

## Ukraine: The Fire Each Time

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*Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to mankind, and suddenly there was light, and warmth, and the gathering at the hearth. The gods never forgave, and ever since periodically they thrust a torch into villains' hands and watch the hearths burn and bring the roofs down. Civilization weeps, in Troy, Hiroshima, Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, Syria.*

In Ukraine, this May 2<sup>nd</sup> will mark the second anniversary of a fire, a show of force to demonstrate that Ukraine's boss was the US-installed nationalist Kiev regime. The House of Trades in Odessa was set on fire. Officially forty-eight people died, but witnesses, survivors, and journalists say the number may be tragically higher—perhaps up to 180. Inside the burning building, people died of fume inhalations. They were also shot, suffocated by the toxic exhalations of a mysterious greenish gas, beaten to death on the ground after jumping out of windows. There were rapes, authenticated by autopsies.

On that day, there was to have been a soccer match between the teams of Odessa and Kharkov. About 3,000 Ukrainian para-military fascists or "ultras" (they are called "Maidan activists" in the Western media) announced they would march in the center of the city. They were members of Pravy Sektor, Svoboda, and other Ukrainian groups who exalt the leadership of wartime Nazi collaborator, Stepan Bandera. They were not spontaneous, independent agents. A proper investigation would show that their actions were orchestrated by Kiev, then unleashing its Anti Terror Operation (ATO) in the Donbass with an act of fiery Wagnerian resonance. Odessa's opposition movement to the Maidan, Kulikovo Pole ("Camp Kulikovo,") determined to stop them. At 2 pm, about 400 Kulikovo men and women gathered in front of the House of Trades but were provoked into violent clashes. Kulikovo members took shelter in the House of Trades, where the horrors of that day began.



Survivors have noted that what occurred in the House of Trades in Odessa reminded them of what the Banderists had done in WWII in Galicia, in Western Ukraine, to the Poles, the Jews, and all those—Russians and Ukrainians—who supported the Soviet Union. Some noted the similarity between 2 May in Odessa and the massacre of Khatin (not be confused with Katyn) on 22 March 1943, when the Nazis, occupying Belarus, gathered 149 civilians in a building and burnt them alive as collective punishment for an action carried out by the partisan resistance. Others suggest that the purpose behind the aggression on the Kulikovo Pole group was to clear the square they had occupied before the anniversary on 9 May of the Soviet Union's victory over the Nazis in WW II. The anniversary would have called to the square thousands of people, which would have strengthened the Kulikovo Pole movement's opposition to the Kiev regime.

What appears to be evident is that the fire and brutality in Odessa, hero city of the Soviet Union for its resistance to Nazi occupation in WW II, was to serve as a lesson to all those who would stand up in opposition to the Kiev junta. Today, after two years, not one of those responsible for the massacre is in jail, but some survivors still are. On March 27, about 100 neo-Nazi Ukrainians attacked a group of relatives of the victims, which every Sunday commemorates the massacre gathering at the House of Trades of Odessa. Though the European Union swear up and down not to be supporting the fascists, their support for Petro Poroshenko belies their vows. Survivors of the fire note that the fascists have become part of institutions: they head the police and the punitive battalions (Azov and Aidar), for example.

The latest report (16 March 2016) by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) documents the cost in distress to Ukrainians of the American-engineered coup, which in turn cost American taxpayers five billion dollars:

\* In total, from mid-April 2014 to 15 February 2016, OHCHR recorded 30,211 casualties in the conflict area in eastern Ukraine, among Ukrainian armed forces, civilians and members of the armed groups. This includes 9,167 people killed and 21,044 injured.

