

Canadian imperialism's fascist friends—Part 3: The role of the OUN and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in the Nazi war on the USSR and the Holocaust

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21 May 2022

[PART ONE] [PART TWO] [PART THREE] [PART FOUR][PART FIVE]

This is the third in a five-part series. The first part introduced Canadian imperialism's long-standing alliance with far-right Ukrainian nationalism. Part two investigated the origins of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi record of Krakivski Visti, which was edited by Mikhailo Chomiak, the grandfather of Canada's Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. Part four will examine how the Canadian state provided a safe haven to the Nazis' fascist OUN (M) and OUN (B) collaborators, assisted them in whitewashing their crimes, and used them and far-right Ukrainian nationalism as instruments of its imperialist foreign and domestic policy.

Although bitterly divided over how to most effectively cooperate with the Nazis in bringing about an “independent Ukraine,” the rival Melnyk and Bandera wings of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists—respectively the OUN (M) and OUN (B)—hailed and participated in the Nazi's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union and served as the Nazis' henchman in the Holocaust.

The Nazi invasion of the USSR was conceived of, from the start, as a “war of extermination” aimed at establishing German imperialist domination over colonies stretching to the Urals. It was characterized by unprecedented brutality and savagery. Under the “Generalplan Ost,” developed by state institutions and the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin, the peoples living in Eastern Europe or Russia were to be exterminated or transformed into colonial slaves. As the bloody violence unleashed by this crusade gathered pace, Hitler and his closest collaborators moved in late 1941 to implement their “final solution” for Europe's Jews, i.e., the planned and systematic extermination of 6 million people in the Holocaust.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), other contemporary right and far-right Ukrainian nationalists who promote, defend and whitewash the OUN, and their imperialist sponsors in Ottawa, Washington, London and Berlin make a series of self-serving, utterly fantastic claims about the OUN's record in World War II. All of them are a pack of lies.

They claim that the OUN and the Banderite Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) were a “national liberation movement.” In reality, they were fascists, subservient to Nazi Germany and later to British and US imperialism. They claim the OUN and UPA fought “both the Nazis and the Soviets.” This despite the Ukrainian fascists having eagerly served in the June 1941 invasion of the USSR and their having continued to fight the Soviets, either directly under Nazi command or in coordination with them, until they were forced to flee in 1945 to the final Nazi redoubts in Vienna, Munich and elsewhere.

In particular the UCC and Ukrainian far-right venerate the genocidal record of the UPA—a force whose leadership and fighters were largely comprised of fascists who, under Bandera's orders, had previously served the Third Reich's war machine and the SS. Finally, the present-day defenders of the Ukrainian fascists claim that they played no part in the Holocaust. Were we not speaking of the extermination of well over 1 million Ukrainian Jews, this would be laughable. Numerous OUN documents and publications, during and even well before the outbreak of World War II, advocated mass violence against the Jews. Recent historical research has documented in chilling detail the OUN and UPA cadres' participation in the Holocaust—including in the rounding up of Jews, their mass slaughter and the staffing of the death camps—as well as the murder of more than 100,000 Poles in ethnic cleansing operations and tens of thousands of Soviet Russian and Ukrainian partisans. The greater the evidence against the Ukrainian fascists, the louder their contemporary defenders scream. But they cannot cry loud enough to silence objective historical facts.

Canadian historian John Paul Himka, himself once a promoter of the myth of Bandera as “national liberation fighter” and a life-long liberal promoter of one form or another of Ukrainian national identity politics, has been forced to admit, through a confrontation with these facts, that the OUN was a criminal organization which participated in the genocide of European Jewry and in the ethnic cleansing of Poles. In his recent book, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944*, Himka summarizes the OUN-UPA role in the Holocaust:

There were three major phases in which the nationalists contributed to the mass murder. ...

First, militias organized by OUN were key actors in the anti-Jewish violence of the summer of 1941, in the immediate aftermath of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The militias arrested Jews in order to subject them to forced labour, humiliation and murder; thousands of those arrested were executed by German units, mainly Einsatzgruppe C and Waffen SS Division “Wiking.” The Ukrainian nationalist militias assembled the Jews for the German's violence, since they could identify Jews more easily than the invaders and knew the localities, including the Jewish neighbourhoods in the cities. Sometimes the violence was accompanied by bloody public spectacles, as in the pogroms unleashed in Lviv and Zolochiv in early July 1941; sometimes the OUN militias murdered selected Jews and their families more

discreetly, and sometimes they just murdered all the Jews in the village.

