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A Monster Reawakens: The Rise of Ukrainian Fascism

By Justin Raimondo

March 4, 2014

With the eyes of the world fixed on Russia's invasion of Crimea and the prospect of a wider war engulfing all Ukraine, our attention has been diverted from what may be the most significant aspect of this crisis: the ascension of a genuinely fascist mass movement into the corridors of power.

Our "mainstream" media shrugs off what it describes as the presence of "a few ultra-nationalists" at the Kiev protests, but this is nonsense: it is far more than a few. Indeed, the activists of the two main fascist parties in Ukraine – Svoboda and "Right Sector" – provided the muscle the insurrectionists needed to take over government buildings in Kiev and across western Ukraine.

Svoboda ("Freedom") was founded in 1991 as the Social National Party of Ukraine. The party idolizes Stepan Bandera, whose followers fought on the side of the Nazis during World War II against the Red Army and Ukrainian communist militias. Bandera's Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) had direct support from the Germans: Hitler wanted them to police Ukraine after the Germans took it, and the OUN organized volunteer militias that actively participated in the Holocaust. "The Jews of the Soviet Union," declared the Banderists, "are the most loyal supporters of the Bolshevik Regime and the vanguard of Muscovite imperialism in the Ukraine." When the Germans took Lvov in the summer of 1941, the Banderists sent a message to Lvov's Jews in the form of a pamphlet which said: "We will lay your heads at Hitler's feet"!

Which they did; the OUN worked with the SS to round up and slaughter 4,000 of the city's Jews. Their weapons of choice: everything from guns to metal poles.

When Viktor Yushchenko, during his disastrous tenure as President of Ukraine, bestowed on Bandera the posthumous title of "Hero of Ukraine," the European Parliament formally protested: they were ignored.

Svoboda leader Oleh Tyahnybok, now a top official of the Ukrainian Parliament, is an unrepentant anti-Semite. In the summer of 2004, he made a speech to his followers at the gravesite of a Banderist commander in which he declared: "You are the ones that the Moscow-Jewish mafia ruling Ukraine fears most." His peroration also made reference to "Kikes" as prominent among those the Banderists fought. Tyahnybok was expelled from Parliament for his remarks, but the "revolution" has installed him back in his seat – and more powerful than ever.

He has plenty of company. Svoboda activists, who already held seats in Parliament, hold no less than eight top Cabinet positions:

- **Ihor Tenyukh** – interim defense minister and a member of Svoboda's political council. Formerly commander of Ukraine's navy, in 2008, during Russia's war with Georgia, he ordered Ukrainian warships to block the entrance of the Russian Navy to the bay of Sevastopol.
- **Andriy Parubiy** – National Security Council chief, co-founded Svoboda back when it was the "Social National" (ahem!) party.
- **Dmytro Yarosh** – deputy head of the National Security Council, i.e. the police, and the founder-leader of "Right Sector," a militant neo-Nazi paramilitary group that took charge of security in the Maiden.
- **Oleh Makhnitsky** – Svoboda member of parliament, is prosecutor-general.
- **Oleksandr Sych** – Svoboda parliamentarian and the party's chief ideologist, is deputy prime minister for economic affairs.
- **Serhiy Kvit** – a leading member of Svoboda, is to head up the Education Ministry.
- **Andriy Moknyk** – the new Minister of Ecology, has been Svoboda's envoy to other European fascist parties. Last year, he met with representatives of Italy's violent neo-fascist gang, Forza Nuovo.
- **Ihor Shvaika** – agro-oligarch and a member of Svoboda, has been appointed Minister of Agriculture. One of the richest men in the country, His massive investments in agriculture would seem to indicate a slight conflict of interest.

For the first time since 1933, the followers of a movement that valorizes Adolf Hitler and preaches anti-Semitism has entered a European government. The German Nazis, too, were part of a "coalition" government, the other members of which thought they could contain or even "tame" them and prevent a Communist takeover. They were tragically wrong – and the United States and its European allies are taking the same road in backing Hitler's heirs in Ukraine.

Of course the majority of the government's supporters are hardly hardcore neo-Nazis: but that isn't necessary to make this a precedent the West will live to regret. The presence of Svoboda and "Right Sector" legitimizes these movements, and not only in Ukraine. Germany has

periodically sought to ban the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party, and the British have taken legal measures against the British National Party: will they now grant the Ukrainian brothers of these so-called hate groups diplomatic recognition and pledges of political and even military support?

What's interesting about the specific appointments listed above is the prominence of "Right Sector" leader Dmytro Yarosh in the key position of deputy chief of the national police. The "Right Sector" organization came out of the merger of several ultra-nationalist and openly neo-Nazi grouplets, including "Trident," the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Defense Force, "White Hammer," and "Patriots of Ukraine." Yarash boasted at the height of the protests that his group had amassed a large weapons cache, and since they already had the guns it was inevitable they would form the nucleus of the reconstituted police force. With the group's high profile, and its celebrated status as "heroes of the revolution," Yarash's stormtroopers – who wear the red-and-black insignia of the Banderists – will be charged with suppressing anti-government "disturbances" and hunting down "traitors." Perhaps they'll throw in a little queer-bashing as well: the nationalists hate gays as well as Jews and all Russian-speakers.

Victoria Nuland thought she could keep Svoboda and "Right Sector" out of the government, but she hasn't done a very good job so far. And with elections scheduled for May 5, the nationalists are well positioned to take a good chunk of the vote. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the State Department's favored candidate, is a bespectacled technocrat notably lacking in the charisma department. Tyahnybok , on the other hand, is a natural demagogue.

No matter how many US taxpayer dollars flow into the coffers of the State Department's Ukrainian sock puppets between now and May 25, all the money in the world may not be able to contain the forces our interventionists have loosened on the world. The news that the leader of "Right Sector" has called on none other than al-Qaeda to help Ukraine in its battle against Russia is an indication of just what sort of demons we have unleashed – this time.