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## The influence of World War I on the activity of the Russian military and naval clergy

**Abstract:** An analysis of the preparation for war by the Russian military and naval clergy and their active involvement in warfare. The author studies various stages in the development of military pastoral activity, as well as the impact of political and social changes in Russia on the religious part of the armed forces.

The institution of the Russian military and naval clergy had a long history. Sources concerning the official formation of church structures in the Russian army reach back to the beginning of the Eighteenth Century. In 1706, Tsar Peter I issued the first decree (*ukase*) among Orthodox parish communities obliging the regular collection of donations for regimental chaplains and hieromonks serving in the Navy. Other laws (1716, 1720) provided a foundation for the creation of the military clergy hierarchy under the regimental oberpriest of the active army and the oberhieromonk of the Navy. In the period of hostilities, the clergy were members of the General Staff and were subject to the Commander in Chief of the army and navy while remaining at the same time under the direct jurisdiction of the Most Holy Governing Synod (*Святейший правительствующий синод*) in clerical matters<sup>1</sup>. The combination of their dependence on the Synod and the Synod field church executive bodies, represented by local bishops and archbishops, and the lack of any clear definition of the scope of the authority of the bishop and oberpriest often provoked conflicts of competence relating primarily to the issue of control over the military clergy and churches intended for guard regiments. This state of disorganization and mutual aversion persisted for nearly a century, complicating the military ministry of priests and depriving

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1 *Полное собрание законов Российской Империи с 1649 года*. Типография Второго отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества канцелярии: Sankt Petersburg 1830, Vol. 5, pp. 240–324; Рыбаков, Николай Александрович: “Развитие правового регулирования деятельности православных священников в армии за период XVIII–XIX вв.” *Молодой ученый* 11, 2012, pp. 339–390.

them of the possibility to effectively administer the property of the orthodox church entrusted to their care<sup>2</sup>.

On 9 April 1800, Tsar Paul I appointed Paul Ozierieckovsky the first oberpriest of the army and navy in the history of the Russian Empire<sup>3</sup>. As he took office, the formal division of power between the superior military priest and the diocese military priest in the area where the troops were stationed was sealed<sup>4</sup>. The oberpriest was granted authority equal to the Bishop's authority. He could appoint and dismiss military clergymen from service at his own discretion, apply disciplinary sanctions, exercise Orthodox administrative and judicial power. Equipped with such substantial powers, the oberpriest was subject to the supreme authority of the Synod, which in practice was responsible only for inspecting (visiting) the Orthodox military structures<sup>5</sup>.

The independence of the military and naval clergy, which was postulated for decades, proved to be only a ephemeral phenomenon. Hopes for the further development of church structures in the army were dashed by the imminent death of the Emperor in 1801, which stalled the military clergy's path to independence for several decades. Paul's project to reform this area was restored in the early 1850s. In 1853, in line with previous solutions, the military clergy gained its autonomy expressed in terms of organizational and competence autonomy. It was confirmed by the decree of 21 December 1887, which regulated the legal and material situation

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- 2 Григорьев, Анатолий Борисович: "Из истории военного духовенства". In: Галкин, Юрий Юрьевич (ed.): *Религиозно-этические аспекты воспитания военнослужащих. Материалы международного семинара, состоявшегося в Международном независимом Эколого-политологическом университете (МНЭПУ) в июне 1997 года*. Издательство Международного независимого эколого-политологического университета: Moscow 1998, pp. 37–45.
  - 3 Невзоров, Николай: *Исторический очерк управления духовенством военного ведомства в России*. Типография Ф. Г. Елеонского и А. И. Поповицкого: Sankt Petersburg 1875, p. 16.
  - 4 Чимаров, Сергей Юрьевич: "Во главе военно-духовного ведомства России: П. Я. Озерецковский – первый обер-священник русской армии и флота". *Военно-исторический журнал* 1, 1998, pp. 76–82; Боголюбов, Андрей Эрастович: *Очерки из истории управления военным и морским духовенством в биографиях главных священников его за время с 1800 по 1901 год*. Типография Артиллерийского журнала: Sankt Petersburg 1901.
  - 5 Russian State Historical Archive (Российский государственный исторический архив subsequently referred to as RGIA), Духовное правление при Протопресвитере Военного и Морского Духовенства (subsequently referred to as DPPVMD), inv. 1, 23, sheet. 2.

of military priests. The rights and wages of the Chief Chaplain became equal to those of the General-Lieutenant, and the position of Protoiereus was made equal to that of Colonel<sup>6</sup>.

