



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

University of Glasgow

Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukrainian National Hero

Author(s): David R. Marples

Source: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Jun., 2006), pp. 555-566

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451225>

Accessed: 03/10/2014 08:34

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Taylor & Francis, Ltd. and University of Glasgow are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Europe-Asia Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Stepan Bandera: The Resurrection of a Ukrainian National Hero

DAVID R. MARPLES

Abstract

This article discusses the reinterpretations of the career of Ukrainian nationalist leader Stepan Bandera and his place in contemporary Ukraine by examining scholarly debates in academic books and articles, school textbooks and media sources from the late 1980s to the present. The article seeks to elucidate the place of Bandera in modern Ukrainian history and illustrates his metamorphosis from arch-villain and alleged traitor in Soviet works to a modern and mythical national hero with a firm place in the historical narrative of twentieth century Ukraine.

THE NAME OF STEPAN BANDERA IS ONE THAT ELICITS EMOTIONAL REACTIONS simply from its utterance. And therein lies the initial problem of an article devoted to his life and politics: the complete lack of consensus among historians, writers and polemicists. He has been depicted as a hero and a villain, as a liberator or potential liberator of an oppressed nation, as a terrorist and a Nazi collaborator. In the Soviet period, his name was associated with evil, terrorism, and treachery by Soviet authorities and propagandists. In various towns and villages of western Ukraine, on the other hand, statues have been erected and streets named after him, including a prominent avenue in the largest city of L'viv.

Recently, there have been attempts by various politicians and activists to have the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), an organisation that acted in Bandera's name, venerated as part of the commemoration of the German–Soviet war in the summer of 2005. This manoeuvre represents the latest step in a protracted campaign. On 22 October 1993, President Leonid Kuchma signed a law 'on the status of and social security guarantees for war veterans'. The bill outlined the categories of people who were to be considered wartime participants, and it included 'combatants of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army'. However, the bill has not satisfied those seeking redress, because it does not include any UPA member who joined the organisation after 1944,

I am grateful to my former graduate student Oleksandr Melnyk and current PhD student Per Rudling for assistance with materials used in this article, and to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada for providing me with financial support.

ISSN 0966-8136 print; ISSN 1465-3427 online/06/040555-12 © 2006 University of Glasgow
DOI: 10.1080/09668130600652118

when Ukraine had become free from German occupation (Kul'chyts'kyi 2001). In late 2003, parliamentary deputy Andrii Shkil introduced a bill seeking the repatriation of Bandera's body, along with those of Evhen Konovalts and Symon Petlyura for reburial in Ukraine. At that time, Bandera's grandson stated that 'even now, 44 years after his assassination, the name "Bandera" is used to frighten people, particularly in Eastern Ukraine. There needs to be a public education campaign conducted throughout the country that will give people the full story of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists—Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN—UPA), not just the myths'.¹

Where does one begin to separate the myths from the accurate accounts? The simplest way to provide an evaluation of Bandera would be to recount the details solely of his personal life. It would, however, hardly convey the import of the man. Like many twentieth century political figures, the impact of Bandera lies less in his own political life and beliefs than in the events enacted in his name, or the conflicts that arose between his supporters and their enemies. Bandera was not a political thinker *per se*, but a man of action who nonetheless was most frequently detached and distant from the conflicts in wartime and post-war Ukraine. While there seems no doubt that he could induce great loyalty among his followers, he was nonetheless not a messianic leader. He was neither an orator nor a theoretician, and he spent much of his life incarcerated or in hiding until he became the victim of a Soviet agent in 1959. According to one former UPA soldier, 'rank and file fighters never saw Bandera or Melnyk. They were symbols, like Petlyura' (Hlyn 1990).

Had this article been written 15 years ago it would have been a depiction of a political leader whose ambitions seemed destined to failure, as his native Ukraine seemed likely to remain indefinitely part of the Soviet Union. Even one year ago, most of his compatriots may have considered that the state that had emerged from the dissolved USSR was some distance from what had been hoped—run by a clique controlled by oligarchs from the industrial east, increasingly corrupt, and moving gradually closer to the Russian orbit. However, the victory of Viktor Yushchenko in the re-run presidential election in December 2004 has added a new dimension to the story of Ukraine. What is the relationship between the revival of national hope in Ukraine and Stepan Bandera, who was born almost a century ago? Is Ukraine today coming closer to the fruition of the desires of Bandera and his followers, as a state that is moving away from the Russian orbit closer to Europe, and thereby attaining full independence after some 350 years of being bound to Russia through the 1654 Treaty of Pereyaslav? Is it fitting to consider Bandera a national hero? How much progress has the revisionist campaign to elevate him actually made?

