

Hate thy neighbour: the racist ideology and Nazi alliances of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Part 1)

By Rachel Douglas

How could then-Speaker of Canada's House of Commons Anthony Rota not know that the 98-year-old "veteran from the Second World War who fought for Ukrainian independence against the Russians", whom he hailed on 22 September to standing ovations in Parliament, had volunteered in 1943 to join a unit created and commanded by Nazi Germany? In Australia, how could Stefan Romaniw, awarded the Order of Australia Medal for work in multicultural education and language-learning, head up (in 2009-22) the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists-Bandera wing (OUN-B), which had allied itself with the Nazis in the 1930s and into 1941, and in 1942 formed the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which slaughtered between 70,000 and 100,000 men, women and children in the ethnic cleansing of Poles and Jews known as the Volhynia Massacres?

The answers lie in nearly 80 years of whitewashing of the war crimes of the UPA, the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division (1st Galician—*Galizien* in German and the *Halychyna* Division in Ukrainian), and some other west Ukrainian nationalist units during World War II.

There are shocking examples of rewriting history by leaders of the OUN-B themselves. On 30 June 1941, eight days after Hitler's army invaded the Soviet Union, the OUN-B issued the "Act of Proclamation of Ukrainian Statehood". It concluded as follows:

"The newly formed Ukrainian state will work closely with National-Socialist* Great Germany, which, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, is creating a new order in Europe and the world and is helping the Ukrainian People to liberate itself from Muscovite occupation. The Ukrainian People's Revolutionary Army which has been formed on the Ukrainian lands, will continue to fight with the Allied German Army against Muscovite occupation for a sovereign and united State and a new order in the whole world.

"Long live a Sovereign and United Ukraine! Long live the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists! Long live the leader of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian people, Stepan Bandera!

"Glory to Ukraine! To its heroes, glory!"

* The short form of "National-Socialist" is "Nazi".

The signer of that document was Yaroslav Stetsko (1912-86), first deputy head of the OUN-B, who was to be prime minister of the declared state. After World War II, the OUN-B abroad often cited the declaration at commemorations and in publications, but blacked out the passages highlighted in boldface type above. In 1967 Stetsko, in his Ukrainian-language book *30 June 1941*, published in Canada, boasted that the proclamation he signed on that day, the one pledging to "work closely" with Hitler, had been an anti-German act of resistance! At a 1983 "Captive Nations" event, the aged Stetsko was presented to US President Ronald Reagan as the "last premier of a free Ukrainian state".

Skipping over the Nazi connection in that way is one method of whitewashing. Another is outright denial.

An example of denial is the most infamous war crime



Stepan Bandera (left) and Yaroslav Stetsko, leaders of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists-Bandera wing. Photos: Wikipedia

committed by the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division (Halychyna), done by a police regiment of this Ukrainian SS division together with German officers and bands of UPA fighters. That was the February 1944 massacre in Huta Pieniacka, a village located in what today is western Ukraine. The Nazis accused its inhabitants, ethnic Poles, of sheltering Jews and aiding Soviet-allied partisans (guerrilla fighters). The murder there of between 500 and 1,200 civilians, mostly women and children, was recognised in 2003 by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance and in 2005 by the Institute of History of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Polish investigators who interviewed survivors for the Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation detailed how the attackers locked the villagers in their barns and set fire to them, shot people as they tried to escape, and committed other horrific acts, such as dashing an infant against a wall, bayoneting an elderly woman in the abdomen, and shooting a woman as she gave birth.

Even the Ukrainian Central Committee, an agency set up by the Nazis to administer Ukrainian affairs in German-occupied Poland (areas now in Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine), acknowledged that it was the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division (Halychyna) that had "pacified" Huta Pieniacka. Historian Per Anders Rudling points out that apologists for the Halychyna Division and the UPA, who deny any Ukrainian involvement in the massacre and attribute it to German units alone, cite a sole source—one with an interest in making the Halychyna Division appear innocent of war crimes—as against several score eyewitnesses. Yet in the 2000s Ukraine's Svoboda Party, an ideological and institutional heir of the OUN, put up a historical marker at the site of Huta Pieniacka with a text that denies any Ukrainian role in destroying the village and murdering its people.

Canadian author Prof. David Marples, in a 2007 book on competing "narratives" of World War II in Ukraine (writings by Soviet, post-Soviet Russian, Ukrainian, and Ukrainian diaspora authors), described another track taken by deniers of UPA or other Ukrainian units' participation in Nazi atrocities. He cited one Ukrainian author who

claimed that any such acts were “false flag” operations, done by Soviet NKVD (secret police) troops disguised as Ukrainian fighters.

Anglo-American intelligence, which after the war found uses for an array of Nazi operatives, and for the OUN and the UPA, came up with its own rationalisations of those organisations’ wartime behaviour. The post-war Nuremberg Military Tribunal on Nazi war crimes had condemned the entire Waffen-SS, the combat arm of the Nazi Party’s paramilitary forces, as war criminals. The only exceptions would be men who had been conscripted, rather than volunteering, and committed no atrocities. The Waffen-SS Halychyna recruits were volunteers; its 14,000 or so members were accepted from among tens of thousands of applicants when the division was formed in 1943—80,000 in the first month alone. Nonetheless Keir Giles of Chatham House (the UK’s Royal Institute of International Affairs) wrote in a 2 October 2023 Politico.eu commentary after the Canadian Parliament scandal, that the Waffen-SS “foreign legions” of non-German fighters were staffed on “administrative rather than ideological grounds”, implying that they should not come under the Nuremberg condemnation.

