

Trudeau government refuses to release the names of 900 Nazi war criminals, for fear it would damage NATO-Ukraine war on Russia

James Clayton
19 January 2025

In defiance of the demands of historians, Holocaust survivors and public opinion, Canada's Liberal government is suppressing an almost four-decade-old secret report that identified some 900 Nazi war criminals who had lived, or were then living, in Canada.

This outrageous decision is motivated by fear that the exposure of the identities of the Nazis and Nazi collaborators would damage the NATO-instigated war on Russia over Ukraine.

Supporters of the report's suppression have justified it in the name of countering "Russian disinformation."

What a fraud! It is the Canadian state that is burying the truth. It fears exposure of Canadian imperialism's three-quarters-of-a-century-long alliance with the Ukrainian fascists who collaborated with the Nazis in the commission of monstrous crimes, including the Holocaust, during their self-proclaimed "war of annihilation" against the Soviet Union.

This alliance continues—indeed, it is even more important today—with the Canadian state and ruling class closely collaborating with the political-ideological descendants of the Nazis' Ukrainian accomplices in both Canada and Ukraine.

The Liberal government's actions shed critical light on the predatory aims motivating Canadian imperialism's support for the war and the fascistic character of the political forces it is employing to prosecute it. Ottawa has provided over \$12 billion in support, including at least \$4 billion in military aid, to the fascistic Zelensky regime in Kiev since Russia's reactionary, US-NATO-provoked 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Zelensky's government rules like a dictatorship, venerates far-right Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera—whose supporters, at his instructions, participated in the Holocaust—and has imprisoned socialist opponents of the imperialist-backed war that has already claimed the lives of half-a-million or more Ukrainians.

The decision not to release the names of the 900 persons identified in a secret annex to the final report of the government-appointed Deschenes Commission into War Criminals in Canada was taken after closed door "consultations with a discrete group of stakeholders" last summer and fall. These "stakeholders," according to a government press release, included "officials from a range of departments" including Global Affairs Canada, which coordinates Canadian imperialism's trade, foreign affairs and military interventions.

They also included the far-right Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) which has advocated for Nazi collaborators since 1946. Created with state support in 1940, the UCC promoted anti-communism and far-right Ukrainian nationalism during the Cold War. Over the past decade, it has played an even more prominent role, working hand-in-glove with Ottawa in politically preparing and rallying support for the Ukraine war.

The UCC fought tooth and nail in the 1980s to prevent the Deschenes Commission from investigating the presence of Nazi collaborators in

Canada. The Canadian government rewarded them with an official role at the Commission, where they made every effort to stymie its proceedings.

The Commission released a sanitized report in 1986, which amounted to a state cover-up. While the second part of the report, which was kept secret, identified 900 of the most infamous Nazis and Nazi collaborators, it denied that Canada had systematically provided safe haven for Nazi war criminals and collaborators as a matter of state policy. Deschenes tartly dismissed the charge that thousands of them had found refuge in Canada "as grossly exaggerated."

Last September, the UCC sent a fundraising circular to members requesting funds to sue the government in order to prevent the declassification of the secret annex. The names contained in the Report likely include hundreds of Ukrainian Canadians, veterans of the infamous 14th Galician Division of the Waffen SS, and supporters of the notorious fascists Stepan Bandera and Andrei Melnyk, two rival leaders of the OUN, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. Many of those named likely directly participated in the Holocaust of European Jewry.

Holocaust survivors and their advocates were shut out of these discussions.

Library and Archives Canada, which is charged with preserving the secret report, might as well be holding a stick of political dynamite, which if lit could expose the fact that Canadian imperialism's historical collaboration with Nazis and fascists continues today in Ukraine, where Nazi militia formations such as Azov and Centuria fight with Canadian weapons and training. Ottawa played a central role in integrating these militias into the Ukrainian army, which like the government explicitly embraces Bandera and fights for the subjugation and carve-up of Russia in the interests of imperialism.

The Canadian government has tried to obscure the true political motivations behind its refusal to release the names of the Nazi war criminals and collaborators. A spokesperson for Pascale St-Onge, the politically influential Minister for Canadian Heritage under whose ambit the Library and Archives Canada falls, mouthed that "it is imperative to release documents in a responsible manner that protects and preserves individual, national and international security."

The true meaning of these weasel words was not lost on anyone with even a cursory knowledge of the issues. Even the *Globe and Mail*, the traditional voice of the Bay Street financial oligarchy, headlined its report on the government's decision, "Ottawa advised against releasing names of alleged Nazi war criminals over concerns for Ukraine."

