What took place in Odessa on May 2?

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New information, eyewitness testimony, photos and videos reveal the extent of the massacre carried out by fascist forces in the Ukrainian city of Odessa on May 2.

The day began when opponents of the Kiev regime assembled in tents in the centre of Odessa to collect signatures in favor of a referendum for a federal system in Ukraine. This peaceful gathering was then attacked by groups of fascist thugs who had been bussed into the city from Kiev and Kharkov. The storming of the tents is shown in this video, which shows hundreds of thugs armed with clubs, shields and pistols marching into the middle of the city and attacking anti-government protesters.

To escape the fascist onslaught, the anti-Kiev activists retreated to the city's central Trades Union building, a massive stone structure consisting of five storeys. The building was then surrounded by the neo-Nazi mob who proceeded to blockade the doors. Bawling "burn them" the nationalist thugs then set fire to the front of the building with Molotov cocktails. Photos show the fascists preparing Molotov cocktails on the street.

During this entire period, the Ukrainian police watched on and did nothing to restrain the fascists. Instead they arrested 130 of the anti-Kiev protesters and survivors of the massacre. There are no reports of arrests by the police of any of the neo-Nazis who stormed the trade union building.

One video shows some of the reactions of the thugs surrounding the building. One man, wearing a yellow-blue armband and identified as an activist in the Maidan demonstrations in February, is seen shooting at people trying to escape from the windows.

Four minutes into the video, one man calls for more Molotov bombs to be tossed into the building: "Throw them, throw them!" A few seconds later a grenade explodes at the front of the building.

As the flames spread on the second floor, people began to jump from the windows. On the ground, the ultra-nationalists shout: "Jump! Glory to the Ukraine!"

Shots aimed at those inside the burning building came from behind police lines, indicating that the police supported the fascists. The police also did nothing to prevent the mob from blocking the path of fire engines attempting to reach the fire. This delay doubtless cost extra lives.

Initially the media reported that the total of around 40 victims of the masssacre died directly as a result of the blaze—from smoke inhalation, or from injuries sustained when they jumped from windows.

The media have maintained a total silence on gruesome photos taken inside the building after the fire that indicate that several victims were murdered and did not die from the fire—suggesting that the fascists were able to enter the building and systematically execute those inside. One photo shows a pregnant woman bent backwards over a desk with a wire wound around her neck. She had evidently been strangled.

These reports expose the attempts of Western officials and media to cover for the reactionary far-right regime in Kiev and blame the massacre on the pro-Russian forces that were its victims. The Swedish foreign minister, Carl Bildt, who has longstanding links to neo-conservative US think tanks, posted on Twitter on the same day of the massacre, noting: "Horrible with at least 38 dead in Odessa. Seems to have started with pro-Russian attempt to get control of buildings….."

The aim of the provocation in Odessa on May 2, followed in the past days by the latest Ukrainian military offensive in Mariupol, is to intimidate all opposition to the putsch regime in Kiev, which has pledged to implement the program of drastic austerity dictated by the IMF and EU. To this end the governments of Washington and Berlin are prepared to collaborate with the reactionary filth responsible for the atrocity of May 2 and even risk military conflict with

Russia.

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