The methodology behind this article is as follows. It is constructed chronologically around the life of Bandera. However, the portrayal discusses along the way the depiction of Bandera and his followers in Soviet sources, when his name became synonymous with criminal acts and what was termed 'bourgeois nationalism', as well as the gradual revisions concerning the life and activities of Bandera and his faction of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists. These include both writings from Ukraine and from historians of Ukrainian ancestry in the West (often lumped simplistically

¹*Kyiv Post* (2003) 11 December, available at: <http://www.kyivpost.com/>, accessed 12 December 2003.

under the general category of diaspora). I will include new analyses of Bandera and the OUN–UPA in universities and schools and attempt to put these new accounts into perspective—obviously a Western perspective—by offering an analysis that attempts to perceive Bandera within his historical context, that of Europe experiencing political change and conflict through two world wars, and violent intervening and succeeding periods under foreign occupation.

Bandera's early life

Biographies of Bandera, while not completely unknown, are relatively rare outside the Ukrainian community in emigration. One of the earliest in the latter case was that of Petro Mirchuk in 1961, which remains the standard interpretation from the perspective of his followers (Mirchuk 1961). In 1993, one of my MA students at the University of Alberta, Paul S. Pirie, completed a dissertation on the life of Stepan Bandera (Pirie 1993). In 1996, as Bandera was becoming a figure of interest in Ukraine, Petro Duzhyi's book, *Stepan Bandera—symvol natsii*, appeared in L'viv (Duzhyi 1996). Three years later, Vasyl' Kuk's new biography appeared in Ivano-Frankivsk (Kuk 1999). Four years later, one of Ukraine's better known literary scholars, Halyna Hordasevych published a book entitled *Stepan Bandera: lyudina i mif*, which she dedicated to all the victims in the struggle for a free Ukraine, which was also published in L'viv (Hordasevych 2001). More recently, in 2004, a Polish scholar, Edward Prus, published a new, extremely hostile and polemical biography, issued by a publishing house in Wrocław (Prus 2004). While there may be other works in the offing, or that have appeared from lesser known publishers, these remain the most familiar and widely read biographies of the Ukrainian leader. Six volumes is relatively little for a man of such impact, though it still outnumbers works on his contemporaries, such as the philosopher Dmytro Dontsov, Evhen Konovalets who was leader of the OUN in its early years, or even his rival after the split in the organisation in 1940, Andrii Melnyk.

Let us begin by recounting briefly the early life of Bandera. He was born on 1 January 1909 in the village Staryi Uhryniv in the district of Stanyslaviv, at that time part of the Austrian Empire (today it is located in the Kalush *raion* of Ivano-Frankivsk *oblast'*), into the family of a Greek Catholic priest that included six children. The father, Andrii Bandera, had served in the short-lived Western Ukrainian People's Republic (1919), and clearly was an inspiration to Stepan, his oldest son. Later Andrii Bandera also served as the chaplain in the Ukrainian Galician Army. In 1920, Stepan's mother died of cancer, and thus he became even more reliant on his father for his upbringing. It is almost impossible to separate the young man from the political events of the time, which from the perspective of nationally conscious Ukrainians like Andrii, constituted a period of missed opportunities and eventually the refusal by the newly formed Polish state to adhere to promises of autonomy for its large minority populations—Ukrainians and Belarusians—following its re-establishment by the Treaty of Riga. Bandera attended school in the town of Stryi, where until the mid-1920s, teachers were able to regale the students with patriotic Ukrainian lessons. Hordasevych notes, on the other hand, that officially it was forbidden even to utter the name 'Western Ukraine' and that the region was referred

to officially as the '*Malopol'ska vskhudnya*', which roughly translated is 'Eastern Little Poland' (Hordasevych 2001, p. 42).

Pirie notes that even though affected by severe arthritis, Bandera became deeply involved in Ukrainian student organisations, including the scouting group Plast and the sporting association Sokol (Falcon), and from the age of 14 he took an active role in the Upperclassmen of the Ukrainian Gymnasia, which was affiliated with the Ukrainian Military Organisation (UVO) (Pirie 1993, p. 18). According to John Armstrong, the links between the UVO and student organisations in the Ukrainian ethnic regions of eastern Poland were exceptionally strong, and the UVO and Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth (SUNM), formed in 1926, had the support of almost all politically active elements (Armstrong 1990). At this time, according to Hordasevych, the two most formative influences on Bandera were Stepan Okhrymovych, a student four years his senior at the gymnasium who was one of the leaders of the Ukrainian youth movement, who also introduced him to the writings of the second influence, Mykola Mikhnovsky, and especially his work *Samostiina Ukraina* (Hordasevych 2001, p. 46; Pirie 1993, p. 19). Subsequently Okhrymovych delved into the work of the better known publicist Dmytro Dontsov, a native of Zaporizhzhya region, who advocated the sublimation of the nation over the individual, an emphasis on national will and revolution, and that Ukraine should break away from Russian control.² The SUNM undoubtedly embraced the philosophy of Dontsov, but also introduced a new mythology centred on a 'cult of heroes', particularly those who had died for the cause of Ukraine.