The war in Ukraine against Russia is part of Canadian and American imperialism's drive to re-divide the world on a basis more profitable to US, Canadian, and European capitalism. The imperialists have worked to disguise the class character of their war with lies about "democracy," "human rights," and protecting Ukrainian "independence." Identifying the

Nazi collaborators would serve to undermine this propaganda.

Canadian imperialism's historical relationship with Nazi war criminals and their Ukrainian and other Eastern European fascist collaborators is a well-established fact that no serious historian can call into question. It thoroughly exposes as a fraud every Canadian nationalist pretense the Canadian capitalism and its state constitute a "kinder, gentler" alternative to the rapacious American dollar republic to the south.

Precisely because it is so well-documented, the Canadian state and establishment media have expended vast resources to cover up Ottawa's longstanding alliance with Ukrainian fascists and denounce anyone who raises it as a stooge for Vladimir Putin who is promoting "Russian propaganda" and "disinformation."

Far from being "ancient history," this alliance—as the government's determination to prevent light being shone on its beginnings suggest—is today more important than ever in advancing Canadian imperialism's interests.

As to the nature of those interests, the American warmonger and fascist Senator Lindsay Graham recently bluntly stated them. The war in Ukraine, he declared, is "all about money," because "Ukraine is sitting on 1 trillion dollars' worth of minerals that could be good for our economy." Geographically, Ukraine is also the gateway to a vastly larger stock of natural resource wealth in Russia, along with the capacity to militarily encircle China. Canadian imperialism is in Ukraine for its grubstake in world conquest.

If the names of the 900 Nazis were released, Canadian imperialism would face a repeat, on an exponentially larger scale, of the political scandal that erupted after the House of Commons, led by Prime Minister Trudeau, gave a unanimous standing ovation to the 96 year-old Waffen-SS veteran Yaroslav Hunka in September 2023. Hunka, who volunteered to fight for Hitler's Third Reich, was hailed as a Ukrainian "hero, who fought the Russians in WWII." Hunka was invited to Parliament as a guest of honour by the Prime Minister's Office, on the advice of influential UCC supporters, to listen to a war mongering speech of Zelensky.

Open door policy for Nazis

Beginning in 1947, only two years after the end of World War II, the Canadian state began to admit known Nazi war criminals and collaborators to act as an anti-communist vanguard against the working class. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent wrote in a personal message to the Minister of Labour in 1948 that the fascists were "people who have demonstrated that they are free men and are on our side of the line in the fight against Communism."

The 900 names contained in the Deschenes Commission Part II Report are those of hardened Nazis against whom the federal Government gathered evidence in advance of prosecutions which were never pursued. But these 900 names are merely the tip of an enormous iceberg, consisting of tens of thousands of lesser-known fascists and collaborators from various Eastern European countries.

The UCC militantly opposes the release of the names because they know that Ukrainian accomplices of the Nazis comprise the single largest group of such people.

The 14th Waffen SS Galician Division, two thousand or more of whose members ultimately found refuge in Canada, was formed in 1943 at the urging of the Ukrainian Central Committee, a branch of the OUN-Melnyk, which was entirely a puppet of the "General Government" in Nazi-ruled Poland. The Committee's newspaper, *Krakivski Visti*, employed Mikhail Chomiak—the grandfather of Chrystia Freeland, Canada's deputy prime

minister and finance minister until her high-profile resignation last month. He was its managing editor, in charge of the paper's relations with its Nazi sponsors. The Galician Division is implicated in the mass murder of Poles, Jews and Slovak partisans. It surrendered to the Allies in 1945, only days after cynically re-branding itself the "First Division of the Ukrainian National Army," in a vain effort at concealment. Many of the unit's soldiers joined after previously serving in collaborationist special police battalions which carried out the Holocaust in Ukraine from 1941 to 1942.

The UCC has maintained the lie that the Deschenes Commission Report exonerated the entire division in its 1986 whitewash report, which refused to examine evidence available at that time only in the Soviet Union and Poland. When this evidence was subsequently examined, it established beyond any doubt that the division carried out massacres of Poles, Jews and Slovaks.

Further, the UCC insists on the fallacy that because the 14th Waffen-SS Galician Division was not named specifically at the Nuremberg Tribunal, its members were therefore innocent. In fact, the Nuremberg Tribunal established that mere membership in *any* division of the Waffen-SS was a crime in and of itself. When this fallacy is challenged, the UCC declares that Division members "had no choice." This too is a bald-faced lie. As a supplementary report to the main Deschenes report authored by the historian Altı Rodal reveals, "The influx (of Ukrainian volunteers for the Nazi Division) was so great, that it astonished even the Germans." When this lie falls apart, Ukrainian nationalists retreat to the feeble excuse that Waffen-SS soldiers wearing Nazi uniforms and sworn by oath to obey Adolf Hitler "thought they were fighting for Ukraine."

