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THE UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE IN ARGENTINA, 1897–1950: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW¹

During the period of mass migration to the Americas, Argentina occupied second place, after the United States, in the number of immigrants who had come for settlement from overseas. Between 1820 and 1932, about 6.5 million immigrants arrived in Argentina.² Although the United States received many more immigrants than did Argentina, the share of the foreign-born in the national population was much larger in the latter country than in the former. Another distinguishing feature of the immigration to Argentina was that most of its immigrants had come from Italy and Spain.

In spite of the dominant role that southern Europeans played in the composition of immigration to Argentina, there was a significant number of immigrants who also came from eastern Europe. Between 1857 and 1920 nearly 164,000 immigrants came to Argentina from the multiethnic Russian Empire and another 87,000 from Austria-Hungary.³ Over the next two decades, 182,000 immigrants came from Poland. Indeed, during the decade of the 1930s, the immigrants from Poland accounted for 58 percent of the net total of all newcomers to Argentina.⁴

¹ This text was presented during the 2nd Congress of Foreign Researchers of the History of Poland in a session moderated by A. Walaszek and J. Lencznarowicz – „Common or Different Experience? A Comparison of Migrations of Poles and Other Nationalities in the World”, September 15th, 2012, Kraków.

² David Cook-Martín, *The Scramble for Citizens: Dual Nationality and State Competition for Immigrants* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 35.

³ Ministerio de Agricultura, *Resumen estadístico del movimiento migratorio en la República Argentina. Años 1857–1924* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Agricultura de La Nación, 1925), 4–5.

⁴ Gino Germani, “Mass Immigration and Modernization in Argentina,” in *Latin American Radicalism: A Documentary Report on Left and Nationalist Movements*, eds. Irving Louis Horowitz, Josué de Castro, and John Gerassi (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 319.

Various groups immigrated to Argentina from eastern Europe, though they tended more to be members of the national minorities than representatives of the titular nationality. Jews were the largest single group to immigrate. Another group that came to Argentina in significant numbers were the Ukrainians. They immigrated *en masse* from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. This essay presents an overview of the evolution of that ethnocultural community in the world's eighth-largest state.

THE FIRST WAVE: 1897–1914

Ukrainians came to Argentina in three separate waves. During the first, between 1897 and 1914, around 10,000 Ukrainians immigrated to Argentina. At that time, especially in 1895–96 and 1907–1910, a larger migration was directed from Austrian Galicia to neighbouring Brazil, particularly the southern state of Paraná.

The Ukrainian immigration to Argentina included a number of transient workers who came from the Russian Empire and settlers from Austria-Hungary who came to farm in places where land could be obtained at affordable prices. Some of the Ukrainians from the Russian Empire converged in Berisso, a suburb of La Plata (capital of the province of Buenos Aires), where they worked in the local meat-packing plants (*frigoríficos*).

The largest single group of Ukrainians from Austria-Hungary came from Galicia. Together with Poles from that crownland, they settled in the sparsely populated Territory of Misiones, a region in northeastern Argentina wedged between Paraguay and Brazil. A small group of Ukrainians from the neighbouring Austrian crownland of Bukovyna also settled in Misiones. Smaller numbers of Ukrainians from Galicia also established farms in other parts of Argentina, especially in the province of Mendoza (in the western central part of Argentina).

THE SECOND WAVE: 1920–1939

The immigrants who came to Argentina before 1914 arrived as bearers of Austrian and Russian passports. After World War I, both the Habsburg and Romanov empires collapsed, and in their place four states emerged which included Ukrainians: the USSR (especially the Ukrainian SSR), Poland (especially Galicia and Volhynia), Romania (Bukovyna and Bessarabia), and Czechoslovakia (Subcarpathian Rus).

