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Comments on the article by Per A. Rudling, "Multiculturalism, memory, and ritualization: Ukrainian nationalist monuments in Edmonton, Alberta," *Nationalities Papers* 39.5 (2011): 733–68

Bohdan Harasymiw

Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Calgary

The author of this piece would have his readers believe that an unbroken line connects some adherents of a nationalistic doctrine originating in Ukrainian lands in the 1930s with all the inhabitants and their descendants of Ukrainian origin in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He also claims that the germ of such ideas, brought to Canada with the third wave of immigration, overwhelmed the existing political culture of the Ukrainian ethnic community, and that this hegemony was aided by the Canadian federal government's multiculturalism policy. This, in turn, made possible the erection of three monuments which continue to disseminate fascist ideas among Edmonton's apparently gullible Ukrainian population, particularly the young. Such a bold thesis requires careful research into the historical contexts on both sides of the Atlantic and thorough familiarity with Canada's socio-political environment; very little of any of this can be found in Mr. Rudling's article.

In promising to generalize to the whole Ukrainian community in Canada the meaning embodied in three monuments erected in the 1970s and 1980s in one city, the abstract immediately signals trouble. This is like someone inferring a Jewish conspiracy to control the world from observing that there are Jews in prominent positions somewhere. Is this going to be serious analysis or ethnic stereotyping?

The author says he will focus on a selection of Ukrainian monuments, what they indicate about the Ukrainian Canadian political culture, and how the group's radicalism has been reinforced by official multiculturalism. Obvious methodological problems are unaddressed, such as how representative and significant these monuments could be for the entire group, whether "the political culture of a particular community" (p. 734) can be deduced from this small sample, how to measure the group's radicalism, and how to assess reinforcement. How is the meaning of these symbols to be ascertained, and where is it to be sought? Instead of dwelling on such questions, the article assumes that the monuments' very existence makes them meaningful. Meaning has to be sought in the minds of the public, yet no effort to do that is made here. Canada has many monuments, of which most Canadians are unaware. In Ontario, for example, the AUUC (Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, the community's communist segment) put up a monument to the poet Taras Shevchenko. (Not so long ago, the monument was stolen to be melted down, leaving only the boots behind – a truly bizarre event.) Winnipeg has a monument to Shevchenko. What did these mean – were they also manifestations of nationalism, of mythmaking, or authentic cultural expression? Is that different from, or part of, the overall political culture of Ukrainian Canadians? Why are these not included in the study? His limiting himself to three entities seems to concede from the outset that the political culture of Ukrainian Canadians is not homogeneous, contrary to Rudling's claim.

Serious conceptual problems plague this work. Terms such as "nationalism," "fascism," and "Nazi collaborator" are carelessly used as labels without being defined precisely. What

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or who is a nationalist, and how would anybody recognize one? What identifiable category of people is the author talking about? Would such a person be a *katolyk*, a *pravoslavny*, or a *bezbozhnyk*? How many Ukrainian nationalists are there in Edmonton, Canada? Of these, how many "radicals" are there? The term "political culture" similarly appears throughout the article, yet nowhere is it defined or its manifestations substantiated in any meaningful way – the reader is never sure what it stands for, if anything.

The historical background offered distorts and oversimplifies the politics in Galicia in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the entire wartime period. It emphasizes that the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was totalitarian, and that it "internalized . . . Nazi and Stalinist political cultures," (p. 735) but refrains from actually labeling the USSR as totalitarian also. This gives the misleading impression that the OUN was totalitarian, but the Soviet Union was not. From the vantage point of today it is all too easy to be judgmental – one would have had to be against the Nazis, or else for them by default. But at that time, when every one of the new states of Eastern Europe except Czechoslovakia succumbed to fascism, there were only two choices: Stalin's Soviet Communism or Hitler's Nazism. As Timothy Snyder makes clear, unless you were Jewish there was no basis for choosing Stalin over Hitler because both of them systematically killed countless millions of civilians for no good reason. The OUN chose one mass murderer over the other, jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. Post hoc judgments are facile. The war and its prelude was a horrible nightmare, and some people made deplorable choices, but generations living now do not bear responsibility for these choices and their consequences – unless one is a subscriber to the theory of collective guilt, punishment, and redemption. The author's task in this article is to demonstrate that making heroes of the Ukrains'ka Povstan'ska Armiia [Ukrainian Insurgent Army] (OUN-UPA) actually resonates with people of Ukrainian extraction in Edmonton 70 years later, unless the real aim is to tar all Ukrainian Canadians, whatever their birthplace and personal history, with the same brush, as nationalist–fascist–Nazi collaborators. The original Nazi collaborators, of course, were Stalin and Molotov, in view of which the refusal of their apologists to denounce them as such is every bit as deserving of condemnation as any reputed collaboration by much smaller fry.

