

INFORMATION GROUP ON CRIMES
AGAINST THE PERSON (IGCP)

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Azov Phenomenon

How Ukrainian Neo-Nazis
Became Influential Political Force

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There were the days when participants of right-wing and neo-Nazi groups in the Ukraine were marginal ones, being expelled to the edge of political and social life. Everything changed in 2014, during the so-called “Revolution of Dignity”. Ukrainian neo-Nazis gained money and weapon, they were given official status as Army, Police and Special Forces units, they got representatives in the Parliament. The history of “Azov” — notorious neo-Nazi detachment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukraine — became an image of such transformation. “Azov” offsprings hold leading offices in Ukrainian Police, raise the youth in neo-Nazi ideology encirclement, effectively expand their representation on the Ukrainian political field and getting ready for the struggle for power. This report is devoted to the process of Ukrainian nationalists becoming influential political power.

IGCP, 2017.

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Preface

“Any man who has once acclaimed violence as his METHOD must inexorably choose falsehood as his PRINCIPLE.”

A.I. Solzhenitsyn
Nobel Lecture in Literature

European integration. Many people have a lot of positive associations related to it — aspiration for freedom, human rights, open borders, progress and so on. If a country chooses a European way of development, it is perceived as a society that does its best to improve people’s life, to build an open and democratic society. However, sometimes social and political transformations connected with this choice bring to negative results. Problems and violation of human rights are justified by good goals and a better future that will happen in any case and make people forget about the difficulties. Where can we find in this rhetoric a key to understanding of how long these negative consequences of the “European choice” can last? Can we achieve freedom by limiting it? Can we build a free society by suppressing dissenters with the help of radical nationalists?

One of the brightest symbols of political and social changes in modern Ukraine is a history of a neo-Nazi battalion, then regiment — the Azov. The constituent assembly of National Corps took place on October 14, 2016. Andrey Biletsky, a “white leader”, a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, was elected its leader. Since September 2014, he has officially run the paramilitary Azov formation included in the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The fact that a neo-Nazi party appeared in Ukraine does not mean that this country has opinion pluralism, as the government has all the possibilities to remove political oppositionists.¹

¹ For example, how it happened to the Communist Party of Ukraine that stopped its activity by a decision of the District Administrative Court of Kiev on December 16, 2015 <http://ukranews.com/news/397695-okruzhnoy-admynstratyvnyy-sud-kyeva-zapretyl-deyatelnost-kpu> (watched on 12/06/16).

The mass media spoke a lot about the Azov and revealed its neo-Nazi nature.² However, this paramilitary organization underwent evolution, though it was mentioned in Amnesty International reports many times because it violated human rights and human freedoms and committed military crimes.³ In 2014–2016, the Azov got more members, opened the Civil Corps and developed into a real political party. Its leaders and members are making a successful career in Ukrainian force structures. The most recent example is Vadim Troyan, an ex-neo-Nazi activist and Azov militant, who became a deputy of the Ukrainian minister of internal affairs on February 8, 2017.

Of course, the Azov is not the only example that shows how radical nationalistic elements come into Ukrainian state structures and hold key positions. We do not mean only Oleg Lyashko, a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada. For example, Andrey Paruby, a head of the Verkhovna Rada, is a creator of the Social-National Party of Ukraine that is described in this book as a predecessor of the Azov. Of course, the Azov is not the only voluntary battalion that “distinguished itself” during the so-called anti-terroristic operation (ATO), especially at the beginning of it in 2014. All such formations did the same in the area of military action.⁴ However, the Azov phenomenon shows a certain direction of the Ukrainian political evolution.

The breakup of the USSR was a big shock for all post-Soviet countries. Independently of how we evaluate the changes, we cannot deny that the power in a young independent Ukrainian state became oligarchic and clannish, as in Russia, of course, also. Ukraine had a specific situation. One of the features of the Soviet heritage was that the public project that united all Soviet citizens had been based on a political idea: a certain understanding of the common good, tasks, possibility of being included in the society on the ground of common goals. After

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/10/azov-far-right-fighters-ukraine-neo-nazis> (seen on 12/06/16); <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3195711/Now-CHILDREN-taking-arms-Shocking-pictures-inside-Ukraine-s-neo-Nazi-military-camp-recruits-young-six-learn-fire-weapons-s-ceasefire.html> (seen on 12/06/16); <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11025137/Ukraine-crisis-the-neo-Nazi-brigade-fighting-pro-Russian-separatists.html> (watched on 12/06/16) etc.

³ <http://europe.newsweek.com/evidence-war-crimes-committed-ukrainian-nationalist-volunteers-grows-269604?nm=eu> (watched on 02/08/17); https://amnesty.org.ru/pdf/Ukraine-report_RUS.pdf etc.

⁴ *Massovy narusheniya prav cheloveka v hode konflikta na Ukraine, 2013–2014: Godovoy otchet IGCP/ Pod red. A.R. Dyukova. M, 2014.*

the Soviet basis disappeared, it was necessary to formulate a new one. The official circles and elite of Ukraine were unable to offer a serious program of development of an independent state. It brought to political populism that developed during post-Soviet period in Ukraine. That is why a series of political and public organizations appeared that based their rhetoric on anti-communism and nationalism. Many of these organizations went a long way and after a violent turnover of February 2014 managed to join the state authorities. The Azov's ascension was not only a result of neo-Nazi participation in military action in the Eastern Ukraine, but also of an active political activity, popularity and prestige among the electorate, coercive suppression of the opposition, entering municipal councils and the Verkhovna Rada. Unfortunately, Ukraine after the Euromaidan did not have anti-Nazi immunity: cooperation with the ultra-right became a norm of socio-political life. Ukraine had certainly an alternative. Viktor Malakhov who works in the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences, wrote a book that was published not long before the Ukrainian confrontation in 2014. He gives an example of how in case political activity limits its discourse with an ethnic component and kindling of international discord, it can result in destructive conflicts. He means Moldova, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He describes Ukraine as a positive example and says that if the People's Movement of Ukraine or other ethnic nationalistic movements came to power, the policy of social exclusion on the language basis would become stricter, and who knows if Donbass and Left-bank Ukraine would stay loyal to Kiev?⁵ Unfortunately, exactly this scenario came to life after the Euromaidan victory. In the recent three years, we have seen that the Ukrainian Parliament directly discriminates the Russian language in its legislative initiatives up to the sanctions for use of Russian.⁶ However, problems started not in February 2014, but much earlier. Even Viktor Yanukovich, a seemingly pro-Russian president, could not help dropping a curtesy to nationalistic movements who offered to the society ready people who were guilty of the current and past problems. Nowadays many people, even the western mass media and human rights activists who supported the Euromaidan are afraid of the scale of repressive measures used by the Ukrainian government.⁷

There were undoubtedly people among those who participated in the Euromaidan at the end of 2013, who wanted the country to develop

⁵ Malakhov V.S. *Natsionalizm kak politicheskaya ideologiya*. M, 2014. C. 135.

⁶ <http://vesti-ukr.com/strana/230425-ukrainizatsija> (watched on 20.03.2017 r.).

⁷ Manchuk A. *Ukraina: Anatomiya katastrofy*. M, 2017. C 328-329.

democratic values, freedom and human rights. However, they did not understand what exactly they had to do to reach it. This and other circumstances turned a constructive desire to an exclusion from the society all dissenters and domination of a radical movement that offered radical measures. For several years, the Ukrainian government has been justifying these measures by an emergency and war. For example, there is a law called “On the legal regime during the state of war”⁸ that abolishes some points from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Social Charter in the ATO area that results in crimes committed by the military forces of Ukraine and paramilitary formations (including the Azov) that stay unpunished. Nationalistic elements that committed crimes before the Euromaidan and during it and ATO merges steadily with Ukrainian state and force structures. Though Ukraine says that it supports the idea of “European integration”, it complies less and less with the European democratic standards.

Timothy David Snyder, an American historian, professor of Yale University, has recently published a list of 20 recommendations that in his opinion can help any country to avoid degradation starting from democracy and finishing with authoritarianism and totalitarianism. There is one that is quite urgent for Ukraine. “Watch out for the paramilitaries. When the men with guns who have always claimed to be against the system start wearing uniforms and marching around with torches and pictures of a Leader, the end is nigh. When the pro-Leader paramilitary and the official police and military intermingle, the game is over.”⁹

The story of the Azov is a good illustration of it.

*Maksim Vilkov,
IGCP coordinator*

⁸ <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/389-19> (watched on 30.03.2017 r.).

⁹ <http://gordonua.com/publications/20-urokov-iz-hh-veka-dlya-sohraneniya-mira-ot-timoti-snaydera-172890.html> (watched on 30.03.2017).

Chapter 1. Street Militants

Social-National Party of Ukraine

The phenomenon of neo-Nazism in the post-Soviet Ukraine has very deep roots. March 28, 1988 Spadshchina (that means heritage in Ukrainian), an underground organization of the Ukrainian youth, was created. Later it participated in mass street protest including the torch-light processions that the western far-rights like so much (in January 1991 its column that consisted of 300 people with torches marched in Lvov)¹⁰. “The symbol of Heritage included (and includes) modified swastika”, says Anton Shehovtsov, a Ukrainian researcher of the right radicalism, editor of a book series called *Issledovaniya krayne pravyyh* (Research of Ultra-right) (ibidem-Verlag, Germany)¹¹.

Members of this organization that positioned itself as national-cultural participated in street conflicts and got prepared for an armed fight. As Andrey Paruby, chief commandant and ex-leader of Spadshchina, said in his interview in February 2014, “When I was 17 [1987-1988], I together with Spadshchina believed, that we will have to fight for Ukraine in a military way. I studied the passages in mountains and gorges”¹². Spadshchina web-site says the same: “The members of Spadshchina got prepared for a possible conflict with the Soviet power... They understood that they could not openly resist the armed forces of the USSR, so their purpose was a preparation for a possible partisan war and the forms of fight typical of it”¹³.

