

Canadian imperialism's fascist friends—Part 2: Hitler's accomplices, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists

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This is the second article in a five-part series.

The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), whose actions and legacy are celebrated by the state-sponsored Ukrainian Canadian Congress, is the political-ideological fount of the fascist forces that are playing such a prominent and reactionary role in contemporary Ukraine.

In 1940, the OUN split into two groups over how best to collaborate with Nazi Germany to secure a Ukrainian national state. In pursuit of that collaboration and their rival visions of a fascist state, both factions would commit horrific crimes. Both supported the Nazis' war of annihilation against the Soviet Union that claimed the lives of over 27 million Soviet citizens and participated in the Holocaust of European Jewry.

The OUN (Melnyk) sought to work within Nazi Germany's occupation regime and promoted the formation of the Galicia Division of the Waffen SS. It was to this organization that the grandfather of Canada's Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland belonged.

The OUN (Bandera), many of whose members were likewise provided refuge in post-World War II Canada, also systematically embedded its forces in the Nazi military machine and its repressive apparatus in German-occupied Poland and later in the Soviet Union. But the OUN (B) took a more "radical stance," going beyond the remit its Nazi patrons and allies had given it. After entering Lvov in June 1941, as part of the Nazi force that invaded the USSR, they declared the creation of an "independent" Ukrainian state—one they stressed would be an integral part of the Nazi-led "New Europe." Frictions ensued. But both sides strove to maintain their alliance, and up until the war's end the Bandera-led OUN (B) and its Ukrainian Insurgent Army or UPA collaborated with the Nazis and the Wehrmacht in fighting the Red Army and Soviet partisans, terrorizing the population and exterminating Ukraine's Jews. It also killed tens of thousands of Poles in pursuit of an ethnically "pure" Ukraine.

The OUN and the origins of Ukrainian fascism

Contemporary apologists for the OUN insist that they were forced into an impossible situation during World War II and can at most be accused of opportunistically embracing Nazi support and its anti-Semitism. These claims are without any historical foundation. The OUN was a fascist organization from its inception, that long sought Nazi support and whose role in the mass extermination of Ukraine's Jews was politically prepared and prefigured by its actions in the decade prior to the war's outbreak in 1939.

The OUN was founded in 1929 through the merger of several far-right organizations, among them the League for the Liberation of Ukraine, which had arisen out of the Union of the Ukrainian Fascists, and the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO). Comprised of veterans of the Ukrainian nationalist forces that had fought the Bolsheviks during the Civil War that followed the 1917 October Revolution, the UVO supplied much of the OUN's initial leadership.

Socially, the OUN was comprised of frustrated and embittered petty bourgeois, as well as dispossessed landlords and other notables. Politically, it was animated by pathological hatred for the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. Ideologically, it was part of the broader fascist, militarist and anti-egalitarian current that developed in the aftermath of the unprecedented violence and dislocation of World War I and in direct reaction against the Russian Revolution and the socialist strivings of the European working class.

But the OUN and its supporters were especially angered and aggrieved. From their perspective, the socialist revolution in Russia and the Ukraine had cheated them out of their birthright—a Ukrainian state where they would rule the roost—as well, in many cases, of their property and other privileges. Moreover, those they perceived as their ethnic rivals had been strengthened. There now was a Polish Republic, including on territory the Ukrainian nationalists coveted and which was repressing its Ukrainian minority. And as a result of the Russian Revolution, Ukraine's Jews, long the target of pogroms and the Czarist government's Black Hundred agitation, enjoyed unprecedented freedom.

Like the White Russian emigres, the Ukrainian far right helped fashion and promote the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism, which held the Jews responsible for the revolution, for them the incarnation of the anti-Christ. An explicitly fascist form of anti-Semitism, the Judeo-Bolshevism canard would be invoked by the Nazis and their Ukrainian allies in the OUN in inciting genocide.

The October Revolution and Ukraine

Between 1918 and 1921, there were multiple attempts to establish a capitalist Ukrainian state in the Ukrainian-majority territories of the former Czarist empire and, after the World War I defeat and collapse of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Galicia. All were short-lived.

The Ukrainian nationalists in historically Russian-held eastern Ukraine sought and received German imperialist support. However, they lost their patrons in Berlin when the Kaiser's regime collapsed due to the twin

blows of military defeat at the hands of the Allies and the November 1918 workers' revolution.