Giles and others invoke Canada’s 1985-86 Deschenes Commission Report, which cleared Waffen-SS Halychyna veterans of war crimes. Between one and two thousand of them had immigrated to Canada after World War II, many without individual vetting by the British officials who were supposed to screen them before release from POW camps. Prof. Marples, in a 26 September 2023 article for The Conversation, wrote that “opening of former Soviet archives” (after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991) “has led to new studies, some of which have accused the Canadian commission of whitewashing the past”.

Several books based on revelations from the newly opened archives—American ones, as well as archives in the formerly Soviet area—have put things in their places. A short bibliography at the end of this article lists some of them, which are sources for this article.

The hateful, racist ideology of the OUN

The Ukrainian radical nationalists who led the OUN at its inception in 1929 and during World War II were violent race purists, long before entering into on-again-off-again collaboration with the Nazis.

The majority of the population of Ukraine or of ethnic Ukrainians did not hold the OUN’s views. The OUN did not even arise within Ukraine. Its centre, now in western Ukraine, was Galicia, a region in and to the north of the Carpathian Mountains, bridging what today is southeastern Poland from west of Krakow and far western Ukraine to 200 km east of Lviv (Polish Lwow, Russian Lvov, German Lemberg). In the 13th through 18th centuries, Galicia was under the Kingdom of Poland and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a large European power that extended from the Baltic Sea nearly to the Black Sea (Fig. 1).

In partitions of Poland among Austria, Prussia and Russia in the 1790s, the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Habsburgs annexed Galicia (Fig. 2).

During those centuries there was no state called “Ukraine”. The ancient city of Kiev on the Dnieper (Dni-pro) River, capital of the medieval state of Kiev Rus (9th-13th centuries) which is the ancestor of both Russia and Ukraine of today, was seized by various forces—the Tatar-Mongol invaders, Lithuania, and Poland—before the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceded it to Russia in the

Fig. 1. Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1610s



The maximum extent of the 13th-18th century Polish-Lithuanian state is superimposed on today’s map of Europe. The circled cities Krakow, Lviv, and Kiev (west to east) were all within it. The Galicia region reached from west of Krakow to east of Lviv. Map: Facebook—Simon Shows You Maps, additions by AAS.

Fig. 2. Partitions of Poland—1772, 1793, 1795



Partitions of Poland resulting from 18th-century European wars: green areas controlled by Russia, blue by Prussia, and yellow/gold by Austria. Galicia (Krakow and Lviv) remained under Austria until the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Map: Creative Commons GFDL License—Halbutt.

17th century. Kiev remained a centre of learning.

In the 16th-18th centuries the steppe-lands on the southern fringes of the Commonwealth, along the Dnieper, were known as the Wild Fields. The entity closest to a state in those parts was the Cossack Hetmanate of 1648-1764, founded by Bogdan Khmelnytsky, leader of the Cossack “Zaporizhia Host”. The name denotes the area “below the rapids” of the Dnieper. The militarised Cossack communities fought the Poles, had crusty relations with the Ottoman Empire’s outpost in Crimea, and allied with Russia. Galicia, still under Polish rule, was not part of the Hetmanate.

The ideas of the first 19th-century Ukrainian nationalist movements were remote from those of the later OUN. In the same decade as the 1848 revolutions in continental Europe, the short-lived Ukrainian Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, was led by historian Mykola Kostomarov (1817-85) and influenced by Ukraine’s national poet, Taras Shevchenko (1814-61). Shevchenko hailed from the Dnieper Basin, while Kostomarov was born in Russia to a Ukrainian mother. The Brotherhood advocated literary development of the Ukrainian language, and polit-

ical autonomy for Ukraine within a Slavic federation. But it did not preach ethnic hatred against Russians. Kostomarov's work *The Two Peoples of Rus* (1861), which promoted the idea that Ukrainians and Russians are culturally distinct, but nonetheless branches of one people, continued to be influential into the 20th Century.

The famous scientist Academician Vladimir Vernadsky, born in Russia in a Ukrainian family, wrote to his daughter in 1923: "I do not divide Russians and Ukrainians, and I believe that if Russia doesn't perish, ... this question can be handled correctly. ... The culture of Russia and Ukraine manifests a single, greater whole. ... I would like to write to you about the Ukrainian question, ... which is in the hands of people who are narrow-minded, fanatical opponents of Russian culture. Some of them are crazy, some merely backward. ... Ukraine exists, and will continue to exist. The important thing is that Dontsov and Co. not be in charge."

In that remark Vernadsky referred to the other tendency in Ukrainian nationalism, the one that would be adopted by the OUN. Dmytro Dontsov (1883-1973) was one of its main propagandists. In Dontsov's best-known book, *Nationalism* (1926), and in postwar writings for Canada-based publications of the OUN-B, he expounded an ethnically defined nationalism and radical social Darwinism. He also translated Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Mussolini's *The Doctrine of Fascism* into Ukrainian.

