



Long-Distance Nationalism: Ukrainian Monuments and Historical Memory in Multicultural Canada

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2017, a political controversy erupted, as the Russian embassy in Ottawa posted a number of images on its twitter account, purporting to depict ‘Nazi memorials’ in Canada. Three images of memorials to Waffen-SS veterans, a prominent Nazi collaborator, and ultranationalist insurgents were accompanied by the comment ‘There are monuments to Nazi collaborators in Canada and nobody is doing anything about it’. The message was followed by the hash tags ‘#NeverForget #Holocaust #WorldWar2’ (‘Russia in Canada’ 2017) (Fig. 4.1). Three years earlier, Russia had invaded Ukraine and annexed parts of its territory, an action not seen in Europe since World War II. The invasion led to a sharp deterioration of Russia’s relations to the West, including Canada, the governments of which strongly and publicly denounced the aggression. The diplomatic row of 2017 should be seen in the context of this conflict.

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Fig. 4.1 Tweet by Russian Embassy in Ottawa (15 October 2017). Thanks to Vasily Kultyshev of the Russian Embassy in Ottawa for the permission to reproduce. For copyright issues, the images of the Edmonton Shukhevych memorial along with the Oakville monuments to the UPA and veterans of the *Waffen-SS Galizien* have been removed. The tweet, with its images, is available online at ('Russia in Canada' 2017)

However, the controversy brings to light issues of memory, migration, and the organization of public space. Why are there monuments to Ukrainian *Waffen-SS* veterans and to other radical Ukrainian nationalist formations in Canada? What sort of monuments are these? Who erected them, and why? When and how did the Russian Federation become a guardian of the memory of the Holocaust? To answer these questions, we need to look closer at the political instrumentalization of history against a complex background of collaboration, displacement, and official government-sanctioned multiculturalism.

UKRAINIAN LONG-DISTANCE NATIONALISM IN CANADA

In the immediate post-war years, Canada received 165,000 political refugees, so-called Displaced Persons (DPs). Anti-communist applicants were favoured over others; Poles and Ukrainians constituted 39% of this group, as a total of 25,772 refugees of Ukrainian origin arrived in Canada between 1947 and 1951 through the efforts of the International Refugee Organization (IRO). Followers of Stepan Bandera (1909–1959), the leader of the radical wing of the far-right Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, known as OUN(b), constituted the largest political party, supported by 75–80% of the West Ukrainian DPs.¹ A significant group

¹A dominant force in Ukrainian émigré politics, the OUN split, in the 1940s and 1950s, into three rivalling wings, as the radical wing under Stepan Bandera, known as OUN(b), broke with the more conservative leadership of Andrii Mel'nyk, which became known as the OUN(m). In the 1950s, a smaller, CIA-funded group OUN(z), or 'OUN abroad' split off

consisted of former combatants of its paramilitary wing, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (known under its Ukrainian acronym UPA (*Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*). In 1950, the Ukrainian Nationalist community grew further, as Canada admitted between 1200 and 2000 veterans of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician). As only a cross-section of the veterans were subjected to security screening (which was sketchy and incomplete), recurrent allegations of war criminals among them triggered intensive discussions ('Rodal Report' 1986; Margolian 2000). In Canada, the clandestine OUN(b) organized itself through front organizations, which set out to infiltrate and take control over local community networks.

While the bulk of Canadians of Ukrainian pedigree are culturally, socially, and politically integrated—if not assimilated—into the Canadian mainstream, a 'vanguard' of diaspora activists, claiming to speak on the behalf of 1.3 million Ukrainian Canadians, promotes a radical historical memory. It entails the glorification of, in particular, three Ukrainian nationalist groups, active during World War II: the above-mentioned OUN; its armed wing UPA; and the 14th Grenadier Division of the SS. The veterans of the latter, known colloquially as the Galicia Division, prefer to refer to the unit as I UD UNA, *Persha Ukrains'ka Dyviziiia Ukrains'koi National'noi Armii*—the First Division of the Ukrainian National Army, a name adopted in the final days of World War II (Rosenberg 1945).

These intensely political refugees formed tightly knit communities around political parties, churches, schools, social organizations, credit unions, scouting groups, and charities. Recurring performances of nationalist rituals played a central role in these émigrés' collective memory and historical culture. On anniversaries, uniformed activists in folk costumes or political and military uniforms gathered to perform speaking choirs, poetry recitals, folk dances, and historical re-enactment aimed at mobilizing the community and to socialize the Canadian-born younger generation into the nationalist historical culture.

from the Banderites. [redacted] (1977) On the OUN émigré groups, see Markus (1992). In order to make a distinction between nationalists—that is, adherents of the idea of Ukrainian statehood, among whom all sorts of political orientations were represented—and the OUN, which subscribed to a particular, totalitarian ideology, this chapter uses capital N when referring to the ideological postulates and followers of the various wings of that organization.

FROM PORTABLE CENOTAPHS TO BRONZE

The cenotaph, the tomb to the unknown soldier, is symbolically empty. As a symbol of wartime suffering, sacrifices, and redemption it dates back to ancient Greece, but became popular across the British Empire after World War I. In 2010, in Canada alone there were over 6200 documented military memorials, and no less than 76 cenotaphs ('Cenotaphs' 2010). During the early years in Canada, the Waffen-SS veterans and the Ukrainian Nationalists performed their rituals in front of portable monuments to the unknown soldier (Rudling 2011, p.750).

War monuments place particular demands on design, material, and functionality, whereby certain materials are clearly preferred. Bronze communicates permanence; marble signifies heaviness, but also something organic of the mountains, finely sculptured by an artist. A monument of Styrofoam, plastered cardboard, or plastic—no matter how durable or heavy—simply would not do for the purpose of venerating the martyrs for the Ukrainian Nationalist cause (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013, p.219). Portable monuments were therefore regarded as an unsatisfactory, temporary solution. As the Ukrainian Nationalists established themselves in Canada, they erected new, permanent memorials in Canada, of granite, marble, and bronze.