The process of combining the function of the army chaplain and chaplain of the fleet in a position represented by one chaplain-in-chief during this period led to the establishment of the role of Protopresbyter on 12 June 1890. He was directly responsible for the management of all temples, hospitals and educational institutions of the military located within the territory of the Empire, with the exception of the Siberian region. A Clerical Board (*Духовное правление*) functioned as an auxiliary and advisory body to the Protopresbyter, which coordinated the complex administrative apparatus<sup>7</sup>.

The first person to be made Protopresbyter was Alexandr Alexeyevich Zhelobovsky, the founder of “Вестник военного духовенства” magazine, the originator of the organization of parish schools in the places where the troops were stationed, and a skilful diplomat capable of obtaining extra financial means for salaries and pensions for the military clergymen, and for the maintenance of temples and cemeteries<sup>8</sup>. After Zhelobovsky’s death in 1910, his former assistant, Evgeny Petrovich Akvilonov, was promoted to the rank of Protopresbyter. He held the position very briefly, because only a few months later in March 1911, he died after a short struggle with progressive cancer<sup>9</sup>. The third and last Protopresbyter of the army and navy of the Russian Empire was Georgy Ivanovich Shavelsky<sup>10</sup>.

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6 Ласкеев, Федор: *Историческая записка об управлении военным и морским духовенством за минувшее столетие*. Типография Товарищества художественной печати: Sankt Petersburg 1900, pp. 98–103.

7 “Положение об управлении церквами и духовенством военного и морского ведомства”. *Вестник военного духовенства* 13, 1890, pp. 418–436; “Положение об управлении церквами и духовенством военного и морского ведомства”. *Вестник военного духовенства* 14, 1890, pp. 418–439.

8 “К 10-летию служебной деятельности о. Протопресвитера Александра Алексеевича Желобовского по управлению церквами и духовенствам военного и морского духовенства (1888–1898). *Вестник военного духовенства* 6, 1898, pp. 181–192.

9 Богуславский, Иван: “Протопресвитер Евгений Петрович Аквилонов”. *Вестник военного и морского духовенства* 9, 1911, s. 257–263; “Воспоминания о почившем о. Протопресвитере Евгении Петровиче Аквилонове”. *Вестник военного и морского духовенства* 10, 1911, pp. 305–308; Фирсов, Сергей Львович: “Протопресвитеры русской армии и флота 1880 – февраль 1917 гг.”. *Новый часовой* 1, 1994, pp. 23–33.

10 “Указ Его Императорского Величества Самодержца Всероссийского из Святейшего Правительственного Синода настоятелю Суворовской Кончанской, что Elbieta Katarzyna Dzikowska, Agata G. Handley and Piotr Zawilski - 9783631806777

Georgy Ivanovich Shavel'sky was born on 6 January 1871 in the village of Dubokraj. At the age of ten he enrolled in a clerical school in Vitebsk, and continued his education at the local seminary after graduating. In 1891 he was appointed as Lecturer of the Orthodox church in one of the towns in his home province and a teacher in a village school. In 1895, Georgy was ordained. Higher Orthodox authorities appointed him a parish priest of the church of St. Nicholas in Bedriace and then of the church of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary in Azarkov. After the unexpected death of his wife, Georgy, at the instigation of the diocesan bishop, began his studies at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy (*Санкт-Петербургская Духовная Академия*). During the Russo-Japanese War he was appointed regimental chaplain, and later Dean of the division. Eventually, he was appointed Chief Chaplain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Manchurian Army. After the war, Georgy returned to the country. He served as a priest in the church at the Nicholas General Staff Academy (*Николаевская академия Генерального штаба*), taught theology at the Imperial Institute of History and Philology of St. Petersburg University (*Императорский Санкт-Петербургский историко-филологический институт*) and was an active member of the Theological Board supporting the protopresbyter of the military and naval clergy (*Духовное правление при протопресвитере военного и морского духовенства*)<sup>11</sup>.