By 1927, Bandera had completed instruction at the gymnasium and intended to continue his studies at the Ukrainian Economic Academy in Podebrady near Prague, but already the Poles had been alerted to his activities and refused him a foreign passport. In September 1928 instead, he enrolled at the L'viv Higher Polytechnical School, continuing his studies until 1934, though he never received the intended diploma in agronomy and engineering, having been distracted by his commitment to political activities.³ Like other members of the SUNM he was guided by the so-called Decalogue, a quasi-Fascist listing of the following principles (Motyl 1980, p. 142; Marples 1992, p. 74; Snyder 2003, p. 143):

- You will attain a Ukrainian state or die in battle for it.
- You will not permit anyone to defame the glory or honour of your nation.
- Remember the Great Days of our struggles.
- Be proud that you are the inheritor of the struggle for Volodymyr's Trident.
- Avenge the deaths of the Great Knights.
- Do not speak about matters with anyone; only those with whom it is essential.
- Do not hesitate to undertake the most dangerous deeds, should this be demanded by the good of the Cause.

²There are clearly some ambiguities about the writings and ideas of Dontsov, which could be interpreted in a variety of ways. A cogent summation of his views and philosophy can be found in Motyl (1980, pp. 61–85).

³Ihor Nabytovych, 'Stepan Bandera: zhizn' i deyatelnost' (undated) available at: <http://zavoliuuu.narod.ru>, accessed 20 October 2005.

- Treat the enemies of your nation with hatred and ruthlessness.
- Neither pleading, nor threats, nor torture, nor death shall compel you to betray a secret.
- Aspire to expand the strength, riches, and size of the Ukrainian state *even by means of enslaving foreigners*.

In 1929, radical Ukrainian activists in Poland completed the process of uniting all their forces into a single organisation: the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), led by Evhen Konovalets, who was also the leader of the Ukrainian Military Organisation. The young Bandera was entrusted with the leadership of the OUN in Western Ukraine (ZUZ) four years later at the age of 24. His main task was to distribute leaflets and literature both abroad and within Polish territory. His elevation was evidently a result of the influence of his mentor Okhrymovych, who preceded him as a member of the Regional Executive. Under Bandera, most sources concur, the OUN embarked on a campaign of terrorism against Polish officials, though the precedent was set by the assassination at the Soviet embassy of A. Mailov, a KGB agent. The assassination was carried out by an 18-year-old university student, Mykola Lemyk, and approved by the military leader of the OUN, Roman Shukhevych.⁴ On 16 June 1934, the OUN assassinated the Polish Minister of the Interior Bronislaw Pieracki.⁵ The assassin, Hryhoriy Matseiko, escaped, but the Polish authorities ordered a crackdown, arresting several OUN leaders. However, the arrest of Bandera actually preceded the assassination by two days, as he was arrested in L'viv on 14 June, thus indicating that the Poles were aware of the plot though they failed to avert it.

At the trial in Warsaw, which began only 18 months later and lasted until January 1936, Bandera, along with Mykola Lebed and Yaroslav Karpinets, received the death sentence. But the Polish authorities, not wishing to create Ukrainian martyrs, reduced those sentences to life imprisonment. Subsequently, a second trial of Bandera and his associates for various acts of terrorism was held in L'viv, and used by him as a podium to espouse the cause of an independent Ukraine to be attained via a nationalist revolution.⁶ The cause of the nation was held as sacred, and elevated above religion or moral scruples. A Soviet source comments that the trial revealed Bandera's role in the deaths of the professor of philology at L'viv Ukrainian gymnasium and a student activist suspected of being a provocateur.⁷ Thereafter he remained in a Polish jail, despite several attempts by his compatriots to break into the prison and release him. With the outbreak of war in September 1939, and the occupation of Poland by the Germans and then the Red Army, the imprisoned OUN leaders were either released or escaped—there are various versions of what actually occurred. Bandera was in L'viv in

⁴See, for example, Marochkin (1991, p. 3). According to Marochkin, the real target was the Soviet consul-general, and Mailov was killed by mistake. The assassination was in protest against the imposition of a forced famine in Eastern Ukraine.

⁵For a detailed account of this assassination, see Panchenko (2001, pp. 23–35).

⁶It is perhaps unfair to draw such an analogy but it is nonetheless difficult to avoid a comparison with the trial of Hitler in Munich after the failed putsch of 1923 in Germany. Both used the trial as a means of free publicity for their world perspectives and both were leaders of extreme nationalist parties with little apparent prospects of taking power in the near future.