Benedict Anderson (1991, pp.6–7) argues that the nation is imagined as a 'deep, horizontal comradeship'. The stylized depiction of the vanguard of the nation—the Nationalist insurgent and martyr, fallen for the national cause, is depicted in a highly stylized, stereotypical fashion, similar to the military men depicted on the monuments for the fallen in World War I. Abousnnouga and Machin (2013, p.111) note,

Typically, the represented participant soldiers in the memorials share faces of perfect symmetrical proportions, square jaws, long slim noses and almond-shaped eyes, their faces can never be considered either plain or unattractive. Locks of hair are carved consistently. Bodies of the soldiers were also perfect and muscular ... The figurative representations of the soldiers create physiognomic stereotypes that cause the illusion of a common ethnic identity and a race that exists within the nation that shares only desirable physical features.

The depiction of the UPA insurgents on the monuments bears little semblance to the brutal realities on the ground in Ukraine; the insurgency

was often highly chaotic, a very significant part of the insurgents were former auxiliary police in German service, many of them with direct involvement in the Holocaust and accustomed to extreme political violence. The rebels were often malnourished, dirty, and—after the return of the Soviets in 1944—increasingly desperate. Their uniforms were incomplete and inconsistent. The monument design was an appropriation of established Commonwealth practices for the community’s own memory culture, in which the Ukrainian Nationalist and Waffen-SS veterans depicted their heroes through Graeco-Roman aesthetics, merging antiquity with modern nationalism.

MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTINATIONALISM

According to the 2011 census, 1,251,170 people in Canada identified as Ukrainian, although only 11.5% of these could actually speak Ukrainian. The number of dedicated Ukrainian nationalists is far smaller, but well organized. In recent decades, in particular, affiliates of the OUN(b) have played important roles in the leadership of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. During the Ukrainian crisis of 2013–2014, the Banderites dominated the leadership of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, which claimed to speak on behalf of all people of Ukrainian ancestry in Canada. Paul (Pavlo) Grod, UCC National President between 2007 and 2018 (and currently president of the Ukrainian World Congress), has held leading positions in the Banderite youth organization SUM as well as the League of Ukrainian Canadians (Chyczij 2019).

In reality, second-, third-, and fourth-generation Ukrainian-Canadians tend to have limited interest in the increasingly distant historical homeland of grand- and great-grandparents. As the command of the Ukrainian language dissipated, the community was increasingly forged around a particular ideological rendition of history. The interpretation that the 1932–1933 famine (*Holodomor*) constituted a deliberate genocide of the Ukrainian ethnic group, along with the cult of the OUN and UPA, constituted key features of this canon. Dissent from the *Holodomor*-OUN-UPA discourse was uncommon, and often censured through ostracization or expulsion from the Ukrainian ethno-political community.

The 1971 introduction of official multiculturalism under Pierre Trudeau (1919–2000, Prime Minister from 1968–1979 and 1980–1984) was intended to defuse the issue of Quebecois nationalism and to promote

good community relations in Canada.² People of Ukrainian heritage constituted one of the largest communities in the Canadian West. Its intensely politicized leadership was the best-organized ethno-nationalist group in Canada. Soon, Ukrainian Canadian ‘ethnic activists’ took the lead in this process, particularly in western Canada (Wayland 1997, p.47). ‘The multiculturalist movement ... began under the initiative of Ukrainian nationalists’, historian Aya Fujiwara notes, ‘by far the most active group in the pursuit of multiculturalism and collective ethnic rights’(2007, p.223). Canadian multiculturalism has come to underwrite long-distance nationalism financially, politically, and socially.

Ironically, Trudeau, whose policies made him one of the Ukrainian Nationalists’ most prominent benefactors, not only opposed Ukrainian separatism, but nationalism as such (Kordan 2019, pp.4–5). Canadian liberalism and Ukrainian Nationalism thus made an unlikely pair. Over the years, however, they came to develop an increasingly symbiotic relationship: Canadian multicultural policies benefited and stimulated the Nationalists, strengthening their hand within the community. This, in turn, aided the organized Ukrainian Nationalists in mobilizing ‘ethnic’ block votes in several key ridings, not least in the Toronto area, allowing them to yield significant political influence over Canadian foreign policy vis-à-vis Ukraine (Fujiwara 2015; MacKinnon 2015; for a slightly different interpretation, see Kordan 2019, p.8). Not only the Liberals, but also the Conservatives and the leftist NDP increasingly came to cater to the Nationalists’ key issues: the *Holodomor* discourse and, in the case of the Tories, the glorification of the OUN and UPA.³

Canadian multicultural policies were supported by 1% of the state budget. During the first three and a half years following its introduction, the Canadian government allocated CAD\$ 19,160,000 to multicultural programmes, spent on ‘ethno-cultural groups’ and ‘ethnic press’; significant resources were set aside to market its new policies (Wayland 1997, p.47). Partially as a consequence of this ‘ethnic turn’, in 1976 the provincial government of Alberta sponsored the establishment of a Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) with an annual grant of \$350,000,

² On descriptive and normative multiculturalism, see Bauhn (1995).

³ In 2008, Canada officially adopted the diaspora’s version of the famine, recognizing, through Bill C-459, the *Holodomor* as a genocide. On the glorification of the OUN(b) and UPA by senior Tory politicians, such as Jason Kenney, formerly Minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism under Stephen Harper, and currently Premier of Alberta, see Himka (2015, p. 157).

an amount later increased to \$500,000 (Kravchenko 2019, p.38). In addition to direct government funding, émigré Nationalist groups were underwritten by indirect sponsorship in the form of tax rebates, reduced postage rates, and full-page government ads in their papers.

To the frustration of the Ukrainian community elites, the focus of Canadian multicultural policies changed over the 1970s and 1980s, as the funding of folklore and nationalist activism decreased in favour of sponsoring stimulating ‘intercultural understanding’ and anti-racism (Rudling 2011, pp.741–742). Official multiculturalism was affirmed in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 which put increased stress on ‘intercultural awareness understanding’ (Wayland 1997, p.49). While the policies have shifted, multicultural funding continues to underwrite Ukrainian Nationalist activism in Canada today. For example, in 2008–2009, through the Department of Canadian Heritage and The Canada Post Corporation, the OUN(b) organ *Homin Ukrainy* received \$ 23,096 in subsidies, the OUN(m)’s *New Pathway* \$15,921, and the pro-nationalist *Ukrainian News* \$15,751 (‘Publications Assistance Program 2008–2009’).

