

The Media's Disinformation Campaign on Ukraine: “There are No neo-Nazis in the Interim Government”

By [Prof. John Ryan](#)

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Since the overthrow of the Yanukovich government in Ukraine at the end of February 2014, the mainstream media en masse has attempted to whitewash the nature of the current Ukrainian government. This has occurred even in some progressive publications and websites, e.g., a recent two-part series in [Rabble.ca](#).

As soon as this government took over, the New York Times referred to it as a new wave of democracy, and this then set the tone for the media in the West. Although here and there it's sometimes mentioned that Svoboda, a member of the coalition government, “once had some quasi-fascist inclinations,” that's as far as it goes. All else about Svoboda and the paramilitary Right Sector has been effectively swept off into Orwell's memory hole.

This is not to say that no one on the Internet has commented on the true nature of Svoboda. To their credit a number of well qualified observers have had no problem spelling out that Svoboda has a solid neo-nazi fascist basis, and not just “inclinations” towards these beliefs. For example, consider the views of [Max Blumenthal](#), [Professor Stephen F. Cohen](#), [Professor Francis Boyle](#), [Professor Michel Chossudovsky](#), [Dr. Inna Rogatchi](#), [David Speedie](#), [Dr. Paul Craig Roberts](#), [Oleg Shynkarenko](#), [Andrew Foxall](#) and [Oren Kessler](#).

Rather than simply plead ignorance about the depth of fascist-racist beliefs in the Svoboda membership, the least the mainstream media could have done was to mention that the European Parliament took the unusual step in December of 2012 to pass a resolution of concern about the unsavory nature of Svoboda. [The Parliament's resolution #8](#) states as follows:

[The European Parliament] is concerned about the rising nationalistic sentiment in Ukraine, expressed in support for the Svoboda Party, which, as a result, is one of the two new parties to enter the Verkhovna Rada; recalls that racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic views go against the EU's fundamental values and principles and therefore appeals to pro-democratic parties in the Verkhovna Rada not to associate with, endorse or form coalitions with this party.



Svoboda was founded in 1991 as the **Social National Party of Ukraine - its name unmistakably being an intentional reference to Adolph Hitler's National Socialist party and it used the Nazi Wolfsangel logo which closely resembles a swastika**. In 2004, with the arrival of Oleh Tyahnybok as leader, the party changed its name to Svoboda to somewhat moderate its image while nevertheless retaining its neo-Nazi core. Also to soften its image it changed its Nazi logo to a stylized three-finger salute.

From its very beginnings as the Social National Party, Svoboda has idolized Stepan Bandera, a Nazi collaborator who formed the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and organized the Ukrainian Waffen SS Galician Division - from 82,000 initial Ukrainian volunteers, the Nazis trained only 13,000 for battle. The division was then sent to fight the Russian and Ukrainian Soviet army, but this unit was decimated at the 1944 Battle of Brody, leaving only 3,000 who went on to form the nucleus of a further rebuilt SS division, later to become the core of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).



Aside from fighting the Soviet army, Bandera's forces assisted the Nazis by willingly killing off tens of thousands of Poles and Jews, and actively took part in the Babi Yar massacre and the Holocaust in general. Although Bandera had some disagreements with the Nazis and was imprisoned for a while, he and his followers never disagreed with the Nazi Jewish policy in Ukraine, which eventually killed over 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews.

Bandera had the delusional idea that if Ukrainians helped the Nazis to fight the Soviet forces and that if the Nazis won the war and conquered the USSR, Bandera would somehow manage to establish a "free Ukraine," independent from the Nazi regime. This was an utter delusion which disregarded Hitler's Lebensraum objective and the fact that the Nazis considered all Slavs to be sub-humans (untermenschen).

Despite all this, Svoboda's current leader Oleh Tyahnybok remains totally unrepentant. In 2004, [in a speech](#) at the grave-site of a commander of the UPA, he urged Ukrainians to fight against the "Muscovite-Jewish mafia" and lauded the World War II Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists for having fought "Muscovites, Germans, Jews and other scum who wanted to take away our Ukrainian state." Tyahnybok's deputy, Yuri Mikhalchishin, [a Svoboda ideologist](#), has founded a think tank called the Joseph Goebbels Political Research Centre. He has also translated and published articles of Hitler regime "classics" and has named the

Holocaust as a “bright period” in European history.



