



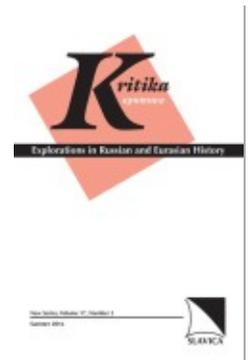
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Who's Afraid of Ukrainian Nationalism?

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Who's Afraid of Ukrainian Nationalism?

JARED MCBRIDE

Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist. Fascism, Genocide, and Cult*. 654 pp. Stuttgart: ibidem, 2014. ISBN-13 978-3838206042. \$45.00.

Myroslav Shkandrij, *Ukrainian Nationalism: Politics, Ideology, and Literature, 1929–1956*. 344 pp. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. ISBN-13 978-0300206289. \$85.00.

Volodymyr V"iatrovych, *Druha pol's'ko-ukrains'ka viina, 1942–1947* (The Second Polish–Ukrainian War, 1942–47). 287 pp. Kyiv: Vydavnychi dim Kyevo-Mohylians'ka akademiia, 2011. ISBN-13 978-9665185673.

With Ukraine and its prospects recently in the news, its dramatic, often tragic past has also come to the fore. One of its contentious aspects is the history of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Throughout the Cold War, the Ukrainian nationalist movement of the first half of the 20th century was vigorously defended by diaspora scholars in North America and the West more generally, while it was the subject of consistent and often hyperbolic denunciation in the Soviet press and literature.¹ Since 1991, more discursive space and archives

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¹ The most iconic postwar study of Ukrainian nationalism, though one with its own shortcomings, is John Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963). The work of writers like Petro Mirchuk, discussed more below, and the long-running Litopys UPA document series are representative of the apologetic diaspora work on

in Ukraine have opened to allow for a reevaluation of various aspects of the movement, including its theoretical underpinnings, especially in relation to right-wing radicalism and fascism in interwar Europe; its cooperation with Nazi Germany; the use of violence against Ukraine's minorities and even other Ukrainians; the relationship with US intelligence after the war; and biographical studies of the movement's leaders and thinkers. A number of scholars have produced new and integrative works in the past five to ten years that tackle an array of issues on Ukrainian nationalism.² At the same time, there has also been a tendency to define the debate within the crude parameters of the Cold War era: for example, whether the OUN and the UPA were protectors of Ukrainians or mass-murdering fascists.³ Therefore this reevaluation of Ukrainian nationalism is very much a work in progress.

In this context, the three new books under review discuss different aspects of Ukrainian nationalism from diverging perspectives. These are Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe's biography of Stepan Bandera, the most influential nationalist leader; Myroslav Shkandrij's history of Ukrainian nationalist writers and ideologues; and Volodymyr V"iatrovych's polemical publication on mass violence between Ukrainians and Poles during World War II. Two books are by established scholars, Myroslav Shkandrij and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, the third by Ukraine's most influential national-memory activist, who has a degree in history and is now the head of its Institute of National Memory, Volodymyr V"iatrovych. It is necessary to situate their works within the contexts from which they have emerged, consisting of debates about both the history and the memory of Ukrainian nationalism.



the topic. On Soviet press and literature, see Trevor Erlacher, "Denationalizing Treachery: The Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in Late Soviet Discourse, 1945–85," *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 2, 2 (2013): 289–316.

² For instance, see the work of such scholars as Tarik Cyril Amar, Jeffrey Burds, Franziska Bruder, Marco Carynnyk, John-Paul Himka, Taras Kurylo, David Marples, Grzegorz Motyka, Alexander Prusin, Per Anders Rudling, Alexander Statiev, Tomasz Stryjek, Serhy Yekelchuk, and Oleksandr Zaitsev.

³ For example, see the discussion of a workshop on Ukrainian nationalism at Columbia in 2013; Taras Kuzio, "This Is Not How Ukrainian History Should Be Debated (at Columbia or Elsewhere)," *Ukrainian Weekly*, 19 May 2013; and the responses to Kuzio at <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2013/06/how-ukrainian-history-should-be-debated.html>. For more background on the debates, see John-Paul Himka, "Interventions: Challenging the Myths of Twentieth-Century Ukrainian History," in *The Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012), 211–38; and Himka, "War Criminality: A Blank Spot in the Collective Memory of the Ukrainian Diaspora," *Spaces of Identity* 5, 1 (2005): 9–24.

Recently, a leading Ukrainian historian, Yaroslav Hrytsak, has remarked that in 25 years of independence, “Ukrainian historians have not managed to write a single good biography” of Stepan Bandera, a “topic of such great interest in both Ukraine and Russia.”⁴ Indeed, it may speak to the lasting explosiveness of Bandera in contemporary debates that the first historian to do so was not a Ukrainian but a Polish historian trained in Germany, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe.⁵ The author in his voluminous study reveals why Ukrainian society, including much of its scholarly community, seems reluctant to face the full legacy of the most famous and notorious Ukrainian nationalist of the 20th century. Rossoliński-Liebe not only provides Bandera’s biography, focusing on his ideas and politics, but also examines the historical context of Ukrainian nationalism, in particular, of the OUN and the UPA. Furthermore, he discusses Bandera’s legacy since his death in 1959, tracing his cult in the West and its export to post-Soviet Ukraine after 1991. Rossoliński-Liebe has used a staggering array of sources, including newspapers, journals, and films, documents from 32 archives, and interviews. He examines not only Ukrainian nationalist records but also “archives of silence”—that is, the testimonies of the victims of nationalist mass violence that rarely make an appearance in Ukrainian history, especially in ideologically committed projects such as the Litopys UPA volumes.⁶

What strikes the reader about this book is that for someone who is both so vilified and revered Bandera emerges as so humdrum—accomplishing little even on his own terms. It is true that Bandera spent much of the 1930s and 1940s locked away in Germany. But when he was free, he did not produce much by way of explicit ideology, perhaps because he was too occupied by infighting among nationalist groups and the OUN’s love-hate relationship with Nazi Germany. His postwar record is even less impressive: more infighting, sending young people on Cold War suicide missions against the Soviets to oversell his compromised underground networks to the West, and courting former Nazis in West German intelligence.