The web-site also says that “in October 1991 Spadshchina initiated among other organizations the creation of Social-National Party of Ukraine and closely cooperated with it”¹⁴. The All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda, which was turned into SNPU in 2003, describes it in another way and closer to

¹⁰ Istorichna dovidka // Sayt OUM «Spadshchina». [Bez daty.] URL: <http://www.spadshchyna.org/index.php/id/193>

¹¹ Shekhovtsov Anton. Vseukrainskoye obyedineniye «Svoboda»: problema legitimnosti borby za vlast // Forum noveyshey vostochnoyevropeyskoy istorii i kultury. 2013. № 1. С. 32.

¹² Наливайко Северин. «Свято вірив, що за Україну доведеться вести військову боротьбу» // Gazeta.ua. 11.02.2014. URL: http://gazeta.ua/articles/events-journal/_svyato-viriv-scho-za-ukrayinu-dovedetsya-vesti-vijskovu-borotbu/541251

¹³ Istorichna dovidka // Sayt OUM «Spadshchina». [Bez daty.] URL: <http://www.spadshchyna.org/index.php/id/193>

¹⁴ Istorichna dovidka // Sayt OUM «Spadshchina». [Bez daty.] URL: <http://www.spadshchyna.org/index.php/id/193>

the truth. Its member says, “Almost all members of Spadshchina, the organization of the Ukrainian youth, joined SNPU”¹⁵. Paruby became one of the leaders, authorized to work with the youth. The new party also included the so-called “Varta” (guard) of The People’s Movement of Ukraine. Yaroslav Andrushkiv, its leader says, “Warta existed since 1988 until 1991 and consisted of approximately 5 000 people. Most of them took part in the war in Afghanistan. Others were trained in martial arts. However, the focus was not on the physical strength and skills, but on the same technique that was later used in Chechnya during the first coup, when Dudaev was a leader and also in Transdnistria. The weapon from the army warehouses was given to the population”¹⁶. It was one more paramilitary ultra-organization, which “has a clear ideology — Ukrainian nationalism” (9)¹⁷, as Eduard Andrutschenko, a researcher of the right radicalism, writes.

“SPNU used a runic symbol “wolf-hook” (Germ. Wolfsangel) as its symbol”, Shehovtsev writes. Despite its long history, the “wolf-hook” is notorious for being used as a symbol of several SS-divisions in the Nazi Germany”¹⁸. The “wolfish hook” was used as an emblem of Jungen Front, the youth organization of the People’s Socialist Movement of Germany, that was prohibited in 1982 because of the activity against the constitutional system of the country including usage of the symbols that copied with a few modifications the symbols of the Third Reich.

The Greek neo-Nazi Golden Dawn that initially used swastika in the same way made the Wolfsangel its emblem¹⁹.

Nestor Pronyuk²⁰, who initiated the acceptance of the Wolfsangel as a symbol of SNPU and was responsible for agitation and propaganda,

¹⁵ Zelik Ruslan. Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. C. 61.

¹⁶ Musafirova Olga. Osnovatel Sotsial-Natsionalnoy partii Yaroslav Andrushkiv: «Eсли vyvavili seksota, to luchshe ne trogat» // Glavkom. 26.07.2011. URL: <http://glavcom.ua/articles/4295.html>

¹⁷ Andryushchenko Yeduard. «Varta Rukhu» ta її rol u suspilno-politichnikh protsesakh v Ukraïni 1989–1991 rr. // Mandrivets (Ternopol). 2013. №1. C. 47.

¹⁸ Shekhovtsov Anton. Vseukrainskoye obyedineniye «Svoboda»: problema legitimnosti borby za vlast // Forum noveyshey vostochnoyevropeyskoy istorii i kultury. 2013. № 1. C. 31.

¹⁹ «Zolotaya zarya» s kosoy chelkoy // Euronews. 25.06.2014. URL: <http://ru.euronews.com/2014/06/25/greece-golden-dawn-leaders-nazi-salutes/>

²⁰ Yaroslav Andrushkiv, a leader of SNPU, wrote about it in his article published in Sothial-natsionalist on April 1, 1995 (Andrushkiv Yaroslav. Ideya Natsii — nash simvol! // Pravy napryam. Lviv: Liga-pres, 1998. C 5), and repeated it later in an interview after he finished his political activity: Musafirova Olga. Osnovatel Sotsial-Natsionalnoy partii Yaroslav Andrushkiv: «Eсли vyvavili seksota, to luchshe ne trogat» // Glavkom. 26.07.2011. URL: <http://glavcom.ua/articles/4295.html>

showed directly the similarity of its ideology with the European ultra-right at the fifth Party Convention. “It’s typical that modern European nationalism demonstrates the main features of social nationalism and can actually be called social nationalism”²¹. “Nationalism is a purely European phenomenon, it was generated by Aryan attitude”, said Paruby in May 1999. He was one of the members of SNPU delegation that visited Paris, where “the Ukrainian Patriot” was accepted to the youth department created by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the National Front (that united the right parties of Europe)²². In 2000 SNPU Oriyentiry journal published an article by Levko Martynyuk, a member of the leadership of the youth department, called *Magiya Znaka* (the Magic of Sign) illustrated by a set of symbols where one symbol developed from another and the Wolfsangel “grows” from a slightly modified swastika²³.

As Ruslan Zelik, a member of SNPU since 1990, wrote the following in 2008 in a propaganda edition published in the University of Political education, where he was the chef, attached to VO Svoboda (in 2012 Zelik became a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada from this party): SNPU program, accepted at the party constituent assembly in October 13, 1991 “was the main party document. After reading it people came to us and became members of the party”. According to him, the program was radical “as an explosion of a nuclear bomb in the center of Lvov”. When he read it himself in 1991, it gave him “the shivers”²⁴. The Social-Nationalists’ program contained anticommunist (p.13: “SNPU is an irreconcilable enemy of the communist ideology and political parties and movements that popularize and implement it) and openly racist ideas.

According to p. 10 of the party program, “unlike the Ukrainians, whose psychology and traditions have been created for thousands of years... most of the so called Russians were just yesterday Ugro-Finnic tribes, peoples of Ural and Siberia, nomads of Mongoloid origin”²⁵. In

²¹ Pronyuk Nestor. Dekalog. Punkt desyaty. Vystup na urochistikh zborakh z nagodi V z'izdu SNPU // Oriyentiry. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. [1999.] [Bez nomera.] S. 19.

²² Parubiy Andriy. Yevropa vilnikh natsiy (pro poïzdku delegatsii SNPU na konferentsiyu Yevronatsu v Parizh) // Oriyentiry. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. [1999.] [Bez nomera.] S. 21.

²³ Martynyuk Levko. Magiya znaku // Oriyentiry. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. № 3. [2000.] S. 38.

²⁴ Zelik Ruslan. Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. S. 64.

²⁵ Programa Sotsial-Natsionalnoi Partii Ukraïni // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. S. 89.

1995, some points were deleted from the program, but, as Zelik said, “we did not change the first program, it was just a tactical move for a registration authority because it was a problem to get an official status with the program of 1991”. According to Zelik, “after the registration SNPU used the first variant” of its party program²⁶.

“As the party has always understood the nation as a blood-spiritual community, SNPU admitted the people only if they belonged to the Ukrainian nation”, Zelik writes²⁷. The film *20 Years of Loyalty. 20 Years of Fight* made by VO Svoboda in 2011 says the same thing, “The party did not admit non-Ukrainians”²⁸.

“SNPU was a very well structured authoritarian system with a strict vertical subordination”, Zelik says. “Up to 1995 the party admitted only young men (not older than 40 years old). The real age of most of the members was 18-25 years”²⁹. It was a typical Fuhrer organization that logically leads to a creation of paramilitary structures. “In 1993 the party created the so-called “protective public detachments” that became the power wing of the political organization”, Eduard Andruschenko, one more researcher of the Ukrainian right radicalism, says. “Their typical sign was a black uniform. On September 22-24, 1993, they participated in a mass protest action near Verkhovna Rada in Kiev and had a clash with the police”³⁰. “On September 21, 1993 ... “public detachments” appeared near the walls of Verkhovna Rada, all dressed in black”, as was written in the book *Politicheskie partii Ukrainy* (Political Parties of Ukraine)³¹.

The name and the black uniform of the structure openly remind of the Schutzstaffel, SS, NSDAP. However, the functions were more similar to storm troopers, Zelik says. “SNPU... formed paramilitary detachments for street fights”. “I took part in those events and I can say that the only

²⁶ Zelik Ruslan. *Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. S. 62.

²⁷ Zelik Ruslan. *Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. S. 58.

²⁸ *Istoriya VO «Svoboda»*. Chast.1 // Kanal polzovatelya «Natalya Korniyenko» na YouTube. 25.09.2011. URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_9OavgCzrA

²⁹ Zelik Ruslan. *Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. S. 58.

³⁰ Andryushchenko Ye.S. Paramilitarni strukturi ukrainskogo natsionalistichnogo rukhu 90-kh rr. KhKh st. // *Naukovi pratsi istorichnogo fakultetu Zaporizkogo natsionalnogo universitetu*. 2011. Vip. XXX. S. 49.