⁷*Pravda Ukrainy* (1990) 13 December.

this month but crossed the border to German-held territory and arrived in Krakow, where among other things he found time to get married to Yaroslava Oparivska. The period, however, was dominated by a rift in the OUN that followed the assassination of leader Konovalets in 1938 at the hands of a Soviet agent in Rotterdam. Most sources depict the quarrel as one that developed on generational lines.⁸ The designated leader Andrii Melnyk failed to gain the support of the more radical youth members, who gradually broke away into a separate faction under Bandera.

The formation of the OUN-Bandera and the Akt of 30 June 1941

On 10 February 1940, Bandera was elected leader of the new revolutionary wing of the OUN at a meeting in Krakow. His group was a monolithic organisation based on strict principles, self-sacrifice for the goals of the nation, and a *Fuehrerprinzip*, modelled loosely on Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. His group included three key figures: Mykola Lebed, who was to head the newly created security service (Sluzhba Bezpeky) which served as an enforcement agency; Yaroslav Stets'ko, described by Armstrong as a brilliant intellectual (Armstrong 1990, p. 37), but criticised in some recent scholarly writings for his stated goal of exterminating Jews as part of a general goal of bringing down Bolshevik Moscow and its reputed agents;⁹ as well as the military leader Roman Shukhevych, later to become the commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). A Second Extraordinary Congress of the OUN in April 1941 formally elected Bandera the leader of this more militant wing. As the head of terrorist activities in the recent past, he was considered the natural choice. His organisation regarded Nazi Germany as the likely catalyst for change in Europe and sought cooperation with the German authorities, particularly the *Abwehr* and the German army. Under German sponsorship, two military units—Roland and Nachtigal—were created, the latter under the command of Shukhevych. According to nationalist sources, these units were intended solely for the struggle against the USSR and were never an integral part of the German army.¹⁰

The formation of the two units and the event that followed after the German invasion of the Soviet Union—the declaration of a sovereign Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941 by Yaroslav Stets'ko on Bandera's behalf, after the Nachtigal unit had entered L'viv ahead of the advancing German army—constitute two of the three most controversial issues in the career of Bandera (the third concerns the activities of OUN–UPA). The debate has been acrimonious and marked by an almost total absence of consensus. In an article written in the late 1980s, historian V.P. Troshchyns'kyi maintains that 'Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist formations' were collaborators with the German Fascists during the Second World War. He points out that when the OUN-B (OUN-Bandera) issued its '*Akt*' announcing the formation of a Ukrainian state, it declared also that the state would be linked with National Socialist

⁸See Boiko (2003, p. 472). Hordasevych outlines how the younger members of the OUN in Galicia perceived Melnyk as too dictatorial. See Hordasevych (2001, p. 91).

⁹Weiner (2001, p. 260), quoting TsDAVOVU, f. 3833, op. 3, d. 7. 1.6; and Berkhoff & Carynyk (1999, pp. 149–184).

¹⁰See <http://zavoliuua.narod.ru>.

Great Germany, which 'under the leadership of Adolf Hitler is creating a new order for Europe and the world'. The first task for the new government would be the creation of Ukrainian armed forces that would 'aid the German army and go immediately into battle'. Stets'ko, according to this article, sent telegrams to various Fascist leaders, including Hitler, Goering, Mussolini, and Franco (Troshchyns'kyi 1988).

By contrast, writing four years later, Volodymyr Kosyk maintains that the war was a terrible period that unfortunately has brought various lies and falsifications about the alleged collaboration of Ukrainians with Nazis. According to his own research, he adds, he can state that with the exception of a few individuals, all associated with the Ukrainian Central Committee in Krakow under the General Government of Poland, 'no Ukrainian organization collaborated with the Germans'. German documents, in his view, testify that the OUN-B actively struggled against the Fascists (Kosyk 1992). In similar vein, R. Rakhmannyi regards the date of 30 June 1941 as the most significant in the history of twentieth century Ukraine and one that unambiguously signalled the liberation strivings of Ukrainians thereafter. It also in his view augured directly the advent of armed resistance from UPA (Rakhmannyi 1992). Moving in between these polarised views is deputy director of the Institute of History of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, a pivotal figure in the development of a revised national history of twentieth century Ukraine. In June 2000, Kul'chyts'kyi published an article in the journal *Istoriya Ukrainy* that focused on the Act of 30 June. Given the importance of the event in the career and assessment of Stepan Bandera, it is worth exploring in more detail.

