth of Ukrainian sentiments in this period was evident in that copies of a picture of Shevchenko in *Russkaia starina* were sold to raise funds for the library. Zubrytsky maintains that between 1879 and 1882 the seminary library "encouraged more than one seminarian [*pytomets*'] to work on the enlightenment of the people and at first brought about in part a strengthening and dissemination of the Ukrainian-Ruthenian idea among the Ruthenian clergy."¹³ He also tells us about the seminarians organizing the group *Moloda falanga* (Young Phalanx), which aimed at ensuring that they received secular as well as theological learning, and for which he wrote a paper on the rather abstruse but socially relevant topic of "the state of subjects and slaves in Rus' from the foundation of the Rus' state to the twelfth century inclusively."¹⁴

The secular and the social also were at the fore in Zubrytsky's description of his circle at the seminary. "We in the seminary were eager to take up action, we were happy that we would soon go out into public life, we broached in incessant conversations the various themes of national life [*narodnii pobut*], and made plans for the future. At times we walked entire hours in groups under the chestnut trees, sharing our comments and observations about what we had read, and after nine o'clock in the evening we strolled in the corridors at times to one in the morning" (p. 18). We should note that it was discussion about national life (or even given the dual meaning of *narodnii*, the people's life) and not about ecclesiastical or dogmatic topics that Zubrytsky describes occurring. He gives long lists of seminarians, including Omelian Hlibovetsky, Lev Horalevych, Yurii Zhuk, Ihnat Vakhnianyn, Ivan Kypriian, Ivan Kuziv, Yosyf and Ivan Yavorsky, Danylo Lepky, Bohdan Eliashevsky, Nykolai Bachynsky, Sylvester and Petro Bohachevsky, Bohdan Kyrchiv, Ivan Mashchak, Ivan Litynsky, and Ksenofont Sosenko, who breathed what he calls the new spirit. Clearly for those who wished to take part in general intellectual life and university courses around 1880, the Lviv Greek Catholic Seminary had much to offer, and it was there that Zubrytsky chose the Ukrainian alternative of Ruthenian identity. He later taught Ruthenian history and literature at the Precentors' Institute in the Peremyshl Greek Catholic Seminary, mentioning

¹² He lists eighteen Polish, fifteen German, and ten Russian periodicals (p. 17).

¹³ On the seminary library, see Zubrytsky's article "Chyital'nia v rus'kii seminarii u L'vovi vid 1879 do 1883," *Dilo*, 30 June/13 July and 1/14, 3/16, and 4/17 July 1900.

¹⁴ On seminary organizations, see Ia. Hlystiuk, "Diial'nist' students'kykh tovarystv Hreko-katolyts'koï dukhovnoï seminarii u L'vovi (1849–1914)," in *L'viv: Misto – suspil'stvo – kul'tura. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'*, ed. Olena Arkush and Mar'ian Mudryi (Lviv, 2007), 246–94.

almost wistfully that it could not be systematic because the seminarians frequently had to be in church (p. 20). Certainly Zubrytsky showed all signs that cultural and scholarly work was his first love. But he also affirmed what he saw as the new type of clergyman emerging among his generation.

On strictly religious affairs, Zubrytsky showed less overt enthusiasm. He reserved much of his criticism of teaching for theological lectures “in foreign Latin” (“foreign” being a negative to this proponent of using the living tongue) and for the inspectors (*nastavnyky*) at the seminary who did not know Ruthenian properly (p. 19). Zubrytsky reflected the general opposition to the reform of the Basilians by the “black spirits” (presumably meaning the Jesuits) and criticized a prefect for working for the “reform.”¹⁵ Clergy were likely to be judged by him for the language they spoke (he condemned those who used Polish or denigrated Ruthenian) and on whether they were Ruthenian patriots and loved their country (*krai*) and people (*narod*) (p. 20). He also criticized priests who did not struggle against alcoholism or held themselves at a distance from the people (pp. 12, 28).

