

Kantor Program Papers

Editors: Roni Stauber, Beryl Belsky

June 2012

HONORING THE COLLABORATORS – THE UKRAINIAN CASE

Irena Cantorovich*

Introduction

During World War II many among the local population in the territories occupied by the Germans collaborated with the latter in various ways, including in the implementation of the Final Solution, and in central and eastern Europe in particular, in the perpetration of atrocities against the Jews (handing over Jews, guarding ghettos and camps, escorting the Jews to the killing fields, and sometimes even in their murder). These collaborators were motivated by antisemitism, material benefit and career advancement, among others.

In the Soviet Republic of Ukraine (and the Baltic States), there was an additional motive for collaboration with the Nazis: the ambition to regain independence, fueled by hatred of the Soviets who had deprived them of it. Those who held this view considered that all means were legitimate, even collaborating with the Germans in the murder of Jews, if this was what was needed in order to convince the Germans to help re-establish an independent Ukrainian state. However, even when those who called themselves freedom fighters and “partisans” realized that the Germans had no intention of fulfilling their dream, they did not cease their involvement in atrocities against the Jews, continuing to regard them as representatives of the Soviets, toward whom their hatred proved to be stronger than their dream of independence.

To this day those Ukrainians see themselves as freedom fighters, while their supporters view them as heroes and patriots who risked their lives for the independence of their country. On the other hand, in Jewish memory as well as in the memory of other ethnic groups who lived in this region, they are perceived as collaborators and murderers. This conflict of views will probably never be solved. The Jews will forever regard the collaborators as accomplices in the attempt to realize the Nazi ideology of a “New Order” free of Jews, while their supporters will always claim that only a few of them participated directly in the murder of Jews and everything they did was for the sake of an independent state which could be established with the help of the Germans. In order to obtain this much needed aid they were forced to collaborate with them.

This paper, which focuses on two leading Ukrainian nationalist leaders, Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich, will discuss some aspects relating to the attitudes of Ukrainian nationalists toward the Jews during the war, and especially the attempts to honor collaborators in Ukraine today. It will also detail the responses in Ukraine and abroad to this whitewashing campaign.

* * * * *

On January 20, 2010, as one of his last actions as Ukraine's president, Victor Yushchenko signed a decree posthumously honoring Stepan Bandera as Hero of Ukraine. The announcement stated, inter alia, that Bandera had demonstrated “heroism and self-sacrifice in fighting for an independent Ukrainian state.”¹ Three years earlier, on October 12, Yushchenko had signed a similar decree posthumously bestowing on Roman Shukhevich the title of Hero of Ukraine for his “contribution to the national liberation struggle for the freedom and independence of Ukraine.”² These events triggered both positive and negative reactions in Ukraine.

The Past – the OUN and the UPA

The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was at the center of anti-Polish activity in



Stepan Bandera

Galicia, western Ukraine, which till World War II was part of Poland. In 1938 its leader was Andreii Melnik, who collaborated with the Nazi regime after he made contact with Abwehr, the German military intelligence organization. Following the Soviet annexation of Ukraine, he moved to the Polish area which was controlled by the Germans, and in 1941 to Berlin.

The Germans regarded Ukraine as a suitable place for colonization because of its fertile black soil, which could be exploited in order to turn Ukraine into the grain supplier of Europe. However, in order to conceal these plans and win the local

-
- ¹ “Yushchenko Honors War Nationalist,” *The Moscow Times*, 25 January 2010, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/yushchenko-honors-war-nationalist/398082.html>; “Ukrainian Honor for Wartime Nationalist Angers Jews,” *JTA*, 26 January 2010, http://www.jta.org/news/article-print/2010/01/26/1010326/ukrainian-honor-to-wartime-nationalist-angers-jews?TB_iframe=true&width=750&height=500.
- ² “Ukrainian President Grants Posthumous Honor to Anti-Soviet Guerrilla Leader,” *Red Orbit*, 14 October 2007, http://www.redorbit.com/news/business/1101700/ukrainian_president_grants_posthumous_honour_to_antisoviet_guerrilla_leader/; “Ukraine President Defends Posthumous Honor to Alleged Head of Pogrom,” *Haaretz*, 15 November 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/ukraine-president-defends-posthumous-honor-to-alleged-head-of-pogrom-1.233238?trailingPath=2.169%2C2.216%2C>.