In 1920–39 about 70,000 Ukrainians immigrated to Argentina, primarily from Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. The few Ukrainians whose origins were

in the central and eastern regions of Ukraine (in the Soviet Union) were generally associated with the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic. The majority of the Ukrainian immigrants thus came with Polish (especially), Romanian, and Czechoslovakian passports. Ukrainian exiles associated with the movement for independence in central and eastern Ukraine during 1917–21 travelled to Argentina with “Nansen Passports or passports issued by the former Ukrainian Representative in Berlin.” They tended to be registered separately as “Ukrainians” by the Argentine immigration officials.⁵

The Ukrainians who immigrated in 1920–39 settled in various parts of Argentina. Many of them again chose the Territory of Misiones and Mendoza, but others also settled in the relatively sparsely populated northern Territory of Chaco. From 1923, Argentina’s minister of agriculture, Tomás A. de Breton, promoted cotton cultivation in Chaco, in response to which came “hundreds of Germans, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs...transferred at the cost of the state to the closest railway station to their *chacra* lots, assigned to them by the Ministry [of Agriculture] from Buenos Aires.”⁶ Many of the newcomers also settled in the province of Buenos Aires. In the latter province, Berisso again became a popular destination, but many of the immigrants also made their homes in several suburbs of the federal capital.

By 1938, according to one estimate, the Ukrainian community in Misiones had grown to comprise twenty-five thousand Ukrainians (immigrants and their offspring born locally). According to the same estimate, there were fifteen thousand Ukrainians in the Federal Capital of Buenos Aires and another thirty-five thousand in its environs (Avellaneda, Lanús, and San Martín). A further four thousand were in Berisso and six thousand others in Rosario, the largest city in the province of Santa Fe. Still others were scattered across the other provinces of Argentina.⁷

While farming became an occupation for many of the immigrants, a good number of others worked in the *frigoríficos* in and near the city of Buenos Aires or in Argentina’s second largest city, Rosario. In Berisso, Slavs constituted a significant portion of the labour force in the *frigoríficos*. Historian Mirta Zaida Lobato, on the basis of personnel records, calculated that of 1,917 foreign workers in the town’s Armour *frigorífico* between 1915 and 1930, 309 were “Russians,” 176 “Poles,”

⁵ “Ukrainians in Argentine,” *Ukrainian Bureau Bulletin* (London), no. 16, 15 February 1933, 6. On 5 February 1921 the Hipólito Yrigoyen-led government recognized the government-in-exile of the Ukrainian National Republic. See Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, *Memoria presentada al Honorable Congreso Nacional 1920–1921* (Buenos Aires: 1923), 42–43.

⁶ Nicolás Iñigo Carrera, ed., *La colonización del Chaco: Regiones y sociedades* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983), 67.

⁷ M. R., “Ukrainsi v Argentyni i Uruhvai,” in *Iliustrovanyi kalendar “Svitlo” na 1939 rik* (Buenos Aires: Svitlo, 1938), 41–42.

42 “Slavs,” and 8 “Ukrainians,” together representing 28 percent of the plant’s immigrant workforce. The group defined as Russian (Ukrainians undoubtedly were among the “Russians,” “Poles,” and “Slavs”) formed the second largest after the Italian, which comprised 386 individuals. In 1915–30 foreigners comprised approximately 70 percent of the personnel of the Armour *frigorífico* in Berisso.⁸

A 1935 report from the Polish embassy in Buenos Aires to Warsaw said of the Ukrainian immigrants: “Those in the cities, themselves of agricultural background, tend to be engaged in unskilled labour; only a small portion are self-employed (shopkeepers, chauffeurs, liquor retailers, etc.), enabling a good number of them to be homeowners in suburbs where many Slavic immigrants live.”

The report added that apart “from this group, there is a small minority of professionals, most of them with tertiary education (often graduates of Czech institutions). They are almost exclusively eastern Ukrainians, ex-officers of Petliura’s army.”⁹

One such ex-officer was the artist Viktor Tsymbal (Victor Cymbal), who had studied in Prague at the School of Decorative Arts and after his emigration to Argentina in 1928 designed neorealist posters for Argentine, American, and European companies. Many of Tsymbal’s paintings were exhibited in the Galería Müller of Buenos Aires in 1936. One of them, titled “Rik 1933” (“The Year 1933”), concerned the famine in Soviet Ukraine of 1932–33.¹⁰

A former member of Poland’s Sejm was also among the Ukrainian immigrant immigrants in Argentina. Iurii Tymoshchuk was elected to the Polish parliament in 1922 from Volhynia, and served on the Labour and Public Works Committee and then on the Communications Committee. In November 1927 he emigrated to Argentina with his family and homesteaded in the province of Santiago del Estero.¹¹

THE THIRD WAVE: 1946–1950

The third wave of Ukrainian immigration to Argentina was the smallest. About six thousand Ukrainians came to Argentina in 1945–50, mostly from

⁸ Mirta Zaida Lobato, *La vida en las fábricas: Trabajo, protesta y política en una comunidad obrera, Berisso (1904–1970)* (Buenos Aires: Entrepasados/Prometeo Libros, 2001), 110 and 113.

