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Ukrainian Canadians' Tremendous Contributions to a Mosaic Canadian Society (in the Context of Celebrating Their 125th Settling in Maple Leaf Country)

“Our ancestors’ journey to Alberta was often one of sacrifice and uncertainty. They overcame incredible hardships, and this is a way to honour them for generations to come. From agriculture and industry, to politics, academia and culture, they and their descendants helped build this province. I am so proud every one of my colleagues supported the call to celebrate the Ukrainian community’s tremendous contributions.”

(Deron Bilous, Alberta's Minister of Economic Development & Trade)

Noteworthy, 2016 has become another crucial landmark in recognizing the remarkable impact of Ukrainian vigorous community, which succeeded in preserving and boosting its heritage values, traditions and language, on all Canada’s walks of life. In this context, this research paper provides an overview of historians, scholars and community members, whereas focusing on a tremendous role that Ukrainians (such as worldly acknowledged Paul Yuzyk, Orest Subtelny, John Sopinka Chrystia Free-land, Sylvia Fedoruk, Edward Michael Stelmach, Myrna Kostash, and newly known Roberta Bondar, Ann Morash, Petro Neborskiy, Oleh Lesiuk) play in the Canadian multicultural society. Owing to their social, political and economic integration, Ukrainians have reached a rather high level of culture perception and blending into a mosaic Canadian society. Looking back on a record of Ukrainian Canadians’ achievements, we can witness that by the early 1990’s some of the high-rank positions have been held by the children or grandchildren of humble Ukrainian immigrants, and, moreover, they have earned accomplishments in various domains. To conclude, Ukrainian Canadians proved that by their exemplary service, enthusiasm and commitment to Canada’s common purpose, they could, collectively as a community, work toward a common goal, ensure their views reached and establish their powerful and valuable existence in Canada.

Keywords

The 125th anniversary, Canada, Ukrainian community, tremendous achievements, multicultural society.

Вагомий внесок канадців українського походження у розбудову країни Кленового листка (до 125-річчя українських поселень у Канаді)

Варто зазначити, що 2016 рік став ще однією важливою віхою у визнанні величезного впливу на всі сфери життя Канади української спільноти, якій вдалося зберегти і розвинути власні цінності, культуру, мову і традиції. У даній науковій розвідці авторка висвітлює цілу низку досліджень як вчених так і представників громадськості, зосередивши увагу на величезний внесок українців (таких всесвітньо відомих як Пол Юзик, Орест Субтельний, Рамон Гнатишен, Джон Сопінка, Христя Фріланд, Сільвія Федорук, Едвард Стельмах, Мирослава Косташ, Василь Курилика, Ярослав Балан та щойно відкритих світовій спільноті Роберта Бондар, Анна Мораш, Петро Неборський, Олег Лесюк) у розвиток канадського багатокультурного суспільства. Українська громада протягом 125 років проживання на американському континенті постійно демонструвала світові свої прагнення зберігати й розвивати національні традиції; у діаспорі нагромаджено значний духовно-культурний потенціал, створено чималі наукові, літературні, художні цінності. Відповідно до сьогоденних реалій, духовна спадщина Канади включає надбання на-

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ціональної культури української діаспори, яка зуміла зберегти і примножити свій позитивний імідж як у країні Кленового листка так і за її межами.

Ключові слова

125-річчя, Канада, українська діаспора, вагомий внесок, багатокультурне суспільство.

Noteworthy, while 2017 marks the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, 2016 celebrates the 125th anniversary of the first recorded arrival of *Ukrainians in Canada* and *Alberta*, in particular, was *the first province* to be settled by Ukrainians; consequently, it is the province, where many of the earliest Ukrainian religious and cultural institutions were founded and later developed. Importantly, according to 2016 Census of Canada, Ukrainian Canadians are estimated to be Canada's tenth largest ethnic group; moreover, Canada has the world's third-largest Ukrainian population behind Ukraine itself and Russia. Slightly more than 110,000 Ukrainian Canadians speak Ukrainian, and more than half live in the Prairie Provinces².