⁴ “‘Shchob peremohy Putina, treba zrobyty ioho smishnym’—istoryky,” *Gazeta* (http://gazeta.ua/articles/history/_sob-peremogti-putina-treba-zrobiti-jogo-smishnim-istoriki/617469). Thanks to Serhy Yekelchuk for alerting me to this quotation.

⁵ Rossoliński-Liebe is no stranger to the vicissitudes of his topic: visiting Ukraine to speak about Bandera in 2012, he had his lectures canceled following threats. Few Ukrainian colleagues defended academic freedom in this situation.

⁶ Litopys UPA consists of four series known as the Old Series (51 vols.), the New Series (25 vols. to date), Litopys Library (13 vols.), and Events and People (31 vols.) as of 2016. It is edited by Peter J. Potichnyj. For a critical assessment of the Litopys series, see Per Anders Rudling, “Historical Representation of the Wartime Accounts of the Activities of the OUN-UPA (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists—Ukrainian Insurgent Army),” *East European Jewish Affairs* 36, 2 (2006): 163–89.

How then can we understand Bandera's resonance? As Rossoliński-Liebe explains, his popularity in the nationalist movement was due to his ruthless fanaticism. Bandera's worldview, by no means unique at that time, included contempt for democracy; fascination with fascism, racism, and eugenics (directed especially against Poles, Jews, and Russians); antisemitism; and a call for a national revolution (104–15). But it was primarily his extremism that made him into a nationalist leader. Even as a teenager Bandera was precociously extreme, sliding “pins under his nails in order to harden himself for future torture” and perceiving “the world in ... black-and-white nationalist categories” (106). Becoming involved in the nationalist movement, he shunned those less committed (95–96). Later he never hesitated to use “revolutionary terror” against perceived enemies of his organization. His perseverance as well as a consistent drive to “sacralize politics and violence” secured Bandera a special position within the movement (115).

A committed right-wing authoritarian and terrorist, Bandera spent the war as a prisoner. So his responsibility for the crimes committed in his name and by his organization during the war has been disputed. Thus Rossoliński-Liebe's authoritative discussion of the OUN and the UPA during the war may be the most important part of an important book. He interprets the events of 1941 in Ukraine as a “national revolution” (167–240).⁷ Already on the eve of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the OUN-B (the Bandera-led wing of the OUN, following a split with another nationalist leader, Andrii Melnyk, in 1939) drafted a plan titled “Struggle and Activities of the OUN in Wartime,” detailing that “enemies,” “Muscovites, Poles, and Jews” would be “destroyed in struggle” and declaring it “permissible to liquidate undesirable Polish, Muscovite, and Jewish activists” (181, 183). Ukrainians disagreeing with the nationalists were branded “traitors” and threatened with “terror” (181–82, 184). The new Ukrainian state, the OUN-B's “Struggle” explained, would be ruled by the OUN under Bandera (187).

After the OUN-B declared a Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941, the Nazis responded by arresting much of the leadership, but Rossoliński-Liebe's main focus is not on this suppression of the nationalist cause. Rather he asks a simple and hitherto neglected question: what was the relationship between widespread nationalist calls for terror and violence and the nationalists' actions during the war? He reveals that although the Germans did strike at Ukrainian nationalists, the latter attacked Jews and other ethnically and politically defined “enemies” of their own.

⁷ This point was first articulated in Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, “The ‘Ukrainian National Revolution’ of Summer 1941,” *Kritika* 12, 1 (2011): 83–114.

Even after the dissolution of OUN-B militias, many nationalists stayed in German service as part of auxiliary police forces until Stalingrad signaled that German luck had run out (256–60).⁸ Furthermore, the OUN offered no sincere objection to participation in police forces and involvement in the Holocaust or violence against civilians in general. Rossoliński-Liebe's examination of the police dispels the myths that the entirety of the OUN-B went underground against the Germans and that its members did not participate in the mass murder of Jews.⁹ Although in 1943 many OUN members fled the collaborating police forces to join the freshly founded UPA, the latter not only fought against Germans and Soviet partisans but also conducted a coordinated campaign of ethnic cleansing of Poles, killed thousands of Ukrainians, and committed violence toward Jews (262–80).¹⁰ Following the reoccupation of western Ukraine by the Soviets in 1944, the UPA waged a guerrilla war against them that was marked by violence against noncombatants (295–309).