Second, OUN recruited for and infiltrated the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in Galicia and the stationary Schutzmannschaften in Volhynia. These police units provided the indispensable manpower for the Holocaust. They rounded up Jews for deportation to the death camp at Belzec or for execution by shooting; although most of the actual killing was done by Germans, the Ukrainian policemen also killed in certain circumstances. These liquidations took place primarily from early 1942 to the middle of 1943.

Third, early in 1943 thousands of these Ukrainian policemen deserted from German service to join the OUN-led nationalist insurgency. Possessed of some military training and familiarity with both weapons and killing, they took leadership positions in UPA. As soon as the former policemen joined them, UPA launched a massive ethnic cleansing project, at first in Volhynia and later in Galicia. Although it was primarily directed against Poles, there were other non-Ukrainian victims. In the winter of 1943-44, as the Red Army moved westward, UPA lured surviving Jews out of their hiding places in the forests, temporarily placed them in labor camps, and then murdered them.

The Ukrainian fascists and Operation Barbarossa

The rival wings of the OUN mobilized thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of their cadres and supporters to actively participate in Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union launched on June 22, 1941. They did so in multiple forms. In the months leading up to Operation Barbarossa's launch, German military intelligence set up two Ukrainian battalions staffed mainly, if not exclusively, by OUN (B) supporters. The lead Ukrainian officer of the Nachtigall Battalion was, as we noted in Part 2, the close Bandera associate Roman Shukhevych, who would later become the military commander of the UPA.

Both the OUN (M) and (B) set up *prohidny hruppy* (task forces) that supported and followed the Nazi armies as they advanced into Soviet Ukraine. Many of them rapidly assumed "police" functions, that is suppressing the population, ferreting out supporters of the Soviet regime, and rounding up and killing Jews. The OUN (B) also formed a "Ukrainian People's Militia," a paramilitary force that worked behind the advancing German lines assisting the SS and the Einsatzgruppen death squads.

Krakivski Visti—the daily published by the OUN (M)-aligned Ukrainian Central Committee and edited by Chrystia Freeland's grandfather, Mikhailo Chomiak—was all but delirious in the June 23, 1941 issue announcing the launching of what it called a "holy war" against the "antichrist."

Under the heading "The Most Justified War in History," *Krakivski Visti* declared:

"Never before in history has there been a more just war than the war started by German troops on Sunday, June 22, 1941. The war that has begun today is something like a huge crusade for the liberation of man, for the liberation of nations, with liberation of the whole world from the terrible ghost of the antichrist. ... Today, the German Führer will be the savior of all the peoples enslaved by Red Moscow ... the blood of German soldiers who had already died and will continue to die a heroic death in THIS holy war will become the foundation of a new future for all the liberated peoples of Eastern Europe, Western Asia, and all mankind."

As the Nazis set Operation Barbarossa in motion, both the OUN (M) and (B) were busy making plans for a greater role for themselves in a Nazi-

led "New Europe."

On June 10, 1941, 12 days before the Nazi invasion, *Krakivski Visti* publisher and the Ukrainian Central Committee (UTsK) head Volodymyr Kubyovych wrote a letter to Adolf Hitler outlining the OUN (M)'s plan for a fascist Ukrainian state under the Third Reich's tutelage.

In his letter he called for:

"A 'Führer' state

"Going back to the tradition of the Ukrainian 'Hetman' state, the future Ukrainian state will have an authoritarian constitution. The executive power will be concentrated in the hands of a Führer, (Vozhd).

"One Party State

"As an advisory body, the leadership of the political party and the advisory board made up of representatives of the various corporations will be available to assist him. A national party will be the only form of political organization in full and will form the basis of the state order as well as the single factor of national education and the organization of community life. ...

"Economy

"... Like the leadership, the administration and the economy will also be organized in an authoritarian manner."

Hitler and the Nazis were not about to create a "Ukrainian state," even one led by a "Vozhd" as slavishly obedient as Kubyovych. They were, however, amenable to his proposal that Western Galicia be included in the territories of the General Government once it was occupied by the Nazi invaders. This allowed the UTsK to expand its operations into part of the Ukrainian heartland.

