

Ignoring Ukraine's Neo-Nazi Storm Troopers

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The Wolfsangel symbol of Adolf Hitler's SS on a banner in Ukraine.

You might think a story about modern-day Nazi storm troopers attacking a European city without mercy would merit front-page coverage in the U.S. press, but not when the Nazi paramilitaries are fighting for the U.S.-backed Ukrainian government and are killing ethnic Russians.

The U.S.-backed Ukrainian government is knowingly sending neo-Nazi paramilitaries into eastern Ukrainian neighborhoods to attack ethnic Russians who are regarded by some of these storm troopers as "Untermenschen" or subhuman, according to Western press reports.

Recently, one eastern Ukrainian town, Marinka, fell to Ukraine's Azov battalion as it waved the Wolfsangel flag, a symbol used by Adolf Hitler's SS divisions in World War II. The Azov paramilitaries also attacked Donetsk, one of the remaining strongholds of ethnic Russians opposed to the Kiev regime that overthrew elected President Viktor Yanukovych last February.

Yet, despite this extraordinary reality – modern-day Nazi storm troopers slaughtering Slavic people in eastern Ukraine – the Obama administration continues to concentrate its criticism on Russia for sending a convoy of humanitarian supplies to the embattled region. Suddenly, the administration's rhetoric about a "responsibility to protect" civilians has gone silent.

This same hypocrisy has permeated nearly everything said by the U.S. State Department and reported by the mainstream U.S. news media since the Ukraine crisis began last year. There was fawning coverage of the Maidan protesters who sought to overthrow Yanukovych and then an immediate embrace of the "legitimacy" of the regime that followed the Feb. 22 coup. As part of this one-sided U.S. narrative, reports about the key roles played by neo-Nazi activists and militias were dismissed as "Russian propaganda."

But the ugly reality has occasionally broken through the blinders of the Western press. For instance, on Sunday, in the last three paragraphs of a long article about the Ukraine conflict, the New York Times reported that the Ukrainian military strategy has been to pound rebel-held cities from afar and then turn loose paramilitary forces to carry out "chaotic, violent assaults."

"Officials in Kiev say the militias and the army coordinate their actions, but the militias, which count about 7,000 fighters, are angry and, at times, uncontrollable. One known as Azov, which took over the village of Marinka, flies a neo-Nazi symbol resembling a Swastika as its flag." [See Consortiumnews.com's "[NYT Discovers Ukraine's Neo-Nazis at War.](#)"]

Actually, the Azov fighters do more than wave a Swastika-like flag; they favor the Wolfsangel flag of Hitler's SS divisions, much as some of Ukraine's neo-Nazis still honor Hitler's Ukrainian SS auxiliary, the Galician SS. A Ukrainian hero hailed during the Maidan protests was Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera whose paramilitary forces helped exterminate Jews and Poles.

Yet, this dark side of the Kiev regime generally gets ignored by the mainstream U.S. media despite the fact that the idea of modern-day Nazi storm troopers wreaking havoc on Slavic "Untermenschen" would seem like a very juicy story.

But it would destroy the white-hat/black-hat narrative that the State Department and the MSM have built around the Ukraine crisis, with the Kiev regime in the white hats and the ethnic Russian rebels and Russian President Vladimir Putin wearing the black hats. It might be hard to sell the American people on the notion that neo-Nazis waving an SS flag and ranting about "Untermenschen" deserve white hats.

Kiev's Tolerance of Neo-Nazis

More details about the Azov battalion's role in the fighting were reported in the conservative London Telegraph. In [a somewhat sympathetic article](#), Telegraph correspondent Tom Parfitt wrote that "In Marinka, on the western outskirts, the [Azov] battalion was sent forward ahead of tanks and armoured vehicles of the Ukrainian army's 51st Mechanised Brigade. ...

"[Despite some casualties] Andriy Biletsky, the battalion's commander, told the Telegraph the operation had been a '100% success'. ... 'Most important of all, we established a bridgehead for the attack on Donetsk. And when that comes we will be leading the way.'"

The Telegraph then added: "But Kiev's use of volunteer paramilitaries to stamp out the Russian-backed Donetsk and Luhansk 'people's republics', proclaimed in eastern Ukraine in March, should send a shiver down Europe's spine. Recently formed battalions such as Donbas, Dnipro and Azov, with several thousand men under their command, are officially under the control of the interior ministry but their financing is murky, their training inadequate and their ideology often alarming. The Azov men use the neo-Nazi Wolfsangel (Wolf's Hook) symbol on their banner and members of the battalion are openly white supremacists, or anti-Semites."

In interviews, some of the fighters questioned the Holocaust, expressed admiration for Adolf Hitler and acknowledged that they are indeed Nazis, a fact also known by Kiev authorities.

Biletsky, the Azov commander, "is also head of an extremist Ukrainian group called the Social National Assembly," according to the Telegraph article which quoted a recent commentary by Biletsky as declaring: "The historic mission of our nation in this critical moment is to lead the White Races of the world in a final crusade for their survival. A crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen."

The battalion itself is founded on right-wing views, Biletsky acknowledged, adding that Nazi allegiances are not grounds for exclusion. "The most important thing is being a good fighter and a good brother so that we can trust each other," he said.

The Ukrainian offensive against the ethnic Russian rebels also has attracted neo-Nazis from around Europe. "Mr Biletsky says he has men from Ireland, Italy, Greece and Scandinavia,"

the Telegraph reported.

These foreign recruits include Mikael Skillt, a former sniper with the Swedish Army and National Guard who leads and trains a reconnaissance unit. Skillt identified himself as a National Socialist who has been active in the extreme right-wing Party of the Swedes. "Now I'm fighting for the freedom of Ukraine against Putin's imperialist front," he said.

The Kiev government is aware of the Nazi sympathies among the fighters that it has sent into eastern Ukraine to crush the ethnic Russian resistance. "Ukraine's government is unrepentant about using the neo-Nazis," the Telegraph reported, quoting Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to Interior Minister Arsen Avakov, as saying:

"The most important thing is their spirit and their desire to make Ukraine free and independent. ...A person who takes a weapon in his hands and goes to defend his motherland is a hero. And his political views are his own affair."

President Petro Poroshenko even hailed one of the militiamen who died in fighting on Sunday as a hero, the Telegraph reported.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his new book, America's Stolen Narrative, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). For a limited time, you also can order Robert Parry's trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes America's Stolen Narrative. For details on this offer, [click here](#).

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