Rudling's catalogue of the OUN's collaboration with the Nazis is certainly damning. That relationship, however, was less than idyllic; collaborator or no, Ukrainians were equally *untermenschen* to the Nazis. Both the Bandera and Melnyk OUN wings were soon decimated by the German forces; their leaders spent much of the war in concentration camps and prison (Magocsi 670–79). This is an odd form of collaboration. The German authorities were mistrustful of and at best ambivalent towards all Ukrainian groupings, whether these were inclined to collaborate with them or not. Furthermore, the relationships among the German command, the SS Galicia Division, UPA, OUN(b), and OUN(m) were extremely complicated, conflictual, and inconsistent, to say the least. Likewise, the motives of those who joined the SS Galicia Division were varied, some expecting to help Ukraine become independent by their actions (Bolianovs'kyi). So unless we accept that individuals are to be judged guilty by association, the direct link between Hitler and the Ukrainians presented in this article seems to be an oversimplification. As the saying goes, when supping with the devil you need a very long spoon indeed, but this is all too easy to see in hindsight.

What is interesting and bears emphasis is that the Germans did not agree to the formation of the SS Galicia Division until 1943, following their defeat at Stalingrad. Shortly after its formation, the Waffen-SS Galicia Division was decimated by the Soviet Army in 1944 near Brody (Bolianovs'kyi 236–37; Magocsi 683); quickly

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reformed, it participated in suppressing the Soviet-concocted anti-Nazi uprising in Slovakia and in other actions against Soviet partisans. After the war, its remnants of some 9,500 personnel were detained for a time in Rimini before most of them were transferred in 1948 to Great Britain (Bolianovs'kyi 268, 272, 370, 376–78). In 1986, justice Jules Deschênes found that "The Galicia Division . . . should not be indicted as a group" (Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals 261), which has not deterred some people from doing so.

Given the author's black-and-white view of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, it is somewhat startling to read that "hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians had to flee the advancing Soviet Army." (p. 737) Why would Ukrainian civilians in the thousands flee before the advancing Soviet Army unless they, like the OUN, were followers of Hitler? The real answer lies in the mistreatment of the population at all levels of society in Western Ukraine by the Soviet authorities during the Molotov–Ribbentrop honeymoon, that is the imposition of Soviet rule between September 1939 and June 1941.[1]

After the war, 26,000 Ukrainian displaced persons made their way to Canada. The impression given here is that every single one was a collaborator, but in fact even if all 2,000 or so ex-members of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division were part of this total, they would have made up but a small fraction of the whole third wave of immigrants. Somehow, however many nationalists there may have been among them, "they came to redefine the Ukrainian community in Canada." (p. 737) This blanket generalization implies that the political culture developed by the first two waves of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada was wiped off the slate or never existed. It glosses over the experiences of those first two waves, the institutions they established, and the degree or nature of their nationalism.[2] The third wave did not in fact introduce Ukrainian nationalism into Canadian society or invent it. Furthermore, far from dominating the Ukrainian Canadian community as implied here, thus consolidating it around the nationalist cause, the postwar immigrants brought about only its further fragmentation.[3] "In exile," we are told, "the nationalists produced a self-serving historical mythology," (p. 737) but this is surely not surprising – why wouldn't they? The real question is, who among the public apart from its main purveyors still subscribes today to what the author calls the fascist brand of Ukrainian nationalism?

"By the 1950s, a considerable part of the Ukrainian émigré elite in Edmonton consisted of people who had collaborated militarily, intellectually, or politically with Nazi Germany." (p. 737) This statement is wholly unsubstantiated. There is no evidence in the article as to what a "considerable part" might have been, who the "émigré elite in Edmonton" were, how it was determined that these people "collaborated . . . with Nazi Germany," or how the significance of this is being assessed.