One finds in Zubrytsky’s writings mentions of Ruthenians who went to Roman Catholic churches, in context implicitly indicating that he viewed the practice negatively though he himself had briefly done so as a pupil in Turka (p. 5). There are but a few glimpses into his understanding of the issues of rite that so occupied Galician religious and political life. Zubrytsky showed he was not immune to the grandeur of the Latin rite, and he mentions that as a boy he was struck by the illumination in a Roman Catholic church (*kostel*) in Dobromyl (p. 5). As a pupil he suffered discrimination and was labeled a Muscovite simply because he had not knelt during a Greek Catholic church service (p. 10.) In sum, however, although one finds in Zubrytsky’s autobiography ample discussions about Galician Ukrainian religious institutions and extensive information on the clergy, there is relatively little on general confessional and religious issues compared with his discussion of the needs and fate of the national movement. One reads his whole text without finding a discussion of the relationship between the two rites of the Catholic Church or the uproar over the conversions to Orthodoxy of the village of Hnylychky in 1882. In some of his later writings Zubrytsky did assert that the Ruthenians were indeed Catholics when he argued against Polish attempts to establish churches with public funds in areas where there were few Roman Catholics.¹⁶ Still, those who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries maintained that the Galician Populists lacked ardent confessionalism might point out that in discussing the reasons for the Union of Brest in his writings, Zubrytsky did not maintain that recognition of Catholicism’s truth was the cause. Instead he asserted that “The Ruthenian clergy probably entered into a union with Rome to free themselves from the cruel treatment/mockery [*zbytkovania*] by the Polish nobles and clergy”¹⁷

¹⁵ “At this time the prefect had truck with the Lviv black spirits and helped to prepare the reform” (p. 19).

¹⁶ [Unsigned,] “Pys'mo z turets'koho povitu,” *Dilo*, 16/28 February 1898.

¹⁷ “Dobrodiistva pol's'koï shliakhty dlia rus'koï Tserkvy i rus'koho dukhoventsva,” *Dilo*, 10/23 and 11/24 December 1902.

Still, it would be mistaken to see Zubrytsky's vision as secular. He had a vision of progress and reform in both the church and society that would have also strengthened the role of the clergy. A few years after writing his autobiography, he responded to Russophile critics who had questioned the Populist clergy's adherence to dogmas and attacked Zubrytsky and other Populist clerics as "radical *popyky*" ("priestlets," a derogatory term), asserting that "I am a priest, and I fulfill my obligations from inner conviction. But I engage in the earthly affairs of my parishioners and all those people I meet if they ask me to do this. I would be pleased if our people raised itself up from its abasement and material poverty."¹⁸ In his response Zubrytsky cited Christ's deeds and the teachings of Father Joseph Scheicher, professor of the Sankt Pölten Seminary, that the church was the mother of the rich and the poor but needed to help the poor because the rich could defend themselves.¹⁹ Zubrytsky maintained that "A priest's work in the enlightenment of the popular masses should not harm him and bring down on him the charge of evil will or work to the detriment of the church and the nation."²⁰ He declared that the faithful of the Ruthenian church included only the poor, thereby justifying his church's engagement in their cause. Zubrytsky identified the national and social issues as intertwined and the proper interest of the church and the priest. He had come to a vision that saw the existence of national communities as part of God's order, and he declared that Polish "patriots" were not good Christians and countervailed Christ's teaching to love one's neighbour as oneself because they sought to despatch Ruthenians from the face of the earth, meaning that they would dissolve them as a nation.²¹ Zubrytsky maintained that "According to Christ's teachings, God created all people, all nations, among them the Ruthenians and the Poles. Would the world exist without the Poles and the Ruthenians? Surely it would, and no one would be troubled by their absence. But while they live on this earth, it is obvious that they are needed, as much the Poles as the Ruthenians. And who insists that the Ruthenians should be effaced from this world, wiped from the face of the earth, distorts God's commandments, and it [this distortion] is not from God but from the devil."

In his autobiography Zubrytsky reveals his vision of the proper role of clergy and their relation to social movements when he discusses the fate of Hryhorii Rymar, a defendant in one of the major trials of socialists in rural Galicia in 1886 and Zubrytsky's fellow *Gymnasium* student in Drohobych.²² Zubrytsky says that

¹⁸ "Kil'ka sliv z nahody statti 'Dila' p.z. 'Lytsemirý.'"

