

Stepan Bandera



# STEPAN BANDERA

The Life and Afterlife of  
a Ukrainian Nationalist  
Fascism, Genocide, and Cult

Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe

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Printed in Germany

For Martina, Gustav, and Alma

and

in memory of civilians killed by the Ukrainian nationalists



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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My interest in Stepan Bandera was awakened about a decade ago when I came across a picture of the Bandera monument in the eastern Galician town of Dubliany and read an article that described the unveiling ceremony. The solemn mood of the crowd in the picture and the highly respectful attitude of the article toward Bandera and his movement puzzled me. After this encounter I examined a number of academic and non-academic writings relating to Bandera, his role in Ukrainian and European history, and in the collective memory of Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, Russians, and other peoples. These publications, however, did not satisfy my curiosity. The characterizations of Bandera and his movement were intriguing but they lacked substance and many were superficial. Because of the lack of reliable information about the subject, it took me several years to define the bases and to comprehend its essentials. The more time I spent in the archives and libraries, the more I was astonished how mythical and escapist the Bandera images are. Interviewing various activists and investigating Bandera museums, I realized how much Bandera meant to people who had made him a part of their identity and how little they were interested in a more realistic understanding of the man and his movement. I also noticed a concealed hostility toward critical examination of the subject and deduced that the common representations of Bandera, whether apologetic or demonizing, were based on disavowal of certain aspects of his past and on collective misinformation, in particular in post-Soviet western Ukraine.

Investigating the early post-war period, I realized that our understanding of Bandera and his movement had been based to a substantial extent on that movement's propaganda, which had been modified after the Second World War and adjusted to the realities of the Cold War by the veterans of the movement and its sympathizers. Several thousand of these people had left western Ukraine together with the Germans during the last phase of the war and remained thereafter in various countries of the Western bloc. Their narrative of the events in western Ukraine during the Second World War was not challenged by professional historians until recently. On the contrary, some of the historians who studied Ukrainian nationalism during the Cold War adopted parts of this distorted and selective narrative in their own writings, taking the memories and self-representations of the veterans of the movement for granted. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a number of political activists and scholars based in western Ukraine presented explanations of the subject that were again very similar to those popularized previously by the movement's veterans and by some historians rooted in the Ukrainian diaspora. In other words the subject has remained unexplored for a long period of time, and its investigation has become difficult and even dangerous.

The theoretical part of my work, in particular the contextualization of Bandera and his movement among other East Central European fascist movements, evoked fierce reactions among far-right activists, and it irritated several historians and intellectuals, including experts in the fields of Polish, Soviet, and Ukrainian history. Equally intense emotions were aroused when I began to connect the apologetic

commemorations and representations of Bandera and his followers with the involvement of Ukrainian nationalists and ordinary Ukrainians in the Holocaust and other forms of mass violence during and after the Second World War. To my surprise, some historians who had not worked in the field of Ukrainian history, but had specialized in subjects such as mass violence, fascism, nationalism, the Holocaust or its denial, had far fewer problems accepting the results of my research and following the narrative of this study.

When I was planning to investigate Bandera and his movement in depth and to write a comprehensive study about them, several scholars warned me that it would be better to choose a less contentious topic for a dissertation. As it turned out, the reactions to my research and to some of my findings exceeded their direst predictions. Especially in the last phase of writing this book, I was exposed to a number of unpleasant attacks on this study and sometimes also on my person. These attacks came both from the Ukrainian far right and from scholars who regarded Bandera as a national or local hero, and his followers as an anti-German and anti-Soviet resistance movement, or as the Ukrainian “liberation movement.” Many people directly or indirectly expressed the opinion that the investigation of subjects such as the mass violence conducted by the Ukrainian nationalists, the Bandera cult, and the Holocaust denial among the Ukrainian diaspora and post-Soviet intellectuals constitutes an attack on Ukrainian identity, and they questioned the usefulness and integrity of such research.