THE SHUKHEVYCH YOUTH COMPLEX, EDMONTON

The introduction of official multiculturalism was accompanied by the erection of a number of ‘ethnic’ memorials across Canada, particularly in the prairie provinces (Swyrypa 2010, pp.172–189). Among the most impressive of all these memorials, monuments, schools, clubs, and community buildings is the enormous, partially government-funded Roman Shukhevych Ukrainian Youth Unity Complex (UYUC) (*Dim ukrains’koi molodi im. Romana Shukhevycha*) in Edmonton, Alberta. The edifice is dedicated to the wartime leader of the OUN(b) and supreme commander of its military wing, the UPA, Roman Shukhevych (1907–1950), an overside bronze bust of which stands in front of its main building (Fig. 4.2). After entering the dimly lit gates, the visitor is again greeted by Shukhevych’s image, in the form of a brightly illuminated golden relief on a dark brick wall, surrounded by the acronyms, in Ukrainian, of the organizations he commanded.

Opened in 1973, the UYUC was underwritten by significant multicultural funding (\$75,000) from the government of Alberta. As a non-profit charitable organization, the UYUC remains a tax exempt organization. The purpose of the complex, the OUN(b) press declared, was to ‘become a blacksmith’s forge, which will forge hard, unbreakable characters of the Ukrainian youth’ and to ‘raise and harden a new generation of fighters for



Fig. 4.2 Bust to Roman Shukhevych (pseud. Chuprynka), Ukrainian Youth Complex, Edmonton. (Photo courtesy of John-Paul Himka)

the liberation of Ukraine, ready to unite its strength with the forces of the warriors of the captive Ukraine’ (Rudling 2011, p.744, 746). The Shukhevych monument was set up without much discussion or controversy. At this time, the Holocaust in Ukraine generated limited interest; the Soviet Union ignored or suppressed the memory of Jewish persecution and Soviet archives remained largely inaccessible to researchers.

It is unlikely that Pierre Trudeau had even heard of Shukhevych when he, in November 1975, visited the complex to enjoy the Nationalists’ folkloristic performances before addressing them about the benefits of multiculturalism (Sinclair 1975, p.1,12). Yet, Shukhevych is controversial as a representative for Ukraine. He collaborated with Nazi Germany, as a commanding officer in the *Batallion Nachtigall*—a collaborationist subunit under the command under the *Abwehr* in 1940–1941—and thereafter in the *Schutzmannschaft* battalion 201 in occupied Belorussia from early 1942 until early 1943. In 1941, the OUN(b) enthusiastically supported a German victory in the war and supplied manpower for various

collaborationist formations. *Nachtigall* soldiers partook in anti-Jewish violence in the summer of 1941, including in the Lviv pogrom and mass shootings in the Vinnytsia area. (Struve 2015, pp.354–360).

After Stalingrad, many Ukrainian Nationalists deserted the auxiliary units for the UPA, the backbone of which consisted heavily of former collaborators (Katchanovski 2019). In 1943 the OUN(b) and UPA, both under Shukhevych's leadership, launched a campaign of ethnic cleansing, which, according to the most detailed studies, claimed the lives of 91,200 Poles and several thousand Jews (Siemaszko 2011, p.341). While the UPA concluded an agreement of mutual support and cooperation with Nazi Germany in August 1944, it retained its autonomy and independence (Burds 2010; Vedenev and Ehorov 1998). The UPA does, however, qualify as a perpetrator in the Holocaust; in 1943–1944, it killed perhaps as many as 10,000 Jews, who until then had managed to survive by hiding in the forests. The mass violence against Poles and Jews was carried out as part of the struggle for Ukrainian statehood and not—as Soviet propagandists liked to claim—by UPA members as proxies, or ‘hangmen’ for the Nazis (Himka 2017).

UKRAINIAN WAR VETERANS’ MEMORIAL, EDMONTON

The ‘first wave’ of Ukrainian immigrants that arrived in Canada from the Habsburg Empire at the turn of the twentieth century, and much of the ‘second’, interwar immigration from West Ukraine regarded cemeteries as hallowed, but rather apolitical grounds. The St. Mykhailo (Michael’s) Ukrainian Cemetery in Edmonton was opened by the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton in 1955 (St. Michael’s cemetery n.d.). Over the years, St. Michael’s started to take on more overt political characteristics. By the 1970s, as a preferred burial ground of many Nationalist activists and Ukrainian SS veterans, it had come to occupy a central place in their memory culture.

On 31 October 1976, at the centre of this cemetery, the Ukrainian War Veterans’ Society in Edmonton (*Ukrains’ka Strilets’ka Hromada*, USH)—where veterans of the 14th Waffen-SS Division Galizien were the driving force—inaugurated a large memorial to their martyrs (Martynowych 2011; Bairak 1978, pp.184–185). The edifice, titled the Central Cross, still towers over the cemetery, surrounded by spruce and Manitoba maple; it carries the text ‘Fighters for Ukrainian Freedom’ (*Bortsiam za voliu Ukrainy*). Bronze plaques, in English and Ukrainian, explain: ‘This monument was erected by the combatant organizations U.S.S., U.H.A.,

U.S.H. U.P.A. and 1-st U.D. U.N.A., it was consecrated by Patriarch Yosyf Slipyj on Oct. 31, 1976'. Incomprehensible to an outsider—and certainly to most Canadians—these are acronyms for armed Ukrainian nationalist formations of two world wars. USS is short for *Ukrains'ki Sichovi Stril'tsi*, the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, whereas UHA stands for *Ukrains'ka Halyts'ka Armiiia*, the Ukrainian Galician Army, two military formations in World War I, the latter associated with the short-lived West Ukrainian People's Republic (Fig. 4.3).

The monument was consecrated by the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Major Archbishop Josyf Slipyi (1893–1984), a former Soviet political prisoner. The memorial construction committee was chaired by multicultural activist Peter Savaryn (1926–2017), leader of the local chapter of the Ukrainian Waffen-SS veterans.⁴ 'For whom did we erect this memorial cross?', Savaryn (2007, p.253) asked rhetorically, as he inaugurated the memorial. Answering his own question, Savaryn reeled off a long list of battles and of martyrs, 'Ukrainian Spartans' of a millennial struggle against the enemies of the nation; 'Ukrainian Thermopylians... from Poltava, Baturyn, Krut, Makivka, Bazara, Lysoni, Gleichenberg'; and heroes 'such as Petliura, Konovalets, Shukhevych, Bandera, and the nameless ... who died, in order for Ukraine to live; may their eternal rest serve



Fig. 4.3 Monument 'To the Fighters for Ukrainian Freedom', Edmonton, Alberta. (Photo by Erik Visser. Thanks to Marc Turgeon, Director of Cemeteries at the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton for generously allowing author to use this illustration. Image from <http://www.stmichaels-rosehill-cemetery.com/st-michaels-description.html>. Accessed 31 July 2018.)