It is worthy of note that what separates Germany from the Bandera Nationalists in Ukraine is that Germany has taken responsibility for the atrocities they committed. Contrast this to Lviv, Ukraine, where surviving members of the WW2 Galician SS, willing participants in genocide, still parade on holidays, proudly displaying medals given them by the German Third Reich. In July of 2013 [the Svoboda party organized a rally](#) to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the 14th Waffen SS Division. And on January 1, 2014, to commemorate Bandera’s 105th birthday, about [15,000 Svoboda supporters marched through Kyiv](#), some wearing Nazi SS Waffen army uniforms.

It is because of these incontestable facts that the European Parliament took the unusual step to pass a resolution of concern about the alarming nature of Svoboda. Recently, an American mainstream publication, [Foreign Policy](#), stated:

“The uncomfortable truth is that a sizeable portion of Kiev’s current government –and the protesters who brought it to power – are, indeed, fascists. . . . Party leader Oleh Tyahnybok is on record complaining that his country is controlled by a ‘Muscovite-Jewish mafia,’ while his deputy derided the Ukrainian-born film star Mila Kunis as a ‘[dirty Jewess](#).’ In Svoboda’s eyes, gays are [perverts](#) and black people unfit to represent the nation at Eurovision, lest viewers come away thinking Ukraine is [somewhere besides Uganda](#).” Yuri Syrotyuk, speaking on behalf of Svoboda, made a further racist comment: “Millions of people who will be watching will see that Ukraine is represented by a person who does not belong to our race.”

Not only does the mainstream media fail to deal with the underlying fascist beliefs of Svoboda, most extend the cover-up by glibly pointing out that right-wing parties exist in several European countries, so this is no big deal. In saying this, they studiously avoid disclosing that in all these countries the right-wing parties are totally excluded from any role in government, but this is not the case now in Ukraine. For the first time since the Nazi era, a basically fascist movement has entered a European government and holds key positions of power. Interestingly, so far there hasn’t been a peep about this from the European Parliament who very recently (as cited above) urged the Ukrainian Rada “not to associate with, endorse or form coalitions with this party.”



Dmitry Yaroch (centre), leader of Right Sector

Although many in the media dismiss the Right Sector (Pravy Sektor) as insignificant, this body was formed in 2013 as an umbrella organization that included several paramilitary groups, including the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self Defense (UNA-UNSO) whose members dress in uniforms modelled on Hitler's Waffen SS and have been fighting Russia for years, including in Chechnya.

[As of March 22, 2014](#), all these individual groups have coalesced into the Right Sector and have declared themselves to be an official political party, with Dmytro Yarosh as their presidential candidate in the coming election. In the meantime, Russia has put Yarosh on an international wanted list and charged him with inciting terrorism after he urged Chechen terrorist leader Doku Umarov to launch attacks on Russia over the Ukrainian conflict. Yarosh has also threatened to destroy Russian pipelines on Ukrainian territory.

In trying to downplay the significance and role of Svoboda and the Right Sector, the media usually point out that Svoboda has only 8 percent of the seats in the Rada and that the Right Sector doesn't have any elected members, thus making it appear that these parties are of little consequence. The startling fact not revealed is that Svoboda has seven members within the government's 21-member cabinet, so they compose one-third of the cabinet - all in the most key and powerful positions. Moreover, the Right Sector has a role in government as well; its leader Dmytro Yarosh is in charge of the police as the Deputy Secretary to the Minister of National Security.

As such, these two neo-Nazi parties have been entrusted with key positions which grant them de facto control over the Armed Forces, Police and National Security. Certainly this information is of the utmost importance - but it is practically never mentioned in the media. Why is this? Essentially, reporting of this type puts forth a very favourable propaganda image of the provisional government. In reality, in putting forth propaganda, what is not said is often every bit as important as what is said. At the very least this is damaging misinformation.