population's support, the Germans sided with Ukrainian independence aspirations. As early as 1938 they initiated radio broadcasts for Ukrainians, both in eastern (Soviet) Ukraine and western (Polish) Ukraine.³

The partition of Poland as part of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact in September 1939 between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, and the USSR's annexation of western Ukraine compounded the eagerness of Ukrainian nationalists to fight for independence, especially in light of the brutal sovietization of the area and the deportation of many thousands of Ukrainians and others (including Jews) to the inner regions of the Soviet Union. In parallel, many of their leaders were released from jail, including Stepan Bandera, who succeeded in uniting young supporters of the OUN under his leadership. When Bandera's supporters accused Melnik and his followers of not doing enough for Ukrainian independence, the organization split into two parts: OUN-M (the original organization) and OUN-B (Bandera's faction), with German support divided between them.⁴

When the Soviets occupied eastern Galicia, some 30,000 Ukrainian nationalists fled to the General Government.⁵ In 1940 the Germans began to set up military training units of Ukrainians, and in the spring of 1941 Ukrainian units were established by the Wehrmacht. The first unit, created in the General Government, was called Nachtigall (Nightingale). Most of its command was German, the rest Ukrainian. Roland was another such unit.⁶

On June 22, 1941, the Germans attacked the Soviet Union and within eight days had reached Lvov. Accompanying the Wehrmacht were groups of OUN followers, some of them part of the Nachtigall Battalion.⁷ Immediately, they declared the re-establishment of the Ukrainian state, with Lvov as its capital. Simultaneously, Ukrainian nationalists were displaying considerable initiative, conducting purges and pogroms against Russians, Poles and Jews. Between July and September 1941 many of Bandera's men were arrested, others

³ I. Kamenetsky, *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine (1941-1944) – A Study of Totalitarian Imperialism* (Milwaukee, WI, 1956), p. 9; W. Kosyk, *The Third Reich and Ukraine* (NY, 1993), p. 165.

⁴ A. Dallin, *German Rule in Russia 1941-1945 - A Study of Occupation Policies* (Boulder, CO, 1981), pp. 114-116; Berkhoff K.: *Harvest of Despair – Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA/London, 2004), p. 10. For more on the beginning of the Bandera movement, see W. Kosyk, *The Third Reich and Ukraine* (NY, 1993), pp. 62-70.

⁵ G. Finder and A. Prusin, "Collaboration in Eastern Galicia: The Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust," *East European Jewish Affairs* 34/2 (2004), p. 98.

⁶ J. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (Littleton, Colorado, 1980), pp. 73-74. For more on the Nachtigall and Roland battalions, see Kosyk, *The Third Reich and Ukraine*, pp. 128-136.

⁷ J. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (Littleton, CO, 1980), pp. 77.

went underground and he himself was taken to Berlin and jailed there.⁸ Later in the same year members of the OUN-M were also arrested.⁹

By November 1941 Ukraine was wholly occupied by the Germans, assisted by Hungarian, Italian, Romanian and Slovak units. Many locals, particularly in western Ukraine, welcomed them: “We were all so happy to see them. They were going to save us from the Communists who had taken everything and starved us,” was a common refrain.¹⁰

Many Ukrainian nationalists, and others, too, were recruited to the Order Police, whose non-German members were called *Schutzmannschaft* (*Shuma*, in short), or *Hilfspolizei* (auxiliary police). Among other ideas, they were indoctrinated into believing that the Jews must be exterminated and subsequently took part in that process.¹¹ They participated in raids on Jews and in their registration, and guarded ghettos. During mass shootings of Jews, the auxiliary police helped assemble the Jews, transfer them to the shooting grounds and guarded those locations during the killings. In Krivoii Rog (Dnepropetrovsk district), for example, “the entire Ukrainian auxiliary police were put to use” during the murder of local Jews.¹²

