

Sheptytsky, Andrei

(1865--1944), Head of the Greek Catholic church in southeast Poland, and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian nationalist movement.

Between the two world wars, Sheptytsky was active in the struggle of Poland's Ukrainian population for national rights. During the 1930s, the Ukrainian nationalist movement became increasingly extremist, and adopted a pro-German, antisemitic ideology. Sheptytsky did not approve of the movement's terrorist activities, but he did not denounce them, either.

Sheptytsky had always had a good relationship with the Jewish leaders of Eastern Galicia. In July 1941 he even promised one rabbi that he would stop the Ukrainians from killing Jews. However, the Ukrainians continued their attacks. In February 1942 Sheptytsky asked Heinrich Himmler to forbid the Ukrainian police from participating in the murder of Jews. Over the next few months, Sheptytsky helped dozens of Jews find refuge in his monasteries and even in his own home. At the same time, however, he supported the German army as the savior of the Ukrainians from the Soviets, and endorsed the formation of a Ukrainian division within the ss. One of Sheptytsky's closest aides served as the division's chief chaplain. Despite his sympathy for the Jews, Sheptytsky did nothing to stop the Ukrainian nationalists from backing Germany.