



КОНГРЕС УКРАЇНЦІВ КАНАДИ

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CONGRESS

CONGRÈS DES UKRAINIENS-CANADIENS

July 18, 2020

Letter to the Ottawa Citizen (letters@ottawacitizen.com)

Re: Graffiti on monument commemorating Nazi SS division being investigated as a hate crime by police

On July 17, 2020 an article appeared in the Ottawa Citizen with a shocking and misleading headline about a “Nazi monument” in Canada being vandalized.

The article propagates the narrative originating from the Russian Embassy in Canada, that Ukrainians in general, and particularly all Ukrainians who took up arms against the Soviet Union during the Second World War, are “fascists” and “Nazis”. These Soviet-era allegations about their involvement in war crimes have never been substantiated, which is a matter of public record, not opinion, and is not reflected in the July 17 article.

In 1986 Canada’s Deschenes Commission cleared these veterans of any involvement in war crimes after a long and exhaustive investigation and public testimony before a Royal Commission. The Commission concluded in its Report that “charges of war crimes against members of the Galicia Division have never been substantiated, neither in 1950 when they were first preferred, nor in 1984 when they were renewed, nor before this Commission.”

Caught between the genocidal dictatorships of Hitler and Stalin, many Ukrainians fought against both regimes for a free Ukraine. Veterans of the Galicia Division referred to in the Ottawa Citizen article never fought against Allied forces and after the war were screened thoroughly by the British, American and Canadian authorities before being allowed to immigrate to Canada. Their burial sites are places for their families to remember them.

Labelling Ukrainians as “Nazis,” is part of Russia’s ongoing effort to sow division in Canada and other Western democracies. It is disinformation to distract critics and the media from focusing their attention on Russia’s military aggression and appalling human rights record, the illegal and brutal occupation of Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine and its own domestic political opposition. Russia’s war against Ukraine has cost over 10,000 lives, over 20,000 wounded and over 1.6 million internally displaced people. This is the record from which Russia seeks to distract.

The most recent report of Canada’s National Security and Intelligence Committee identified the Russian Federation as one of the primary states engaged in foreign influence activities in Canada. Canada is a target due to our global standing, robust and diverse economy, large ethnocultural communities, membership in key multilateral organizations and close relationship with the United States. Canada’s steadfast support for Ukrainian sovereignty and independence in the face of Russia’s invasion of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine have also made Canada and our large Ukrainian-Canadian community obvious targets.

It is therefore surprising and disappointing that some Canadian journalists continue to repeat the false narratives originating from the Russian Embassy rather than rely on the findings of a Canadian Royal Commission of Inquiry.

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