Ukrainian "independence" in bondage to Nazi-led German imperialism

According to the OUN (B)'s own account, the OUN-staffed Nachtigall Battalion of the German army reached Lviv on June 30, 1941, "and OUN leaders headed by Yaroslav Stetsko declared the restoration of Ukrainian statehood and formed a government."

To this day, the Ukrainian fascists and their defenders and apologists celebrate the "Akt Proholoshenia Ukrainskoi Derzhavy" (Proclamation of Ukrainian State Power) that Stetsko pronounced at a gathering in Lviv, on the same day a horrific pogrom against the city's Jewish population began, as a "declaration of independence."

The proclamation is seldom quoted in full by Bandera's Ukrainian nationalist apologizers. Because it would only serve to further underline that having arrived in Ukraine as eager participants in the Nazi war of extermination against the Soviet Union, they were not declaring Ukraine's independence but its vassalage to Nazi-led German imperialism.

A short text that does not even use the word independence, the proclamation pledges that the "Ukrainian state power" will "cooperate closely with National Socialist Great Germany, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, to create a new order in Europe and the world ... and to strongly cooperate with the German army against the Muscovite occupation. ..."

The Banderites were clearly trying to emulate their fellow fascist allies in Slovakia, where the Hlinka Guard had formed a government under Nazi tutelage, and the Croatian Ustase, with which the OUN leaders had trained in the 1930s, who had been granted their own fascist puppet state.

Seeing the operational usefulness of the OUN-B terrorists, sections of the Wehrmacht (German military) welcomed the Lviv proclamation, and a group of Wehrmacht officers present when Stetsko made it reportedly cheered. But Hitler saw the vast fertile lands of Ukraine as too vital to his

racialist-fascist project of creating Lebensraum for the Germans to allow any form of a Ukrainian state.

On July 5, 1941, Bandera was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Berlin. Stetsko, who had named himself Ukraine's "Prime Minister," followed a week later. While detained in Berlin, Bandera and Stetsko continued to enjoy political freedom. Bandera's correspondence, some of it marked "Secret," continued. Bandera and Stetsko were released on July 14, and continued to negotiate with the Nazi regime, proposing various projects to different Nazi military and police organs. In a grovelling August 3, 1941 "letter of protest" to Hitler regarding Galicia's separation from the rest of Ukraine and incorporation into the General Government, which was itself in part a reaction to the OUN-B's proclamation, Bandera affirmed his "deepest respect" for Hitler as a fellow "nationalist of the Western Mark."

Stetsko, for his part affirmed that a Ukraine under their governance would function as a national forced labor camp for Nazi Germany: "I know," he wrote, "that the reconstruction of a sovereign and united Ukrainian state is possible only with (Nazi) Germany's victory ... we uphold the complete economic support of Germany by Ukraine with all available means ..."

It was the Banderites' assassination of Mykola Stisiborskyi, a rival leader and ideologue of the OUN (M), the Nazis' other Ukrainian fascist allies, that caused the Nazis to again detain Bandera and Stetsko.

The OUN's supporters and apologists like to paint the "custody" of Stetsko and Bandera as something equivalent to the kind of brutal imprisonment the Nazis (and OUN!) meted out to communists, Jews, Roma and political prisoners. OUN pamphlets speak ominously of the "concentration camps" into which Stetsko and Bandera were put.

In reality, the OUN (B) leaders were held in "Sonder und Ehrenhaft," a special and privileged status of detention the Nazis reserved for diplomats and heads of state. Moreover, they were allowed to continue to correspond with their followers embedded in the Nazi repressive apparatus, although the Nazis took steps to tighten their surveillance and control by integrating OUN militia and task force members into Ukrainian police units.

While in custody, Stetsko produced a document to which Ukrainian nationalists do not like to refer, his "Zhitiypys" or "Life story." It further attests to OUN's support for the extermination of the Jews and fascist character.

"I consider Marxism," wrote Stetsko, "to be a product of the Jewish mind, which however, has been applied in practice in the Muscovite prison of peoples by the Muscovite-Asiatic people with the assistance of Jews. Moscow and Jewry are Ukraine's greatest enemies and bearers of corrupting Bolshevik international ideas. I fully appreciate the undeniably harmful and hostile role of the Jews, who are helping Moscow to enslave Ukraine ... I therefore support the destruction of the Jews and the expedience of bringing German methods of exterminating Jewry to Ukraine."