¹⁹ He cites Scheicher's writing appearing some years earlier in the *Quartalschrift*. Until 1893 Scheicher contributed frequently to *Theologisch-Praktische Quartalschrift* (Linz), especially under the rubric "Zeitläufe." On Scheicher and the Christian social movement, see John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848–1897* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press,), chap. 3, esp. 140–43.

²⁰ "Kil'ka sliv z nahody statti 'Dila' p.z. 'Lytsemirý.'"

²¹ "V istoriï neraz deshcho povtoriuie sia (Pys'mo z kruhiv dukhoventsva)," *Dilo*, 29 May/11 June 1902.

²² See Andriy Zayarnyuk, "The Dobrivliany Affair of 1886: A Nodal Approach to Consciousness Formation," *Spaces of Identity* 4, no. 3 (2004): 21–39 <<https://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/soi/article/viewFile/8005/7158>>.

after the death of Father Antonii Chapelsky, pastor of the village of Dobrivliany, Rymar, the village secretary, was accused of “godlessness and so forth” and had emerged from prison a broken man. Zubrytsky maintains that “a man of his [Rymar’s] abilities could have greatly contributed to the betterment of peasants in his area if only someone had been found to show him the road to this and had worked together with him.” Rymar had praised Chapelsky as his benefactor, and Zubrytsky obviously saw the affair as resulting from a good pastor’s unfortunate demise. Thus, as late as 1896 Zubrytsky could still play down the threat of godlessness and posit a role for the clergy to work together with those who wished progress, even if they harboured concepts that questioned religion and the role of the church.²³ Indeed, by 1898 he went so far in responding to the Radicals that he affirmed their idea that those who tilled the soil should own it, in part basing himself on this program being good for “our [the Ruthenian] cause.” He declared: “As it was under serfdom, so it is now among us, the same as in Ireland, Italy, and above all Sicily. The Ruthenian intelligentsia, knowing this, should put forth as [its] main principle that land should belong to those who work on it. This will be a little radical, but good for our cause. This will irritate and pain some, it will bring forth a shout that Haidamakas are coming and so forth, but this will not hinder us, and he who is a good patriot will defend this thesis, because it is necessary that our masses would see our intelligentsia’s living compassion for their interests.”²⁴

In writing in his autobiography about his parishioners who hoped for a return of the way things were earlier, in this case referring to the superior position of the petty nobles, Zubrytsky maintained that “they did not know that humanity does not go backward in its development” (p. 27.) This coincided with his political speeches of the period. In them he condemned “conservatism” and affirmed progressivism²⁵ and characterized democracy as in keeping with Christ’s teachings. In other writings he quoted the biblical passage about not putting one’s hope in princes.²⁶ Zubrytsky’s platform for progress, however condescendingly paternal, came about because he wanted to see a new type of priest who would instill a fresh, informed, non-superstitious faith and religious practice among the people while joining in their political, social, and educational betterment.²⁷

²³ In his later writings, Zubrytsky went quite far in his understanding of those who opposed the clergy and the church. In 1902, in discussing Polish and other attacks on the clergy, he wrote: “I understand those people who come out against the clergy and the church in general. They have their principle, they hold to it, and they wish to enact it in life. I do not wish here to decide whether they will succeed or not, because it would be premature” (“V istoriyi neraz deshcho povtoriuie sia”). He went on to say that the Poles did not attack their own and behaved like Pharisees in attacking Ruthenian priests.

²⁴ “Tykhyi ale revnyi patriot,” *Dilo*, 24 March/5 April and 26 March/7 April 1898.

²⁵ See “Nash ustrii derzhavnyi ta soim kraiovyi (Z promovy o. Mykhaila Zubryts'koho na peredvyborchkykh zborakh v Starom-misti dnia 2. padolysta 1894),” *Bat'kivshchyna*, 1/13 and 16/28 December 1894.

²⁶ “Rusyny suprotyv poliakiv i moskaliv,” *Bat'kivshchyna*, 28 August 1895.

²⁷ One can see this credo in his article “Kil'ka sliv z nahody statti ‘Dila’ p.z. ‘Lytsemirý,’” in which he responded to accusations that Uniate priests lacked interest in Catholic dogma.

