

Canada-Ukraine: Are all Nazis War Criminals?

Stupidity and Depravity Can be Mutually Exclusive

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A question: Is it the case that an individual member of an organization who rejects participation in the wider group's malefaction is to be held equally culpable in the wider group's evildoing just by virtue of affiliation?

If so, this panders to the guilt by association fallacy.

In Canada, the Justin Trudeau government has further sullied its reputation and the reputation of Parliament by having invited and feted the 98-year-old Yaroslav Hunka as a "Ukrainian hero and a Canadian hero" who had fought against the Russians.

Yet, fighting against the Russians obviously meant that Hunka had to be fighting on the side of Nazi Germany. That fact seemed to elude the Canadian parliamentarians.

This incident ripped the mask off Trudeau's protecting "Canadian values," causing the government to try and have the embarrassing episode [struck from Hansard](#).

"The fact that a motion from the government benches to suppress any official (Hansard) record of the incident being tabled does nothing but underscore its culpability in Canadian-Ukraine fascism," said the ever insightful writer T.P. Wilkinson in an email.

Canadian officials are concerned that the proper vetting of invitees to the Parliament was not carried out. A spokesperson for the speaker of the House of Commons, Anthony Rota, indicated that Rota had not shared his list of invitees with the Prime Minister's Office or any opposition parties before the event. Rota had to take the fall, resigning as speaker.

Was it political cowardice that caused Trudeau to duck the subsequent Question Period and evade fellow parliamentarians?

Are There "Good Nazis"?

Hunka was a volunteer member of the 14th SS Division Galicia. The SS were notorious for committing war crimes.

But does being a Nazi mean one is *ipso facto* a war criminal, a scumbag, or some other nefarious descriptor?

Wernher von Braun was a Nazi who was also a rocket engineer. The Americans brought him stateside where he later became a director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. Von Braun designed the Saturn V launch vehicle, the superbooster that would send Americans to the moon. The Americans, apparently, thought von Braun was a good enough Nazi to bring to US soil.

What about Oskar Schindler, the German industrialist who was the main protagonist in Stephen Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*? Schindler was a member of the Nazi Party, but he is depicted as a humanitarian for helping Jews escape Nazi persecution.

What about [Dr. Hans Münch](#)? Or [Karl Plagge](#), former commander of a Nazi forced labor camp? Or [John Rabe](#), an ardent Hitler supporter? Or Nazi party official [Helmut Kleinicke](#) who Israel designated as Righteous Among the Nations in January 2020. These men have been described as "good Nazis."

Nazis are not alone in their monstrosity. To access the research findings of the notorious [Japanese scientists of Unit 731](#) who carried out exceedingly cruel criminal experimentation on humans, the US government had them snatched from the docket of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and brought to America.



Nazism and Chrystia Freeland

Canada, which had denied safe haven for over 900 Jewish refugees aboard the MS *St Louis* in 1939 (an unsavoury incident for which Trudeau issued a formal apology in 2018), had for some reason seen fit to open its borders to allow several Nazis in.

Nazism is strident in Canada.

Currently, Ukrainian-Canadian Chrystia Freeland serves as number two in Canada's government, as deputy prime minister. This is despite critics branding her as [sympathetic to Nazism](#).

Russian officials are also critical of Freeland. Kirill Kalinin, a spokesman for the Russian Embassy in Ottawa, [charged that Freeland](#) evaded revealing her grandfather's complicity with Nazis during World War II.

Freeland has brushed aside questions regarding her grandfather's Nazi involvement as Russian disinformation designed to undermine Canadian democracy. Yet, on 7 March 2017,

the *Globe and Mail* [reported](#) that “Freeland knew her grandfather was editor of a Nazi newspaper.”

The sins of the grandfather do not automatically fall upon the granddaughter, but Freeland must have felt the pressure to publicly denounce Nazism. On 28 March 2019, the [CBC quoted Freeland](#) as saying: “Neo-Nazis, white supremacists, ‘incels,’ nativists and radical anti-globalists who resort to violent acts are a threat to the stability of my country and countries around the world.”

However, on 4 March 2022 *Canadian Dimension* [headlined an article](#): “Chrystia Freeland’s ties to Ukrainian nationalists reveal a double standard The deputy prime minister was photographed with a scarf associated with the Ukrainian far-right at a demonstration in Toronto.”

Freeland deleted a tweet she had posted and relied again on the *ad hominem* fallacy of Russian disinformation.

It seems more like the claim of disinformation applies to Freeland as evidence indicates that she had contributed to an encyclopedia downplaying the ties of Ukrainian SS units to Nazism.