Kul'chyts'kyi notes that between September 1939 and June 1941, relations between the German authorities and Ukrainian nationalists were almost problem-free. As committed opponents of Poland, the nationalists were *ipso facto* allies of the Germans. In Krakow, the OUN Provid prepared for the creation in Ukraine of future state structures. Both wings of the OUN believed that a German–Soviet war was imminent and that the Germans would support an independent Ukraine, and after the destruction of the USSR there would be a union between Germany and the enemies of Russia. The ideology of National Socialism and Ukrainian integral nationalism was similar, and the German special services were interested in deploying the OUN throughout Ukraine. He points out that Ukrainians took part in preparatory work in instruction centres of the *Abwehr* in especially created police schools, and in OUN organisations in Krakow. This cooperation led directly to the creation of the two battalions Roland and Nachtigal. On 22 June, the leader of the sabotage unit of the *Abwehr*, Captain E. Stolz, instructed Bandera and Melnyk to carry out actions in the rear of the German army. Such actions were to be conducted by the Bandera troops in Galicia and Volhynia, by the Melnyk group in Bukovyna, and by the so-called Polis'ka Sich of Taras Bul'ba-Borovets in Polissya (Kul'chyts'kyi 2000, p. 6).

On 30 June, Kul'chyts'kyi continues, Stets'ko announced the Act to declare a sovereign Ukraine, which was broadcast twice on L'viv radio station, on the evening of 30 June and the early morning of 1 July. For several days, the Stets'ko government operated 'legally'. This time was reportedly used to prepare the administrative apparatus and a Ukrainian national-revolutionary army. On 3 July, Stets'ko announced that the Ukrainian state was a part of the new European order, subordinate to the 'great Fuehrer of the German army and the German people'. A day earlier,

the Gestapo in L'viv informed Berlin about the creation of a Ukrainian political government. The real goal of these events, in Kul'chyts'kyi's view, was to force the hand of the Germans. If so, it failed, since Hitler refused to agree to the formation of an independent Ukraine. The Germans appear to have been uncertain of how to react. On 5 July, Bandera was taken to Berlin and placed under house arrest. He and Stets'ko were asked to renounce the Act. Both refused, and on 21 July, Bandera was sent to a concentration camp, initially under fairly benign conditions. By 5 August, the *Wehrmacht* in Ukraine ordered the arrest of the members of the Bandera group and the two battalions were disbanded. By mid-September, mass arrests and executions of OUN-B members began, and on 25 November, the Gestapo ordered the elimination of the group on the grounds that it was preparing an uprising against the Reichskommissariat Ukraine (Kul'chyts'kyi 2000, pp. 8–9).

The Act of 30 June 1941 divided Ukrainians. Though evidently supported by the Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrii Sheptyts'kyi, it was opposed by the OUN-M. By September 1941, Bandera had been placed under 'full arrest' in a Berlin prison. In March 1943, he was moved to Sachsenhausen camp north of Berlin and kept in isolation. His brothers Oleksiy and Vasyly were arrested and died at Auschwitz. Stepan remained in the camp for some 20 months before being released in December 1944, when the Germans once again reconsidered the idea of cooperating with Ukrainian nationalist forces. The critical events in the nationalist pantheon of the later war years thus occurred while Bandera was incarcerated, and though they remain closely linked to his 'legend', his role in them and indeed even his assent remain uncorroborated or obscure. They include the formation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in October 1942 though in active form only from the spring of 1943; expeditionary groups sent to Eastern Ukraine, the formation of underground OUN organisations in different towns of Ukraine, reportedly under 'anti-Hitler and anti-Stalin slogans'; the Third Extraordinary Grand Assembly of the OUN in August 1943, which adopted a social-democratic platform that fundamentally altered the original nationalist tenets and was more attuned to the mood of the Ukrainian population (Lebed was removed from a position of influence); and the formation of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council in July 1944, with a platform along similar lines (see, for example, Turchenko *et al.* 2001, pp. 26–28; Pirie 1993, pp. 63–64).

Bandera's later years

At this stage of the war, it becomes difficult to separate fact from myth. Bandera's future role was largely symbolic, since he remained in Germany. At a conference in February 1945 a new Provid buro was elected which composed of Bandera, Shukhevych, and Stets'ko. Bandera was the leader of the OUN and Shukhevych, leader of the UPA, his deputy and chairman of the Provid in Ukraine. Pirie maintains that in the spring of 1945, when Bandera met representatives of the new OUN in Vienna, they regarded him as a 'relic from the past', but he formed his own Foreign Centre of the OUN, which later moved to the city of his future residence, Munich, under the name *Zakordonna Chystyna OUN* (Pirie 1993, p. 66). Interestingly, both Bandera and his theoretical mentor Dontsov embraced Christianity in the post-war period, which was more acceptable in their new countries of residence. Dontsov, who had moved to Quebec, Canada,

appeared to be in danger of deportation from the country after questions about his past life surfaced in parliament.¹¹ Bandera does not seem to have undergone any fundamental change of views from those embraced in his youth. Yet if his personal career was in decline, the name of Bandera gained new notoriety in Western Ukraine, now re-annexed to the Soviet Union, and in which bitter fighting was taking place between OUN–UPA and the Soviet internal police.

