

# New evidence implicates pro-US opposition in Maidan killings during Kiev coup

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Further evidence has emerged that the deadly shootings on Independence Square (Maidan) in Kiev last February, in the final stages of the NATO-backed putsch that ousted pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, were carried out by the far-right.

Recently published investigative coverage by the BBC and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) in Germany indicates that snipers were recruited by fascist forces to fire on targets on the Maidan. Until that point, police had engaged in violent confrontations with anti-government protesters but had yet to resort to live ammunition.

This suggests that the far-right forces were trying to escalate the conflict, in order to shatter plans for a negotiated settlement that European officials were trying to work out between the Yanukovych regime and the far-right, pro-NATO opposition forces.

The 98 deaths during the Maidan protests—now referred to as the “Heavenly Hundred”—were utilized to promote the myth that the fascist-led coup was a democratic movement of peaceful protesters martyred by Ukrainian riot police. The Kiev regime established the “Order of the Heavenly Hundred,” which recognizes people for “civic courage, patriotism, the upholding of constitutional principles of democracy.” Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko recently declared February 20 the “Day of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes” to commemorate the “Revolution of Dignity.”

The BBC and FAZ investigations give the lie to this propaganda. They point to the anti-democratic intrigue that underlies the current Kiev regime and ongoing US provocations against Russia in the region, which threaten the world with what France’s president recently described as “total” war.

On February 11, the BBC published an interview with a man identified as “Sergei,” who was involved in anti-government protests for several weeks in early 2014. He

told the news agency he was armed with a high-velocity hunting rifle by pro-Maidan operatives and posted in the Conservatory building on the Maidan along with another gunman.

Early in the morning of February 20, he began targeting government troops, who had taken up positions in the square itself for the first time and were using water cannons and crowd control methods to break up the protest encampment.

As they came under assault, the security services retreated from the square and began returning fire as they pulled out. That same day, Yanukovych’s interior minister authorized the use of lethal force.

Sergei’s account was partially corroborated by Andriy Shevchenko, an opposition Ukrainian member of parliament who joined the Maidan protests. Shevchenko told the BBC that as events on February 20 unfolded, the head of the Yanukovych regime’s riot police contacted him about the escalating situation.

“He calls me and says, ‘Andriy, somebody is shooting at my guys,’” Shevchenko told the BBC. He added, “I kept getting calls from the police officer, who said, ‘I have three people wounded, I have five people wounded, I have one person dead.’ And at some point he says, ‘I am pulling out.’ And he says, ‘Andriy, I do not know what will be next.’ But I clearly felt that something really bad was about to happen.”

Andriy Parubiy, a leader of the pro-Maidan movement who also founded the Social-National Party of Ukraine, a neo-Nazi precursor of today’s fascist Svoboda party, and is currently the deputy speaker of Ukraine’s parliament, has denied that any gunmen were found in the conservatory. He has also asserted, along with other leaders of the recently-installed Ukrainian regime, that sniper fire on the Maidan came from Russian agents.

These claims, however, are belied by photographic evidence of shooters in the building and by a recent

interview in the *FAZ* with Volodymyr Parasyuk, a pro-Maidan leader who admits to commanding riflemen in the conservatory.

Parasyuk, who later fought against pro-Russian separatists in southeast Ukraine as part of the fascist Dnipro battalion and is now a member of parliament, told the *FAZ* last week that at the Maidan, “A lot of lads came to us then, who said we said we should take up arms and attack...Many had guns with them, often hunting rifles.” In an interview given to the Ukrainian press last year just after these events, however, Parasyuk made no mention of the use of firearms during the protests.

A recently published article in *Business News Europe* also reports that a source staying in a hotel overlooking Maidan square said that opposition gunmen demanded access to rooms and fired from hotel windows.

On February 20, dozens were killed in the violence that erupted on the Maidan. The situation appeared to stabilize the next day when the European Union negotiated a power-sharing deal between Yanukovych and the NATO-backed opposition parties. However, the deal quickly evaporated.

Parasyuk, who up until this point had worked behind the scenes directing the armed attacks of far-right forces, took to the stage on the night of February 21 in a rally held to commemorate the deaths of those allegedly killed at the hands of the Ukrainian security services. He demanded Yanukovych’s resignation and warned that his forces would storm the presidential palace the next morning if he did not resign.

Despite having just reached a political agreement to resolve the crisis, Yanukovych fled the country. *Business News Europe* notes that one factor in the Ukrainian president’s decision to abdicate power was “the direct physical threat to [him] from an apparent armed wing of the protesters not under the control of the parliamentary opposition.”

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