Dontsov viewed a "nation" as a biological species. He wrote that only one such ethnic "nation" could ever inhabit the same land: "He who views peoples as definite species, which, as in the organic world, are doomed to eternal competition between them—that person sees clearly that even two of them cannot be accommodated on one patch of ground under the Sun. ... The weaker must yield to the stronger. ... Nature does not know humanism or justice.

"The striving for life and power is transformed into the striving for war. ... War is eternal. ... International life is built upon struggle, upon constant motion, which brings the world to war and war to the world. ... War exists between species, and therefore between people, peoples, nations, and so forth. Be aggressors and occupiers, before you can become rulers and possessors. ... No common human truth exists."

According to Dontsov, the leading force in society should be an "aristocracy" or "order"—an initiative-taking minority. The nation should have a *vozhd*, a concept close to the German *Führer*. Dontsov emerged as a major figure in the 1920s, in the wake of three failed attempts to form an independent Ukrainian state during World War I and the 1918-22 Civil War in the former Russian Empire. His career is summarised by British academic researcher Andrew Wilson:

"Dontsov, like Mussolini, had originally been a socialist but joined the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine [ULU] in 1914 and moved quickly to the right. Dontsov also took much of his political philosophy from Italian fascism, but developed his own uniquely Ukrainian brand of extremist nationalism, which he dubbed 'forceful', 'action' or (after Maurras)* 'integral' nationalism (*chynnyi natsionalizm*)... Dontsov's starting point was a violent critique of the alleged provincialism, inferiority complex and Little Russian** mentality of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, ... whose failure to liberate themselves from Russian culture and the illusory hope of co-operation with non-existent Russian 'democrats' left Ukraine adrift and leaderless in 1917-20. ...

"Dontsov's vision of the Ukrainian nation ... was essentially ethnicist. A pure and inspiring 'national idea' could only exist as the representation of the spirit of a homogeneous ethnic nation, free from all internal 'impurity' and disunity

(Dontsov here borrowed from the populist myth of a homogeneous Ukrainian peasantry). Ukraine therefore had to be purged of all Jewish, Polish and above all Russian influence. Moreover, the homogeneous ethnic nation would in Dontsov's vision be run as a corporate state, with the nationalist political party providing its 'ruling caste'. This would be the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists."



Dmytro Dontsov, ideologue of the racist form of Ukrainian nationalism, translator of Hitler and Mussolini into Ukrainian. Photo: Wikipedia

* Charles Maurras (1868-1952) was a French royalist and aggressive anti-Semite who founded the right-wing Action Française movement.

** The term "Little Russia" (*Malorossiya*) dates to at least the 13th century, when Byzantine clerics evidently used "great" and "lesser" as geographical designations, like "upper/lower", for the two major districts of the Orthodox Church in Rus. The more southerly one, closer to Byzantium and coinciding with part of modern Ukraine, was "lesser" or "little".

As seen in his 1923 letter, the great scientist and patriot of Ukraine Vernadsky believed that the country's relationship with Russia could be discussed rationally, as long as the crazed Dontsov were out of the picture. Yet Dontsov became the mentor of the OUN, and it was his notions of ethnic purity that were incorporated into OUN manifestos and—under the decades-long patronage of British MI6 and the Anglophile Allen Dulles wing of US intelligence, in particular—became the stock in trade of Ukrainian nationalists.

Dontsov and company attacked the thinking of Kostomarov and his followers as "Little Russianism" and anti-Ukrainian. It is easy to see Nazi-like thinking, even before the German Nazis existed, woven into Dontsov's vision of permanent struggle, inevitable war, and the purging of alien ethnic groups.

To be continued.

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Hate thy neighbour: the racist ideology and Nazi alliances of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Part 2)

By Rachel Douglas

Part 1 appeared in the AAS of 22 November 2023. Introduced in Part 1: Galicia, a region in today's southeastern Poland and far western Ukraine, before 1919 a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Dmytro Dontsov, a Ukrainian nationalist ideologue who preached that only one ethnic group could ever inhabit a given territory.

During World War I (1914-18) the Austrian Empire, at war with the Russian Empire, pioneered 20th-century ethnic cleansing and concentration camps. The population of Galicia was by no means uniformly attached to ideas such as Dontsov's, but he moved there in 1914 and operated in the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, an anti-Russia project of Austrian intelligence. Worried about the pro-Russian sympathies of Galicia's Rusyns (Ruthenians), eastern Slavic people in the Carpathians who had remained oriented towards Russia and Eastern Orthodoxy for centuries, the Austrians annihilated priests and other intellectuals who might provide leadership for opposition to Austrian rule. In 1914 they established the Thalerhof Internment Camp near the city of Graz, a concentration camp in which thousands of Rusyn community leaders, as well as people simply accused of being pro-Russian, perished from disease and cold, or were executed.

Also active on behalf of Austria were the Galicia-based Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, reconstituted after the Russian Revolutions of 1917 as the Sich Riflemen, a 25,000-strong army that through 1919 fought against the Bolsheviks—Vladimir Lenin's political party and the Soviet Red Army—on behalf of an abortive attempt to form a Ukrainian state during the Russian Civil War (1917-23). The re-establishment of Poland under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, after more than a century of partition (Part 1, Fig. 2), and the 1918-21 war between Soviet Russia and Poland left Galicia and the neighbouring province of Volhynia within Poland, not in Soviet Ukraine (which was soon, in 1922, to merge into the Soviet Union).