The Deschenes Commission entirely ignored an even bigger category of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators who found refuge in Canada, the members of the Banderite wing of the OUN and its Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which fought the Soviet Red Army in collaboration with the Nazis. Like many of Melnyk's supporters, many members of the UPA, had—at Bandera's urging—previously joined the Nazi-established Ukrainian Auxiliary Police, which actively assisted the SS in the mass detention and slaughter of Jews.

The UPA's principal commander and close Bandera associate, Roman Shukhevych, fought in Nazi Schutzmannschaft battalions tasked with carrying out the Nazi Vernichtungskrieg—the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union.

The UCC has fought relentlessly to whitewash the crimes of the Nazi's Ukrainian accomplices, recasting the UPA, which carried out well-documented mass slaughters of Poles and Jews, as "freedom fighters." This includes the lie that the UPA "fought both the Nazis and the Soviets." In reality, just 6 percent of OUN/UPA casualties can be attributed to skirmishes with the Nazis. The vast majority were killed fighting the Soviets.

In her report, Rodal underlines that it was the conflation of Jews with Bolshevism, via the Nazi amalgam of "Judeo-Bolshevism," which provided the principal ideological justification for the Holocaust in Ukraine. She cited an April 1941 declaration of the OUN-B that, "The Jews in the USSR constitute the most faithful support of the ruling Bolshevik regime, and the vanguard of Muscovite imperialism in Ukraine." Rodal underlines that "the principal and for Jews the most devastating collaboration came from organized sectors of Ukrainian society, such as municipal administrations taken over by Nazi elements, and particularly from the Ukrainian semi-military and auxiliary police formations under German command, who were assigned the specific function of assisting the German police and the SS in the seizure and the shootings of Jews."

These are the social elements whose crimes the UCC and the Canadian state seeks to cover-up, whitewash and politically excuse; for whom the Canadian state rolled out its welcome mat after World War II so as to use them as instrument of its Cold War policy; and whose political

descendants Canadian imperialism is working with in close concert today.

In addition to these Ukrainian war criminals, the Rodal Report, as well as declassified CIA files, establish that Nazi collaborators and fascists admitted to Canada included:

- Nazi scientists who were personally approved by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, and the “Minister of Everything” C.D. Howe, over the objections of Canadian scientists working in post-war Germany. The project rapidly swelled to admit 71 top Nazi scientists, none of whom have ever been identified.

- Senior World War II fascist leaders, including Ferdinand Durcansky, and Karol Sidor, the Slovak fascist leaders. Prime Minister St. Laurent intervened personally to bring the latter to Canada.

- SS officers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania complicit in the murders of tens of thousands of Jews and partisans.

- Concentration camp sadists such as the infamous Radovan Charapic, aka “Radon,” who were subsequently used by the RCMP as police spies. Charapic was infamous as the deputy commander of the Banjica concentration camp, where more than 3,800 people were murdered.

- Romanian, Hungarian, Slovak, Serbian, Croat and other fascist and Nazi collaborators, many of whom went on to play leading roles in far-right expatriate organizations in Canada, and who enjoyed the patronage of Canadian governments.

Nazi accomplices as a labour police force

As the Cold War against the Soviet Union began, Canadian imperialism turned towards Ukrainian Nazi and other collaborators to act as a labour police force against the working class at home. Admitted via the “Bulk Labour Program” starting in 1947, they were “exercising a very healthy anti-communistic influence,” according to the Canadian Liberal Senator Thomas Crerar in 1948.

This “influence” included attacking socialist-minded workers with broken glass, clubs, fists and firebombs. From 1948 to the 1960s, Ukrainian Nazi collaborators waged a war of terror in the Canadian labour movement against suspected communists and socialists. Socialist meetings were attacked and broken up. Speakers and attendees were viciously beaten.

In 1950, Ukrainian Nazi collaborators bombed Toronto’s Ukrainian Labour Temple. The prime suspects in the bombing went on to play prominent roles in Canadian society. These included University of Montreal Professor Dmytro Dontsov, and Roman Rachmanny, a supporter of the fascist Stepan Bandera, and founder of the Banderite newspaper *Homin Ukrainiy*. Rachmanny organized the CBC’s Ukrainian language propaganda broadcasts into the USSR.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, the Canadian state campaigned for the political break-up of the USSR into petty ethno-states, via the CBC’s Ukrainian language service, and via its political sponsorship of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, for whom John Diefenbaker, Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963, emerged as a key political advocate. prime ministers Lester Pearson, Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Brian Mulroney all supported the Ukrainian and Eastern European far-right.

