



AUSTRALIAN UKRAINIAN CONGRESS

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Australian Ukrainian Congress
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11 JULY 2024

VICTORIA'S PREMIER HANDS PUTIN A HUGE PROPAGANDA WIN AGAINST AUSTRALIA AND UKRAINE

The Australian Ukrainian Congress (AUC) says that Victoria's Premier, Jacinta Allen, has played into Russian President Vladimir Putin's hands by handing him a propaganda victory with an up-coming State Funeral

The funeral will be for Mr Romaniw, who was the head of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), who passed away recently.

More controversially, he was also the was the global leader of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists - Bandera (OUN-B) between 2009-2023. Before and during World War 2, this was an antisemitic, Nazi collaborationist organisation in Poland, Germany and Ukraine.

"Despite warnings sent directly to her, the Premier has played into the hands of the enemies of Ukraine in Australia and globally," AUC spokesperson, Andrew Olexander said.

"At a time when the world rightly condemns Russia for the bombing of a children's hospital, Mr Putin and the Kremlin are using the State Funeral as evidence of Ukrainian Nazi links and the supposed approval of those links by Ukrainians' western democratic allies, especially Australia!"

The AUC wrote to the Premier warning her of the distress this would cause. The text of the letter follows.

He said many Ukrainians in Victoria and throughout Australia are shocked that the Victorian Government has approved this State Funeral.

He added that divisions within the Victorian multicultural community have been heightened, especially amongst Ukrainians with Polish and Jewish family connections.

INQUIRIES: Andrew Olexander - 0409 513 465

Dear Premier,

The Australian Ukrainian Congress (AUC) represent thousands of Australian Ukrainians and Australian supporters of Ukraine throughout Victoria and every other State and Territory of the nation.

We are not to be confused with affiliates of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), which, until recently was led by Mr Stefan Romaniw OAM, who passed away last week.

We write to you at this time on an issue of great importance, concern and significant community sensitivity.

Recent media reports that your Government is actively considering honouring Mr Romaniw with a taxpayer-funded Victorian State Funeral have been received with a combination of incredulity, consternation and extreme distress by our members, supporters, and allied multicultural communities.

While we fully acknowledge that Mr Romaniw's contributions over many years to the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Community Languages Australia, the Starlight Foundation and his own AFUO are worthy of thanks and praise by those bodies and their successors, we strongly oppose the granting of a State Funeral to Mr Romaniw on behalf of the people of Victoria.

A State Funeral is symbolic of the approval of the entire community, and a singular honour provided by governments to those whose entire sphere of activity are laudable and unimpeachable, and have tangibly unified our community.

This is far from the case with Mr Romaniw and his AFUO organisation.

Please allow us to clarify and elaborate on issues that we believe you and many other Australian leaders have been hitherto unaware:

1. Mr Romaniw was the global leader of an organisation known as the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists - Bandera (OUN B) between 2009-2023. Before and during World War 2, this was an antisemitic, Nazi collaborationist organisation in Poland, Germany and Ukraine. This organisation fought against the Allies on the side of Hitler's Nazi regime between 1939-1942, and 1944-45. The OUN B participated with the Nazis in Ukraine, Poland and Belarus in the Jewish Holocaust, the ethnic cleansing of Polish civilians, and the mass murders of many Ukrainians, Russians, Slovaks and Romany throughout World War 2.
2. For many years prior to this role, Mr Romaniw was the Australian leader of the Ukrainian Youth Association in Australia (otherwise known as CYM), which not only glorified (and still glorifies) the OUN Bandera as a heroic liberation movement, but still engages in historical revisionism and whitewashing of the crimes committed during WW2, and still engages in Holocaust denialism in the context of the OUN B and its wartime activities.
3. Mr Romaniw was the Chair (and recently Co-Chair) of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) for the last 26 years. The AFUO has a pyramidal structure, comprised of 22 "affiliated" Ukrainian Community organisations based in Australia.

Three of the AFUO-affiliated organisations who exert a disproportionate influence upon the AFUO are the aforementioned CYM who glorify Nazi collaborators, the “League For The Liberation Of Ukraine”, a front or facade organisation of the OUN B globally, and the “Veterans Association of the Ukrainian National Army - UNA” which fought the Allies in WW2 and was known as the Waffen SS Galicien Division until 1945, and who perpetrated many war crimes and crimes against humanity.

4. Mr Romaniw and his colleagues in Canada were responsible for bringing an elderly member of the OUN who had fought in WW2 into the Canadian Parliament during the visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. This individual was passed off to that body as “a Ukrainian WW2 hero who fought the Russians”, and given a standing ovation by all present. It subsequently became known that this individual had fought for the Nazis in the Waffen SS, and the Einsatzgruppe military formations. This led to the humiliation of President Zelensky on the world stage, provided a huge propaganda victory to Vladimir Putin & the Kremlin, and resulted in a global public apology from the Prime Minister of Canada and the resignation of the Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons.

We appeal to you Premier, and to your decision makers within the Victorian Government, not to make a serious error of judgement by awarding Mr Romaniw a taxpayer-funded State Funeral.

We legitimately believe this would damage the reputation of you and your government, contribute damaging propaganda value to the enemies of Ukraine and divide the Victorian and Australian communities.

Sincerely,

Spokesperson on behalf of the Presidium of the Australian Ukrainian Congress

Andrew Olexander.
Melbourne