Because we are speaking of such grave matters, it must be emphasized that Stetsko used the words "*vinisheniya*"—destruction—and "*eksterminatsii zhidivstve*"—extermination of Jewry.

In another passage, Stetsko forthrightly expounds the Ukrainian nationalists' implacable opposition to and hatred of socialism and democracy:

"I co-created the ideology and program of the Organization (OUN) as completely hostile to Marxism, democracy, and all class-based ideologies and programs. Politically, I support authoritarian, single-party system in Ukraine. In the social sphere, I support national solidarism, which is close to the National Socialist (Nazi) program, but mine differs in the particular features of the Ukrainian land ..."

Stetsko—who would succeed Bandera, on the latter's death, as head of the OUN (B)—was not telling the Nazis what he thought they wanted to hear to get out of prison, for which he volunteered. He was simply stating

to his Nazi captors and patrons the already established policy of the OUN (B).

Borotba I diialnist OUN pidchas vinny (Struggle and Activities of the OUN in Wartime)—an OUN (B) document prepared as a guide to the Ukrainian fascist *prohidny hurupy* (task forces) that supported and followed the Nazi armies as they invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941—explicitly sanctioned mass murder: "At a time of chaos and confusion, liquidation of undesirable Polish, Muscovite and Jewish activists is permitted, especially supporters of Jewish-Muscovite imperialism."

This document, which contemporary fascists supporters of the OUN continue to cite, further states:

"Once the OUN establishes a government, it is to be based upon the following social principles:

"The national minorities are divided into a) those that are friendly to us ... and b) those that are hostile to us—Muscovites, Poles and Jews ...

"Re: a) Have the same rights as Ukrainians ...

"Re: b) Destruction in the struggle, especially those who defended the regime: deportation to their homelands, destruction, especially of the intelligentsia, which should not be allowed to hold any administrative positions. In general, we make it impossible to produce an intelligentsia that has access to schools, etc. For example, the so-called Polish peasants are to be assimilated, making them understand from the outset ... that they are Ukrainians, only forcibly assimilated to the Latin rite. Leaders are to be destroyed. Jews are to be isolated and removed from administrative positions so as to prevent sabotage. If, for example, there is an absolute need to retain a Jew in the economic administration, one of our militiamen should be placed over him and he should be liquidated for the slightest transgressions. Only Ukrainians and not foreign enemies can be leaders in the various branches of life. Assimilation of Jews is forbidden."

Working alongside and within the Nazi security forces, the Ukrainian fascists of both factions of the OUN put these genocidal notions into practice in pursuit of their goal of establishing a "Ukraine for the Ukrainians"—that is an ethnically "pure" Ukrainian state.

The Nachtigall Battalion and OUN (B) auxiliary groups participated in two murderous sprees in Lviv in 1941, from June 30 to July 3, and again from July 25 to 29, in which up to 9,000 of Lviv's Jews were murdered by Nazis and Ukrainian fascists. Similar pogroms occurred in Ternopil, Kremianets, Zolochiv and Zboriv. These murder campaigns led to much larger mass shootings. Organized by the Einsatzgruppen death squads with the assistance and participation of OUN militia and police auxiliaries, they killed more than 50,000 people in the summer of 1941.

University of Ottawa political scientist Ivan Katchanovski, who has extensively researched and documented the dominant role former Ukrainian police and auxiliary forces involved in the slaughter of Jews played in the UPA, also points to the involvement of OUN (M)-led police in some of the most horrific crimes, including the September 1941 shooting of 34,000 Jews at Babi Yar in Kiev.

Many OUN (B) members who played a leading role in the auxiliary police units, including the infamous Mykola Lebed, received training in torture and other "skills" at German military and police schools run by the Gestapo and the SS. Lebed, who would go on to head the OUN (B)'s ruthless SB security services, commanded the group of 120 Ukrainians recruited by the Nazis for training at the Zakopane Gestapo training school immediately following their invasion of Poland in 1939. After the war, he was a lifelong CIA asset, who ran the "Prolog" propaganda publishing house in the United States.

His training at the Zakopane Gestapo school involved the random selection of innocent Jews for hands-on torture and murder. An OUN-B defector, Mykyta Kosakivsky, would confess decades later how he witnessed Lebed "enter some Jewish home ... grab a Jew, and bring him to the Unit ..." Gestapo officers taught "the proper methods of interrogation."

