

Government-backed Ukrainian Canadian Congress opposes naming 900 Nazi war criminals who found refuge in Canada

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The far-right Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) is raising \$150,000 to fund a lawsuit against the Canadian government to stop the potential release of the heretofore secret Part 2 of the 1985 Deschenes Commission Report on War Criminals in Canada. The report contains the names of more than 900 Nazi war criminals who were admitted as immigrants to Canada, the so-called “Master List,” along with summaries of the criminal allegations against each of them.

The campaign by the UCC, which has enjoyed the support of the Canadian state for decades and has significant influence within the pro-war Trudeau government, is supported by sections of the corporate media. The main argument raised against the Canadian government revealing the names of the mass murderers it allowed into the country following World War II is that it would harm the imperialist powers’ war on Russia. There could hardly be a more damning admission as to the character of the regime backed by Washington and Ottawa in Kiev. According to a *Globe and Mail* report, releasing the names of 900 Nazis “could fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin’s claim that the invasion of Ukraine amounts to a purge of Nazis,” remarking that “Russian propaganda in the war against Ukraine could get a boost.”

“Russian propaganda” is the preferred term in ruling circles to denote any opposition to the imperialist-instigated war on Russia in Ukraine, especially opposition that develops in a left-wing, socialist direction. The aim of the war is to subjugate Russia to semi-colonial status so that Washington, Ottawa, and their European allies can seize its natural resources. The fear motivating the *Globe*, UCC, and broad sections of the ruling class is far less that Putin’s reactionary Russian nationalism, which has nothing to offer workers in Russia, let alone those in the West, will gain ground. Rather, it is that the further exposure of how the US/NATO war being waged in the name of “defending democracy” is in reality a predatory imperialist war of conquest being carried out in alliance with the political descendants of Nazi collaborators and war criminals will fuel anti-war sentiment.

Almost exactly a year ago, the Canadian Parliament rose unanimously on September 23, 2023, to give a standing ovation to Waffen-SS veteran Yaroslav Hunka, who was a member of the 14th or “Galicia” Division of the Waffen-SS, made up overwhelmingly of pro-Nazi Ukrainian nationalists. The Galicia Division participated in the Holocaust and the massacre of tens of thousands of Poles, with each member swearing a personal oath to Adolf Hitler.

The disgusting display in parliament, which was joined by representatives from all G7 countries, laid bare the true character of the war in Ukraine and fuelled popular anger. Since the fascist-spearheaded Maidan coup in 2014 that overthrew Ukraine’s elected

pro-Russian president and brought to power a pro-Western puppet regime, Canada and its imperialist allies have worked systematically to rearm and train the Ukrainian military for war, and integrate fascist forces like the Azov Battalion into its ranks. The applause for Hunka was the appropriate political expression of this process.

Responding to the popular outcry, the government was forced to sanction the declassification of further sections of the annex to the Deschenes Commissions’s report that had been suppressed for over 38 years. It included some new revelations about individuals allowed into Canada and how Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the current Prime Minister’s father, intervened to protect the exposure of a Nazi war criminal in the 1960s.

On September 6, *Ottawa Citizen* reporter David Pugliese revealed that Libraries and Archives Canada, charged with conserving the secret Part 2 of the Deschenes Report, had held consultations over the summer with “a discrete group of individuals and organizations” about whether or not the secret report should finally be released, and was still deliberating on its decision. This group of “stakeholders” included the far-right UCC, which defends Nazi war criminals like Hunka as “freedom fighters.” Not a single victim of the Holocaust or a Holocaust scholar was invited. UCC Director Ihor Michalchysyn has declared that the secret report is “destined to remain confidential.”

In this context, it must be stressed that the 900-plus names in the secret Part 2 of the Deschenes Report are not the names of every Nazi or known fascist collaborator who entered Canada after World War II. There were tens of thousands of such people!

Under discussion is the exposure of a policy of Canadian state support for and collaboration with more than 900 of the most hardened Nazi war criminals. They include Nazi scientists, senior officials, and other mass murderers. The secret portion of the report also contains possible criminal cases against them that were never pursued.

The UCC’s provocative positioning on this issue can only be explained by the intimate alliance it has with the Canadian state apparatus and current Trudeau Liberal government. Since it was set up, under the auspices of the Canadian state, in 1940, at the beginning of World War II, to combat left-wing sentiment that was dominant among Canada’s Ukrainian immigrant population at the time, the UCC has benefited from funding, political protection and outright promotion by successive governments. It spearheaded the post-war campaign to open the floodgates to Nazi war criminals and collaborators and was given a prominent place in Canadian imperialism’s anti-communist Cold War propaganda. Monuments

were erected to the fascist leader Stepan Bandera, who led the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists as it collaborated with Hitler. In addition, centres for Ukrainian studies were established, including at the University of Alberta, to serve essentially as propaganda institutes to whitewash and justify the crimes of far-right Ukrainian nationalists.