When the Stalinist bureaucracy dissolved the USSR in 1991, Ukrainian nationalists became even more important to Canada’s imperialist foreign policy, and the nexus of interests and associations between the UCC and the Canadian state consequently grew. For Canadian imperialism, the fascistic-minded Ukrainian nationalist forces which it had incubated for decades suddenly became operational assets which it could deploy in the field, as opposed to merely politically promoting them from afar.

Right-wing nationalists such as the teenage Chrystia Freeland actively

intervened in Soviet Ukraine, from which Freeland was expelled in 1989. Her mother, Halyna Chomiak, later helped draft Ukraine’s post-Soviet capitalist constitution.

Canadian Ukrainian nationalists found that their fascist weeds at first refused to sprout in Ukraine’s black earth and had to be carefully transplanted and watered. In her 2015 essay, “Putin’s Big Lie,” Freeland remarked, “Ukraine’s national consciousness was weak.” This “national consciousness” in the form of the neo-Nazi Banderite ideology of the OUN, based entirely on lies, had to be force-fed to Ukrainians in Ukraine proper, who through no fault of their own, being estranged from the revolutionary socialist tradition and mercilessly crushed by the economic catastrophe resulting from the destruction of the USSR, had little else to consume.

Speaking in the 1990s with the academic Michael Ignatieff, who would later go on to lead the federal Liberal Party, Freeland was even more explicit about the need to inject far-right Ukrainian nationalism into Ukraine’s body politic. Summarising an interview that he conducted with her when she was still a young journalist, Ignatieff wrote in his *Blood and Belonging*, “It is common [Freeland] says, for Canadian Ukrainians to think of themselves as the true Ukrainians, the ones who kept the faith while among the actual Ukrainians the compulsion and fatalism of the Communist system was working its way into their bones. The Ukrainian Canadians return ‘home’ expecting a fervently nationalist and religious people, and find instead phlegmatic, ironic, sober, and fatalistic Soviet souls. Independence requires a new human type, but she says ... it will be a long time coming.”

Freeland has gone on to become the most powerful exponent of far-right Ukrainian nationalism within the Canadian state. But she is not alone. Former UCC Director Taras Zalusky serves as the Chief of Staff to Bill Blair, the Minister of National Defence. Another former UCC director, Paul Grod, has accompanied Prime Minister Trudeau, his predecessor, Stephen Harper, and other senior Canadian officials on numerous trade and political delegations to Ukraine.

Under Liberal and Conservative governments alike, and with the full-throated backing of the NDP and the Quebec sovereignists, Canadian imperialism has worked for the past 30 years to harness “independent” Ukraine to western imperialism. Canada was the first state to recognize Ukraine’s “independence,” when the Stalinist bureaucracy, as the culmination of its betrayals, restored capitalism and dissolved the Soviet Union. Ottawa pressed for NATO’s encirclement of Russia, through the incorporation of virtually all of the states of Eastern Europe, and in 2008 urged George W. Bush to bring Ukraine into NATO.

As the above-cited comments of Freeland suggest, it worked with the UCC to promote inside Ukraine the virulent brand of anti-Communist, anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalism it had incubated in Canada during the Cold War. Far-right Ukrainian forces spearhead the US-orchestrated 2014 Maidan coup, politically and logistically supported by Canada, that overthrew Ukraine’s elected pro-Russian president, Victor Yanukovich, and brought to power a pro-NATO, pro-European Union government. With Canada’s support, Bandera’s far-right political descendants have come to play an ever-larger role in the Ukrainian state and military as the most fervent supporters of the war with Russia.

This history is one that the Canadian state and its fascist allies do not want workers to hear, because the truth would undermine public support for war. The UCC and the Canadian government have thus sought to silence all principled anti-war voices, campaigning to shut down the meetings of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, as well as to stop workers from viewing film and art work critical of the war in Ukraine. In Ukraine itself, the socialist Bogdan Syrotyuk, a leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, which campaigns for the unification of Ukrainian and Russian workers to stop the war and fights for the overthrow of all the belligerent governments, has been

imprisoned for close to ten months.

Canadian imperialism's war campaign, to say nothing of the reactionary influence of the UCC, would be seriously undermined if Canadian workers knew the truth about Canada's Cold War alliance with Nazi war criminals and accomplices and what it has spawned in the twenty-first century.

This is why the demand must be forcefully raised for the immediate release of the names of the 900 people the Deschenes Commission identified as Nazi war criminals and for full disclosure of all the evidence against them and all files relating to their entry to Canada and subsequent ties to the Canadian state.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact