CELEBRATING FASCISM AND WAR CRIMINALITY IN EDMONTON

The Political Myth and Cult of Stepan Bandera in Multicultural Canada

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Introduction

Canadian history, like Canadian society, is heterogeneous and complex. The process of coping with such a history requires not only a sense of transnational or global historical knowledge, but also the ability to handle critically the different pasts of the people who immigrated to Canada. One of the most problematic components of Canadian’s heterogeneous history is the political myth of Stepan Bandera, which emerged in Canada after Bandera’s assassination on October 15, 1959. The Bandera myth stimulated parts of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and other countries to pay homage to a fascist, anti-Semitic and radical nationalist politician, whose supporters and adherents were not only willing to collaborate with the Nazis but also murdered Jews, Poles, Russians, non-nationalist Ukrainians and other people in Ukraine whom they perceived as enemies of the sacred concept of the nation.

In this article, I concentrate on the political myth and cult of Stepan Bandera in Edmonton, exploring how certain elements of Ukrainian immigrant groups tried to combine the policies of Canadian multiculturalism with the anti-communist rhetoric of the Cold War in order to celebrate the ‘heroism’ of Stepan Bandera as part of their struggle against the Soviet Union and for an independent Ukraine. Investigating the political myth and cult of Stepan Bandera, I firstly provide a short theoretical introduction into the political myth. Secondly, using the method of ‘thick description’ and critique of ideology,1 I analyse how Ukrainians celebrated Bandera in Edmonton and some other Canadian cities under the influence of his political myth.

Since this article focuses on the political myth rather than the person of Stepan Bandera, I do not consider his biography in detail. Similarly, I do not explore earlier forms of the Bandera myth which emerged in the Second Polish Republic and during World War II, especially during the OUN-B’s ‘Ukrainian National Revolution’ in the summer of 1941,2 or indeed the negative image of Stepan Bandera created in the Soviet Union, which still helps fuel Bandera’s reputation as a hero among numerous Ukrainian nationalists, including some scholars in Canada and Western Ukraine.3 While there is not enough space here to outline the history of such organisations as the OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists – Orhanizatsia Ukrains’kykh Nacionalistiv) and the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army – Ukrains’ka Powstanka Armiia), or to analyse issues surrounding the collaboration between the Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists, the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, the ethnic cleansing of Poles by the UPA, and the importance of fascism4 and anti-Semitism in the OUN, these questions have been explored at length by such scholars as Frank Golczewski,5 Dieter Pohl,6 Grzegorz Motyka,7 Franziska Bruder,8 Karel Berkhoff,9 Jeffrey Burds,10 and Timothy Snyder.11

The Person and the Political Myth of Stepan Bandera

In this article the myth is not defined as the opposition of truth or reality as historians or other scholars occasionally claim in order to stress their validity. I define myth as a ‘story’ which mobilizes emotions and immobilizes minds. A political myth is a more modern version of a myth which is related to politics or ideology. In this article I follow a cultural, non-evaluative concept of ideology, which Clifford Geertz elaborated on in his essay Ideology as a Cultural System. For Geertz it is ‘a loss of orientation that most directly gives rise to ideological activity, an inability, for lack of usable models, to comprehend the universe of civic rights and responsibilities in which one finds oneself located’.12 This loss of orientation certainly occurred in Western Ukraine after World War I. It manifested itself in organisations such as the OUN, which radicalised Ukrainian nationalism orientating it towards Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and other extreme and radical nationalistic movements. This applied to terrorism that occurred in the interwar period and mass violence and murder conducted during World War II in an attempt to eke out a state. A loss of cultural orientation also occurred amongst the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and other countries around the world,

http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/fallstudie/GRossolinski-Liebe2.pdf
although it was different in form than the loss that occurred in 1930s and 1940s Western Ukraine. At this time these communities began to celebrate Stepan Bandera and war criminals such as Roman Shukhevych as heroes of the Ukrainian nation.

The political myth of Stepan Bandera has not been solely based on the person of Stepan Bandera. Generally, political myths are embedded in an ideology that provides them with meaning. In the case of the Bandera myth, this meaning is provided by the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism that, in its radical version, appeared after World War I in Western Ukraine. Furthermore, embodiments of political myths can be understood as the visual component of an ideology, as a captivating story or an image that is also a part of the propaganda of this ideology, which consists of many interconnected political myths. Apart from ideology, a political myth is interrelated to cults, rituals and symbols.

The cult of Stepan Bandera and rituals based around his person are on the practical side of the political myth of Stepan Bandera. The cult and rituals are practiced by those who believe in the myth, acting as its producers, receivers, or both. In the case of the political myth of Stepan Bandera, it is a political cult of personality. The interwar period witnessed the rise of a range of cults of personality in Europe. While some of them were not fascist or authoritarian, including the cult of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in Czechoslovakia, all of them relied on charisma to legitimate power. The leaders’ charisma was seldom ‘natural’, but was often fabricated by extensive propaganda measures. These cults sprang up in different political, cultural and social circumstances, accomplishing different purposes in the societies where they were applied. It would thus be wrong to equate them, but it is possible to compare them given that comparing does not only mean looking at similarities but also differences. The most well-known European cults of personality were established around the most anti-Semitic European leader, Adolf Hitler in Germany, the prototype of the fascist leader Benito Mussolini in Italy, Francisco Franco in Spain, Antonio Salazar and Rolão Preto in Portugal, Philippe Pétain in France, Ante Pavelić in Croatia, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and Ion Antonescu in Romania, Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski in Poland, Vidkun Quisling in Norway, Josif Stalin in the Soviet Union, Miklós Horthy in Hungary, Engelbert Dollfuß and Kurt Schuschnigg in Austria, Andrej Hlinka and Józef Tiso in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia, Antanas Smetona in Lithuania, Ahmed Zog in Albania, Aleksandar I. Karadordević in Yugoslavia, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, Anastasii Vonsiatskii and Konstantin Rodzaevskii among Russian émigrés, and several others.

However, the myth of Stepan Bandera cannot be reduced to the cult of personality. The myth also relates to events that Bandera did not participate in, as well as persons who identified themselves and were recognized by others as the banderites (Ukrainian banderitsi), referring thereby to the name of Stepan Bandera. The symbol of Bandera was also frequently used to denote an epoch in which, as the believers of the myth would purport, the ‘Bandera generation’ had struggled for Ukraine.