On 5 May 1911, by the decision of the Most Holy Governing Synod, Georgy Shavel'sky was appointed as Protopresbyter of the army and navy. This is what the newly elected Orthodox chief chaplain of the Russian army wrote about his appointment:

I was one of the youngest priests in the Ministry of War in St. Petersburg. I did not even think about the dignity of the Protopresbyter because I felt that I did not deserve it and I was not adequately prepared for it: I just turned 40, worked for the Ministry of War from the end of January 1902, and at that given moment, I was the last link, a non-permanent member of the Theological Board supporting the Protopresbyter of the military and naval clergy. My strengths were: the degree of Master of Theology (only three masters worked for the ministry), the chair of the institute of theology in college and [...] my activities during the Russo-Japanese war [...]. However, all these advantages did not give me a

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при Императорской Николаевской военной академии церкви, протоиерею Георгию Ивановичу Шавельскому". *Вестник военного и морского духовенства* 10, 1911, p. 289.

- 11 *Дело великого строительства церковного. Воспоминания членов Священного Собора Православной Российской Церкви 1917–1918 годов*. Воробьёв, Владимир Николаевич (ed.). Издательство Православного Свято-Тихоновского Гуманитарного Университета: Moscow 2009, pp. 690–692.

reason for thinking about the office of the Protopresbyter that should be held by those carefully prepared for it. The appointment was, therefore, a surprise to me<sup>12</sup>.

When he took office, Shavel'sky stood at the head of an anachronistic institution, developed for almost two centuries on the basis of theoretical schemes and fragile political orders. The need for administrative reforms, aimed at activating Orthodox structures in the Russian army and improving the system of clerical management of tsarist soldiers and sailors, was highlighted by the outbreak of one of the greatest conflicts. On 28 July 1914, the Great War began. This international armed conflict involved the majority of European countries, including tsarist Russia. Military operations put the tsarist bureaucracy in a state of emergency. War-time military structures were organized with the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich at the head, and mobilization was announced at the end of July. By the decision of Tsar Nicholas II, the Protopresbyter of army and navy became a part of the General Staff of the Russian army<sup>13</sup>.

When the hostilities began, the plans of the Orthodox Church to prepare for a military conflict were still at a preliminary stage. Protopresbyter Shavel'sky was aware of the weakness and ineffectiveness of the system of spiritual care for soldiers and the lack of understanding of effective pastoral service during the war; this prompted him to convene a gathering of the military and naval clergy from all over Russia, which would become a forum for the exchange of opinions, as well as a reformist body<sup>14</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Military and Naval Clergy (*1-й Всероссийский съезд военного и морского духовенства*) took place from 1 July to 10 July 1914. It was attended by 49 representatives of military structures at all levels, sent to the Congress by the Minister of War, General Vladimir Alexandrovich

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12 Henceforth, unless indicated otherwise, all quotations in the text have been provided by the translator. Шавельский, Георгий: *Воспоминания последнего протопресвитера русской армии и флота*. Крутицкое Патриаршее Подворье: Moscow 1996a, Vol. 1, p. 19.

13 Сенин, Александр Сергеевич: "Армейское духовенство России в Первую мировую войну". *Вопросы истории* 10, 1990, s. 159–165; Фирсов, Сергей Львович: "Военное духовенство накануне и в годы Первой Мировой войны". *Новый часовой* 3, 1995, pp. 21–32.

14 Андреев, Федор: "Начало войны – начало молитв. Духовное пробуждение народа". *Вестник военного и морского духовенства Спецвыпуск*, 2005, pp. 23–32; Фирсов, Сергей Львович: "Военное духовенство России. К вопросу о материальном положении священно- и церковнослужителей русской армии и флота в последней четверти XIX — начала XX столетий". *Новый часовой* 2, 1994, pp. 19–25.

Sukhomlinov. The general Congress proceeded on the basis of three principles presented by the Protopresbyter for the consideration of the participants of the meeting in his opening speech. Firstly, he drew special attention to the need to introduce changes in the operation of the institute remaining under his jurisdiction, which were supposed to come from the common experience of all military and navy clergymen. Secondly, he recommended paying particular attention to the spiritual development of officers and soldiers and thereby, the religious and moral education of the whole nation. Thirdly, he obliged the attendees of the Congress to develop a program to raise the level of education and professional preparation of military priests and explore ways of improving pastoral service in the army, aimed at ensuring complete spiritual care for all those who need it<sup>15</sup>.