⁹ Ryszard Stemplowski, “Los ucranianos en la Argentina,” *Estudios Latinoamericanos* (Wrocław), no. 3 (1976): 293.

¹⁰ Tetiana Mykhailivska Tsymbal, *Spohady: Moie zhyttia na emigratsii* (Buenos Aires: Iulian Serediak, 1984), 83. An album of graphic works and paintings, edited by Sviatoslav Hordynsky, was published as *Viktor Tsymbal, maliar i hrafik: monohrafiia* (New York: Ukraïns’ka vil’na akademiia nauk u SShA, 1972).

¹¹ See “Tymoshchuk, Yurii,” in *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, vol. 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 330; and Tymoshchuk’s obituary in *Ukraïns’ke slovo* (Buenos Aires), 22 October 1939.

displaced camps in Europe but also, to a much lesser extent, from China, where there had been a sizable community in Manchuria prior to World War II. This wave was much more urban-oriented and included more professionals than the two that preceded it. According to one estimate, some 250 of the Ukrainian refugees (many of them from the displaced persons camps in Salzburg, Austria) had attained tertiary education. They included engineers, teachers, agronomists, artists, technicians, and lawyers.¹² A good number of the immigrants from this wave dwelled in the city of Buenos Aires and its environs.

UKRAINIAN ORGANIZATIONS: THE FIRST WAVE

During the course of the five decades of immigration, many of the newcomers joined and created organizations. In a book about Spaniards in Argentina, José C. Moya made the following observations about Spanish organizations: "...pre-arrival traits and the host environment, plus

the variables that their interaction produced, shaped the organized life of the immigrants. The societies were neither imported institutions nor rootless products of the new environment...The conflicts that riddled the organized community were often imported but also molded by the new situation."¹³ These observations could plausibly be applied to the Ukrainian experience in Argentina as well.

Ukrainians from the Russian Empire tended to join All-Russian organizations in Argentina (e.g., the Federation of Russian Workers' Organizations in South America ["Federatsiia Russkikh Rabochikh Organizatsii Iuzhnoi Ameriki"]), although attempts were made to carry out activities of a Ukrainian character. In 1910, Pylyp Bak, an immigrant who had been associated with the cultural and political newspaper *Rada* in Kyiv, set up Ukrainian-language evening classes for adults and children. He was able to establish a library for the students which included songs and the works of various intellectuals (e.g., the writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko and the historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, both of whom would later become leaders of the Ukrainian National Republic) and the leading newspapers from both western Ukraine (in the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and eastern Ukraine (in the Russian Empire). The evening classes came to an end when the students left the federal capital for seasonal work in other parts of the country, and Bak himself left Argentina for Brazil in April 1911.¹⁴

¹² Ievhen Onatsky, "Ukraïntsi v Pivdennii Amerytsi," in *Ukraïntsi u Vil'nomu Sviti: Iuvileina knyha Ukraïns'koho Narodnoho Soiuzu, 1894–1954* (Jersey City: Ukrainian National Association, 1954), 220.

¹³ José C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 400.

¹⁴ See Pylyp Bak, *Deshcho pro moie uchyteliuvannia v Brazylīi* (New York: Slavia, 1988).

In Misiones, Greek Catholic Ukrainians and Roman Catholic Poles in the colony of Azara worshipped in a chapel they built together in 1902.¹⁵ The following year, the Polish priest Rev. Józef Bayerlein-Mariański came to tend to the needs of these worshippers.

In the meantime, the Greek Catholic settlers in Misiones petitioned the metropolitan of their Church in Lviv (in German: Lemberg, in Polish: Lwów) to send a priest that could conduct services according to the Byzantine rite. The Lviv metropolity was unable to spare any celibate priests (as preferred in the Americas—many of the Greek Catholic priests were married, as permitted by the Eastern rite), and after repeated attempts to obtain a Byzantine-rite Catholic priest failed, in 1908 a number of the Greek Catholic settlers switched to the Orthodox Church.

There was already some Greek Orthodox among the Ukrainians in Misiones. They were not from Galicia but from the neighbouring Austrian crownland of Bukovyna, where the majority of the Ukrainians were Orthodox. There, they were under the jurisdiction of the autocephalous Bukovyna-Dalmatia Orthodox metropolis in Chernivtsi (German: Czernowitz, Romanian: Cernăuți), but in Argentina the parish the Orthodox immigrants had established in Misiones came under the authority of the Russian Orthodox mission in Buenos Aires which was headed by Archpriest Konstantin Izraztsov. The Galician Greek Catholic settlers in Misiones who decided to switch to Orthodoxy also came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox mission in Buenos Aires.¹⁶

To counteract further desertions to Russian Orthodoxy, the apostolic internuncio for Argentina, Bishop Achille Locatelli, approached the Vatican with an urgent plea to bring over a Catholic priest of the Byzantine rite. A priest of the celibate Basilian Order came from Brazil. His arrival marked a turning point in the history of Ukrainians in Misiones. Although the first Ukrainian secular organization (named “Prosvita”) dated back to 1907 in Azara, Misiones, Ukrainian priests helped to raise national consciousness among the settlers and played an important role in the founding of organizations. In Apóstoles, it was a Greek Catholic priest, Rev. Ivan Senyshyn, who founded the district’s first cooperative, the Agrícola Ucraniana, in 1922.¹⁷ That year also witnessed the visit to Misiones of the metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Andrei Sheptytsky.

¹⁵ Rev. Volodymyr Kovalyk, *Vasyliiany v Argentyni* (Buenos Aires: OO. Vasyliiany, 1988), 34.

¹⁶ For more on the conversions to Russian Orthodoxy in the Americas, see Joel Brady. “Transnational Conversions: Greek Catholic Migrants and Russky Orthodox Conversion Movements in Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the Americas (1890–1914).” Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh (Religious Studies), 2012.

¹⁷ Bernardo Allassia, *Apóstoles: Su historia* (Posadas: Lumicop, 1974), 125.

The visit raised the morale of the local Ukrainian Catholic community and helped reaffirm the bonds with the old country.¹⁸

By that time, Ukrainian territories had changed hands. The Ukrainian National Republic's efforts to obtain independence failed, but they nonetheless had an impact. Among other things, it had led to the creation by Ukrainians abroad of a separate Orthodox Church. In June 1914, the priest who had been summoned by the Russian Orthodox mission to serve the settlers in Misiones, Rev. Tykhon Hnatiuk, went to Volhynia to visit his relatives. After witnessing the fall of the tsar and the attempts at gaining statehood, Rev. Hnatiuk returned to his parish in Tres Capones, Misiones, in early 1924 as a priest of the newly created Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and placed his parish and others that followed under the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Ioan Teodorovych in the United States (the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA).¹⁹

UKRAINIAN ORGANIZATIONS: THE SECOND WAVE

The shifting of boundaries after World War I had an impact on the composition of Ukrainian immigration to Argentina. The region of Volhynia, hitherto part of tsarist Russia, was brought into the Second Polish Republic. Western Belarus, which bordered on Volhynia, had also previously been part of the Russian Empire and likewise came under Poland. Volhynian Ukrainians, unlike their counterparts from Galicia, were largely Greek Orthodox. Many Belarusians were also Orthodox while others were Roman Catholic.

In the period prior to 1914 Greek Catholics predominated among the Ukrainian emigrants to South America (Brazil and Argentina). After World War I, Orthodox were in the majority as the emigration encompassed not only Brazil and Argentina, but Paraguay and Uruguay as well. Indeed, South America seems to have been a slightly more popular destination for Ukrainian emigrants in 1920–39 than North America. Immigration to the United States and, albeit to a lesser extent, Canada had become more restricted during that period. In addition to the ca. 70,000 Ukrainians who immigrated to Argentina, up to 12,000 others emigrated to Paraguay (they constituted most of the immigrants from Poland),²⁰

¹⁸ See, for example, Rev. P. Khomyn, "Mytropolyt Andrii Sheptyts'kyi iak Apostols'kyi Vizytator dlia ukrainsiv v Poludnevii Amerytsi," *Bohoslovia* 4, nos. 1–2 (1926): 213.

¹⁹ [Iakiv Lavrychenko,] "80-richchia ukrains'koï emigratsii v Argentyni i Ukrains'ka Avtokefal'na Pravoslavna Tserkva," *Litopys Volyni*, no. 15 (1988): 146–60.

²⁰ Serge Cipko and John C. Lehr, "Ukrainian Settlement in Paraguay," *Prairie Perspectives: Geographical Essays* 9, no.1 (October 2006): 31–46, and Izabela Klarner-Kosińska, "Polonia w Paragwaju," in *Dzieje Polonii w Ameryce Łacińskiej*, ed. Marcin Kula (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1983), 328–29.

around 6,000 or so to Uruguay,²¹ and perhaps 12,000 to Brazil in the interwar period.²² Ties were especially developed with the communities in Paraguay and Uruguay. In the case of Paraguay, Ukrainians settled near the border town of Encarnación, which is separated from the city of Posadas in Misiones by the Paraná River.

By far the largest group of Ukrainian emigrants to Argentina in the interwar era came from Galicia and Volhynia under Poland. They emigrated together with ethnic Poles, Belarusians, and Jews, the latter accounting for 38.1 percent of the emigration from Poland in 1927–38. Although Polish statistics on emigration do not distinguish by ethnic group, they do on the basis of religious affiliation. According to the statistics, during 1927–38, 33,700 Jews, 29,900 Roman Catholics, 25,100 Orthodox, 20,000 Greek Catholics, 4,000 Protestants, and 400 others—altogether, 113,100 people—emigrated from Poland to Argentina.²³

The Ukrainians who created organizations in Argentina during the second wave of immigration were conditioned to some degree by the conflict with the Poles for control over Galicia and with the Bolsheviks elsewhere in the years immediately following World War I. Few Ukrainians in Argentina were content with the establishment of Polish rule in western Ukraine. They agreed less on the matter of the Soviet regime in the Ukrainian SSR. The regional origins of the immigrants influenced their attitude toward the latter. Ukrainians from Volhynia were more likely to be sympathetic to the Soviet regime than their counterparts from Galicia. Indeed, some Ukrainians from Volhynia developed strong ties with Belarusians in Argentina to form the pro-Soviet organization Union of Ukrainian and Belarusian Workers' Organizations. The very creation of such an organization embracing the two groups is noteworthy. An historian of Belarusians in Argentina, Siarhei Shabeltsau, affirmed that the activity carried out by the Belarusian community was significant in the history of the larger diaspora. The

²¹ The estimates vary from 5,000 to 10,000. See *Ukrains'ke slovo* (Buenos Aires), 14 August 1938, and Roman Lapica, "An Interview with Bishop Buchko," *Trident* (New York), no. 6 (July–August 1940): 21.

²² Serge Cipko, "Three Waves of Ukrainian Immigration to Brazil, 1890s–1940s: An Historical Overview," in *Ukrainci Brazylji/Os ucranianos do Brasil/Ukrainians in Brazil*, ed. Maryna Hrymych et al. (Kyiv: Duliby, 2011), 20–21.

²³ *Maly Rocznik Statystyczny 1939* (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1939), 53. The rate of re-emigration for the immigrants from Poland was reported as 14 percent, yielding the most favourable net gain among the larger groups of immigrants in Argentina in 1920–39. See Canals Frau, "La inmigración europea en la Argentina," *Anales del Instituto Étnico Nacional*, no. 1 (1948): 87–113. Polish statistics show that 18,073 returned to Poland from Argentina in 1922–39. See Adam Walaszek, *Reemigracja ze Stanów Zjednoczonych do Polski po I wojnie światowej, 1919–1924* (Craców: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1983), 24.

