



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

9 July 2024

Why are the government, media, and community groups ignoring the objections of Ukrainian Australians to a state funeral for an apologist of a Nazi collaborator?

On 2 July, the Australian Ukrainian Congress sent the following letter to the Victorian Government and Opposition, the federal Government and Opposition, and the major media, objecting to the discussion of a possible state funeral for Stefan Romaniw, co-chair of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations.

The Victorian government ignored the letter and the following day confirmed Mr Romaniw would receive a state funeral.

This is a scandal equivalent to the Canadian Parliament's embarrassing standing ovation for a veteran of the Nazi Waffen SS in September last year, for which debacle the Speaker of Canada's Parliament was forced to resign; as the following letter indicates, Mr Romaniw was involved in that scandal.

The state funeral for Stefan Romaniw is scheduled for 12 July. Please read the following letter and help the Australian Ukrainian Congress object by calling Premier Jacinta Allan and Opposition Leader John Pesutto to ask: "Why are you honouring a follower of a notorious Nazi collaborator responsible for killing thousands of Poles and Jews and others with a state funeral?" Call today!

Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan: 03 9651 5000
Opposition Leader John Pesutto: 03 9882 4088

Australian Ukrainian Congress letter

2 July 2024

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
The Hon. Andrew Olexander
Melbourne
Facebook: Australian Ukrainian Congress

AUC PRESIDIUUM MEMBERS

Roxolana Mishalow—NSW
Olga Proskurnyak—NSW
Ihor Rojek—VIC
Andrey Zhelyuk—SA
Eric Paul Goldie—WA
Stefan Serdiuk—QLD
Maya Kovalenko—TAS
Orest Bard—NT

cc: Prime Minister Anthony Albanese MP
Leader of the Opposition Peter Dutton MP
Bill Shorten MP
Leader of the Opposition (Victoria) John Pesutto MLA