Ukraine subsequently became a major arena in the Civil War, with the revolutionary workers' and peasants' government established by the 1917 October Revolution pitted against an array of counter-revolutionary forces. These included the imperialist-backed White armies based on Russia's landlord and capitalist elite, the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, and the newly founded Polish Republic led by Pilsudski.

The Ukrainian nationalists vehemently opposed the social revolution carried out by Ukraine's workers and peasants under the leadership of the Bolsheviks and begged for imperialist patronage. Their nationalist armies carried out pogroms, as did the Whites, during the course of the Civil War in which up to 200,000 Jews were murdered.

Because they advanced a revolutionary program that addressed the fundamental social and democratic needs of the masses, the Bolsheviks, under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership, prevailed. The Red Army enforced the expropriation of the landlords, who for centuries had cruelly exploited Ukraine's majority peasant population.

The Bolsheviks were also keenly aware of the necessity of providing political support to the national-democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people, long trampled on by the Czarist regime and now by its would-be successors in the leadership of the Whites. This was not a matter of expediency. The Bolsheviks had placed the struggle against Great Russian chauvinism and for the right to self-determination for Russia's oppressed peoples at the centre of their struggle for the unity, political independence and hegemony of the working class. "Only unqualified recognition of this right," wrote Lenin in 1917, "makes it possible to advocate a free union of the Ukrainians and the Great Russians ... and actually break completely and irrevocably with this cursed Tsarist past, when everything was done to bring about a mutual estrangement of the two peoples so close to each other in language, territory and history." A document drafted by Trotsky in 1919 underscored the Bolsheviks' determined struggle on this issue. It declared, "In view of the fact that Ukrainian culture ... has for centuries been suppressed by Tsarism and the exploiting classes of Russia, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, makes it obligatory for all members of the party to help in every way to remove all obstacles to the free development of the Ukrainian language and culture." These socialist internationalist conceptions animated the founding of the Soviet Union in 1922 as a voluntary association of soviet republics, including Soviet Ukraine.

The OUN in the 1930s: The development of Ukrainian genocidal nationalism

While the OUN's fascism developed as a direct reaction against the Bolsheviks' socialist internationalist program and effort to unite the working class in a multinational socialist state, it was ideologically radicalized still further by the emergence and coming to power of fascist movements in much of Europe.

During the 1930s the OUN was headquartered in Rome, reflecting its initial affinity for the Mussolini regime. But after the coming to power of Hitler in 1933, for both ideological and geopolitical reasons, it increasingly orientated toward the Nazi regime. This was particularly true of a younger generation of leaders, of whom Stepan Bandera would prove the most influential. Leading OUN members worked with and for the intelligence agencies of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and cadre involved in its campaign of assassinations of Polish and Soviet officials were trained in Italy alongside members of the Ustasha, the Croatian fascist movement the Nazis would place in power in April 1941.

The OUN's role as Nazi henchmen in the Holocaust and application of genocidal violence against other perceived enemies of the Ukrainian nation was foreshadowed and politically prepared in the development of its ideology and discourse in the 1930s. Plans for mass murder were discussed and elaborated in the writings of OUN ideologues and at their congresses.

One such document, developed through presentations at multiple OUN congresses and other OUN gatherings, was titled "The War Doctrine of the Ukrainian Nationalists."

"Our uprising," it declared, "is not intended to change only the political order. It should cleanse Ukraine of the alien and hostile element and of our miserable element. ... the more the alien element is killed during the uprising, the easier it will be to rebuild the Ukrainian state and the stronger it will be."

It went on to advocate the mass extermination of Jews, citing a potential figure of "half a million," "because the more Jews will be killed during the uprising, the better for the Ukrainian state."

Noxious as were the politics of the OUN, its toxic brew of Ukrainian nationalism, fervent anti-Bolshevism and virulent anti-Semitism was able to gain growing support in the majority Ukrainian-inhabited region of what was then southeast Poland by exploiting the disappointment, confusion and anger created by the actions of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy. Having usurped political power from the working class, the bureaucracy repudiated the program of socialist internationalism and revived the worst traditions of Great Russian chauvinism. The Stalin regime's sudden and brutal implementation of forced collectivization in the early 1930s had a devastating impact on Soviet Ukraine.

