

Long suppressed report sheds light on Canada's “Open Door Policy” for Nazi war criminals

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11 February 2024

Important new information continues to emerge about how the Canadian state provided safe haven to Nazis and Nazi collaborators who were involved in the Holocaust and Hitler's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union.

On February 1, the Canadian government quietly declassified a further fourteen pages of an annex to the final 1986 report of the Deschenes Commission into War Criminals in Canada, most of which was suppressed until last summer.

Authored by Alti Rodal, “Nazi War Criminals in Canada: The Historical and Policy Setting from the 1940s to the Present” is a detailed, 619-page historical investigation of Canadian policy towards Nazi collaborators. With the latest release, most of the report is finally in the public domain—some 38 years after it was submitted and following the deaths of virtually all those it investigated.

What remains redacted and off-limits is notable, however. This includes the true identities of the alleged Nazi collaborators themselves, their numbers, and information detailing Canadian government cooperation with US intelligence.

A trained historian and senior government bureaucrat who was born in 1944 in western Ukraine to Holocaust survivors, Alti Rodal was the Director of Historical Research for the Deschenes Commission.

Pierre Trudeau and the Nazi accomplice “Subject F”

The newly released pages of her report detail the 1967 refusal of then Justice Minister (later Prime Minister) Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the father of current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, to support extradition to the USSR of a Nazi collaborator who had been chief of a Latvian police station during WWII. Admitted to Canada in 1948 and protected for decades by the Canadian state, the person identified in Rodal's report only as “Subject F” was Haralds Petrovich Puntulis. He was accused of involvement in the murders of 15,000 partisans, Jews and Gypsies, and the enslavement of many others, and was convicted in 1965 *in absentia* by the USSR's Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.^[1]

A 1965 External Affairs document, cited by Rodal, described Puntulis as “an ardent Nazi lackey, not only cooperating actively with the occupying German forces but actually serving their Jewish and Gypsy extermination squads.”

Despite the fact that “there was indeed evidence against Subject F” the elder Trudeau refused to extradite Puntulis, as “similar steps might be taken against any persons who had obtained a certificate of citizenship if it were found he had not disclosed occurrences in his past...”

Other still secret annexes to the Deschenes Commission report contain the records of more than 700 such persons, including wartime leaders of fascist Slovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, and German SS officers, all of whom were admitted to Canada after WWII and protected by the Canadian state. Rodal's report contains coded references to Subjects “A” through “Z”.

Justin Trudeau's government has faced mounting pressure to make a complete disclosure of the state's historical relationship with Nazi war criminals since the entire Canadian Parliament gave a standing ovation to Yaroslav Hunka, a volunteer for the notorious Ukrainian-manned 14th Galizien Division of the Waffen SS.

Taken together, the release of the Rodal report and the continuing scandal over the official state tribute paid to the Nazi Yaroslav Hunka point to a fundamental truth: Canadian state collaboration with outright fascist forces continues to this day. In Ukraine, the government of the younger Trudeau is arming and politically supporting the ideological descendants of the Nazi war criminals protected by the elder Trudeau, and by previous Prime Ministers.

Canada arms, trains and politically defends today's Nazis in the Azov Battalion and other fascist elements in the Ukrainian state and political establishment in order to advance its imperialist ambitions in Eurasia, all the while dressing up what is essentially a criminal conspiracy in the phony language of “democracy” and “human rights.” If anything, the Rodal report exposes the *continuity* of Canadian imperialist policy, not some anomalous “bad practices,” and the persistence of official lying about it.

Last week it was exposed that the Trudeau government lied when it claimed in September 2023 that it was unaware of who Yaroslav Hunka was. In fact, Hunka had received a personal invitation from the Prime Minister's Office, at the suggestion of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), with which, as we have detailed in the *World Socialist Web Site* series, “Canadian Imperialism's Fascist Friends”, Ottawa has worked for decades. This included providing safe haven to the Nazis' Ukrainian accomplices, helping them whitewash their crimes. Subsequently, the Ottawa-backed UCC promoted an extreme right-wing, virulently anti-communist and anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalism that glorifies the Nazi collaborator and pogromist Stepan Bandera.

The Canadian capitalist press has reported some of the latest revelations from the Rodal report, but only as historical footnotes. Not a single paper has named Puntulis, or revisited his alleged crimes. This is because the Canadian state has a great deal more to hide.

Reading the now largely unredacted Rodal report, one understands why it was kept secret. It demonstrates that many of Justice Jules Deschenes' conclusions in the official Report on War Criminals in Canada were lies.

Deschenes demurred that “the Commission will leave it to professional

historians to examine the reasons which may explain this lack of interest on the part not only of successive governments, but of the people themselves,” in the prosecution of war criminals in Canada.

This deeply cynical statement, which attempts to blame the Canadian working class for the political complicity of the ruling class, was made with full knowledge of how the Canadian state rapidly relaxed its policy on the admission of those who fought for the Nazis and did so voluntarily.