By and large, Rossoliński-Liebe's discussion of Bandera's responsibility for nationalist violence is judicious. We know little about the extent of Bandera's control over his organization in the summer of 1941, before his arrest. But Rossoliński-Liebe shows that he provided instructions to his representative on the ground, Ivan Klymiv. Moreover, Bandera knew about the violence (542).¹¹ But at no point—during or after the war—did he distance himself from it (239). Similarly, although Bandera was not in Ukraine during the ethnic cleansing of 1943 and 1944, he never criticized it (282). While it may not be possible to hold Bandera “personally responsible” for nationalist atrocities, Rossoliński-Liebe argues, the leader of an organization calling for “cleansing” Ukraine of Russians, Jews, and Poles did bear “moral, ethical, and

⁸ Ivan Katchanovski has shown based on 118 biographies that 46 percent of OUN-UPA leaders served in some type of German-run police unit or had been recruited or trained by them (“Terrorists or National Heroes? Politics and Perceptions of the OUN and the UPA in Ukraine,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 48, 2–3 [2015]: 217–28).

⁹ On the OUN-B's participation in the Holocaust, see also Ivan Katchanovski, “The OUN, the UPA, and the Nazi-Led Genocide in Ukraine,” paper presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities Conference, Columbia University, 15–17 April 2010; and Jared McBride, “‘A Sea of Blood and Tears’: Ethnic Diversity and Mass Violence in Nazi-Occupied Volhynia, Ukraine 1941–1944” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2014), 113–15, 262–77.

¹⁰ For excellent work on this topic, see scholarship by Grzegorz Moryka, including his *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960: Działalność Organizacji ukraińskich nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej powstańczej armii* (Warsaw: Rytm, 2006); and Timothy Snyder, “The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943,” *Past and Present*, 179, 1 (2003): 197–234.

¹¹ Stets'ko told Bandera in a telegram, “We are setting up a militia that will help to remove the Jews and protect the population.”

political responsibility” (411; see also 280–82 and 542–43). Indeed, Jewish and Polish testimonies often convey their fear of the “banderites.”¹²

Whereas Rossoliński-Liebe is successful in capturing the ideology and ethos of the Ukrainian nationalist movement and its violence, he is less convincing when depicting its relationship with the larger population. Discussing the ethnic cleansing of Poles, Rossoliński-Liebe writes that many Ukrainians did not oppose it and that the UPA motivated them to participate with “racist slogans.” He mentions the role of “ordinary Ukrainians” in ethnic violence but says little about inducement and motivation (267).¹³ Although he makes brief remarks about how “chance” and “coercion” could play a role in causing average Ukrainians to join the UPA, he does not explore this theme (539–40).¹⁴ More work is needed to understand the dynamics of popular support of the OUN and UPA, especially at the microlevel.¹⁵

Also, Rossoliński-Liebe’s use of terminology is sometimes misleading, such as his use of the term “genocidal movement” for the OUN and UPA (28, 38). To one extent or the other, nationalists did participate in the Holocaust, but it was not their idea or central aim. Moreover, as the author argues, the concept most adequate to the mass killings of Poles is “ethnic cleansing” (290). Using “genocide” in this context may distract from otherwise rigorous analysis and may be confused with politicized attacks on Ukraine, as discussed also by Rossoliński-Liebe (363–406). Elsewhere he offers convincing arguments for understanding Ukrainian World War II nationalism through the category of “fascism,” rather than the often analytically misplaced “integral nationalism” (456).

Rossoliński-Liebe has illuminated the controversial figure of Bandera by producing a deeply researched and pioneering study. In a politicized field featuring works in Ukrainian such as “Why We Love Bandera,” this book is urgently needed (443, 474).¹⁶ Integrating fresh international scholarship,

¹² Many Jews in hiding in Ukraine in 1943–44 feared the UPA as much as the Germans, if not more at times. See USC Shoah Foundation Archive testimonies from Feigi Gluss (21611), Aron Baboukh (26557), and Max Grosblat (11967) as just three of many examples of Jewish attitudes on the UPA.

¹³ His 1941 article also implies there was substantial support in 1941 due to the existence of letters sent to the OUN leadership. See Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera*, 229–34; and Rossoliński-Liebe, “Ukrainian National Revolution.”

¹⁴ He does describe forced conscription to UPA in the postwar era (1945), but not during the war. See Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera*, 301.

¹⁵ As an example of a microstudy, see Jared McBride, “Peasants into Perpetrators: The OUN-UPA and the Ethnic Cleansing of Volhynia, 1943–1944,” *Slavic Review* 75, 3 (2016, forthcoming).

¹⁶ It can be read alongside the recent excellent study of the OUN by Franziska Bruder, “*Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!*” *Die Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) 1928–1948* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007).

it challenges nationally dominated narratives; it also signals areas for further research, such as the Bandera cult and its postwar export to the West and then reexport back to post-Soviet Ukraine.¹⁷



Like Rossoliński-Liebe, Myroslav Shkandrij, a literature scholar, also makes important contributions to the understanding of Ukrainian nationalism in his *Ukrainian Nationalism: Politics, Ideology, and Literature, 1929–1956*. The topic alone makes this work a welcome addition to the current scholarly debates.¹⁸ Although Ukrainian nationalism's political and military aspects have received much attention, Shkandrij is largely correct in claiming that there is “surprisingly little research” on the OUN's ideologists (9). Through an exposition of important theoreticians and writers, Shkandrij seeks to move beyond binaries of “unproblematic glorification or denunciation of the OUN as a whole” and demonstrate a heterogeneity and evolution of thought within a movement dominated by “authoritarian nationalism” (12, 271).

Shkandrij's book has four sections, addressing politics, ideology, myth, and literature. After providing the historical backdrop for the discussion of writers and thinkers, Shkandrij focuses on the “spiritual father” of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, Dmytro Dontsov, and the ideology of the OUN, zeroing in on the writings of five key ideologues. Then he shifts to more immediately literary concerns by explicating the role of myth and palingenesis within Ukrainian nationalist thought. In the last section of the book, Shkandrij explores the writings of seven nationalist writers through their literary works.