While trying to maintain himself in the *Gymnasium* in Drohobych, Zubrytsky had contacts with German workers (p. 10.) As he recounts in his autobiography, he was amazed what they could tell him about Saxon princes, Martin Luther, and other topics, and he compared them favourably to his own people working in the mines. While Zubrytsky does not amplify on what the Germans could tell him about Luther, he wished for the day when his own people would be educated enough to discuss religious and national leaders of the past. His goal became the uplifting of his people through their abandonment of superstitions and pagan practices, and the elevation of their faith through its proper definition and proper exercise. Zubrytsky saw the religious practices in Mshanets at the time of his arrival as more pagan than Christian (p. 23). In his autobiography he illustrated his point about his parishioners' shaky hold on faith by saying that the village children had asserted that the Annunciation was the day God blessed the earth. He maintained that "In general in my conversations with the peasants, I observed that among them Christian concepts had been intermixed with pagan [ones] and the latter even prevailed. Therefore much work was needed to change this all, to root out the old viewpoints, and to defend the new" (p. 23). Zubrytsky admitted, however, that as of 1896 he had not fully succeeded in his task. In his description of his youth in Kindrativ, he recounted that his father had built a new house on the advice of sorcerers (*mantii-vorozhlynyky*) because the old house, though structurally fine, had an unchristened child born out of wedlock (*kopylia*) buried under it and many children had died and his father had nightmares (p. 4). These were the kind of mixed practices that Zubrytsky sought to uproot.

Zubrytsky asserts that until the first new ideas and books reached Mshanets in the 1870s, the inhabitants thought that all their customs and behaviour were "holy" (p. 23). He clearly saw the need to educate them in the essence of what he believed a Christian should see as truly holy. In describing his mission in Mshanets, he declares that his goal, including in religious affairs, was to uproot the old and plant the new in his effort to bring his people up to the level of what he called the more cultured lands.

What then were the new religious customs that Zubrytsky sought to introduce? He had already been impressed with community singing when he had attended elementary school in Rozbir Okruhlyi on the western fringe of Ukrainian settlement. There young Mykhailo had learned the simple catechism and read the great catechism of Metropolitan Ivan Levytsky, sang troparia and kondakia, read the Bible, and used an illustrated Bible published in Buda (p. 23). Although the Ukrainian tongue was disappearing there from everyday use, that peasant community preserved its identity by all singing the service together. In describing the situation in the parish of Kropyvnyk Novyi, where Zubrytsky visited the Svysch brothers, he noted their recounting of their parish problems, including the shortening of services and rare serving of vespers, as proof of a clergyman not fulfilling his mission. Zubrytsky saw this laxity as part of the reason the church was not active in curbing drinking and excessive revelries (p. 12).

This was much the model Zubrytsky took to Mshanets in the 1880s. He had received his assistant pastorship in the parish of Antonii Nazarevych, the grandfather

of his wife, Olha Borysevych, and assumed the pastorship only upon Nazarevych's death in 1888. Thus in a way Zubrytsky even criticized his grandfather-in-law when he described his own close relations and frequent discussions with the peasants: "There were in this area various priests, at times exemplary and in their own way good Ruthenians, but they did not allow things to go too far with the peasants. Because of this, relations between the clergy and their parishioners were quite cold" (p. 28). This was not to be Zubrytsky's way or his conception of how a priest was to be a good Ruthenian. As he wrote in one of his later articles, "A priest creates respect for himself among the people through his toil and work in the interest of the people. He who does not dread toil and work does not need to fear an undermining [*pidorvania*] of respect among his parishioners."²⁸ In his autobiography Zubrytsky describes a virtual whirlwind of activity. He even read aloud tales of distant peoples, including the Inuit, and planned to obtain a globe for the village reading room. But religion was also at the core of his activity. Zubrytsky recounts that he began catechization during his first winter in Mshanets, reading daily prayers aloud in church and subsequently teaching catechism and the Bible. He gathered the young after vespers in the parish house to sing religious songs, and while doing so he taught them the alphabet. He also imported an illustrated Bible from Freiburg to teach biblical history. By 1896 Zubrytsky could say that in the Mshanets church, where the precentor had formerly chanted alone, the whole congregation now sang the service. Zubrytsky's vision also changed the ritualistic practices in the village: he insisted that the petty nobles should not have their Easter baskets blessed apart from the peasants. He was creating one, egalitarian, priest-led religious community based on his vision of how Ruthenian society should function in the modern world.