immigrants in Argentina founded organizations bearing the name “Belarusian” at a time when it was not common to do so, he observed.²⁴

By the 1930s the Ukrainian community in Argentina was split into two camps: one pro-Soviet and the other nationalist. In 1929 the underground Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was founded and conducted acts of sabotage and other actions against the Polish state. A year later, the so-called “Pacification” saw punitive measures against Ukrainians in Galicia. The “Pacification” turned Ukrainians in Argentina against the Polish state more than before. The creation of the OUN found an echo in the community there. In 1924 the cultural-educational organization Prosvita (“Enlightenment”) had been founded and opened branches across Argentina. In 1933, a group within Prosvita created the more militant and pro-OUN organization the *Ukraïns’ka strilets’ka hromada* (“the Ukrainian Riflemen’s Community”). In 1934 the organization began to publish a weekly newspaper, symbolically calling it *Nash klych* (“Our Call”) after the pro-OUN periodical in Lviv, which had been banned by the Polish authorities the previous year.²⁵ That year (1934), a member of the OUN, Hryhorii Matseiko, assassinated Poland’s minister of the interior, Bronisław Pieracki. After the assassination, Matseiko was able to avoid capture and fled abroad to Argentina.²⁶

During the course of the 1930s, the Polish embassy in Buenos Aires more than once complained to the Argentine authorities about the activities of local Ukrainian nationalists. For their part, Ukrainian groups in Argentina staged demonstrations against Poland. Indeed, emigration and immigrant matters may well have been among the dominant themes in the relations between Argentina and Poland in the interwar period. Diplomatic ties between the two countries were initiated in 1922 (Argentina had recognized Poland *de jure* on 7 July 1919), and Poland established a legation in Buenos Aires and Argentina (in January 1925) in Warsaw. However, in the evaluation of Waldemar Rommel, trade between the two countries was not significant and Latin American affairs as a whole were entrusted a “minor place” in the political-economic department which guided Polish state policy. He concluded that Argentina and the rest of Latin America were “the Cinderella of Poland’s foreign policy during the years between the two

²⁴ Siarhei Shabeltsau, *Belarusy u Arhentsin—hramadskaia dzieinasts’ i reemihratsyia u SSSR (1930–1960-ia gg.): zbornik dokumentau i uspaminau* (Minsk: Medysont, 2009).

²⁵ Ivan Kryvyi, “Hromads’ka pratsia natsionalistiv v Argentini,” in *Orhanizatsiia ukraïns’kykh natsionalistiv 1929–1954* ([Paris:] Persha Ukraïns’ka Drukarnia u Frantsii, 1955), 368–69.

²⁶ Matseiko slipped away to Czechoslovakia and travelled to Argentina on a Lithuanian passport (Polish-Lithuanian relations were strained, and Kaunas supported the OUN movement). In Argentina he lived under a pseudonym. See his obituary in *Ukraïns’ke slovo*, 28 August 1966. See also Władysław Żeleński, *Zabójstwo Ministra Pierackiego* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1973), 100.

world wars” and that the ties were not well developed—except in the sphere of emigration.²⁷

During World War II, the pro-Soviet camp gained considerable ground in the community. After Soviet troops moved into eastern Poland on 17 September 1939, western Ukraine and western Belarus were joined to the Ukrainian SSR and Belarusian SSR respectively. Following the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Ukrainians and Belarusians organized actions in support of the Soviet war effort. An idea of raising an army and sending it, with Allied support, to Ukraine to take part in the war was even entertained.²⁸ That project never materialized, but Argentine Ukrainians were among those who enlisted in the Polish armed forces during the recruitment overseas.²⁹

Ukrainians in Argentina took an active part in the Pan-Slavic endeavours in Argentina. After the Nazi invasion, the Kremlin established a Slavic Committee to coordinate the war efforts of Slavs abroad. A coordinating council was established in Montevideo. The first All-Slavic congress convened in Buenos Aires in August 1942 and another one followed in Montevideo in 1943. At the Latin American Slavic congress that convened in Uruguay (in April 1943), Ukrainians constituted the largest group among the delegates from Argentina. In all, 390 delegates representing myriad Slavic organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile, along with those from Uruguay, had converged in a theatre in the Uruguayan capital. Representatives from Argentina accounted for 260 of the delegates, and of these, 70 were Ukrainians, 58 Yugoslavians, 42 Czechs and Slovaks, and the remainder were Russians, Poles, Bulgarians, and Macedonians.³⁰