When the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the German embassy in Kiev invited me to deliver six lectures about Bandera in three Ukrainian cities in late February and early March 2012, organized hysteria was stirred up, not only among Ukrainian far-right activists and nationalist scholars but also among a number of “liberal” scholars in Ukraine and some scholars of East European history in other countries. The organizers of the lecture tour had great difficulty in finding universities or other institutions with sufficient courage to host my lectures. Venues were found in Kiev and Dnipropetrovsk, but none in Lviv. In the event, even the four institutions (including the Tkuma Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies) that had agreed to my appearance canceled the lectures a few hours prior to their planned start. As a result, only one lecture took place, in secure conditions in the premises of the German embassy in Kiev. In front of the building, about a hundred angry protesters tried to convince a few hundred interested students, scholars, and ordinary Ukrainians not to attend my lecture, claiming that I was “Joseph Goebbels’ grandchild” and a “liberal fascist from Berlin,” who did not understand anything about the subject he would talk about.

The lectures in Ukraine in early 2012 were prevented by two kinds of political and intellectual opponents. The first group consisted of far-right activists from the Svoboda Party who intimidated the universities and other institutions. The second group was composed of nationalist and “liberal” intellectuals and scholars, who contacted the institutions and also announced in public that it would be better not to allow me to speak on the subject of my research, because I was not a historian but a “propagandist” who would besmirch the country or attempt to spark a civil war and split Ukraine. During the wave of disturbing and hostile insults and protests, a number of people, including Antony Polonsky, Delphine Bechtel, Per Anders Rudling, Marco Carynnyk, Andreas Umland, Jared McBride, Mark von Hagen, Arnd Bauerkämper,

Christian Ganzer, Frank Golczewski, Anton Shekhovtsov, Gertrud Pickhan, Grzegorz Motyka, Omer Bartov, Simon Hadler, Susanne Heim, and especially my wife Martina, were very supportive. These people convinced me not to pay too much attention to the various kinds of nationalist and intellectual hysteria and to concentrate on finishing the study and publishing the book.

This study could not have been accomplished without the help and support of many people and institutions. At the very beginning of this undertaking, Philipp Ther convinced me to see it through. Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner († 2008), an inspiring theoretician and a remarkable critic of collective memories, did so too. During the entire project, my dissertation adviser Frank Golczewski supported me with advice on various academic matters and helped me to face sundry bureaucratic obstacles. In Ukraine, Leonid Zashkylniak, Iaroslav Hrytsak, Ostap Sereda, and a number of other colleagues helped me to locate and extract some essential documents and to overcome many kinds of administrative complications. Similarly, several archivists and librarians in Canada, Germany, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States were very helpful during my investigations. John-Paul Himka taught me a great deal about the Ukrainian diaspora and its nationalist misrepresentation of history. He and scholars such as Omer Bartov, Dieter Pohl, Grzegorz Motyka, and Per Anders Rudling drew my attention to the question of ethnic and political violence and its significance for this study. The writings on fascism by scholars such as Arnd Bauerkämper, Roger Eatwell, Roger Griffin, Constantin Iordachi, Michael Mann, Stanley G. Payne, Kevin Passmore, Robert Paxton, and Zeev Sternhell helped me to contextualize Bandera and his movement.