³¹ Golobutsky O.P., Krivoruchko T.G., Kulik V.O., Yakushik V.M. *Politichni partii Ukraïni*. Kiïv: Kobza, 1996. Quote by an Internet version of the book on Aleksey Golobutsky's web site URL: <http://golob.narod.ru/glvltultrapravi.html>

difference between the troopers and the police was the absence of the special clothing (shields, helmets)³². VO Svoboda explains the last point in its anniversary film that tells us about the training of social-nationalists. “Lvov citadel, that was used as Austrian and Polish quarters before, became SNPU military camp at the beginning of the 1990-s. 500 people were trained daily,” Andrey Mitschenko [a famous activist of SNPU, later Svoboda], says. “Trainers were spetsnaz members.”³³

It is more likely that the fights near Verkhovna Rada were a “non-specialized” use of those hundreds of fighters that were trained by the special services in Lvov. Their main task was street terror against the activists of the left and Russian national-cultural organizations. Late September 1993, Igor Kotsuba, one of SNPU leaders, said during the rally near the Verkhovna Rada in Kiev, “I have been dreaming of The St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre for the Russians in Lvov. However, I understand that we are not strong enough for it yet”. Together with other Ukrainian right radicals social nationalists participated in captures (according to their terminology they “took them under their protection from Moscow” to give to “Ukrainian” churches) of the churches that belonged to Moscow patriarchy. “In 1992 SNPU took under its protection the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Lutsk, the Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir-Volynsky, and dozens of other orthodox churches in villages and cities”, VO Svoboda’s film shows. “In Volhynia and Galicia we fought for Ukrainian churches”, Anatoly Vitiv, a leader of Volhynian organization VO Svoboda, who joined SNPU in 1991, said. “We did not see a difference between Kiev patriarchy and the Greek Catholic Church. For us the most important thing was that it was not Russian”³⁴.

“It is also necessary to mention such a party structure as Patriot of Ukraine that was created and registered [soon after SNPU was registered in October 16, 1995] as a society that helped the Ukrainian armed forces and the Navy”, Zelik writes. “In its prime Patriot of Ukraine had 3 000 members — organized and disciplined young men of the call-up age. It was the biggest organization of this type in Ukraine”³⁵.

³² Zelik Ruslan. *Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. C. 58.

³³ *Istoriya VO «Svoboda»*. Chast.1 // Kanal polzovatelya «Natalya Kornienko» na YouTube. 25.09.2011. URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_9OavgCZrA

³⁴ *Istoriya VO «Svoboda»*. Chast.1 // Kanal polzovatelya «Natalya Korniyenko» na YouTube.25.09.2011. URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_9OavgCZrA

³⁵ Zelik Ruslan. *Istoriya SNPU — VO «Svoboda» // Kurs I. Osnovi natsionalizmu*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Misto NV, 2008. S. 67.

Andrey Paruby from Spadshchina who was mentioned before became a head of Patriot of Ukraine. Ukrainian political scientists also said that in 1990s SNPU wanted to have in the “force structures patriots, elite of the nation”³⁶. Ukrainian enforcers continued their cooperation with neo-Nazis. The special services used neo-Nazis for their goals, but social-nationalists wanted to spread their influence on the youth of the call-up age and to become more influential because of the number of members and people with experience of military service. In December 1999, SNPU published *Put voyna (Way of a Fighter)*, a brochure with farewell quotes of Stepan Bandera, Friedrich Nietzsche and the neopagan Book of Veles (and a picture of a fighter with a Wolfsangel on the shield on the cover). The brochure was intended for the members of Patriot of Ukraine, the circulation was 1000 copies. One of the quotes from the Book of Veles said that “blood is saint... our blood says, that we are sons of Rus”³⁷.

Patriot of Ukraine did not only spread propaganda, but also started a campaign of street terror against the left. On November 7, 1997, several hundreds of its members led by Paruby attacked and beat unmercifully the members of the Communist Party of Ukraine who organized an action devoted to an anniversary of the October Revolution near the monument of Ivan Franko in the center of Lvov.

Criminal proceedings under Section 206 Part 2 (malignant hooliganism) of the Ukrainian Criminal Code were instituted against the head of SNPU youth department and some of its most distinguished brothers-in-arms. However, Paruby was not arrested and was elected a deputy to Rada of Lvov oblast in 2002. On December 12, 1999, after a convention of Patriot of Ukraine Paruby organized a torchlight procession in Lvov, in which 1 500 of his fighters participated. On November 7, 2000, at the rally in the center of the city he said, “If the Verkhovna Rada had at least 10 nationalists, no one there would have spoken Russian for a long time”³⁸. That time (1999–2000s), Patriot of Ukraine had most members, Andryushchenko says³⁹.

³⁶ Golobutsky O.P., Krivoruchko T.G., Kulik V.O., Yakushik V.M. Politichni partii Ukraïni. Kiiiv: Kobza, 1996. Quote by an Internet version of the book on Aleksey Golobutsky's web site URL: <http://golob.narod.ru/glvltultrapravi.html>

³⁷ Shlyakh voïna. Lviv: Patriot Ukraïni, 1999. S. 19.

³⁸ *Aksenchik Vitaly*. Vo Lvove 7 noyabrya sozhgli Lenina // № 45 (46). 10–16.11.2000.

³⁹ *Andryushchenko Ye.S.* Paramilitarni strukturi Ukraïnskogo natsionalistichnogo rukhu 90-kh rr. KhKh st. // Naukovi pratsi istorichnogo fakultetu Zaporizkogo natsionalnogo universitetu. 2011. Vip. XXX. S. 45, 49.

The articles published by SNPU in its printed sources — Sotsial-natsionalist newspaper and Oriyentiry journal - give a clear picture of its ideology. In the editorial published in November 1999 Oriyentiry expresses hope that “Ukrainian nation will abandon ideological traps of communism and demoliberalism... and will come back to life-giving sources that brought to life a great Aryan civilization”⁴⁰. On 19 November 1995, at the official presentation of SNPU in the Maria Zankovetska Theatre Party members said, “Because of a degradation of whole nations... we are almost the last hope of the white race”⁴¹.

SNPU propaganda was based on racism. In the same issue of Oriyentiry published in 1999 Andrey Potseluyko, party theorist, wrote, “Real nation is a big family, a community of people connected by blood. One race, one blood, one ancestry”. Then he said, “Not all the Europeans are really white people. Yes, the population of southern provinces of some European countries consists of European “coloured” who are genetically different from, for example, Arabs and Caucasians. Yes, Russians are in fact a type of the “coloured” Turanian ethnoses”⁴². After reading these declarations, you can understand Paruby’s statement “One of the National Front activists told me that France and Ukraine are very similar. Not only by a square and a number of population, but also by geopolitical location. France stops Asian hordes in the Western Europe and Ukraine in the East”. “Barbers can temporarily win, destroy many things, but they can not destroy the European soul, the soul of the white race!” the leader of Patriot of Ukraine says passionately⁴³.

“No one doubt racial, mental and spiritual closeness of Ukrainians to other European nations”, Paruby wrote in Oriyentiry published in May 2000 (he was also a chief editor of this ideological edition of the party). “However, it is also obvious that there is a racial, mental and spiri-

⁴⁰ Avid redaktsii // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. [1999.]. [Bez nomera.] [Bez paginatsii.]

⁴¹ *Yakimovich Ya. SNPU: ofitsiyny vikhid na lyudi // Za vilnu Ukraïnu.* № 146. 1995. Tsit. po: Golobutsky O.P., Krivoruchko T.G., Kulik V.O., Yakushik V.M. Politichni partii Ukraïni. Kiïv: Kobza, 1996. Quote by an Internet version of the book on Aleksey Golobutsky’s web site, URL: <http://golob.narod.ru/glvltultrapravi.html>

⁴² *Potsiluyko Andriy.* Miscellanea // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. [1999.]. [Bez nomera.]. S. 39.

⁴³ *Parubiy Andriy.* Yevropa vilnikh natsiy (pro poïzdku delegatsii SNPU na konferentsiyu Yevronatsu v Parizh) // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. [1999.]. [Bez nomera.]. S. 22.

tual confrontation between Ukraine and Russia”⁴⁴. “Internationalist Marxism and cosmopolitan liberalism are alien to the Ukrainian nation, the nation that is the basis of the white race”, Levko Martynyuk, one of the leaders of Patriot of Ukraine, said to the party newspaper Sotsial-natsionalist on October 19, 1997. “It is not a nation that was artificially created from the rabble of different ethnicities (like Americans) and that accidentally appeared as a result of interbreeding of the Asians and Europeans (as Moscow)”⁴⁵.

Antisemitism was also promoted. “The USA are big and very proud. Is an American their ruler”? No, he is not”, Valentin Moroz wrote in Sotsial-natsionalist in 1997, who later took floor at SNPU⁴⁶ conventions and was highly respected by its leaders⁴⁷. “An American has a car and a house. They are provided to him and are not taken away to prevent a rebel. However, Zionism rules”⁴⁸.

SNPU ideologists used the party journal to call for a genocide of “racially defective”. “When a white man met someone like him, chaos was something that can be conquered, mastered and regulated”, Potseluyko wrote in 2000. “However, if he meets human beings who are different from him in a qualitative sense, it is necessary to change the game rules. Here the war is not a competition, it is a confrontation of alien, heterogeneous worlds, and there can be only one result — one of them will not exist anymore. In other words, here chaos is something that is necessary to eliminate”⁴⁹.

As the researchers of Ukrainian right radicalism say, “SNPU was the first more or less significant party that started to recruit Nazi-skinheads and football hooligans”⁵⁰. The party started to use the representatives

⁴⁴ *Parubiy Andriy*. Geopolitichni oriyentiri Ukraïni // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. [2000.] № 3. S. 10.

⁴⁵ *Martynyuk Levko*. Chomu na nashikh styagakh znak «Ideya Natsii» // Pravy napryam. Lviv: Liga-pres, 1998. S. 45.

⁴⁶ *Gutsul Yevgeniy*. Sotsial-natsionalisty provozglasili veliky pokhod na Vostok Ukrainy // Zerkalo nedeli. 26.03.1999.

⁴⁷ *Radomskiy Antin*. Yuvileyny vechir, organizovany SNPU, v nagodi 55-richchya Valentina Moroza // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 4 (7). S. 6.

⁴⁸ *Moroz Valentin*. Zbilshuvati natsionalistichny potentsial Ukraïni // Pravy napryam. Lviv: Liga-pres, 1998. S. 36.