In 1920-21 Sich Riflemen veterans, among them Yevhen Konovalts (1891-1938) and Andriy Melnyk (1890-1964), formed the Ukrainian Military Organisation (Ukrainian acronym UVO) to continue fighting against those they called "occupiers"—chiefly the Poles in Galicia and Volhynia, and the Soviet authorities farther east. The UVO raised money by selling espionage services to various forces. This practice was continued by the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which the UVO men formed in 1929 to broaden their political impact. The OUN's founding conference took place in Vienna, Austria; Konovalts, its first leader, lived abroad and was ultimately assassinated by a Soviet NKVD (secret police) agent in Rotterdam in 1938.

Like the UVO, the early OUN functioned as an assassination bureau. While Konovalts and other founders lived in western Europe, a younger generation, born around 1910, operated underground inside Poland: Stepan Bandera, Yaroslav Stetsko, Stepan Lenkavsky, Roman Shukhevych, et al. These leaders of the OUN's "homeland executive" coordinated acts of arson, including burning the crops of Polish farmers, and several score assassinations of Polish officials, Ukrainians they deemed opponents of the OUN, and some Soviet diplomatic staff. The most infamous kill-



The image of Stepan Bandera on flags in the red and black (blood and soil) colours of his OUN flies above a torchlight march in his honour, in Kiev, 2015. Photo: Wikipedia Creative Commons

ing was the assassination of Poland's Minister of the Interior Bronislaw Pieracki in 1934, for which OUN leaders Bandera and Mykola Lebed were convicted and jailed. They escaped when the Nazis took over western Poland in 1939.

One of the OUN activists' espionage clients was the *Abwehr*, German military intelligence, before and after the Nazis came to power in 1933. Polish documents indicate that the OUN also did tasks for MI6, the British foreign intelligence agency. British intelligence and political circles, up to and including Winston Churchill, had designs during the 1930s for Ukrainian participation in geopolitical projects such as Intermarium (a projected confederation of nations located between the Baltic, Black, Aegean, and Adriatic seas) and the Promethean League of ethnic minorities from regions within the USSR. Several of these organisations were jointly sponsored by British and German agencies, as long as leading British circles remained openly supportive of the Nazis; thus the later, post-war relationship of MI6 with the Ukrainian nationalist underground involved not only picking up Nazi assets, but also re-taking custody of projects in whose creation MI6 had been instrumental in the first place.

'The greatest crime'

Dontsov did not join the OUN, but continued to pump his doctrine of ethnic purity into its circles. In 1929, the year of its founding, he wrote the introductory line of the so-called "Decalogue of a Ukrainian Nationalist", composed by Bandera's OUN associate Lenkavsky. These ten commandments were used in training manuals of the OUN-Bandera wing (OUN-B) in the years ahead:

"I, the spirit of eternal element, who shielded you from the Tatar flood and placed you between two worlds, command to create a new life:

1. You will attain a Ukrainian state or perish fighting for it.
2. You will not allow anyone to tarnish your people's reputation or honour.
3. Remember the great days of our struggle for liberation
4. Be proud that you are heir to the fight for the glory of Volodymyr's Trident [the coat of arms of Vladimir the Great of Kiev Rus, 958-1015].
5. Avenge the death of the Great Knights.

6. Do not discuss this with whomever you can, but only with whom you must.
7. You will not hesitate to commit **even the greatest crime**, if the good of the cause demands it.
8. With hatred and **deceit** you will receive the enemies of your nation.
9. Neither pleading nor threats, torture or death will force you to reveal secrets.
10. You will strive to expand the strength, fame, wealth and area of the Ukrainian state, **even through the enslavement of foreigners.**"

Some years later the words highlighted in bold type above were edited out, changing "even the greatest crime" to "the most dangerous of acts" and "deceit" to "ruthless combat", while the final phrase was deleted.

The OUN incorporated other fanatically racist positions in its documents. In April 1941, for example, the OUN-B in Krakow held its "Second Great Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists", at which the Bandera wing declared itself a separate organisation and "de-legalised" the western Europe-based older leadership (which became known as the OUN-M, for Melnyk). A booklet of *Resolutions from the Second Great Congress* stated that the OUN-B sought to implement the type of nationalism expressed by Mykola Mikhnovsky (1873-1924). Mikhnovsky's creed had included such points as "Do not marry a foreign woman because your children will be your enemies", "Ukraine for Ukrainians", and "All people are your brothers, but Muscovites [Russians], Poles, Magyars [Hungarians], Romanians, and Jews are the enemies of our nation as long as they rule over us and exploit us".

The hateful language of OUN leaflets from the 1930s rivalled that of the Nazis. Polish-German historian Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, in his thoroughly documented history of Bandera and the OUN (see [Bibliography in Part 1](#)), quotes a 1936 OUN leaflet: "Attention, kill and beat the Jews for our Ukrainian leader Symon Petliura; the Jews should be removed from Ukraine, long live the Ukrainian state." Petliura had headed the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917-21. His Ukrainian People's Army (UNA) was a major perpetrator of the "White Terror" pogroms of 1918-20, in which thousands of Jewish villages were sacked and between 100,000 and 250,000 Jews were killed.

