Development of multiculturalism is focus of new political memoir

"The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir" by Manoly Lupul. Alberta: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2005. 508 pp., $34.95 (paper) and $69.95 (cloth).

by Jars Balan

Canadian multiculturalism is the focus of an important new memoir authored by a major figure in the multicultural movement during its heyday in the 1970s and early 1980s. Published by CIUS Press in November 2005, "The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir," by Manoly R. Lupul, provides a fascinating, well-documented, first-hand account of the author's involvement in multicultural politics and the evolution of his thinking about ethnic minority rights from his childhood years through to his intellectual maturity.

Born and raised in a Ukrainian community in the heart of rural east Alberta, Dr. Lupul was educated at the universities of Alberta, Minnesota and Harvard before returning to the University of Alberta to pursue a successful academic career in the Faculty of Education. His appreciation of the value of cultural pluralism, and his concern for the development of minority and linguistic and cultural rights in Canada, was informed in part by his encounter with the Soviet policy of Russification during a trip to Ukraine in the late 1960s.

Dr. Lupul's involvement in Canadian multiculturalism began with the drafting and passage of Alberta's first school legislation for bilingual programs (1971); similar laws were subsequently enacted in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. He went on to serve as an executive member of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism and as a member of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council.

In 1976 Dr. Lupul became the founding director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta, the first publicly funded institution of its kind outside Ukraine. It was in part through his efforts that the multiculturalism clause was included in the Canadian Constitution (1982).

Although Dr. Lupul's political memoir draws on his personal writings and recollections, it also brings together much documentary information previously unavailable in print. In his frank account, Dr. Lupul offers unrivalled insight into the aspirations that gave rise to Canada's policy of multiculturalism and the interplay of forces that shaped and blunted its development.

The book will appeal to readers interested in Canadian culture and politics and, more generally, in the problem of promoting minority-group rights in democratic societies.