The book has profited from discussions and critical readings. I had the pleasure to present and discuss the project at academic seminars organized by Arnd Bauerkämper, Frank Golczewski, Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, Gertrud Pickhan, Philip Ther, the German Historical Institute Warsaw, the working group “Holocaust and Memory Politics” at the University of Alberta, and the department of Eastern European History at the University of Giessen. Arnd Bauerkämper, Omer Bartov, Frank Golczewski, Mark von Hagen, John-Paul Himka, Iaroslav Hrytsak, Tanja Penter, Per Anders Rudling, Tomasz Stryjek, and Andrzej Zięba commented either on the whole manuscript or some of its parts. Ray Brandon, Franziska Bruder, Marco Carynnyk, John-Paul Himka, Jared McBride, Grzegorz Motyka, Dieter Pohl, and Per Anders Rudling assisted me with information and drew my attention to documents they had discovered during their own research on topics relating to this study. Marco Carynnyk and Michał Młynarz helped me by editing the manuscript. It would not have been possible to conduct the research for this study and to write this book, without the financial assistance of the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the University of Alberta, and the German Historical Institute Warsaw, or to have the manuscript edited without the assistance of the Gerda Henkel Foundation. I would therefore like to thank all the people who have helped me to publish this book. Given its subject and length it was a quite challenging task. Above all, I very sincerely thank my wife, who showed considerable patience and compassion during the extensive and exhaustive process of accomplishing this study. I devote this book to her and to my two children.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASSS	Archives of the Shevchenko Scientific Society in New York
AAN	Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw)
ABN	Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations
AENM	Alliance of European National Movements
AK	Armia Krajowa (Polish Home Army)
ASBML	Archive of the Stepan Bandera Museum, London
ASSS	Archives of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, New York
ATsDVR	Arkhiv Tsentru doslidzhen' vyzvol'noho rukhu (Archives of the Institute for the Study of the Liberation Movement)
AUNR	Armia Ukraïns'koï Narodnoï Respubliky (Ukrainian People's Army)
AŽIH	Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (Archives of the Jewish Historical Museum, Warsaw)
BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin (German Federal Archives, Berlin)
BAK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz (German Federal Archives, Koblenz)
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv—Militärarchiv (Military Archives in Freiburg)
BayHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (Bavarian Main State Archives)
BCh	Bataliony Chłopskie (Peasants' Battalions)
BMN	Blok Mniejszości Narodowych (Bloc of National Minorities, Blok fon Nashonal Minorities, Blok Natsional'nykh Menshyn, or Block der Nationalen Minderheiten)
BN	Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie (National Library, Warsaw)
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst (Federal Intelligence Service)
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany)
BStU	Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes (Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Archives)
CAW	Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Rembertów (Central Military Archives, Rembertów)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIUS	Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
CŽKH	Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna (Central Jewish Historical Commission)
DALO	Derzhavnyi Arkhiv L'vivskoï Oblasti (State Archives of Lviv Oblast)
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)
DP	displaced person(s)
FNİe	Front natsional'noï iednosti (Front of National Unity)
FHO	Fremde Heere Ost (German Military Intelligence on the Eastern Front)
FSB	Federal'naia sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation)
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation)
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
HA	Hauptabteilung (Main Department—of the MfS)

HURI	Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute
HDA SBU	Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi arkhiv Sluzhby bezpeky Ukraïny (State Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine)
HJ	Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)
HRO	Hrvatska revolucionarna organizacija (Croatian Revolutionary Organization), or Ustaša
HSLŠ	Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana (Hlinka's Slovak People's Party)
HUNM	Hrupa Ukraïns'koï Natsionalnoi Molodi (Group of the Ukrainian National Youth)
HURI	Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute
KAUM	Katolyts'ka aktsiia Ukraïns'koï molodi (Catholic Action of Ukrainian Youth)
KAW	Karta, Archiwum Wschodnie in Warsaw (Karta Archives in Warsaw)
KGB	Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)
KiSPSB	Komitet iz sporudzhennia pam"iatnyka Stepanu Banderi (Society to Erect the Stepan Bandera Monument)
KONR	Komitet Osobodzhennia Narodov Rossii (Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia)
KP(b)U	Komunistychna Partiiia (bil'shovykiv) Ukraïny (Communist Party [Bolsheviks] of Ukraine)
KPSS	Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Sovetskogo Soiuzia (Communist Party of the Soviet Union)
KPU	Komunistychna Partiiia Ukrayiny (Communist Party of Ukraine)
KPZU	Komunistychna Partiiia Zakhidnoi Ukraïny (Communist Party of West Ukraine)
KUK	Komitet Ukraïntsiiv Kanady (Ukrainian Canadian Committee)
KUN	Kongres Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists)
LAF	Lietuvos aktyvistų frontas (Lithuanian Activist Front)
LNAU	L'vivs'kyi Natsional'nyi Ahrarnyi Universytet (L'viv State Agrarian University)
LN-W	Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen (Provincial Archives, Nordrhein-Westfalen)
LUN	Lehiia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (Legion of Ukrainian Nationalists)
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Stasi (Ministry for State Security)
MGB	Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (Ministry of State Security)
MI6	Colloquial name for the Foreign Section of the (British) Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)
MSW	Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
MSZ	Ministerstwo Spraw Zewnętrznych (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
MVD	Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
NARA	U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
NDH	Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)
NKGB	Narodnyi komissariat gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (People's Commissariat for State Security)