The formation of UPA under the leadership of the OUN-B represents the most controversial issue in Bandera's life and one that has bitterly divided historians both within and outside Ukraine. Though UPA was a large and well organised military and later guerrilla army under Roman Shukhevych, the Soviet authorities never desisted from using the appellation 'Banderites' or 'Banderivtsi', with various descriptions of members of this army as 'Ukrainian–German nationalists', agents of 'Anglo-American imperialists', 'bandits', and 'traitors to the Motherland' (Cherednychenko 1970). By and large, the Soviet version of events, which focused on the alleged collaboration between OUN–UPA and the German occupation forces, has been rejected by contemporary Ukrainian historians. It is virtually absent from contemporary textbooks in Ukraine, most of which offer sympathetic views of the nationalists. One source notes, for example, that 'in his writings Bandera supported Christian liberal-revolutionary nationalism, [that would bring about] the independence of Ukraine' (Temka & Tupchienka 2002). On the other hand, the link between OUN–UPA and the occupants has been stressed persistently by some Western scholars (see, for example Sabrin 1991). New studies of the wartime period have also emphasised the massacre of the Polish population of Volyn by the OUN-B, in what has been described as one of the earliest twentieth century examples of 'ethnic cleansing' (Berkhoff 2004). In other words, the OUN-B carried out a systematic campaign to remove the Polish population as potential rivals for control over this territory after the war ended.

To reiterate: the personal links between Bandera, living in western Europe, and the events taking place in his homeland are often difficult to establish. On the other hand, the fanaticism of UPA fighters, particularly in an increasingly hopeless situation in the late 1940s in Western Ukraine, and especially after they had been forced underground by a joint police campaign of the USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia after 1947, was derived directly from Bandera's wing of the OUN. The way in which the OUN–UPA operated has raised some doubts about the sincerity of the dramatic programme change of 1943, and the question of whether it was adopted primarily for political expediency. The insurgency of the UPA is perhaps the most debated historical issue in Ukraine today. Some Western scholars in turn have sought to influence their counterparts in Ukraine, including historian Taras Hunczak, who was a colleague of Mykola Lebed at the journal *Suchasnist'*, but made his career as a historian at Rutgers University, and University of Montreal scholar Roman Serbyn, who has been active in a campaign to have UPA fighters considered veterans of the Second World War.¹²

¹¹*Montreal Daily Star* (1948) 14 May. For an example of Dontsov's change in outlook, see his pamphlet 'Cross against Devil', Dmytro Dontsov Papers, MG31, D130, Vol. 2, P1077, National Archives of Canada.

¹²Hunczak (1994, pp. 178–186). Serbyn wrote the following to the Infoukes discussion group on 7 June 2004 with regard to the forthcoming commemoration of the war in Ukraine: 'The myth of the GFW [Great Fatherland War] is preventing reconciliation between Ukrainians who fought in the three

It was as a symbol of an independent Ukraine that Bandera was assassinated by KGB agent Bohdan Stashynskyi in Munich in October 1959.¹³ Pirie maintains that after the fall of Communism, there was a revival of nationalist cults in Eastern Europe, which included the 'quasi-religious cult of Ukrainian nationalism' in Ukraine that has now embraced a new youthful generation, resulting in the formation of a Dmytro Dontsov club and a revival of the Union of Nationalist Ukrainian Youth (Pirie 1993, p. 91). There is an OUN organisation that is active in Kiev, and which has transferred its newspaper, *Ukrains'ke Slovo*, from Paris to the capital city. Several contemporary Ukrainian newspapers have helped to revive the myth of Bandera and make him well known to a new generation in Ukraine. Foremost among them, though no longer in circulation, was the L'viv-based *Za Vil'nu Ukrainu*, the articles of which can be characterised as one-sided and passionate in their approach to their subject (see, for example, Bazelyuk 1993). Others have included the reputable weekly of the Ukrainian Writers' Union, *Literaturna Ukraina*, the newspaper of the Ukrainian Republican Party, *Samostiina Ukraina*, and perhaps most notable of all has been the youth newspaper, *Ukraina Moloda*, which has taken on the mantle of the semi-academic popular dissemination of information about Ukrainian nationalism of the first half of the twentieth century (Fomenko 2002).