Because the issue of the role of Svoboda in Ukraine's government is so fundamentally important, let's take a look at the cabinet membership.

Oleksandr Sych- Deputy Prime Minister, a Svoboda parliamentarian, the party's chief ideologist, and a virulent anti-abortion activist

[IhorTenyukh](#) - Minister of Defence, member of Svoboda's political council, and formerly commander of Ukraine's navy but was dismissed from his post when he tried to help Georgia following its military attack on South Ossetia which Russia quickly rebuffed.

[AndriyParubiy](#)- Secretary of the National Security and National Defense Committee (RNBOU), co-founder of the Social-National Party of Ukraine (Svoboda). This is a key position which oversees the Ministry of Defense, the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement, National Security and Intelligence. The RNBOU is central decision-making body. While it is formally headed by the president, it is run by the Secretariat with a staff of 180 people including defense, intelligence and national security experts. Parubiy was the head "kommandant" of the MaidanRight Sector forces and directed the masked armed men who battled the police.

[OlehMakhnitsky](#) - Prosecutor-general, Svoboda member of parliament. With this appointment Svoboda will control the judicial process.

[IhorShvaika](#) - Minister of Agriculture, an agro-oligarch and a member of Svoboda. As one of the richest men in the country, his massive investments in agriculture would seem to indicate a slight conflict of interest.

[AndriyMoknyk](#) - Minister of Ecology, Deputy Chairman of the Svoboda party and a member of their Political Council, and has been Svoboda's envoy to other European fascist parties.

[SerhiyKvit](#) -Minister of Education, a leading member of Svoboda, noted for his efforts to glorify those who inspired the Bandera fascists in World War II.

[DmytroYarosh](#) - Deputy head of the National Security Council, to be in charge of the police. Yarosh is the founder-leader of the paramilitary "Right Sector," and together with Parubiy they directed the demonstrations at Maiden. Years back, Yarosh fought alongside Chechen Islamists, and proudly claims that he personally killed a large number of Russian soldiers.

So although Svoboda has only 8 percent of the members in the Ukrainian parliament, they, along with the Right Sector, compose more than a third of the government's cabinet, including some of the key positions. Hence they have a totally disproportionate share of power, and to compound the problem, Svoboda have no elected members from the entire southeastern part of Ukraine, which has more than half of Ukraine's population.

A further problem is that it appears there are few, if any members, from southeastern Ukraine in the entire cabinet. As such, over half the country's population has little or no representation in the interim government's cabinet, so on this basis alone it lacks legitimacy.

As an indication of how this fascist-inspired government would function, the day after it came into power its very first action was to pass a bill to revoke Ukraine's very tolerant

multicultural language law. In effect the bill banned the use of Russian, Hungarian, Moldovan and Romanian in any official capacity. The bill also includes a provision to ban all Russian language media in Ukraine. Immediately afterwards the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on Ukraine's new regime to respect the rights (and languages) of its minority population. Following this outcry and condemnation, Interim President Oleksandr Turchynov vetoed bill and asked that it be rewritten to be more acceptable.

But the damage was done and this mean-spirited action alerted all minority groups to what the future would hold, especially since some Svoboda members have [threatened to ban the Russian language](#) completely and even strip the Ukrainian citizenship of the nation's Russian speakers. Moreover, a further bill has been advanced that would overturn a law that forbids "denying or excusing the crimes of fascism". All this is surely a sign of possible future discrimination against minority groups.

To put this issue in perspective **for Canadians, just imagine if a newly installed government in Ottawa would suddenly ban the use of French as an official language in Canada. How long would it take for Quebec to call for a referendum and then proceed to secede from Canada?** In actuality, this is exactly what happened in Crimea, where the bulk of the people speak Russian. They called for a referendum and on March 16, with a turnout of over 80 percent, there was a 97 percent vote to secede from Ukraine. Since ethnic Russians form only 58 percent of the population, it means that the bulk of Ukrainians and Tatars in Crimea also voted to secede from Ukraine.

