

German ambassador applauds Nazi war criminal in Canadian parliament

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Last week, every member of Canada's parliament, along with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, took part in a standing ovation for Nazi war criminal Yaroslav Hunka, whom the speaker of the Canadian parliament declared a hero.

It has since come to light that among those applauding the Nazi was Sabine Sparwasser, Germany's ambassador to Canada.

At a press conference on Wednesday, a spokesman for Germany's Foreign Office confirmed Sparwasser's participation in the standing ovation for the Nazi, along with diplomats and ambassadors from other G7 countries.

Seventy-eight years after the fall of the Third Reich, a top diplomatic official of the German government has applauded a member of a criminal organization that played a key role in the Holocaust and in Hitler's war of extermination against the Soviet Union. This action is the result of a systematic campaign, years in the making, to rehabilitate Nazism as part of the promotion of German militarism at the highest levels of the German state.

In attempting to downplay the significance of Sparwasser's applause for Hunka, a spokesperson for the German Foreign Office asserted that that "the true identity of Mr. Hunka, namely that he was a volunteer member of the Waffen-SS, was not known to those present, since his participation had not been announced."

This is totally unconvincing. The appearance of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in front of the Canadian parliament was an important political event that was meticulously prepared. Invited guests would have been thoroughly vetted for security reasons. This is especially true for a "guest of honor" like Hunka, who was called by name and officially celebrated.

Even if the German ambassador had not been informed beforehand, she must have known who Hunka was when he was introduced by the now-former speaker of the Canadian Parliament, Anthony Rota.

"We have in the chamber today a Ukrainian war veteran from the Second World War who fought for Ukrainian independence against the Russians and continues to support

the troops today, even at his age of 98," Rota said. "His name is Yaroslav Hunka but I am very proud to say he is from North Bay and from my riding of Nipissing-Timiskaming. He is a Ukrainian hero, a Canadian hero, and we thank him for all his service."

Sparwasser knew exactly whom she was applauding. She is a highly trained top diplomat who has been working in leading positions at the Federal Foreign Office for more than 35 years and is familiar with political and historical issues—especially with regard to recent European and German history. Before her diplomatic career, she was, among other things, a research assistant on European integration.

In an effort to defend Sparwasser, the Federal Foreign Office spokesman stated that there had been "a wide variety of groups" in the Second World War "that had resisted both the Wehrmacht and the Red Army," citing the Polish Home Army as an example.

Anyone familiar with the history of World War II knows that the Polish Home Army fought against the Nazi occupation and was almost completely wiped out in Warsaw in the course of the brutal suppression of the Warsaw Uprising. Only after the victory of the Red Army over the Wehrmacht did individual fighters, referred to as "outcast soldiers," take up armed resistance against the new Moscow-backed Polish government.

In the case of Hunka, it was also clear from the outset that he was not a fighter of the Polish Home Army or any other resistance organization, but a Ukrainian Nazi. The Ukrainians who fought "against the Russians" in World War II were fascists who glorified the Nazi regime and continue to do so to this day. The overwhelming majority of Ukrainians who fought in World War II were fighting *against the Nazis*, either in the Soviet army or as partisans.

In 1943, when millions of Ukrainians were at war against the German invaders, Hunka joined the tens of thousands of Ukrainians, including many students, in the SS Volunteer Galicia Division of the Waffen SS. He later described his years in the SS as the happiest of his life.

The WSWS has already explained in previous articles that the standing ovation for a member of Hitler's Waffen SS was no accident. It exposes the character of the war that the NATO powers are waging in Ukraine against Russia, and which, supported by the most reactionary political forces, they are continuing to escalate. Germany is playing a leading role in this.

Just two days before Sparwasser's applause for Hunka, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz launched an anti-Russian tirade at the United Nations of which Hitler would have been proud. The chancellor aggressively emphasized that Berlin rejects peace negotiations and is pursuing the goal of defeating Russia militarily in Ukraine. The German ruling class is thus directly pursuing its war and great power goals in the First and Second World Wars, when it was likewise seeking to militarily subjugate and split up the resource-rich and geo-strategically important country.

Ideologically, the realization of these revanchist goals requires the rehabilitation of Nazism. In Ukraine, the imperialist powers rely on the same fascist forces with which Hitler's Germany made a pact during the invasion of the Soviet Union. Already at the beginning of 2014, Washington and Berlin orchestrated an anti-Russian coup in Kiev, in which fascist forces such as the Svoboda Party and the Right Sector played the decisive role. Since then, they have been supporting and arming to the teeth a regime that reveres Nazi collaborators like Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych and mobilizes army units like the Azov Battalion that openly flaunt their fascist views.

The Waffen SS Galicia Division, to which Hunka belonged, is today being publicly celebrated. In Lviv, which was a centre of Ukrainian fascism during the Nazi occupation in World War II, a parade in honour of the SS Division has been held annually on April 28 since 2010. In several Ukrainian cities, roads were renamed after the Galicia Division. On September 23, 2020, the Supreme Court of Ukraine ruled that the symbols of the SS Galicia Division are not associated with Nazism and therefore should not be banned.

In addition to Kiev, Berlin itself is also a centre of this open rehabilitation of fascism. The German federal parliament already had its "Hunka moment" on February 27, 2022. When Scholz announced the €100 billion special fund for the German army and the first heavy arms deliveries for Kiev three days after Russia's NATO-provoked invasion of Ukraine, then-Ukrainian Ambassador Andrij Melnyk was the guest of honour in the Bundestag. And although Melnyk is an avowed Bandera supporter and publicly honors and defends his murderous legacy, the entire Bundestag applauded him.

The official attitude of the German government towards

the Ukrainian Nazi collaborators does not differ from that of the Supreme Court of Ukraine. In response to a parliamentary question from the Left Party on "right-wing extremist manifestations of Ukrainian historical policy," the German government recently stated that it "expressly does not adopt the blanket classification of certain (historical) groups or persons as right-wing extremist, anti-Semitic, anti-Gypsy or otherwise racist."

The "groups" and "persons" mentioned in the answer to the parliamentary question are, among others, Bandera, Shukhevych and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) under their command. Both were demonstrably involved in the Holocaust and in massacres of Russians, Poles and Hungarians. The OUN-M also provided the volunteers for the Waffen SS Galicia Division, of which Hunka was a member.

This despicable whitewashing of Nazi organizations and their horrific crimes has been prepared for years. In 2014, far-right Humboldt University Professor Jörg Baberowski described Hitler in *Der Spiegel* as "not vicious," and claimed: "He did not want people to talk about the extermination of the Jews at his table." In the same interview, he expressed his solidarity with the now deceased Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte, who publicly argued in the 1980s that Hitler's war of extermination was a justified reaction to the Soviet Union.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party--SGP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) publicly condemned this deliberate effort to whitewash National Socialism and warned that the relativisation of Nazi war crimes was aimed at preparing new wars and new crimes.

These warnings have been dramatically confirmed. The ruling class is now openly celebrating fascist forces, signaling that it will stop at nothing to ensure the defeat and subjugation of Russia. A renewed relapse into world war and barbarism must be prevented. This requires the building of an anti-war movement of the international working class based on a socialist program.



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