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INTERVIEW WITH ELISA HATEGAN

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Elisa Hategan
Author, *Race Traitor*

In the 1990s, a young Romanian immigrant Elisa Hategan was a prominent figure within neo-Nazi circles in Canada as a member of the racist Heritage Front and with her work with Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel. She was a speaker at rallies, a writer of several articles and she has also appeared on television programs like *The Montel Williams Show*. When things started to take a dark turn with the Heritage Front however, and she began to rethink her own perspectives about who she is and what direction she was going in,

she not only left her old group, she provided enough information to anti-racist activists and government



Above: Elisa Hategan recently shared her story with LexisNexis Canada employees.

“The reason this book is unique is because there just haven’t been that many individuals who have witnessed what I have and took the risk to become whistleblowers.”

behind, she has written a book about her life and experiences, *Race Traitor: The True Story of Canadian Intelligence Service’s Greatest Cover-Up*.

Q: You did something unique in writing this book. You didn’t just write about how you got out of the white power scene, you also talked about how the government was complicit in its growth for whatever ends. Why do you think you are maybe the only one that has ever talked about this, despite how much it seems to happen?

A: I think that, for better or worse, I am simply a product of being in the right place at the right time to witness not only the growth of the most organized, violent white supremacist group Canada has ever seen, but also its downfall. And ironically, both that exponential growth and downfall came as a direct result of the activities of Canada’s own intelligence agency, CSIS.

There was nothing intrinsically special about me other than my gender and my young age. I was a stupid, wounded little girl. But being the only girl inside the Heritage Front core group, a vulnerable sixteen-year old Romanian immigrant from an abusive household, allowed me the opportunity to be taken into the fold and into their trust. For over two years I was very close to the leadership of the Heritage Front and to Ernst Zundel, who used me for free labour inside the Toronto house from where he distributed Holocaust-revisionist propaganda all over the world. Being that I was a runaway kid who needed their protection, it was easy for them to trust me. They treated me as their own kid, encouraged me to give speeches at rallies and paraded me around each time there was a media interview as the “softer face of the Heritage Front.” It was easy for HF co-leader Grant Bristow, who was later revealed to be a CSIS agent, to confide in me and teach me the psychological terror tactics that he had used to terrorize people in the anti-racist community. He took me for granted; he never saw me as a threat.

The reason this book is unique is because there just haven't been that many individuals who have witnessed what I have and took the risk to become whistleblowers. Of course, there are tons of people who are undoubtedly aware of the role intelligence agencies often play in the building-up of terrorist groups, but don't get the opportunity to witness first-hand how such a process actually works. I felt it was very important - crucial actually - that beyond describing the step-by-step process of radicalization and indoctrination that a vulnerable young person might experience into an extremist group, to go higher. To reveal that often times, intelligence forces and police departments are complicit in fostering and even facilitating hate group activity.

“When it comes to hate, people will reach for whatever they think is the anti-establishment movement of the day.”



Q: In recent years we have seen a lot of the older, more established organizations fall apart (National Alliance, Aryan Nations, etc.) due to their elderly leaders passing on and those that are left incapable of maintaining them because of infighting, greed or just flat out incompetence. In your opinion, do you feel it was pretty much inevitable?

A: When it comes to hate, people will reach for whatever they think is the anti-establishment movement of the day. A hundred years ago it was the Klan. Twenty years ago, the neo-Nazi movement. Today, young white men are flocking in droves to the radical Islamic movement. I find that when it comes to impoverished, little-educated young people with inferior self-esteems, blaming others is a typical

response. Hate does not know boundaries – it traverses race, religion and creed. People who have nothing always want whatever they can't have. They will hate and kill for it – even if it's just a utopian version of an idealized world, a fantasy where they will be recognized, appreciated and loved. But the paradox is, the less love you have within yourself, the more desperately you crave it. And somehow, you think that you can earn that love by proving what a bad-ass you are.

Of course, it was inevitable that the white supremacist movement would fall apart, albeit the organized version of it. Skinheads who go to jail quickly realize that nobody from their group will actually visit them. As the old leaders die off or go silent due to lawsuits, the young increasingly turn to the virtual world. And the truth is, most people are more sensitized now to go out in public and admit they are racists. They're cautious to call another race a derogatory name, other than behind an anonymous handle on hate forums such as Stormfront. But racism is alive more than ever before, especially as members of what used to think of itself as a majority realize that they are indeed the minority now. The hate is internalized, spewed via the internet, but it's still there. And that's what makes the extreme right-wing movement so dangerous globally – as the numbers of immigrants in Europe and North America grows, so do the ranks of extremist political groups such as the National Front in France or Greece's Golden Dawn, which actually came in third in the January 25, 2015 elections.