The development of the political myth of Stepan Bandera began before World War II in the South-Eastern territories of the Polish Republic, inhabited primarily by Ukrainians. In the beginning, the myth was shaped by the Polish-Ukrainian conflict and Warsaw’s nationalistic politics against the Ukrainian minority. In particular, the Bandera myth evolved following the assassination of the Polish interior minister, Bronisław Pieracki, by the OUN-B, which was supposed to be the prototype of the Bandera myth. The cult of Stepan Bandera and rituals based around his person are on the practical side of the political myth of Stepan Bandera.

During World War II the myth evolved and spread amongst members of different nationalities and religious groups that inhabited or occupied the territories of Western Ukraine, including groups of Galician Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, Germans and Soviet Russians and Ukrainians. One of the most important events that propelled the rise of the political myth and cult of Stepan Bandera during World War II was the »Ukrainian National Revolution« of the summer of 1941, which began at the outset of the German-Soviet war on June 22, 1941. It was then that the OUN-B proclaimed a Ukrainian state in L’viv on June 30, 1941, trying to convince Nazi politicians to recognise it in hopes of becoming part of the New Fascist Europe under the aegis of Nazi Germany. Stepan Bandera, as the protivnyk (leader) of the OUN-B, was supposed to be the proudnyk of the new Ukrainian fascist state. According to

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the Führerprinzip, applied by the OUN-B, Bandera’s word would be above all written law in the OUN-B state – he would become the embodiment of this fascist Ukrainian state. The Nazis, however, did not accept the state and took Bandera into captivity on July 5, 1941. He was transported to Berlin, where he stayed under house arrest until September 15, 1941. He was subsequently arrested and kept in a Berlin prison as an honorary prisoner (Ehrenhaftung) until October 1943. From October 1943 to October 1944 Bandera stayed in Zellenbau, a part of the concentration camp Sachsenhausen for political prisoners. After Bandera was released he was once more allowed to collaborate.35

What happened in Ukraine while Bandera was in Berlin was extremely significant for the political myth of Stepan Bandera. During the »Ukrainian National Revolution« the OUN-B established a militia that, together with German troops, organized and conducted pogroms. As a result of these activities between 15,000 and 35,000 Jews were killed by the perpetrators of the pogroms. The UPA, an army established by the OUN-B, conducted in 1943 in Volhynia and in 1944 in Eastern Galicia a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Polish population; as a result, between 70,000 and 100,000 people were killed. Simultaneously, the UPA partisans also killed several hundred Jews who had survived previous repressions until then. Between 1944 and 1953, the UPA killed Ukrainians who were accused of collaborating with the Soviets. Altogether at this time the OUN-UPA killed more than 20,000 civilians. During their war against the OUN-UPA the Soviets killed 153,000, arrested 134,000 and deported 203,000 members of the OUN-UPA, members of their families and random Western Ukrainian civilians. The fanatical and irresponsible fight of the OUN-UPA against the much more powerful Soviets certainly contributed to the massive and violent scale of Soviet atrocities against Western Ukrainians. However, ultimately no one can be held more responsible for Soviet crimes than the Soviets themselves just as Poles were fully responsible for killing between 10,000 and 20,000 Ukrainians (both OUN-UPA members and civilians) during and after World War II.36

The OUN-B activists and the UPA partisans who committed these atrocities were known as banderites: Bandera’s people. This term was not invented by Soviet propaganda but dates back to the split of the OUN in late 1940 and early 1941, distinguishing members of the OUN-B from members of the OUN-M faction, who became known as melnykites (mel’nikivtsi) after their leader Andrii Mel’nyk. Thus Bandera became the main symbol of the OUN-B and the UPA although he himself did not participate in the atrocities of the OUN-B and the UPA. However, he is certainly responsible at least for the pogroms in June and July 1941 as he prepared the »Ukrainian National Revolution« and planned the OUN-B militia.

Since 1944, Soviet propaganda helped to establish Stepan Bandera as the most tangible symbol of Ukrainian fascism and radical nationalism not only in Soviet Ukraine but also in many other Soviet republics and satellite countries. By creating a narrative that portrayed Bandera as an enemy of the »decent« Soviet Ukrainians and condemning Ukrainian nationalism which celebrated Bandera’s anti-Sovietness, Soviet propaganda encouraged nationalist Ukrainian emigrants in Canada to glorify the person of Stepan Bandera, leading to a propagandistic campaign by the émigrés community against the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. This effective engagement of the Ukrainian diaspora did not leave space for a critical sense of coming to terms with the Ukrainian nationalists’ collaboration with the Nazis and their involvement in the Holocaust, the ethnic cleansing of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia in 1943/44, and the massacres of civilian Ukrainians who supported or were accused of supporting Soviet power in Western Ukraine between 1944 and 1951. The Ukrainian diaspora completely suppressed the memory of all the nationalistic, fascist and anti-Semitic features of Stepan Bandera, including such embarrassing rituals conducted by the leaders of the »Ukrainian National Revolution« of 1941 as the greeting with the right arm »slightly to the right, slightly above the peak of the head« while calling »Glory to the Ukraine!« (Slava Ukraini!) and responding »Glory to the Heroes!« (Heroiam Slavat!).37

*Canadian Believers of the Bandera Myth*

The assassination of Bandera by the KGB agent Bohdan Stashynskyi allowed nationalist elements of the diaspora to blame the communist Soviet leaders, mainly Nikita Khrushchev, for his death. Immediately after the assassination, the Bandera myth re-emerged amongst the Ukrainian diaspora in Australia, Argentina, Canada, West Germany, Great Britain, the USA

http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/fallstudie/GRossolinski-Liebe2.pdf
and several other countries. Meanwhile, Soviet censorship and propaganda prevented the spread of the myth in Soviet Ukraine, promoting instead a radically different set of cultural and political activities, specifically the demonization of Stepan Bandera as well as all other Ukrainian fighters who at the same time had been glorified by the diaspora.

The most significant places where the myth was reinvented and most rituals were performed were London, Munich, and Toronto. Influential newspapers were published in these centres. After Bandera’s assassination, the Munich-based _The Way to Victory (Shliakh Pereremony)_ , _Ukrainian Thought (Ukrains’ka Dumka)_ in London and the Toronto-based _Ukrainian Echo (Homin Ukrainy)_ acted to revitalize, in a very intensive manner, the political myth of Bandera, thereby influencing subscribers in other cities and countries. The Edmonton-based weekly _Ukrains’ki visti_ was less prominent in the process of making the political myth of Stepan Bandera.