Zubrytsky's program was a mixture of religious, social, and national goals, which he pursued at times as a pastor and at times as a scholar. Although he recounts having enjoyed Christmas carolling as a boy in Kindrativ, which included the carollers consuming liquor, Zubrytsky stamped out Mshanets's old carolling traditions because the village brotherhoods there drank too much while out carolling (p. 24). As he did so, Zubrytsky the ethnographer carefully noted down the customs he observed and the songs he heard and shared them with scholars, such as his *Gymnasium* schoolmate Ivan Franko.²⁹ He also banned the practice of having fifteen godparents per child and limited their number to four. Zubrytsky recorded that at first his "conservative" people resisted, and elsewhere he commented on their startled reactions to their activist priest rooting out some of their traditions while valorizing them by interviewing them and recording their responses for posterity (p.25). In planning to replace the late eighteenth-century wooden church in Mshanets with a stone church designed by the then best architect in Lviv, Ivan Dolynsky, Zubrytsky leaned too far on the side of the modern, not understanding the architectural significance of the unique church he had taken charge of.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ On Zubrytsky's relations with Franko, see Ivan Paslavs'kyi, "Mykhailo Zubryts'kyi v otsintsii Ivana Franka," in *Boikivshchyna: Istorii ta suchasnist'*, 7–9.

³⁰ Iaroslav Taras, "Storinky do istorii tserkvy sela Mshanets' ta otsia Mykhaila Zubryts'koho," special issue of *Slovo "Prosvity"* (Staryi Sambir), no. 102 (March 2008): 4–6.

Although he could not know the future, he committed his greatest error in propagating the modern: he had his community entrust funds to bank accounts that were lost in the chaos of the Great War. By having the old church dismantled in 1912, Zubrytsky deprived his community of a religious edifice until a new wooden church was built in 1922. This absence was one of the reasons the Left was able to gain influence in Mshanets.

Father Zubrytsky's goal was to create a community of enlightened, patriotic, sober, prosperous, and literate villagers. He saw the clergy, and not the lay intelligentsia, as having direct contact with the peasantry and thereby being crucial to the national cause.³¹ He was willing to commit himself to this cause, while many other priests were not.³² While Zubrytsky's innovations disturbed the traditional life of the village, they should not be seen just as a manifestation of the national movement. He had a vision in which religion was to be reformed together with society and the nation. If Zubrytsky's work to create a literate and self-reliant peasantry opened the doors to challenging the church's role, it also created the means for the innovations that the reform forces in the church had planned to reach the village. Zubrytsky had, after all, defined faith and religion more precisely in a way that not only the opponents of church took aim at it, but also in a way that provided a basis upon which proponents of confessionally restricted practices and forms of piety could reach literate villagers better schooled in the Bible, liturgy, and the tenets of the faith. The latter were not Zubrytsky's model of religion. His model espoused enlightenment and learning and the advancement of the national interests of the Ukrainian nation (which was at least theoretically bi-confessional—Greek Catholic and Orthodox—and encompassed “Dnipro Ukraine”), of which the peasantry was the core. In this model the Galician Ukrainian church and clergy were to be on the side of social and national justice, education, and progressive politics. Father Zubrytsky died just as the Galician Ukrainians made their bid for Ukrainian statehood. The failure of that attempt, the rise of radicalism on the Left and the Right, and the political tensions that a stateless people were to endure in the Polish nation-state would put the model that he advocated to its greatest test.

³¹ “V istoriï neraz deshcho povtoriue sia.”

³² For Zubrytsky's criticism of a priest (Teodor Krushynsky) who refused such a role, see his “Z Staro-mis'koho pyshut' nam: V nashim poviti nezvychaina novyna,” *Dilo*, 28 January/9 February 1899.

im Habsburgerreich (1996), *Die Perle des Imperiums: Der russische Krim-Diskurs im Zarenreich* (2007), and *Geschichte der Ukraine* (2010).

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