These nationalist newcomers placed a great deal of emphasis on the upbringing of their children, which Rudling regards as peculiarly fascist and abnormal. "The heavy focus on youth is a common theme among nationalist movements," he writes in note 12, but the examples given omit mention of the Komsomol, Young Pioneers, and Little Octobrists in the Soviet Union. According to this reasoning, even Lord Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts would be a fascist organization. No membership figures are given for Plast and Soiuz Ukrains'koi Molodi [Union of Ukrainian Youth] (SUM), or for the newspapers recording their activities; their universal influence over the entire Ukrainian community, which is simply assumed, is not believable. The author's grasp of Canadian social history and politics is extremely weak, so that the discussion on multiculturalism (pp. 740–42) is as misguided as much of the rest of the article. It implies that the politicization of ethnicity in Canada only began with the policy of multiculturalism. In fact, ethnicity had long been politicized in this country, well before 1971. Canadian society, as

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John Porter explained 50 years ago, was always a "vertical mosaic" in which ethnicity, status, and power were linked. The policy of multiculturalism arose out of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, initiated according to the then-comfortable notion that Canada comprised only the two cultures or founding nations, French and English (both being nations, therefore not "ethnic" groups), plus the Others (the "ethnics"), and intended to accommodate the French to the dominance of the Anglos. Against this exclusively bimodal concept of Canadian society was proposed the alternative of multiculturalism – as an acknowledgement of social reality. Multiculturalism did not spring spontaneously from the head of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and the "Ukrainian nationalists" in the sense of "Banderites" were not its driving force.[4]

It is not clear, incidentally, why "ethnicity" is presented throughout in quotation marks. Does it mean that "ethnicity" is artificial, but that ethnicity is real, or that all "ethnicities" are unreal? Without clarification, this becomes an annoying preciosity, or perhaps an attempt at cleverness that conveys no meaning at all.

Reciting a litany of the Ukrainian Canadian community's hopes for this policy of multiculturalism does not tell us how much of it was realized. Yes, we do see more "visible minorities" in Canada, and government's multicultural policy has changed. We see more visible minorities even reading the news on CBC TV, reflecting the social reality – that, too, is a policy change. On the whole, Canadians today are ambivalent in their attitudes toward multiculturalism, according to a new survey by the Association for Canadian Studies (*Globe and Mail*), which simply means that, whatever the intention behind multicultural policy, the public is not of one mind about it now.

Rudling mentions a complaint by Peter Savaryn about a disproportionate expenditure of funds by the federal government on French language instruction and then documents it in an odd way. Instead of citing any dollar figures to assess Savaryn's claim, he presents a potted biography emphasizing links to the Waffen-SS. Dealing with "ethnic" academic studies in Canada, the article twice misses the boat. First, it ignores the ethnic power structure in Canadian government, politics, and higher education. In the 1970s, WASPs were in charge of universities in Canada; "ethnic" studies were non-existent because they were considered illegitimate while the ethnicity of the WASPs was itself unacknowledged. The author takes the word of the graduate dean who opposed establishment of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) at face value, oblivious to the possibility that the latter might have been protecting interests of his own as well as a social order then considered proper and legitimate. In presenting the inauguration of ethnic studies, now a normal feature of the curriculum, as something perverse, the author accepts the old WASP narrative of what legitimate subjects at universities should be – which was that they shouldn't be "ethnic." Secondly, what gets taught, or not, at Canadian universities is established politically, whether this is acknowledged or not. So the article fails to account for the CIUS's successful establishment in the face of such strong WASP opposition; that would require a better understanding of Canadian politics.

In its activities the CIUS is said to have been promoting one (the nationalist-fascist) side of the story, yet no evidence is given. The author could have surveyed the institute's newsletters, scrutinized its list of publications, looked at the fellowships awarded for what sorts of topics, and come up with a more believable assessment as to whether or not "one particular narrative" was dominant. Note 20 reveals that Volodymyr Kubijovyč, a Nazi collaborator, set up one of the endowments. Were all other donors, endowments, and their recipients likewise compromised? Regarding the monuments, three of five having been selected for scrutiny, they can presumably represent no more than three-fifths of the total political culture of Edmonton's Ukrainian Canadians. "They illustrate three

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predominant themes in the nationalist mythology: suffering, resistance, and redemption." (p. 743) Maybe so, but the important question – never broached in this article – is, how widespread is belief in this mythology among the thousands of Ukrainians in Edmonton? Unless it can be shown that these monuments actually communicate their themes to the public, and that the public sees them as meaningful, then the monuments' significance remains an unknown.