It should be noted, however, that some members of the auxiliary police, including entire battalions, later deserted and joined the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), established by Bandera's supporters in 1943.¹³ Their main goal now was to protect the “Ukrainian population against the most abusive forms of German colonial policy” and to act against the Germans, Soviets and Poles simultaneously. Like the OUN, the UPA too were active mainly in the western parts of Ukraine – Volhynia and Galicia.¹⁴ Because of the shortage of doctors in its ranks, some Jewish physicians were recruited to the UPA.¹⁵

⁸ Bandera was released a few days after his arrest, but was not allowed to leave Germany. He was later rearrested and released in September 1944 in order to set up OUN headquarters in Berlin. The Soviet KGB poisoned Bandera in Munich, Germany, on 15 October 1959. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stepan_Bandera#cite_ref-31.

⁹ Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, pp. 119-121; Finder and Prusin, “Collaboration in Eastern Galicia,” p. 100; Kosyk, *The Third Reich and Ukraine*, pp. 98-101.

¹⁰ K. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair – Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA/London, 2004), pp. 11, 20-21.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 42, 62-64.

¹² D. Pohl, “The Murder of Ukraine's Jews under German Military Administration and the Reich Commissariat Ukraine,” in *The Shoah in Ukraine – History, Testimony, Memorialization*, edited by R. Brandon and W. Lower (Bloomington, 2008), p. 55.

¹³ Kamenetsky, *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine*, p. 81; Finder and Prusin, “Collaboration in Eastern Galicia,” p. 100.

¹⁴ Kamenetsky, *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine*, p. 70; Kosyk, *The Third Reich and Ukraine*, p. 222. The UPA continued to fight against the Soviets till September 1949 and some units were active even till 1956. See: “69th anniversary of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army – Kiev,” *Demotix*, 14 October 2011, <http://www.demotix.com/news/873479/69th-anniversary-ukrainian-insurgent-army-kyiv>.

¹⁵ Pohl, “The Murder of Ukraine's Jews,” p. 53.

Roman Shukhevich was a member of the OUN-B and one of the commanders of the Nachtigall unit. A controversial issue in connection with this unit is whether it participated in the murder of Jews and Poles in Lvov in the summer 1941, and in particular, in the murder of about 4000 Jews and dozens of Polish intelligentsia (Professors' Massacre) in July 1941. The participation of Ukrainians in the murder of the Jews and Poles was not even discussed during the Nuremberg Trials and the entire blame was put on the Germans. By the end of the 1950s the subject was raised as part of East German propaganda against Theodor Oberländer, the Abwehr liaison officer to Nachtigall who subsequently had to resign from his position as a minister in the West German government.¹⁶

In November 1941 about 650 Ukrainian Nachtigall personnel were re-organized by the Germans to form the 201st Schutzmannschaft Battalion. Shukhevich was appointed its deputy commander. In March 1942 the battalion was sent to Belorussia to fight partisans and Jews, but following the expiration of their contracts after a year, almost all members refused to renew them and the battalion was disbanded. Shukhevich escaped arrest by the Germans and became head of the military section of the OUN. In August 1943, during its Third Grand Congress he was elected director of the OUN and Supreme Commander of the UPA. After the end of World War II his units continued fighting against the Soviets. He was killed in combat with the Soviets in Lvov on March 5, 1950.¹⁷



Roman Shukhevich

As for the attitudes of these organizations toward the Jews, the OUN's standpoint was already clear ten years before the outbreak of World War II. Many Ukrainian nationalists (even prior to the OUN's establishment) had connections with National Socialists in Germany. As the Germans advanced eastward, and atrocities against the Jews were committed in the occupied territories of Poland, the negative sentiments of Ukrainian nationalists toward the Jews intensified. OUN archival documents, for example, include a statement by Yaroslav Stechko, who in June 1941 became prime minister of the Ukrainian government in Lvov (appointed by the OUN). He stated that "Jews help Moscow to keep Ukraine in captivity; that is why I hold that Jews should be annihilated and the German method of destruction of Jewry is necessary."¹⁸

¹⁶ John-Paul Himka, "True and False Lessons from the Nachtigall Episode," *BRAMA*, 19 March 2008, http://www.brama.com/news/press/2008/03/080319himka_nachtigall.html; a Soviet document on the propaganda against Oberländer: <http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2008/02/nachtigal/007.jpg>

¹⁷ "Roman Shukhevych," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shukhevych>

¹⁸ A. Weiss, "The Attitude of the Ukrainian Nationalist Groups towards Jews during the Second World War," in *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution*, edited by D. Bankier and I. Gutman (Jerusalem, 2003), p. 266-267.