OUN propagandist Volodymyr Martynets wrote a brochure titled *The Jewish Problem in Ukraine*, in which he treated Jews as a separate "race". There were too many Jews in Ukraine, he wrote, especially in its cities, where they outnumbered Ukrainians, so they should be "cleansed". In the 1930s OUN members smashed windows in Jewish homes and committed arson against them. (Rossolinski-Liebe provides documentation of these acts.)

The OUN-B Resolutions adopted the slogan "Glory to Ukraine, to its heroes glory!", modelled on the "call and response" rhetoric used by Italian fascist Gabriele d'Annunzio at his mass rallies and analogous to the Nazis' "*Heil Hitler! Sieg heil!*". It took red and black, for blood and soil, as its colours, used on the OUN flag of the Bandera movement to this day.

In the 1930s the OUN self-identified as "national socialist", which is to say—like the German Nazis. "Ukrainians use the word 'nationalism' in the sense of 'National Socialism' or 'Fascism'", proclaimed a 1938 OUN article (speaking for themselves, not all Ukrainians). Put on trial by Poland for the assassination of Pieracki, Bandera and his OUN comrades, Rossolinski-Liebe notes, "presented [the OUN] as a fascist movement which attempted to lib-

erate Ukraine."

The torturous 20th century

Confronted with evidence of the OUN's attempts to ally with the Nazis, a customary response by its apologists (apart from outright denial) is that such an alliance was understandable in light of the suffering of Ukrainians under Soviet rule in Stalin's time (1924-53). The complex and bloody history of Russia and Eastern Europe goes beyond the scope of this article, but two observations are in order.

Firstly, all the peoples of this area suffered greatly in the first half of the 20th century. World War I brought 3.3 million civilian and military deaths in the Russian Empire (including parts of Poland and Ukraine), more than 1.5 million in Austria-Hungary, and 1.4 million in Romania and Serbia. Twelve million or more people died in the Russian Civil War (including in Poland and Ukraine), more than 10 million of whom were civilians killed by disease, famine, or execution. The famines of 1931-33 in the Soviet Union killed several million people in Ukraine, southern Russia, and Kazakhstan. The number of victims of the 1930s Great Purges in the Soviet Union, or "repressions" as Russians term these deaths and jailings in the GULAG prison camps, is still debated; the cruelty of Soviet secret police agencies that implemented them is well documented. World War II brought 27 million deaths in the Soviet Union. More than 2 million Ukrainians were deported to Germany as slave labour for the Nazis. Poland and Ukraine were epicentres of the Holocaust, with the murder of close to 90 per cent of the Jews living in what today is Belarus and more than a million Jewish people in modern Ukraine.

Some of these killings had a racist or ethnicity-based component, such as, obviously, the systematic murder of Jews. Others were political or of mixed cause, including the famine in which millions of Ukrainian peasants who had resisted the Soviet collectivisation of agriculture starved, amid forcible requisitioning of the grain they produced; this tragedy, called the Holodomor in Ukrainian, has been recast by many Ukrainian authors as solely "Russian genocide against Ukrainians".¹

Secondly: It is not surprising, in the setting of such devastating hardships, that some Ukrainian villagers did welcome the Germans as "liberators" when they invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Often the enthusiasm was short-lived, as the realities of Nazi rule became known. But the actions of the OUN, and other Ukrainian forces that it influenced, were different: they were based on the principles described above, which the OUN shared with the Nazis.

The OUN remained a minority body. The Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance, the largest Ukrainian political party in interwar Poland, commanded a voter base of 600,000, while the top estimate of membership in the illegal, underground OUN in those years is 20,000. During World War II, the very highest claimed number of fighters in the OUN-organised Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) at the height of its activity in 1943-44 is 200,000, while scholarly works suggest just tens of thousands. It was centred in western Ukraine. Meanwhile, between 4.5 and 7 million Ukrainians fought in the Soviet Red Army, against the Nazi invasion.

Conclusion will follow.

1. Andrea Graziosi, "[The Soviet 1931-1933 Famines and the Ukrainian Holodomor: Is a New Interpretation Possible, and What Would Its Consequences Be?](#)", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 2004. The Italian scholar gives an overview of evidence and analyses of these tragic events.

Hate thy neighbour: the racist ideology and Nazi alliances of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Part 3)

By Rachel Douglas

In Parts 1 and 2 of this article (AAS, 22 and 29 December): The ideology of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) came from a minority wing of 19th-century Ukrainian nationalists who preached ethnic purity and race hatred. Founded in 1929, the organisation specialised in assassinations and arson in inter-war Poland, worked up a set of beliefs emulating Italian fascism and German National Socialism (the Nazis), and sold its services to foreign intelligence agencies including the *Abwehr*, Germany's military spy unit.

One of the claims made in defence of OUN leader Stepan Bandera as “not a Nazi collaborator” is that the OUN and its military offshoot, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), fought against both “the Russians and the Germans”—the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Besides, it is often added, Bandera himself was interned in a German concentration camp.