NKVD	Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)
NRU	Narodnyi Rukh Ukraïny (Popular Movement of Ukraine)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NSZ	Narodowe Siły Zbrojne (National Armed Forces)
NTS	Natsional'no Trudovoi Soiuz (National Alliance of Russian Solidarists)
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Supreme Command of the Armed Forces)
ONR	Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (National Radical Camp)
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OUN-B	Orhanizatsia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv-Bandera (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists-Bandera)
OUN-M	Orhanizatsia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv-Mel'nyk (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists-Mel'nyk)
OUN-z	Orhanizatsia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv-za kordonom (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists-abroad)
OVF	Orhanizatsii Vyzvol'noho Frontu (Organizations of the Liberation Front)
ObVB	Ob'iednannia Ukraïntsv u Velykii Brytanii (Federation of Ukrainians in Great Britain)
OVKUH	Orhanizatsiia Vyzhchykh Kliias Ukraïns'kykh Himnazii (Organization of the Upper Grades of the Ukrainian High Schools)
PAA	Provincial Archives of Alberta
PAAA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes in Berlin (Political Archives of the Foreign Office in Berlin)
PSPU	Prohresyvna sotsialistychna partiia Ukraïny (Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine)
PUN	Provid Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (Leadership of the Ukrainian Nationalists)
PRL	Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (People's Republic of Poland)
PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers' Party)
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RFP	Rossiiskaia fashistskaia partiia (Russian Fascist Party)
RGASPI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
RGVA	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv (Russian State Military Archives)
ROA	Ruskaia Osvoboditelnaia Armia (Russian Liberation Army)
RGASOI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History)
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)
SB	Sluzhba Bezpeky (Security Service)

SBU	Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukraïny (Security Service of Ukraine)
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SIFAR	Servizio Informazioni Forze Armate (Italian Military Intelligence)
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
SNPU	Sotsial-natsional'na partiia Ukraïny (Social-National Party of Ukraine)
SNUM	Spilka Nezalezhnoi Ukraïns'koï Molodi (Association of Independent Ukrainian Youth)
SS	Schutzstaffel (Protection Squadron)
StM	Staatsarchiv München (Munich State Archives)
SUB	Soiuz Ukraïntsv u Velykii Brytaniï (Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain)
SUF	Soiuz Ukraïns'kykh Fashystiv (Union of Ukrainian Fascists)
SUM	Spilka Ukraïns'koï Molodi (Ukrainian Youth Organization)
SUN	Soiuz Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (Union of the Ukrainian Nationalists)
SUNM	Soiuz Ukraïns'koi Natsionalistychnoi Molodi (Union of the Ukrainian Nationalistic Youth)
SUOZUNzW	Stowarzyszenie Upamiętnienia Ofiar Zbrodni Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów z Wrocławia (Society to Commemorate the Victims of the Crimes of Ukrainian Nationalists in Wrocław)
TsDAHO	Tsentrāl'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh obiednan' Ukraïny (Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine)
TsDAVOV	Tsentrāl'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vshchkykh orhaniv vldy ta upravlinnia Ukraïny (Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine)
TsDIAL	Tsentrāl'nyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv u L'vovi (Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv)
TsDVR	Tsentr doslidzhen' vyzvol'noho rukhu (Institute for the Study of the Liberation Movement)
TShLA	Taras Shevchenko Library and Archives (of the SUB in London)
TsNV	Tsentr Natsional'noho vidrodzhennia imeni Stepana Bandery (Stepan Bandera Centre of National Revival)
UNO	Ukraïns'ke Natsional'ne Obiednannia (Ukrainian National Association)
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UB	Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (Polish Department of Security)
UCC	Kongres Ukraïntsv Kanady (Ukrainian Canadian Congress)
UHA	Ukraïns'ka Halyts'ka Armiia (Ukrainian Galician Army)
UHVR	Ukraïns'ka Holovna Vyzvol'na Rada (Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council)
UINP	Ukraïns'kyi instytut natsional'noi pam'iaty (Ukrainian Institute of National Memory)
UKKA	Ukraïns'kyi Kongresovyi Komitet Ameryky (Ukrainian Congress Committee of America)