A second phase in the OUN's attitude began in August 1941 and lasted till August 1943. As noted, when the Ukrainian nationalists realized that Germany was not planning to grant them independence and even arrested some of them, several members went underground. As a result, their negative attitude toward the Jews changed. According to the resolution accepted at the 11th conference of OUN-B in April 1942, "it [is] pointless at the present moment to participate in anti-Jewish operations... We do not want to divert the attention of the masses from the primary enemy." Nevertheless, Ukrainian nationalists continued to take part in exterminating Jews.¹⁹

A more significant shift (although too late for most of Ukraine's Jewry) occurred during and after the Third Grand Congress of the OUN-B in August 1943. Then racism was condemned and there were discussions about equal rights for all citizens regardless of nationality. This turnabout may be attributed to developments at the front and to German losses at the time.

However, the reality was different. According to the OUN-B's "Temporary Instructions" from early 1944, "the Jewish question has stopped being a problem (very few of them have remained). This does not apply to those who actively stand against us."²⁰ We might therefore ask, how in the forests did they distinguish between Jews who "actively stand against us" and those who did not?

The OUN's attitude toward the Jews was a factor of necessity. When they required the help of Jewish doctors, for example, they provided them with false documents and accepted them into their ranks. In other cases, they acted against the Jews: in early 1942 the Ukrainian police in the Rovno District gathered weapons for the OUN-B. When the collection was discovered by the Germans, the police said it belonged to the Jews.²¹

The Present – "Heroes of Ukraine"

During the Soviet era the issue of collaboration of the local population with the Germans was not aired publicly. The authorities feared that such a discussion would harm the image of the "friendship of peoples" against the German invader. At the same time, Ukrainian collaborators were held up as an example of people who chose to join the German occupier because of their "bourgeois background."²² In addition, Bandera's name became synonymous with a man who had betrayed his people and chosen to join the Soviet Union's enemies.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 271.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 272-273.

²¹ Alexander R. Dyukov, *The Minor Enemy: OUN, UPA and the Solution of "Jewish Question,"* (Riga, 2010), p. 76.

²² Anatoly Podolsky, "Collaboration in Ukraine during the Holocaust: Aspects of Historiography and Research," in *Collaboration with the Nazis – Public Discourse after the Holocaust*, edited by Roni Stauber (London/New York, 2010), p. 48.

The collapse of the Soviet regime and the declaration of Ukrainian independence in 1991 strengthened the nationalist atmosphere and the public discourse of subjects that could contribute to shaping a national consciousness. One such topic was collaboration, with those who served in the UPA and OUN being presented as a legitimate force which fought during World War II for Ukraine's independence. After the Orange Revolution in 2004-5 the process of recognizing members of those units as having rights that equaled those of Red Army veterans was accelerated. In 2006 the education ministry was instructed to stress the participation of the Ukrainian people as a whole in World War II including the nationalist units²³.

In the eastern and southern areas of Ukraine, where a high percentage of the population is Russian, both the population and its politicians do not support this change. Some regional councils even called on the president to cease the promotion of a narrow point of view about World War II, supported by a small “group of people who are guilty of committing the most bloody crimes against humanity.”²⁴

On October 14, 2007, some one thousand rightwing extremists held a rally in Kiev to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the establishment of the UPA. According to a statement issued by the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, the participants gave the Nazi salute and shouted Nazi slogans. The Jewish community of Ukraine condemned the event.²⁵

In March 2008, Kryivka, a popular coffee shop in Lvov, was adorned with UPA posters, as well as a stool with gallows “for traitors.” At the entrance a man with a machine gun asked all those entering to swear that they were neither a Yid nor a Moskal (derogatory nicknames for Jew and Russian, respectively). Kryivka is the name of the hiding place used by UPA members during World War II.²⁶

Two years later, on March 2, 2010, people of all ages marched through Kiev and Lvov, holding torches and wearing UPA uniforms and traditional Cossack dress, to mark the 60th anniversary of Shukhevich's death.