Things were not so simple, in reality. We saw in Part 1 the June 1941 proclamation, signed by OUN-B (for “Bandera”) deputy leader Yaroslav Stetsko, that the newly formed would-be Ukrainian state would “work closely” with Hitler and “fight with the Allied German Army against Muscovite [Russian] occupation”. Here, in brief, are the events that preceded and followed that turning point.

The Munich “appeasement” conference of the UK, France, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, when British PM Neville Chamberlain approved the Nazis’ annexation of Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland region, took place in September 1938. Chamberlain told Britons he had achieved “peace for our time”. By early 1939, however, Germany was threatening to seize part of Poland. After the failure of diplomatic attempts in March-July 1939 to arrange a Soviet-British-French collective security pact against further such Nazi moves, Soviet leaders Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov, who were not mistaken in thinking that London wanted Hitler to strike only to the east, in August negotiated a non-aggression pact with Germany instead. That was the “Molotov-Ribbentrop” pact, so-called after the foreign ministers (or, the “Hitler-Stalin” pact).

A secret protocol to the German-Soviet agreement identified spheres of interest in central Europe, the dividing line running north-south through Poland. On 1 September 1939 the Nazis invaded Poland, occupying its western half. On 17 September Soviet forces moved into the eastern part, an area known as Poland’s Eastern Borderlands, or *Kresy* (Fig. 1).

The *Kresy* area had been “Russian Poland” under Russian rule in 1795-1919. It made up a large part of the Pale of Settlement, the area where the Russian Empire restricted Jews to living. Jews, Poles and Ukrainians each made up approximately one-third of its population.

As the map shows, Krakow and Lviv were on different sides of the divide; the OUN’s home base of Galicia—formerly a province of Austria and since 1919 in southern Poland—was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union. Bandera relocated to Krakow, in the western, German-occupied part, expecting that his operating

conditions there would be better than in Lviv under the Soviets. Between September 1939 and the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the OUN organised a militia, which killed upwards of 3,000 Poles, Jews, and Ukrainian political enemies in eastern Galicia and Volhynia (northeast of Lviv). The Krakow Second Great Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, which inaugurated the OUN-B as a separate organisation, took place in April 1941.

OUN ‘Struggle and Activities’

In May of 1941 Bandera, together with Yaroslav Stetsko, Stepan Lenkavsky, and Roman Shukhevych, composed a document called “Struggle and Activities of the OUN in Wartime”, which served as guidelines for launching a “Ukrainian National Revolution” as soon as there would be a “war between Moscow and other states”—the war that would begin on 22 June 1941, when the Germans invaded eastern Galicia and the Soviet Union proper, in Operation Barbarossa. Also before the German invasion, the OUN-B received aid from the *Abwehr* to form the *Nachtigall* and *Roland* battalions of Ukrainian fighters, with both German and Ukrainian officers, whose purpose would be to attack Soviet forces in their rear, once the German invasion began. Other members of the OUN-B underground came to western Galicia for special military training by the Germans, even though several hundred were caught and executed by Soviet border guards.

The “Struggle and Activities” document stated a special agenda for the OUN-B underground. It advised that it would be “permissible” during the war “to liquidate undesirable Polish, Muscovite, and Jewish activists”. (The OUN habitually called Russians by the pejorative name “Muscovites”, insisting that Ukrainians alone were the heirs of mediaeval Kiev Rus.) Indeed, “Struggle and Activities”

Figure 1. The shifting borders of Poland



Poland as established in 1919-23 (thick brown borders and label) was farther east than post-World War II Poland (black borders and label). Its Eastern Borderlands, or *Kresy*, included modern western Ukraine and part of Belarus. The eastern border of post-war Poland approximates, with a few variances, the dividing line between German and Soviet spheres of interest defined in the secret protocol to their 1939 non-aggression agreement. Source: 1990 map by US CIA, edited for AAS.

mandated that whole categories of people be “exterminated”: “Muscovites”, Jews “as individuals as well as a national group”, Poles, and “aliens, especially various Asians with whom Moscow has colonised Ukraine”. It instructed OUN activists to make blacklists of people who might “threaten the decisive mind-set of the Ukrainian nation”.

These preparations exploded into hideous atrocities, carried out under such slogans as “Death to Muscovite-Jewish Communism!”, as soon as Operation Barbarossa began.

The Soviets had deported more than 300,000 people from Kresy to the interior of the Soviet Union in 1940-41, including 140,000 from eastern Galicia (80,000 inhabitants and 45,000 Jewish refugees from the Nazi-occupied western half of Poland). Additionally, Soviet NKVD (secret police) forces had arrested nearly 50,000 people in Galicia; they saw Ukrainian nationalists as a threat in the area they occupied, and treated them cruelly. Nonetheless, when the Nazi invasion reached Lviv on 30 June 1941 its population was 160,000 Jews (including refugees from Nazi-occupied western and central Poland), 140,000 Poles, and 70,000 Ukrainians.

Bandera stayed back in Krakow to coordinate the Ukrainian National Revolution from afar, while Stetsko travelled with the OUN-B units accompanying the Germans. On 25 June he sent a message to Bandera: “We are setting up a militia that will help to remove the Jews and protect the population.” Stetsko issued the proclamation of Ukrainian statehood on 30 June in Lviv.

