

ing with the Ukrainian nationalists, sheltering them from exposure,” many left the AUUC in “fear of falling prey to terrorism.” The government, said Luciuk, allowed “nationalists a chance to emasculate their opponents,” and “debilitate... that element within the Ukrainian Canadian society which had long represented nothing but trouble for the authorities.”¹⁰⁰

While the post-war incursion of ultranationalists had a terrifyingly malevolent impact on Canada’s Ukrainian Left, it was a godsend for the Right. The influx swelled their antiCommunists’ ranks, breathed life into the government-created UCC, and fuelled Cold War phobias.

Nazi SS Veterans come to Canada

Canada’s postWWII newcomers included thousands of Ukrainian veterans from military formations tied to Nazism.

These groups, still venerated by Canada’s Ukrainian Right, are now listed as national members of the UCC: (1) The “Society of Veterans of Ukrainian Insurgent Army–UPA [*Ukrayins’ka Povstans’ka Armiya*]” (see pp.44) and, (2) The “Brotherhood of



Ukrainian
Insurgent Army



Waffen-SS Galicia

In 1940, the Liberal government helped to create the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC). This consolidated Canada’s nationalist, Ukrainian Right and marginalised the Left. After WWII, the Liberals brought thousands of Nazi-linked Ukrainian veterans to Canada. Their groups joined, and still belong to, the UCC.

Veterans 1st Division UNA [Ukrainian National Army] National HQ.¹⁰¹ (See “Waffen-SS Galician Division...” below.)

The irreconcilable split between the Right and Left camps of Ukrainian Canadians peaked in 1950, when the UCC and

AUUC fought over Canada’s admission of thousands of veterans from the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician). This Nazi SS Division is what the UCC now euphemistically calls the “1st Division UNA.” This whitewashed name was only given to the Galician SS on April 25, 1945, a mere 13 days before its surrender to the Allies.¹⁰²

After WWII, while most of the 15,000 captured Galician-SS soldiers were interned by British forces at a camp in Rimini, Italy, thousands were in US camps in Germany and Austria. Although the US freed its share of these Nazi veterans in 1947, Britain moved its 8,000 Ukrainian SS veterans to the UK.¹⁰³

In 1946, Canadian and British political, military and intelligence officials allowed UCC president Kushnir to visit interned Galician SS veterans in Europe. The UCC campaign to bring these veterans to Canada was opposed by the AUUC which called them “war criminals” and “former collaborators

Waffen-SS Galician Division still Revered by Canada’s Ukrainian Right

By Richard Sanders

After its creation by Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, recruitment for the Galician SS began in May 1943. While over 70,000 Ukrainians volunteered, but only 13,000 made the cut.

Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches helped rally this SS Division and then supplied it with military chaplains. Religious, ethnic and political symbols were congealed to inspire hatred of Jews and Communists. For example, a 1944 Easter greeting from the Galician SS—depicting a smiling couple in traditional dress—said: “Christ has arisen! Only with the faithful brotherhood of the Waffen-SS can we save Ukraine from judeocommunist dominance!”¹ And, as Volodymyr Kubijovy, the Ukrainian-Polish politician who helped create the Galician SS, proclaimed in 1943: “The Fuehrer of the Great German Reich has agreed to the formation of a separate Ukrainian volunteer military unit under the name SS Riflemen’s Division ‘Halychyna’ [Galician].... You must stand shoulder to shoulder with the unbeatable German army and destroy, once and for all, the Jewish-Bolshevist monster.”²

Not only did it join the Nazi war against the Soviet Army, the Galician SS also murdered Jews, Communist partisans and villagers trying to protect them. Cre-

ated, financed, trained and armed by the Nazis, the Galician SS was integral to the German military. Commanded by fanatical Brigadeführer Fritz Freitag, all Galician SS troops took this vow to Hitler:

“I swear before God this holy oath, that in the battle against Bolshevism, I will give absolute obedience to the commander in chief of the German Armed Forces Adolf Hitler, and as a brave soldier, I will always be prepared to lay down my life.”³

Recruits swore this “holy oath” after a religious service led by military chaplain Vasyl’ Laba. After coming to Canada, Laba was the Ukrainian Catholic “vicar at the Edmonton eparchy from 1950 and became honorary member of the Ukrainian War Veterans Association in Edmonton.”⁴

In *Murderous Elite*, on Waffen-SS history, James Pontolillo details a litany of “extermination operations” in which Galician SS units “murdered thousands of innocent civilians.” For example, in the summer of 1943, Division members joined “anti-partisan operations in Poland which resulted in the wholesale murder of innocent civilians.” Later that year, “divisional elements assisted in the deportation of Polish Jews to KL [concentration camp] Auschwitz for extermination.”⁵