SCC CHIEF JUSTICE TO LEAD INTERNATIONAL BODY OF FRANCOPHONE CONSTITUTIONAL COURTS

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Cristin Schmitz,
Ottawa Bureau Chief,
The Lawyer's Daily

Canada's top judge has assumed the presidency of an international organization dedicated to strengthening the rule of law and promoting judicial independence in French-speaking constitutional courts around the globe.

On May 1 in Montreal, Chief Justice of Canada Richard Wagner opened a two-day conference of the Association des Cours Constitutionnelles ayant en Partage l'Usage du Français (ACCPUF) – an organization that was created in 1997 to build and solidify mutually supportive relationships among constitutional courts which operate in nations that use the French language.

Chief Justice Wagner succeeds Ulrich Meyer, first president of the Federal Supreme Court of Switzerland, as the ACCPUF's president, an unpaid position, for the next three years.

 Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Richard Wagner said he is 'very proud' his court is lending its support to an organization of constitutional courts whose aim is to strengthen the rule of law in French speaking countries.

"I am very proud of the fact that the Supreme Court of Canada is able to lend its support to an association like the ACCPUF, whose mission is, in part, to help strengthen the rule of law in French speaking countries," Chief Justice Wagner told The Lawyer's Daily through a court official.

"As an institution, the Supreme Court of Canada is held in high regard both at home and abroad," the chief justice noted. "I expect that the court's good reputation will be a positive influence in the pursuit of the association's important mission."

The ACCPUF – whose general assembly votes May 2 on changing the organization's name to "Association des cours constitutionnelles francophones" (ACCF) – has members from more than 40 constitutional courts (or equivalent institutions) in Africa, Europe, Asia and America.



The group collaborates closely with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in efforts to achieve the ACCPUF’s aims of strengthening the rule of law and supporting the authority of constitutional courts, mainly through the exchange of ideas and experiences, and through mutual co-operation and assistance, mostly via training, and technical and material support.

The challenges constitutional courts face across the globe are quite diverse. In some countries, getting access to legal books or other basics is a major hurdle

to delivering justice. For others, a key challenge is to earn the public’s confidence that the court is delivering justice in accordance with the rule of law.

As ACCPUF’s president Chief Justice Wagner, whose own court leads the way in Canada in judicial communications with the media and Canadian public, will continue to convey his passionate conviction that the public’s trust in courts depends on public understanding of the justice system, including the importance of an independent judiciary to a free and democratic society. In turn, public understanding depends on courts communicating well with the public.

☞ **To guarantee social peace, the law must aim at accessibility, stability and predictability.**

“International exchanges and co-operation efforts such as those led by the association can be incredibly useful in that regard,” the chief justice remarked.

The theme for the annual conference underway in Montreal is “Constitution and Legal Certainty.” (Past conference themes included Judicial Drafting, the Conduct of Proceedings, Children’s Rights and the Constitution, and Citizens’ Access to Constitutional Justice.)

“The notion of ‘legal certainty’ has not been theorized in the same way in our respective jurisdictions, which do not all address in the same way the problems posed by situations of insecurity, instability, uncertainty and inaccessibility of the law (translation),” Chief Justice Wagner told the ACCPUF’s general assembly in French (a copy of his written text was provided to The Lawyer’s Daily by his office).

“While the concept of legal certainty is sometimes recognized as a legal norm — some argue that it is a universal norm inherent in the rule of law — others (and this is the case of Canada) recognize instead that legal certainty is an essential



value that underlies the legal order,” Chief Justice Wagner said. “In my opinion, whether certainty is established as an independent normative principle or as part of the fundamental values recognized by a legal system, it is unquestionably an end of the law. To guarantee social peace, the law must aim at accessibility, stability and predictability.”

During the chief justice’s three years as president, the ACCPUF expects to focus on co-operation between members via: international exchanges;

the creation of a bursary program for staff of member institutions; and the provision of support for training within, and between, member institutions.

A second focus is improving communications, for example, by enhancing ACCPUF’s website; publishing conference materials; and assisting member institutions with training on plain-language communications and media relations.

A third area of focus will be providing member courts with such technical and material support as legal materials and books and language training.

As well ACCPUF will continue to co-operate with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, in exchanges of information and networking, including by members contributing to the CODICES international database on constitutional jurisprudence.

The ACCPUF has also committed to supporting the implementation of the Declaration of Bamako, adopted on Nov. 3, 2000, by ministers and delegates of states and governments of francophone countries.

The declaration is a reference document for the OIF in the areas of democracy and human rights and provides an action plan to help strengthen the rule of law in French-speaking countries.

The ACCPUF is expecting to boost its efforts to collaborate with the OIF, notably in the area of ensuring fair and democratic elections. For example, on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, 2018, the ACCPUF and the OIF organized in Rabat, Morocco a joint seminar on managing electoral disputes, of which eight member institutions took part. The seminar addressed such issues as the general principles of electoral law and best practices for communications in the context of electoral disputes.

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