Shkandrij is largely successful in showing the existence of various allegiances and fissures among nationalist thinkers as well as changes in their ideas over time. He discards as a crude caricature the Soviet propagandistic depictions of Ukrainian nationalist thought as a straight line from Dontsov and his “séances of hatred” to the L'viv pogroms (83). While Dontsov remains

¹⁷ For a pioneering work on Ukrainian “long-distance nationalism” during the Cold War, see Per Anders Rudling, “Cold War Representation of a Wartime Life: Memory and Contention,” paper presented at the From Hot War to Cold War: Transnational Trajectories Workshop, Columbia University, New York, 22 April 2015.

¹⁸ Past key works on Ukrainian nationalism in English include Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*; and Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1980). For other recent works, see Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego: Analiza wybranych koncepcji* (Wrocław: Fundacja na rzecz nauki polski, 2000); and Oleksandr Zaitsev, *Ukrains'kyi intehral'nyi natsionalizm (1920–1390-ti roky): Narysy intelektual'noi istorii* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013).

Shkandrij's villain, it becomes clear that many key thinkers of Ukrainian nationalism, even those initially under Dontsov's influence, broke with him at various junctures (98, 104, 109). Shkandrij examines how key OUN writers like Mykola Stsiborsky and Yevhen Onatsky clashed with Dontsov over his "mysticism, irrationalism ... [and the] idea of an aristocratic caste" (106). These writers shied away from an open embrace of fascism and did not accept Dontsov's rejection of any type of ethnocultural tradition and his "amoral voluntarism" (115, 214, 271). Shkandrij also highlights lesser-known nationalist thinkers like Yuliiian Vassyian, Yurii Boiko, Yurii Klen, and Dokia Humenna to show how some writers rejected their own pasts and aspects of the nationalist movement for ideas that promoted Christian humanism and elements of democratic thought in the postwar period.

In the final section, Shkandrij's analysis of Ukrainian nationalist literature is informative, elegant, and persuasive. He brings to life the complicated biographies of a number of writers such as Olena Tehlia and Ulas Samchuk, well known today in Ukraine but not in the West. Shkandrij leaves behind nationalist mythologizations of Tehlia to show us a woman who fought and died for Ukraine (she was murdered at Babyn Yar in 1942). Simultaneously, he writes how she was an unabashed supporter of Hitler and Dontsov in the 1930s (176–77, 185). He also documents her clashes with more moderate women activists in the Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance (UNDO) and the role of femininity and gender among nationalists. The Volhynian Samchuk is another compelling subject: ordered, in his youth, to murder a church leader (32–33), Samchuk then collaborated with the Nazis as a newspaper editor. Later he sought to repent for his wartime antisemitism and became a vocal critic of the OUN and Dontsovian ideology (235). The rich complexities that Shkandrij brings out in these often lionized figures make for fascinating reading.

While Shkandrij is on solid ground in his discussion of the writers and literature of Ukrainian nationalism, his account of the OUN political leadership and activities is less assured. He assumes that there was a linear and parallel ideological development between his thinkers and the OUN's wartime and postwar political organizations (76, 99, 270, 274), claiming that there was a "break" with fascism and shift toward democracy around August 1943—when the war had turned clearly against Nazi Germany and in favor of the Allies. Shkandrij evokes John Armstrong's old speculation that there were "avowed and real attitudes" in the OUN movement, hinting that the embrace of fascism may have been a temporary political expediency, while democratic views, usefully close to those of the Western Allies, lay just beneath the surface all along (124).

Even though some writers and ideologues may have had a change of heart at this time, in the summer of 1943 the OUN and the UPA were still months away from concluding their ethnic cleansing operations, even after they formally announced principles of democracy and the rights of national minorities.¹⁹ Shkandrij believes that “ensuing events demonstrate that a large number of members genuinely embraced these [democratic] principles,” but in reality, the postwar record of OUN activities in Germany was rife with violence and internecine fighting, as documented by Rossoliński-Liebe (270, 291–361). Postwar records demonstrate that few of the various nationalist factions discussed by Shkandrij were immune to the sin of the “leader cult,” extensive denunciations of fellow nationalists and other Ukrainians to US intelligence (often blocking Ukrainians from going to the West), and the brutal realpolitik of the weak that meant sending young Ukrainians to die in hopeless Cold War spy missions to Ukraine.²⁰ The materials from US archives on the postwar period that show vicious infighting among nationalist groups, denunciations to the US intelligence services, and stated commitment to antidemocratic political practice demonstrate why perhaps we should ask Armstrong’s question about the OUN’s “avowed and real attitudes” toward democracy.²¹ Shkandrij’s traditional intellectual history does not capture the realities of geopolitics, ethnic cleansing, and ordinary opportunism.

Additionally, Shkandrij does not answer the question raised by Rossoliński-Liebe: how did Bandera and his followers develop such “rigid, fanatical views,” including the racial nationalism and reverence for violence (42)? Stsiborsky and Onatsky may have held complex and sometimes contrarian perspectives on these topics, but as Rossoliński-Liebe shows, other writers like Mykola Mikhnovs’kyi and Stepan Rudnyts’kyi offered racialized views of Ukrainians and their neighbors that had an obvious influence on OUN members (55–57, 71, 83–84, 87, 111, 177–78, 215, 533–34). Mikhnovs’kyi demanded a “Ukraine for Ukrainians” and that Ukrainians should never intermarry,

¹⁹ Shkandrij fails to mention that the ethnic cleansing of Poles extended to Galicia as well (270).