⁴⁹ *Potsiluyko Andriy*. *Miscellanea* // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. [1999.] [Bez nomera.] S. 39.

⁵⁰ *Umland Andreas, Shekhovtsov Anton*. Natsional-ekstremizm, shcho ne vidbuvsya? // Politichna kritika. 2011. № 2. S. 25.

of a new radical subculture because of the activity of Alexander («Oles») Vahny. In 1995–1998, he was a head of its Kiev department and from the first year, he had recruited skinheads. In 1998, Vahny was arrested for attacking the office of the Committee of Electors in Kiev. Most of recruited skinheads left the party including Demyan (Dmitry Volkov), one of the soloists of *Sokir Perun*, a neo-Nazi band. In 2002, he organized an attack of the right fans of Dinamo (Kiev) at the synagogue that was situated in Brodsky Street in Kiev. Later Vahny complained that SNPU leader Yaroslav Andrushkiv did not pay enough attention to this racist street young people in Kiev, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk and the Crimea whose goal was to fight not only “Moskals”, but also “interracial elements” from Caucasus, Africa and Asia⁵¹. Nowadays Vahny who was called “a leader of Kiev skinheads” by journalists (his interviews show that there was a reason for it), work as a deputy assistant in the Verkhovna Rada (from the radical party of Oleg Lyashko) for Igor Mosiychuk, who was a member of social-national assembly of Andrey Biletsky and a PR deputy of the commander of the Azov battalion⁵².

In the autumn of 2001 SNPU was actively involved in the organization of mass actions in support of the future “orange” president of the country. That time Viktor Yushchenko was a prime minister who tried to keep his position and organized a street campaign. In the end of March Paruby took a floor in Sambora (Lvov oblast) at the ceremony of creation of SNPU block with the Republican Party of Ukraine (RPU) at the regional level. “All their speeches had the same line”, SNPU party journal wrote about the speeches of Paruby and Svatoslav Uhach, leader of RPU Sambora department. “They wanted to call for an integration of all national patriotic political parties and to make Viktor Yushchenko, ex-prime minister, their leader⁵³.”

At the beginning of April, 2001 Poltavskaya SNPU organized a procession under the slogan “For great Ukraine! For Viktor Yushchenko”⁵⁴. On April 8, SNPU together with other nationalistic parties organized rallies

⁵¹ Spogad pro zanepad subkulturi: Vakhniy proti Tyagniboka // Blog Olesya Vakhniya na Gazete.ua. 19.10.2011. URL: <http://gazeta.ua/blog/707/spogad-pro-zanepad-subkulturi>

⁵² *Maltsev Vladislav* Veterana neonatsizma zaderzhali za ogrableniya igrovoykh salonov v Kiyevе. I otpustili // Life. 10.01.2016. URL: <https://life.ru/957398>

⁵³ *Zvyagolsky Stanislav. Poltava* // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 4 (7). S. 6..

⁵⁴ *Fedirko Vasil. Sambir* // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 4 (7). C. 7.

in Lvov⁵⁵, Kovel (Volhynian region)⁵⁶ and Khmelnytskyi (Khmelnytskyi region)⁵⁷. At the same time, SNPU in Odessa also organized an action to support Yushchenko⁵⁸. As SNPU's journal said, on April 19 "around 5 000 supporters of Viktor Yushchenko gathered near the Verkhovna Rada (Kiev department of SNPU was the most active one)". At the rally Oleg Tyagnibok, a leader of Kiev department and deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, in his speech "asked all the national-patriotic forces to join together and to protect the Ukrainian prime-minister"⁵⁹.

On May 6, SNPU and other nationalistic parties organized a rally in Lvov under the slogan "For Ukraine! For unity! For Yushchenko! Say no to communistic-oligarchic coup". Paruby participated in it⁶⁰. On April 23, social-nationalists held a mass-meeting to support Yushchenko in the center of Vladymir-Volynsky (Volhynian region)⁶¹. SNPU departments' leaders published in Oriyentiry reports of the actions, appeals like "Social-National Party asks the Ukrainians to join the actions... to support Viktor Yushchenko"⁶², and Paruby's article *SNPU for Yushchenko*⁶³.

"Yushchenko... deliberately cooperated with us", Tyagnibok explained in 2004. He also admitted that "at the beginning of 1990s the first democrats showed us as so-called Nazi-fascists - guys in black shirts with an iron look, as my nowadays colleagues, memebrs of the fraction Our Ukraine, said 10 years ago."⁶⁴ The pro-Western part of Ukrainian

⁵⁵ *Radomskiy Antin. Lviv // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 3 (6). S. 7.*

⁵⁶ *Thachuk Vitaliy. Kovel // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 3 (6). S. 7.*

⁵⁷ *Kustovskiy Sergiy. Khmelnitsky // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 3 (6). S. 6.*

⁵⁸ *Odeska SNPU kintsya 90-kh — pochatku 2000-kh. // Blog Eduarda Andryushchenko. 01.07.2011. URL: <http://did-panas23.livejournal.com/196443.html>*

⁵⁹ *Kayda Oleksiy. Kiiv // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 3 (6). S. 6.*

⁶⁰ *Radomskiy Antin. Lviv // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 4 (7). S. 7.*

⁶¹ *Pilipyuk Ruslan. Volodimir-Volynsky // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 2 (6). S. 7.*

⁶² *[Obyavleniye] // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 2 (5). S. 10.*

⁶³ *Parubiy Andriy. SNPU za Yushchenka! // Oriyentiri. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoï partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 3 (6). S. 2, 4.*

⁶⁴ *Oleg Tyagnibok: «Mne by ne khotelos, chtob moi vzglyady i moya pozitsiya navredili Yushchenko» // Ukrainskaya pravda. 31.03.2004. URL: <http://www.ppravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/03/31/4377947>*

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elite used national radicals as a street mass to hold the power. However, before the president election in November 2004 they sent a clear signal that if social nationalists want to join Yushchenko's party Our Ukraine bloc, they have to "smooth" their public image.

On February 14, at the 9th SNPU convention the party was renamed in the All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda, the symbolism was changed, ideological aims were softened, Patriot of Ukraine disbanded. In January 2005, Paruby and his five colleagues who were also leaders of the party left Svoboda and promised to create a new "right party with a national orientation"⁶⁵. People's Union Ukrainians! was soon created, then Paruby joined the president's Our Ukraine—People's Self-Defense Bloc. It is important that he did not abandon his ideas. In 2008 at the Internet conference for one popular Ukrainian web site he said, "I was one of the founders of SNPU, I have not changed my political position since then as well as my ideological basis"⁶⁶.

In future Paruby was used by the Establishment. On February 27, 2014, immediately after the victory of the Euromaidan, whose combat formations ("self-defence") were led by Paruby, he was appointed a head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, where he worked until August 7, 2014. In October 2014, he was elected to the Verkhovna Rada as a member of the People's Front party led by Arseniy Yatsenyuk, a prime minister. In its pre-election list, he took fourth place that was very prestigious and became the first Rada's president deputy. On April 14, Paruby was elected a head of the Ukrainian parliament. Patriot of Ukraine brand left by the leader of VO Svoboda was not set aside. This organization was given a new life by new people in Kharkov who followed Vahny's recommendations regarding the ideology and practice of the organization.

⁶⁵ V partii Tyagniboka proizoshel raskol // Obkom. 12.01.2005. URL: <http://obkom.net.ua/news/2005-01-12/1024.shtml>

⁶⁶ Chat z Andriem Parubiem // VGolos. URL: <http://vgolos.com.ua/chat/35> There is no date, but according to the discussed topics (war in South Ossetia) the Internet conference took place at the end of summer — beginning of autumn 2008.

The Social-National Assembly

“I represent Patriot of Ukraine. This organization was created in 2004”, Andrey Biletsky, a leader of the restored organization, said in an interview in 2010. “A small force right group in Kharkov met, contacted the social-national party of Ukraine. The party was under reformation inside the Svoboda Party. Therefore, Patriot of Ukraine was created based on this Kharkov party mainstream and this force group. Later when we left Svoboda for some reasons and went our own way, we became a 100 percent all-sufficient social-national organization”⁶⁷.

The Social-National Assembly’s official edition, created by Biletsky in 2008, says the following about the past of its leader, “Since 2002 a leader of Kharkov troop of the organization Trizub im. S. Bandery... In 2003 actively cooperated with Kharkov SNPU cell and supported a resistance against SNPU liberalization and its turn into VO Svoboda. After Patriot of Ukraine, the Association of Support for the Armed Forces and Navy of Ukraine, was dismissed, Andrey Biletsky created a new Patriot of Ukraine that was independent of any party structures. He has been her permanent leader since then. The first members of the organization were young fighters of Kharkov SNPU, UNA-UNSO and Trisuba cells who saw the decay of nationalistic structures of the 20th century and the necessity to create a new effective nationalistic force at the end of the 21st century”⁶⁸.

In his speech about recruiting the people to this organization Vyacheslav Likhachyov said, “During the election [to the Verkhovna Rada on March 26, 2006] Andrey Biletsky was “a director deputy for national-patriotic education” in Kharkov IAPM (Interregional Academy of Personnel Management) that shows nonrandomness and systemacy of his cooperation with the most active anti-Semitic party in the history of independent Ukraine”⁶⁹. Interregional Academy of Personnel

⁶⁷ *Gorsky Yury*. Andrey Biletsky: Sotsial-natsionalizm — Zolotoy Vek Ukrainy // ArtPolitInfo. 08.12.2014. URL: <http://artpolitinfo.ru/sotsial-natsionalizm-zolotoy-vek-ukrainyi-v-budushhem-andrey-biletskyi>

⁶⁸ Andriy Biletsky: korotka biografiya // Biletsky Andriy. Slovo Bilogo Vozhdya. [Kharkov: Bez mesta, 2013.] S. 4.