In Ukraine about 8.3 million people, almost one-fifth of the population, described themselves in the country's last census as ethnic Russians. However, the [Russian language is spoken](#) by at least one quarter of the population and perhaps by as much as 40 percent. Russian speakers are especially concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine. With respect to the prevalence of Russian language, [Dr. Vitaly Chernetsky](#), a Slavic languages professor at the University of Kansas, has noted if one looks at an average Ukrainian newsstand, one will find that about 90 percent of the publications are in Russian, even in areas where the majority of the population speaks Ukrainian. "The Russian language also dominates the radio," he said. "The only segment of the media where the Ukrainian language predominates is the national-level television channels." Hence for this new government to put drastic restrictions on Russian media and the language is a fanatical bizarre course of action.

Going back to how this new government was formed, it is invariably made to appear that there had been a legitimate transfer of power at the end of February. It is usually pointed out that Victor Yanukovich was impeached by a unanimous vote of 328-0, or by 73 per cent of the deputies of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada. What is seldom revealed is that Ukraine's constitution stipulates that it requires a 75 percent vote of the members of the Rada to legitimately impeach a president. Given this, although Yanukovich was removed from office, it was done in violation of Ukraine's constitution, and as such this was not a legal impeachment - it was plainly and simply a coup d'état. Furthermore, what preceded this vote was a semi-riot in the Rada brought on by an invasion of armed Right Sector protestors. It is because of this that more than a quarter of the members of the Rada fled, in fear of their lives - hence the insufficient number for the impeachment vote.

A matter that is seldom mentioned is the February 21 agreement, brokered by Germany, France and Poland, between the Yanukovich government and the protestors to end the three-month long confrontation. The agreement was signed by President Yanukovich and

the three opposition party leaders Arseny Yatsenyuk, Vitaly Klitchko, and Oleh Tyahnybok. The agreement called for early parliamentary and presidential elections, the return of the 2004 constitution and the formation of a temporary government of national unity. If an early election were held it was certain that the Yanukovych government would have been defeated.

When the agreement was announced to the protestors in Maiden Square, the leaders of the armed paramilitary Right Sector immediately rejected a peaceful settlement, and were determined to carry on with their armed protest. Despite this, the blundering Yanukovych inexplicably ordered the police to withdraw from guarding the parliament and government buildings, and he himself flew to a prearranged meeting in the city of Kharkov. As such the compromise agreement for a peaceful settlement did not last a single day - on February 22 the Right Sector armed mobs stormed the government buildings and staged a coup in the parliament. And the rest is history as they say.

Strangely, there were no protests from the governments of Germany, France and Poland on behalf of their emissaries who had arranged for a peaceful transition of power in Ukraine. Instead, the obvious coup d'état was never acknowledged and the coup government has been accepted as legal, and the inclusion of fascist elements in a European government for the first time since Hitler left the scene is seemingly no cause for alarm. So much for the warnings from the European Parliament "not to associate with, endorse or form coalitions with this party (Svoboda)." And it seems that even the Right Sector . . . is all right.

True to form, many in the media ridicule the idea that the USA had any role in helping to foment the demonstrations which resulted in the overthrow of a corrupt but nevertheless legally elected government. As [Diana Johnstone](#) in a recent article has stated:

"The U.S. Undersecretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, Victoria Nuland, has openly boasted that the United States has spent five billion dollars to gain influence in Ukraine - in reality, in order to draw Ukraine away from Russia and into the U.S. military alliance."

Indeed, the mainstream media has been so effective that as Ms Johnstone puts it

"much of public opinion seems to accept the notion that the villain of this story is the Russian president, who is accused of engaging in unprovoked aggression against Crimea - even though he was responding to one of the most blatant provocations in history."

At the time of the dissolution of the USSR, the USA assured Gorbachev that NATO would never extend into any of the buffer states bordering Russia. This promise was violated almost immediately and NATO has expanded into all these bordering states, except so far into Ukraine.