Trudeau’s Double Standards on Nazism

When the Trucker Convoy gathered in Ottawa to oppose the government’s COVID mandates, prime minister Trudeau [smeared the protestors](#) as homophobic, racist, and Nazis. Hypocritically, it is Trudeau’s government that has had to [deny accusations](#) of aiding Ukrainian Nazi fighters. On 4 May 2022, the Department of National Defence dismissed any allegations that the Canadian Armed Forces had trained Ukrainian Nazis. Yet CTV wrote that there is plenty of evidence that Canada helped [train Ukraine’s Nazi Azov Battalion](#) and called for the government to be held to account. Unfortunately, support for Ukraine spans the spectrum of Canada’s major political parties, and it is [abetted by Canada’s mass media](#).

So, the hullabaloo — deserved as it is — is puzzling surrounding the former Waffen SS volunteer, Yaroslav Hunka, given a longstanding lax attitude toward Nazism by Canada.

Hunka does have support in at least one corner. The president of the Ukrainian National Federation of Canada, Jurij Klufas, [complained about the unfair treatment Hunka is receiving](#). He makes the point that Hunka was fighting for Ukraine — not Germany — and that Canada, along with other countries had cleared his division of war crimes.

“If you’re a soldier, doesn’t mean you’re a member of a certain party from the country,” Klufas said.

How Were Nazis Accepted Into Canada?

A Canadian commission headed by Jules Deschênes issued a [report](#) with findings and recommendations concerning the Galicia division in which it stated that “it is worthwhile to pause and examine the blanket accusation brought against the members of the Galicia Division” (p 249) who were held in Britain as POWs.

On 31 May 1950, it was decided by the Canadian cabinet “that Ukrainians, presently residing in the United Kingdom, be admitted to Canada notwithstanding their service in the

German army provided they are otherwise admissible. These Ukrainians should be subject to special security screening, but should not be rejected on the grounds of their service in the German army.” (p 250)

An excerpt from the Screening Commission reported:

“The general impression which we have formed of all the men in the camp is favourable, as they strike us all as being decent, simple minded sort of people.” (253)

“The Commission is only interested in individuals, of whatever ethnic origin, who may be seriously suspected of war crimes.” (254)

“Membership alone in the Waffen SS does not, in itself, amount to a crime under international law; it must be membership as qualified by the Tribunal in Nuremberg. It implies either knowledge or participation.” (257)

“... no presumption of individual guilt derives from the declaration of the Nuremberg Tribunal, and that consequently, the prosecution is called to prove not only that the accused was a member of the organization declared criminal, but also that he knew the relevant facts or (if an involuntary member) that he was personally implicated in the commission of crimes....

In the event the courts have in many cases explicitly ruled that the burden of proof remains on the prosecution.” (259)

Remarks by Scott Ritter

Former US Marine intelligence officer Scott Ritter is a superbly insightful analyst of the special military operation that Russia is carrying out in Ukraine. He is deeply versed in the history of the former Soviet Union, Russia, and militarism, and he is forthright in presenting his analysis and views. However, there is cause for one to demur from Ritter’s opinions expressed in a recent [interview](#) — opinions that are contrary to some of the findings in the Deschênes Commission.

Ritter opined about Hunka that:

“He was a rifleman, so he probably shot a few Jewish women himself. He probably enjoyed it, too, because that is how those Ukrainians are that join the Waffen SS. They’re not innocent. These are ideologically motivated thugs.”

In 2011, Hunka waxed poetic in [a blog](#) about what motivated him and other Ukrainians to join the Galicia SS: “faith in God and love for Ukraine.”



A photograph of SS Galizien soldier Yaroslav Hunka, taken between 1943 and 1945. (Licensed under the Public Domain)

He lamented that day in 1940 when two *enkavedists* (special groups of the NKVD, the state security apparatus of the Soviet Union) came and took their beloved Russian language lecturer, an “old, tall, noble in character” Pole, and brought him forthwith to the railway station, where other families had been brought at night, including Hunka’s aunt and uncle Kobrin and his cousins Stefa and Volodymyr. He notes that Stefa, 15 years old like him, died that winter near Irkutsk in Siberia.

He wrote, “The terror of Moscow Communism raged over the Berezhansk land. The NKVD had eyes and ears everywhere.”

Hunka relates that when the German army occupied Berezhany (a city in western Ukraine) in July 1941, the German soldiers were joyfully greeted. No more would the citizens have to live in fear of a middle-of-the-night knock on the door, and Führer Hitler became regarded as the new “liberator” of the Ukrainian people.

This would seem to explain his anti-Russian, anti-Communist disposition — “those beasts turned into human form with a red star on the forehead” — a disposition that would drive him, at age 16, to join the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Is it an honest accounting of his time during WWII? He does not mention the Waffen SS in his blog posting.