It is difficult to elucidate which individuals or what parts of the Ukrainian diaspora were influenced by the political myth of Stepan Bandera, or who celebrated the Bandera cult in Edmonton. Ukrainians have been immigrating to Canada since the 1890s and as a result the Ukrainian diaspora has been divided along generational lines, as well as levels of political exposure. The first stage in the development of the Bandera myth in the 1930s and the 1940s influenced mostly Ukrainians in Poland. Concurrently, the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada was only marginally exposed to the Bandera myth. Due to the fact that this wave of the diaspora was less politicised or nationalist, it was not particularly enthusiastic about this myth. The ideology of Ukrainian nationalism reached Canada and other places with a large diasporic community only with the arrival of the DPs (displaced persons) after World War II. Many of them refused to return to Soviet Ukraine as they feared being persecuted for their collaboration with the Nazis.38

Many DPs had grown up in interwar Poland and became acquainted with the Bandera myth during World War II. When these Ukrainians arrived in Canada even the more nationalistic components of the Ukrainian diaspora did not adopt their very radical values and refused to work with them. The new political diaspora was on average more educated and more politically active than the older generation that mainly consisted of farmers. The younger members of the diaspora organized youth groups, parishes, political parties, newspapers, Saturday schools, veteran associations, scholarly societies, credit unions, resorts, encyclopaedia projects, museums and archives, radio programs, sports, hobby clubs, etc.39

The Cold War motivated Canadian politicians not to interfere with the anti-Soviet activities of these communities. The politics of multiculturalism, officially applied in the 1970s, a decade after the Bandera myth re-emerged, encouraged Canadian politicians to interpret the events organized by radical nationalist elements of the Ukrainian diaspora as an expression of Ukrainian culture.40

The community of the banderites (mainly, but not exclusively consisting of former members of the OUN-B) had the strongest ideological roots. They acted radically and gained increasing numbers of members who became enthusiastic about the OUN-B’s plan to liberate Ukraine from the Soviets and to clear its territory of ‘enemies’. The banderites established influential centers in Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada. In the United Kingdom they took over the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain.41 In Canada, on December 25, 1949, they founded the LVU (League for the Liberation of Ukraine – _Liga Vyzvolementia Ukrainy_). The League established some 20 community centres for its more than 50 branches in Canada. The most important medium that the banderites used to spread their ideas and to influence the mindset of Canadian Ukrainians was the newspaper _Ukrainian Echo_ , published in Toronto. The official website of the League shows that the League has been willing to combine Ukrainian nationalism with the policy of multiculturalism in Canada:42

The League’s main focus, however, was on the promotion of national independence for Ukraine and human rights for the Ukrainian people, while advancing the interests of the Ukrainian Canadian community within the framework of multiculturalism. Public actions included rallies, demonstrations, political mass meetings, seminars, conferences, public lectures, petitions and mass mailings.43

The League also organized women’s, youth’s and veteran’s organizations like the SUM (Ukrainian Youth Association – _Spilka Ukrain’s’koї Molodi_) or the OZH-LVU (Women’s Association of the Canadian League for the Liberation of Ukraine – _Obiednannia Zhinok_).
Canadian Multiculturalism, Ukrainian Nationalism and Political Activism

The Canadian parliament adopted multiculturalism as official policy in 1971. At this time, multiculturalism in Canada was understood as a counterbalance to the earlier supremacy of English culture. Like other countries, Canada sought to liquidate cultural or ethnic inequalities and to establish more tolerance for the ‘Other’. In this regard, the politics of multiculturalism was successful. On the one hand, it helped make Canadian society more conscious of its own cultural and ethnic diversity and of ‘Otherness’ in society in general. Multiculturalism encouraged and allowed Canadian citizens with a non-English or non-French background to identify themselves with Canada through their respective home cultures. It made possible to open German, Italian, Ukrainian and other national schools and to enrich Canadian society in other ways. On the other hand, the same politics helped to build a climate in which it was difficult to cope critically with the histories on which the identities and the folklore of the various ethnic groups were based. The existence of ‘authentic’ or ‘primordial’ ethnic groups was assumed by the theories of both multiculturalism and nationalism. This assumption turned a multicultural society into a multi-ethnic or multi-national community in which a critical coping with the past of a given group, regardless of its intention, was understood as an illegitimate and often mischievous intervention into its unique culture. This, combined with the anti-Soviet and anti-communist climate of the Cold War, enabled some of these groups to cultivate and work on rituals that were related to radical nationalism, fascism and anti-Semitism that occurred in their ‘external homelands’ between the 1920s and 1940s.

Canadian multiculturalism did not generate or re-establish the Bandera myth in Canada; indeed, the myth had developed ten years before the official introduction of the policy of multiculturalism. Moreover, multiculturalism cannot be blamed for the rise of Ukrainian fascism in Canada, for it had already spread in the 1920s and the 1930s amongst Ukrainians in Poland. However, multiculturalism did facilitate the process of celebrating anti-Semites, fascists and radical nationalists as being an essential part of Ukrainian culture that, according to the notion of multiculturalism, belonged in the heterogeneous Canadian culture. Ukrainians celebrating Bandera in Canada did not celebrate and remember him as an anti-Semite, fascist and radical nationalist. They repressed these ‘dark sides’ of Bandera and the banderites, focusing instead on their role as national heroes who struggled for an independent Ukrainian state. This battle would be the continuation of the fascist Ukrainian revolution of the summer of 1941 and the struggles of the UPA between 1943 and 1953. For this purpose, in 1962 a monument to the heroes of Ukraine was erected at a newly opened recreation camp in Ellenville located in upstate New York. The monument consisted of a giant spear with the Ukrainian trident on it and the busts of Symon Petliura and Ievhen Konovalets’, as well as Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera, on either side of the spear.