The Nazis were not interested in the appearance of a Ukrainian state; they wanted to keep control of the OUN forces, not let them become leaders. Soon Bandera and Stetsko were detained. Bandera’s place of confinement was attached to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, but it was a special unit for *Ehrenhaft*, or “honourable captivity”, of certain political prisoners who might be useful in the future.

Bandera’s absence from Lviv and its surroundings didn’t matter to the implementation of the “Struggle and Activities” guidelines he had written. An OUN-B underground order from around the time of the Nazi invasion stated, “I am introducing mass (family and national) responsibility for all offences against the Ukrainian State, the Ukrainian Army, and the OUN.” On 30 June the Germans discovered corpses in east Galician prisons; the NKVD, before retreating, had executed several thousand of their prisoners. The OUN-B spread word, through posters and leaflets, that these Soviet-imprisoned Poles and Ukrainians had been killed by “the Jews” (in reality, many of the victims were Jewish), thus signalling for the start of anti-Jewish pogroms in Lviv. On 1 July, OUN-B militiamen together with German units started to grab Jews in the street, stripping people naked, beating and killing them. Survivor accounts of atrocities committed against these victims are corroborated by photographs the German troops took. English and Israeli historians, based on secret German police reports, estimate more than 4,000 victims of the OUN-B militia and German Einsatzgruppen (“task forces”—killing squads) in two days.

(Documentation of these rampages, and many more horrific atrocities, is given by Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe in his history of Bandera and the OUN; see Bibliography, Part 1.)

It was only the beginning. Poland and Ukraine were epicentres of the Holocaust. By the end of the war in 1945, 85 per cent of the Jewish population of Kresy were dead. Within the post-war borders of Ukraine, nearly 1 million

Jews were killed.

As of 2 July, Nazi officials defined the OUN-B militia as subordinated to the SS, the Nazi Party’s military organisation, and called it the Ukrainian police. They continued to assist the Nazis. OUN-B official Mykola Lebed, for example, supplied to the Nazis the names and addresses of 25 Polish professors living in Lviv, whom a Nazi *Einsatzgruppe* murdered along with their families on 3 and 4 July 1941.

In August 1941 SS boss Heinrich Himmler formally established the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (*Hilfspolizei*), initially staffed by members of the OUN-B militia. These Ukrainian *Polizei* helped to enforce Nazi rule as the German forces rolled eastward. They took a major role in killing Jews throughout Ukraine and assisting the Nazis to do so.

At the end of 1942 the OUN-B decided to found its own military force, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Its early recruits included thousands of OUN men who deserted the *Polizei* and joined the UPA. As the tide turned on the Eastern Front at the Battle of Stalingrad (Aug. 1942-Feb. 1943) and the German army began to retreat, the UPA fought some skirmishes with German forces. But the UPA’s main foe continued to be the Soviet Red Army and the non-Ukrainian population of western Ukraine. The UPA perpetrated the Volhynia Massacres in early 1943, when they killed upwards of 70,000 Polish villagers in eastern Galicia and Volhynia, pursuing ethnic purity with exceeding brutality.

When it suited them in 1944, the Nazis released Bandera and other OUN-B leaders, toying with the formation, once again, of joint OUN-Nazi operations against the advancing Soviet Army. Those plans came to naught, and Bandera stayed in exile in Europe after the war.

After the War, into the present

Anglo-American strategists who anticipated fighting against their World War II ally the Soviet Union in the not too distant future sought to co-opt Nazi and fascist networks after the war. There was a paramilitary side to these intelligence-agency recruitment programs, as seen in British MI6’s backing of the OUN in subversive activity in Ukraine well beyond the end, in 1954, of the western Ukraine civil war between Soviet authorities and the remnants of the UPA.

There was also a “civilian” side to CIA and MI6 network-building among ex-Nazis and their allies, which fed into covert operations in South America, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as affecting public opinion in the UK and the USA. For example, US Army Counterintelligence attempted in 1952 to block entry into the USA by Mykola Lebed, an on-the-ground OUN-B leader in Galicia during the war and an instigator of the Volhynia Massacres, terming him “a well-known sadist and collaborator of the Germans”, but was overridden by CIA Director Allen Dulles on grounds that Lebed was of “inestimable value to this Agency in its operations”. The CIA went on to establish and fund the Prolog Research Corporation in New York City as Lebed’s base of operations, for intelligence-gathering and the distribution of nationalist and other literature inside the USSR. Prolog lasted until 1990, and supplied personnel who headed the Ukrainian section of Munich-based, CIA-funded Radio Liberty, broadcasting into the Soviet Union, in 1978-2003.

In 1948 the Truman Administration secretly initiated a program of covert operations against the Soviet Union. Inaugural CIA Director Allen Dulles coordinated

establishment of the Free Europe Committee and the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism. Yaroslav Stetsko came in handy when some non-Russian émigrés from the Soviet Union had refused to join in Russian émigré-dominated umbrella groups, which would not endorse the independence of their native areas from Russia. Already in 1946 Stetsko had revived the Committee of Subjugated Nations which the OUN had run for the Nazis, as a new Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) for non-Russian émigré activists. Based in Munich, the ABN was initially backed by British MI6 and subsequently by the Americans.