Western Ukraine and western Belarus reverted to the Soviet Union after the war was over. In fact, the Ukrainian SSR was significantly enlarged when territories formerly in Romania and Czechoslovakia, as well as Poland, were added to it. Following the war, the Soviet embassy in Montevideo announced that immigrants could turn in their Polish passports and apply for Soviet citizenship. A number of interested individuals responded by travelling to Montevideo, until a Soviet diplomatic mission was opened in Buenos Aires in 1946. Two years later, in 1948, Iakov Malik, the Soviet deputy minister for foreign affairs, was informed by the Soviet embassy in Buenos Aires that a large number of people were

²⁷ Waldemar Rommel, “Poland and Latin America,” *Studies on the Developing Countries* 11 (1975): 13.

²⁸ Panas Hubarchuk, “V iedynim poryvi,” *Vitchyzna*, no.12 (December 1964): 203.

²⁹ Ryszard Stemplowski, “Enlistment in Brazil to the Polish Armed Forces, 1940–1944,” *Polish Western Affairs* 17, nos. 1–2 (1976): 165;

³⁰ Andrei Strelko, *Slavianskoe naselenie v stranakh Latinskoj Ameriki* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1980), 117. For more on the Pan-Slavic movement in Argentina, see Ana Serrano Benítez, “El elemento foráneo y la imagen del extranjero comunista durante el primer peronismo. El caso de la Unión Eslava Argentina,” *Anuario de la Escuela de Historia Virtual* 3, no. 3 (2012): 175–91.

interested in resettling in the USSR.³¹ However, the individuals who expressed interest in relocating at that time could not obtain the necessary permission from the Soviet authorities.

UKRAINIAN ORGANIZATIONS: THE THIRD WAVE

The wave of immigration that took place between 1946 and 1950 was the smallest, but its influence reached far beyond its numbers. Members of the postwar immigration revitalized existing organizations and created new ones. The immigration included priests who strengthened the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Argentina and helped expand the number of parishes in the country. Its Orthodox counterpart also experienced growth. Indeed, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Argentina was for a while able to extend spiritual support to local Georgians, Romanians, and Belarusians.³² And in the postwar period, too, the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Church came into being after it broke away from the Slavic Union of Evangelical Christians in the River Plate Republics (Slavianskii Soiuz Evangelskikh Khristian La Platskikh Respublik) in 1955.³³ Another example of the impact of the postwar immigration was the establishment of three Ukrainian credit unions—the combined membership of which would approach nine thousand.³⁴

A major achievement of the postwar immigrants was the creation of the Ukrainian Central Representation (Representación Central Ucraina) in 1947. Eventually, this umbrella entity was able to embrace all the major organizations in Argentina that were not pro-Soviet. One of its activities in the 1950s was to confront members of the pro-Soviet organizations and try to persuade them not to resettle in the Soviet Union.

By the mid-1950s, after Stalin's death, the Kremlin had reversed its earlier policy of dissuading sympathetic expatriates from resettling in the Soviet Union. A Committee for the Return to the Homeland was set up in East Berlin and periodicals were published in several languages for expatriates in the diaspora. In Argentina the response ran in the thousands. By 1966, 4,195 individuals had departed Argentina (presumably, Paraguay, too) and re-settled in the Ukrainian

³¹ Isidoro Gilbert, *El oro de Moscú: La historia secreta de las relaciones argentino-sovieticas* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1994), 229, n.4.

³² Rev. Borys Ariichuk, "V imia pravdy!" *Dzvin*, no. 9 (1957): 15.

³³ For a history of the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Church in Argentina, Mykola Soltys, *Ukrains'kyi Ievanhelyzm v pralisakh Misionesu* (Winnipeg and Chicago: Doroha pravdy, 1972).

³⁴ For more on the credit unions, see Myjailo Vasylyk, *Inmigración ucraniana en la República Argentina: Una comunidad por dentro* (Buenos Aires: Editorial LUMEN, 2000), 76–82.

