

The US State Department’s “labor man” in Ukraine

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The visit of American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten to Kiev had nothing to do with the interests of the working class. The trip was aimed at bolstering the operations of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVP) and its leader Mikhail Volynets.

The KVP, whose headquarters served as an organizing center for the right-wing Maidan protests, has long been financed by State Department money funneled through the AFL-CIO’s American Center for International Labor Solidarity (also known as Solidarity Center).

An account of Volynets’ role written by Oleg Vernyk, chairman of the All-Ukrainian independent trade union Zakhyst Pratsi (Labor Defence), recently appeared in the Ukrainian news magazine *korrespondent.net*.

In his blog, “All-Ukrainian strike as big fake of Euromaidan,” Vernyk exposes the fraud of the supposed general strike called by opposition parties for February 13, 2014 and backed by Volynets’ KVP. Although the Ukrainian media widely promoted the so-called strike as a great success, in fact, workers in both the western and eastern regions of the country largely ignored it.

Referring to western Ukraine, Vernyk explains, “Ordered by the directors of the enterprises, workers were forced to abandon their lunches and gather for one hour in front of the main entrances to their factories, to express their hearty support of the opposition leaders. A clip about this ‘lunch strike’ in a linen factory in Rivne was on constant rotation on TV Channel 5, which belongs to the oligarch Petro Poroshenko. Its participants later openly admitted that their ‘strike’ was ordered by the factory’s director. And this was the scenario for all of the enterprises that were announced

as having joined the ‘All-Ukrainian Strike.’”

Vernyk continued, “Ukraine is probably the only country in the world where strikes are not held through the initiative of the workers themselves, but are ordered by their bosses, to occur in an orderly fashion during the lunch hour so that no disruption of their business operations will take place. This would be funny were it not so sad!”

Vernyk explains that besides the opposition parties, the only other participant in the “All-Ukrainian Strike Committee” was Volynets’ KVP. None of the other independent Ukrainian union federations were allowed to participate. “At the same time,” Vernyk writes, “the KVP has long ago lost all human and organizational resources, and is incapable of organizing any ‘strike’ by its own strength. For over 20 years, the American labor and trade union, the AFL-CIO, has provided financial and organizational support to the KVP.”

Describing another episode, Vernyk reports that “the leaders of the political opposition demanded that Mikhail Volynets bring the miners to Kiev—no miners arrived. Instead, Volynets had the office workers of his KVP put on the miners’ helmets and simulate ‘miners from Donetsk and Luhansk’ at Maidan. However, the most impressive and outrageous of his actions was the public announcement that Mr. Mikhail Volynets made at a press conference in Kiev in December of 2013. In it, he declared that all markets in Kiev had gone on strike. It should be noted that the press conference was held on Monday, which is the cleaning day, during which markets in Ukraine are normally closed. Naturally, on Tuesday, the following day, all markets were open and operating to their full capacity.”

Vernyk says the February 13 “strike” was chiefly organized by Vitaly Klitschko’s Udar Party, which is

funded by German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and represents "large enterprises and business directors of Ukraine."

The "democratic revolution" in Kiev was chiefly a combination of US- and EU-funded provocations and the fascistic violence of neo-Nazis. This is the foul operation Weingarten & Co. traveled to Kiev to endorse.



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