“[T]o induce the innocent Jew to confess that he had raped an Aryan woman, the German officers beat and tortured him, using their fists, a sword and iron bars. When he was bloody from head to toe, they applied salt and flame to his wounds ...” Later the Gestapo commander “Rosenbaum beat the Jew again with an iron pipe and Lebid (sic) too assisted in that heroic action.”

The Ukrainian fascists’ response to the turn in the war against the Nazis

The twin defeats of Hitler’s armies at Stalingrad in the fall/winter of 1942-1943 and the Battle of Kursk in the summer of 1943 caused both the rival factions of the Ukrainian fascists to make opportunistic and cynical tactical shifts.

In the spring of 1943, the OUN (M) began mobilizing its supporters to form a Ukrainian unit of the Waffen SS. Prior to the crisis prompted by the defeat at Stalingrad, the Nazis had restricted entry into the Waffen SS to “pure Aryans.” As the only Ukrainian-language publication allowed in the Nazi General Government, *Krakivski Visti*, under Chomiak’s editorship, played a crucial role in this campaign.

On May 16, 1943, *Krakivski Visti* published the following appeal from Kubyovych:

“The long-awaited moment has arrived when the Ukrainian people will again have the opportunity to come out with gun in hand to do battle against its most grievous foe—Bolshevism. The Führer of the Greater German Reich has agreed to the formation of a separate Ukrainian volunteer military unit under the name of SS Infantry Division ‘Galicia.’ ... You must stand shoulder to shoulder with the invincible German army and destroy, once and for all, the Bolshevik beast ...”

Kubyovych himself became the Waffen SS Division Galizien’s first official member, swearing an oath to the Waffen SS and to the SS’s head Heinrich Himmler.

Krakivski Visti accompanied its recruitment campaign for the Waffen-SS with a foul torrent of anti-Semitic articles. German Press chief Emil Gasner demanded that these articles should be authored by Ukrainians, as opposed to the many reprints of German anti-Semitic content that the paper regularly published. These articles would serve to underline Ukrainian support for the Waffen SS recruitment campaign. Several volunteers stepped up, including Oleksander Mokh, who would later go on to a publishing career in Toronto. But before his immigration, his contributions to world literature consisted of such titles as “How the Jews are Depraving Europe,” “How They (the Jews) helped the Bolsheviks” and “Conscience and Sodom,” published in May and June 1943. These contributions are conspicuously absent from his biography in the “Encyclopedia of Ukraine,” which was edited by none other than Kubyovych himself and would ultimately come to be sponsored by the University of Alberta’s Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.

The Waffen SS 14th or Galicia Division was trained adjacent to various concentration and forced labour camps in 1943, including Dachau, according to the confessions of former division members. Camp inmates were forced to remove their hats when the new SS recruits marched by. They received two hours of indoctrination in National Socialist theory each week, while the rest of their days were filled with its practice. At the end of August 1943, the members swore an oath to Adolf Hitler, after having been tattooed with their blood group. As the 8,000 enlistment target was oversubscribed, those who did not make the cut were incorporated into four special police units, who also went on to participate in atrocities.

The Galicia Division would not see combat until February 1944, when it

was sent into action against the resistance to the Nazis. In July 1944, the Division lost 73 percent of its forces at Brody resisting the Soviet counteroffensive which corresponded with the D-Day landings. The unit was rebuilt by the Nazis from reserve forces and sent to Slovakia to crush the uprising of the Slovak working class against fascist rule in early 1945.

The commanding officers of the Waffen SS 14th Galizien were drawn from the ranks of the worst Nazi mass murderers. Fritz Freitag was a veteran of Einsatzgruppen killings, who kept an extensive diary of his atrocities, with entries such as “114 prisoners taken, 283 Jews shot.” SS-Obersturmbahnfuherer Franz Magall also recorded his Einsatzgruppen crimes in a diary: “Driving women and children into swamps was not as successful as it should have been, since the swamps were not deep enough for them to sink.”

Michael James Melnyk, who has written three books on the history of the Galicia Division, describes in minute detail the anti-partisan operations it conducted against the local population of Ukraine and then against the Slovaks. But as the son of a former Waffen SS member, he simply assumes that all of the unit’s victims had it coming, as “communists” or partisans.