⁶⁹ Chto NAM v NIKh ne nraivitsya-I: Andrey Biletsky // Blog Vyacheslava Likhacheva. 05.11.2014. URL: <http://corneliu.livejournal.com/227914.html>

Management (IAPM) became famous in 2000s by publishing huge circulations of a lot of literature that called for pogroms. People who used Ukrainian political Internet forums spoke about the same episode in the biography of the future “White leader” at the end of October 2014. “Biletsky was a manager of a household in Kharkov IAPM department and formed a chain of associates in all the spheres starting from the researchers and finishing by turretless far-right nationalists in different Ukrainian cities”⁷⁰.

The quoted Internet user described Biletsky’s office in Kharkov department of the academy, “It was a small building at Kharkov tractor plant, there was nothing to manage there, Biletsky’s office was just a small closet”⁷¹. He also explains why this academy was so valuable for recruiting people, “Late 2000s IAPM was a center of nationalism. It attracted people with far-right ideas starting from its administration. They organized different conferences and held lectures. It united mostly those who left SNPU after Tyagnybok was elected the head of the party and it was renamed in Svoboda”⁷². Besides, students were also valuable. It is not a coincidence that Artem Levchenko, a journalist, described the participants of the march of the “Patriot of Ukraine” that took place on April 14, 2006, as “students”.

Levchenko also described a short prehistory of the organization activity before this moment in his article published on April 17, 2006 in the Vecherny Kharkov newspaper. “The regional Patriot of Ukraine appeared for the first time in Kharkov at the end of last year, immediately before the pre-election campaign [to the Verkhovna Rada], when the members of this so-called “independent association of an order type” supported the ultra nationalistic party Svobada. In December [2005] to celebrate another anniversary of hunger of the 1930s patriots burned red flags and place wreathes made of barbed wire to the monument of Lenin at Svoboda square. In February [2006] Kharkov city soviet members picketed because they wanted to put to the agenda the question of making Russian a regional language. In March, they organized an

⁷⁰ A message of a user called Darth Vader at the forum of web site «Spravzhnya ukrainska pravda». 28.10.2014. URL: <http://ukrpravda.net/index.php?topic=24719.msg672348#msg672348>

⁷¹ A message of a user called Darth Vader at the forum of web site «Spravzhnya ukrainska pravda». 28.10.2014. URL: <http://ukrpravda.net/index.php?topic=24719.msg672402#msg672402>

⁷² A message of a user called Darth Vader at the forum of web site «Spravzhnya ukrainska pravda». 28.10.2014. URL: <http://ukrpravda.net/index.php?topic=24719.msg672416#msg672416>

action to the memory of UPA fighters, guarded by Oleg Tyagnibok, a famous people's deputy, during his visit to Kharkov, and fought the police trying to prevent the representatives of the local authorities to bring flowers to the monument of Taras Shevchenko. The topic of immigrants was also paid attention to. They picketed regional FRRO and the main regional office of education and science demanding to strengthen the control of the foreigners and to bring their presence in Ukraine to minimum"⁷³.

The first independent action of Patriot of Ukraine was march "Ukraine against occupation" held on April 14, 2006, aimed at uniting all young people who had nationalistic views.

"People were different — from skinhead teenagers in camouflaged loose overalls on thin shoulders to hairy members of unofficial organizations in clamped leather coats", Levchenko described the participants attracted by an announcement of an action. Members of the organization together with Belitsky looked different. "He appeared when it was necessary — at the last moment, five minutes before the column of marchers started to move. He was at the head of its avant-garde — thirty or forty brave guys who looked like athletes in the equal khaki uniform... and army wide trousers tucked into heavy quarters."⁷⁴

The slogans for the march in the center of Kharkov on April 14, 2006, were "Immigrants, go home! "One race! One nation! One motherland! This is Ukraine" and "Ukraine for Ukrainians!" According to journalists, it gathered around 100 members. According to the far-right who also mentioned skinheads and football fans it gathered around 200 people⁷⁵. In future, such processions were held annually on April 14 — on the day of Koliyivshchyna, Cossack rebel of 1768, when mass massacre of Poles and Jews took place. The next march took place on June 3, 2006. This time the enemy was indicated quite clearly — Buddhist pagoda the construction of which had been started by a famous Vietnamese society in Vstrecha park in Frunzensky district. "This time the action attracted not only patriotic youth, but also local citizens who had radical views and who on practice knew neighborliness of narrow-eyed citizens of Kharkov", the far-right said. "After communicating with each other,

⁷³ *Levchenko Artem*. Kharkovskiye «Patrioty Ukrainy» vyshli na ulitsy // Vecherny Kharkov. 17.04.2006.

⁷⁴ *Levchenko Artem*. Kharkovskiye «Patrioty Ukrainy» vyshli na ulitsy // Vecherny Kharkov. 17.04.2006.

⁷⁵ Ukraina protiv immigratsii // Sayt Ukrainskoy natsional-trudovoy partii. 07.08.2006. URL: <http://www.untp.org.ua/index.php?id=402>

despite the recommendations of the police not to do it, members of the Patriot brought to naught all the undertakings of the constructors.”⁷⁶

Next year there were more attacks at Vietnamese. “On March 18 [2007] in Kharkov the ultra-right youth movement “Patriot of Ukraine” organized a torchlight procession round the dormitory in the university camp. The slogans were “One race! One nation! One motherland — Ukraine!” and “The best dormitory to Ukrainian students”. The procession was sanctioned and went under observation of the police without disorderly conduct,” Vyacheslav Lihachev, an expert of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities (VAAD), said in the chronicle of xenophobia manifestations in Ukraine in the first half of 2007. “As the director of the Kharkov Human Rights Protection Group (KHRPG) Yevgeny Zaharov said, the action was aimed at intimidation of foreign students. It was already the third action like that and before the members beat students with non-Slav look. As the human rights activist said, no criminal proceedings were instituted as the suffered (who only anonymously agreed to speak about it) were afraid to put in an application to the police”. According to another report in the chronicle, this fear could be explained by the fact that Biletsky cooperated with enforcers. “On May 1 [2007] Patriot of Ukraine attacked agricultural greenhouses near Kharkov, where Vietnamese worked. Nationalists caught and held eight migrants by force and then brought them to Kharkov and gave to the police”.

The organization actively expanded beyond Kharkov region. The first regional department was officially created on November 18, 2006 in Kiev and showed itself by organizing “March against illegal immigrants” on April 14, 2007. “A column marched across the whole center of the capital for the first time. People chanted the slogans “One race!” The march was sanctioned by the authorities, the demonstrators said. It was organized by a public organization Patriot of Ukraine, the Internet edition Segodnya said. Around 100 activists participated in it. They wore khaki uniform and carried yellow flags with blue tridents. The slogan was “One race! One nation! One home! This is Ukraine!”⁷⁷ After the march for which the capital ultra-rights were mobilized were similar to what happened in Kharkov. “On the same day a few violent incidents

⁷⁶ Kharkov protiv aziatskoy okkupatsii // Blog press-sluzhby Ukrainskoy natsional-trudovoy partii. 05.03.2006. URL: <http://ua-untp.livejournal.com/8422.html>

⁷⁷ Abramov Vlad. V Ukraine rasizma net, no migrantam ne mesto? // Segodnya. 16.04.2007. URL: <http://www.segodnya.ua/ukraine/v-ukraine-racizma-net-no-mihrantam-ne-mecto.html>

happened in Ukrainian capital... At Borshchagovka a few young men attacked a teenager, a son of a Ukrainian woman and an African man. They wounded him with cold steel several times. The injured was sent to hospital in a bad condition”⁷⁸.

However, Kharkov remained the main field for the organization, where it started to attack Vietnamese more aggressively at the beginning of 2010s, when the number of the members significantly increased. On October 24, 2010, Patriot of Ukraine organized a torchlight procession in the evening in Kharkov. “Patriots” in khaki uniforms with lighted torches attracted a lot of attention of the citizens”, the witnesses said. “Open flags, lighted torches, a column of 200-300 young people march along Moscow avenue, then along akademika Pavlova street, then along Saltovskoye highway”⁷⁹. You can see a banner in the pictures, carried by the participants of the procession. It showed haidamaks with exposed sabers and a quote from Taras Shevchenko’s poem of the same name *In the Same Time Haidamaks Consecrated Their Knives*.

“Kharkov nationalists started a campaign against Vietnamese”, local journalists said in spring 2011. “Radical nationalists burst into dormitories, where foreigners live, shout extremist slogans, march along the streets and stick leaflets on the pillars that call for a boycott for Vietnamese”⁸⁰.

On April 17, 2011, Patriot of Ukraine and right football fans organized a procession in the center of Kharkov. Up to 1000 people participated in it, as the organizers said. The slogans were beside the familiar ones “White Power”, “Immigrants, go home”, “White man — great Ukraine!”⁸¹

On May 19, 2011, members of Patriot of Ukraine led by Oleg Odnorozhenko conducted a raid in a dormitory of Kharkov Polytechnic University, where they searched for illegals. Gazeta.ua said, “Some of

⁷⁸ *Likhachev Vyacheslav*. Antisemitizm i ksenofobiya v Ukraine, yanvar — iyun 2007: khronika prestupleny na pochve nenavisti // Sayt Assotsiatsii evreyskikh organizatsiy i obshchin Ukrainy «Vaad». [Без даты.] URL: <http://old.vaadua.org/News/07-07/antsem%2001-06-2007.htm>

⁷⁹ *Udovichenko Sergey*. Marsh «Patriotov» protiv vyetnamskoy mafii. // Sayt organizatsii «Immigratsiya — stop!». 24.10.2010. URL: <http://immigration-stop.org.ua/ru/?p=476>

⁸⁰ *Shaporenko Valeriya*. Radikaly obyavili voynu vyetnamsam. Chego zhdat kharkovchanam ot takoy neterpimosti? // Mediagruppa «Obyektiv». 28.05.2011. URL: <http://www.objectiv.tv/280511/56461.html>

⁸¹ *Mazhora Anatoly*. Odni krichat, drugiye molchat // MediaPort. 19.04.2011. URL: http://www.mediaport.ua/articles/76604/odni_krichat_drugie_molchat_

them [nationalists] wore a military uniform and covered their faces”⁸². “Activists of a radical Patriot of Ukraine are throwing out the Vietnamese from the dormitory. The foreigners are told to stay in front of the wall, humiliated, demanded to show the documents”, Obyektiv media group described a video of the raid made by the right radicals⁸³.