These demands formed the program assumptions of the Congress and were reflected in the resolution summarizing the debate, which lasted for ten days and was sometimes stormy. The final document introduced a reform of the management of the military clergy during armed conflicts. It was supposed to be headed by the Protopresbyter, managing and controlling it with the help of his closest associates. The second level in the hierarchy comprised chaplains serving on the north, west, south-west, Romanian and Caucasian fronts. Chaplains for Baltic and Black Sea fronts were also appointed in 1916<sup>16</sup>. The third level, subordinated to them, was the group of staff chaplains. The fourth component of the war-time Orthodox church structure was the largest group of priests serving in divisions, garrisons and military hospitals. The smooth functioning of the whole structure of management and control was ensured by conferences organized for military clergy of different levels: the Protopresbyter with army chaplains and army chaplains with staff chaplains, as well as the general congresses of the clergy held under the chairmanship of the Protopresbyter or an appointed army chaplain. This division enabled the separation of the scope and location of pastoral work of individual priests, while maintaining control by a superior<sup>17</sup>. It also improved the organization of the military and naval clergy, which in the initial stages of the

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15 “Из речи о. Протопресвитера Г. И. Шавельского на открытии съезда”. *Вестник военного и морского духовенства*, 15/16, 1914, р. 547; Котков, Вячеслав Михайлович: “Полковой священник – главный организатор духовно-нравственного воспитания военнослужащих”. *Журнал Московской Патриархии Русской Православной Церкви* 8, 1999, pp. 70–80.

16 Фирсов, Сергей: 1995, р. 25.

17 RGIA, DPPVMD, inv. 5, 9432, part 1, sheet 205.

war, consisted only of seven hundred and thirty priests. During the first months of the conflict, the number of clergymen in the army increased to five thousand<sup>18</sup>.

The Congress made the first attempt in the history of Russia to codify the duties of the military clergy in the form of an instruction. Protopresbyter Shavel'sky summarized its contents as follows: "The instruction indicated precisely for each priest [...] where he should be, what he should do during the fighting and in the period of calmness, where and how he should celebrate a service, how to preach and what about, etc."<sup>19</sup>.

As war changed the conditions of their past life and work, in addition to their normal service, including the celebration of the liturgy, the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word of God, the Instruction obliged clerics who participated in the hostilities to *inter alia* help doctors dress the wounded, lead the retrieval of bodies from the battlefield and transport the wounded to field hospitals, maintain soldier graves and cemeteries, notify relatives about the death of their loved ones and organize support for families of war invalids<sup>20</sup>. The activity of Orthodox military priests in this regard was subject to strict control by the chief chaplain of the Russian army. Many years later Shavel'sky recalled:

At the time [...] of my journey I talked with ministers in the most diverse conditions: on trains, in homes, in the open air, on a meadow, in the woods concealing us from the enemy etc. During these conversations I learned a lot, but I also had the chance to teach others and direct them. During my visits to hospitals, dressing points and trenches I could easily see if these places were often visited by my fellow clergymen, whether they properly understand and earnestly perform their duties and how the low-ranking officers and soldiers treat them. A zealous priest was well aware of the deployment and positions the company regiments, he knew the soldiers, both brave and cowardly, met them in the trenches as a frequent and peasant guest. A zealous hospital priest knew every hospital room and the status of each patient<sup>21</sup>.

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18 Шавельский, Георгий: *Воспоминания последнего протопресвитера русской армии и флота*. Крутицкое Патриаршее Подворье: Moscow 1996, Vol. 2, p. 93.

19 Ibid.

20 Шавельский, Георгий: "Духовенству воинских частей действующей армии и госпиталей". *Вестник военного и морского духовенства* 20, 1914, pp. 696–697; Носков, Юрий Геннадьевич: "Религия и воспитание воинов". In: Галкин, Юрий Юрьевич (ed.): *Религиозно-этические аспекты воспитания военнослужащих. Материалы международного семинара, состоявшегося в Международном независимом Эколого-политологическом университете (МНЭПУ) в июне 1997 года*. Издательство Международного независимого эколого-политологического университета: Moscow 1998, pp. 7–14.

21 Шавельский, Георгий, 1996b, p. 97.