Ukrainian SRR	Ukraïns'ka Radians'ka Sotsialistychna Respublika (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)
UKU	Ukraïns'kyi Katholyts'kyi Soiuz (Ukrainian Catholic Union)
UNA	Ukraïns'ka natsional'na asambleia (Ukrainian National Assembly)
UNA	Ukraïns'ka Natsional'na Armiia (Ukrainian National Army)
UNDO	Ukraïns'ke Natsional'no-Demokratychne Obiednannia (Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance)
UNDP	Ukraïns'ka Natsional'no-Demokratychna Partia (Ukrainian National-Democratic Party)
UNF	Ukrainian National Federation of Canada
UNK	Ukraïns'kyi Natsional'nyi Komitet (Ukrainian National Committee)
UNO	Ukraïns'ke Natsional'ne Obiednannia (Ukrainian National Association)
UNP	Ukraïns'ka Narodna Partia (Ukrainian National Party)
UNR	Ukrayins'ka Narodna Respublika (Ukrainian People's Republic)
UNR	Ukraïns'ka Natsionalna Rada (Ukrainian National Council)
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNSO	Ukraïns'ka natsional'na samooborona (Ukrainian National Self-Defense)
UPA	Ukraïns'ka Povstans'ka Armiia (Ukrainian Insurgent Army)
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
USRP	Ukraïns'ka Sotsialistychno-Radykalna Partiiia (Ukrainian Socialist Radical Party)
USSR	Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
UTsK	Ukraïns'kyi Tsentral'nyi Komitet (Ukrainian Central Committee)
UVF	Ukraïns'kyi Vyzvol'nyi Front (Ukrainian Liberation Front)
UVO	Ukraïns'ka Viis'kova Orhanizatsiia (Ukrainian Military Organization)
UVU	Ukraïns'kyi Vil'nyi Universytet (Ukrainian Free University)
UWI	Ukrainisches Wissenschaftliches Institut (Ukrainian Scientific Institute)
UWVA	Ukrainian War Veteran's Association
VMRO	Vatreshna makedonska revolutsionna organizatsia (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation)
VNN	Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes (Society of People Persecuted by the Nazi Regime)
ZAIG	Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe des MfS (Central Evaluation and Information Group)
ZCh OUN	Zakordonni Chastyny OUN (Foreign Units of the OUN)
ZNiO	Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu (National Ossoliński Institute in Wrocław)
ZP UHVR	Zakordonne Predstavnytsvo UHVR (Foreign Representation of the UHVR)
ZUNR	Zakhidno-Ukrayins'ka Narodna Respublika (West Ukrainian National Republic)

## NOTE ON LANGUAGE, NAMES, AND TRANSLITERATIONS

The region in which Bandera lived for the first thirty years of his life was inhabited by peoples who spoke different languages and used various names for their cities, towns, and villages, and also for the regions in which they lived, such as Lemberg, Lwów, Lemberik, L'viv, L'vov for Lviv; or Kraków, Kroke, Krakau for Cracow; or Galizien, Halychyna, Galicja, Galitsye for Galicia. In this book I use well-established English names, such as Cracow, Galicia, Kiev, Lviv, Moscow, or Warsaw, if they exist. Otherwise I use the names in the language of the country in which they are currently located, such as Ivano-Frankivs'k, Ternopil' or Gdańsk. On first use, I also introduce the name used by the state administration at that time. The transliteration of Ukrainian and Russian words follows the standard of the Library of Congress (unless Latin characters were used in the original).

# INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the life and the political cult of Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian far-right leader who lived between 1909 and 1959. Bandera's cult emerged in the mid-1930s and has endured to the present. The person and the cult did not exist separately from each other but remained in a state of mutual dependency. They did not occur and function in a vacuum but in specific cultural, social, and political contexts. The investigation of these contexts is one of the crucial goals of this study. It will allow us to comprehend the interrelation between Bandera's life and the processes surrounding his mythologization. The book combines a political biography of the legendary Ukrainian leader, embedded in the history of his movement, with an analysis of the writers, historians, ideologists, film directors, politicians, and political activists who were involved in the process of creating the Bandera cult between the mid-1930s and the end of the first decade of this century.

## The Person

Even without the cult that arose during his lifetime and flourished after his death, Stepan Bandera was an intriguing person. It was not purely by chance that he became one of the central symbols of Ukrainian nationalism, although the role of chance in history should not be underestimated. With his radical nature, doctrinaire determination, and strong faith in an ultranationalist Ukrainian revolution that was intended to bring about the "rebirth" of the Ukrainian nation, Bandera fulfilled the ideological expectations of his cohorts. By the time he was twenty-six, he was admired not only by other Ukrainian revolutionary ultranationalists but also by some other elements of Ukrainian society living in the Second Polish Republic. The same factors made him the leader (Ukr. *Providnyk* or *Vozhd'*), and symbol of the most violent, twentieth century, western Ukrainian political movement: the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv*, OUN), which in late 1942 and early 1943 formed the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukraïns'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*, UPA). Despite, or perhaps because of the fact that Bandera spent a significant part of his life outside Ukraine, in prison or other confinement, he became a legendary personality after whom thousands of his followers, sympathizers and even ordinary western Ukrainians were called Banderites (Ukr. *banderivtsi*, Pol. *banderowcy*, Rus. *banderovtsi*). There are also those who think that his remarkable-sounding name, meaning "banner" in Polish and Spanish, contributed to his becoming the symbol of Ukrainian nationalism.