Ukrainian children of the diaspora congregated in front of the monument to recite poems glorifying the Ukrainian heroes or to perform folklore dances.43

Similar camps were established in Canada. In Ontario, the camp Veselka was opened in 1954 and the camp Verkhovyna was inaugurated in 1955 at St. Theodore in Quebec. The SUM of Sudbury opened a camp called Bilohorsha and the SUM of Thunder Bay set up two more camps (Karpaty and Dibrova). The camps had an educational purpose, aiming to teach diaspora children to love their country and to hate the enemies of Ukraine. OUN activists and UPA partisans were introduced as heroes to the children, while UPA war crimes and the anti-Semitism and fascism of the OUN activists were denied. The long-term aim was to recruit a new generation that would continue their struggle for the Ukrainian state: as the organizers put it, »to educate Ukrainian youth about their history and culture, as well as cultivating them to become active members of their Ukrainian and local communities while serving God and their Ukrainian homeland.«44
This preservation also meant the continuation of Ukrainian nationalism as can be illustrated by the image on the cover of The Politics of Multiculturalism. A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir, written by an activist of multiculturalism, Manoly R. Lupul. The photograph (fig. 1) shows six men. Three of them are sitting at a table, while three others are standing behind them. Two of the men sitting, the one in the middle and the one farthest to the right have pens in their hands and are signing a document. The document is a contract between the University of Alberta’s CIUS (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies), an academic institution established in the summer of 1976, and the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Europe, in which both sides agreed to collaborate on the Encyclopaedia of Ukraine in December 1976. The men sitting in the picture are, from the left, Georg Luckyj, Volodymyr Kubiovych and Manoly Lupul. The men standing, from left to right, are Petro Savaryn, Antanas Figol’, and Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky.

As mentioned, Manoly Lupul was the author of The Politics of Multiculturalism as well as a member of the Alberta Council of Multiculturalism and the first director of the CIUS. He decided to put this picture on the cover as it likely symbolized, for him, an important act, showing prominent Ukrainian activists of both multiculturalism and Ukrainian nationalism.

After World War II, Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky was quite an open-minded and liberal politician at the Department of History at the University of Alberta, while also serving as the associate director of the CIUS. He was critical of Bandera and Ukrainian and other fascist movements.

Georg Luckyj was the second associate director of the CIUS. He administered the Institute’s Project Office, housed in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto. In his 1992 published memoir Luckyj wrote: »I was one of the few boys in our school who was not deeply stirred by Ukrainian nationalism. The nationalist rhetoric seemed to me full of clichés, and as for various nationalist youth groups (Plast, etc.), I refused to take part in them.«

Despite these statements from 1937 to 1939 Luckyj studied in Berlin and received a scholarship from Nazi Germany. In 1939 he left for England where in 1943 he enlisted in the British army and served in the intelligence, partly with translation work. In 1941–1945, Antanas Figol’ was the representative of the UTsK (Ukrainian Central Committee – Ukraїns’kyi Tsentral’nyi Komitet) in Berlin. Since 1955 Figol’ worked as an economical advisor for the Shevchenko Scientific


49 Ibid., p. 322.


51 Rituals can also be used to provide a sense of orientation and to assure members of a collective group about the validity of their political, cultural and social orientation. Finally, rituals are also used for the symbolic recreation of communities, Therefore, the study of rituals involved in the creation of the Bandera myth provides us with an insightful look at not only the processes surrounding the creation of the political myth, but also the processes of establishing communities as parts of the Ukrainian diaspora who ›loved‹ Stepan Bandera, or the community in the Soviet Union who ›hated‹ him.
From the beginning, elements of the Ukrainian diaspora used the death of Bandera for such purposes as spreading hatred towards the Soviet Union, or uniting the community through ostentatious and collective mourning. The Ukrainian News informed its readers in Edmonton of the death of Stepan Bandera on October 19, 1959; Bandera’s death was announced on the front page and readers were informed that Bandera perished at the hands of an unknown murderer. Furthermore, the article familiarized readers with the details of Bandera’s life, which was reduced to his ›national-revolutionary‹ activities. No information about the atrocities that banderites committed against Jews, Poles and unsympathetic Ukrainians, either during or after the war, appeared in this article. The penultimate sentence of the article informed readers that both of Bandera’s brothers, Oleksandyr and Vasyl, perished in the ›German camp of Auschwitz‹. This information implied that not only Stepan Bandera but also his two brothers fell in their struggle for Ukraine. The last sentence of the article announced that the funeral of Stepan Bandera would take place on October 20, 1959 in Munich, encouraging the Ukrainian community of Edmonton to mark this event.

The readers of Ukrainian Echo, a newspaper edited by the LVU, were likewise bombarded with material regarding Bandera’s death. The editors of Homin Ukraїny turned it into one of the greatest catastrophes of the Ukrainian nation. On October 24, 1959, the front page turned into a huge obituary (fig. 2), with Bandera’s photograph featured in the middle. The headline and deck consisted of a striking inscription: »In Loving Memory STEPAN BANDERA«. Between the photograph and inscriptions, the editors informed readers that both of Bandera’s brothers, Oleksandyr and Vasyl, perished in the ›German camp of Auschwitz‹. This information implied that not only Stepan Bandera but also his two brothers fell in their struggle for Ukraine. The last sentence of the article announced that the funeral of Stepan Bandera would take place on October 20, 1959 in Munich, encouraging the Ukrainian community of Edmonton to mark this event.

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the period of mourning would last for two months, from October 15 to December 15. Intro-

ductions to two articles were printed on either side of the photograph, which the articles

prolonged on page six. One article was entitled Fighter, Leader and Symbol (Borets', Pro-

vidnyk i Symvol), while the second was called In Deep Sadness... (U hlybokomu smutku...).

These articles told readers that the death of Stepan Bandera »shocked the entire Ukrainian

diaspora on this side of the ocean«, and that Bandera was killed by an enemy. Furthermore,

readers were advised that, in the person of Stepan Bandera, a symbol of both the general

Ukrainian struggle and an entire epoch of the struggle for independence in particular, had

passed away.54

On October 26, the front page of the newest issue of Ukrainian News informed readers of

the sad news of Bandera’s death, providing details about how Bandera had been found

suffocated in his stairwell. Readers found out that Bandera died in the ambulance on the

way to the hospital and that the proclamation of the police in Munich stated that Bandera

died because of potassium cyanide that was found in his body during the post-mortem

examination. Additionally, the newspaper wrote about the proceedings of the funeral in

Munich on October 20 and the church services that had been held in many Canadian towns

and cities on the October 18 and 20.65

On October 31, 1959, the front page of Ukrainian Echo featured an article entitled The

Final Journey of the »Providnyk« Bandera. The authors glorified »the final 500 meter

journey of Bandera«, during which he was accompanied by about 1,500 admirers and 10

priests who came to the funeral from all around the world to say farewell to their providnyk,

who had »perished on the forefront of a bloody, lingering war against the cruel, deceitful,

villainous enemy«.66 To persuade the readers about the seriousness of the tragedy that

had struck the Ukrainian nation, together with the apologetic article the publisher printed a

photograph showing Bandera’s coffin being carried by four men and the funeral procession

behind it. In the centre of the photograph, marching alongside the coffin, are four uniformed

young women, most likely members of the SUM, and a man in a suit. The faces of all four

uniformed teenage women and the well-dressed man appear to be filled with sadness, sor-

row and concern. One of the women, mourning the loss of her providnyk, is seen weeping

and looking down at the ground. The eyes of the man in the suit are focused on the final 500

meters of his providnyk’s journey. His face is not only sad, but also appears pensive and

seemingly outraged. The facial expressions of all people seen in the picture communicate the

same message – that of the loss of a very important and irreplaceable personality.57