Hunka’s professed motivation for joining the OUN/Galicia Waffen SS is understandable, even if the reasoning was flawed. But what do most 16-year-olds know of the world and war? The adult Hunka, who was 85 when he wrote the blog, is another story. Obviously, the truthfulness of the blog relies upon the veracity of its writer.

Hunka’s Joining the Nationalist OUN

Ritter was also scathing about Freeland: “Chrystia Freeland, herself, is just a dyed-in-the-wool Nazi.... She is scum personified, and so is almost everyone of Ukrainian descent in Canada.... but I’m not saying that just because you are Ukrainian you are scum, but I’m

saying that if your ancestors were Nazis and if you continue to glorify their history, and you continue to try and whitewash it, then you are scum, too.”

For Ritter, Hunka is a “murderous Nazi war criminal.” This is based purely on Hunka’s affiliation with the Waffen SS.

There is no denying that the SS is an utterly despicable outfit. And if Hunka did commit the war crimes that Ritter alleges, then he is indeed a monster. But merely joining a despicable outfit such as the Waffen SS does not mean that a person participated in any horrendous acts against other humans. However, there is a matter of the incriminating cognizance of egregious crimes. At best, Hunka can be accused of being naive or foolhardy in joining the SS for whatever reason. And, to iterate, if Hunka did commit war crimes, then he should be held accountable.

Good for the Goose, Good for the Gander

If everyone who allied with Nazis can be denounced as scum, then the same principle should apply to other despicable outfits that are known to have committed war crimes. That would definitely include the US military as it (with the collusion of Britain and France) is held to have deliberately starved German POWs after Germany’s surrender in WWII, perhaps killing as many as 1.7 million POWs (see *Other Losses* by James Bacque); the scorched earth destruction and wanton commission of war crimes in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (See A.B. Abrams’s *Immovable Object North Korea’s 70 Years At War with American Power*. [Review](#)).

US atrocities were not limited to the DPRK but occurred even in South Korea; e.g., the No Gun Ri massacre); the several massacres perpetrated in Viet Nam (e.g., the rape and killing of women and slaughter of elders during the My Lai massacre); the disgusting abuse of military superiority in Iraq from the Highway of Death, which likened the slaughter of retreating Iraqi soldiers to shooting fish in a barrel, and to the torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib; bombing wedding parties in Afghanistan; and the cowardly sacrificing of Ukrainian lives to fight the US-Nato war against Russia. The US military is steeped in war crimes. (See A.B. Abrams’s *Atrocity Fabrication and Its Consequences*. [Review](#).)

Scott Ritter was in the US military. Does that make him scum and a rapist of little girls? No. So why does it make every Nazi a war criminal and rapist?

Where does Ritter get off saying things like: “This 98-year-old guy was a young guy at the time, He was chasing down the Jewish girls and killing them and raping them because that is what they [the Galicia SS] did.”

There are far too many documented accounts of American soldiers raping and killing. Can one therefore say Ritter was chasing down Iraqi girls and killing them? Of course not.

Ritter, who was an opponent of a war on Iraq, also acknowledges that at one time he was sharing intelligence about Iraq with Israel. But Israel is a war crimes monstrosity itself that is engaged in massive human rights abuses and killings of the indigenous Palestinians.

Thus, it was surprising to hear Ritter say, “[W]hen Jewish people say ‘never again,’ I have to respect that. They mean ‘never again.’”

Ritter doubled down on those two words, *never again*: “It means it ain’t never again gonna

happen.”

Again, I will demur with Ritter on this point. The oft heard maxim is that actions speak louder than words. Words are easy. Words in isolation don't deserve respect; it is the rightful actions that deserve respect. It is the actions that give force to the truthfulness behind words.

Returning to Israel, an informed observer would ask what does the [slow motion genocide](#) of Palestinians by Jewish Israelis, supported by much of the Jewish diaspora, signify for fidelity to the refrain “never again”?

Conclusion

Dr Wilkinson:

I spent much of my youth around the military and naval forces. I know the sources of the attraction. Ritter is sincere in his loyalties and criticisms. However the reality was for many in the thirties and forties that the SS was just as proud as the US Marine Corps. The Corps is the most heavily indoctrinated branch of the regular US military- even the Navy keep them at arm's length.

So Ritter should not throw stones at nonagenarians.

No people are a monolith.

People, especially those imbued with the folly of youth, can make foolish mistakes in choosing which friends to hang with, gangs to join, and organizations to participate in. Then there are [those persons addicted to lethal violence](#) some of who primarily enlist in the military for a chance to shoot and kill a purported enemy and not to serve firstly as a defender of their country.

It is not out of the realm of possibility that some people felt or were trapped by their foolish choices but refrained from taking part in dastardly acts of their group. To be clear, people are culpable for their choice of who they associate with. But does this make them equally culpable for the misdeeds of the wicked group members?

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