The Youth Complex is described as "a massive complex," (pp. 743, 744) but how its massiveness compares with Edmonton's other structures (for example, West Edmonton Mall) or how that matters in the dissemination of nationalist ideology is unclear. It is definitely not massive enough to house all of Edmonton's Ukrainian population at one time. The term "massive" is supposed to convey an importance; sadly, I must inform the author that the massiveness of this complex has practically no impact on Edmontonians' consciousness – they are more interested in hockey arenas. How many other such complexes there are in Edmonton, and whether their programs are complementary or competing, ought to have been relevant questions. From personal observation over the past 30 years, they are mostly places where well-fed, well-dressed people gather to eat good food, dance, and celebrate weddings, anniversaries, and funerals. The elaborate details regarding this structure, its financing, and its opening were, in this author's opinion, given too much prominence by Per Rudling. How does this advance the argument about nationalists' influence on Ukrainian Canadian political culture? The words of Archbishop Neil Savaryn and others, quoted here, were just hopes expressed at the time. How widely are such views subscribed to today? Not very, I should say, speaking from my home base here in Edmonton. Obviously, it is but a part of the larger Ukrainian community. Unfortunately, this sense of perspective does not come through in the present article because it offers no follow-up to the opening of the complex, it says nothing about who actually uses it and how often, or how many other such (Ukrainian Canadian) complexes there are in the city, and it neglects to ask the obvious question: Do people in Edmonton even know who Shukhevych was?

The monument for Ukrainian war veterans, located in St. Michael's Cemetery, one of 22 in the city, where approximately 1/22 of the public's attention can therefore possibly be captured – even less by the monument itself – is the second one. On my last visit there, however, I failed entirely to notice the monument, and so missed an opportunity to be indoctrinated by it. Was my experience atypical, or is the monument not doing its job? "The tomb of the unknown soldier is one of the more powerful products of the nationalist imagination," (p. 749) writes the author, ignoring the fact that practically every country, including Canada, has such a national monument. Here again we have details of the monument's unveiling in 1976, but not a word about what effect it has had on public consciousness. The famine memorial supposedly "reflected a change in the historical culture of the nationalists," (p. 751) but what that had been is not explained. Incidentally, the monument is not "a symbolic broken circle," (p. 752) but actually a broken millstone – useless for grinding grain into flour, and in that way a metaphor for the famine. This story is not brought up to date; likewise, no measure as to the meaning of this monument within the Ukrainian ethnic group is attempted. The author's take on multiculturalism policy is only half-right. It is right when he says that "it emphasizes form, rather than content." (p. 755) It is also right in saying that spending on multiculturalism has been diverted into affirmative action, combating racism, and challenging discrimination. He could have mentioned that some monies go to assist in immigrant settlement, and, of course, that multiculturalism policy is a vote-buying tool. In my opinion the author's judgmental posture – and lack of real judgment – undermine his message. Referring to "radicals

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within ethnic communities," he writes that "multiculturalism . . . facilitated their promotion of nationalist mythology." (p. 754) Is that avoidable? What kind of multiculturalism would *not* facilitate it? If ethnic groups are, as Benedict Anderson says, "imagined communities," then all such groups will inevitably take advantage of opportunities to disseminate their myths about themselves. Surely it is not just those troublesome Ukrainian nationalists who resort to this mythmaking – every ethnic (or, for that matter, culturally dominant) group invents and reinvents its identity. The author implies that multiculturalism can somehow be separated from ethnic identity, which is wishful thinking.