On November 2, on the front page, Ukrainian News published an article with the

headline »1500 People at Bandera’s Funeral« that reminded the Ukrainian community of

Edmonton of the importance of the loss. Fifteen hundred people had attended the funeral,

they emphasised, despite it being held on a working day. The article also mentioned that

representatives of other liberation movements attended the funeral, including the Hungari-

an, Bulgarian, Slovakian, Romanian, Croatian and Turkmen movements, thus stressing the

wider significance of the loss.58

On November 7, the front page of Ukrainian Echo informed its readers that the »Ukr-

rainian nation« had suffered a blow from the »villainous« and »savage« Moscow that had

killed, in the most cunning and perfidious manner, the greatest leader of the Ukrainian

freedom movement. According to the authors of this article, the loss of Bandera for the

Ukrainian people was akin to the loss of a great son of the nation, who for his entire life had

struggled for the freedom of Ukraine. Furthermore, the authors characterized Bandera as

being »a great example of an unswerving fighter – revolutionary, ideologist and strategist,

theoretician and practician of the Ukrainian liberation revolution.«69 This kind of charac-

terization of Bandera recurred in many other articles printed in the Ukrainian Canadian
diaspora press. Generally, the authors of these articles were keen to glorify their providnyk

and never mentioned any atrocities that the banderites or the »Ukrainian liberation move-

ment« had committed. They also avoided referencing the negative portrayals of Bandera

that emerged after World War II. This allowed Bandera to appear as a saint, or a demigod

figure, comparable to Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Iosif Stalin at the height of their

power and popularity.

The diaspora Ukrainians who could not attend the funeral of Bandera in Munich

mourned him in their places of residence. In Edmonton the Organisations of the Freedom

Movement (Orhanizatsii Vyzvol’noho Frontu) started to prepare for lavish celebrations

57 Motyka 2006, p. 181, p. 383, p. 386; Golczewski 2008, p. 136; Hm-
kia 2006, p. 165f.

58 Golczewski, Frank: Geschichte der

Ukraine. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

Ruprecht 1993, pp. 259-260.

59 Bergesen, Albert: Die rituelle

Ordnung. In: Belliger, Andréa/Krieger,

David J. (Eds.): Ritualtheorien. Ein

einführendes Handbuch. Opladen,

Wiesbaden: Westdt. Vlg. 1998,


60 Kertzer, David J.: Ritual, Politik und

Macht. In: Belliger/Krieger 1998,


62 Ibid., p. 50f.

63 Stepan Bandera ne zhyve [Stepan

Bandera is dead], In: Ukrainian News


64 Ukrainian Echo 44/44 (24.10.1959), p. 1f.

65 Jak zhyvly Stepan Bandera [How

Bandera died], In: Ukrainian News 43/


66 Ostannia doroha providynta Ban-

dery [The Final Journey of the »Pro-

dvidnyk« Bandera], In: Ukrainian Echo


67 Cf. the picture in: Ukrainian Echo


68 1500 People at Bandera’s Fu-

neral. In: Ukrainian News 44/XXXII


69 Zvernennia Provodu ZCH OUN

[Appeal of the ZCH OUN Leadership],

on the day of Bandera’s death, October 15. On October 20, the day of Bandera’s funeral in Munich, memorial services were organized in almost all Ukrainian churches in Edmonton. On October 25, a requiem mass (panakhida) was organized at the St. Iosaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral at 7 p.m., with six priests presiding. Members of the SUM and the Plast Scout Organisation presented their banners as scout uniforms hung behind the altar, while members of the LvU were also in attendance. The cathedral was full of people, both uniformed and in plain clothes. After the male choir of the Ukrainian National Home of Edmonton (Ukrainský Narodnyi Dim) enriched the national and holy atmosphere in the church with their vocal performances, the pastor (parokh) of the church delivered a speech in which he praised Bandera’s love, commitment and labour for Ukraine. The blue-yellow flag of Ukraine and the red-black flag of the OUN were flown at the entrance to the church, where young girls distributed black ribbons.

After the church service, the celebration continued at the Ukrainian National Home that had also been decorated with flags. It was there that the ›mourning assembly‹ (zhalibna akademiatia) took place. The hall could not accommodate the crowd that had gathered to mourn Bandera’s death and some were turned away. The memorial service opened with Chopin’s Funeral March, after which Dr. V. Hyrak opened the academy and D. M. read a poem entitled Immortal Son (Bezsmertynji syn), which he wrote for Stepan Bandera. Subsequently, the male choir of the Ukrainian National Home of Edmonton sang several religious and nationalist songs. Bandera’s portrait composed the stage decoration. It had been prepared especially for the occasion by ›professor‹ Iu. Butsmaniuk. The portrait hung on a huge wall in the background with Bandera’s dates of birth and death on either side with a black wall in the background and a trident, the symbol of Ukraine, as well as two baskets with red roses placed underneath.

Similar religious-ideological celebrations of Stepan Bandera occurred in many other places around the world as the Ukrainian diaspora said goodbye to their providnyk. The OUN-ZCh (Foreign Section – Zakordonni Chastyny) used Bandera’s death to start a fund called Stepan Bandera’s Liberation Struggle Fund (Fund vyzvol'noi borot'by im. Stepana Bandery); they collected money for a possible war against the Soviet Union and the liberation of Ukraine.

The first anniversary of Bandera’s death was celebrated around the world: in Munich, Philadelphia, Ottawa, Cleveland, London, New York, Chicago, Toronto, Edmonton and many other cities with a sizeable Ukrainian diaspora. In Edmonton, the celebrations began with a panakhida held at St. Iosaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral. After the panakhida, the celebration moved into the Ukrainian National Home, where Petro Bashuk from Winnipeg delivered a speech. Bashuk claimed that Stepan Bandera was a fighter for ›the rights of God and people in Ukraine‹ and that the Ukrainian nation was in a permanent state of struggle. He stressed that the Ukrainian people were imbued with the spirit of Christian idealism, adding that the West should accept the same ideals as the Ukrainian nationalists if they were to win their struggle against ›Moscow Bolsheviks‹. A female choir added a cheery note to the celebration with some nationalist and religious songs.

