

How the Waffen SS Galicia division is glorified on Ukrainian television

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In late September, while on an official visit to Canada, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, along with the Canadian parliament, gave a standing ovation to a Nazi scoundrel from the 14th Waffen SS Volunteer Division “Galicia” who swore an oath to Adolf Hitler that they would serve and obey him to the death.

It was based on this oath to the Nazi Führer that war criminal Yaroslav Hunka fought under Hitler’s swastika.

Serving Hitler, the soldiers of the Waffen SS “Galicia” division whose ranks included members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) directly cooperated with Hitler’s SS units and Hitler’s gendarmerie. One of their many crimes was the destruction of the villages of Guta Penyatska and Bialyaki, where an estimated 800 inhabitants were shot or burned alive in the church and their own homes. While stationed in Slovakia, one of the regiments took part in the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising in 1944. Afterward, the division was transferred to Yugoslavia for action against the partisans.

It was an applause that swept not only over the vaults of the Canadian Parliament, but also over the thousands of graves and ashes of millions blighted by fascism.

And it has not yet died down, but continues to resound. Emboldened by the support of the imperialist powers, it can now be heard from many Ukrainian TV channels and especially from Espresso TV.

Espresso TV was founded by Mykola Knyazhytsky, who is now a member of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) from the European Solidarity party of former President and “chocolate oligarch” Petro Poroshenko. The channel began broadcasting on November 24, 2013 at 12:30 with a live broadcast of the events at the Euromaidan protests in Kiev.

Both then and now, that is, for almost 10 years, Espresso TV has been advocating for the 2014 coup d’état, which was financed and organized by US and German imperialism, and has been committed to all the policies pursued by the authoritarian Kiev regime.

The owners of the channel today are Ivan Zhevago—son of Ukrainian billionaire and former parliamentarian Kostyantyn Zhevago—and Larisa Knyazhytska, wife of Mykola Knyazhytsky.

In addition to them, the channel is also owned by Arseniy Yatsenyuk, a former Ukrainian MP and head of the party that was part of the united leadership of Euromaidan together with Oleh Tyahnybok’s Svoboda party and Vitali Klitschko’s UDAR party, and Inna Avakova, wife of former Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov. Following the coup in 2014, the Svoboda party became the first openly anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi party to enter a European government since the end of World War II.

Even before the defense of Hunka and the whitewashing of the SS Galicia division, the channel distinguished itself with broadcasts mocking the victims of the fascist May 2, 2014, massacre in Odessa.

When the whole world became aware of the incident in the Canadian Parliament, the TV channel at first began to zealously urge the Institute of National Remembrance to stand up in defense of Zelensky and Hunka and to equate those who fought in the Red Army with those who fought in the SS. This is despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians fought in the ranks of the Red Army. According to some sources, at least 6 million Ukrainians died in its ranks, compared to 9-10 thousand who died fighting for the Nazis in the Waffen SS “Galicia”.

Then they began to invite Ukrainian academics, starting with the former head of the Institute of National Memory, Volodymyr Vyatrovich, who is an open admirer of Ukrainian fascist leader Stepan Bandera and the Nazi collaborator Roman Shukhevych and a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada from the party of Petro Poroshenko. On the 3rd day after the incident, they invited Tatyana Shvidchenko, a Candidate of Historical Sciences.

Shvidchenko began by reiterating what Vyatrovich had said earlier, that the division was not condemned at the Nuremberg trial and is not a criminal Nazi organization, because it was not mentioned in the verdict of the

Nuremberg Tribunal.

This is a lie. The Waffen SS “Galicia’ division was part of the SS forces. Across occupied Europe, SS units were involved in the systematic genocide of the Jewish population, deportation of people of non-German nationality, as well as mass murder and brutal treatment of civilians. The verdict of the Nuremberg Military Tribunal revealed the essence of the SS structure, troops and military units of the SS, exposed their crimes and recognized *all* structures and components of the SS, except for the cavalry, as criminal organizations.

After that Mrs. Shvidchenko read a quote from the memoirs of Roman Danelyuk, who fought, just like Hunka, in the Waffen SS division Galicia:

“We were not fighting against the United States of America, Great Britain, France, we were fighting Bolshevism.”

Toward the end, she called Hunka an innocent victim of bullying.

But the “facts” that she cited to back up her words only revealed that, at the height of the Cold War, many war criminals, including those from the SS Galicia, were not punished by the US, Canada and Britain, because they were still considered useful by the imperialist powers.

What is the real history of the Waffen SS Galicia Division?

It was none other than Andriy Melnyk, leader of a wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, who offered to Adolf Hitler on January 12, 1942 to create a military force of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists to fight Bolshevism. After the defeat of the Nazis at Stalingrad in February 1943, the German command treated Melnyk’s appeal very favorably.

On April 28, the act of formation of the division was proclaimed.

On October 15, 1943 the number of SS Division Galicia was 4,280 people, of which only 820 were Germans, and there were 3,460 Ukrainians in its ranks.

On December 31, 1943 the strength of the division was 12,634 men. During the next month, another 2,304 Ukrainians joined the division.

In July-October 1944, it was subordinated to the rear headquarters of the active land army. In July 1944, it was transferred to Brody-Tarano (Ukraine) as part of the XIII Army Corps, where it was thrown into battle, suffered huge losses and was almost completely negligible. Afterward, the division had about 3,000 men left.

In March 1945, it was officially transferred to the command of the Ukrainian National Army (UNA). From April 1945, it was named the 1st Ukrainian Division of the UNA. In May 1945, it surrendered to American troops in the area of Tomsweg.

The open glorification of the Waffen SS Galicia division on Ukrainian television is not a one-off. It is the culmination of a decades-long, systematic rehabilitation of Nazism and its Ukrainian collaborators. Ukrainian fascists and Nazi collaborators like Stepan Bandera are honored in monuments and with streets named after them. Meanwhile, despite the fact that the Red Army liberated the territories of Western Ukraine in battles in which thousands of Ukrainians died, their memory is being purposefully destroyed, monuments to them are being removed and vandalized and their graves are being dug up.

History has already demonstrated the truth of Marx’s words that all means are good for capitalism, even the worst crimes, when it comes to profit. And today, when the very survival of capitalism is at stake, everything, as before, will be part of the arsenal of reaction. Behind Hunka, as behind Hitler, stands capital.

By justifying fascism, the ruling class in the imperialist countries, as the oligarchy in Ukraine, open their hands for new crimes such as the world has never seen before.

By glorifying the crimes of the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, by putting them on a par with the anti-fascists whom they hanged and shot, for whom they invented ever more cruel means of tortures, the Ukrainian ruling class wants to justify the use of these same means by the heirs of the Ukrainian neo-Nazis today, who only changed their masters, but not their essence.

In today’s events in Ukraine, with its bloody slogan to fight to the last Ukrainian, we can see a mirror reflection of the ideology of the Waffen SS Galicia Division.

In opposition to this, since the outbreak of this war, the International Committee of the Fourth International has raised the slogan for the unification of the workers of Ukraine and Russia.

Only through the building of sections of the International Committee all over the world, both in Ukraine and Russia, only through the fraternal union of workers of all countries can this war be stopped, before it develops into a third world imperialist war.



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