The beliefs and platform of the OUN-B—toned down and whitewashed—were promoted abroad for 50 years after the war by successor organisations such as the ABN and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) which celebrates Bandera as “one of Ukraine’s most devoted heroes and patriots”.

A cohort of Ukrainian diaspora members, sometimes two or three generations removed from immigration, came to hold influential posts in Washington, from which they preached the Banderite hard line of hostility towards Russia. Some of them, who as young activists had worked with Lebed at Prolog in the 1980s, went on to such jobs as vice-president of the National Endowment for Democracy, a senior fellowship at the Atlantic Council, and adviser to NATO on Ukraine (“Heirs of the OUN, Grandchildren of MI-6”, *EIR*, 16 May 2014).

In the years that followed, these Ukrainian diaspora figures aimed to set “thought rules” for public opinion and political circles elsewhere, for example in the USA or Australia, and, within Ukraine, to inculcate in the next generation the notion that to be a patriot of Ukraine, one must hate Russia. When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, millions of Ukrainian citizens—ethnic Ukrainians, Russians, and those of mixed or other ethnicity—advocated preserving close, cooperative relations with post-Soviet Russia. The dominant belief in official Washington, however, was that no true Ukrainian patriot would have that attitude.

Kateryna Chumachenko, the American-born wife of former Ukrainian President Victor Yushchenko, had worked in the Washington offices of the UCCA in the 1980s. During Yushchenko’s time in office (2005-10), big strides were taken towards the rehabilitation of Bandera and the OUN. Ukraine’s former KGB archives, held by the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU), were put under the charge of historian Volodymyr Vyatrovych, whose task was to develop “national heroes” as images for the new Ukraine. Vyatrovych painted all the main OUN figures in glowing tones.

The return of the OUN-B to Ukraine also took a more direct form. Upon the death of Stetsko in 1986, leadership of his ABN passed to his widow, Slava Stetsko. She returned to Lviv from the OUN-B’s headquarters in Munich in 1991, immediately after Ukraine’s independence, and founded a political party called the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (KUN). She chaired the party until her death in 2003, during which time the KUN won seats in the Supreme Rada, Ukraine’s Parliament.

Slava Stetsko sponsored a new organisation called *Tryzub* (the Trident) of Stepan Bandera. Its guiding light was Vasyl Ivanyshyn, a second-tier KUN leader and professor at the Drohobych Pedagogical Institute near Lviv. Ivanyshyn began to crank out tracts such as *Nation. Power. Nationalism* (1992) and *The Ukrainian Idea and the Prospects for a Nationalist Movement* (2000), in which he lauded Dontsov and Bandera. Tryzub was conceived as a “national-patriotic, social and sports organisation on the model of an



Slava Stetsko (middle row, female in dark coat) with Tryzub recruits in 1994. The organisation’s leader, Vasyl Ivanyshyn, is second on her right. Photo: Screenshot

order.” Ivanyshyn died in 2007 and was succeeded by his student Dmytro Yarosh.

In a 2008 interview, Yarosh declared that war with Russia was inevitable: “Sooner or later, we are fated to do battle with the Muscovite Empire.” Though its members were arrested for terrorism more than once, for blowing up statues and the like, Tryzub held regular summer recruitment and training camps. At the one in 2013, Yarosh video-recorded a speech that circulated widely online. It denounced the elected government of Ukraine as an “internal occupation” regime, called for a “national revolution”, and proclaimed that “as long as the Russian Empire exists in any form, true, real national independence of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people is impossible.” Yarosh urged, “We must show not only in words, but with our deeds, that the Bandera cause is not yesterday, but it is the present and the future.” He forecast, “The times are approaching that we may have been only dreaming about.”

Three months later, in November 2013, the demonstrations in Kiev’s Maidan (Square) started, which culminated in February 2014 with the ouster of the elected President of Ukraine. The Tryzub organisation had become part of the Right Sector coalition, which acted as an engine of the coup process. Many of the pre-organised Maidan Defence Forces were hundred-man units (*sotny*) from western Ukraine (including nationalist summer camp grads), whose population was disproportionately represented in the Maidan.

The red-black flag of UPA flew over the Maidan alongside Ukraine’s blue and yellow. Crowds of people who thought they were demonstrating for a better life through association with the European Union chanted the old OUN call-and-response, “Glory to Ukraine! To the heroes, glory!”, and jumped like puppets when the organisers called out, “Whoever doesn’t jump is a Muscovite!”—some of them having no idea where these slogans came from.

On the evening of 23 February 2014, Commandant of the Maidan Yuri Lutsenko took the microphone on the Maidan stage and thanked a long list of those who had made the coup possible. He offered special gratitude to “Right Sector and its leader, Dmytro Yarosh.”

Through political and institutional continuity, supplied in part through the diaspora and partly through such special projects as Tryzub and Right Sector, an unquestioning acceptance of many OUN assumptions (not necessarily so identified) as normal, healthy Ukrainian nationalism, became the norm among the Maidan movement and its foreign backers. That doesn’t mean that everybody in Ukraine bought into the OUN’s violent, extreme ethnic hatred, but its commitment to permanent war, especially with Russia, infected broader layers and made them tools in the hands of NATO.