

Yuri Shymko: From Bandera youth leader, MPP and MP, to elder statesman

For more than 50 years, Canada's Yuri Shymko has led far-right Ukrainian groups that idolize Stepan Bandera as a war hero, despite his fascist ideology, his reliance on terror tactics, his military aid to the Nazis, and his role in eradicating Poles, Jews and communists.

1967, July 31: As a leader of the Banderite Ukrainian Youth Association (UYA), Shymko shared the stage with PM Pearson on Parliament Hill to address 1,500 scout troop members who stood in formation wearing army-like uniforms.¹

1969, Oct. 18: Shymko spoke at a Parliament Hill rally "commemorating the 10th anniversary" of Bandera's murder. This event was organised by Canada's leading Banderite group, the Canadian League for the Liberation of Ukraine (CLLU), now called the League of Ukrainian Canadians (LUC). "The marchers," said the *Ottawa Journal*, "laid a wreath honoring Bandera's memory at the National War Memorial."²

1970, Oct. 21: Shymko created the Canadian Freedom Council (CFC). These "Canadians of Eastern European origin" fought to "preserve democracy" by opposing "Marxist-Leninist propaganda."³ The CLLU had a "leading role" in the CFC's first propaganda project: "Lenin Without Makeup."⁴

1971, Jan. 30: Joining a melee at the Soviet embassy where windows were broken, the "double police line was rushed" and "breached" and "fireworks emitting smoke were tossed by demonstrators," he "turned his bull horn at the embassy and yelled 'And listen, you Russian b——!'" No arrests were made. Later, "the European division of external affairs ... received Mr. Shymko and a delegation to hear their request for Canadian intercession" against the USSR.⁵

1971, Mar. 31: As a member of the CLLU's national executive and its former president, Shymko addressed a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons.⁶

1971, Jun. 2: Shymko was a member of the "founding committee" that formed Paul Hellyer's Action Canada Party (ACP). Hellyer was the Assoc. Defence Minister under Liberal PM Louis St. Laurent in 1957, Pearson's Defence Minister (1963-67) and Trudeau's Transport Minister. (1968-69). After being an Independent MP (1972) and a Progressive Conservative MP (1972-76), Hellyer went public in 2005 with his beliefs in aliens and UFOs. Shymko, who was a "Liberal riding worker" for Hellyer in the 1960s, described ACP as "a useful vehicle for ethnic groups ... anxious for Canada to pursue a more anti-Communist policy abroad."⁷

1971, Oct. 9, 1971: When running as a Tory in the Ontario election, Shymko's campaign workers were accused of "'scurrilous antisemitic' attacks" against NDP incumbent Dr. Morton Shulman.⁸ Shymko's supporters conducted a "nasty, dirty," "vicious campaign of hatred," said Shulman, that included stealing hundreds of NDP signs, threatening the lives of canvassers, tossing a brick threw his car window, making "ugly calls" to his office, circulating a fake document linking him to the NDP's radical Waffle movement "for an Independent Socialist Canada" and "going around telling everybody I'm a communist." Shymko, who strongly denied this, blamed Shulman for resorting to "filthy muckraking tactics."⁹

1973: Shymko's book *For this was I Born*, was published by proBandera Ucrainica Research Institute, then housed with the UYA, and CLLU's weekly paper, at Toronto's Ukrainian Cultural Centre. His book was promoted (1975-81) by *Ukrainian Review*,¹⁰ a global Banderite journal edited by Slava Stetsko. She led the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) after her husband Yaroslav died in 1986. *Ukrainian Review* was "published in cooperation with" the CLLU, which distributed it in Canada.¹¹

1973, Aug. 24-27: Shymko spoke at the ABN's global conference, London, UK, celebrating its 30th anniversary. Its keynote speaker, ABN president Yaroslav Stetsko, led Bandera's Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN-B). Shymko "conveyed greetings to participants from John Diefenbaker, former Prime Minister of Canada."¹²

1973-78: Shymko was Sec.-General of the OUN(B) and its top global front, the World Congress of Free Ukrainians¹³ (WCFU) now the World Ukrainian Congress.

1978-79: Progressive Conservative MP

1978, Fall: On Oct. 20, Shymko chaired a press event at the UN telling it to "dismantle the Soviet Russian Empire."¹⁴ His proclamation was signed by global groups whose founders and leaders included Nazi collaborators: the Estonian World Council, Confederation of Free Byelorussians, Lithuanian World Community, World Federation of Free Latvians and the WCFU. On Nov. 23, he submitted their demands to the UN General Assembly's president. Shymko noted that his initiative "had the support of all three parties—the NDP, Liberal and Conservative."¹⁵

1981-87: Progressive Conservative, MPP

1981, Nov. 7-8: Shymko spoke at an ABN-Canada Conference in Toronto.¹⁶

1983, Jun. 25: Shymko hosted an "Inter-

national Affairs Seminar, sponsored by the ABN."¹⁷ Held in the Ontario Legislature, its main speaker was Col. Albert Koen, treasurer of the US Council for World Freedom (USCWF), the US branch of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL).¹⁸ Other speakers included ABN-Canada chair Orest Steciw, Tory MPs (John Gamble and Michael Wilson) and Jay Parker,¹⁹ a Black member of USCWF's board.²⁰ In the 1960-70s, Parker helped lead a pro-Vietnam War group, Young Americans for Freedom. After working for Reagan's administration, he was an advisor to the Christian right's American Freedom Coalition.²¹ This front of the "Moonies" Unification Church was created by S. Korea's CIA. It worked with the WACL, Reagan and George Bush Sr., and helped fund and supply the contras.