²⁰ For an example of a left-leaning Ukrainian leader by the OUN, see the story of Ivan Maistrenko. For his memoirs (Ivan Maistrenko, *Istoriia moho pokolinnia: Spohady uchasnyka revoliutsiinykh podii v Ukraini* [Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985]) and his US Army CIC intelligence file as examples of the types of new materials one can find in US archives, see National Archive and Record Administration (NARA) RG 319, IRR (Investigative Records Repository), XE262527, Ivan Maistrenko Personal File (released to the author through a Freedom of Information Act request, 2015).

²¹ For the use of US archives in a nuanced way, see Jeffrey Burds, “The Early Cold War in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944–1948,” *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 1505 (2001).

while Rudnyts'kyi claimed there were “anthropological differences of the Ukrainians from their neighbors” (Rossoliński-Liebe, 84). An OUN brochure from 1944, “The Nation as Species,” even references Rudnyts'kyi to justify a racialized way of understanding Ukrainian identity (Rossoliński-Liebe, 268). Bandera and other nationalists were well acquainted with these thinkers from mid-1930s journals, not to mention other writers who propounded that Jews were “aliens” and “a hostile element” in “the Ukrainian national organism” (Iurii Mylianych, quoted in Rossoliński-Liebe, 108). To understand how such views took hold within the core group of the OUN-B, it would be necessary to consider these and other influential radical writers, some of whom were directly connected to the OUN.²²

Some of Shkandrij's claims regarding wartime OUN history are erroneous. For example, not all the Ukrainian troops trained by the Germans were “removed from the front and disarmed” in 1941; in reality, many, like the future UPA commander Roman Shukhevych, served the Germans dutifully in a well-armed Schutzmannschaft battalion into 1943 (60).²³ Various UPA leaders and commanders continued their service under the Germans as well.²⁴ Shkandrij's interpretation of pogrom violence is also dated, relying on the historian Yaroslav Hrytsak, who is not an expert on the war or on pogroms (66).²⁵ Unfortunately, V'iatrovych's polemical work is cited to show that the OUN prevented pogrom violence against Jews—a politicized and fundamentally misleading claim that is not supported by any current research on the pogroms (67).²⁶

The root of Shkandrij's difficulties in dealing with the OUN's legacy of violence seems to lie in his treatment of the historiography. He integrates new

²² See, e.g., Marco Carynnyk, “Foes of Our Rebirth: Ukrainian Nationalist Discussions about Jews, 1929–1947,” *Nationalities Papers* 39, 3 (May 2011): 326; and Taras Kurylo, “The ‘Jewish Question’ in the Ukrainian Nationalist Discourse,” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 26: *Jews and Ukrainians*, ed. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern and Antony Polonsky (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013), 213–58.

²³ See Per A. Rudling, “Szkolenie na mordowaniu: Schutzmannschaft battalion 201 i Hauptmann Roman Szuchewycz na Białorusi w 1942 r.,” in *Prawda historyczna a prawda polityczna w badaniach naukowych: Ludobójstwo na Kresach południowo-wschodniej Polski w latach 1939–1946*, ed. Bogosław Paż (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2011), 211.

²⁴ McBride, “Sea of Blood and Tears,” 111–15, 267–74.

²⁵ Shkandrij could have consulted an important article like the following instead of the problematic sources he uses: Wendy Lower, “Pogroms, Mob Violence, and Genocide in Western Ukraine, Summer 1941: Varied Histories, Explanations, and Comparisons,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, 3 (2011): 217–46. For the best study on the topic (published after Shkandrij's book), see Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt: Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine* (Munich: DeGruyter-Oldenbourg, 2015).

²⁶ Taras Kurylo and John-Paul Himka, “Iak OUN stavylasia do ievreiv? Rozdumy nadknyzhkoii Volodymyra V'iatrovycha,” *Ukraina moderna* 13, 2 (2008): 252–65.

and important work by historians like John-Paul Himka but fails to grasp the fundamental difference between such research and the polemical work of writers such as V"iatrovych (54–55, 68–71). For a book with the avowed objective of avoiding the “unproblematic glorification” of the OUN, it does not make sense to rely on a writer who has stated his desire to glorify the OUN (12). Likewise, first-generation OUN supporters like Petro Mirchuk and Lev Shankovsky did not simply “avoid discussion of darker pages of the organization’s history,” as Shkandrij claims (9). They actively suppressed it. While Shkandrij is correct that the opening of archives has allowed for “myths” to be dispelled, it is important not only to do more archival research but also to recognize how myths were created in the first place—in East *and* West, antinationalist *and* nationalist—and, last but not least, why they are still with us (276).



Whereas Rossoliński-Liebe and Shkandrij’s books stand as examples of works that are willing to tackle difficult questions surrounding Ukrainian nationalism and make real contributions to the historiography, Volodymyr V"iatrovych’s recent work is a prime example of a type of study that has plagued the field for decades: a myopic, poorly researched apology for Ukrainian nationalist violence. Volodymyr V"iatrovych is the new director of the Institute of National Memory in Ukraine (and the keynote speaker at a recent ceremony for the first Bandera monument erected in North America).²⁷ He has long been a key activist in nationalist efforts to celebrate the OUN and the UPA, downplaying and denying their darker side.²⁸ He has a degree in history (*kandydat nauk*), and over the last decade he has served as head of the archives

²⁷ The Organization for the Defense of Four Freedoms for Ukraine organized the event called “Celebration of Our Heroes” on 5 July 2015 in Ellenville, NY. The original monument was erected in 1962. For background, see Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stegan Bandera*, 421–22.

