

The fascist danger in Ukraine

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6 March 2014

A politically sinister propaganda offensive is underway in the media to either deny the involvement of fascists in the US-backed coup in Ukraine or present their role as a marginal and insignificant detail.

The *New York Times*, for example, asserted, “Putin’s claim of an immediate threat to Ukrainian Russians is empty,” while Britain’s *Guardian* dismissed as a “fancy” claims that events in Crimea were an attempt to “prevent attacks by bands of revolutionary fascists,” adding that “the world’s media has [not] yet seen or heard from” such forces.

This is an obscene cover-up.

The reality is that, for the first time since 1945, an avowedly anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi party controls key levers of state power in a European capital, courtesy of US and European imperialism. The unelected Ukrainian government, headed by US appointee Arseniy Yatsenyuk, includes no fewer than six ministers from the fascist Svoboda party.

Less than a year ago, the World Jewish Congress called for Svoboda to be banned. But the party’s founder and leader, Oleh Tyahnybok, who has spoken repeatedly of his determination to crush the “Russkie-Yid mafia that controls Ukraine,” was feted by US and European Union officials as they prepared last month’s coup.

Following the 2010 conviction of John Demjanjuk as an accomplice in the murder of nearly 30,000 people in the Nazi concentration camp at Sobibor, Tyahnybok called him a hero. Tyahnybok’s deputy, Yuriy Mykhalchyshyn, founded a think tank called the Joseph Goebbels Political Research Center.

Svoboda was the major political force in the Maidan protests that overthrew Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. In return for providing the shock troops for the coup, it has been given control of vital ministries.

Svoboda co-founder Andriy Parubiy acted as “security commandant” in the protests, directing attacks by the Right Sector—an alliance of fascists and extreme right-wing nationalists, including the paramilitary Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self Defense

(UNA-UNSO). Dressed in uniforms modelled on Hitler’s Waffen SS, its members boast of fighting Russia in Chechnya, Georgia and Afghanistan.

Parubiy is now secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, overseeing the Defence Ministry and the armed forces. Dmytro Yarosh, leader of the Right Sector, is his deputy.

Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Sych is another leading Svoboda figure, as is Oleh Makhnitsky (prosecutor-general), Serhiy Kvit (Education Ministry), Andriy Makhnyk (Ecology Ministry) and Ihor Shvaiko (Agriculture Ministry).

Others reportedly connected to UNA-UNSO are Dmytro Bulatov (youth and sports minister) and the “activist” journalist Tetyana Chernovol, who was named chair of the government’s anti-corruption committee.

The hero of Svoboda and UNA-UNSO is the Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera, leader of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN), which aided the Nazis in horrific massacres of the Jewish population.

In 2010, Svoboda’s official forum posted a statement reading: “To create a truly Ukrainian Ukraine in the cities of the East and South...we will need to cancel parliamentarism, ban all political parties, nationalise the entire industry, all media, prohibit the importation of any literature to Ukraine from Russia...completely replace the leaders of the civil service, education management, military (especially in the East), physically liquidate all Russian-speaking intellectuals and all Ukrainophobes (fast, without a trial shot. Registering Ukrainophobes can be done here by any member of Svoboda), execute all members of the anti-Ukrainian political parties....”

One of the first acts of the new government was to abolish minority rights for Russian-speakers. Moves are also afoot to overturn the law that bans “excusing the crimes of fascism.”

In recent days, representatives of the Right Sector have been busy attacking Jews, Russian Orthodox Christians and legal figures. Two YouTube videos show a Right Sector leader Aleksandr Muzychko—who described his

credo as fighting “communists, Jews and Russians for as long as blood flows in my veins”—physically attacking a regional prosecutor in Rovno and forcing Rovno regional parliament members to hold a session at gunpoint after he brandished a Kalashnikov, demanding, “Who wants to take away my machine-gun? Who wants to take away my gun? Who wants to take away my knives? I dare you!”

The US and European bourgeoisie, along with their media lackeys, are well aware of these facts.

Their attempts to portray the extreme right as a marginalised minority that has emerged almost overnight are equally bogus. There are numerous academic documents that detail the role and significance of the extreme right in Ukraine stretching back decades. They also illustrate how, having first reared its head again in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism, the far right has risen to prominence, its ascendancy prepared ideologically over many years. The rise of the far right accelerated markedly following the Western-orchestrated “Orange Revolution” in 2004.

Per Anders Rudling (*Organised Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Ukraine: Structure, Influence and Ideology*, 2006), cites the critical role played by the Interregional Academy of Human Resources (MAUP), a private university founded in 1989 that “operates a well-connected political network that reaches the very top of the Ukrainian society.”

In 2008, the US State Department listed MAUP as “one of the most persistent anti-Semitic institutions in Eastern Europe.” Rudling states that MAUP has “educated more government officials, diplomats and administrators than any other university” in Ukraine.

MAUP’s speciality is churning out extreme-right propaganda disguised as academic research portraying Bolshevism and the October revolution as the creations of “international Jewry.” On this basis, it asserts that the crimes of the Stalinist dictatorship against the peoples of the Ukraine were part of the same “Jewish conspiracy.”

In June 2005, participants at the Fourth World Wide Conference organised by MAUP included David Duke, former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, and the extreme nationalist and former Ukrainian ambassador to Canada, Levko Lukianenko.

Lukianenko presented a paper that argued that the 1932-1933 famine, in which millions of Ukrainians died, was the work of a Jewish-run satanic government. Delegates at the conference called for the deportation of all Jews from the Ukraine.

At the time, Lukianenko was allied with the two leading figures in the Orange Revolution, Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko. The two were backed by Washington and the European powers as part of a campaign to secure the presidency of Ukraine against the pro-Russian incumbent Viktor Yanukovich.

In January 2005, Yushchenko replaced Yanukovich as president. He was at the time on MAUP’s board of directors. Lukianenko was part of Tymoshenko’s electoral bloc. Only weeks before the June 2005 MAUP conference, Yushchenko made Lukianenko a “Hero of the Ukraine.”

At the end of 2005, MAUP held a conference under the title “The Jewish-Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—the Source of the Red Terrorism and the Starvation of Ukraine.” Not for nothing does Rudling note, “In the wake of the Orange Revolution, Ukraine has witnessed a substantial growth in organised anti-Semitism.”

So great was the stench of fascist reaction that, in July of that year, leading Ukrainian academics issued an appeal for the Orange leaders to disassociate themselves from the “xenophobic stance” of MAUP. “We would like to ask high government officials: at whose cost are these large-scale anti-Semitic campaigns being waged?” the appeal asked. “Do we not have a ‘fifth column’ that wishes to bring foreign ethno-political conflicts into our territory?”

The objective of this fifth column was to poison the ideological climate with reaction, as aspiring oligarchs jostled for control of Ukraine’s resources and the imperialist powers pressed forward with their plans to dominate Ukraine in order to isolate and ultimately colonise Russia.

This is the real record of the reactionary forces that the imperialist powers are aiding and abetting in Ukraine, and on whose behalf they are prepared to plunge Europe, and indeed, the entire world, into a Third World War.



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