For the most part, 2016 has become another crucial landmark in recognizing the remarkable impact of Ukrainian vigorous community, which succeeded in preserving and boosting its heritage values, traditions and language, on all fundamentals of the Canadian way of life. It is worth mentioning here that, 1891 is recorded as a year that ushered the new era in the lives of the immigrants, who made the thorny journey to Canada seeking a new prosperous life of cultural and economic freedom. Those brave and determined pioneers and the following waves of Ukrainians, who have since made the same journey, have significantly contributed to building a strong, culturally rich and vibrant Canada.

In addition, 2016 also observes the 55th anniversary of the Ukrainian education program in Manitoba, which was taught in the early decades until it was prohibited in 1916 and later resumed in 1961, according to the proclamation, which highlighted three Ukrainian Manitoban institutions established at the University of Manitoba: St. Andrew's College in 1946, Ukrainian Studies in the Department of German and Slavic Studies in 1949, and the Center for Ukrainian Canadian Studies in 1981³.

In recent times, while re-imagining the course of the Ukrainians' quasiquicentennial settling in Maple Leaf country and their great accomplishments, again and again I have ascertained that Canada today reflects a vast multicultural diversity, which is a consequence of centuries of immigration. Significantly, Ukrainian Canadians were one of the first ethnic groups to exercise the respect to their cultural distinctiveness, maintaining their individual sense of self-worth and identity, attachment to the country and sense of belonging. Owing to its social, political and economic integration it has reached a rather high level of culture perception and blending into a mosaic Canadian society. And what is more, the Ukrainian immigrants' long struggle for being accepted by Canada has been largely won by their robustness, ingenuity and flexibility.

Taking into consideration both its self-organization and momentous impact on domestic and foreign policy, Ukrainian Canadians belong to the most globally recognized Diaspora community. My strong conviction is that their experience could be taken as a model to emulate for Ukraine (especially under the present-day situation).

Interestingly, a comprehensive research allowed to affirm that no matter whether it is politics, sports, arts, academics, or entertainment the Ukrainians have done Canada proud in their accomplishments.

In this context the research paper provides an overview of historians, scholars and community members, whereas focusing on a tremendous role that Ukrainians play in the Canadian multicultural society. I dare not analyze the whole body of this literature. Instead, the focal point here is on one essential aspect of it, historical scholarship. Currently, historical inquiry in the area of immigration and ethnicity prides itself on some excellent monographs and collections of essays on particular immigrant groups, the booklets published by the Canadian Historical Association in its series *Canada's Ethnic Groups*, and numerous well-researched articles in specialized periodicals, such as *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, published by the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association: M.R. Lupul, ed, «A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of the Ukrainians in Canada» (1982); M.R. Lupul, ed, «Visible Symbols:

² Ukrainian Canadians (2015). Available at: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ukrainian-canadians> (Accessed 12 May, 2016)

³ Canada: Marking 125 years of Ukrainian settlement (2016). Available at: http://risu.org.ua/en/index/monitoring/society_digest/65832/ (Accessed 12 May, 2016)

Cultural Expression among Canada's Ukrainians» (1984); O. Martynowych, «Ukrainians in Canada, 1891-1924: The Formative Years» (1991); M.H. Marunchak, «The Ukrainian Canadians: A History» (2nd ed, 1983); Frances Swyripa, «Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991» (1993), Helen Potrebenco, «No Streets of Gold: A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta» (1977); Orest Subtelny, «Ukrainians in North America: An Illustrated History» (1991), Jars Balan, «Salt and Braided Bread: Ukrainian Life in Canada», Myrna Kostash, «All of Baba's Children», Alexander Baran, «Carpatho-Ukrainian (Ruthenian) Emigration: 1870-1914,» in Jaroslav Rozumnyj, ed., «New Soil – Old Roots: The Ukrainian Experience in Canada», Manoly R. Lupul, ed., «A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada», Paul Yuzyk, «Religious Life,» in Manoly R. Lupul, ed., «A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada», Yury Boshyk and Roman Senkus, eds., «The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II», Manoly R. Lupul, «The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir», Paul Yuzyk, «The Political Achievements of Ukrainians in Canada», 1891-1981, Will Kymlicka, «Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights», «Canadian Multiculturalism in Historical and Comparative Perspective: Is Canada Unique?»⁴.

Paraphrasing a famous Ukrainian Canadian political scientist and church historian Bohdan Bociurkiw, we can single out the most basic concepts in understanding the role of the Ukrainian ethnic group in Canadian polyethnic organism. Owing to its socio-political and economic integration it has reached a rather high level of culture perception and adaptation into Canadian society. Ukrainian Canadians are one of the minorities whose public response has been strongest in the debate resulting from Canada's changing patterns of ethnic relations. It should be mentioned, that politically their aspirations for ethno-cultural rights have been primarily limited to demands for reform of government policies supporting ethnic groups. Notwithstanding, in the debates on Canada's interethnic relations, Ukrainian Canadians have expressed strong support for multiculturalism rather than other ethno-cultural strategies. Ukrainian Canadians are fully integrated into Canadian mosaic, with some exceptions; the Ukrainian language is not used as a language of employment by most ethnic Ukrainians. In the social realm, Ukrainian Canadians are experiencing increasing assimilation of many of those common traditional experiences and institutions that in the past gave Ukrainians a clear sense of community in the country of Maple Leaf⁵.

In that vein, Myrna Kostash, has disclosed the Ukrainian Canadian's attitude towards the problems of identity, multiculturalism, mentioning that Ukrainian Canadians still have issues that involve the rest of Canadian society. «Yet official multiculturalism policy has been vigorously disputed by those who see it as an accommodation with the fragmenting tendency of the post-modern world, a systematic deconstruction of a whole and unified concept of the place called Canada, to which we all belong». Then she strives to shed the light on their being real Canadians. «We know ourselves as Canadians by the constant encounter and engagement with just arrived 'otherness'. The new otherness inevitably wobbles old certainties about who we 'really' are, and how our constituent cultural diversity is to be integrated into something called the 'national' life. This is never resolved by any particular generation once and for all»⁶.

As Dr. Roman Petryshyn, a Research Associate at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (University of Alberta) stated in his «Changing Realities» that Ukrainian Canadians are an ethno-cultural minority with a social potential less than that of an emerging nation, yet considerably more than that of a mere ethnic census category that has no internal cohesion and is unconcerned about its common fate. Regionally and socially, Ukrainian Canadians find themselves in a situation which leads them to express clearly their concern for group survival, community development and multiculturalism⁷.

⁴ Bohatyrets V. (2012). Accomplishments of Ukrainian Canadians in a Polyethnic Country of Tolerance and Diversity. – *Буковинський журнал історії та культурної антропології*, Chernivtsi National University Publishing House, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, №1, С. 86-93.

⁵ Bociurkiw B. (1978). The Federal Policy of Multiculturalism and the Ukrainian-Canadian community. In M. R. Lupul (Ed.), *Ukrainian Canadians, multiculturalism and separatism: an assessment*, Edmonton, AB: The University of Alberta Press, pp.98-129

⁶ Kostash M. (2000). All of Baba's Great Grandchildren: Ethnic Identity in the Next Canada, Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 47 p.

⁷ Petryshyn R. (1980). *Changing Realities: Social Trends Among Ukrainian Canadians*, Edmonton: CIUS, 249 p.

Many intellectuals from the Ukrainian Canadian community, such as historian and Senator Paul Yuzyk and linguist Joroslav Rudnyckyj, have played a prominent role in defining Canadian policy of multiculturalism. Since 2009, the Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism has been given each year to individuals, groups and organizations that have made exceptional contributions to multiculturalism and the integration of newcomers.

Indeed, in the eyes of the most recent immigrants of other ethnic and racial origin, Ukrainian Canadians appear to become full-fledged members of the Canadian “establishment”. The long, often disheartening, struggle for acceptance has been succeeded by the realization that further struggle lies ahead for Ukrainian Canadians, if much of their original culture is to be preserved.

The original beacon of hope to find new life of equal opportunities has transformed the unwelcome Ukrainian immigrants into an integral and politically important construct of Canada which has played a leading role in remaking Canada into a multicultural nation.

Symbolically, looking back on a record of Ukrainian Canadians’ accomplishments, we can witness that by the early 1990’s some of the high-rank positions have been held by the children or grandchildren of humble Ukrainian immigrants. In the space available here, it is not possible to cover the diverse variety of all of them. Let’s revolve our focus around some of distinguished Canadians of the Ukrainian descent – their outstanding accomplishments are examples to emulate:

Governors General: Ramon John *Hnatyshyn* (Ray Hnatyshyn) – a Canadian politician and statesman who served as Governor General of Canada, the 24th since Canadian Confederation; Edward Richard *Schreyer* – a Canadian politician, diplomat, and statesman who served as Governor General of Canada, the 22nd since Canadian Confederation;

Ministers: Chrystia *Freeland*, Minister of Foreign Affairs, P.C., M.P., former Minister of International Trade; MaryAnn Mihychuk – the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour;

Lieutenant Governors, Sylvia *Fedoruk* – a Canadian scientist and former Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan; Peter Liba – former Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba;

Premiers: Edward Michael *Stelmach* – a Canadian politician, who served as the 13th Premier of Alberta (2006-2011); Roy John *Romanow* a Canadian politician, who served as the 12th Premier of Saskatchewan (1991–2001);

Chief Justices – Edward Dmytro *Bayda* – the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan and Chief Justice of the Province’s Court of Appeal; John Sopinka, Queen’s Counsel – a Canadian lawyer, the first Ukrainian-Canadian appointed to the High Court.

And what is more significant, distinguished Canadians of Ukrainian ethnic origin have attained some of the highest offices in Canada, whilst others have spearheaded breakthroughs in science or won national acclaim in the arts or sports – can be rightfully considered as a great asset to the country and its nation builders – Stephen Worobetz, Michael Luchkovich, Paul Yuzyk, Mary Batten, Jaroslav Rudnyckyj, William Kurulek, Liuba Kowalchuk, Luba Goy, George Ryga, and Roberta Bondar, the first Canadian woman of the Ukrainian descent to walk in space, as well as many players in the National Hockey League, the hockey superstar Terry Sawchuk, Johnny Bucyk, Wayne Gretzky, Dale Hawerchuk and Mike Bossy⁸.

Especially I would like to pay my credit to those Ukrainian Canadians, who personally made Canada the most Ukrainian nation outside Ukraine. In this regard, Paul Yuzyk – the chief architect of Multiculturalism – became the first Ukrainian ever to be appointed to the Canadian Parliament’s Upper Chamber. According to him, Canada could succeed in building a strong nation through adherence to the principles of Confederation, concession and “unity in diversity”. In his maiden speech on March 3, 1963, broached in the Senate, Paul Yuzyk predicted that Canada would become a role model for other nations faced with the challenge of integrating peoples of diverse faiths and cultures. In terms of his published contributions, his books ‘The Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History’, ‘For a Better Canada’, ‘Ukrainian Canadians: Their Place and Role in Canadian Life’ earned him the respect and admiration all around the world. His vision of multiculturalism was equality, tolerance, multilingualism and creed as integral qualities of all Canadians. In his ‘better Canada’ he preached democracy and equal-

⁸ List of Ukrainian Canadians (2015). Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Ukrainian_Canadians (Accessed 25.06.2016)

ity. His 'Ukrainian Canadians: Their Place and Role in Canadian Life' was considered one of the best works on Ukrainians in Canada.

Another bright example is Vera Lysenko (1910-1975), who worked as a journalist for the Windsor Star until 1943, when she became a freelance journalist and writer. She wrote under the names Vera Lysenko (Luba Novak). She was the author of *Men in Sheepskin Coats* (1947), which examines the first Ukrainians to come to Canada. Her novels include *Yellow Boots* (1954) and *Westerly Wild* (1956). Lysenko's work tended to puzzle standard critical categories and has, therefore, been much neglected. She has also authored numerous articles, essays, short stories, poetry, plays, and some unpublished manuscripts. Additionally, she is considered to be a social activist, a translator, a historian and a pioneer to Ukrainian women; she was one of the first Ukrainian women to complete a university degree⁹.

The most visible and successful manifestation of the Ukrainian cultural heritage in Canada can be found in the performing and Fine arts. Of particular interest for our research was a discovery of Oleh Lesiuk (born in Lviv, Ukraine and immigrated to Canada in 1992), currently Member of the National Artists' Union of Ukraine, the Sculptors' Society of Canada; President of the Ukrainian Association of Visual Artists of Canada and Vice- President of the Ukrainian Canadian Art Foundation. O. Lesiuk has become the author of the logo «Kanada-Ukraina 125» that commemorates 125 years of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. The artist's idea is very symbolic and worth high appraising as it consists of three parts – the bottom part signifies four Waves of immigration to Canada, central part – people transforming into the three flying cranes (zhuravli in Ukrainian), that are a long-standing symbol of migrating from one's own nest to travel to faraway lands, possibly never to return again. The national crest of Ukraine – the Golden Trident (Tryzub), superimposed on a blue crane, symbolizes the country of origin. The wings of the cranes ultimately transform into a Maple Leaf – the national symbol of Canada¹⁰.

Throughout Canada, Ukrainian festivals with colorful and artistic dances, performed by such renowned ensembles as Shumka of Edmonton, and the robust and melodious choirs, such as O. Koshetz of Winnipeg, have long been focal points of Ukrainian gatherings. In particular, Petro Neborskiy (Artistic Director of the Svitanok Ukrainian Dance Ensemble (Ottawa), Honoured Artist of Ukraine) through his years in Canada is really proud to argue that «...the state of Ukrainian dance in Canada is at its highest point of artistic excellence. It's not only being well preserved and maintained, but also constantly developed and theatrically enriched in a variety of artistic styles. It's great that we have so many Ukrainian dance ensembles in Canada. And here is the point that I want to emphasize: I salute those ensembles and their artistic directors who create their own unique choreography, dance languages and vocabularies – their own dance styles and ensemble artistic identities. As Ukrainian dance ensembles in Canada, we are rich artistically and aesthetically when we're different and when there are many of us who strive to keep our distinctiveness. That is what we strive to do in Svitanok»¹¹.

Apropos, from its humble origins, the intricate Easter egg (pysanka) has evolved into the symbol of the Ukrainian identity in Canada: in early 2016 to crown the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, the Royal Canadian Mint released a \$20 silver coin – the world's first-ever coin in the shape and colors of the beloved Hutsul pysanka. An image of Queen Elizabeth II appears on the verso. Ann Morash, the Canadian artist of the Ukrainian descent, was tremendously honored to be chosen to represent her heritage in making the design of the pysanka¹².

In accordance with above mentioned considerations, The Ukrainian ethnic group during its stay in Canada has become an inseparable part of the Canadian polyethnic organism. 'We are Canadians, but

⁹ Mriya Ukrainian dreams (2016). Available at: <http://www.ukrainian-dreams.com/famousUCan.php> (Accessed 25.06.2016)

¹⁰ Ukrainian Canadian Congress unveils logo for commemorations Of 125th Anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada (2016). Available at: <http://www.ucc.ca/2015/09/22/ukrainian-canadian-congress-unveils-logo-for-commemorations-of-125th-anniversary-of-ukrainian-immigration> (Accessed 25.06.2016)

¹¹ Ukrainians in Saskatchewan (2012). About Ukrainians. Available at: <http://www.ucc.sk.ca/en/about/ukrainians-in-sk> (Accessed 27.06.2016)

¹² Paschak Tracz O. (2016) Pysanka featured on \$20 Canadian silver coin. Available at: <http://www.ukrweekly.com/uw/wp/pysanka-featured-on-20-canadian-silver-coin> (Accessed 27.06.2016)

we are Canadians who proudly celebrate our origins¹³. In view of the size and compactness of the Ukrainian Community in Canada, its extensive community infrastructure, its cultural vitality and its articulated beliefs, there is every reason to believe that it will continue to be a dynamic minority for some generations to come. «We who have been several generations now in Canada, for the uncompleted business of our communal life, are being invited, I think, by the new strangers at our gates, to engage in a politics of resemblance»¹⁴.

We can summarise that Canada is what it is today due to centuries of contributions by the millions of immigrants that worked so hard to build this nation and make it a good place for all of them to live in. Canada is, beyond any doubt, a multicultural country where diversity is valued, respected, and honoured. This diversity creates a rich atmosphere of learning and growing from the multiple perspectives that the people of Canada of various ethnicities and backgrounds offer in building a common Canadian society¹⁵. A multicultural policy that is sensitive to the needs of both long-time residents and the newly arrived will probably meet with the greatest success. Canada's future depends on the commitments of all its citizens to a unified Canadian identity, while still taking pride in the uniqueness of their individual heritage.

To conclude, this research paper has provided an overview of scholarship that focuses on the role that Ukrainians play in the Canadian polyethnic society. The long struggle for acceptance by Ukrainian immigrants in Canada has been largely won by their toughness, resourcefulness and resilience. The original lure of free lands has transformed the unwelcome Ukrainian immigrant mass into an integral and politically important element of Canada which has played a leading role in remaking Canada into a multicultural nation.

Finally, Ukrainian Canadians proved that they could, collectively as a population, work toward a common goal, ensure their views reached an intended audience, and establish a powerful and valuable presence in Canada. Their exemplary service, zeal and commitment to Canada's common purpose, and their perseverance have lasted and Ukrainian Canadians continue to influence Canada politically today. All of the political advocacy, passion, and work of Ukrainian Canadians, from their initial involvement in Prairie municipal politics to their current efforts against war in Ukraine, combine to demonstrate that this population has a strong influence and an important role in Canada.

As a country largely shaped by the experiences, backgrounds, and contributions of the members of its population, Canada owes much to the countless groups of people who immigrated to its lands over the past decades and centuries. Ukrainians, one such ethnocultural group, have established its strong presence in Canada which has given birth to a particular identity: Ukrainian Canadian, which has preserved, advanced its heritage language, values and traditions for four or even five generations over the years, and consequently, has made a distinctive mark on Canadian society.

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¹³ Todd Z. (2016). «Ukrainian-Canadians celebrate 125th anniversary of first immigration». Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/ukrainian-canadians-celebrate-125th-anniversary-1.3711069> (Accessed 27.06.2016)

¹⁴ Isajiw W. (1983). «Identity retention among second- and third-generation Ukrainians in Canada», J. Rozumnyj (Ed.) *New soil – old roots. The Ukrainian experience in Canada*, Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, pp: 208-225

¹⁵ Kostyuk S. (2007). «Canada and Saskatchewan through their eyes: survey of recent immigrants from Ukraine», *Analytical report*, Kyiv, Ukraine; Saskatoon, SK: Sergius Press

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