²⁸ For background on V"iatrovych and his work, see Jared McBride, “How Ukraine’s New Memory Commissar Is Controlling the Nation’s Past,” *The Nation*, 13 August 2015, (<http://www.thenation.com/article/how-ukraines-new-memory-commissar-is-controlling-the-nations-past/>); John-Paul Himka, “Legislating Historical Truth: Ukraine’s Laws of 9 April 2015,” *Ab Imperio*, 21 April 2015 (<http://net.abimperio.net/node/3442>); Per A. Rudling, “The OUN, the UPA, and the Holocaust: A Study in the Manufacturing of Historical Myths,” *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 2017 (2011), 28–31; Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, “Debating, Obfuscating, and Disciplining the Holocaust: Post-Soviet Historical Discourses on the OUN–UPA and Other Nationalist Movements,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 42, 3 (2012): 207–8. On V"iatrovych, see also Vasyl’ Rasevych’s critical articles: “Zamknute kolo ‘spetsial’noi’ Ukrain’koi istorii,” *Zaxid.net*, 13 September 2010 (http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?zamknute_kolo_spetsialnoyi_ukrayinskoyi_istoriyi&objectId=1111060); “Skryn’ka Pandory,” *Zaxid.net*, 13 April 2015 (http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?skrinka_

of Ukraine's secret service (the SBU) and as director of the L'viv-based Center for the Study of the Liberation Movement (TsDVR), which tends to justify and glorify Ukrainian nationalist movements.²⁹ V'iatrovych's activities have received funding and support from parts of the North American Ukrainian diaspora—that is, by and large from the same groups and organizations that cultivated the postwar Bandera myth so thoroughly deconstructed by Rossoliński-Liebe.

V'iatrovych's *Druha pol's'ko-ukrains'ka viina*, published by the press of one of Ukraine's universities that generally enjoys a "liberal" and "Western" reputation, tries to refute the existing solid and voluminous research documenting the role of the OUN and the UPA in the ethnic cleansing of Poles and the 70,000–100,000 victims it claimed.³⁰ His is a conveniently "balanced" story of mutual communal violence, shot through by sporadic and spontaneous peasant brutality.³¹ It is hard to explain this fundamentally biased interpretation other than as the result of a preconceived and nonacademic agenda. The book has been reviewed widely and has enjoyed much public attention in Ukraine.³² In the scholarly community, the majority of reviews have been extremely critical.³³

In V'iatrovych's reading, mass violence between Ukrainians and Poles was a "war" that began with Poles killing Ukrainians in the summer of 1942 and ended with Poles deporting Ukrainians in 1947. The contention that the comparatively limited killings of 1942 (with hundreds of Ukrainian victims) caused the Ukrainian-nationalist ethnic cleansing campaign that

pankori&objectId=1347660); and "Vyverty Propahandy," Zaxid.net, 30 August 2015 (http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?viverti_propagandi&objectId=1367592).

²⁹ On the center, see Per Anders Rudling, "Warfare or War Criminality," *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2012): 357–59.

³⁰ For a list of publications by the center, see its website at <http://www.cdvr.org.ua/>. Academic institutions in North America such as the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute support the center, while nationalist diaspora organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America also support the center. The book was published through the press at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy—the same university that canceled a talk on Bandera by Rossoliński-Liebe.

³¹ For an overview of the numbers, see Motyka, *Ukrainska partyzantka*, 410–13.

³² See the special issue of reviews on the book in *Ab Imperio*, including Rudling, "Warfare or War Criminality"; Andzhei Zemba, "Mifologizirovannaia 'voina'"; Grzegorz Motyka, "Neudachnaia kniga"; and Ihor' Il'iushin, "Plokho zabytoe staroe: O novoi knige Vladimira Viatrovicha"—all in *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2012): 356–421. Additionally, see Andrei Portnov, "Istoriia dlia domashnego upotrebleniia," *Uroki istorii*, 26 March 2012; and Andrzej Leon Sowa, "Recenzja ksiązek: Polsko-ukrajński stosunki w 1942–1947 rokach u dokumentach OUN ta UPA, red. Wołodymyr Wiatrowycz oraz Wołodymyr Wiatrowycz, *Druha polsko-ukrajńska wijna 1942–1947*," *Pamięć i sprawiedliwość* 1, 21 (2013): 450–60.

³³ The lone exception is Alexander Motyl, "Review of Volodymyr V'iatrovych's *Druha pol's'ko-ukrains'ka viina*," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 37, 1–2 (2012): 216–18.

took tens of thousands of lives has long been discarded by scholars, as there is no evidence to link the two events in this causal chain.³⁴ Also, V"iatrovych's use of the term "war"—instead of the far more precise "ethnic cleansing"—is worryingly misguided, as it implies that this was, in essence, a conflict between armed and empowered combatants. But the overwhelming majority of victims on both sides were unarmed civilians. V"iatrovych's interpretation shields the perpetrators by reproducing their self-presentation as warriors, not murderers. This in turn insulates the political organizations to which these combatants belonged from their political agenda, which called for and directed ethnic violence. Such an approach echoes a traditional tactic of denying or downplaying responsibility for mass killings. Whether in Turkey or the Balkans or elsewhere, defenders of perpetrators have consistently tried to dissolve premeditated mass violence against civilians into perhaps tragic but certainly unintentional collateral damage and other machinations of denial.³⁵ The result is that perpetrators are stripped of responsibility. V"iatrovych's book fits this pattern sadly and disturbingly well.