A biographical investigation of Bandera is challenging. His political myth is embedded in different ideologies, which have distorted the perception of the person. Not without reason do the Bandera biographies that have appeared in Poland, Russia and Ukraine since 1990 differ greatly from one another and inform us very little about the person and related history. Very few of them examine archival documents. Many are couched in various post-Soviet nationalist discourses. Their authors

present Bandera as a national hero, sometimes even as a saint, and ignore or deny his radical worldview and his followers' contribution to ethnic and political violence. Others present Bandera as a biblical kind of evil and deny war crimes committed against Ukrainian civilians by the Poles, Germans, and Soviets. Earlier publications on Bandera written during the Cold War were either embedded in Soviet discourse or, more frequently, in the nationalist discourse of the Ukrainian diaspora.

The investigation of Bandera requires not only a comparison of his biographies and other publications relating to him, but, more important, the examination of numerous archival documents, memoirs written by persons who knew him, and documents and publications written by him personally. The study of these documents reveals how Bandera acted at particular stages of his life, and how he was perceived by his contemporaries. This enables us to understand Bandera's role in twentieth-century Ukrainian history and helps us look for answers to the most difficult questions related to his biography, such as if and to what extent he was responsible for OUN and UPA atrocities, in which he was personally not involved but which he approved of.

## Cult, Myth, Charisma, and Rituals

The cult of the leader is a phenomenon created by and rooted within a particular society, group, or community that is prepared to accept the ideological dimensions of the cult. A leader often emerges in a time of crisis and his adherents believe that he will help the community weather it. The power and charisma of the leader derives usually only in part from him. In greater measure, it is a social product, a creation of social expectations vested in him.<sup>1</sup> The leaders around whom personality cults are established are therefore either charismatic or, more frequently, believed to be charismatic. Charisma might be a "personality gift, a situational coincidence, or a particular pact between leader and the followers."<sup>2</sup>

A charismatic leader cannot exist without a "charismatic community," which would accept, admire, celebrate, and believe in his "extraordinary" qualities. To achieve this state of mind and affairs, an emotional relationship between the leader and the community must be established. The community feels connected with its leader who, as his followers believe, takes care of them and leads them toward a better future.<sup>3</sup> One of the most effective ways to establish an emotional relationship between the leader and the community is through the performance of rituals. The practicing of political rituals is crucial for the formation of a collective identity that unites a group. Rituals influence the morality and values of the individuals practicing them, and transform the emotional state of the group.<sup>4</sup>

In practice, the process of creating charisma around the leader might proceed in different ways, depending on the nature of the movement. Small movements in

<sup>1</sup> Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle A. Kallis, "Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic Domination' and Interwar European Fascism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2006): 25.

<sup>3</sup> Kallis, *Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation'*, 25–26.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Bergesen, "Die rituelle Ordnung," in *Ritualtheorien: Ein einführendes Handbuch*, eds. Andréa Belliger and David J. Krieger (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998), 50–51.

multiethnic states—such as the OUN or the Croatian Ustaša—would use methods different from those used by movements that took control of the state and established a regime, such as the Italian Fascists or the German National Socialists. Charisma may also be attributed to a leader after his death. A charismatic community might still be under the influence of its deceased leader and therefore continue to admire and commemorate him. Not only the body of the leader but also his personal objects, including his clothing, writing desk, or pen might become imbued with sacred meaning after his death. The members of the charismatic community might treat those objects as relics, the last remnants of their legendary leader and true hero.<sup>5</sup>