In the Conclusion (pp. 755–57), it is said that the Yushchenko presidency revived the Banderites at home and abroad, while "the European Parliament . . . called upon Ukraine to stop glorifying Nazi collaborators." (p. 755) The problem with "Nazi collaborators" is that in the Soviet narrative of the Great Fatherland War, still kept alive today, this is a blanket term for anyone who was not totally loyal to the Soviet Union. It is a black-and-white depiction of the conflict, making no allowance for distinctions or alternative allegiances. It is said that none of these monuments "have been scrutinized, debated, or questioned," (p. 756) which is true – they are ignored as irrelevant, until somebody decides to rescue them from history's dustbin. Mr. Rudling is astonished that the monuments have evoked "virtually no opposition, even from the local Polish and Jewish communities." The author then looks for a way to account for Canadians' quiescence regarding the nationalist-fascist danger in their midst. Ostensibly, "a significant part of the Canadian . . . establishment perceives the nationalist narratives . . . as pluralism," (p. 756) which may be so, but no evidence is provided to back this up; neither is "significant" explained or the "part" of the establishment identified. This would take us in an entirely different direction, into a study of the thinking of the political elite. Such groping for an explanation further underlines the lack of a clearly articulated problem and framework for analysis at the outset. "Official multiculturalism," we are told, "works in favor of the . . . elites within the 'ethnic' communities," (p. 756) which suggests a conspiracy theory, neither provable nor disprovable. That elites rather than their followers have benefitted more from multicultural policies is not a novel discovery. He almost concedes the irrelevance of his efforts. "The study of one particular ethnic community . . . at one particular locality of Canada does not provide sufficient material to draw general conclusions about . . . multiculturalism," (p. 756) yet he will continue to make a mountain out of a molehill nonetheless. This is necessary supposedly because "the 'ethnic' building blocks of the . . . 'mosaic' of Canada are understudied and insufficiently problematized," (p. 756) which sounds impressive but is just another cliché. Actually, this paper's premises are "insufficiently problematized." The "Canadian identity and citizenship . . . rests [instead] upon the nationalists' own primordial claims, . . . sanctioned by the state." (p. 756) That is really the way things work in Canada, strange as it may seem, contrary to the author's preferences, because there is no basis for ethnic/national identity other than those "primordial claims." This was, however, not invented by Ukrainian nationalist-fascists. The Canadian prime minister, supported by a unanimous House of Commons, not long ago recognized Québec as a nation. Though he writes that "official multiculturalism has catered to the nationalists," (p. 757) I doubt that the author has tracked down all applications for multicultural grants from all Ukrainian organizations and determined that a disproportionate percentage of monies was given to nationalists. A little digging in federal government documents would show that the lion's share of monies goes to Francophone associations – so much for the multiculturalism policy's support for "ethnic" nationalisms. Supposing he were right, though, why should this disproportionate rewarding be unexpected? In Canada's politics the squeaky wheel gets the grease. "Public funds have sponsored

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radical nationalists," (p. 757) but where are the actual comparative dollar figures? According to the author, "multicultural programs have helped the nationalists defining Ukrainian culture in Canada," (p. 757) but this article provides no evidence of cause and effect, before and after. How great a part of the Ukrainian Canadian political culture is or was this nationalist component? No doubt, "the nationalists present the legacy of the OUN . . . as . . . Ukrainian 'heritage,'" (p. 757) but who accepts and internalizes it? Without that side of the picture, this "analysis" is unbalanced. What's needed is a sociological study, a survey of people's present-day attitudes, and a close reading of the culture of Ukrainian Canadians as a system of meaning, a "thick description," to see whether they hold onto the values directed at them, and whether it makes any difference. "After 40 years of multiculturalism, a considerable part" – how much, exactly? – "of the 'ethnic' elite of the Ukrainian community is deeply entrenched in an anachronistic political, cultural, and historical culture at odds with the Canadian mainstream." (p. 757)

If he disagrees with the Canadian government's multiculturalism policy, he would strengthen his case by providing evidence for and against, rather than citing only sources critical of multiculturalism or assuming that the policy of multiculturalism is identical in every Western society.

In view of its manifest deficiencies as a piece of scholarly research, I am surprised that this paper survived scrutiny by the referees selected by *Nationalities Papers*. In my view, its publication reflects poorly on the reputations of author and journal alike because it is basically polemical and propagandistic instead of objective, scholarly, and academic. It makes sweeping generalizations without evidence, shows only a superficial acquaintance with the literature on Canadian society and politics, appears more concerned with attributing guilt by association to various individuals living and dead than with assessing their real influence within the Ukrainian Canadian community, makes no attempt to substantiate its claims about the symbolic meaning of the monuments in question, lacks originally (cf. Rossolinski-Liebe), raises more questions than it answers, and ultimately fails to demonstrate the significance of the topic. It is very poor scholarship indeed. Essentially, it is a diatribe against the myth of Ukrainian integral nationalism, but the presumption that people in Edmonton uniformly adhere to this strain of nationalism is itself a myth.

Notes

1. See, for instance, the graphic account in Jan T. Gross.
2. For readers unfamiliar with this aspect of Canadian history, the first and second waves of Ukrainian immigration arrived before and after the First World War, respectively, were economic rather than political in nature, and settled mainly in Western Canada. The third wave settled mostly in the east, especially in Toronto. See for instance Manoly R. Lupul; Lubomyr Y. Luciuk; Orest Martynovych.
3. Luciuk, chapters 7–8. In the interwar period, the diaspora Ukrainian community in Canada had followed closely events in both Polish and Soviet Ukraine, and experienced a rise in Ukrainian nationalism, which infected even the radical segment of that community (Martynovych, ch. 17; Luciuk, ch. 3).
4. See, for example, the thoroughly researched and scrupulously objective participant-observer account by the late Bohdan Bociurkiw (pp. 98–128).

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