Among the numerous new analyses of Bandera and the OUN–UPA, those of a few historians and writers deserve particular attention. One is Viktor Koval, who has dismissed all allegations of OUN collaboration with Germany with the phrase, 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend', and portrayed the role of UPA as essentially one to protect the population of Volhynia from terrorist actions by the Polish underground and Soviet Partisans (Koval 1996). He also regards the Third Extraordinary Congress of the OUN as an appeal for the democratic reconstruction of the USSR and the formation of a new Ukrainian society based on the principles that were pronounced by all parties after Ukraine gained independence in 1991. Kul'chyt's'kyi, cited earlier, has been a prolific writer on various topics, including OUN–UPA, and has tried—with varying degrees of success—to maintain a balanced approach. He maintains that the relationship between OUN–UPA and Nazi Germany was far too complex to be described as collaborationist, and that OUN tried to use the Germans for the attainment of their own goals, i.e. the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state. Although UPA in his view did fight the Germans, by the summer of 1943, with the Red Army advancing westward, the Nationalists perceived the Germans as the lesser evil. By declining to fight against the German army in the latter stages of the war, UPA was working against

different military formations (even though there were transfers between them): the Red Army, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Division Halychyna (and those in other German formations). It is a disgrace to Ukraine and especially a shame on the Ukrainian political elites that 60 years after the war Ukrainians are still divided on this issue and a shame to the president, the government and the parliament of Ukraine, that the only armed force that formed for the independence of Ukraine is not recognized by this independent state today'. See www.infoukes.com and the mailing list for history.

¹³Details of the assassination can be found in *Zbirka dokumentiv i materiyaliv pro vbyvstvo Stepana Bandera* (1989).

the interests of the Ukrainian people, even though the advance of the Red Army signified a return of totalitarianism (Kul'chyts'kyi 1997).

Easily the most prolific historian currently writing on these issues in Ukraine is Volodymyr Serhiichuk, who has produced about a dozen books and pamphlets, evidently with a clear goal in mind: to exonerate OUN and to depict it as a democratic force, leading an anti-totalitarian struggle against the Bolsheviks and Nazis. In his view, the struggle initiated by Bandera has been validated by the Ukrainian referendum of 1 December 1991, which ratified parliament's decision to declare an independent Ukraine the previous August. Serhiichuk claims to have had access to previously secret archives to verify his claims, one of which is that the OUN was strongly anti-German in its orientation even before 1943, and that Stets'ko's declaration of independence in L'viv was an 'anti-German act'. UPA, in turn, was a humanitarian organisation that often cooperated with Poles, and was subject to the strictest moral code, ideals and tolerance (Serhiichuk 2000). Serhiichuk's work, with its claims to be scholarly and archive-based, has essentially taken us further away from a more objective view of both Bandera and OUN–UPA than hitherto. At least two of his major works are essentially responses to articles critical of Ukrainian national heroes (mainly by scholars and writers from Poland), and thus often descend into polemics and appear to have the ultimate goal of constructing a direct and positive link between modern Ukraine, its Kyivan Rus' past, and the integral nationalists of the Bandera era (Serhiichuk 2000 and 2003).

Today Bandera has become a focus of impassioned debate between those who wish to elevate him as a national hero and those who regard him as the epitome of evil, treachery, and as a collaborator with the Hitler regime. His views were not untypical of his generation, although they represent an extreme political stance that rejected any form of cooperation with the rulers of Ukrainian territories: the Poles and the Soviet authorities. Like Dontsov, he regarded Russia as the principal enemy of Ukraine, and showed little tolerance for the other two groups inhabiting Ukrainian ethnic territories, Poles and Jews. However, his importance as a thinker or philosopher was minimal, and the most significant facet of Bandera's personality was his implacable and uncompromising position and willingness to abandon all principles to attain the goal of an independent Ukraine. As a symbol of this latter achievement, he can be linked to recent events in Ukraine, but it seems unlikely that he will ever be accepted as a national hero such as Churchill in Britain or Zhukov in Russia. Indeed the narrowness of his outlook is more reminiscent of Vladimir Lenin: one who was prepared to sacrifice all for a single goal. His resurrection has thus been a partial one, confined mainly to Western Ukraine, albeit with the sort of fervour that he once adopted himself along with his like-minded followers. Finally, it is worthwhile to reiterate that while the followers of Bandera may have received the derogatory title of Banderites, he was essentially limited to a passive role by the autumn of 1941. Thus cut off from the explosive events that took place in his name, he was reduced until his shocking death to the unhappy life of an exile and the fractious disputes that such a life entails.