⁴Volodymyr Kubijovych Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, (henceforth: LAC), MG 31, D 203, Vol. 10, folder 41 "Petro Savaryn."

as a call to awaken their own people'. To Savaryn, the Ukrainian nationalist struggle reaches back several hundred years, linking the present to a distant past of princely knights, Cossacks, *baidamaks*, Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, soldiers of the UHA, UNR,⁵ UPA, Waffen-SS Galizien and the Carpathian *Sich*,⁶ who 'laid down their exuberant heads, united, indivisible and faithful ... as members of the eternal body of the eternal Ukrainian people'. He further noted that their sacrifices were not in vain, as their children 'will take up the swords of their forefathers, to the joy of mother Ukraine' (ibid.).⁷

MONUMENT TO THE GLORY OF THE UPA, NORTH OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

Similar memorials appeared in other Canadian cities with significant Ukrainian populations. St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Cemetery, in North Oakville, Ontario, established in 1984, was owned and operated by the Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral with the same name. The idea to erect a memorial in Oakville emerged in 1981–1982, following which a committee was formed in 1984. Inspiration came from south of the border, where Ukrainian Nationalists were erecting UPA memorials in Parma, OH, in 1982 and Bound Brook, NJ, in 1984 (Vakar 1988, p.5). The committee was pan-nationalist, bringing together representatives of the two OUN branches, the Ukrainian Free Cossack Movement, veterans of *Nachtigall* and its sister unit *Roland*, its successor, the *Schutzmannschaft* battalion 201 (euphemized as DUN, *Druzhyhny Ukrain's'kykh Natsionalistiv*, Units of Ukrainian Nationalists), the Waffen-SS Galizien, and the UNR in exile. By 1988, the committee had raised \$88,650 for a memorial to the 'glory of the UPA'.⁸ A huge granite memorial, entitled *Pam'iatnyk Slavy UPA*

⁵The UNR stands for *Ukrains'ka Narodna Respublika*, the Ukrainian People's Republic, a short-lived republic declared in early 1918.

⁶The Carpathian Sich (*Karpats'ka Sich*) was a paramilitary organization set up in late 1938, and which sought independence for Capatho-Ukraine.

⁷See also LAC, MG 31, D 203, Vol. 10, folders 40 "Petro Savaryn – Edmonton (1968, 1970, 1972–75)"; Peter and Olga Savaryn Family Fonds, Provincial Archives of Alberta (henceforth PAA), accession no. PR2014.0451/0003, PR0671.0005, "Information and biographies," Box 1.

⁸The list of donors read as a who-is-who of radical émigré Ukrainian Nationalism. The list of donors includes prominent OUN names such as Halamai, Stets'ko, Luciuk, Plaviuk, Kashuba, and many others (Vakar 1988, pp. 9, 14, 22, 61, 104).

(‘Monument to the Glory of the UPA’), designed by Volodymyr Mariian Badnars’kyi-Volod was hewn by Bronson Granite and Marble Ltd. in Kitchener, Ontario, in 1987–1988 (Vakar 1988, p.3). The monument depicts a soldier, wearing a stylized Cossack uniform hat, a so-called *maze-pinka*. Behind the granite relief is a large Ukrainian trident and a black cross with a stylized symbol of the UPA, a raised sword, with the words ‘Eternal glory to the soldiers of the UPA: For Ukraine, for Freedom, for the people’ and the years 1942–1952. The base of the monument carries the OUN ‘commandment’, to which all members pledged to commit themselves: ‘Achieve a Ukrainian State or Die in the Struggle for It’. Typically for these sorts of monuments, it presents death as a deliberate act of giving (Abousnrouga and Machin 2013, p.219) (Fig. 4.4).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UPA_Monument_3.jpg

Inaugurated on 26 May 1988, to coincide with the commemorations of the millennial celebration of Christianity in Ukraine, the monument constitutes the imposing centrepiece of a large necropolis. The opening rituals were saturated in the rhetorical pomp so characteristic of the émigré Ukrainian Nationalists, glorifying the ‘Fallen Hero Soldiers of Ukraine’, specifically the USS, the OUN, and UPA, ‘victims of the “Muscovite satanical machine”’ (Vakar 1988, pp.5, 6, 13). Soon thereafter, the ‘Monument to the Glory of the UPA’ was accompanied by a cenotaph to the Ukrainian Waffen-SS veterans. It carries inscriptions in three languages. The Ukrainian text ‘To the Fighters for the Freedom of Ukraine’ is accompanied by ‘To Those Who Died For the Freedom of Ukraine’ and ‘Morts Pour L’Ukraine’ in the two Canadian official languages. On the top of the black marble cenotaph is a large cross with the coat of arms of the Waffen-SS Division Galizien, with the letters ‘1 UD UNA’ (Fig. 4.5).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SS_Galician_monument.jpg

Beyond the Ukrainian diaspora, these monuments went largely unnoticed. The few times the St. Volodymyr’s cemetery was even mentioned in the local press reflects the sleepy, peaceful Canadian suburbia that surrounded it. A fence was installed in the 1990s, ‘after homeowners used to [sic] cemetery to dump yard clippings and used motor oil’, reported the local newspaper, *The Oakville Beaver*. In 1996 and 1998, the *Beaver* reported cases of vandalism at the cemetery, though apparently without political motives, as the vandals made no discernment between the graves of Ukrainian veterans and that of a baby (Mozel 1998, pp.1,5).



Fig. 4.4 ‘Monument to the Glory of the UPA’, North Oakville, Ontario. Wikipedia commons, photo by Wikipedia user ‘Lvivske’

The 1990s not only saw the collapse of the Soviet Union; over the decade, interest in the Holocaust surged. The Ukrainian community, as Canada at large, meanwhile underwent significant demographic changes. As the veterans’ generation aged and passed away, a ‘fourth’ wave of post-Soviet Ukrainian immigrants took over the management of the North Oakville cemetery, which was reflected on its web site, administered by people with a first language other than English.