Besides the OUN and UPA, other units have also been honored. In April 2009, for example, posters with symbols of the Ukrainian SS Galichina Division (14 Waffen Grenadier-

²³ Presidential Decree number 879/2006, October 14, 2006, <http://www.president.gov.ua/ru/documents/5098.html>

²⁴ See, for example, the announcement of the Regional Council of Kharkov from December 3, 2007: <http://news.mail.ru/politics/1509036>

²⁵ “Ukraine Nationalists Rally in Support of WW2 Insurgents,” RT, 14 October 2007, <http://rt.com/news/ukraine-nationalists-rally-in-support-of-ww2-insurgents/>.

²⁶ “Not a Yid and not a Moskal – [You Can] Enter the Coffee Shop,” *AEN*, 26 March 2008, http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=brief&article_id=48480&PHPSESSID=dapus9m1muat0m6m0k0jnrsjg0; Iryna Yehorova, “Kryivka for Entertainment, Not Hiding,” 20 November 2007, <http://www.day.kiev.ua/290619?idsource=191789&mainlang=eng>.

Division der SS Galizische) appeared on the streets of Lvov.²⁷ The posters read “Ukrainian Galichina Division. They defended Ukraine,” in the Ukrainian language. The initiator was a local branch of the extreme right and antisemitic Svoboda party.²⁸ As of fall 1943, this division collaborated with the Nazis and participated in battles all over Europe. The posters were removed on April 23, 2009, following condemnations in the Russian and European media, but on April 28, a memorial service marking the 66th anniversary of the formation of the division took place in Lvov Square.



Insignia of Galichina division

In early May 2009 the Ternopol regional council decided to erect a memorial plaque in honor of Ukrainians who served in the Galichina division. The decision was condemned by Ilya Rogachev, Russia’s deputy ambassador to the UN, who said: “It is known that Ukrainian SS [soldiers] annihilated Soviet soldiers, partisans in France and Yugoslavia, [and] peaceful inhabitants in Poland, suppressed anti-fascist revolts in Slovakia, [and] shot Jews and Communists in Ukraine”²⁹.

On March 5, 2011 a parade took place in Ivano-Frankovsk, marking the 61st anniversary of the death of Roman Shukhevich. The torch-bearing participants shouted “Shukhevich – hero of Ukraine,” “Ukraine before everything,” “Death to the enemies,” among other slogans. The parade was initiated by Svoboda and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists.³⁰

About six weeks later, on April 28, a rally was held in Lvov to commemorate the 68th anniversary of the establishment of the Galichina division. According to Iurii

²⁷ “Ads Praising Nazi WWII Division Pop Up in Ukrainian Town,” *RT*, 27 September 2009, <http://rt.com/news/ads-praising-nazi-wwii-division-pop-up-in-ukrainian-town/>.

²⁸ It should be noted that Svoboda (Freedom) has become very popular in recent years. Political commentator Konstantin Dymov wrote in 2009 that “a couple of years ago Tyagnibok’s men were regarded as a marginal group... Today they are a really influential force.” See Konstantin Dymov, “Nazification of Galicia,” *Globo Scope*, 2 April 2009, <http://www.globoscope.ru/eng/content/articles/479>. On October 31, 2010 this extreme right party won 30-34% of the votes in elections in three important cities in western Ukraine: Lvov, Ternopol and Ivano-Frankovsk. Their campaign emphasized Ukrainian patriotism and resistance to Russia. One of their leaders, Oleg Tyagnibok, is known for his nationalist and antisemitic views. See “Ukrainian Appeals to Anti-Semitism in Election Win,” *Kiev Ukraine News Blog*, 5 November 2010, <http://news.kievukraine.info/2010/11/ukrainian-appeals-to-anti-semitism-in.html>; “Kiev – Ukrainian Appeals to Antisemitism in Election Win,” *Vos Iz Neias*, 5 November 2010, <http://www.vosizneias.com/67823/2010/11/05/kyiv-ukrainian-appeals-to-anti-semitism-in-election-win/print/>; Andreas Umland, “Ukraine’s Party System in Transition? The Rise of the Radically Right-Wing All-Ukrainian Association ‘Svoboda’,” *Geo-Politika*, 5 January 2011, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=4429>.