1983, Nov. 16: Shymko had Charlton Heston at his Toronto fundraising dinner. The Reagan-loving actor, who later led the National Rifle Assoc. (1998-2003), used Shymko's event to "condemn...the Communist regime's repression of Solidarity in Poland" and the "horrors" of communism in Ukraine.²² Heston said he was "pleased" that PM Pierre Trudeau "issued a firm stand of support for the NATO alliance."²³ Shymko paid Heston US\$10,000 "for a speech so pro-nuclear armament," said *The National Post*, that "Tory cabinet ministers and civic leaders were squirming with embarrassment." Shymko "hit the jackpot," it said, selling \$150 tickets²⁴ to raise the 2020 equivalent of \$250,000.

1986, Nov. 20-22: During the ABN's global Campaign Freedom Conference (CFC), Toronto, Shymko got the Silver Medal for "outstanding work in promoting the ideals and goals of ABN."²⁵ As part of the CFC he held an event at the Ontario Legislature for ABN pres. Slava Stetsko. (Shymko's daughter Lisa was a CFC coordinator.)

1988-93: Shymko was Ukrainian Congress of Free Ukrainian's president. He succeeded Univ. of Alberta chancellor Peter Savaryn, veteran of the Waffen SS Galicia.

1999-2004: Canada's government funded programs that sent Shymko as an objective observer to monitor several presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

2004, Nov. 25: "Shymko and [former Polish leader Lech] Walesa stood side by side ... [in] Kyiv's Independence Square... addressing one million ... during the Orange Revolution" demanding "Let Ukraine be Ukrainian."²⁶ This is virtually identical to the racist, "Ukraine-for-Ukrainians" slogan used by Bandera's OUN. Wanting Ukraine as an "ethnic nation state" "'purified' of non-



Yuri Shymko

Viktor Yushchenko
President of Ukraine
2005-2010

Lisa Shymko

Empowered by the US/NATO-backed "Orange Revolution" of 2004, Yushchenko decreed fascist leaders Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych Heroes of Ukraine, led rehabilitation of their fascist army, and gave Yuri Shymko a state medal.

Ukrainian inhabitants," said historian Grzegorz Rossolinski, the OUN-B elevated "ethnic violence" to one its "central concepts."²⁷

2006: Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko gave Shymko a state medal, the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise.

2012, Aug. 15: When LUC leaders met Harper's Defense Min. Peter MacKay, Shymko represented LUC's Nat'l Executive.²⁸

2013, Nov. 22: The Toronto-based International Council in Support of Ukraine (ICSU) met at Kiev's Bandera Center for National Revival and made Shymko its chair. The ICSU unites proBandera groups around the world.²⁹ The meeting took place the day after Ukraine's first Euromaidan protest which led to a US-backed coup that installed a government rife with neoNazis.

2016, June 2: Started a petition urging MPs to pass Magnitsky Legislation.³⁰

2016, Oct. 1: When Shymko received the Taras Shevchenko Medal, LUC's Ukrainian Youth Assoc. proudly said he was one of its members, and praised him for receiving the UCC's "highest form of recognition."

2017, Mar. 19: Under Bandera's photo at Etobicoke's Ukrainian centre, Shymko backed Conservative leadership hopeful Chris Alexander as "the only candidate with a clear & consistent policy on Ukraine."³²

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Oleh Romanyshyn: Oleh organized ABN-Canada's 1981 conference. His uncle, Yaroslav Stetsko (the top deputy of fascist Ukrainian WWII leader Stepan Bandera), was its honoured, keynote speaker. Then an associate editor of the global, Banderite quarterly, *Ukrainian Review*, Oleh worked under its chief editor, his aunt Slava Stetsko. Oleh later become League of Ukrainian Canadians' (LUC) president and edited its paper, *Ukrainian Echo*. He has served as a Board Director of many Banderite-led groups including the Ucrainica Research Institute, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), the Ukrainian Cultural Centre (Toronto) and the World Ukrainian Congress. Oleh's activism began in the early 1960s. After their postwar escape to Argentina, his parents came to Canada in 1960 and he began his lifelong role in the Plast scouting movement. He soon led the antiSoviet Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union and the global Central Union of Ukrainian Students, 1970-73.

Orest Steciw: Under the UCC's patronage, Orest began his antiSoviet activism as a university student in 1970 and is a longtime member of the Banderite Ukrainian Youth Association of Toronto. Throughout the 1970s and '80s, he played key roles in the World Anti-Communist League and the ABN. As chair of ABN-Canada, he spoke at national and global



"It was an honour to speak about the Holodomor at League of Ukrainian Canadians reception..."
Chrystia Freeland, MP, June 15, 2015.

ABN conferences in Toronto (1981, '86, '90, '92). He was chief organizer of its global 1990 conference and was made executive chair of the worldwide ABN at its 1992 event. Active in LUC since 1980, and its president (2011-17), he is now on its executive committee. President of the Ucrainica Research Institute and executive of Toronto's Ukrainian Cultural Centre, Orest received the UCC's top medal for "community development" in 2019.