It is useful therefore to compare Melnyk’s description of the spring 1944 Huta Pieniacka massacre with the accounts of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance and that of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

Melnyk justifies the atrocity as follows: “The village (with approximately 1,000 inhabitants) is openly acknowledged to have become a well-fortified armed stronghold and major resistance centre for both Polish and Soviet led partisan groups. These partisans, in addition to harassing German supply columns and disrupting the rear areas of the German Army, are also known to have fought against the UPA as well as terrorizing the local Ukrainian population by raiding the surrounding villages.” Melnyk then goes on to admit that the village was subject to a “‘pacification action’ which ultimately led to the destruction of the village and the liquidation of many of the remaining civilian population,” but that this was the work of the Germans. Melnyk also leaves out the fact that the people of Huta Pienacka had fled the massacres by the OUN (B) of more than 100,000 Poles and Jews in the previous year. The “pacification action” finished them off.

The Poles remember things differently:

“... the crime was committed by the 4th battalion of the 14th division on February 28. On that day, early in the morning, soldiers of this division, dressed in white, masking outfits, surrounded the village. The village was cross-fired by artillery. SS men of the 14th Division of the SS ‘Galizien’ entered the village, shooting the civilians rounded up at a church. The civilians, mostly women and children, were divided and locked in barns that were set on fire. Those who tried to run away were killed. Witnesses interrogated by the prosecutors of the Head Commission described the morbid details of the act. The crime was committed against women, children, and newborn babies.”

The Ukrainian Academy of Science writes:

“The SS detachment’s attack on the village was the result of the denunciation to the Ukrainian police by the population in Pidhirtsiv, which informed the Germans that the Poles of Huta Pieniacka were hiding Jews, supported Bolshevik partisans, stored weapons and so on. The Ukrainian SS men arrived in the village to conduct an inspection. When they began robbing the population, speaking Ukrainian to each other, the Poles took them for bandits in disguise, and began defending themselves. Then, a Ukrainian squadron of the SS arrived in the village from Pidhirtsiv. After having encircled the village, it began to murder people.”

The OUN (B) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army

After the German surrender at Stalingrad in February 1943 and with support swelling among the Ukrainian people for the Soviet partisan resistance to the Nazis, the OUN (B) began to prepare for the possibility that its Nazi allies could go down to defeat and the prospect of an “independent Ukraine” lost.

The OUN-organized Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) is said to have been founded in October 1942. But it only emerged as a significant force in the spring of 1943 and then only as the result of the March-April 1943 mass desertion to it of Ukrainian police commanders and officers.

Some 4,000-6,000 Ukrainian police responded to the UPA’s call to join its ranks in the Volhynia region of Nazi occupied-Poland in spring 1943. According to Katchanovski, at the end of that year police defectors continued to comprise more than half of all UPA fighters. The UPA would also be joined by others who had served as Nazi henchmen including in the Nachtigall and Roland German special operations battalions, and ultimately by deserters from the Waffen SS Galicia Division.

At the height of its power, the UPA had perhaps 20,000 fighters, a majority of whom had previously served and/or fought alongside the Nazis.

The political significance of the mass police defection to the UPA cannot be overemphasized. If the OUN (B) could command thousands of police officers to defect to the UPA, it was because they were serving in the Nazis’ auxiliary police at the OUN (B)’s instructions; and when they helped implement the mass extermination of the Jews of Ukraine, they did so under its discipline and at its behest.

Katchanovski, through a review of the biographies of 119 top-ranked and 210 middle-ranked OUN (B) leaders and UPA commanders, has demonstrated the extent to which this so-called “national liberation movement” was led and staffed by Nazi henchman. Based on the available evidence, he has established that 55 percent of middle ranking OUN/UPA cadre actively collaborated with the Nazi military, police and/or intelligence, as did 77 percent of the top-ranked OUN and UPA leaders. He stresses the true percentages are likely higher due to information gaps.

Lubomir Luciuk, a Royal Military College of Canada professor and recipient of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress’ Shevchenko Medal, would have us believe the UPA “fought both the Nazis AND the Soviets.” But any anti-German military engagements were few, and inconsequential. Katchanovski has documented that only 6 percent of top OUN commanders, and only 3 percent of the top UPA commanders, died as the result of military engagement with the Germans, as opposed to 54 percent who died in combat with Soviet forces. Though 32 percent of OUN leaders were at some point taken prisoner by the Germans, almost all of them were released shortly thereafter. Objectively verifiable facts contradict the lies spun by the Ukrainian nationalists and their western imperialist allies.