After the first period of the war, characterized by the high efficiency of the military clergy, who were driven by feelings of patriotism and keen on visiting the front, there was a regression in the development of military pastoral activity. Its effect was the decreased number of vocations of military priests and a significant reduction in their activity in frontline areas. The atmosphere of defeat mobilized Protopresbyter Shavelsky to even stricter supervision of the fulfillment of duties by his subordinates. This is what he wrote about his obligations to the Russian soldiers:

Almost every month I spent ten days in combat units, visiting regiments, brigades, and, sometimes under fire, trenches, stopping at every hospital, celebrating services everywhere, preaching the Word of God. These journeys were important. I appeared there not just as the Protopresbyter, but also as a representative of the Monarch, on behalf of whom I always greeted the troops and handed out crosses and icons given to me by the Empress. My greetings and visits, especially in dangerous places, raised the spirits and strengthened soldiers<sup>22</sup>.

The defeatism that prevailed among priests was caused, on one hand, by external factors. These included the defeats of the Russian army in World War I, marring the expectations of the Russian soldier and his chaplain, and the enormous losses in manpower resulting from a bad war strategy and incompetent commanding. Amid the general disintegration of the army, Protopresbyter Shavelsky demanded in his circular № 3287 of 14 September 1915 that chaplains remain constantly present with the soldiers in a spiritual sense, not only during their stay in the camp, but especially in the trenches and during regular battles on the front<sup>23</sup>.

The complex functioning of the institutions of the Russian military and naval clergy was also influenced by internal factors such as, first and foremost, the anti-war agitation, conducted also among front-line troops. Priests, who were obliged by the highest authorities of the Synod to remain apolitical, often gave in to the wave of revolutionary propaganda, which was enhanced by the fact that the participation of tsarist Russia in World War I exposed the country's economic inefficiency, and the consequences of the decline, i.e. high inflation, food shortages and a decrease in wages, was painfully perceptible for the Russian society, exhausted after the war<sup>24</sup>.

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22 Ibid.

23 Золотарев, Олег Валентинович: *Христолюбивое воинство русское*. Граница: Moscow 1994, p. 74.

24 Marples, David R./ Scharoch Irena: *Historia ZSRR od rewolucji do rozpadu*. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich: Wrocław 2006, pp. 41–44; Kenez Peter/ Górka, Aleksandra: *Odkłamaniana historia Związku Radzieckiego*. Bellona: Warszawa 2008, pp. 28–30; Smaga, Józef: *Narodziny i upadek imperium. ZSRR 1917–1991*. Znak: Kraków 1992,



The increase in social discontent led to the events of 8 March 1917. A demonstration was organized on the occasion of the International Women's Day, which quickly evolved into an anti-tsar rally, and then riots, which later triggered an uprising. An immediate effect of the "February Revolution", as the Russian uprising of March 1917 is identified in the historiography, was the fall of the monarchical system in Russia. A personified autocracy was established in its place in the form of the Provisional Government (*Временное правительство*), which was created on 15 March 1917 by an agreement between the Provisional Committee of the Duma (*Временный комитет Государственной думы*) and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (*Петроградский совет рабочих и солдатских депутатов*). The first Prime Minister of the Government was Prince Georgy Lvov, who (on 21 July) was replaced by Alexander Kerensky<sup>25</sup>.

The political and social changes occurring in Russia could not fail to affect the work of the military and naval clergy. The change of the situation and its implications for pastoral ministry in the army were discussed during the session of the 2<sup>nd</sup> All-Russian Congress of the Military and Naval Clergy (*2-ой Всероссийский съезд военного и морского духовенства*). It was held in the period of 1–11 July 1917 in the Supreme High Command in Mogilev with the participation of representatives of the lower clergy and lay people interested in ecclesiastical affairs<sup>26</sup>. Two basic issues were raised, representing the spectrum of interest of those gathered.

Firstly, the new political conditions existing within the atmosphere of an "Orthodox revolution", proceeding along similar lines to the social and political revolutions, caused the removal of many hierarchs from their positions and promoted the idea of social participation in democratic community management independent from the state authorities. The reforms of the military and naval clergy continued. It was decided, in accordance with the spirit of the times, that the function of Protopresbyter will be filled by free and democratic elections, organized each time at the congress of the military and naval clergy. Candidates for this position had to meet formal requirements, which included at least five years of work in the departments of the military and the navy and obtaining an approval from the highest authority of the Orthodox Church Synod. The Protopresbyter

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pp. 17–18; Pipes, Richard/ Szafar, Tadeusz: *Rewolucja rosyjska*. Wydawnictwo Magnum: Warszawa 2006, pp. 292–356.