Fig. 4.5 Monument
'To the Fighters for the
Freedom of Ukraine',
North Oakville, Ontario.
Wikipedia commons,
photo by Wikipedia user
'Lvivske'



Since [sic] its establishment St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Cemetery has developed into a [sic] largest Ukrainian cemetery in Canada. Ukrainian War Veteran's memorials of the Ukrainian Liberating Army and First Ukrainian Division marking designated burial grounds of our freedom fighters [sic]. ('St. Volodymyr's Ukrainian Cemetery' [n.d.](#))

The cemetery's website offers 'UPA shape' tombstones, starting at \$3860, with the words 'ETERNAL GLORY' [VICHNA SLAVA] (*ibid.*). The OUN(b) and its façade organizations regularly gather at the necropolis to perform their rituals. Yet, rather than making inroads into Canadian mainstream, this memory culture exists at the fringe of society, and the cemetery remains largely a preserve of 'frozen' immigrant culture.

WOOING THE ‘ETHNIC’ VOTE

The organization today known as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) was established in 1940 by a Canadian government concerned with the spread of communism. It has worked closely with successive Canadian governments (Fujiwara 2015, pp.208). Underwritten by official Canadian multiculturalism, since 1971 the UCC has moved its positions forward, regardless of whether Conservatives or Liberals were in power (Himka 2015, p.156). The impact of the organized Ukrainian diaspora on Canadian politics has been significant. In 1991, Canada was the first Western country to recognize Ukraine’s independence, and the country has had a close relationship with Ukraine ever since (Kordan 2019, p.16). Bilateral treaties, signed in 1994, designate the relations between Canada and Ukraine as a ‘special partnership’ (Bessonova 2018, p.8).

During the so-called Orange Revolution of 2004–2005, Canada took an active part in promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict between an increasingly authoritarian government and pro-democracy protesters. As president, the victor of the Orange Revolution, Viktor Iushchenko (2005–2010), adopted the diaspora’s memory culture and turned glorification of the OUN(b) and UPA Ukrainian into government policy. Shukhevych and Bandera were elevated to official heroes of Ukraine, posthumously awarded the highest state decorations, and their portraits appeared on postage stamps and commemorative coins. If Iushchenko’s memory policies sharply polarized Ukrainian opinion, they delighted the diaspora. In Canada, the UCC felt emboldened to request recognition and pensions for OUN and UPA veterans in Canada, triggering intense discussions in the pages of the *Edmonton Journal* and the local Ukrainian press in Alberta.

Under the leadership of Grod, a successful businessman, the UCC aggressively moved its positions forward. Grod skilfully formed close relationships with top Canadian government officials, reflecting a new confidence and boldness of its mostly OUN(b)-affiliated leadership. In 2013, a satisfied UCC reported that, for the second year in a row, ‘Paul Grod has been once again named as one of the top 80 influencing Canadian foreign policy by *Embassy Magazine*, a prominent Ottawa-based publication’ (‘Ukrainian Canadian Congress President Listed’ 2012; ‘Paul Grod Named...’ 2013; Shane and Foster 2013). The UCC noted that this ‘re-affirms that the hard work of our branches, committees and member organizations ... is making a difference with Canada’s top decision makers’

(‘Paul Grod Named...’ 2013). Aside from Canadian foreign policy, in particular vis-à-vis Ukraine, historical memory constitutes a top priority for the UCC.

During his tenure as UCC President, Paul has successfully ensured that Ukraine is a top foreign policy priority for Canada, negotiated the recognition of Canada’s first national internment operations and establishment of a \$10 M endowment by the Government of Canada, and ensured that Canada recognized the *Holodomor* as a genocide of the Ukrainian people. (ibid.)

The UCC’s agenda is heavily focussed on historical injustices committed against Ukrainians, never on wrongs committed by Ukrainians. The UCC remains highly sensitive to matters related to the Holocaust, in particular Ukrainian involvement in atrocities. Regarding historical representations of Ukrainians, Grod stresses the importance of Ukrainians being ‘viewed as victims, and not perpetrators of Nazism, during the Second World War’ (Grod 2013, quote at 1:03–1:10).

The government of Stephen Harper (b. 1959, PM 2006–2015) was highly receptive to the UCC’s narration of history. Harper not only affirmed the UCC’s *Holodomor* discourse, but uncritically repeated its grossly inflated casualty numbers of over ten million famine deaths in the Ukrainian SSR in 1932–1933 (Himka 2015, p.157; see also Moore 2012). The Prime Minister received the OUN(b)’s revisionist historians, whereas Jason Kenney, his minister in charge of multiculturalism, visited the OUN(b)’s own Lonts’kyi Street Museum (*Tiurma na Lonts’koho*) in Lviv, Ukraine, reassuring the diaspora Nationalists back in Canada that he had paid proper tribute to ‘the freedom fighters of the OUN’ (Himka 2015, p.157). Aya Fujiwara (2015, p.211) cautions that

[t]he Canadian Parliament has thus adopted the UCC’s version of Ukrainian politics and history unquestionably as the most authoritative, notwithstanding its inclination towards far right political views, which hindered a balanced interpretation of the Ukrainian past.

CANADA AND THE *EUROMAIDAN*

Following the ouster of the corrupt Viktor Ianukovych (b. 1950, president 2010–2014) in a popular uprising in early 2014, Russia invaded Ukraine and illegally annexed parts of its territory. Ianukovych’s successor,

Petro Poroshenko (president 2014–2019) resumed the glorification of the OUN and UPA. Parks and central thoroughfares in Kyiv were renamed after Bandera and Shukhevych, while ‘disrespect’ for ‘fighters for Ukrainian statehood in the XX century’ was criminalized. The Ukrainian army received new uniforms, modelled after the UPA, and adopted the OUN(b) salute. Predictably, also this round of instrumentalization of history led to protests, among other from the Jewish community, Israel, Poland, the EU, the United States Holocaust Museum, and several dozen members of the US Congress.⁹

During the 2014 crisis, the UCC further strengthened its position, all but monopolizing its position to speak on Ukrainian matters. The UCC ‘was unofficially designated as a significant participant in Canadian diplomacy’, and ‘Paul Grod was invited to participate at every stage of Canada’s action’, Fujiwara notes (2015, p.210). Publicly and vigorously protesting Russia’s actions, Harper adopted the diaspora’s rhetoric, referring to Putin as ‘evil’, ‘extremist’, and ‘imperialist’, comparing him to Hitler. ‘[T]he government of Canada’, Fujiwara argues, ‘demonstrated that it would side with the UCC completely, embracing the latter’s political and historical vision and incorporating UCC suggestions into its policies’. Throughout the Ukrainian crisis, ‘both the UCC and Canada became active participants in the “propaganda war”’ (ibid., pp.212–214). Subsequently, during his 2014 state visit to Canada, Poroshenko declared that Ukraine had ‘no better friend’ than Canada (Kordan 2019, p.5). In February 2015, the *Kyiv Post*, an English-language paper popular with the Ukrainian diaspora, ranked Harper among the top ten ‘most influential promoters’ of Ukraine in the international community, adding that ‘perhaps Stephen Harper would not support Ukraine that actively if Canada did not have the world’s largest diaspora community’(MacKinnon 2015).