Then it was another big university’s turn. “On May 25 [2011] Vitaly Ganchev, police major and UGIRFO employee (Administration of Citizenship, Immigration and Registration of Individuals) together with a dozen members of Patriot of Ukraine came to a clockhouse of Ukrtechprogress to check this university,” said Sergey Udovichenko, a journalist of Svoboda’s newspaper Svoboda Slobozhanshchina and a representative of affiliated together with Patriot of Ukraine the movement Immigration Stop!, who came together with the right radicals. As he said, “guys in a khaki uniform frightened the security so much, that they closed the entrance, called additional security, a lawyer, Patrol-Guard service, “Berkut”, State Protection Service and also some local police”. On the same day in the afternoon the members of Patriot of Ukraine again arrived to the university building trying to enter it and search for illegals.⁸⁴

“On Friday [May 28, 2011] they marched along the city streets under observation of the police. Around one hundred young men in khaki uniform went from the Metallist Stadium to Moscow police department”, Obyektiv said. “In Saltovka [a big housing estate in the north-east of Kharkov] anti-Vietnamese posters are stuck to houses and columns. “Patriots” call for a boycott for Vietnamese: no purchases from them, no renting, no communication. They say that Vietnamese sell drugs in Kharkov, capture plants and beat Ukrainian kids”⁸⁵.

The right radicals also started terror against the left. “In Kharkov Patriot of Ukraine started a street war with pro-Russian, communist,

⁸² *Timoshenko Denis*. V Kharkove natsionalisty peretryasli vyetnamskiye «gnezda» // Gazeta.ua. 19.05.2011. URL: http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/politics/_v-harkove-natsionalisty-peretryasli-vietnamskie-gnezda/383396

⁸³ *Shaporenko Valeriya*. Radikaly obyavili voynu vyetnamtsam. Chego zhdet khar-kovchanam ot takoy neterpimosti? // Mediagruppa «Obyektiv». 28.05.2011. URL: <http://www.objectiv.tv/280511/56461.html>

⁸⁴ *Udovichenko Sergey*. Kak vyetnamtsy uchatsya v Kharkove. (foto) // Narodnaya prav-da. 28.05.2011. URL: <http://narodnapravda.org/news/534-kak-vietnamcy-uchatsya-v-xarkovfoto.html>

⁸⁵ *Shaporenko Valeriya*. Radikaly obyavili voynu vyetnamtsam. Chego zhdet khar-kovchanam ot takoy neterpimosti? // Mediagruppa «Obyektiv». 28.05.2011. URL: <http://www.objectiv.tv/280511/56461.html>

leftist organizations, and they disappeared,” Odnorozhenko boasted. “We started from attacking their mass-meetings and breaking up their conventions”⁸⁶.

Aleksey Kornev, head of the Nation Hope organization, beaten together with several other people by the right radicals on June 3, 2009, near the eternal flame in the center of Kharkov, said, “I was attacked by skinheads in a normal sport uniform. O. Odnorozhenko was the first. He knocked me off my feet, and while I was trying to stand up, other people started to beat me with their feet... They even hammered my glasses in my face. I fainted. They broke me a nose and two ribs. I also have a cleavage of two teeth, a brain concussion and hematomas on the whole body. Now I am on sick leave. A few days before the attack I gave a speech for one of Kharkov TV channels and spoke about the threat of neo-Nazism in Ukraine. I also commented on neo-Nazism in Kharkov and the activity of Patriot of Ukraine in TCN news at channel 1+1. I think it was a reason why I was attacked”⁸⁷. A criminal proceeding was instituted against Odnorozhenko, but while the “orange” stayed in power, he was free. In December 2013, he was arrested and sent to remand prison (SIZO)⁸⁸.

“Biletsky’s organization has been systemically, for years cultivating violence as a legal method of political activity”, Lihachev says⁸⁹. As he wanted to make his organization more influential, Biletsky held a constituent assembly on November 8, 2008, in Kiev, where a new political party was created — the Social-National Assembly (SNA). It was based on Patriot of Ukraine and some ideologically related groups and copied

⁸⁶ *Nalivayko Severin*. «Oppozitsiya uzhe mogla byt vlastyu. Zato proigryvayet na vsekh frontakh» — istorik // *Gazeta.ua*. 26.12.2013. URL: http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/politics/_opozitsiya-uzhe-mogla-byt-vlastyu-zato-proigryvaet-na-vseh-frontah-istorik/534204

⁸⁷ *Voynitsky Andrey*. Predsedatel organizatsii «Nadiya natsii» utverzhdayet, chto ego izbili chleny organizatsii «Patriot Ukrainy». Vozbuzhdeno ugovnoye delo (dopolneno) // *Status Quo*. 23.06.2009. URL: http://www.sq.com.ua/rus/news/politika/23.06.2009/predsedatel_organizacii_nadiya_naciyi_utverzhaet_chno_ego_izbili_chleny_organizacii_patriot/

⁸⁸ *Fedosenko Pavel*. V Kharkove arestvovali ideologa natsionalistov // *Vesti*. 23.12.2013. URL: <http://vesti-ukr.com/harkov/31091-v-harkove-arestovali-ideologa-nacionalistov>

⁸⁹ *Bereza Anastasiya. Andrey Biletsky*. Kak vojna prevratila polituznika v komandira batalyona Azov // *Novoye vremya*. № 23. 17.10.2014. Quoted by an Internet publication on web site URL: <http://nv.ua/publications/andrey-bileckiy-kak-vojna-prevratila-polituznika-v-komandira-batalona-azov--17031.html>

its symbolism and ideology. So Kharkov right radicals managed to create a new affiliate in Odessa on the basis of the local neo-Nazi Glory and Honor group. In summer 2008, they organized a march in honor of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Glory and Honor was led by Maxim Chaika, a skinhead and a right football fan. His Jewish classmate mentioned his aggressive antisemitism⁹⁰.

“SNA reached the pinnacle of its power in spring 2011. Only in Kharkov it had 600 militants and several thousand sympathizers”, Sergey Kolesnik, an antifascist journal, said in Kharkov. “The organization covers the whole Ukraine. SNA had its cells in Lugansk, Donetsk, Zaporozhye, Yalta, Simferopol, Nikolayev, Odessa, Sumy, Konotop, Kiev, Vasilkov, Belaya Tserkov, Zhitomir, Khmelnytsky, Rovno, Chernovtsy, Ternopol, Ivano-Frankovsk, Galich, Lvov, Vladimir-Volynsk, and Novovolynsk.”⁹¹ Lihachev agrees with Kolesnik who thinks that the Social-National Assembly is the top of the neo-Nazism evolution in Ukraine. In March 2014 Lihachev wrote in Kiev Jewish Hadashot newspaper, “From 2006 to 2011 this group was the most serious neo-Nazi organization in the country.”⁹²

Patriot of Ukraine had a good ideology that was based on racism much more than the ideology of its predecessor. Her authors were Biletsky and Oleg Odnorozhenko who was close to him. Odnorozhenko had close relations with Kharkov SNPU in 2001⁹³, and Lihachev called him “ideologist of the modern Ukrainian racism” in 2014.⁹⁴

“As the program of Patriot of Ukraine published on the official website of the organization said, the organization “stands for a monoracial, mononational society”, the Kharkov Human Rights Protection Group said on September 5, 2008. “Biletsky directly says, that “Ukrainian racial social-nationalism is an ideology of Patriot of Ukraine (it was also a name of his article published [in 2007 in Kharkov] in *Ukrainian Social*

⁹⁰ Bereza Anastasiya. Andrey Biletsky. Kak voyna prevratila polituznika v komandira batalyona Azov // *Novoye vremya*. № 23. URL: <http://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/13/52>

⁹¹ *Kolesnik Sergey*. «Sotsial-natsionalnaya assambleya» — vershina evolyutsii neonatsizma v Ukraine // *Analitik.ua*. 03.10.2014. URL: <http://analitiks.su/social-nacionalnaya-assambleya-vershina-evolyucii-neonacizma-v-ukraine/>

⁹² *Likhachev Vyacheslav*. *Temnaya storona nesvobody* // *Khadashot (Kiyev)*. № 3. Mart 2014 g.

⁹³ *Odnorozhenko Oleg*. *Kharkiv* // *Oriyentiri*. Vidannya Sotsial-Natsionalnoi partii Ukraïni. 2001. № 2 (5). S. 10.

⁹⁴ *Likhachev Vyacheslav*. *Temnaya storona nesvobody* // *Khadashot (Kiyev)*. № 3. Mapr 2014 r.

Nationalism, a collection of ideological works and program documents)”. O. Odnorozhenko, an ideologist of the organization, says frankly in the material *Social-Nationalistic Movement And Its Main Tasks*, “All foreign ethnic racial groups will be limited and controlled, and later deported to their ancestral lands. We, Ukrainian social nationalists, see the so-called “human races” as separate biological species, only White European Man can be considerate biologically rational being⁹⁵. In 2014, Lihachev continued the quote from this article by Odnorozhenko, “We, Ukrainian social nationalists... consider our direct responsibility to exclude any interracial (interspecific) contacts that bring to interracial (interspecific) blending and to the extinction of a White Man in the end”. One more quote said, “The Ukrainian social nationalism builds its ideology on maximalism, national racial egoism, love to its own things, intolerance to hostile things and activism that can function as an iron ram for extermination of the foreign force that wants to interfere with the Ukrainian Nation and White Race”⁹⁶.