V"iatrovych's approach to sources is baffling: he warns us of the unreliability and emotional bias of testimony, especially from victims (19). Claiming a dated notion of objectivity to systematically neglect victim testimonies recalls earlier mistakes in the field of Holocaust history, long abandoned there.³⁶ But V"iatrovych does not disregard all contemporary voices: he uncritically cites at

³⁴ For criticism of the argument that Polish violence drove the Ukrainians to commit ethnic cleansing, see Rudling, "Warfare or War Criminality," 361–62; Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, "Der polnisch-ukrainische Historikerdiskurs über den polnisch-ukrainischen Konflikt 1943–1947," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 57, 1 (2009): 77–78; and Moryka, "Neudachnaia kniga," 396–98.

³⁵ Examples for the Balkans are Stefan Karganović and Ljubiša Simić, *Srebrenica: Dekonstrukcija jednog virtuelnog genocida* (Belgrade: Fond "Istorijski Projekat Srebrenica," 2010); Karganović and Simić, *Rethinking Srebrenica* (s.l.: Unwritten History, 2013); Milivoje Ivanišević, *Srebrenica July 1995: In Search of Truth* (Belgrade: Hrišćanska misao, 2008). For the Armenian genocide, see Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005); and Justin McCarthy, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009). An analogue in the Polish case would be Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *The Massacre in Jedwabne, July 10, 1941: Before, During, After* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2005). For important recent works on ethnic violence, see Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); and Edina Becirevic, *Genocide on the Drina River* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

³⁶ For a useful evaluation of this issue, see Omer Bartov, "Eastern Europe as a Site of Genocide," *Journal of Modern History* 80, 3 (2008): 581–91; and Bartov, "Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies: Jewish-Christian Relations in Bucacz, 1939–1944," *East European Politics and Societies* 25, 3 (2011): 486–511. See also Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera*, 38–39; and Christopher Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

length, for example, the personal archive of Mykola Lebed—a key nationalist leader, convicted murderer of an interwar Polish official, and postwar CIA agent (26). V"iatrovych does not ask whether Lebed—interested in his reputation, his CIA connection, and, last but not least, in his immigration status—possibly has pruned his own archive.³⁷ He also routinely cites memoirs of nationalists without questioning whether they would honestly record their own crimes for history—or authorities. But it is well known for scholars of violence that victims' voices often can tell us more than perpetrators, for the simple reason that the latter have more to lose by honesty.³⁸

This does not mean that traces of mass violence are not detectable in the archival and even memoir record: there are, in fact, remnants of UPA materials pointing to violence against civilians—including Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians—such as the memoir of UPA veteran Danylo Shumuk, who made various references to killing Poles (killings that he claimed to oppose).³⁹ There is also an unpublished diary of a UPA soldier that documented his unit's murder of Jews, bragging that they “dispatched them to the womb of Abraham.”⁴⁰ V"iatrovych has labored hard to show that the UPA did not attack civilians, be they Polish or Jewish. To maintain this illusion, selectivity is the rule when engaging nationalist memoirs and diaries.

Furthermore, as a former secret police archive director, V"iatrovych tries to use these archives to deny the existence of nationalist orders to commit coordinated mass violence. V"iatrovych dismisses various references to leaders and soldiers discussing orders to kill Poles as Soviet forgeries, though he happily cites thousands of pages of materials from the same archives when they suit his aims. For example, V"iatrovych maintains that the important testimony of UPA commander Iurii Stel'mashchuk from 28 February 1945 is a forgery, because he could not find the original transcript (93–95).⁴¹ As it

³⁷ NARA RG 319 (Records of the Army Staff), E 134B, B 757, Box 757 (Mykola Lebed IRR Personal File).

³⁸ Jeffrey Burds, “Ethnicity, Memory, and Violence: Reflections on Special Problems in Soviet and East European Archives,” in *Archives and Social Memory: Institutions, Practices, and Political Cultures*, ed. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 478.

³⁹ Danylo Shumuk, *Life Sentence: Memoirs of a Ukrainian Political Prisoner* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1984), 80–84.

⁴⁰ Derzhavnyi arkhiv Rivnens'koi oblasti (DARO) f. R-30 (OUN-UPA), op. 2, spr. 89 (Diary of a commander from Kolodzyns'kyi *otriad*).

⁴¹ On Stel'mashchuk, see also Volodymyr V"iatrovych, “Volyns'ka tragediia—chastyna pol's'ko-ukraïns'koi viiny,” *Istorychna pravda*, 7 December 2011 (<http://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/4e1c07cfdc581/>).

happens, the original exists and has been preserved in a Moscow archive.⁴² For V"iatrovych, any Soviet document is a forgery when it contains information he does not like, but he will cite information from the exact same documents to claim that ethnic cleansing did not happen (124).

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the book is the treatment of the "Peter and Paul massacres" of 11–12 July 1943, one of the biggest nationalist operations when, in one night, over 100 Polish villages were attacked. Focusing on one of the villages, Poryts'k, V"iatrovych notes varying estimates of Polish victims and uses these divergences to cast doubt on the entirety of ethnic cleansing in the region (124–25). This corpse counting masquerading as historical inquiry is eerily similar to another false methodology that tries to diminish the mass murder of Jews during the same war. Moreover, V"iatrovych seems confused about the concept of ethnic cleansing, which includes not only mass murder but also expulsion—a fact that may explain "missing" bodies.