²⁹ “A Memorial Board to SS Warriors to be Opened in Ternopol,” *FEOR*, 4 May 2009, http://www.jewish.ru/news/cis/2009/05/prn_news994273823.php; “Russia Condemns the Opening of Memorial Board to SS Division,” *FEOR*, 6 May 2009, http://www.jewish.ru/news/cis/2009/05/prn_news994273880.php.

³⁰ “Nationalists Hold Torchlight Procession in Honor of Shukhevich,” *History Foundation*, 9 March 2011, http://historyfoundation.ru/news_item.php?id=1878.

Mikhalchishin (Svoboda Party), a member of the municipality and organizer of the event, the participants were “patriotic youths from Lvov who support the ideas of social and national justice... [and] oppose stigmatization of the fighters for Ukraine's independence as Nazi collaborators and enemies of the Ukrainian state.” Participants shouted slogans in Ukrainian, such as “Shukhevich, Bandera – heroes of Ukraine” and “Galichina – a division of heroes.”³¹ It should be noted that Mikhalchishin is known for his antisemitic and anti-Israel views.³²

In October, the administrative authorities of Railov (a village in the Lvov region) decided to change the name of Mir (peace/world) Street to Nachtigall Street. The initiator was Maryan Berezdetkii (Svoboda Party), a member of the administration, and his proposal was supported by the majority.³³

During the unveiling of a memorial to Stepan Bandera in Velikii Mosty (Lvov region) in early January 2012, Andreii Libych, representative of the Free Nationalists (one of Ukraine's small nationalist groups), declared that Ukraine was now in a period of “Yidocratia” and that “our leader [Bandera] did not fight for such a Ukraine, where the soil and industry are being robbed by all kinds of Feldmans, Kolomoyskis, Akhmetovs and other Yids. We don't need a Yidocratia.”³⁴

Two months later, on March 16, 2012, the Lvov District Council instituted a new award named after Bandera, to be granted for exceptional contribution to the development of Ukrainian statehood. It is to be granted each year on January 1, Bandera's birthday, except in 2012 when it will be given on June 30, the day in 1941 when Ukrainian nationalists announced the re-establishment of their state. A Bandera award in journalism was founded in 2007.³⁵

³¹ “March Held in Lvov to Mark 68th Anniversary of 14th Grenadier SS Division Galichina,” *World without Nazism*, 29 April 2011,

<http://worldwithoutnazism.wordpress.com/2011/04/29/%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%8F%D0%BB%D1%81%D1%8F-%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%88-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%8E-68-%D0%BE%D0%B9>

³² See for example, “ Hamas Apologetics by Lvov Deputy,” *Euro-Asian Jewish Congress*, 6 June 2011, <http://ejc.org/page18/news24232.html>.

³³ “Ukraine – Street Named after Nazi Appears in Village Near Lvov Instead of Mir Street,” *IzRus*, 12 October 2011, http://izrus.co.il/print_news.php?news=44933; “Nazis from the Nachtigall Battalion Will Not Become Heroes of Ukraine,” *Voice of Russia*, 12 October 2011, <http://rus.ruvr.ru/print/58626344.html>.

³⁴ “Bander Fought for Ukraine without Jewish Akhmetovs,” *Polemika*, 10 January 2012, http://polemika.com.ua/index/print/news_id/80082; <http://evreiskiy.kiev.ua/ukrainskijj-nationalist-prizyvaet-10797.html>.

