



ASSOCIATION OF UNITED UKRAINIAN CANADIANS BRANCH 2 EDMONTON

11018 97 Street NW, Edmonton, AB, T5H 2M9

29 September, 2023

The Edmonton Branch of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC) condemns the honoring of a nazi Ukrainian World War II veteran, a member of the notorious 14th Waffen SS Division "Halychyna", in the House of Commons during the visit of Ukrainian President Zelenskiy last Friday, 22 September, 2023.

Our Association, founded in 1918 in Winnipeg as the Ukrainian Labor Temple Association, has an unblemished record of opposing fascism, in word and deed, before and after WWII, in Canada, in the Ukrainian-Canadian community, and abroad. Our members fought heroically in the Spanish Civil War, on the side of the Republican government, against fascism. They fought for Canada, allied with the Soviet Union, against nazi Germany and fascist Italy in WWII.

It is therefore unbelievable to us, as to most other Canadians, that when the individual in question, Yaroslav Hunka, was introduced in parliament as a Ukrainian veteran of WWII who fought against Russia, no one in attendance, all of whom gave him two standing ovations, realized what this meant. We know exactly what it meant.

Now this shameful spectacle has been publicized to all Canadians, and throughout the world. We welcome this publicization. We hope it will lead to a reckoning. Some steps in this direction have already been taken. The speaker of the House of Commons has resigned. An endowment in the name of Yaroslav Hunka at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, at the University of Alberta, has been returned. We welcome these steps. But they are only first steps. Much more must be done. The problem is greater than simply one nazi, one speaker, and one endowment.

It is estimated that two thousand members of the 14th Waffen SS Division "Halychyna" were allowed into Canada after WWII. Our Association, immediately at that time, publicized and opposed their entry, to our everlasting credit. This figure does not include other nazis and nazi-collaborators, of various nationalities. That means thousands of Yaroslav Hunkas. Several of them went on to occupy prominent and leading positions in certain other Ukrainian-Canadian organizations, in religious institutions, educational institutions, and state institutions. The Canadian state supports, with funding and semi-official recognition, Ukrainian-Canadian organizations that unapologetically honor these nazis. If honoring Yaroslav Hunka in the House of Commons was a shameful act that had to be corrected, then so must all these other cases be corrected.

We therefore call on the Canadian state at all three levels (federal, provincial, municipal) to halt all state funding to all Ukrainian-Canadian organizations which honor any Ukrainian nazis or nazi-collaborators, including especially veterans of the 14th Waffen SS Division "Halychyna", until such time as these organizations explicitly and unequivocally apologize for having done so, severing all connections with all these nazis and nazi-collaborators, in all forms whatsoever.

We call for the removal and dismantling of two monuments to nazi Ukrainians in Edmonton: the monument to the veterans of the 14th Waffen SS Division "Halychyna" located in St. Michael's Cemetery, and the bust of Roman Shukhevych located at the Ukrainian Youth Unity Complex, preferably by their respective property owners, and if not by them, then by state compulsion.

We call on the government of Canada, and on the Liberal Party of Canada which formed the government at the time, to issue official apologies to our Association (the AUUC), in consultation with our Association, for banning it (then named the Ukrainian Labor-Farmer Temple Association) by an order in council in June 1940, seizing its properties, our halls and their contents (furniture, musical instruments, dance costumes, books, etc., most of which were destroyed), and interning our leaders in internment camps, acknowledging this as a terrible miscarriage of justice and act of oppression.

We call on all Canadians, all progressive Canadians, all decent Canadians, all anti-fascist Canadians, individually and through their various organizations, to support us in these calls for justice, by publicizing this statement, and pressuring their political representatives.

Alex S. Boykowich, President, AUUC Branch 2 Edmonton