Coincident with the Nazi tank army defeat in the Battle of Kursk, an OUN (B) congress in the summer of 1943 made a totally cynical and dishonest rhetorical shift, so as to position itself for a future attempt to court British and American imperialist support. It condemned “National Socialist ideology” and professed its support for “national minorities.” Essentially, this is where the OUN campaign of lying about itself and its political history begins.

In practice, the UPA continued to perpetrate mass violence. A systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing of up to 100,000 Poles in the Volhynia, Galicia, Lublin and Polesia regions peaked just as the OUN was declaring its love for “national minorities.” In June 1943, the commander of the UPA-North, Dmytro Klyachivsky, issued a secret directive saying: “We should make a large action of the liquidation of the Polish element. As the German armies withdraw, we should take advantage of this convenient moment for liquidating the entire male population in the age from 16 up to 60 years. ... Villages and settlements lying next to the

massive forests, should disappear from the face of the earth.” The majority of those massacred were in fact women and children. The murders continued until 1945. The UPA even shot the few conscripted Jewish doctors it had pressed into service.

Throughout the UPA played a role in protecting the Nazi rear, permitting German units to be deployed against the Soviets in a more efficient manner.

Facing the prospect of imminent defeat, the Nazis released Bandera from captivity in September 1944. This resulted in still closer cooperation between the UPA-OUN (B) and the Nazis in fighting the advancing Red Army. According to Bandera’s biographer, Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, “Bandera together with the other Ukrainian leading politicians such as Melnyk, Kubiiovych, and Pavlo Shandruk, agreed to help the Germans to mobilise Ukrainians for the fight against the Soviet Union.”

As the Soviet Red Army inflicted defeat after defeat on the German Wehrmacht during 1944 and early 1945, bringing the collapse of Nazi Germany ever nearer, the Ukrainian nationalists of the OUN (B) and OUN (M) fled westwards. Freeland’s grandfather Mykhailo Chomiak and his collaborators travelled to Vienna, where they continued to publish *Krakivski Visti*. The last issue appeared in March 1945. Many leading figures ended up in displaced people’s camps, where OUN members operated mafia-like structures.

Bandera fled to Munich, where he would later collaborate with the CIA and West German intelligence. The OUN (B), after a brief suspension of its activities, was reconstituted under the auspices of Britain’s MI6 in 1946 to be used as an ally in an anti-Soviet insurgency in Ukraine that the Americans would covertly back until at least the end of the 1950s. By the mid-1950s, Bandera’s intransigent fascism had alienated the CIA and many of his former allies, who found it “distasteful” and politically out of step with western imperialist propaganda about democracy and freedom for “captive nations.” He was reputedly assassinated by a KGB agent in 1959. His wife and son fled to Toronto, Canada, where they continued to promote the OUN cause.

The surrender of the 14th (Galicia) Division of the Waffen SS to the British forces is illustrative of the campaign of lies told by the Ukrainian fascists to cover their tracks and clean up their political reputation to make themselves more palatable to their new American—and Canadian—masters. Around April 25, 1945, just before its surrender, the members of the Galizien Division of the Waffen SS shed their uniforms and SS insignia and declared themselves to be “the First Unit of the Ukrainian National Army.” The British officers who first encountered them only later discovered who they were really dealing with. They were interned for several years before eventually being admitted as immigrants to the US, Canada, UK and Australia.

* * *

On April 27, every Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Green and New Democratic Party MP present unanimously approved an NDP parliamentary motion labelling Russia’s military operation in Ukraine an “act of Genocide.”

Clearly, the cynicism and hypocrisy of the Canadian ruling class and its political representatives is boundless.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is reactionary. But the claim that Moscow is carrying out genocide in Ukraine is a provocation aimed at diabolizing Russia and making any de-escalation of the conflict impossible, so Canadian imperialism and its allies can pursue their plans to subjugate Russia irrespective of the cost in Russian and Ukrainian lives.

It is all the more grotesque coming from a state and political establishment that for eight decades has cultivated an alliance with those who aided and abetted Nazi genocide against the Jews of Ukraine. In the concluding part of this series we will document how Canadian imperialism provided refuge to the Ukrainian fascists, helped them cover up their crimes and has made use of them to advance its predatory

interests, including in the preparation, instigation and waging of the current war.

To be continued.



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