³⁵ “Award Named after Bandera Founded in Lvov,” *Focus*, 16 March 2012, <http://focus.ua/society/223468>.

Responses

In November 2007, during President Yushchenko's visit to Israel, Tommy Lapid, late chairman of Yad Vashem, accused him of glorifying Shukhevich and claimed that Yad Vashem had documents in its archive which prove the latter's participation in the murder of Jews in Lvov in July 1941. He invited Ukrainian historians to come and research the documentation.

In early 2008 a group of Ukrainian historians visited Israel where they received some documents. However, when they returned to Ukraine they claimed they had been falsified by the Soviets to incriminate the abovementioned Oberländer. This episode caused some tension in Israeli-Ukrainian relations. Although Shukhevich's participation in the massacre in Lvov has not yet been proven, there is a wealth of documentation and testimonies establishing OUN's hostile attitude toward the Jews and the participation of its members in their murder during the war.³⁶

In June 2008 the International Union of Former Juvenile Prisoners of Fascism asked President Yushchenko not to recognize UPA members as heroes because they fought alongside the Germans during World War II and some of them took part in the killing of Jews. Boris Zabarko, chairman of the All-Ukrainian Association of Former Jewish Prisoners of Ghetto and Nazi Concentration Camps, said it was "immoral to reward those who were connected to pogroms and murdered Jews and others during and after WWII."

Yushchenko's decision to honor Bandera in 2010 was praised by prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko³⁷ but condemned by Ukraine's chief rabbi Reuven Asman, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Russia, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Anti-Defamation League, and former partisan and prominent historian of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union Itzhak Arad, among others.³⁸

³⁶ John-Paul Himka, "Debates in Ukraine over Nationalist Involvement in the Holocaust, 2004-2008," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 3, May 2011, pp. 362-365. And see above note...

³⁷ "Tymoshenko: Historic Truth should be Guideline in Bandera Issue," *Kyiv Post*, 30 January 2010, <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/58317/print/>

³⁸ "Ukrainian Honor for Wartime Nationalist Angers Jews," *JTA*, 26 January 2010, http://www.jta.org/news/article-print/2010/01/26/1010326/ukrainian-honor-to-wartime-nationalist-angers-jews?TB_iframe=true&width=750&height=500; "Wiesenthal Center Blasts Ukrainian Honor For Nazi Collaborator," *Simon Wiesenthal Center*, 28 January 2010, <http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWlLbPJLnF&b=4441467&ct=7922775>; "Former Head of Yad Vashem Speaks Out against Yushchenko's Decision," *IzRus*, 27 January 2010, <http://izrus.co.il/dvuhstoronka/article/2010-01-27/8307.html>; "Ukraine Chief Rabbi Protests Bandera's Honor," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 2 February 2010, http://risu.org.ua/article_print.php?id=34158&name=church_state_relations&lang=en&; "ADL Calls On New Ukrainian President to Withdraw 'Hero' Title Bestowed by Predecessor on Nazi Collaborators," *ADL*, 11 March 2010, <http://www.adl.org/NR/exeres/E750CFA2-2117-4143-BAD3-494CC2390A94.0B1623CA-D5A4-465D-A369-DF6E8679CD9E.frameless.htm>.

On January 25, 2010, advocate Vladimir Olentsevich from Donetsk filed a suit to cancel Yushchenko's decree of five days earlier, claiming that under Ukrainian law such an award could be granted only to a Ukrainian citizen, which Bandera never was.³⁹

On January 30, 2010, anti-fascists held a demonstration in Odessa, during which they burned a copy of the edict and a puppet symbolizing Bandera.⁴⁰ On February 25, the European Parliament issued a resolution expressing the hope that president-elect Viktor Yanukovich would cancel the decree. During Yanukovich's visit to Moscow in early March he promised to postpone it till Victory Day (May 9).⁴¹

Following the opening of a photo exhibition on April 8, 2010, at Ukraina House in Kiev, titled "The Volyn Massacre: Polish and Jewish Victims of the OUN-UPA," initiated by Polish Catholic priest Tadeush Zalensky, chairman of an association of Poles who lived in the areas occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939-1945, members of Svoboda broke into the premises and damaged photographs of Polish and Jewish World War II victims. Police arrested 13-15 of them. They claimed the exhibit was Ukrainophobic and was aimed at "stirring interethnic and religious hostility and humiliation of the national honor and dignity of Ukrainians."⁴²