Mykhailo Wynyckyj, a Ukrainian Canadian diaspora political analyst, credits the diaspora community with bringing Ukraine to the attention of politicians in Ottawa. The Conservatives’ support for the Ukrainian cause, he noted, has political consequences on a national scale:

The gratitude of a community once seen as favouring the Liberal Party could tip key ridings in the Conservatives’ favour, particularly in and around cities with large Ukrainian populations, such as Toronto and Winnipeg. (cited in MacKinnon 2015)

⁹On the Ukrainian memory laws, see Marples (2018); Israeli reactions, Sokol (2018).

Russia, which had vocally expressed its dissatisfaction with the positions of the Harper government, appears to have hoped for a new dynamic when the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau (b. 1971) took office in late 2015. At a press conference in Moscow on 26 January 2016, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov criticized Canada for its stance on the conflict in Ukraine, in particular for having sided with ‘rabid representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora’, but expressed hopes that the relations may now improve. He was sharply rebuked by Stéphane Dion (b. 1955), the new Liberal foreign minister, reconfirming that the sway of the UCC would continue also under the new government. ‘[W]e will not tolerate from a Russian minister any insults against the community’, Dion stated (cited in Kordan 2019, p. xiii). In response to inquiries from the media, Dion reconfirmed that ‘The Ukrainian-Canadian community is a very important part of Canada’s fabric. They are also experts on Ukraine. So it is natural – and beneficial for us – to consult them and take account of their views’ (cited in Kordan 2019, p.151).

A similar assessment was made in the House of Commons by Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux, who presented the work of UCC Executive Director Taras Zalusky and Paul Grod as

excellent and wonderful ... in ensuring that whether a member or a leader of the Liberal Party [,] of the Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party, we are kept abreast of their point of view on what it actually taking place. (cited in Fujiwara 2015, p.210)

As Russia would learn, the support for the UCC’s narration of history cut across the Canadian political landscape, from the Conservatives, through the Liberals, into the leftist New Democratic Party. Canadian foreign policy interests appeared conspicuously aligned with the UCC (Kordan 2019, p. xiii).

THE FASCISM OF OTHERS: ACCUSATIONS OF NAZISM AS RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOOL

In the 1980s, the depiction of the US and Canada as safe havens for war criminals became a staple of Soviet propaganda. Under Vladimir Putin, the legacy of the ‘Great Patriotic War’ has returned to the centre stage of official ‘patriotic’ discourse in the Russian Federation. Accusations of war

criminality have similarly gained a greater prominence in Russian propaganda, as its relations with the West have deteriorated. Similarly, claims that the popular uprising against Ianukovych constituted a fascist coup became the *Leitmotif* of an intense Russian media campaign to legitimize the military aggression against Ukraine and the occupation of the Crimea (Fedor et al. 2015).

In a January 2017 reshuffle of his cabinet, Trudeau replaced Dion with the journalist Chrystia Freeland (b.1968) as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Raised in the Ukrainian community in Alberta, and with a background in the nationalist scouting organization *Plast*, Freeland works closely with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, referring to Paul Grod as a ‘friend’ (‘Khrystia Frilend’ n.d.; Freeland 2014). Freeland appears to have become a particular irritant for the Russian government; almost immediately upon taking office, Russian-affiliated media venues portrayed her as a ‘catastrophe for Canadian-Russian relations’, ‘a Russophobe, a hater of Putin, of Russian politics’ (‘Ottawa’s New Foreign Minister’ 2017).

In an August 2016 tweet, Freeland made her own family history a public and political matter by introducing her maternal grandparents as refugees who ‘worked hard to return freedom and democracy to Ukraine’, adding that ‘I am proud to honour their memory today’ (Freeland 2016). Coming to terms with family histories of the Nazi era has often proven difficult, also in societies and communities where Holocaust awareness is a central feature of memory culture (Welzer et al. 2002). Freeland’s public claims notwithstanding, her grandfather’s democratic credentials are, at the very least, debatable. From 1940 to 1945, her grandfather, Mykhailo Khomiak (1905–1983) was the editor of the pro-Nazi collaborationist paper *Krakivs’ki visti* in Nazi-occupied Poland (Gyidel 2019; Markiewicz 2018). After immigrating to Canada with his family in 1948, Khomiak was active in various nationalist organizations, such as the Ukrainian War Veterans’ Association in Edmonton—which played a key role in erecting the monument at St. Michael’s Cemetery (‘Chomiak Mychajlo’ 1945; Bairak 1978, pp.147, 163). That Khomiak would end up at the centre of an international political controversy decades after his death was unexpected; he did not write anything of substance, and his private correspondence reflects a man of simple and rather pedestrian views (Gyidel 2019).

Khomiak’s legacy initially became a topic of discussion on websites, blogs, and online newspapers, not least on the radical left or alternative

right.¹⁰ Soon, however, the story was picked up by mainstream media, increasingly turning into a political liability for the Trudeau government. At a press conference on 6 March 2017, Freeland dodged a direct question whether her grandfather collaborated with the Nazis, answering instead that Russia has sought to destabilize the US political system and that Canada should be prepared for the same ('Russia spreads disinformation...' [2017](#), quote at 5:10–5:45). An official in Freeland's office went further, denying outright that her grandfather would have been a Nazi collaborator, whereas Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety, urged Canadian politicians to be alert to Russian disinformation tactics (Fife [2017](#)).

Similar denials came from the Ukrainian community, with UCC President Grod dismissing claims originating with Russian venues as *a priori* false and 'outlandish' 'fake news' and 'disinformation' (Fife [2017](#)).

