

Andrii Krawchuk. *Christian Social Ethics in Ukraine: the Legacy of Andrei Sheptytsky.* Edmonton: Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies Press, 1997. xxiv + 404 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 (cloth), ISBN 1-895937-04-3.

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Between Caesar and the Faith

From 1899 until his death on 1 November 1944, Andrei Sheptytsky served as the Eastern-rite Metropolitan Archbishop of Lviv in Galicia. Members of the Greek Catholic or Uniate Church are largely western Ukrainians or their descendants. Sheptytsky supported the Ukrainian national movement which had begun to wage a struggle for political self-determination by the early years of this century. He was called upon to lead his church through an intense Polish repression of things Ukrainian, through two world wars, and through brutal occupations of Galicia by Russian communists and German Nazis. There are two fundamentally opposed viewpoints about Sheptytsky's life. During his lifetime and after, Soviet propaganda vilified him claiming that on his account, the Greek Catholic Church endorsed militant nationalism and Hitler's plans for Eastern Europe. In Ukraine on the other hand, he was and remains immensely popular, praised for his courage and for having extolled the unity of church and society. There has been a movement for his beatification since the 1950s.

Sheptytsky was born a member of a prominent Ukrainian-Polish noble family in the Austrian empire in 1865. There were four bishops of the Greek Catholic Church among his ancestors. Baptized a Roman Catholic, he joined a Galician Eastern-rite order of monks in 1888, was ordained in 1892 and quickly rose through church ranks.

The author is a member of the Sheptytsky Institute and editor of a multi-volume archival project having to do with the Metropolitan's life and work. In this book, he restricts himself to analysing Sheptytsky's moral instruction as it was applied to the various political, social and economic circumstances in which Western Ukraine found itself in his years of leadership. Sheptytsky applied key principles of Christian social ethics to such questions as patriotism and nationalism, inter-ethnic and church-state relations,

and the challenges posed by communism, Nazism, and atheism.

There are five chapters in the book, each one corresponding to a different political reality. Until the outbreak of World War I, most Uniate church members lived in the Austrian empire; between 1914 and 1923, they had to contend with war and civil war; between 1923 and 1939, Galicia was part of Poland whose leaders systematically denigrated things Ukrainian; between 1939 and 1941, it was occupied by Soviet communists, and from 1941 by the Nazis. Krawchuk examines how Sheptytsky evaluated the moral and ethical attitude which was appropriate for Christians to adopt in each of these circumstances. In each chapter he begins with the reconstruction of Sheptytsky's empirical and theological reading of a situation followed by an analysis of the rules and principles to which he referred in developing an ethical response. Then he shows the specific courses of action which he proposed that Christians take.

Krawchuk draws almost exclusively on Sheptytsky's actual writings. He has assembled a 119-page bibliography with more than four hundred primary source entries including materials from North America, Italy, Poland and after 1988, from the USSR. These are organized year by year beginning in 1899.

In 1900, over forty percent of Austrian Galicia's seven million people considered themselves to be Ukrainian and hence Greek Catholic. Uniate priests received state salaries, tracts of arable land and ex officio membership in the House of Lords. The biggest ideological challenge for the church, as Sheptytsky saw it, sprang from the growing appeal of socialism to the poverty stricken subjects of this pre-industrial state. In a major work of 1904 entitled *On the Social Question*, he addressed it in the context of socio-economic questions and the secularizing tendency among the Ukrainian intelligentsia.

Sheptytsky objected to the socialist position particularly over the questions of private property and social equality. The former, he argued, is a fundamental human right while the latter has no basis in human nature. He pressed for clerical solidarity and cautioned that political concerns must always be subordinate to spiritual ones. Krawchuk mentions the 1907 elections in which suffrage was extended to peasants. Sheptytsky and other bishops wanted local assemblies of priests to seek ways of achieving unanimous endorsement of given candidates, preferring those known to be "good Christians." But Sheptytsky's nationalism was always tempered by compassion. When a Ukrainian student assassinated the Polish viceroy to Galicia in April, 1908, Sheptytsky condemned the act thereby frustrating many nationalists.

When Austria declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914, Sheptytsky advocated loyalty to the emperor. The Russians soon moved west. From September 1914 to March 1917, Sheptytsky was exiled to Russia. In October 1918, he was present when an independent western Ukrainian state was proclaimed in Lviv. When the Poles took Lviv again on 3 November 1918, they put Sheptytsky under house arrest where he remained until March 1920. In the Polish-Ukrainian war in Galicia which lasted from November 1918 to July 1919, he intervened with both sides on humanitarian grounds.