The cults of fascist and other totalitarian leaders emerged in Europe after the First World War. Their emergence was related to the disappearance of relevant monarchies and of the cults of emperors who had been regarded as the representatives of God on earth, and whose absence caused a void in the lives of many.<sup>6</sup> Several fascist movements regarded the Roman Catholic Church as an important institution to imitate because the head of the Church did not need his own charisma to appear charismatic.<sup>7</sup> Nazi Party Secretary Rudolf Hess wrote in a private letter in 1927: “The great popular leader is similar to the great founder of a religion: he must communicate to his listeners an apodictic faith. Only then can the mass of followers be led where they should be led. They will then also follow the leader if the setbacks are encountered; but only then, if they have communicated to them unconditional belief in the absolute rightness of their own people.”<sup>8</sup> The legal philosopher Julius Binder argued in 1929: “The Leader cannot be made, can in this sense not be selected. The Leader makes himself in that he comprehends the history of his people.”<sup>9</sup> The historian Emilio Gentile observed that the “charismatic leader is accepted as a guide by his followers, who obey him with veneration and devotion, because they consider that he has been invested with the task of realizing an idea of the *mission*; the leader is the living incarnation and mythical interpretation of his mission.”<sup>10</sup> In this sense, the leader as an incarnation of a mission, or as a charismatic personality, might acquire the qualities of a saint or messiah that correspond to the community’s needs.<sup>11</sup> Followers of a leader believe that he comes as “destiny from the inner essence of people,”<sup>12</sup> because he embodies the idea of the movement and personifies its politics. Roger Eatwell observed that the leader might help people

<sup>5</sup> For worshipping a leader after his death, see Sergio Luzzatto, *The Body of Il Duce: Mussolini's Corpse and the Fortunes of Italy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Heidi Hein-Kircher, “Führerkult und Führermythos: Theoretische Reflexionen zur Einführung,” in *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Benno Ennker and Heidi Hein-Kircher (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2010), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Emilio Gentile, “Mussolini as the Prototypical Charismatic Dictator,” *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, ed. Roger Eatwell, Stein Ugevlík Larsen, and António Costa Pinto (London: Routledge 2007) 125.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 27.

<sup>9</sup> Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962), 273, quoted in Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Gentile, Mussolini as the Prototypical Charismatic Dictator, 113.

<sup>11</sup> Kallis, Fascism, ‘Charisma’ and ‘Charimatisation’, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'*, 19.

to “understand complex events” and “come to terms with complexity through the image of a single person who is held to be special, but in some way accountable.”<sup>13</sup>

A fascist leader is expected to be an idealistic, dynamic, passionate, and revolutionary individual. He is the “bearer of a mission,” who tries to overthrow the status quo and has a very clear idea of his foes. His mission is understood as a revolutionary intervention. He frequently presents himself as a person who is ready to sacrifice his life and the lives of his followers for the idea of the movement. His transformation into a myth is almost inevitable, and he may become the prisoner of his own myth.<sup>14</sup>

The interwar period witnessed the rise of a range of different charismatic leaders and personality cults. A few leaders, such as Tomáš Masaryk in Czechoslovakia, were neither fascist nor authoritarian.<sup>15</sup> Some of them, like Józef Piłsudski in Poland were authoritarian, but not fascist, and could best be described as military.<sup>16</sup> The cults sprang up in different political, cultural, and social circumstances. The most famous European personality cults were established around Adolf Hitler in Germany, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Josef Stalin in the Soviet Union. Other cults surrounded Francisco Franco in Spain, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in Portugal, Ante Pavelić in Croatia, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and Ion Antonescu in Romania, Miklós Horthy in Hungary, Engelbert Dollfuss and Kurt Schuschnigg in Austria, Andrej Hlinka and Jozef Tiso in Slovakia.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike most of these personalities Bandera never ruled a state, nor was his cult institutionalized in a sovereign state during his lifetime. This changed, ironically enough, half a century after his death, when not only did his cult reappear in western Ukraine but the President, Iushchenko, designated him a Hero of Ukraine. Since the middle of the 1930s, Bandera has been worshiped by various groups, as *Providnyk*, as a national hero, and as a romantic revolutionary. The ideological nature of the Bandera cult did not differ substantially from that of other cults of nationalist, fascist, or other authoritarian leaders, but the circumstances in which the Bandera cult existed were specific. Moreover, the long period over which the Bandera cult has been cultivated is not typical of the majority of such European leader cults. Following his assassination, the Ukrainian diaspora commemorated Bandera, not only as the *Providnyk* but also as a martyr who died for Ukraine. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the cult re-emerged in Ukraine. One of the purposes of this study is to explain both the continuity of the Bandera cult, and its varieties.