25 Kenez, Peter/ Górska, Aleksandra: op. cit., pp. 30–38.

26 RGIA, DPPVMD, inv. 5, 10140, v. 1–3.

was supposed to be supported by a Protopresbyter Council, a supervisory and advisory body, and the Commission for Economic and Charitable Affairs<sup>27</sup>.

On 9<sup>th</sup> July, the Congress participants selected the Protopresbyter of the military and naval clergy by ballot. This office, this time for life, was taken again by Georgy Shavel'sky<sup>28</sup>.

The model of the functioning of the highest authorities was reflected in the organizational chart of the lower Orthodox military structures. The aspect of hierarchy and universality was strongly emphasized, treated as a counterweight for the autocracy of the church. This principle created traditional systems: collegiality and autonomy at every level of management. At the same time it was enriched by an element of modernity, expressed in the participation of society in the decision-making bodies. In practice this meant that every appointment, beginning with the division chaplain and ending with the corps chaplain, was to be decided by common and democratic elections organized during the military and naval clergy congress, the results of which were approved by the Protopresbyter. Chaplains having extensive executive, managerial and supervisory powers were to cooperate with a clerical council appointed to support them when making key decisions<sup>29</sup>.

Secondly, the delegates developed a proclamation to the Russian soldiers. They were urged to continue their selfless fight for their homeland, which, as it was strongly emphasized, was standing on the verge of a political disaster and at this particular time was all the more in need of help and support from its devoted citizens:

Brothers soldiers, the best sons of Russia, its flower and hope! We, the military clergy, sharing the burdens of life in the trenches with you, washing the sacred blood of a Russian soldier, we beg you in the name of Christ and God: gain some sense, do not let the enemies of the Homeland and of our freedom, madmen and traitors make fools of you, deceive and corrupt you. Do not let Russia die. Only you can save it! Russia needs a strong authority. Recognize the full power of the Provisional Government, made up of friends of the nation, led by only one desire to save Russia, make it happy!<sup>30</sup>

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27 Russian State Military History Archive (Российский государственный военно-исторический архив) Управление главного священника армий Северного фронта, inv. 1, 30, sheet 35.

28 Сенин, Александр: op. cit., p. 165.

29 RGIA, inv. 5, 10140, vol. 2, sheets 219–222.

30 Бабкин, Михаил Анатольевич: *Российское духовенство и свержение монархии в 1917 году. Материалы и архивные документы по истории Русской православной церкви*. Индрик: Moscow 2006, p. 372.

The establishment of the Provisional Government did not calm the social and political situation in the country. The proliferating economic difficulties and the increase in social discontent escalated the criticism of Alexander Kerensky's internal policy<sup>31</sup>. The growing anti-war and anti-government movement led to the outbreak of an armed uprising that shortly after, became a civil war. On 7 November, the whole of Petrograd, apart from the seat of government, the Winter Palace, was in the hands of the rebels. Alexander Kerensky fled from the capital, and gathered the Second All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Soviets (*Второй Всероссийский съезд Советов рабочих и солдатских депутатов*), where the seizure of power by the Provisional Government of the Workers and Peasants (*Временное рабочее и крестьянское правительство*) was announced. The new leader was Vladimir Lenin<sup>32</sup>.

The policy of the Russian state created after the Bolshevik revolution by the delegates of the Second Congress and by the Vladimir Ilyich himself was oriented to achieve stability on the international arena and strengthen its position within the country. To achieve these aims in the external sphere, efforts were made to end the armed conflict as soon as possible. On 8 November, the Second Congress issued a decree regarding peace, in which the peoples and governments of the fighting parties were called on to conclude a "just, democratic peace, [...] without annexations and contributions"<sup>33</sup>. Following this declaration, some efforts were initiated to sign a peace treaty, which initially were positively received only by Germany. Despite the difficulties in reaching a common position, which resulted in Leon Trotsky breaking off negotiations, and Germany resuming hostilities on 18 February 1918, occupying a part of Ukraine and threatening the capital of the Empire, the peace was concluded on 3 March in Brest-Litovsk<sup>34</sup>.