The second anniversary of Bandera’s death in Edmonton proceeded in a similar manner. The celebrants first met at St. Iosaphat Cathedral where the parokh, Iurii Koval’s’kyi, conducted a panakhida. Koval’s’kyi reminded the gathering that, since Ukrainians had lost so much with the death of Bandera, it remained important to preserve a religious and national spirit. After the panakhida, the crowd moved to the Ukrainian National Home, where a meeting of the male and female sections of the League for the Liberation of Ukraine took place. The gathering opened with a speech by M. Kohut, who spoke about Stepan Bandera – the Symbol of the Liberation Struggle. Additionally, Mrs. Aponiuk read the poem October 15, 1959, followed by a reading of Morozenko’s memoirs about Bandera. The stage was decorated in a similar fashion to the year before: a portrait of Bandera painted by Iu. Butsmaniuk was surrounded on either side by the dates 1959 and 1961, with a wreath, flowers, the date ›October 15‹, and the Ukrainian and OUN flags underneath. This imagery indicated that the Ukrainian community of Edmonton had had to overcome all the difficulties of daily life and to continue their struggle for liberation without their providnyk for two years. The mood amongst the 170-strong crowd that gathered for the proceedings was very ceremonious.

To some extent, the third anniversary of Bandera’s death was overshadowed by the trial of Bandera’s murderer, Bohdan Stashyns’kyi, which took place between October 8
and 19, 1962 in Karlsruhe, West Germany. This trial was a media sensation for Ukrainian communities around the world. During this time period, the same people who had called for a trial in the immediate aftermath of Bandera’s death now announced that his murderer was a Soviet agent. The fact that Stashyn’s’kyi came from Western Ukraine was a disturbing fact for the nationalists. Even so, this gave a new legitimacy to those Ukrainian nationalists who had proclaimed a ‘crusade’ against Moscow, giving a new impetus to their political activities. Just as in the two preceding years, the celebrations began with a panakhida at St. Josaphat Cathedral in Edmonton, moving then to the Ukrainian National Home where, underneath Butsmaniuks’ portrait of Bandera, the participants could see a golden trident and a barbwire trident surrounded by a crown of thorns (symbols of Auschwitz and the Passion of Christ). Halyna Shevchuk, a female member of the Ukrainian Youth Association, opened the rituals by reading Ie. Ren’s memoirs concerning Bandera, which was then followed by Oleh Hnatiuk’s recitation of the poem We Will Not Stop Fighting (Ne kynemo zbroi). Ivan Shevchuk spoke about Bandera as a human and as a providnyk, as additionally giving information about the trial against his murderer – the Soviet agent – that had begun the previous week.  

In the following years, Bandera’s adherents celebrated the anniversary of his death on a regular basis; usually this was not done every year, as it had been during the first three years, but eventually it was held every five and ten years. As the 1964 celebrations in Edmonton and Winnipeg took place on October 18, the ideological factions of the Ukrainian diaspora could render homage to their providnyk first by attending a large anti-Soviet demonstration in front of Soviet diplomatic missions on October 15 in New York and on October 17 in Washington D.C. and Ottawa. On October 18, the Ukrainian community in Winnipeg celebrated the death of Bandera by singing nationalistic songs such as March of Nationalists (Marsh Nationalistiv) or Ukraine Will Arise (Vstane Ukraina). The Ukrainian community of Saskatoon did not have the opportunity to attend the protests in front of the Soviet embassy in New York because they decided to celebrate on the exact anniversary of Bandera’s death. In Edmonton, the Ukrainian community chose to combine the celebration of their providnyk’s death with two other national or religious celebrations: the first was Spiato Pokrovky (Protection of the Mother of God) and the second was Spiato Zbroi (Weapon Celebration). As in previous years, the day of festivities started at St. Josaphat Cathedral. Afterwards, the celebratory crowd of 200 people listened to a speech about their providnyk at the Ukrainian National Home, which had been recorded five years before and which gave them a chance to admire the ‘farsightedness and the political reason’ of their providnyk.

On Saturday, October 18, 1969, Bandera’s adherents used the 10th anniversary of his death to demonstrate in Ottawa. The most important points of their demonstrative and commemorative march in Ottawa were at the parliament and the Soviet embassy. In Winnipeg, 10th anniversary celebrations of Bandera’s death were enriched by a relic: soil from Bandera’s grave in Munich that had been brought to Winnipeg by Semen Ïzhnyk, radiating an aura of ‘nationalist holiness’ for the 500 celebrants. In Edmonton, between October 11 and 13, the Organisations of the Ukrainian Liberation Movement combined the 40th anniversary of the OUN with the 10th anniversary of Bandera’s death, adopting the atavistic and heroic motto ‘Either you achieve the Ukrainian state or you die in the struggle for it’. In 1979, the International Celebration Committee (Mizkraiovuy Sviatkovuy Komitet) invited believers in the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism from around the world to come to Munich to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the death of their providnyk on the site of his grave on September, October 13. Prominent figures of Ukrainian nationalism, such as Mykola Klymyshyn, an old friend and prison companion of Bandera, and Bandera’s son, Andrii Bandera, travelled from Canada to Munich. Klymyshyn delivered a speech on the grave of their providnyk on October 13, and marched with other adherents of Bandera through the streets of Munich, protesting against the Soviet Union and carrying banners with Bandera’s image on it. For his part, Andrii Bandera joined Iaroslav Stets’ko, a good friend of Bandera, and another important Ukrainian nationalist and leader of the OUN-ZCh and the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, at a conference that took place on October 12 in the Plazi Hotel in Munich. Canadian Ukrainians who were unable to travel to Bandera’s graveside in Munich for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of his death commemorated the anniversary at home, as witnessed in Saskatoon.
While searching through the newspapers Ukrainian News, published in Edmonton, and Ukrainian Echo, published in Toronto, I did not find any articles or reports discussing celebrations of the anniversary of Bandera’s death in the years 1984, 1989 and 1999 in Edmonton. The Ukrainian Echo, however, featured articles that encouraged its readers to commemorate the anniversary of Bandera’s death, and I have found reports from celebrations that took place in other North American cities and in Europe. The most elaborate of these celebrations took place in Munich, where the celebrants gathered at Bandera’s grave site. 

Since 1989, and particularly after the establishment of the independent Ukrainian state in 1991, the political myth of Stepan Bandera and the political cult surrounding his image have also flourished in Ukraine. Still, the Ukrainian diaspora continues to organise its own celebrations of Bandera. In 2009, I witnessed how the Ukrainian community in Edmonton celebrated the anniversary of Bandera’s death.

This was a combined celebration, commemorating 100 years since Bandera’s birth and 50 years since his death. It took place in the building of the Ukrainian Youth Association at 9615-153 Avenue in Edmonton on Sunday, October 25, 2009, between approximately 2:30 and 5:30 p.m. The complex is named in honour of Roman Shukhevych, a leading banderite and leader of the UPA in the years 1943–1950. Shukhevych was more directly responsible for OUN-UPA’s crimes against humanity such as the ethnic cleansing of Poles in Volhynia and Galicia and massacres of Jews. In 1972, a bust of Roman Shukhevych was placed in front of the entrance to the building, resulting in all celebrants passing by it on their way to the place of celebration.

The Bandera celebration was combined with the religious holiday Sviato Pokrovy (Protection of the Mother of God). The hall was decorated with a huge painting of the Virgin Mary. The painting was fixed upon a cross made from blue and yellow cloth, the colours of the Ukrainian flag. The background was red and black, symbols of the OUN standing for blood and earth. This religious, nationalistic, and fascist collage was the main decoration on the stage. The Ukrainian and Canadian flags were fixed on both sides of this decoration. On the right side of the stage the audience could see a huge portrait of Bandera with the dates 1909–1959. A golden trident was hung from above the stage, above the Mother of God. The podium was covered in red and black cloth, with a trident fixed on top.

About 400 people attended the celebration. It began with a panakhida, during which the participants sang dirges for Stepan Bandera and performed a wide range of religious rituals under the leadership of three or four priests. Nationalist rituals began after this religious component. A very mysterious, nationalistic, and martyrdom-tinged narrative of the history of Ukraine was presented in several short, two to three minute segments by the speaker Roman Brytan who also coordinated the entire event. Between the speeches, many different individual artists and musical groups sang pop, folkloristic or classical songs to glorify Stepan Bandera. Some of them were based on the lyrics of OUN and UPA songs. Altogether some 15 performances took place. Performers wore peasant blouses and Cossack costumes. Also children of the SUM, wearing light brown uniforms and ties that resembled the colour and design of the uniforms of the Hitler Youth, sang different pop songs about the OUN, UPA and the Orange Revolution.

In addition to musical performances, Bohdan Tarasenko recited Bandera’s 1936 speech before the Polish court in L’viv, in which Bandera explained why he had given permission for the liquidation of a number of Poles and Russians, as well as some Ukrainians who in his understanding betrayed the Ukrainian nation. The organisers also played back a recorded interview Bandera had given Western journalists in the 1950s, explaining the necessity of a war against the Soviet Union. The event ended with a speech by Ihor Broda, the leader of the League of Ukrainian Canadians in Edmonton, during which he gave thanks to the celebrants and artists for being such a »spiritual nation«, also underlining that the participants had helped keep Bandera alive by coming to the celebration. The speech also asserted that modern-day Ukraine is threatened by »Moscow«, because Russia is planning to conquer Ukraine as it had done in the past. My impression was that, for Broda, Bandera is the embodiment of the person who can help Ukrainians to defend itself against »Moscow«.

The celebration was advertised on posters and in the newspaper Ukrainian News. The CIUS was also involved in the promotion of this event, displaying a poster on its premises (fig. 3), as well as sending one employee, Dr. Andrij Hornjatkevyc, to enhance the artistic program of the celebration by playing folkloristic music on bandura and singing folkloristic
songs in honour of Stepan Bandera. Moreover, a week before the celebration, Ukrainian News published Ihor Broda’s article about Stepan Bandera on the front page. Broda characterized Bandera as the symbol of an epoch in which the OUN and UPA had struggled for an independent Ukrainian state. In this article, Broda never mentioned the atrocities against humanity that the OUN and UPA had committed likely because he believes that the OUN and the UPA consisted only of heroes. For Broda, Bandera as a symbol of the OUN and UPA can only be characterized in this holistic, heroic, pathetic and apologetic way. Broda delivered proof for this self-evident nature of Bandera in two sentences: »Highly civilized nations and honest people can respect even foreign heroes. Primitives can only be hostile [to the heroes], they can only dishonour, defame, curse them, and declare false propaganda«. Broda did not consider whether the »heroes« were radical nationalists, fascists, anti-Semites or war criminals; from his perspective this is not a relevant issue, because he celebrates Bandera as a hero and a civic saint. Furthermore, like Bandera, Broda cannot be wrong because of the »awareness that God is with us [him, Bandera and the Ukrainian nationalists].« This logic might be surprising, but it is the fundamental logic of the believers of the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism.

It is interesting to note that Broda applies the political myth of Stepan Bandera to a period in which a Ukrainian state exists, thus there is no longer anything left to fight and struggle for. Broda claims that Ukraine remains threatened by »Moscow«, with the threat of war looming above both »enemies«. The first enemy is the »contemporary Ukrainian nation [sic]« which should be »educated, inspired and provided with national consciousness so that it can understand that it is the descendant of Cossacks...«. The second enemy is the »Russian nation in Russia and Ukraine«.

Ukrainian Echo devoted the entirety of issue 35, a full 32 pages, to the propagation of the political myth and cult of Stepan Bandera.

All propagandistic measures and methods that this newspaper employed over five decades were mobilised again in this issue. The entire front page consisted of a portrait of Bandera. Articles and pictures served two main goals. Firstly, they were to convince readers of Bandera’s greatness, heroism and willingness to make sacrifices. Secondly, they aimed to demonstrate that Bandera was not only a hero amongst the Ukrainian diaspora but also in Ukraine. In this vein, the newspaper featured articles discussing demonstrations and celebrations in Ukraine, as well as photographs of monuments and museums glorifying Bandera in Kyiv and west Ukrainian cities, towns and villages.
Conclusions

This article has analysed several aspects of the political myth of Stepan Bandera in Canada, concentrating on Edmonton. The Bandera myth forms a Ukrainian contribution to Canadian multiculturalism. At the same time it provides a mechanism through which Canadian Ukrainians cope with Ukrainian and European history. It propagates frames of thinking which are incompatible with democratic values, as well as attitudes to war, violence, fascism, nationalism and anti-Semitism that developed in Europe after World War II. It appears that Ukrainian communities in Canada provide ‘their’ or Ukrainian history with meaning in churches and at political meetings, refusing to study ‘their’ history on the basis of publications written by professional scholars.

