Manoly R. Lupul. *The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir.* Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2005. xviii, 508 pp. $34.95, paper. $69.95, cloth

In *The Politics of Multiculturalism,* Manoly Lupul, former director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and a prominent Ukrainian community activist, sums up over thirty years of his association with the framing and implementation of Canadian multiculturalism. Lupul’s memoir is much more than a personal life story—it is an incisive analysis of Canadian ethnic and government politics. It provides the reader with a unique and very personal perspective on the subject, which comes from the author’s intimate knowledge of the inside workings of community and government institutions involved in multiculturalism policy-making. A timely and much needed book, it presents a strong case for multiculturalism at a time when increased public concern with national security is leading some commentators to question Canada’s accommodating approach to cultural diversity.

Like thousands of third-generation Ukrainian Canadians from the Prairies, Lupul was brought up in the bicultural world of Alberta’s Ukrainian bloc settlement, which he describes in the first chapter. The author’s graduate studies at the University of Minnesota and Harvard University, where he completed his doctorate, were formative in shaping his
outlook as a liberal democrat with a strong commitment to cultural diversity. Lupul
describes how his research on the education of Canadian linguistic and religious minorities
(the subject of his doctoral dissertation) first brought his attention to the predicament of
Ukrainians, threatened by assimilation in Anglo-dominated Canada and by Russification in
the Soviet-ruled homeland, which he visited in 1968. Lupul’s growing concern for the
future of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture was shared by many third- and
second-generation Ukrainian-Canadian professionals of his generation, who forged an
alliance with strongly nationalist post-1945 émigrés to achieve recognition of the
community in Canadian public affairs.

Central to the book is the discussion of the relations between the Canadian state and
the Ukrainian-Canadian community, which led the way in promoting official
multiculturalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. Lupul writes about the successes and failures
of implementing multiculturalism in a society still dominated by the largely Anglo-
Canadian establishment. He focuses on several key projects initiated by the Ukrainian-
Canadian community: the establishment of bilingual education programs in the Prairie
provinces, the founding of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies in Edmonton and the
Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, and a number of heritage-
preservation initiatives.

One learns from the book that carrying out multicultural projects involved constant
lobbying and difficult negotiating with politicians and civil servants in Ottawa and the
provincial capitals. According to Lupul, Ottawa was never able to fully square its avowed
commitment to cultural diversity with the policy of official bilingualism, which favoured
Canada’s two “founding nations” over other ethnic groups. Lupul’s account of his service
on the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism and other advisory bodies often
shows his frustration with the meagre impact these agencies had on government policy-
making. Despite the setbacks, he views Ukrainians as one of the ethnic groups that reaped
the most benefits “institutionally (if not necessarily organizationally) from the multicultural
movement” (p. 479). More could have been achieved, he argues, if Canada’s Ukrainian
community had been able to present a clear and unified vision of its future in a
multicultural Canada. Lupul’s own efforts at reforming the community were only partially
successful: more often than not they ran up against the narrow sectionalism of Ukrainian-
Canadian organizations and the social conservatism and administrative ineptitude of their
leaders. The author’s observations on the generational and social gap between Canadian-
born community activists and the post-1945 émigré cohort will no doubt be interesting to
all students of Ukrainian-Canadian community history.

Some of the most polemical chapters in the book address what Lupul describes as the
“demise of official multiculturalism” in the late 1980s and 1990s, which he attributes to the
parsimony of neoconservative-minded governments and the reorientation of the policy
from the support of ethnic cultures to facilitating the integration of new immigrants,
especially visible minorities. Ultimately, however, he blames the decline of
multiculturalism on the “schizophrenic attitude towards ethnicity” of most Anglophone
Canadians: while generally proud of their ancestral roots, most of them “have not been
overly ethnically conscious” (p. 480).

Among the few drawbacks of the book is the amount of detail, which often seems
excessive. Many sections are overloaded with descriptions of routine agency meetings,
quotations from memoranda, resolutions and speeches, and the names of individuals who
turn out to play only a minor role in the narrative. While this material may certainly be
interesting for scholars specializing in multiculturalism or Ukrainian community history,
general readers will probably find these parts of the book somewhat tedious. Nevertheless, *The Politics of Multiculturalism* is a must-read for all those interested in the origins and evolution of Canadian multiculturalism and should also prove instructive for ethnic activists striving to pursue their community interests.

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