Those bloody actions that V"iatrovych cannot simply disappear he interprets as cases of "Jacquerie," by which he means inflamed peasant passion and not deliberate, politically motivated ethnic cleansing (107, 116). His maneuvering to save nationalists from any suspicion produces a stereotyped image of Ukrainian peasants as axe-wielding savages, willing to murder men, women, and children in curious acts of spontaneous combustion. Ironically, in his relentless defense of ethnic nationalists, V"iatrovych ends up casting average Ukrainians in a bad light. Scholars who warn, in a postcolonial vein, against orientalizing East European subjects should find V"iatrovych's depictions of peasants offensive. An interpretation more in line with recent studies of violence, genocide, and civil war would accommodate the complexity of the relationship between armed groups and civilian perpetrators in which inducement, reward, and coercion help motivate participation in violence.⁴³



⁴² The testimony from 28 February 1945 absent from the case file (spr. 22085) at Haluzevnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv sluzhby bezpeky Ukrainy (HDA SBU) can be found in Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 9478 (The Main Struggle against Banditry), op. 1, d. 399, ll. 15–18 (Protokol doprosa arestovannoho Stel'mashchuk Iurii Aleksandrovicha, 28 fevralia 1945). The idea that there were interrogations recorded but not inserted into the final case file is hardly an anomaly in secret police archives. Moreover, V"iatrovych remains unaware that the Stel'mashchuk testimony can be traced down the chain of command and connected directly to a massacre of Poles in the Liuboml' region through a cross-examination of UPA documentation and Polish and Ukrainian witness testimony. See McBride, "Peasants into Perpetrators."

⁴³ On the complex conditions under which civilians become involved in violence, see Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

In conclusion, Bandera, like the general topic of mid-20th century Ukrainian nationalism, remains an important and polarizing issue in contemporary Ukraine. During the second Maidan revolution, Bandera's image and OUN-UPA symbols could be found in many public places. While some scholars have been critical of this appropriation in a modern Ukraine striving for democracy and pluralism, some intellectuals have defended it.⁴⁴ They have claimed that the references to Bandera and the nationalists of World War II are mere mimetic gestures, reassuringly detached from real history, so that Bandera is only a sign of resistance to old-regime kleptocracy and Russian aggression.⁴⁵ Somewhat ironically, Volodymyr V"iatrovych, now heading Ukraine's national memory agency, insists that what matters is not memory but amnesia, since "what Bandera actually did, and who he actually was, isn't important these days."⁴⁶

V"iatrovych's book has been reviewed widely and has enjoyed much public attention in Ukraine, and now English and Polish translations of it are being prepared.⁴⁷ But it would be better if the works of Rossoliński-Liebe and Shkandrij were translated into Ukrainian. Rossoliński-Liebe's biography of Bandera and, to a lesser extent, Shkandrij's study of Ukrainian theorists and writers challenge the canon of Ukrainian nationalism developed during the Cold War and rehashed now. Their integration of newly available archival sources, comparative analyses, and conceptual frameworks—as well as an engagement with other scholars embarking on new studies in social, cultural, and intellectual history—can generate fresh studies to help us understand the

⁴⁴ See the 2009–10 debate on Bandera in Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera*, 519–24; and Tarik Syril [Cyril] Amar, Ihor Balyns'ki, and Iaroslav Hrytsak, eds., *Strasti za Banderouiu* (Kyiv: Hrani-T, 2007).

⁴⁵ Raisa Ostapenko, "The Success of Russia's Propaganda: Ukraine's 'Banderovtsy,'" *Cambridge Globalist*, 29 January 2015 (<http://cambridgeglobalist.org/2015/01/29/success-russias-propaganda-ukraines-banderovtsy>); Shkandrij, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 99; Alexander J. Motyl, "Here's Why More Ukrainians Admire Nationalists, and Why the West Shouldn't Freak Out," *The Atlantic Council Blog*, 18 July 2015 (<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/understanding-contemporary-ukraine>).

⁴⁶ Matthew Schofield, "Hero or Villain? WWII Partisan Bandera Still Animates Ukraine-Russia Fight," *McClatchyDC*, 28 March 2014 (<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24765829.html>). In contrast, some leaders of the diaspora community actually embrace the terrorism element of the OUN-B, claiming it was legitimate violence within the context of Polish rule. See Askold S. Lozynskiy, "Who's Really to Blame for Ruining Ukraine," *Politico*, 23 July 2015 (<http://www.politico.eu/article/letter-to-editor-ukraine-dirty-dozen>).

⁴⁷ The translations are being organized and prepared by diaspora organizations in Canada, many of which have strongly sympathetic views of the OUN-UPA. For a list of the organizations supporting the Polish translation, see Mykola Svyntukh-Zaverukha and Mariika Jacyla, UCC press release, "To Members of the Ukrainian Community," 6 March 1943 (http://www.lemko-ool.com/uploads/Volyn_43-eng.pdf). Thanks to Per Rudling for this information.

cataclysm of violence that engulfed World War II Ukraine in an academic and honest manner.⁴⁸ The results of such genuinely fresh work do not always align, nor should they: for instance, Rossoliński-Liebe and Shkandrij may disagree on the use of the term “integral nationalism,” and such pluralism is inherent to nonpoliticized and non-nationalized scholarship. A frank and direct engagement with the real history of Bandera and his organization would cause the field to grow and may also help the Ukrainian public question the symbolic meaning and legacy of ethnic nationalists.

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⁴⁸ See, e.g., Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Nazis, Stalinists, and Nationalists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).