The myth of a leader is related to the phenomenon of a leader cult but the two concepts are not synonymous. The leader myth is a story that reduces the personality

<sup>13</sup> Roger Eatwell, “Concept and Theory of Charismatic Leadership,” in *Charisma and Fascism*, ed. Eatwell, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Gentile, Mussolini as the Prototypical Charismatic Dictator, 114, 117, 119, 127.

<sup>15</sup> Masaryk was neither a fascist nor an authoritarian dictator, but his charisma was used to create a cult that helped to legitimize the existence of Czechoslovakia. Cf. Andrea Orzoff, “The Husbandman: Tomáš Masaryk’s Leader Cult in Interwar Czechoslovakia,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 39 (2008), 121–37.

<sup>16</sup> For the Piłsudski cult, see Heidi Hein, *Der Piłsudski-Kult und seine Bedeutung für den polnischen Staat 1926–1939* (Marburg: Verlag Herder Institut, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> For the cults of personality in Europe and the charismatic European leaders, see Roger Eatwell, Stein Ugevik Larsen, and António Costa Pinto, ed., *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe* (London: Routledge 2007); Benno Ennker and Heidi Hein-Kircher, *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2010); Bernd J. Fischer, ed., *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of South Eastern Europe* (West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2007).

and history of the leader to a restricted number of idealized features. It may be expressed by means of a hagiographic article, book, image, film, song, or other form of media. The myth usually depicts the leader as a national hero, a brave revolutionary, the father of a nation, or a martyr. It describes the leader in a selective way, designed to meet and confirm the expectations of the “charismatic” or “enchanted” community. Like every myth, it mobilizes emotions and immobilizes minds.

The leader myth belongs to the more modern species of political myths, embedded in a particular ideology. Such myths emerged alongside modern politics, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to Christopher Flood, there is a reciprocal relationship between political myths and ideologies. Ideology provides myths with a framework of meaning, and myths are a means of visualizing and manifesting ideology.<sup>18</sup>

For the purposes of this study, ideology is characterized as a set of ideas of authoritative principles, which provide political and cultural orientation for groups that suffer from temporary cultural, social or political disorientation.<sup>19</sup> Ideology oversimplifies the complexity of the world, in order to make it an understandable and acceptable “reality.” It also deactivates critical and rational thought.<sup>20</sup> For Clifford Geertz, “it is a loss of orientation that most directly gives rise to ideological activity, an inability, for lack of usable models, to comprehend the universe of civic rights and responsibilities in which one finds oneself located.”<sup>21</sup> Ideologies are more persistent in societies that have strong needs for mobilization and legitimization, such as totalitarian states and fascist movements, than in those without such needs. Owing to their unifying, legitimizing, and mobilizing attributes, ideologies can also be understood as belief-systems that unite societies or groups, provide them with values, and inspire them to realize their political goals.<sup>22</sup>

The political myth of Stepan Bandera was initially embodied in the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism, which, in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, underwent a process of fascistization. This ideology produced a whole mythology, consisting of a set of various political myths, of which the Bandera myth was perhaps the most significant. Examples of other important political myths embedded in far-right Ukrainian nationalist ideology are the myth of the proclamation of Ukrainian statehood on 30 June 1941 in Lviv; military myths, including the myth of the tragic but heroic UPA; and the myths of other OUN members and UPA insurgents such as Ievhen Konovalets', Roman Shukhevych, Vasyl' Bilas, and Dmytro Danylyshyn. Finally, it should be added that the Bandera myth was an important component of Soviet ideology and the ideology of Polish nationalism, each of which evaluated Bandera very differently from the way the Ukrainian nationalist ideology defined him.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 164; Yves Bizeul, “Theorien der politischen Mythen und Rituale,” in *Politische Mythen und Rituale in Deutschland, Frankreich und Polen*, ed. Yves Bizeul (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 2000), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basis Books, 1973), 218–20; Bizeul, *Theorien der politischen Mythen*, 16–17.

<sup>20</sup> Anton Grabner-Haider, *Ideologie und Religion: Interaktion und Sinnsysteme in der modernen Gesellschaft* (Vienna: Herder, 1981), 23–31; Flood, *Political Myth*, 26. On this question, see also Hubert Schleichert, *Wie man mit Fundamentalisten diskutiert, ohne den Verstand zu verlieren: Anleitung zum subversiven Denken* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 219.

<sup>22</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (New York: Verso, 1991), 43–44.