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31 Williams, Beryl/ Tuszyńska, Agnieszka: *Lenin*. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich: Wrocław 2002, pp. 67–78; Malia, Martin/ Hulas, Magdalena/Wyzner, Elżbieta: *Sowiecka tragedia. Historia komunistycznego imperium rosyjskiego 1917–1991*. Wydawnictwo Philip Wilson: Warszawa 1998, pp. 120–129; Witkowicz, Andrzej: *Wokół terroru białego i czerwonego*. Książka i Prasa: Warszawa 2008, pp. 69–75.

32 Bazylów, Ludwik: *Historia Rosji*. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich: Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk 1975, pp. 499–516; Smoleń, Mieczysław: *Stracone dekady. Historia ZSRR 1917–1991*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN: Warszawa–Kraków 1994, pp. 23–35; Service, Robert/ Szczerkowska, Hanna: *Towarzysze. Komunizm od początku do upadku. Historia zbrodniczej ideologii*. Znak: Kraków 2008, pp. 77–89.

33 Kenez, Peter/ Górska, Aleksandra: op. cit., p. 43.

34 Pipes, Richard/Szafar, Tadeusz: op. cit., pp. 596–627.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was an important moment in the course of the on-going civil war in Russia. “White” armies, led by former tsarist generals opposed to the “October Revolution” and communist dictatorship, gradually withdrew from the territory of Russia. The fate of soldiers, aristocracy and civilian population was also shared by some Russian clergymen. Protopresbyter Georgy Shavel'sky, who was trying to organize a relatively normal religious life in the areas free from the Bolsheviks' power, was one of them<sup>35</sup>. The previous Orthodox institutions, such as the military and naval clergy, which was led by Shavel'sky, ceased to exist following the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of 16 January 1918<sup>36</sup>, and the representatives and faithful of the Orthodox church fell victim to repressions<sup>37</sup>.

Shavel'sky's attempts to appeal to the highest national authorities and protect ecclesiastical structures from total paralysis did not have the desired effects<sup>38</sup>. In the face of defeat, the army of General Anton Denikin, Shavel'sky emigrated to Bulgaria. Until his death, he actively participated in the life of the Bulgarian Orthodox community as a Professor of Pastoral Theology at the University of Sofia, Lecturer and Director of the Russian Gymnasium, and co-organizer of the Sofia Ecclesiastical Academy. He died on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1951<sup>39</sup>. The period of the Great War was one of the most important moments in the biography of the last Tsar's Protopresbyter of the military and navy and the nearly two hundred year history of the Institute of Russian military priests. In this context, the events of

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35 Поспеловский, Дмитрий Владимирович: *Русская Православная Церковь в XX в.* Республика: Москва 1995, p. 120; Кострюков, Андрей Александрович: “Временное Высшее Церковное управление на Юго-Востоке России как начало зарубежной церковной власти”. *Вестник Православного Свято-Тихоновского Гуманитарного Университета. Серия: История. История Русской Православной Церкви* 3(28), 2008, pp. 50–60.

36 Кострюков, Андрей Александрович: “Военное духовенство и развал армии в 1917 году”. *Церковь и время* 2, 2005, p. 169.

37 Емельянов, Николай Евгеньевич: “Оценка статистики гонений на Русскую Православную Церковь в XX веке”. In: Воробьев, Владимир Николаевич (ed.): *Ежегодная богословская конференция Православного Свято-Тихоновского Богословского Института.* Издательство Православного Свято-Тихоновского Гуманитарного Университета: Moscow 1997, pp. 166–167.

38 RGIA, DPPVMD, inv. 5, 10526, sheets. 1–2.

39 State Archive of Russian Federation (Государственный архив Российской Федерации): Шавельский Георгий Иванович, протопресбитер военного и морского духовенства (с 1911 г.), протопресбитер добровольческой армии (1918–1920 гг.), доцент богословского факультета софийского университета (с 1924 г.), 51, sheets. 1–2.

the years 1914–1918 can be treated as a kind of turning point which began at the moment of the outbreak of conflict. The beginning of hostilities contributed to the flourishing of this institution, which developed a strict, wartime organizational and institutional framework in this period. It also showed the commitment of the last Tsar's Protopresbyter of the military and navy, Georgy Shavel'sky. The end of this chronological framework is determined by the end of the Great War. The signing of a peace treaty coincided with the collapse of the institution of the military and naval clergy, which, according to the new, Bolshevik leaders of Russia, was a relic of the old, ossified tsarist system which had to be liquidated along with the system itself.

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