Canada's post-war “Nazi Open Door” policy

The Rodal report lists a series of government policy decisions, some of them heretofore secret Orders in Council and RCMP memoranda, which indicate the development of the Canadian state's open-door policy to Nazis, for example:

- 29 May 1947: P.C (Privy Council) 2047 provides for entry to Canada under Minister's Permit of German scientists and technicians under certain conditions...

- 31 July, 1947: P.C. 2908 lifts ban on admission of enemy aliens for nationalities of Finland, Hungary, Italy and Roumania... Service in the armed forces of these countries during the war not to be a ban on admission to Canada, according to External Affairs circular, January 1948.

- April 1948: RCMP and Immigration decision to admit former members of Baltic Waffen SS who enlisted after December 1, 1943

- 30 Nov 1950: RCMP circular: membership in the Nazi Party no longer grounds for rejection for immigration to Canada...

- May 1951: Security Panel recommendations: that service in the Waffen SS should no longer be cause for blanket rejection.... that Waffen SS should be rejected if: non-German SS found to bear mark of SS blood group... Collaboration in itself not to be considered cause for rejection... All cases of ‘major and ‘minor’ collaborators to be decided by Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.”

Rodal notes that in discussions within the Canadian state on the admission of Nazi war criminals, “the moral dimension was absent.” Canadian officials took into consideration only the cold calculations of the interest of Canadian capitalism and imperialism.

Rodal's report further exposes how those regulations on the entry of war criminals which remained in place were openly countermanded by secret orders. She writes, “Research for this report indicates that there were instances when Canadian officials decided to overlook SS tattoo marks... that there were in fact directives issued to screening officers to ignore SS tattoo marks for Baltic Waffen SS cases...” and several other instances. (emphasis added)

While the official Deschenes report blessed the decisions of previous governments to admit war criminal suspects, as they had been “individually screened for security purposes before admission to Canada,” the Rodal report exposes the security screening processes as a fraud, and Deschenes's statement as a lie.

Rodal notes that “One must reject as unfounded recollections and conclusions reached by former immigration and security screening officers regarding the strictness and thoroughness of postwar immigration screening procedures.” Yet these were the very same phony recollections which the official Deschenes report promoted as good coin.

Thanks to Rodal, we know that Jules Deschenes lied outright when he stated that, “Public statements by outside interveners concerning alleged war criminals in Canada have spread increasingly large and grossly exaggerated figures as to their estimated number.”

Rodal reached exactly the opposite conclusion, declaring “it would be

rash to assume that significant numbers of war criminals and Nazi collaborators did not enter Canada.”

Likewise, Deschenes infamously exonerated all of the members of the Ukrainian 14th Waffen SS Galizien Division, at least 3000 of whom entered Canada.

Rodal noted that the previous employment of many members of the Division in various Ukrainian police battalions which had played a major role in the Holocaust in Ukraine, rounding up and killing Jews en masse, “may not remove, but rather strengthen the probability of a war criminal element.” Further, Rodal documented the campaign of lies waged by the Ukrainian Canadian Committee from 1947 to 1950 to mis-characterize the Waffen SS Division as a unit of the regular German army, and even as “labour conscripts.” Deschenes in contrast, gave the UCC official standing before the Commission of Inquiry!

As the WSWS has previously explained, the Deschenes Commission was a cover-up. Its report and findings were written not to tell the truth, but to protect the Canadian state, which ran Nazi war criminals as intelligence agents during the Cold War, deploying them as a blunt weapon against the working class at home and abroad. The Rodal report was likewise written with the aim of assisting the Canadian state, by ensuring that its senior operatives were confidentially apprised of some of the most sordid and politically explosive of its Cold War crimes.

The case of the Serbian Nazi and deputy concentration camp commander “Radon”

Typical is a case which Rodal chose to describe in detail, and at random, for its representative nature of a whole body of similar cases, codenamed in government records variously as “U,” “V” or “Radon.”

After thirteen years of membership in the *Lotich*—the Serbian Nazi party—and the Belgrade Police—Radon became the deputy commander of the Branjica concentration camp, “associated with the deaths of 700,000 people” according to Rodal. In all likelihood Radon is Radovan Charapic,[i] who was named subsequent to Rodal's report. Radon was accused of being “one of those responsible for making selection lists of those prisoners to be shot, sent to gas chambers, or to concentration camps in Germany.” He was sentenced to death in absentia in 1947 in Yugoslavia.

“Radon” entered Canada under the Bulk Labour Program using forged papers provided by US intelligence in 1948. He immediately began espionage work against Yugoslav Communists in Toronto under RCMP supervision. This lasted until 1951, when the *Globe and Mail* reported on the Yugoslav government's demand for his extradition to stand trial for war crimes. Despite the conclusion of the Department of Justice “that there was sufficient evidence to take action against ‘U’ ” no action was ever taken to prosecute him.