It would be naive in the extreme to assume that the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the recent U.S. gambit led by Victoria Nuland was not aimed at bringing Ukraine, including the main Russian naval base at Sebastopol, into the NATO orbit. This is in spite of the fact that [polls in Ukraine](#) as a whole show that about 70 percent of the population is against joining NATO. The strategic function of placing missiles in Ukraine would be to provide the United States with a hypothetical nuclear first strike capacity against Russia. Putin is no fool and

that is why he took advantage of the overwhelming desire of the people of Crimea to secede from Ukraine.

The issue of the sniper killings in Maidan Square has been downplayed by the media – with the exception [The Guardian](#) and the RT television channel there was initially no mention of the intercepted phone conversation between the Estonian foreign minister and the EU foreign affairs chief. The Estonian foreign minister related that he had been told that the snipers responsible for killing police and civilians in Kiev last month were protest movement provocateurs rather than supporters of then-president Viktor Yanukovich. This is vitally important information but somehow this was ignored by the entire American media. It was only after Russia made appeals to the European Union to investigate who was responsible for the killings (which included police and protestors) that the new Ukrainian government made a move to start an investigation. So far nothing has come of this except for the original account that this had been ordered by Yanukovich, with the most recent suggestion that this was the work of Russian agents.

This matter raises the question cui bono? The killings occurred on February 21, the very day that the European emissaries were trying to work out a peaceful resolution to the three-month protest movement. Why would Yanukovich or Russia want to scuttle the possibility of a peaceful resolution? On the other hand, the last thing the heavily armed hardcore fascist Right Sector paramilitary mob wanted was a peaceful solution – they kept demanding the overthrow of the government. Moreover, these were the people who brandished assault rifles and they occupied and controlled most of the tall buildings surrounding the square – buildings from which the shots were fired. How could it be possible for Yanukovich's police or Russian agents, armed with assault rifles, to pass unnoticed through the crowds of protestors and enter buildings occupied by the protestors?

The sniper killings changed the entire tone of the protest movement. If the protests had been violent before, after the sniper killings the violence escalated. It was at this point that the parliamentary leaders announced to the enraged mob that they had reached an agreement with the government to have an early election and that the protest should end. These leaders were booed and Dmytro Yarosh, the head of the Right Sector, vowed to carry on until the government was defeated. The next day, with the police no longer on the scene, the armed mob took over all government buildings and the parliament. And the rest we know – a legally elected government (no matter that it was corrupt) was deposed by means of a coup d'état. But the word "coup d'état" is verboten in all of our media, with the sole exception of RT, which is prepared to call a spade a spade.

As for the investigation about the sniper killings, ironically, Dmytro Yarosh, the leader and founder of the Right Sector is now a deputy minister . . . in charge of the police! Andriy Parubiy was the official "kommandant" of the Right Sector forces and the person in charge of all the occupied tall buildings surrounding the Maidan Square . . . but he is now the head National Security and Law Enforcement. But of course there will be a thorough investigation into the sniper killings . . .

With Ukraine now having Europe's first government since Hitler's time to include fascists in high profile cabinet positions, one might wonder how their presence affects the operation of the government. On the very first day when this government "impeached" Yanukovich (legally invalid because the Rada lacked the proper quorum to do so), [this video](#) shows the rowdiness and intimidation that occurred in Ukraine's parliament at that time. [A further](#)

[video](#) shows the decorum and behaviour of this new element in the operations of the government. In an unnamed regional parliament a Right Sector “enforcer” came in with a Kalashnikov and lectured the members, saying, “Who wants to take away my machine gun, my pistol, my knives?” The scene was filmed and the [video went viral](#), racking up more than 50,000 views in the first three days.


[Another Right Sector video](#) shows one of their members, Olexandr Muzychko, as he barged into a prosecutor’s office in the Rovno Oblast and proceeded to threaten and rough up the official, much in the line of Hitler’s brownshirts in a different era.

A prominent figure in Svoboda, Muzychko has publicly vowed to fight “against Jews, communists, and Russian scum” for as long as he lives. And finally, and equally ominous, on March 18 several [Svoboda members of Parliament](#), including the deputy head of Ukraine’s committee on freedom of speech, stormed their way into the offices of the president of the National Television Company of Ukraine and after beating up the official they forced him to resign.

