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Special Section

**A DEBATE ON “USTASHISM,”
GENERIC FASCISM, AND THE OUN III**

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Introduction

Continuing the Ustashism Debate*

Yuliya Yurchuk and Andreas Umland

This *JSPPS* special section is the third round of an interactive debate on the concept of “ustashism” and its usefulness for a comparative assessment of the Bandera wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN(b)). This debate complements our series of special sections on the memory and history of the OUN and the OUN(b) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukr. abbrev. UPA),¹ yet it differs

* We are very grateful to Julie Fedor for her extremely careful and patient final editing of the contributions to this special section including this introduction.

¹ Per Anders Rudling, “Yushchenko’s Fascist: The Bandera Cult in Ukraine and Canada,” Yaroslav Hrytsak, “Ukrainian Memory Culture Post-1991: The Case of Stepan Bandera,” Yuliya Yurchuk, “Rivne’s Memory of Taras Bul’ba-Borovets’: A Regional Perspective on the Formation of the Founding Myth of the UPA,” and Lukasz Adamski, “Kyiv’s ‘Volhynian Negationism’: Reflections on the 2016 Polish–Ukrainian Memory Conflict,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 3, no. 2 (2017): 129–290; Ivan Gomza, “Catalytic Mobilization of Radical Ukrainian Nationalists in the Second Polish Republic: The Impact of Political Opportunity Structure,” Igor Barinov, “Allies or Collaborators? The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Nazi Germany during the Occupation of Ukraine in 1941–43,” Myroslav Shkandrij, “Volodymyr Viatrovych’s *Second Polish–Ukrainian War*,” John-Paul Himka, “Correspondence,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 4, no. 2 (2018): 35–132; Kai Struve, “The OUN(b), the Germans, and Anti-Jewish Violence in Eastern Galicia during Summer 1941,” Yuri Radchenko, “The Biography of the OUN(m) Activist Oleksa Babii in the Light of His ‘Memoirs on Escaping Execution’ (1942),” Tomislav Dulić and Goran Miljan, “The Ustašas and Fascism: ‘Abolitionism,’ Revolution, and Ideology (1929–42),” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 6, no. 1 (2020): 205–306; Grzegorz Motyka, “NKVD Internal Troops Operations against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in 1944–45,” Oksana Myshlovska, “History Education and Reconciliation: The Ukrainian National Underground Movement in Secondary School Curricula, Textbooks, and Classroom Practices in Ukraine (1991–2012),” Marian Luschnat-Ziegler, “Observing Trends in Ukrainian Memory Politics (2014–2019) through Structural Topic Modeling,” *Journal of Soviet and*

from traditional research article collections. While also referring to empirical details like ordinary academic studies, it consists of non-reviewed and largely disputational commentaries rather than research articles proper.

The debate responds to a 2015 seminal paper by Oleksandr Zaitsev (Ukrainian Catholic University) on the OUN's "ustashism," in the journal *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*,² and rebuttal by two specialists on the Ustašas, Tomislav Dulić and Goran Miljan (both at Uppsala University), on the relationship between fascism and abolitionism, in *JSPPS*.³ The start of this series of special sections was a rebuttal by Zaitsev to Dulić and Miljan.⁴ Subsequently, a number established and younger scholars from both, Ukrainian and fascist studies, contributed their interventions to the first two installments of this debate.⁵ This special section comprises two additional

Post-Soviet Politics and Society 7, no. 1 (2021): 17–110; Oleksandr Melnyk, "Ukrainian Nationalism, Soviet Power, and Legitimacy Contests in the Kyiv Region, 1941–44: Actors, Issues, and Interpretations," Per Anders Rudling, "Managing Memory in Post-Soviet Ukraine: From 'Scientific Marxism-Leninism' to the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, 1991–2019," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 2 (2021): 21–135.

² Oleksandr Zaitsev, "Fascism or Ustashism? Ukrainian Integral Nationalism of the 1920s–1930s in Comparative Perspective," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 48, nos. 2–3 (2015): 183–93. See also: *idem*, "Integral Nationalism in the Absence of a Nation-State: The Case of Ukraine," in *Conservatives and Right Radicals in Interwar Europe*, ed. Marco Bresciani (Routledge, 2020), 118–42.

³ Dulić and Miljan, "The Ustašas and Fascism."

⁴ Oleksandr Zaitsev, "On Ustashism and Fascism: A Response to Critics," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 125–44.

⁵ Roger D. Griffin, "Fascism, Ustashism, and the Ecumenical Application of Ideal Types," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 145–52; Angel Alcalde, "A New Turn: On the Need for a Transnational Interpretation of the Ustaša and OUN," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 153–62; Stephen D. Shenfield, "Accommodating 'Stateless Nations' in the Conceptualization of Fascism," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 163–68; Ivan Gomza, "Gravity of Void: Remarks on the Structural Consistency and Empirical Validity of the Notion of 'Ustashism'," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 169–78; Per Anders Rudling, "'Saving the OUN from a Collaborationist and Possibly Fascist Fate': On the Genealogy of the Discourse on the OUN's 'Non-Fascism,'" *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 179–214; Serhiy Kvit, Ukrainian Nationalism, "Ustashism, and Fascism: The Subject- Matter and

contributions to the “ustashism” debate by a Ukrainian philosopher and a Ukrainian historian.

Oleksiy Panych (“Dukh i Litera” Publishing House) in his article “Fascism as Ideology and Practice and the OUN as a Social Movement” contributes to the debate about an adequate classification of the ideology of the OUN by way of questioning such an attempt by itself. He proceeds from the fact that there was no Ukrainian independent state that would systematically apply any ideology claimed by the OUN leaders. Instead, the OUN existed as a broad movement with diffuse social margins.

Even if there were some members who could be classified as fascists within the movement, this did not make the entire movement into a fascist one. It had too diverse actual practices to be characterized by any single ideology except for the broad idea of national liberation, argues Panych.

Yuri Radchenko (Center for Interethnic Relations Research in Eastern Europe, Charkiv) in his paper “Once More on Ustashism: Remarks on the *JSPPS* Discussion” argues that, after many discussions of the OUN, the “Ukrainian niche” in the system of European fascisms in the 1920s–‘40s still “remains wide open.” Based on his own research, Radchenko points out that reference to the much-discussed German repression of Ukrainian nationalists in 1941–42, which is used by some scholars to reject the allegation that the OUN was fascist, does not hold as a sufficient reason to reject a categorization of the Organization as a permutation of fascism. Significant ideological change in the various wings of the OUN occurred only after the end of the war in 1945.⁶ Even if “ustashism” can be used as a

Context of the Discussion,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 2 (2021): 146–58; Oleksandr Pahiria, “In Search of a Third Way: The OUN between Fascism and Anti-Colonialism,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 2 (2021): 159–65; John-Paul Himka, “OUN and Fascism, Definitions and Blood,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 2 (2021): 166–75; Omer Bartov, “Fascism in Practice and Contemporary Politics,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 7, no. 2 (2021): 176–83.

⁶ See also, in *JSPPS*: Yuri Radchenko, “From Staryi Uhryniv to Munich: The First Scholarly Biography of Stepan Bandera,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1, no. 2 (2015): 429–58.

covering term in relation to the OUN, the usage of this term does, in Radchenko's opinion, not necessarily enrich our understanding of the OUN's ideology and practice. Radchenko hence argues for the need to analyze each national movement in the context of its own time without projecting present-day expectations onto the past.