

Response by Peter Galadza to
Paper by Natalia Shlikhta
“Portraits of Two Bishops
Defending Their Dioceses:
A Study of the Orthodox Episcopate
in Postwar Soviet Ukraine”

Presented at the Ninth Annual Danyliw Seminar
on Contemporary Ukraine, Nov 1, 2013

Peter Galadza

It is a pleasure to be the discussant for this fine paper by Prof. Shlikhta. She is certainly establishing herself as a key specialist in the area of Soviet-era Church history, and this paper confirms that reputation. The paper is well researched, grounded as it is in an array of archival materials. Also, her methodology is appropriate and her judgments balanced. Consequently, almost all of my questions or remarks will be of an amplificatory nature. Another scholar, with real expertise in this particular area, might be more probing and critical. On the other hand, that scholar might be just as laudatory. In any case, I will have to leave it to that scholar – who will presumably have more time to do the probing than we discussants were given – to make that evaluation.

My remarks will be organized according to the following scheme. After several positive comments I will pose several questions. Then, I will analyze and critique some of Prof. Shlikhta’s moral, or “ecclesio-ethical” presuppositions.

As regards the positive comments, the paper is invaluable in providing flesh and blood to figures that all too easily become mere silhouettes – or worse – caricatures. We learn details of Bishop Feodosii's attempts to be able to serve liturgy during his incarceration, the tribulations of dealing with reprobate government officials (e.g. Zhvanko), and the specifics of the pastoral initiatives that Feodosii and Palladii promoted in order to revitalize their parishes. Certainly, the more such details that can be provided – the better. During the Soviet era, Western researchers rarely had access to the kinds of particulars that provide texture to studies like this.

Along these lines, Shlikhta's careful archival work enables us to get behind the apparent, in order to understand how deceiving appearances can be. Only archival material reveals, for example, that in spite of Archbishop Palladii's transmission of the Patriarchal order to close the monastic churches in Kremets', he privately recommended to the superior that the order be ignored.

Shlikhta is also to be commended for drawing attention to the "Uniate factor" in studies of Orthodoxy in postwar Ukraine. As she notes, the need to contend with the underground Greco-Catholic Church provided Orthodox churchmen – whether in Ukraine or Moscow – with a convincing apologia for aiding the *official* Church. As these Orthodox churchmen frequently asserted to their NKVD overlords: "If you don't allow us to serve the religious needs of the believers, they will turn to 'Banderite Uniates' for baptisms, weddings and funerals." Undoubtedly this accounts for some of the vitality of the Orthodox Church in Galicia and Transcarpathia during the Soviet period. In the past, many scholars either ignored this vitality or simply assumed that it was due primarily to the fact that the Soviets had only occupied Western Ukraine since 1944.

Incidentally, it seems that one should find a way to indicate in English that in the Ukrainian language the name of the Orthodox Church during the Soviet period was *Rus'ka* – not "Rossiis'ka" – *Pravoslavna Tserkva*, and that while ultimately it was a distinction without much of a difference, the term "Rus'ka" could make the Church somewhat more pala-

table to even Ukrainian-minded Galicians. The use of “Russian Orthodox Church” in English, elides the distinction.

As regards my questions, the first pertains to the fate of Bishops Feodosii and Palladii during the 1930s. Shlikhta refers to the former’s five-year sentence in the Gulag. Nothing similar is reported concerning Palladii’s biography. If the latter did not serve time in the Gulag – as one is lead to believe – might this not help explain the differences between Feodosii’s and Palladii’s behaviors vis-à-vis the Soviet state. Unlike Feodosii, Palladii was willing to cull whatever shreds of virtue he could from government pronouncements concerning “peace-building” and “global harmony.” In doing so, he was actually behaving in a manner consistent with prudent pastoring. (Philippians 4: 8–9 asserts: “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just ... if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”) Besides, even the most uncompromising Christianity does not prevent one from fulfilling some of the requirements of citizenship – even in tyrannical regimes. Feodosii, on the other hand, would hardly have been inclined to find anything “worthy of praise” in a government that had made his life so unbearable.

Another question relates to the issue of “*kompromaty*,” or rather, lists thereof, possibly preserved in the archives. Shlikhta makes no references to these. Are we to presume that Feodosii and Palladii had no “skeletons in their closets” that the authorities could have adduced when needed? Or should we surmise that such lists are unavailable? Is it possible they have been destroyed? Incidentally, I have no reason to insist that such compromising information existed in their dossiers, but in view of what we know about the Soviet system and other churchmen, the question seems reasonable. In fact, I suspect I am not the only one present here who would like to learn more about this aspect of the Soviets’ control of the Church – over and beyond the cases of Feodosii and Palladii.

Let me now turn to some of the ethical presuppositions of Prof. Shlikhta’s paper. Shlikhta approvingly cites William C. Fletcher’s assertion: “The primary significance of most – if not all – of the recorded actions of the Church during the Soviet period is to be found in the struggle for survival.” At the socio-