They were furious and called it treasonous that the national TV company showed Russian President Putin signing a bill to make Crimea part of Russia. This would be the equivalent of Canadian MPs forcing the president of the CBC to resign. Instead of protesting this fascist behaviour, Canada’s Prime Minister Harper visited Kiev recently to offer Canada’s full support for a regime that includes neo-nazis.

There are many other significant matters that the mainstream media has ignored. To put these issues in better perspective, here are a few salient points from [Katrina vandenHeuvel](#), editor of The Nation:

“Yanukovych’s decision to postpone the EU’s association agreement was not irrational. It would have forced Ukraine to decide between Russia and the EU, flatly rejecting Putin’s offer of a tripartite arrangement that would allow the country to sustain its ties with Russia. Quite apart from Putin’s December offer of financial rescue, Ukraine is heavily dependent economically on Russia, which supplies and subsidizes much of its energy and is its largest trading partner. The EU and the United States, for all their bluster, are not about to replace that deep connection with Western aid and trade Even as it seeks closer ties with Europe, Ukraine can’t afford to turn its back on its huge eastern neighbor. For starters, it gets [more than half its natural gas](#) from Russia. The EU couldn’t help much if Moscow turned off the tap—though it’s unlikely to do so, since Russia ships gas to Western Europe via Ukrainian pipelines. Nor can the EU suddenly absorb the \$15 billion in iron, steel, grain, and other products that Ukraine annually sells Russia, its biggest trade partner. And for all the anti-Moscow rhetoric heard during the recent protests, the two countries have deep historical and cultural ties.”

 It is important to note that some of the interim government’s top ministers were also ministers in previous governments and were participants in policies that created the country’s current economic basket case. During all these years they had failed to curb rampant corruption or tackle economic inefficiency. In fact, the EU [has provided](#) Ukraine with \$19.1 billion in grants and loans since 1991, and together with IMF and other aid it pushes the total well over \$30 billion. And despite Ukraine’s current antagonistic rhetoric, the country has received massive aid from Russia in the form of discounted natural gas—a subsidy totaling \$200 billion to \$300 billion since 1991. So where has all this money gone?

“Into the pockets of an incredibly corrupt political elite and oligarchs,” says [Emily Holland](#), a specialist on energy policy at the European Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin. And with all the brouhaha about corruption by the protest movement, the new fascist-tainted regime [has appointed](#) some of the worst oligarchs to key regional government posts in eastern Ukraine. So what are the realistic prospects for this essentially failed state?

At the basis of the continuing political turmoil in the country is the fact that Ukraine consists of two fundamentally different regions – its eastern part and its western part. [A possible solution](#) would be the creation of a loose confederation with two autonomous regions. One autonomous region would be free to become more economically connected with the European Union while the other with Russia. In addition to other proponents for such a sensible solution, ironically, this proposal has been put forth by Russian Foreign Minister [Sergei Lavrov](#), who on March 20 said:

“. . . a constitutional reform should be held, so that interests of all Ukrainian citizens and regions are respected. This is the only basis for forming legitimate authorities, legislative and executive, central and regional . . . we are convinced that the situation in the country can be stabilized only through making Ukraine a federal state.”

An apropos concluding comment on this complex matter are the words of [Katrina vandenHeuvel](#):

“The [US] president would be well advised to investigate whether the European Union, Russia and the United States can join together to preserve Ukraine’s territorial unity; to support new and free elections; and to agree to allow Ukraine to be part of both the European Union and Russian customs union, while reaffirming the pledge that NATO will not extend itself into Ukraine. It is time to reduce tensions and create possibility, not flex rhetorical muscles and fan the flames of folly.”

***John Ryan**, Ph.D., Retired Professor of Geography and Senior Scholar, University of Winnipeg. In studying for his Ph.D. at McGill, Dr. Ryan specialized in the economic and political geography of the USSR. He then taught courses on the USSR for more than 30 years at the University of Winnipeg. He can be reached at jryan13@mymts.net*

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