In the *Ottawa Citizen*, Lubomyr Luciuk, a geographer at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, and a tireless promoter of the legacy of the OUN(b), UPA, and the Waffen-SS Galizien, wrote that *Krakivs'ki visti*'s 'editors had no affinity for Nazi aims but used their positions to sustain the Ukrainian resistance'. To Luciuk, not only was Khomiak's wartime past 'nothing to be ashamed of', but—quite the contrary, a source of pride (Luciuk [2017](#)). To Canada's geopolitical adversaries, the scandal and the awkward damage control revealed a significant political potential of this undigested historical past.

TWITTER WARFARE

On 14 October 2017, Ukrainian Nationalists in Canada gathered for their annual commemorations of the (fictitious) 1942 foundation date of the UPA. The celebrations coincide with a Ukrainian Greek Catholic religious holiday and the anniversary of the martyrdom of Stepan Bandera at the hands of a KGB assassin on 15 October 1959. That day, the Russian embassy in Ottawa, through its official Twitter account, released its now-famous tweet, illustrated with three images: the Edmonton Shukhevych monument and the Oakville monuments to the IUD UNA and the UPA ('Russia in Canada' [2017](#); Smith [2017](#); Sevunts [2018](#)). The Russian Embassy tagged prominent Jewish organizations, such as the Centre for

¹⁰On the campaign, launched on *Russian Insider*, [Consortiumnews.com](#), and *The New Cold War: Ukraine and Beyond*, see (Fife [2017](#))

Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and B'nai B'rith Canada. Kirill Kalinin, the Russian diplomat who managed the Twitter account, provided the following rationale for his actions:

We wanted to let our followers on Twitter know that even today in Canada you can find monuments to Nazi collaborators that committed atrocities in the Soviet Union, Poland, etc. and fought against the heroic Red Army that was allied with Canada, U.S. and Britain during the Second World War. (Harvey 2017a)

DISBELIEF, DISAVOWAL, DISINTEREST

To the surprise and disbelief of *The Oakville Beaver*, its sleepy suburban community suddenly found itself at the centre of an international political controversy:

The Oakville monuments include a memorial to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and one to the 1st Ukrainian Division. The Russian Embassy charges the latter was suspect as the 1st Ukrainian Division was created following the reformation of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS. Both monuments have been in Oakville since the late 1980s. Neither structure features Nazi symbols and there is no reference to the SS on the memorial to the 1st Ukrainian Division. (Lea 2017)

Approached by national media, the manager, Oleg Bezpitko, appeared unprepared for the sudden interest in the cemetery. Queried by the *National Post*, Bezpitko was unable to say much about the background of the contentious monuments, other than that they were ‘probably erected sometime during the 1980s, before he himself immigrated to Canada’, the paper wrote. Bezpitko confirmed that several Waffen-SS men were buried in the cemetery, but added: ‘Fighting on the German side doesn’t mean to be a Nazi, right ... You have to understand, those were the people who were fighting communism’ (cited in Smith 2017). This rather detached, matter-of-fact attitude is rather common among post-Soviet Ukrainian immigrants, many of whom are detached or disinterested in the post-World War II Galician émigrés’ history and memory culture.

The largest image in the tweet, however, depicted the Shukhevych monument in Edmonton. This monument is more controversial, not only because of the far greater scope of the OUN-UPA atrocities, or because Poland, in July 2016, recognized the Volhynian massacres as genocide,

but because it was set up with Canadian government funding. Contacted by the *National Post*, the Ukrainian Youth Unity complex in Edmonton reacted with defiance. Its spokesperson Taras Podilsky ‘rejected any notions that Shukhevych may have been involved in war crimes’, the paper reported.

I have never heard ... about him being in any war crimes or anything we should be hiding ... He’s completely seen as a hero, and respected to this day as a symbol of the fight for freedom. (Smith 2017)

Interviewed by the *Edmonton Examiner*, Ihor Broda, a leader of the Edmonton Banderites, laid out the Nationalist narration in some detail, arguing that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. He had learned about Shukhevych’s fight for independence, he told the press, but ‘the curriculum did not include the pogroms or controversies’ (cited in Goldenberg 2017). Broda claimed that since the information flow was controlled by Nazis and Soviets, people ‘did not know the Holocaust was happening’, that Shukhevych’s legacy ‘is safe with those who understand his perspective’ and that

the people who knew him and what he was about, they support and admire him ... Others may not, the second and third generation people have drifted away. They say Nazis are bad, therefore he is bad. Most people are not that interested in getting into historical details. (ibid.)

Aidan Fishman, interim director of B’nai B’rith Canada’s League for Human Rights, suggested that these monuments ought to give the Canadian public cause to pause and reflect upon history and memory. ‘I think the question that Canadians really need to ask is, does the presence of these monuments in any way contribute to anti-Semitism, or to other forms of racism or bigotry in Canada today?’ (cited in Smith 2017). To Fishman, the answer appeared to be ‘no’, since ‘the intent of these monuments is not to stir up hatred or to glorify crimes against Jews’. While B’nai B’rith would not support any further such monuments, Fishman did not call for their removal.

I think that the communities that have established these monuments, so namely the Ukrainian-Canadian community, should take a critical look at these facts and should remind themselves that many of these people were

engaged in collaboration with the Nazis ... And that may change the way that these people are portrayed and perceived in their own community. (ibid.)

To the *National Post*, Ihor Michalchyshyn, Executive Director and CEO of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, communicated little interest in such introspection. On the contrary, he rejected outright ‘any insinuation that Ukrainians collaborated with Nazi Germany during the Second World War’, *National Post* reported.¹¹

I think that the premise of calling them Nazi collaborators is slanderous. And our community honours our dead, and our veterans, and we’re very disappointed that the story continues to be propagated in support of Russian disinformation ... I think the real story here is about the Russian Embassy and what they’re trying to do to our community and how they’re trying to create an issue where there isn’t one. (Michalchyshyn, cited in Smith 2017)

Other UCC activists similarly dismissed Kalinin’s comments as ‘baseless and hav[ing] nothing to do with history’. Alexandra Chyczij, first vice-president of the UCC, dismissed the Russian claims as ‘long-disproven fabrications’(Chyczij, cited in Lea 2017), whereas Lubomyr Luciuk accused the Russian embassy of provoking ethnic hatred in Canada. ‘These Russian Twitterers should be reminded that the Criminal Code prohibits the public communication of statements likely to lead to a breach of the peace’, he told the media (Luciuk, cited in Lea 2017).