Biletsky said the following about the fundamental principles of its organization in the article *We are Social Nationalists* published on SNA web site, “Racial identity. Our nationalism is nothing, it is like castles in the air if it is not based on blood foundation, race foundation. Traditional nationalism (post-war, by Postone) puts a cart in front of a horse. It says that nation is a language, cultural or territorial economical phenomenon. Of course, we know the significance of moral and cultural linguistic factors as far as territorial patriotism. However, according to our deep conviction, they are all just derivatives of our Race, our Racial nature... So if we want to treat our National body, we need to start with a Racial purification of the Nation... Besides purity, it is necessary to pay attention to the full value of the Race. Ukrainians is a part (one of the biggest and the most qualitative one) of a European White Race, the creator of a great civilization, the highest human achievements. The historical mission of our Nation in this critical century is to lead White People of the whole world to the last crusade for its existence, the crusade against subhumanity led by Semites.” Biletsky said, that

⁹⁵ Vidkryty list Kharkivskoї pravozakhisnoї grupi do Do Tsentralnogo pravlinnyia Vseukraїnskogo Tovaristva «Prosvita» im. T. Shevchenka // Sayt Kharkovskoy pravozashchitnoy grupy. 05.09.2008. URL: <http://helsinki.org.ua/articles/vidkrytyj-lyst-harkivskoj-pravozahysnoji-hrupy-do-do-tsentralnoho-pravlinnyia-vseukrajin-skoho-tovarystva-prosvita-im-t-shevchenka/>

⁹⁶ Chto NAM v NIKh ne nraivitsya-I: Andrey Biletsky // Blog Vyacheslava Likhacheva. 05.11.2014. URL: <http://corneliu.livejournal.com/227914.html>

“the goal of the current generation is to create the Third Empire — Great Ukraine”⁹⁷. A new Third Reich...

“People who create SNA... are quite young. They represent street militant youth movements. Fight, hierarchy, discipline are normal for us”, Biletsky said in 2010. “We are going to bring our values to politics, and it will make us a unique political party. Besides, we plan to be the only political party that not only fights politically, but is also active in the street, has its own force resources and a clear world view.”⁹⁸ Regarding the “clear world view”, it is worth mentioning April 25, 2013, when Patriot of Ukraine organized a march to celebrate an anniversary of SS Galician division creation in Ivano-Frankovsk⁹⁹.

On October 14, 2007, a column of Patriot of Ukraine participated in a march in honor of UPA in Kiev. It became one of the main components of its right radical column and demonstrated to the public neo-Nazi symbolism on the uniform — images of “Black Sun” and a little bit modified “Imperial Eagles” (Der Reichsadler) similar to stripes on the uniform of Wehrmacht soldiers, but holding in the claws eight pointed swastika, and not a four pointed one. “Patriots” were carrying flags and shields with stylized images of another version of the Third Reich eagles.¹⁰⁰ A year later the members of the organization marched in Kiev not only in a khaki uniform, but in steel army helmets.¹⁰¹ The right radicals’ procession soon tuned into mass conflict with the police spetsnaz, but the radicals did not win. Alyona Belozerskaya, a nationalist, said, “I have heard a version that it was a planned provocation... from the “patriots”,

⁹⁷ The Social-National Assembly web site is not available now. Quotes with a reference to an article on it: Ultrapravi organizatsiï v Ukraïni // Pravozashchitny Fond imeni R.I. Marochkinoy. 22.03.2010. URL: <https://marochkina.wordpress.com/2010/03/22/analiz-utrpravvyh/> Polnaya kopiya statyi Biletskogo: Kurina Aksinya. Pochemu «molodye politiki» podderzhivayut kandidata s neonatsistskoy ideologiyey? // Blog Kurinoy na «Ukrainskoy pravde». 08.10.2014. URL: <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/kurina/543545886e82a/>

⁹⁸ Kopiya intervyyu so ssylkoy na original na sayte Sotsial-natsionalnoy assamblei: Akkaunt Anny Brazhkinoy v sotsseti Facebook. 04.05.2014. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/annabrazhkina/posts/796326400380335>

⁹⁹ V Ivano-Frankivsku vidbulos svyatkuvannya 70 richnitsi stvorenniya diviziï SS «Galichina» (Foto) // Paralleli. 29.04.2013. URL: <http://paralleli.if.ua/news/31691.html>

¹⁰⁰ A photo report was published in Mignews.com.ua, but then deleted. Copies: Voskresny marsh v Kiyeye (29 foto) // Trinixy. 16.10.2007. URL: http://trinixy.ru/page,1,9,10138-voskresnyjj_marsh_v_kieve_29_shtuk.html

¹⁰¹ *Nikolayev Sergey*. Protivostoyaniye // PhotoPolygon. 08.11.2008. URL: <http://photopolygon.com/posts/4663>

because many of them were in helmets, it means, they got prepared!... I think, if you ask the “patriots” themselves, they will say that, first, it was as they wanted to look cool, and, second, because a conflict with cops was possible. What to deny here?”¹⁰² Lihachev wrote in 2014, “Nowadays we can say that a mass fight with the police which Brotherhood and Patriot of Ukraine organized near SBU on October 18, 2008 looks like a prologue to the storm [The Presidential Administration of Russia] of Bankovaya on December 1 [2013]”¹⁰³.

“Biletsky started to create a patriotic organization ten years ago and a chain of its representatives in the Eastern Ukraine and in some cities of the Western Ukraine,” a man said in October 2014 who knew him well. “He gathered people around who were not only very patriotic, but had also been getting the skills of partisan fight and subversive activity on billowy territory and in town for all these years before war... They had been training and had been training hard. They had developed intestinal fortitude in mud and fire. They had been preparing for this war in advance. Besides, he trained his associates to be very disciplined and to unquestioningly obey to the authority of older and more experienced comrades.”¹⁰⁴ It is confirmed by Vadim Troyan, a member of the Patriot of Ukraine and later the Azov battalion, “The Azov is based on people who have been trained and disciplined for their whole life”. We have been preparing for the war”¹⁰⁵. Sergey Koleskin, Kharkov antifascist journalist also writes about this, “SNA militants were trained according to the program of special force units. One of the obligatory subjects that was necessary to pass if you want to become a full member of the organization was “a two-minute hand-to-hand combat against two enemies simultaneously”, and “a four-minute knife fighting against two enemies alternately” (a quote by “a book of a fighter”, which every SNA member had to carry with him). SNA Kharkov department (the leading one) had a school, which trained extremists from the whole Ukraine. They learned subversive activity... The organization even had real quar-

¹⁰² Poboishche pid chas Pravogo marshu // Blog Oleny Bilozerskoy. 19.10.2008. URL: <http://bilozerska.livejournal.com/91123.html>

¹⁰³ *Likhachev Vyacheslav*. Temnaya storona nesvobody // Khadashot (Kiyev). № 3. Mart 2014 g.

¹⁰⁴ A message of a user called Darth Vader at the forum of web site «Spravzhnaya ukrainska pravda» 28.10.2014. URL: <http://ukrpravda.net/index.php?topic=24719.msg672200#msg672200>

¹⁰⁵ *Bazar Oleg, Shvets Yevgeny. Vadim Troyan: «My ponimali: sdadim Mariupol — proigrayem voynu»* // Lb.ua. 02.12.2014. URL: http://society.lb.ua/life/2014/12/02/287807_vadim_troyan_mi_ponimali_sdadim.html

ters in the office for people from other cities. Every fighter had to live there minimum for ten days.”¹⁰⁶

When the criminal case of Biletsky and his accomplices who tried to kill Kolesnik was investigated, the police found pictures from knife fighting trainings, conducted by “a white leader” himself. It turned out that they learned how to kill someone by stabbing him in the back to the heart and cutting a throat from different sides.¹⁰⁷

At the beginning of 2010, the organization accumulated weapon. “As one of SNA ex-members said, their leader Biletsky armed the organization all the time. First of all he bought around 20 starting pistols Zoraki that he immediately changed for shooting with live cartridges, and a couple of shotguns. Besides, the arsenal was enriched all the time. Every SNA member had to carry a knife and to know how to use it. It is confirmed by the fact that every time when SNA members were arrested by the police, they withdrew knives from them. The examination record of one of SNA ex-members say, “A.I. Biletsky have been looking for an opportunity to buy a more serious weapon lately (before mass arrests of the members of this terrorist organization started). He wanted to buy guns, grenades and smoke-puff charges.” He thought that I. Mihaylenko (a famous organization member) who studied weapons and ammunition and later trained others could make a self-made bomb.”¹⁰⁸

Why did this neo-Nazi organization acted freely and developed in one of the biggest Ukrainian cities? Anton Shehobtsov answers this question in an article published on December 12, 2014, on the web site of the German newspaper Die Zeit. He thought that Patriot of Ukraine flourished because Arsen Avakov, a governor of Kharkov region in 2005–2010, protected it. Andrey Lipchansky also participated in this scheme. He was Avakov business partner and had an Internet holding which included the Triolan company run by Vadim Troyan, an active member of Patriot of Ukraine and an ex-policeman, in 2010–2012. “Avakov, Biletsky and Troyan were born in Kharkov. They have known each other at least since 2009–2010. Avakov was a governor of Kharkov region that

¹⁰⁶ *Kolesnik Sergey*. «Sotsial-natsionalnaya assambleya» — vershina evolyutsii neonatsizma v Ukraine // Analitik.ua. 03.10.2014. URL: <http://analitiks.su/social-nacionalnaya-assambleya-vershina-evolyucii-neonacizma-v-ukraine/>

¹⁰⁷ S kakoy tselyu natsionalistov uchat ubivat chasovykh? // Blog Miroslavy Berdnik. 01.06.2013. URL: <http://varjag-2007.livejournal.com/4734376.html>