During and especially in the aftermath of the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ottawa mobilized its fascist Ukrainian allies to promote Ukrainian nationalism and lay the basis for a pro-imperialist regime in Kiev. As John-Paul Himka, Canada's preeminent historian of modern Ukraine, put it, the UCC worked to put the "glorification" of Bandera "at the very centre of the Ukrainian national identity project."

The further exposure of Canada's long-standing ties to such reactionary political forces and how they serve as the main shock troops in the war on Russia can only lead to a growth in popular opposition to imperialist war. This process is already well underway, as shown by the mass protests that have swept Canada and other countries to oppose their complicity in Israel's genocide against the Palestinians. The government responded with a ruthless campaign of intimidation and persecution against anti-genocide protesters and opponents of the war in Ukraine. The UCC, backed by the Ontario provincial government, tried and failed to disrupt and break up the first anti-war meeting held in Toronto, organized by the Socialist Equality Party, following the launch of the US/NATO war on Russia.

Canadian imperialism has funneled more than \$4.5 billion in weapons to its Ukrainian fascist proxies since February 2022, and provided over \$10 billion in assistance when all forms of aid are taken into account. During the same period, the Ukrainian state has criminalized all remaining political opposition, jailing scores of dissidents, including the socialist and internationalist leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik Leninists, (YGBL) Bogdan Syrotiuk on the bogus claim that he is a "Russian propagandist." Canadian imperialism continues to maintain the fraud that Ukraine is a "democracy." If so, it's the only "democracy"—other than its imperialist sponsors Canada and the US—which erects monuments to Nazis such as Stepan Bandera and Yaroslav Stetsko.

Meanwhile, top UCC officials have moved seamlessly from their former roles as lobbyists for Ukrainian fascist nationalism into top positions in the Canadian state. Former UCC Director Taras Zalusky is the Chief of Staff for Defence Minister Anita Anand.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland's rise has closely followed the growing importance of Ukraine to Canadian imperialism's global calculations. The former journalist turned top Liberal Party operative, who has maintained close ties with the UCC since her childhood, has been active on the Ukrainian far right since she intervened as a teenager in Soviet Ukraine in 1989, campaigning to split the USSR along ethno-nationalist lines. Freeland's grandfather, Mikhailo Chomiak, was an ardent Nazi propagandist, and the managing editor of the fascist newspaper *Krakivski Visti* during WWII. Freeland's mother, Halyna Chomiak, helped draft Ukraine's nationalist post-Soviet constitution.

The fact which the UCC and Canadian imperialism wish to conceal is this: Canadian imperialism has never broken with its fascist friends. On the contrary, they have come to play an ever more prominent role in Ottawa's foreign policy as it joins in the imperialist redivision of the world being unleashed by the deepening crisis of world capitalism.

The UCC has cynically expressed the concern that exposing the Nazi war criminals listed in the secret part of the Deschenes report

will cause "harm and trauma" to their families. No such concern was ever expressed for Holocaust survivors following the unanimous standing ovation for Hunka, who was invited to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister's office and received a standing ovation from Canada's highest "democratic" body.

The Hunka scandal led to a limited exposure of prominent public figures, whose well-known Nazi past created no barrier to their advancement to the heights of political power in Canada. The most prominent among these was Peter Savyryn, who was unapologetic about his past service in Adolf Hitler's 14th Waffen SS Galician Division. Savyryn rose to become the head of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party Association and the Chancellor of the University of Alberta. Calls to strip Savyryn of his "Order of Canada" medal, the highest state honour, were met by official professions of impotence, based on the justification that no legal mechanism existed to strip a person of the honour.

A hint of the web of criminality, lying and deceit which awaits in the secret files is indicated through information that is already public knowledge. Among the potential revelations in part 2 of the Deschenes report are new details about:

- Canadian state support for the Slovak fascist leader Karol Sidor;
- The transit of the Croat fascist genocidaire Andrija Artukovic through Canada;
- Canadian state support for the Slovak fascist criminal Ferdinand Durcansky;
- Canadian state support for Romanian mass murderer Viorel Triffa;
- Canadian state support for Otto Strasser, a founder of the Nazi Party;
- RCMP and state support over years for the Serbian concentration camp butcher turned RCMP informant against workers, Radovan Charapic;

Also further information concerning:

- Canadian state knowledge of the crimes of Latvian Nazi Haralds Petrovich Puntulis, implicated in the mass murder of thousands of Jews and anti-fascist partisans;
- The confidential opinion of the Canadian government on the prospects for Hungarian Gendarmerie captain Imre Finta's prosecution for the murder of 8,617 Jews;
- The identities of the suspects in the 1950 bombing of Toronto's Ukrainian Labour Temple, which could potentially include a prominent Montreal professor and an official at the CBC;
- and, potentially, details revealing Canadian government knowledge of the crimes of Alfred Valdmanis, a top Latvian Nazi who served as the chief economic adviser to Newfoundland's Liberal government in the early 1950s, only to be later convicted of fraud.



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