Beginning in the 1890s, communities of migrants from Austria-Hungary, living and laboring in the United States, converted from one form of Eastern Christianity, known as Greek Catholicism, to another, called Russky (or Russian) Orthodoxy. In doing so, they also underwent ethnic, national, and racial conversions as “Rusyns,” “Russians,” “Ukrainians,” “Hungarians,” “Slavs,” and “Whites.” Soon, migrants also began converting en masse in Canada, Brazil, and Argentina. Ultimately, the conversions, likely numbering 100,000 by 1914, spread to migrants’ villages of origin in the Austro-Hungarian regions of Galicia and Subcarpathia, through remigrations and correspondence. For twenty-five years, conversion and counter-conversion movements in each of these regions interacted with and mutually influenced one another, in the context of transnational migration.

As a consequence of these transnational conversions, a great war broke out, and not only in a metaphorical sense. For in addition to the protracted, heated, and periodically violent battles erupting between converts and opponents of conversion in all affected regions, these multi-continental ethnoreligious shifts also cast sparks, which contributed substantially to the outburst of that great global conflagration, beginning in September 1914, called World War I. Diplomatic tensions arose as statesmen at the highest governmental levels in Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Germany, as well as the major Great Power presses, vied with one another to define the conversions: either as Russian political machinations among “Ruthenians,” justifying future annexation of Austro-Hungarian territories inhabited by presumed “Russians”—identifiable by Orthodox religion—or as mere religious movements among Russia’s innocent, co-national expatriates, persecuted by the Austro-Hungarian regime. The same statesmen in July 1914 engaged in diplomatic hostilities surrounding Serbia, but the preceding years, months, and weeks, devoted to the issue of converting Greek Catholics, had helped set the stage for the July Crisis. Because the “East European” conversions resulted primarily through transatlantic migration, this study argues for the “American” origins of the Great War. In its simplest, most reductive, and unqualified form, it suggests that, because a migrant coal miner in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania decided to attend a different church one day, World War I happened.
Russia’s effort to keep Ukraine under its thumb prompted a revolution in 2014 and a war that has claimed more than 10,000 lives. It also prompted, on Monday, what may be one of the most serious splits in Christendom since the Great Schism between Rome and Constantinople in 1054 and the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago. This new crisis has deep historical roots, and could shape religious and secular ties among many countries for years to come. Here’s what happened: The Church of Russia announced this week that it was breaking ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which has In 1772, Galicia was brought under Austria-Hungary, though the local ruling class still were descendants of the old Polish gentry. Polish nobles and Jews took exclusive possession of Orthodox lands in Poland starting in the middle of the 14th century. The Unia was imposed on Galicia due to ignorance. We wanted to, so that is a danger that extends from the side of the Jews all Austria in general, and in our Galicia in particular, drew the spotlight and caused yet vigorous defensive action, because otherwise absorbing wave Jewish Christian population invasion deprived of parental property or transform it into slavery, homeless and homeless proletarians (Vaskiv, 2013). As he sought the gradual conversion of the Unia to Orthodoxy, he was excommunicated in 1885.