While fighting in German-occupied Poland in January 1944, the Galician-SS

engaged “in mass executions of Ukrainians, Jews, and Poles...under a pretext of anti-partisan actions,”⁶ says University of Ottawa political scientist Ivan Katchanovski. In February 1944, the Galician Division’s 4th SS police regiment helped kill 500 to 1,500 civilians in Huta Pieniacka, Poland, where 120 houses were incinerated. While children were killed in front of their parents, hundreds were herded into barns and burned alive. In March, this same regiment helped kill hundreds of villagers hiding in a monastery in Podkamien, Poland. These crimes were part of the “pacification” of eastern Galicia. Poles were targeted for hiding Jews or for aiding the local communists who were fighting the Nazis.⁷ These SS operations “destroyed 20 villages,” killed more than “5,000 innocent people, and shipped... 20,000 civilians off to Germany as slave laborers.”⁸

After being largely routed by the Soviets in July 1944, the Galician SS was replenished and redeployed to Slovakia. There it joined other SS units in suppressing the Slovak National Uprising which was fighting the Nazi’s clerico-fascist puppet regime. The Galician SS helped kill Slovak civilians, and burned villages that were helping partisans and hiding Jews.⁹

Although the Galician SS was declared a criminal organisation at the Nu-

with German occupation authorities.”¹⁰⁴ The Canadian Jewish Congress also denounced this flood of former SS soldiers.

In 1950, the Liberals opened Canada’s gates to welcome between 1,200 and 2,000 veterans of the Waffen-SS Galician Division.¹⁰⁵ This was heralded as a humanitarian victory by Canada’s Ukrainian Right, which still continues to salute these veterans as heroes of the noble, antiCommunist crusade for Ukrainian nationhood.

The repeated mantra of Ukrainian nationalists is that the Galician SS did not aid the Nazis but merely fought Canada’s Soviet allies in order to gain Ukrainian freedom from the evils of communism. They were, as Myroslav Yurkevich put it, “anti-Soviet, not pro-Nazi.” To prove this, Yurkevich (senior editor of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta) quoted from Galician-SS recruitment bulletins calling for the destruction of “the Bolshevik monster, which is insatiably drinking our people’s blood.” Yurkevich said this rhetoric was “inflated, but...perfectly accurate.”¹⁰⁶

No one disputes the

remberg war crime trials, Canada’s Ukrainian Right has always memorialised these WWII vets as anticommunist heroes. They have done this in a myriad of ways from speeches, media releases and ceremonies to public monuments and academic endowments. For example, the University of Alberta’s Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS), administers four endowments to honour leading Waffen-SS veterans who came to Canada.¹⁰

The CIUS also publishes the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, which claims “there has never...been a Ukrainian anti-Semitic organization or political party.”¹¹

Historian Per Rudling says the Waffen SS Galicia “has been the object of intense myth making” and is “glorified” by Canada’s Ukrainian Right. “A sanitized, ideological narrative of the unit’s history has become an integral part of the Ukrainian diaspora’s culture of memory,” says Rudling, and “ritualized veneration of the unit became part of the ideological training of many diaspora youth organizations.”¹² Their rendition of history relies on a “self-serving historical mythology”:

“Even the Ukrainian Waffen-SS veterans’ investment in a fascist Europe was denied, and they remain respected and

antiRed credentials of the Galician SS or its Ukrainian Canadian admirers. At issue are the vehement denials of those who blindly refuse to see that this Nazi SS division was “pro-Nazi.” A concerted effort is required to remain unconscious of this obvious reality. As Rudling says, Canada’s Ukrainian Right has “an ideological narrative, based upon selectivity, omission, and focusing on (and inflating) crimes committed by others against [their]... imagined community.” Such mythmaking, he says, “passes over in silence atrocities committed by the OUN, UPA, Waffen-SS Galizien, and other Ukrainian armed forces in the service of Nazi Germany.”¹⁰⁷

The Cold War

Profunc: Internment/Surveillance

While the 1945 armistice ended WWII, it did not stop the war against communism that the Nazis had spearheaded. Although Canada’s Soviet allies suffered 30 million deaths, and the Red Army was instrumental in defeating fascism, the USSR and

communism in general was soon rebranded as the West’s worst enemies.

Throughout the Cold War, the Ukrainian Canadian Left was continuously targeted for surveillance and internment. In contrast, the Ukrainian Right continued to receive the very generous support of its allies within the Canadian government.

In 1950, while the UCC rejoiced that Mackenzie King’s Liberal government had released thousands of Ukrainian SS veterans from UK internment camps by granting them Canadian citizenship, it began a top-secret plan to intern thousands of Canadian citizens who were active in the AUUC and other left-leaning groups.

This long-hidden, Cold-War program was in operation from 1950 until the early 1980s. Each year during those decades, successive Liberal and Conservative governments tasked the RCMP to prepare detailed lists of Canadians who were to be rounded up in case of war, insurrection, public disorder or some vague “national emergency.” Underpinning this government program of mass captivity was



Heinrich Himmler (Nazi SS Reichsfuehrer and head of the Gestapo) inspecting the Waffen-SS Galicia Division on June 3, 1944.

revered as heroes and pillars of the community.”

Canadian governments, says Rudling, have “helped...develop and retain their myths, facilitated their history writing, [and] funded their activities down to the construction of nationalist monuments.”¹³

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