Discussing these developments, Trotsky wrote in 1939, "In the conception of the old Bolshevik party Soviet Ukraine was destined to become a powerful axis around which the other sections of the Ukrainian people would unite. It is indisputable that in the first period of its existence Soviet Ukraine exerted a mighty attractive force, in national respects as well, and aroused to struggle the workers, peasants, and revolutionary intelligentsia of Western Ukraine enslaved by Poland. But during the years of Thermidorian reaction, the position of Soviet Ukraine and together with it the posing of the Ukrainian question as a whole changed sharply. The more profound the hopes aroused, the keener was the disillusionment. The bureaucracy strangled and plundered the people within Great Russia, too. But in the Ukraine matters were further complicated by the massacre of national hopes. Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine in the struggle against the powerful, deeply-rooted longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence. To the totalitarian bureaucracy, Soviet Ukraine became an administrative division of an economic unit and a military base of the USSR.

"... Toward the sections of the Ukraine now outside its frontiers, the Kremlin's attitude today is the same as it is toward all oppressed nationalities, all colonies, and semi-colonies, i.e., small change in its international combinations with imperialist governments."

Trotsky went on to discuss the calamitous impact that the Stalinist bureaucracy's criminal policies had had on the Ukrainian workers and peasants beyond the borders of Soviet Ukraine.

"Not a trace remains of the former confidence and sympathy of the Western Ukrainian masses for the Kremlin," he wrote. "Since the latest murderous 'purge' in the Ukraine no one in the West wants to become part of the Kremlin satrapy which continues to bear the name of Soviet Ukraine. The worker and peasant masses in the Western Ukraine, in Bukovina, in the Carpatho-Ukraine are in a state of confusion: Where to turn? What to demand? This situation naturally shifts the leadership to the most reactionary Ukrainian cliques who express their 'nationalism' by seeking to sell the Ukrainian people to one imperialism or another in

return for a promise of fictitious independence. Upon this tragic confusion Hitler bases his policy in the Ukrainian question.”

The first phase of World War II in Eastern Europe and the split in the OUN

Only a few months after Trotsky wrote these words, Stalin’s counter-revolutionary maneuvering with the imperialist powers would culminate in what arguably was the most cynical and politically reprehensible “combination” of them all—one that directly impacted the Ukrainian masses and strengthened reaction the world over—the Hitler-Stalin Pact.

On September 1, 1939, nine days after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Nazi Germany invaded Poland triggering the outbreak of World War II. OUN cadres in Poland, principally Bandera’s faction, supported the Nazi invaders by carrying out acts of sabotage against Polish military forces. They also carried out ethnically motivated attacks on Polish civilians, killing, according to one estimate, 3,000 people. Even John Armstrong, an American political scientist who helped the Ukrainian fascists sanitize their record by labeling them “integral nationalists,” conceded that the OUN served as a “faithful German auxiliary” from the very start of the war.

When Stalin, enacting the secret protocols of his pact with Hitler, ordered the Red Army to invade eastern Poland, the OUN forces fled into Nazi-occupied Poland. Cracow soon became the centre of Ukrainian far-right activity. This was because it was the seat of the General Government, the part of Nazi-occupied Poland not annexed to the Third Reich and the administrative center for the Polish Ukrainian borderlands now under Nazi rule.

The more conservative faction of the OUN loyal to Andriy Melnyk organized a Ukrainian Central Committee (UTsK) that successfully petitioned the General Government for recognition as a mechanism for interacting with and controlling the Ukrainian-speaking population. The Nazi authorities viewed the local population through the prism of their racist ideology and hierarchy. But they also recognized the value of the UTsK as a means of exploiting and inciting ethnic tensions, so the Poles and Ukrainians “never come together”—to use the words of Hans Frank, the Munich Beer Hall putsch veteran Hitler installed as head of the General Government.

Led by Volodymyr Kubyovych, a hitherto obscure Ukrainian geographer, the UTsK was officially a “social welfare” organization, as the Nazis dissolved all non-Nazi political organizations. The UTsK was, in fact, deeply political, and its leaders saw the Nazi takeover as an opportunity for expanded influence and also for revenge against their ethnic and political “enemies.”

The Melnyk faction urged OUN members to integrate themselves into the Nazi regime’s military-security apparatus. Its focus, however, was on working within the political and administrative structures established by the Nazi-occupied General Government. Those around Bandera, now liberated from a Polish jail cell, on the other hand, focused on embedding themselves into the repressive apparatus and military machine of the Nazis.

Soon after their conquest of Poland, the Nazis recruited 120 members of the OUN for training at a Gestapo police school at Zakopane under two German officers. The commander of the Ukrainians was Mykola Lebed, who would later become head of the OUN (B)’s ruthless SB security services and after the war a lifelong CIA asset. Subsequently, one of Bandera’s closest associates, Roman Shukhevych, became the leading Ukrainian officer of the Nachtigall Battalion, one of two battalions composed largely of Bandera supporters set up by the Abwehr, German

military intelligence. The future commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Shukhevych, and the Nachtigall Battalion that he helped direct were involved in the massacre of thousands of Jews in western Ukraine between June and July 1941.

Differences over how best to secure and make use of Nazi support in realizing their goal of a Ukrainian state and an ethnically cleansed “Ukraine for Ukrainians” led in February 1940 to a formal split, with the rival groupings named after their respective leaders, each of whom fashioned himself as a führer—the OUN (M) and OUN (B).

Hitler’s cheerleaders and accomplices: The record of the OUN-led Ukrainian Central Committee and *Krakivski Visti*

By December 1939, Poland’s Nazi occupiers were so satisfied with the UTsK’s protestations of support that they allowed it to establish a publishing house, using a printing press stolen from a Cracow-based Jewish newspaper, *Nowy Dziennik*, whose owners were later murdered at the Belzec death camp.

The UTsK quickly established its own newspaper, *Krakivski Visti* (Cracow News). It was the only Ukrainian-language newspaper sanctioned within the General Government and by all accounts the most influential Ukrainian newspaper in Nazi-ruled Europe until the Third Reich’s impending collapse forced it to cease publication at the end of March 1945.

Launched on Orthodox Christmas Day, January 7, 1940, *Krakivski Visti* became a daily from November 1940. Mykhailo Chomiak, the maternal grandfather of Canada’s Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, was editor-in-chief for all but a handful of *Krakivski Visti*’s initial issues, as the German occupation authorities had removed his predecessor for being insufficiently pliant.

Chomiak would be handsomely rewarded for churning out pro-Nazi propaganda and personally benefited from the dispossession of Poland’s Jews. He was given a luxury apartment in the Pugetów Palace at 15 Starowiślna, stolen by the Nazis from “the Jew Dr. Finkelstein” along with the doctor’s furniture. Chomiak discreetly described the latter as being “handed down to me” when he moved to a second stolen apartment. On September 19, 1940, Freeland’s beloved grandfather sent a letter to the Treuhandstelle—the predatory German state agency officially charged with stripping Jews of their property—demanding he be reimbursed for the 190 zloty he had spent to “delouse” this second apartment. Only three days prior, all confiscated Jewish properties in the General Government officially came under the control of the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost. Thus Chomiak seems to have very much been at the head of the line for the spoils of the Holocaust in Cracow.

Under Chomiak and the UTsK’s direction, *Krakivski Visti* extolled the virtues of Nazi rule and Nazi-Ukrainian collaboration. It regularly reproduced articles from the Nazi German press, including the official Nazi organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. *Krakivski Visti* would proclaim the launching of the Nazi war of annihilation against the Soviet Union in June 1941 “the most justified war in history” and later promoted the creation of an all-Ukrainian division of the Waffen SS.

From its very first issues, *Krakivski Visti* engaged in anti-Jewish incitement, publishing virulent anti-Semitic screeds and caricatures, and pressing for the seizure of Jewish property.

Further evidence of the Ukrainian fascists’ eager collaboration with the Nazis and their attempts to profiteer from the persecution, dispossession and subsequent annihilation of the Jews of Poland and Ukraine is documented in thousands of pages of UTsK correspondence with the German authorities.

In *Krakivski Visti*'s inaugural issue, we read the following analysis from none other than General Hans Frank of the new conditions of life for Ukrainians under Nazi rule:

Free from the compulsion of the outrageous policy of your intellectual, ruling class, do everything for your good by fulfilling the general duty to work under the powerful protection of Greater Germany. Under just rule, everyone will earn a living. However, for political instigators, economic hyenas and Jewish moneylenders, there will be no place in the space under German supremacy.

On the opposite page there is a fascist propaganda photo of Ukrainians in "national dress" presenting Frank with bread and salt, a traditional offering of hospitality. This image, more than any other, sets the tone for the UTsK's relationship with the Nazi state and that of the Ukrainian nationalists with imperialism more generally.

Krakivski Visti routinely emphasized the parallels between, and common aims, of the Nazi German and Ukrainian nationalist causes and struggle. It urged Ukrainians to both learn from Germany's purported Hitler-led national revival and to look to them as allies and protectors in dealing mortal blows to the "enemies" of the Ukrainian nation—the Russo-Bolsheviks, Poles and Jews.

Posing the question "What is the war in the west about?" Chomiak and the OUN (M) Ukrainian fascists provided the following answer:

The war in the west was the result of the same incitement and dissension that sowed and sought to perpetuate forever the Soviet settlement dictated to the world in 1918. We Ukrainians were also its victims and the subject of experiments. ... Germany fought against this system of organized violence, and we, Ukrainians, also fought in unusually difficult circumstances. Hence the spontaneous and sincere response of mutual sympathy between those who will stand up to the struggle against what was not and could not be right: Existence against the arbitrariness organized in Versailles. We watched with sympathy as German victory, in cooperation with the able-bodied peoples broke the shackles step by step, as the German people gained sovereignty in their own homeland...

On April 24, 1940, *Krakivski Visti* paid tribute to Adolf Hitler on the occasion of his birthday, with a glowing portrait that characterized him as a "Great Figure of the 20th Century."

Again the link between Hitler's military re-conquest of territories lost to Germany as the result of World War I and the unification of all ethnic Germans under a single national state was promoted as an example for Ukrainian nationalists to follow:

He revived the sense of national community in all Germans living in the world and united them in one native idea and organization. ... He threw off the shackles of the infamous Treaty of Versailles, revived the German armed forces on land, sea and air in unprecedented proportions, and gradually, but with iron consistency and steadfastness took back all the once lost lands and provinces: Porurja, Austria, Sudetenland and then the Czech Republic...

Anti-Jewish incitement and plunder

In its sixth issue, published January 25, 1940, *Krakivski Visti* featured on its front page a campaign against speculation undertaken by the Nazi authorities. Titled "Death Penalty for Speculators," it was accompanied by a vicious anti-Semitic cartoon.

This campaign served as the pretext to seize the assets of Jews in Krakow, so they could be appropriated by the Treuhandstelle, the agency that later provided *Krakivski Visti*'s editor with his palatial apartment. From January to March 1940, the Nazi authorities forced Jews in Krakow to register all property and assets. The anti-Semitic caricature published by *Krakivski Visti* would have circulated in Krakow at the height of this campaign. Many thousands of people would have seen it. Its caption makes the link between the anti-speculation drive and the Nazi campaign to remove the Jewish people from economic life perfectly clear: "No Mrs Speculators ... you will not earn a living under my roof."

In the same issue, we find a story about the newly formed Ukrainian Cooperative Bank. It informs us that:

During the Polish-Jewish rule, Ukrainians had to face difficult obstacles at every step, which were very difficult to stop, and then completely overshadowed the development of our lives in every area, especially in the economic area. ... Everywhere, in purely Ukrainian neighborhoods, we saw only a Jew, a Pole, a Jew and once again a Jew. The Jews were the singers who in our villages and towns completely mastered the economic life and in a terrible way, exploited the Ukrainian poor. ... Vital conditions have changed. ... In the princely garden of Sanok ... [shop signs] are in Ukrainian, German and Polish. However, we still see, unfortunately, many five-armed stars of Zion and the inscription "Jewish shop." In the center of the city we also see a new sign with the inscription "Ukrainian Cooperative Bank."

The OUN (M)-led Ukrainian Central Committee and its organ, *Krakivski Visti*, would show great interest in promoting the Ukrainian "cooperative movement," which flourished on the basis of properties expropriated by the Nazi authorities through Treuhandstelle and re-allotted to grasping Ukrainian petty bourgeois. Many of these businesses in turn purchased ads in *Krakivski Visti*.

While the Nazis sought to overcome the crisis of German capitalism through military conquest, the Ukrainian fascists sought to enrich themselves and compensate for the historic weakness of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie through Nazi-enforced racial ethnic plunder. Just as they hoped to carve out a political space for themselves by serving the Third Reich, so the OUN sought to expand Ukrainian capitalism by collaborating with the Nazis and pleading for a share of the booty plundered from their ethnic rivals.

Krakivski Visti's 35th issue, published on May 4, 1940, declared in a celebratory tone, "Ukrainian private merchants took over all the best shops in the former Jewish market."

Krakivski Visti's anti-Jewish incitement drew on traditional anti-Semitic tropes as well as the more recently developed and expressly fascist Judeo-Bolshevik pathogen. On Easter 1940, *Krakivski Visti* informed its readers that "Christ is Risen" and that Jews had been responsible for his crucifixion, repeating the medieval incitement to pogroms. In 1943, while campaigning for the creation of the "Galicia division" of the Waffen-SS, the newspaper edited by Freeland's grandfather published a series of tirades against the Jews, many of which promoted the Judeo-Bolshevik

canard. Among them was a piece by the writer and future émigré to Canada, Olena Kysilevska. Titled “Who Ruined the Hutsul Region?” it is ostensibly about the southeasternmost part of the Carpathian mountains. The article’s subheadings are an indictment: “How Jews destroyed Hutsul wealth ... How Jews threw out the Hutsul from his home ... How Jews destroyed carpet making ... Jews and the spreading of Bolshevism...” According to Kysilevska, all was not lost, however. Writing in the midst of the Holocaust, she concluded her anti-Semitic tirade with the observation that “Jews are now gone from the Carpathian mountains.”

Through the pages of *Krakovski Visti*, the Ukrainian fascists also promoted virulent anti-Russian and anti-Polish ethnic chauvinism.

They welcomed the expansion of the Treuhandstelle’s mandate to include the seizure of Polish-owned businesses and properties. In a November 1941 intelligence report based on his eyewitness observations, the former United States Vice Consul in Poland drew attention to the privileged position some Ukrainians had been able to secure in German-occupied Poland through collaboration with the Nazi authorities:

The Ukrainian element in Poland constitutes a privileged class ... and can obtain food from German stores on cards identical with those of Reich and Volksdeutsch. They are employed in German offices in Cracow, Warsaw and in the provincial districts. A large number are Treuhänders (officials appointed to manage) ... industrial and commercial firms confiscated from the Jews.

In an unmistakable reference to *Krakovski Visti*, the US diplomat added, “The Ukrainian press in Poland is loud in its praise of Hitler and the Nazis.” He also noted the large numbers of Ukrainians employed in the Nazi security apparatus—positions they had frequently been instructed to assume by the Ukrainian fascists. “It is well known that most of the jails in the southern part of the General Government are staffed by Ukrainians. They treat the Poles even more harshly than do the Germans. They are given instruction in special police schools ...”

Krakovski Visti published a series of articles in 1943-44 decrying the “denationalizing” impact of mixed marriages between Ukrainians and Poles. Their fellow Ukrainian fascists and bitter rivals in Bandera’s UPA would contemporaneously provide their own horrific “solution” to the “latynnyky” problem. During their ethnic cleansing operations targeting Poles, they demanded Ukrainians kill their Polish spouses.

The June 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union provided new opportunities for the Ukrainian fascists to profit from the persecution, dispossession and destruction of Poland’s and Ukraine’s Jewish population.

In the weeks immediately after Operation Barbarossa’s launch, the head of the OUN (M)-dominated UTsK and *Krakovski Visti*’s publisher, Volodymyr Kubyovych, submitted documents to the Hitler regime setting out plans for the forced removal of Jews and Poles from Galicia, and the creation of an ethnic “Ukrainische Volksgemeinschaft,” or “Ukrainian People’s Community,” on the Nazi model.

The German authorities recorded the UTsK’s demands, with their own commentary:

In order to preserve the Ukrainian settlement area in the General Government, the Ukrainians are asking for the borders of the Ukrainian area to be fixed, into which Polish and Jewish evacuees should not be deployed. In addition, they ask for Polish and Jewish elements to be removed from these areas...

Ukrainians were to be identified as distinct from Poles and Jews, and thus to be treated distinctly under the law, based on a separate identity card, or “Kennkarte.” This was a measure to which the Nazi authorities readily agreed.

On August 29, 1941, Kubyovych wrote to Hans Frank setting out additional demands for the seizure of Jewish land:

Considering that all Jewish property originally belonged, for the most part, to the Ukrainian people and only through ruthless law breaking on the part of the Jews and through their exploitation of members of the Ukrainian people did it pass into Jewish possession, we deem it a requirement of justice, in order to make restitutions to the Ukrainian people for moral and material damages, that a very considerable portion of confiscated Jewish property be returned to the Ukrainian people. In particular, all Jewish holdings should be given to Ukrainian peasants.

A report from the General Government in 1941 describes the “success” of the Ukrainian cooperatives established in the space formerly occupied by Jewish businesses. Page 3 of the document “What the Ukrainians in the General Government expect from the Ukrainian cooperative system” notes:

The elimination of Judaism from trade both in the towns and in the villages has given the Ukrainian people the opportunity to replace the missing trade apparatus with trade cooperatives. In this regard, the Ukrainian cooperative system achieved great results even before the war in East Galicia, in which it was able, through national solidarity, to gradually push Judaism first out of trade and then out of industry on a large scale.

What is left out of this account is that Jews were “pushed out of industry” into ghettos and concentration camps, then subsequently into gas chambers or before firing squads. The pushing was aided and abetted by the Ukrainian fascists, as was much of the killing. Seized Jewish property was transformed into these “Ukrainian cooperative societies,” which grew from 200 in 1939 to more than 900 by 1941. The extent to which the UTsK’s policies facilitated the seizure and exploitation of stolen Polish and Jewish property is a subject which has yet to be fully examined by historians. Even absent a deeper historical investigation, it is clear that *Krakovski Visti*’s role cannot be considered without reference to these plans promoted by its publisher.

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As we explained in the first part of this series, when Freeland’s political ancestry was publicly exposed in 2017, the political establishment and corporate media rushed to defend Canada’s deputy prime minister with the claim that she was the target of a “Russian disinformation campaign.”

As part of its defence of Freeland, the media sought to minimize the import of her grandfather’s actions as a prominent Nazi collaborator. Two scholarly articles authored decades ago by Chomiak’s historian son-in-law, in one case with Freeland’s assistance, were dredged up so as to make the claim that *Krakovski Visti* did not agitate against the Jews, apart from two regrettable instances.

According to this exculpatory argument, the first of these instances came in July 1941, and was triggered by the discovery of several thousand prisoners whom agents of the NKVD, the Stalinist regime’s secret police, murdered as they fled before Operation Barbarossa’s initial thrust. This crime was seized on by the Nazis and their allies to incite, justify, and

expand the mass anti-Jewish violence already well under way. The July 8, 1941 issue of *Krakivski Visti* declared of the NKVD massacre, 'We lay this all to the account of the Jewish potentates in the Kremlin, whose crimes against the whole world will find appropriate retribution.' The reputed second and final instance of a *Krakivski Visti* campaign of anti-Semitic incitement was a series of articles published in 1943 expressly commissioned by a Nazi press officer. They include the previously discussed article by Kysilevska, "Who Ruined the Hutsul Region?"

Given all the information we have presented above—and it is only a partial and preliminary account—it hardly seems necessary to answer the manifestly false claim that *Krakivski Visti* "only" twice incited virulent hatred for the Jews from its editorial offices in Krakow some 60 kilometres from the gas chambers at Auschwitz!

However, the two articles from the 1990s that have formed the basis of this claim were authored by the noted historian John-Paul Himka. Himka, who also happens to be Freeland's uncle, would readily admit his views about the Ukrainian fascists have evolved considerably since the mid-1990s, when serious historical research into their activities and the Holocaust in the Ukraine was only in its initial stages. Himka has himself done much to expose the horrific crimes of Stepan Bandera, his OUN (B) and the UPA, including in his recently published *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944*. We will have occasion to cite this work in Part 3, as we examine the activities of the Ukrainian fascists during the war of extermination against the USSR. Over the past quarter-century Himka has had to take issue with parts of his own previous scholarly writing that served to cast the Banderaites as fighter for national liberation. "I know the legend well," he wrote in a 2010 polemic, "because I helped promote it."

It is not to Himka's credit that he has failed to challenge the attempt to downplay *Krakivski Visti*'s role and thereby cast Chomiak's granddaughter, Freeland, who continues to publicly venerate him and routinely employs UPA symbols and rituals, in a better light. But whatever Himka's political limitations and moral failings, they do not begin to explain, let alone account for, the Canadian establishment's hostility towards any serious probing of Freeland's political ancestry. Nor do they account for its silence about the actions of the OUN fascists, who are celebrated by the state-sponsored UCC and by the contemporary Ukrainian far-right forces that Canadian imperialism has allied with in preparing, instigating and now waging war in Ukraine.

Our investigation demonstrates that the dispossession, displacement and outright destruction of Ukraine's substantial Jewish minority was an important element in the ideology and program of both wings of the Ukrainian fascist OUN and their plans to create, in alliance with Nazi-led German imperialism, a powerful Ukrainian nation-state and capitalist ruling elite.

To be continued



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