University of Alberta

References

- Armstrong, J.A. (1990) *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 3rd edn (Littleton, CO, Ukrainian Academic Press), p. 15.
- Bazelyuk, M. (1993) 'Odyn proty imperiyi', *Za Vil'nu Ukrainu*, 13 March, p. 2.
- Berkhoff, K.C. (2004) *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), p. 286.
- Berkhoff, K.C. & Carynyk, M. (1999) 'The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Its Attitude toward Germans and Jews: Iaroslav Stets'ko's 1941 Zhyttiepyss', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 23, 3–4, pp. 149–184.
- Boiko, O.D. (2003) *Istoriya Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Akademvydar), p. 472.
- Cherednychenko (1970) *Natsionalizm proty natsii* (Kiev).
- Duzhyi, P. (1996) *Stepan Bandera—symvol natsii: eskiznyi narys pro zhyttya i diyalnist providnyka OUN* (L'viv, Halytska Vydavnycha Spilka).
- Fomenko, A. (2002) 'Pravda pro UPA', *Ukraina Moloda*, 10 October, pp. 4–5.
- Hlyn, P. (1990) 'Vybor', *Pravda Ukrainy*, 5 January.
- Hordasevych, H. (2001) *Stepan Bandera: lyudyna i mif* (L'viv, Piramida).
- Hunczak, T. (1994) 'OUN—German Relations, 1941–5', in Torke, H.-J. & Himka, J.-P. (eds) (1994) *German—Ukrainian Relations in Historical Perspective* (Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies), pp. 178–186.
- Kosyk, V. (1992) 'Svoboda dast' nam shans', *Literaturna Ukraina*, 23 January, pp. 3, 8.
- Koval, V. (1996) 'Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiya: Dovidka Instytutu istorii AN URSSR dlya Komissii Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy z pytan' bezpeky vid 1 lypnya 1991 roku', *Ukraina i Svit*, 35, September, pp. 18–24.
- Kuk, V. (1999) *Stepan Bandera (1909–1999rr.)* (Ivano-Frankivsk).
- Kul'chyts'kyi, S. (1997) 'Trahediya pysana samoyu istoriyeyu', *Za Vil'nu Ukrainu*, 14 October, p. 2.
- Kul'chyts'kyi, S. (2000) 'Akt 30 chervnya 1941 roku', *Istoriya Ukrainy*, 23–24, pp. 6, 8–9.
- Kul'chyts'kyi, S. (2001) 'Veterans, Veterans. . . Gordian Knot of the OUN—UPA Problems Nourishes Separatism', *The Day Digest*, 2 October, available at: <http://www.day.kiev.ua/267963>, accessed 15 December 2003.
- Marochkin, V. (1991) 'Trydtsat' dnyv z Mykoloyu Lebedem', *Visti z Ukrainy*, 27, p. 3.
- Marples, D.R. (1992) *Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s* (London, Macmillan, 1992), p. 74.
- Mirchuk, P. (1961) *Stepan Bandera, symvol revolyutsionoi bezkompromisovosti* (New York).
- Motyl, A.J. (1980) *The Turn to the Right: the Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (Boulder, CO, East European Monographs), pp. 61–85.
- Panchenko, O. (2001) *Mykola Lebed'* (Lokhvytsya, Poltava, Kobelyaky), pp. 23–35.
- Pirie, P.S. (1993) 'Unraveling the Banner: A Biographical Study of Stepan Bandera', Unpublished MA thesis (Alberta, Department of History, University of Alberta).
- Prus, E. (2004) *Stepan Bandera, 1909–1959: symbol zbrodni i okrucienstwa* (Wroclaw, Nortom).
- Rakhmannyi, R. (1992) 'Vyznachnyi Akt istorii', *Za Vil'nu Ukrainu*, 30 June.
- Sabrin, B.F. (ed.) (1991) *Alliance for Murder: The Nazi—Ukrainian Nationalist Partnership in Genocide* (New York, Sarpedon).
- Serhiichuk, V. (2000) *Nasha Krov—na svoi zemli* (Kiev, Ukrain's'ka Vydavnycha Spilka), pp. 3, 7, 72–73, 78.
- Serhiichuk, V. (2003) *Trahediya Volhyni: Prychynyj perebih pol's'ko-ukrains'koho konfliktu v roky druhoi svitovoi vijny* (Kiev, Ukrain's'ka vydavnycha spilka).
- Snyder, T.S. (2003) *The Reconstruction of Nations* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press), p. 143.
- Temka, H.D. & Tupchienka, L.S. (eds) (2002) *Istoriya Ukrainy: Posibnyk* (Kiev, Vydavnychi Tsentri 'Akademiya'), p. 341.
- Troshchyns'kyi, V.P. (1988) 'Protly vyhadok pro tak zvany 'antyfashysts'kyi rukh oporu' Ukrain's'kykh natsionalistiv', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 5, pp. 76, 79–80.
- Turchenko, F.H., Panchenko, P.P. & Tymchenko, S.M. (2001) *Novitnaya istoriya Ukrainy*, part 2, 1939–2001 (Kiev, Heneza), pp. 26–28.
- Weiner, A. (2001) *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, Princeton University Press).
- Zbirka dokumentiv i materiyaliv pro vbyvstvo Stepana Bandera* (1989) (Toronto, World Ukrainian Liberation Front).