SSR and 1,500–2,000 others had left and moved to the Belarusian SSR.³⁵ The departures caused concern not only for political reasons—they happened as the Cold War was ongoing and were thus controversial, gaining much domestic and international media attention—but for economic reasons as well. The Canadian newspaper *Globe and Mail* quoted an Argentine army spokesperson who said that most of the people who were leaving were “needed to work in Argentine cotton and wine-growing areas.”³⁶

The departures weakened the pro-Soviet camp in the community and the decline was hastened by political repression in Argentina in subsequent years.³⁷ However, with the passage of time many of the postwar immigrants also departed Argentina, re-emigrating to the world’s other superpower, the USA, or elsewhere. About two of every three postwar immigrants eventually left Argentina.³⁸

EPILOGUE

Even with the departure of the majority of the post-World War II immigrants, their arrival had served as a turning point in the history of Ukrainians in Argentina. The creation of an umbrella organization made it easier for joint initiatives to be launched. Throughout their history in Argentina the community had existed at a time when there was no independent Ukrainian state (except briefly through the Ukrainian National Republic). The Ukrainian Central Representation was committed to the ideal of Ukrainian independence. Its influence in Argentina can perhaps be gleaned by such trends as the naming of streets and squares after Ukraine in towns and suburbs where the Ukrainian immigrants had settled and also the erection of monuments to the nineteenth-century poet Taras Shevchenko. There are three monuments to the “bard of Ukraine” in Argentina and another one across the frontier in the Paraguayan town of Encarnación. The first monument (created by Canadian sculptor Leo Mol) was unveiled in Buenos Aires on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Argentina, and the other two (busts in the towns of Apóstoles and Oberá, Misiones) around the

³⁵ Siarhei Shabeltsau, *Immigranty-chakarero iz II Rechi Pospolitoi v Argentine i Paragvae: vospominiia belorusov i ukraintsev* (Minsk : RIVSh, 2011), 19.

³⁶ “1,000 Set Sail from Argentine for East Europe,” *Globe and Mail*, 13 July 1956, 17.

³⁷ Former banned clubs eventually came together under the umbrella Federación de Instituciones Culturales de Soviéticos en Argentina, which was formed in 1986. Sometime after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the name was changed to the Federación de Instituciones Culturales de Inmigrantes Bielorrusos, Rusos, y Ucranianos. See Observatorio de colectividades, “F.I.C.I.B.R.U.,” *Buenos Aires Ciudad*, http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/secretaria_gral/colectividades/?secInter-na=98&subSeccion=443&col=24.

³⁸ Mykhailo Vasylyk, “Ukraïntsi v Argentyni z hospodars’koho pohliadu,” *Ukraïns’kyi samostiinyk*, no. 4 (April 1966): 29.

time of the eightieth anniversary. The unveiling of the one in Buenos Aires on 5 December 1971, in the park Tres de Febrero (neighbourhood of Palermo), was witnessed by over ten thousand people, including several hundred from Canada and the United States.³⁹

By the time the Ukrainian community had commemorated its centenary in 1997, the overwhelming majority of its members were Argentine-born. Immigration from Ukraine had ceased since the third wave that had come (not directly from Ukraine, but largely from displaced persons' camps in Germany and Austria) in 1946–50 — a notable exception being the Argentine-born Ukrainians who were granted permission to leave the Soviet Union from the 1960s. The latter group and arrival of Ukrainians from Paraguay helped to offset the losses of the 1950s.

Another major turning point in the history of the community was the declaration of Ukraine's independence in 1991. Among other things, it led to the exchange of embassies between Argentina and Ukraine and also to a new wave of immigration. It is noteworthy that the first country to recognize Ukraine after its referendum of 1 December 1991 was Poland. Argentina was not far behind, recognizing the government in Kyiv on 5 December 1991. Indeed, the very fact that Argentina was among the first countries in the world to extend recognition likely had something to do with the presence of a local Ukrainian community, which by that time was almost a century-old.

³⁹ "Argentine's Shevchenko," *Forum: A Ukrainian Review*, no. 77 (Spring 1989): 65–66.