The academic field of Ukrainian studies in Canada similarly showed little interest in the controversy. Jars Balan, interim director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, merely noted that Shukhevych’s history is ‘checkered’, and that ‘history in general is messy’ (cited by Goldenberg 2017). He told the *Edmonton Examiner* ‘I understand Shukhevych is a controversial figure, but people were not in the shoes of someone in World War II who had to make horrible decisions’. Shukhevych’s legacy, Balan continued, is not an issue ‘because of who brings it up’, and that Russian propaganda seeks to divide the Ukrainian and Jewish communities.

¹¹In a separate UCC communique to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Ihor Michalchyshyn (2018) stated explicitly his claim that ‘[t]he veterans of the 14th Division Galicia/Halychyna joined not to fight for Germany, but to fight against Soviet Communist tyranny and for a free Ukraine’.

I don't think [the issue] is mainstream. A large part of [the] community does not lose sleep over it ... The priority is to defend Ukraine and that is what they should rally around. This is all just a distraction. (ibid.)

There were, however, exceptions. Dominique Arel, the chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa—one of very few institutions willing to openly address these issues—noted: ‘Unfortunately, the Ukrainian-Canadian organizations have not shown real readiness to discuss these issues... On the whole, there’s a great deal of resistance’ (cited in Smith 2017). Freeland’s uncle, John-Paul Himka, a professor emeritus from the University of Alberta, was blunter:

It’s about time that somebody paid attention to it ... The fact is the Ukrainian government and the diaspora have been honouring Holocaust perpetrators and war criminals for a long time ... You have enough corpses in the closet, it’s going to start to smell. (cited in Smith 2017)

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT REACTIONS

The Canadian government agency tasked with handling this delicate matter appears to have been struggling to come up with an appropriate response. Documents obtained through the Access to Information Law show how the Russian tweet put the government officials in a rather difficult situation, as the Privy Council and the Prime Minister’s Office requested them to counter the Russian claims about the monuments to Nazi collaborators. The initial reaction was to again dismiss the entire story as ‘disinformation’. The first draft response accused Russia of ‘destabilizing Western democracies’, again without addressing the actual history of these Ukrainian units. Ultimately, Ursula Holland, Deputy Director for Global Affairs Canada, settled for dealing ‘with the tweets as disinformation and irresponsible use of social media’, arguing that ‘Framing them as “destabilizing western democracies” seems a step too far’ (Holland 2017). The final statement read that

Canada remains concerned by inappropriate Russian efforts to spread disinformation ... [and] Canada expects all foreign representatives in Canada to act appropriately and responsibly, including their use in social media. (Harvey 2017b; Pugliese 2018a)

The reaction of the Privy Council was similar, stressing that this was hostile propaganda from an adversarial state, linking it to Canada’s

relatively high profile in the Ukrainian conflict. In April 2018, Canada expelled Kirill Kalinin and three other Russian diplomats from Canada. Justin Trudeau cited the campaign against Freeland, referring to it as ‘efforts by Russian propagandists to discredit our minister of foreign affairs through social media and by sharing scurrilous stories about her’ (Pugliese 2018b). The strategy to dodge the issue as disinformation was not very effective. On the contrary, the allegations and counter-allegations prompted the first serious discussions in mainstream media on the presence of these contentious monuments.

CONCLUSION

Russia is as unlikely a champion of transparency and critical inquiry as it is an awkward guardian of the memory of the Holocaust. In the Soviet Union, this memory was suppressed, and the first Russian book referring to the Holocaust appeared as late as 1987. Key sites of Holocaust massacres in the Russian Federation remain neglected, and awareness is limited, not least relative to Canada (Karlsson 2013). Thus, the Russian regime’s agenda was apparent enough: its alarmist messages served the political aim of discrediting an adversary by exposing and exploiting ill-conceived domestic policies. This is in line with how Russian propaganda campaigns have been conducted in recent years: rather than seeking to produce a positive image of Russia abroad, they aim at sowing doubt by focusing on shortcomings in Western political and medial cultures, thereby stimulating critical attitudes from within (Widholm 2016, p.218).

Russian propaganda reduces the complex legacy of the memory culture of the Ukrainian post-war immigration to Canada to a simplistic binary of ‘Nazi’ memorials, juxtaposed with the uncritical glorification of the ‘heroic Red Army’. It has, however, been rather effective in putting the spotlight on some of the paradoxes of official Canadian multiculturalism, illustrating how these Canadian monuments to Shukhevych, UPA, and the *Waffen-SS Galizien* are physical manifestations of an undigested historical past. The Russian Embassy listed but a handful of these; it could easily have expanded the list with the Ukrainian War Veterans’ memorial at St. Michael’s Cemetery in Edmonton, the Stepan Bandera Ukrainian Black Sea Hall (*Ukrains’kyi Chornomors’ky Dim im. St. Bandery*) of St. Catharines, ON, and several other such edifices across Canada.

The presence of these monuments and community halls in Canada is neither ‘fake news’, nor ‘disinformation’. Canadian normative

multiculturalism serves as a vehicle for self-appointed community elites, facilitating access to government funds and top politicians. In underwriting multiple groups, committed to a variety of nationalist causes in ancestral homelands, it manifests itself as multi-nationalism, illustrated quite well by the Ukrainian case. The Russian Embassy identified a blind spot in Canadian historical memory, exploiting it to some effect against a geopolitical adversary. It placed the Canadian government in a difficult situation, exacerbated by its reliance on Ukrainian nationalist ‘expertise’ on matters of historical controversy. This episode reminds us how an undigested past can become a political liability (Colborne 2018).

Against the background of our significantly improved understanding of the legacy of Roman Shukhevych, the OUN(b), the UPA, and the Waffen-SS Galizien following the opening of the archives, it is increasingly clear that the heroic narratives of these groups would benefit from a proper *Aufarbeitung*, not only by professional historians, but also through open discussions in Canadian civic society. Media coverage in *The National Post*, CBC, and several local papers shows an increased interest in focusing on this complex set of issues. In 2018, the movie *A Monumental Secret* by Alberta filmmaker Adam Bentley sought to problematize the presence of these monuments in the form of a didactic conversation between two Edmontonians—one of whom believes the monuments ought to be torn down, the other wanting them amended (Bentley 2018). How to relate to this is ultimately a political question. As Canada is a democracy, the decision of how to allocate its tax revenues and what monuments should grace its public space is—of course—the prerogative of its citizens.

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