

Rivne's Memory of Taras Bul'ba-Borovets': A Regional Perspective on the Formation of the Founding Myth of the UPA*

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Abstract: *This article focuses on the process of memorialization of Ukrainian wartime nationalist resistance leader Taras Bul'ba-Borovets' in the West Ukrainian city of Rivne in the early 2000s. Via analysis of the local debates over a proposed monument to this historical figure as well as examining how he is represented in a local museum, I show how Taras Bul'ba-Borovets' has been commemorated as a local hero in Rivne in such a way as to reinforce a seamless narrative of a wartime nationalist movement represented by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). This narrative was instrumental in the hands of regional parties in the turbulent years of the anti-Kuchma campaign that led to the mass protests now known as the Orange Revolution. After these events brought Viktor Yushchenko to power, the memory of Taras Bul'ba-Borovets' became obsolete in Rivne. The campaign to build a local monument to Borovets' resumed only after Yushchenko's main opponent Viktor Yanukovich became president in 2010. This case study of regional commemoration shows how remembrance of the OUN and UPA was instrumentalized by political parties lacking access to other more conventional political resources.*

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