\* 6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs),

\* 800,000 and 1 million IDP are living in territories controlled by the Government, where some continue to face discrimination in accessing public service

\* 8,000 to 15,000 civilians cross the contact line on a daily basis, passing through six checkpoints in each transport corridor: three checkpoints operated by the Government, and three by the self-proclaimed 'Donetsk people's republic' with a stretch of no-man's land in between. OHCHR has regularly observed up to 300-400 vehicles - cars, minivans and buses - waiting in rows on either side of the road. Passengers spend the night in freezing temperatures and without access to water

Distress is not all. The OHCHR reports summary executions, enforced disappearances, unlawful and arbitrary detention, and torture and ill treatment:

\* Throughout the country, OHCHR continued to receive allegations of enforced disappearances, arbitrary and incommunicado detention, and torture and ill-treatment of people accused by the Ukrainian authorities of 'trespassing territorial integrity', 'terrorism' or related offenses, or of individuals suspected of being members of, or affiliated with, the armed groups [meaning, Donetsk and Luhansk forces]

\* During the reporting period, OHCHR documented a pattern of cases of SBU detaining and allegedly torturing the female relatives of men suspected of membership or affiliation with the armed groups. In addition to being a violation of the prohibition of torture, these cases raise concerns of arbitrary deprivation of liberty and gender-based violence.

\* OHCHR remains highly concerned about consistent allegations of detainees being held in unofficial places of detention by SBU. These places are not accessible to the National Preventive Mechanism and international organizations. Reliable accounts from victims and their relatives indicate a widespread pattern of conduct across several SBU departments. Since the outbreak of the conflict, a network of unofficial places of detention, often located in the basement of regional SBU buildings, have been identified from a large number of reliable accounts from victims and their relatives. OHCHR recalls that the prohibition of unacknowledged detention is not subject to derogation.

\* OHCHR has received alarming allegations that in Odesa [sic], detainees are held for up to five days incommunicado at the SBU building following their arrest, without any contact with their family or access to a lawyer. Information recorded by OHCHR indicates that, as of February 2016, 20 to 30 people were detained illegally and incommunicado at the Kharkiv regional SBU building. When asked about their fate and whereabouts, SBU officials have systematically denied any involvement. According to information gathered by OHCHR, the vast majority of those held in the Kharkiv SBU were [sic] not arrested in accordance with legal procedures and have not been charged, despite being held because of their presumed affiliation with the armed groups.

The OHCHR's report on violence against women would have had the Western media hoarse with shouting "foul"—had the deeds been perpetrated by Russia:

On 8 December 2015, in Shchurove village, Donetsk region, SBU officers arrested a 74-year-old woman at her house while they were looking for her

son. She was detained at the SBU building in Mariupol, charged with 'terrorism', and beaten. OHCHR visited her in the Mariupol pre-trial detention facility (SIZO). After OHCHR communicated this case to the Office of the Military Prosecutor, a criminal investigation was initiated into her allegations of ill treatment. On 27 January 2016, the woman was relocated to the SBU SIZO in Kyiv. OHCHR believes she is at risk of further abuse. The SBU informed OHCHR that she and her son are suspected of being informants for the "ministry of state security" for the "Donetsk people's republic."

OHCHR also documented the case of three women, who were detained in May 2015, in a town under Government control in Donetsk region. The victims included the wife of an armed group commander and her daughter. The latter was allegedly severely tortured, and both were allegedly threatened with sexual violence.

Such is the nature of the "maidan democracy" Victoria Nuland's boss, President Obama, bestowed on Ukraine. Nor does there seem to be any lessening of support by the Obama administration to this oppressive US protectorate regime—a Nazi-era throwback. The 2016 US Consolidated Appropriations Act secures \$250 million ("Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative") "to provide assistance, including training; equipment; lethal weapons of a defensive nature; logistics support, supplies and services; sustainment; and intelligence support to the military and national security forces of Ukraine." Moreover the US (you and me) will spend at least \$658.2 million on "bilateral economic assistance," "international security assistance," "multilateral assistance," and "export and investment assistance" for Ukraine in 2016. Since the Maidan coup in February 2014, the US has lavished on Ukraine \$760 million in "security, programmatic, and technical assistance" and \$2 billion in loan guarantees.

Was it "worth it"—burning people alive in the Odessa Trade Building on 2 May 2014 to consolidate Kiev's power through fear? No doubt, from Kiev's point of view it was totally worth it. Look at the loot they got. It certainly was worth it to the US neoliberal and military establishment—the transfer of wealth from our pockets to theirs.

But was it worth to us, the people in the US, who footed the bill for terror in Ukraine?

Sometimes I think that our consciences are so burdened by the guilt of crimes committed in our names and through the pilfering of our purses that one more drop of blood on our hands will tip us over, and we'll finally cry out, "In the name of humanity, stop."

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