Actions were instead taken to protect him. In 1962 the RCMP Security Service deliberately withheld information from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration which would have informed them of Radon's wartime activities. The RCMP testified that any association of “U/V” (Radon) with Charapic was “probably a case of mistaken identity.”

The Deputy Minister of Immigration at the time could not help but comment that “I can't escape the conclusion that there is probably something to this story: nor can I believe that we would have been quite so unconcerned about really getting to the bottom of the whole business if the man had been a subversive of the ‘left’ rather than on the ‘right’ side of the political spectrum.”

By 1967, Canada's Department of External Affairs was aware of Radon's identity and wartime criminal record. Nothing was done. In 1979, the RCMP interviewed Radon, and declared “there is nothing on file to indicate that the Security Service or any other Canadian Agency was aware of V's correct identity prior to his arrival in Canada using false documentation.” This pathetic excuse is entirely beside the point, as his

identity was publicly revealed in 1951, yet he was allowed to remain in Canada unmolested.

A 1983 secret RCMP report determined that Radon's identity as an accused war criminal had been confirmed to the Security Service in 1964.

1983 was also the year in which the RCMP destroyed more than 6,462 cubic feet of immigration files, an act which Justice Deschenes declared, "should not be considered a culpable act or a blunder, but which has occurred in the normal course of the application of a routine policy."

Rodal suggests the reason for the RCMP's protection of Radon: his continued exploitation by US intelligence and the RCMP. She reveals that in 1961, Radon possessed two different passports, using two different aliases. "This suggests the possibility that his past record for such services to the Americans and his false identity would also have been known by Canadian authorities at that time."

An ongoing state coverup

Rodal also reveals that she herself was under immense pressure NOT to investigate the links between state intelligence agencies and Nazi war criminals, stating "The author of this report was specifically discouraged by Commission Counsel from researching these allegations further on the grounds that the task was an impossible one, and not properly the work of the Commission." Rodal responded that "Nevertheless, aspects of the allegations do appear to have some foundation, and the issue calls for further research."

Further research has been stymied by the deliberate destruction and falsification of the historical record. Underscoring this is Rodal's remark "that internal RCMP memoranda, at the time when Corporal Yetter of the Federal Policing Branch was investigating the allegations regarding the role of American and British intelligence, refer to the disappearance in the early 1970's of files relating to the subject of Nazi war criminals and to the reconstitution of a 'false docket' on the subject."

Rodal's report contains many additional important revelations, which the *World Socialist Website* will be reporting on in greater detail:

- The participation of the Canadian government in US intelligence's "Operation Paperclip" to provide safe haven to Nazi scientists and technicians, despite their inadmissibility under the law.

- Direct support of the highest state officials, including Prime Minister Louis St Laurent, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and Foreign Affairs Minister Paul Martin Sr. for high officials in the Nazi-created Slovak fascist state and the native fascist party (the Slovak People's Party or Hlinka Party)—including those who formulated its genocidal policies against Slovakia's Jews. These criminals include Karol Sidor, Joseph Kirschbaum, Ferdinand Durcansky, Karol Murin, and Konstantin ?ulen, all of whom found refuge for at least some time in Canada. Kirschbaum, who was the secretary-general of the Hlinka Party, later went on to edit the Canadian Slovak newspaper, *Kanadsky Slovak* and founded the virulently anti-communist, CIA-backed Slovak World Congress.

- The fascist political organizing in Canada and the United States of legionaries of the Rumanian Iron Guard, including the infamous Joseph Trifa, as well as fifteen others who lived out their lives in Toronto, Hamilton and Windsor, despite the knowledge of Canadian officials that these men had likely taken part in wartime atrocities.

- The admission to Canada of high officials of fascist Hungary, members of the Arrow Cross Party, whose Nazi backgrounds were known to the RCMP. Canada's national police and then chief national security agency was also made aware of their role in the deportation of more than 600,000 Jews to Nazi Germany, and in the production of anti-Semitic propaganda.

- The admission to Canada of prominent Nazis and Nazi collaborators from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, including members of the "Arajs" Latvian execution squads, which carried out mass shootings of Jews, Gypsies and Communists.

- The escape from justice, via Ireland and then via Canada of Andrija

Artukovic, a leading member of the fascist Croat Ustase, Minister of the Interior and of "Justice" in the Croat fascist state. Artukovic established and oversaw the system of concentration camps in Croatia, including the infamous Jasenovac camp, in which prisoners were murdered with particular sadism, beaten to death with hammers, and chopped to pieces using axes.

Rodal says that Subject F was "sentenced in October 1965 absentia by a Soviet Court." making it all but certain this was Puntulis, as he was sentenced by a Latvian SSR court on Oct. 12, 1965. The charges against Puntulis are discussed in an FBI [file] concerning one of his co-accused then living in the United States, Bo?eslav Maikovskis.

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