On April 2, 2010, the Donetsk Regional Court annulled the Yushchenko decree regarding Bandera, and in January 2011 the Supreme Administrative Court of Ukraine ratified this ruling.⁴³ On April 21, 2010, the Donetsk Appeals Court also invalidated Yushchenko's 2007 decree regarding Shukhevich, since, as in the case of Bandera, under Ukrainian law this title can be given only to a citizen of independent Ukraine (as of 1991). Since Shukhevich

³⁹ "Ukrainian Files Lawsuit against Honoring of Nationalist Leader," *RIA Novosti*, 26 January 2010, <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20100126/157681165.html>.

⁴⁰ "ITAR-TASS: Bandera's Effigy, His Order, Decree Making Him Hero Burned in Odesa," *Kyiv Post*, 30 January 2010, <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/ukraine/detail/58334/print/>.

⁴¹ "European Parliament Resolution of 25 February 2010 on the Situation in Ukraine," European Parliament, 25 February 2010, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0035+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>; "Yanukovych Promises Medvedev to Withdraw Rank of Hero of Ukraine from Bandera and Shukhevych," *UNIAN*, 5 March 2010, <http://www.unian.net/eng/print/366099>.

⁴² "Ukraine Nationalists Attack Polish-Jewish Memorial Photo Exhibit," *World Congress of Russian Jewry*, 8 April 2010, <http://www.wcrj.org/en/news/detail.php?ID=804>; "Svoboda Association Insists Volyn Massacre Exhibit Stirs Religious Hostility," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, 8 April 2010, http://risu.org.ua/article_print.php?id=35152&name=protests&lang=en&; "Kiev, Ukraine – 13 Arrested for Breaking into Polish-Jewish Memorial Exhibit," *Vos Iz Neias*, 8 April 2010, <http://www.vosizneias.com/52742/2010/04/08/kyev-ukraine-13-arrested-for-breaking-into-polish-jewish-memorial-exhibit/print/>.

⁴³ "Kiev, Ukraine – Court Annuls Award to Nazi Collaborator," *Vos Iz Neias*, 3 April 2010, <http://www.vosizneias.com/52489/2010/04/02/kyev-ukraine-court-annuls-award-to-nazi-collaborator/print/>; "Bandera Permanently Deprived of Hero of Ukraine Title," *IzRus*, 10 January 2011, http://izrus.co.il/print_news.php?news=32943; "Ukraine Strips Nationalist Leader Bandera of Honor," *JTA*, 12 January 2011, <http://www.jta.org/news/article/2011/01/12/2742522/ukraine-strips-nationalist-leader-bandera-of-honor>.

was killed in 1950 he is not entitled to such an honor.⁴⁴ These legal decisions serve as a convenient way-out for the government from a complex situation of opposing pressures and contradictory historical evaluations.

The Bandera and Shukhevich affairs can be considered manifest examples of such attitudes toward the past in the post-Soviet region. The cooperation of those two men and the organizations they headed with Nazi Germany is not viewed as a problem in the eyes of their supporters. They became heroes because they fought against the Soviets for the independence of the Ukrainian people. The means they used are irrelevant, even if some members of their groups took part in atrocities against Jews.

Even after the change of presidents in February 2011 the issue remained on the public agenda. Moreover, it became a bone of contention between pro-Russian and Ukrainian nationalist elements. Bandera and Shukhevich became symbols of the Ukrainian nationalists' struggle against anyone whom they believed did not fit the perceived national character of the country.

* Doctoral candidate and researcher, Moshe Kantor Program for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism. Her thesis deals with Jews in the Soviet partisan movement in Lithuania, Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-1944.

⁴⁴ “Another Nazi Collaborator Deprived from Hero Title in Ukraine [sic],” *The Voice of Russia*, 23 April 2010, <http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/04/23/6810665.html>