The Ukrainians of Edmonton have been able to celebrate Bandera in Ottawa, Washington D.C. and at Bandera’s gravesite in Munich. The Toronto-based Ukrainian Echo and, to a lesser extent, Ukrainian News from Edmonton, have been the main sources of inspiration and orientation in the development of Bandera’s cult. It is difficult to establish the uniqueness of the cult of Bandera in Edmonton, for this would require a more detailed study of other nationalist Ukrainian communities, but two observations about the uniqueness of Edmonton and Alberta can be made here.

Firstly, Edmonton is home to the CIUS, funded by the Alberta government, which the University of Alberta has provided with an academic aura. This aura seems to have been abused by the institute. From the very beginning, the CIUS refused to cope in a critical and professional manner with contemporary Ukrainian history. At the time of writing of this article, CIUS has not initiated any program to investigate Ukrainian history during World War II, examine questions surrounding the collaboration of the OUN and UPA with the Nazis, Ukrainian fascism, the role played by Ukrainians in the Holocaust or any other related subject matter. In this sense, the CIUS has followed in the footsteps of the Ukrainian Free University in Munich where Volodymyr Ianiv worked as rector between 1968 and 1986.96 Ianiv was active in the OUN in the first half of the 1930s and was a member of the national executive alongside Stepan Bandera, Iaroslav Stets’ko, and Roman Shukhevych while the executive was conducting a range of assassinations against the enemies of the Ukrainian nation.97 CIUS has also echoed the views of such nationalist whitewashers of Ukrainian history as Roman II’nyts’kyi, Petro Mirchuk, Mykola Klymyshyn and Volodymyr Kosyk who have either sympathised with the OUN or have been members of the movement, while later writing a range of apologetic historical studies about Ukrainian nationalism. In 2009, the academic aura of the CIUS was further compromised with the institute’s involvement in the Bandera celebrations at the Shukhevych complex, as one of its scholars not only promoted the event but also took an active part in artistic performances.98 One year later, on November 8, 2010, the CIUS even invited Volodymyr Vitrovych, known for his anti-Semitic writings on Jews and the OUN, to give a lecture.99

However, it would be wrong to claim that all employees of the CIUS are under the influence of the Bandera myth and do not try to separate activism from scholarship. At least two historians employed at the CIUS, David Marples and John-Paul Himka, both former students of Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, have tried to separate activism from scholarship. In the last two decades, Marples and Himka have published several critical articles and one monograph about recent Ukrainian history.102 Moreover, they did not participate in the celebrations of Stepan Bandera on October 25, 2009 at the Roman Shukhevych complex in Edmonton. It is interesting to note that both Marples and Himka were not interested in a critical study of Ukrainian nationalism in the 1980s, and even developed affirmative attitudes towards the UPA, which begs the question of what encouraged them to revise their previous attitudes towards the OUN and UPA and to begin to cope critically with the question of Ukrainian nationalism in the 1990s and 2000s.102

Secondly, in considering the uniqueness of Edmonton and Alberta, it should be noted that certain local Ukrainians developed a strategy to channel government funds into their nationalistic projects by depicting them as a Ukrainian contribution to Canadian multiculturalism. A good example of this is the massive complex of the SUM, where the Bandera celebration took place in 2009, which is named in honour of a Nazi collaborator and war criminal, Roman Shukhevych. This complex was erected between 1972 and 1974, as the policy
of multiculturalism was officially applied from 1971. Construction work consumed $750,000
Canadian, which was partially provided by the Alberta and Canadian governments.104

The investigation of rituals surrounding the political myth and cult of Stepan Bandera
also proves that parts of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada have used the ideology of Ukra-

nian nationalism as a point of orientation in their cultural and political activities. Some of
these activities, primarily the new ones illustrated by the example of Ihor Broda’s article, are
so misanthropic as to be seen as incitement to hatred. In fact, if Broda had not defined war
in his article as »propaganda war« but as a »violent conflict« he could have been prosecuted
for his article Stepan Bandera – Deference to the Immortal that appeared shortly before the
Bandera celebration in 2009.105 Yet Broda’s article did not evoke any concern from its rea-
ders. In view of the fact that Broda can present his activities as part of Canadian-Ukrainian
culture and politics, he can claim a contribution to Canadian multiculturalism.

This leads one to question why Canadians can tolerate, ignore or approve of the glori-
fication of Ukrainian radical nationalism in Canada. Conceivably, before 1990, it was the
Cold War that encouraged support for any anti-Soviet action or opinion. Indeed, positive
attitudes towards the cult of Bandera can be seen as reactions to Soviet propaganda, which
demonized Ukrainian nationalists. One can also explain the rise of ambiguous attitudes
towards Bandera by difficulties involved in accessing Soviet archives, both before 1991 and,
to a lesser extent, beyond. However, despite these considerations, there still seems to be
something wrong with both the intellectual shape of Ukrainian communities in Canada and
with historians and other scholars in Canada who have failed to understand Ukrainians in
Canada for a long period of time. Until recently, only a handful of individuals were interes-
ted in conducting a critical investigation of these factions of the Ukrainian diaspora who
are besotted with the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism and thus celebrate fascists, radical
nationalists, war criminals and anti-Semites as martyrs and heroes.


103 For John-Paul Himka admiring the UPA in the 1980s, advising historians to follow the rules of the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism and being angry with historians who do not follow them, cf. the correspondence between John-Paul Himka and Janusz Radziejowski in: Interview with John-Paul Himka (a manuscript forthcoming in Krytyka). For David Marples uncritically following a Cold War narrative that whitewashed the UUN and UPA of crimes against Jews, Poles, non-nationalistic Ukrainians, Russians etc., cf. Marples, David: Ukraine During World War II: Resistance Movements and Reannexation. In: The Ukrainian Weekly 41/LIII (13.10.1985), p. 7, p. 13. In this article, Marples euphemizes UPA’s crimes with the statement that »some undisciplined actions on the part of an armed group were almost inevitable« (ibid) and claims that the UPA was a multicultural force as he writes that »according to a Western source, the nationality groups within the [UPA’s] ranks included Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks, Tatars, and Jews« (ibid.).

104 Buduemo dim ukrains’koi molodi [We are Building a Home for Ukrainian Youth]. In: Ukrainian News 8 (22.02.1973), p. 4; Rudling, Per: Multiculturalism, Memory and Ritualization. Ukrainian public memorials in Edmonton, Alberta (article in progress which will explore in more depth the financial background of multiculturalism and Ukrainian nationalism in Edmonton).