In Paris in March 1923, he spoke to French president Poincaré in a final futile attempt to dissuade him and the Council of Ambassadors from giving Eastern Galicia to Poland. For the next sixteen years, Sheptytsky was obliged to lead his church in the face of considerable discrimination and growing Ukrainian unrest. He warned angry young Ukrainian nationalists against violence and encouraged instead constructive nation building in a spirit of calm and prudence.

Meanwhile, he used his influence to counter communism. Krawchuk discusses a pastoral letter of 1936 in which Sheptytsky warned against Bolshevik social and economic policies and urged people not to read their publications. He insisted that sacraments be denied to Bolsheviks who did not first renounce their ideology.

On 17 September 1939, the USSR invaded Galicia. Monasteries and convents were suppressed, landholdings confiscated, and the school system secularized. Priests were deprived of their state salaries and seminaries were dissolved. New ethical guidelines were required. Preferring negotiation to confrontation, Sheptytsky urged people that, insofar as they were not contrary to Christian teaching, the laws of the state were to be obeyed. In his dealings with the authorities including Nikita Khrushchev who was head of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Sheptytsky referred to the 1936 constitution of the USSR which mentioned religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Because many Uniate priests were lost or had fled from their parishes from fear, Sheptytsky promoted more lay participation in church work. In general he bent the rules to make it possible for people to live and work under the harsh new regime.

Nazis expelled the Soviets on 29 June 1941. Krawchuk identifies three stages in Sheptytsky's reaction to the new occupation. At first he welcomed them as agents for liberation from Soviet oppression. On 22 July 1941, Sheptytsky addressed a telegram to Hitler, Himmler and Ribbentrop protesting the projected annexation of Western Ukraine to the Generalgouvernement. In a footnote, Krawchuk mentions a separate letter which Sheptytsky was alleged to have written to Hitler in August 1941 offering him congratulations for taking Galicia and argues that it was almost certainly a forged piece of soviet anti-Ukrainian propaganda.

As soon as Sheptytsky saw that the Nazi state was inherently evil, he began to advocate non-violent civil disobedience. The turning point from mere criticism to resistance came in February 1942 when he sent a letter to Himmler protesting the Nazi treatment of Jews and the use of Ukrainians in anti-Jewish repressions. He launched a campaign to save Jews and urged the same action on his clergy and laity. They organized a network of individuals to collect information from ghettos and to create clandestine rescue and sanctuary operations. Monks and nuns ran escape routes, hid Jews and provided children with false certificates of baptism and Ukrainian names.

In the depths of war, the Metropolitan did not lose sight of Ukrainians' desire for a free and united homeland. In a pastoral letter of 1942 entitled "The Ideal of our National Life," he wrote of

civil authority, its source and obligations, and stated that the guarantee of religious liberty was a key characteristic of a civilized state. Should the goal of a unified Ukraine be achieved, Uniate and Orthodox Ukrainians must cooperate. Sheptytsky was willing for his church to make concessions and compromises that would lead to religious unity.

In an appendix, Krawchuk addresses the contentious issue of "Sheptytsky's Attitude to the Formation of the Division Galizien." He notes that Sheptytsky never issued an official statement unequivocally supporting formation of the unit. However, he appointed a chaplain to it and is purported to have celebrated a liturgy for it. Krawchuk dismisses as "ideologically inspired posturing" extremist allegations which have been issued against Sheptytsky on this account. Insofar as he supported the foundation of the Division, it was as an alternative to partisan chaos.

Krawchuk observes that, in all the various circumstances, Sheptytsky's fundamental ethical norm was the Christian concept of love. Poles have painted him as an anti-Polish nationalist and Russians have decried his anti-Russian Germanophilism. Both of these approaches deliberately misunderstand his purpose which was to delineate the delicate question of acceptable limits of political involvement by priests and to provide a guide to Christians who were also patriots.

Looking over his career, it has been argued that Sheptytsky passively submitted to whatever was the civil authority of the day. Krawchuk shows us that this is a serious oversimplification. The picture which emerges here is that of a principled man deeply committed to social justice. He was also a very conservative one tending to the reactionary. Priests were required to oppose divorce and birth control, civil marriage was equated with concubinage, the deconfessionalization of schools was to be resisted and so on. My Galician born Ukrainian mother who became an evangelical Christian after coming to Canada in 1930 recalls parish priests as being meddlesome and dictatorial towards their parishioners. It is, of course, a subjective memory selected and honed over decades. The same attributes and ideological positions which she interprets today as officious and intrusive are seen by less harsh critics as attempts to keep intact a family of believers, conformity of belief and action serving as a kind of benevolent glue to unite people in the face of hostility and persecution. And so for many, maybe most Ukrainians, Sheptytsky is a genuine hero. Krawchuk's dispassionate and scholarly analysis shows us why.

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