¹⁰⁸ *Kolesnik Sergey*. «Sotsial-natsionalnaya assambleya» — vershina evolyutsii neonatsizma v Ukraine // Analitik.ua. 03.10.2014. URL: <http://analitiks.su/social-nacionalnaya-assambleya-vershina-evolyucii-neonacizma-v-ukraine/>

time. “Patriot of Ukraine” participated in attacks on Vietnamese traders and companies. In 2010, Patriot of Ukraine took by force around 50 newsstands in Kharkov that were then given to property of Andrey Lipchansky’s company. Lipchansky was Avakov’s business partner and run the Administration of the Press and Information during his governorship in Kharkov region. The mass media also say that Lipchansky rented a gym to train the members of Patriot of Ukraine. They were responsible for security during protests against Kiev government organized [2010] by Yuliya Tymoshenko’ Bloc in Kharkov. Avakov was a president of the regional department of Tymoshenko’s Bloc.”¹⁰⁹

Kharkov mass media had said the same earlier. “They organize real death squads in the city,” Argument, an Internet edition, wrote on September 1, 2014. “They are financed by Yevgeny Zhilin, an ex-police-man, who is famous for money laundering in Kharkov, and Aleksey Lipchansky, nicknamed Lyopa, an owner of one of the biggest providers — Triolan. Bandits themselves were recruited from Patriot of Ukraine and partially from local sportsmen. Aleksey Lipchansky, who was an owner of Premyer, a publishing house, in 2005–2010, financed the public organization Patriot of Ukraine. He was not interested in the public part of its activity. However, the “patriots” seized the property that belonged to other people on his instruction. For example, newsstands, when Lyopa wanted to expand the retail chain of the press. That time he was Avakov’s favorite, but then the administration changed. Lyopa did not get lost. He stopped financing “patriots”, joined the Party of Regions and became a deputy of the city soviet.”¹¹⁰

In 2012, journalists spoke a lot about seizure of newsstands by Patriot of Ukraine described by Shehovtsov, that they were given to Lipchansky. “The businessmen themselves say that on June 1, 2010, similar events happened in several newsstands. Patriot of Ukraine activists burst into newsstands opened because of heat, threw the newsagent away, fastened their padlocks and disappeared. It was in the afternoon. At night, they sawed the padlocks, threw the goods away and occupied the newsstand... A strange contract appeared later. According to it, OOO Pressa-Kharkov sold 48 newsstands to Ruslan Eglit, a businessman, at a surprisingly low

¹⁰⁹ *Shekhovtsov Anton*. Wie Vetterwirtschaft ukrainischen Neonazis nutzt // Zeit Online. 11.12.2014. URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2014-12/ukraine-neonazis-vetterwirtschaft> Opublikovano takzhe: *Shekhovtsov Anton*. Entwicklungsperspektiven der rechtsradikalen Kräfte in der Ukraine // Ukraine-Analysen. ¹.144.28.01.2015.S.9-10.

¹¹⁰ *Lodygin Stanislav*. Kak Kharkov stal Gepagradom // Argument. 01.09.2014. URL: <http://argumentua.com/stati/kak-kharkov-stal-gepa-getto>

price of 500 hryvnia... Ruslan Eglit is connected with Aleksey Lipchansky, a media proprietor, who runs a cable chain Triolan and founded OOO Premyer-tsentr, which printed a promotional newspaper of the same name... It is also important to mention that many “patriots” work as linesmen in Lipchansky’s Kharkov cable chain Triolan, who supported Yuliya Tymoshenko and her Block at presidential and parliamentary elections. Lipchansky rented a gym in sports school #9 in Chuguevskaya Street, where Triolan’s employees, that means “patriots”, were trained hand-to-hand fighting twice a week. Patriot of Ukraine have one more protector. He was seen among the members of the organization many times during the actions of “patriots” who tried to promote his interests. It is interesting that Patriot of Ukraine was created and developed, when he was a governor. We speak about A. Avakov, a candidate to a city major and a leader of Kharkov BYT. The members of Patriot of Ukraine were the main agitators for his candidacy. They played a role of security squads at BYT’s actions, and TV companies ATN and Vesti have employees who are on the staff of Patriot of Ukraine. Therefore, we can understand why ATN (Avakov) and Kharkov Vesti (Lipchansky) showed the activity of the “patriots” in a good light¹¹¹. The suffered newsstand owners spoke about an interesting moment regarding the raiders, “We had a conversation and found out that they are led by Vadim Troyan, security chief from Kiev, from Triolan, and they got an order to attack us from Ruslan Eglit, a director of Triolan... We also found out that the unknown people who attacked us were members of Patriot of Ukraine... Then Vadim Troyan came from Kiev and told us that we must give him our phone numbers, and the “boss” will call and speak with us.”¹¹²

In 2014, Troyan told Deutsche Welle that he actively participated in the activity of Patriot of Ukraine. “I was responsible for physical training. I brought teenagers and young men to all-Ukrainian training camps.”¹¹³ It corresponds with the gym rent for right radicals by Triolan,

¹¹¹ Kto takiye «Patrioty Ukrainy» i za chto oni boryutsya // Sayt Zakog.ru. 27.11.2012. URL: <http://www.zakog.ru/2012/11/blog-post.html>

¹¹² Reydersky zakhvat kioskov «Kharkov-prensa» (VIDEO) // Yuridicheskaya pomoshch. 01.06.2010. URL: <http://advocat-cons.info/index.php?newsid=7724#.VuF43-KLTcs>

¹¹³ *Grishko Liliya, Teyze Yevgen*. Golovny militsioner Kiiivshchini: rizikovane pryznachennya // Deutsche Welle. 20.11.2014. URL: <http://www.dw.com/uk/%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B9-%D0%BC%D1%96%D0%BB%D1%96%D1%86%D1%96%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80-%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%97%D0%B2%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F/a-18074783>

but there is one circumstance — Troyan admits his cooperation with Patriot of Ukraine only in 2005–2007. It is not true, as Lihachev says. Later Troyan also played an important role in this neo-Nazi organization. “One of the key activists and leaders of the neo-Nazi organization Patriot of Ukraine in the second half of 2000s. On October 18, 2008, he participated in a provocative action organized by Dmitry Korchinsky, a leader of the Brotherhood party, and Andrey Biletsky, a leader of Patriot of Ukraine. It was an alternative march in UPA’s memory, that finished with an effort of national radicals to break through a police cordon and a fight with the police. V. Troyan was arrested and incriminated with hooliganism.”¹¹⁴

Then it means that the man who later held a high post in the structures of Avakov’s business partner (and was loyal to him even after a break because of a power change in Lipchansky’s region) had cooperated with neo-Nazis long time before the protests of 2010, from 2005, when Avakov had become a governor of the region.

Yes, it is surprising, how simultaneously Avakov’s political career and Patriot of Ukraine’s activity developed. In February 2005, Avakov became a governor of Kharkov region and soon a new neo-Nazi organization with big ambitions appeared and started active actions. It developed without any difficulties up to Avakov’s resignation in February 2010, and continued during his active opposition activity in the region. In September 2011 Avakov went to Italy to “political immigration” that continued up to the end of 2012 when he got immunity to criminal proceedings because he was elected a deputy to the Verkhovna Rada from Yuliya Tymoshenko’s Fatherland Union.

Local authorities in Kharkov withdrew Avakov’s assets. Patriot of Ukraine also suffered a blow. The leaders of the organization were arrested for preparing a terror attack in Kiev region on August 22, 2011.¹¹⁵ Two activists were arrested on September 11, 2011, for an attempt on journalist Sergey Kolesnik’s life, who was stabbed several times in

¹¹⁴ Chto NAM v NIKh ne nravitsya-IV: Bonus! Vadim Troyan // Blog Vyacheslava Likhacheva. 05.11.2014. URL: <http://corneliu.livejournal.com/228690.html> Troyan arrest at the march of right radicals in 2008 was mentioned before in the article: *Chepurko Valeriya*. Novomu nachalniku militsii Kiyevskoy oblasti «shili» delo za khuliganstvo // Komsomolskaya pravda v Ukraine. 03.11.2014. URL: <http://kp.ua/kiiev/476747-novomu-nachalnyku-mylitsyy-kyevskoi-oblasty-shyly-delo-za-khulyhanstvo>

¹¹⁵ Tema nedeli: SBU otchitalas, chto obezvredila terroristov iz Vasilkova // Lb.ua. 28.08.2011. URL: http://24tv.ua/ru/tema_nedeli_sbu_otchitalas_chto_obezvredila_terroristov_iz_vasilkova_n129392

Kharkov office of Patriot of Ukraine. Andrey Biletsky was arrested on December 27, 2011. The “white leader” and his closest accomplices will be released only after the victory of the Euromaidan.

Ukrainian national security attacked the biggest neo-Nazi organization that had been getting prepared to seize the power in the country. However, it did not manage to shatter it past retrieval. “The Security Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs tried to destroy the organization by sending Biletsky to prison. However, the members just went underground, but did not stop their activity,” a well-informed (as it was shown before) source said. “It is impossible to destroy the organization that had initially got prepared for an underground fight. When Biletsky was released from SIZO at the end of February [2014], he formed very quickly his own voluntary combat unit. It was already ready, but few people knew about it.”¹¹⁶ Biletsky said almost the same in June 2014, “My friends met me, right activists, football ultras, ex-members of Patriot of Ukraine and other right organizations. On the first day when I was released [from SIZO], a few hundred guys came. Next day we went to storm Oplot [a combat club that united those who were against the Euromaidan]. Our group became a basis of the Azov battalion with time.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ A message of a user called Darth Vader at the forum of web site «Spravzhnya ukrainska pravda». 28.10.2014. URL: <http://ukrpravda.net/index.php?topic=24719.msg672397#msg672397>

¹¹⁷ *Sheremet Pavel*. Komandir batalyona «Azov»: Samaya strashnaya oshibka vlasti — politicheskiye peregovory s separatistami // Ukrainskaya pravda. 17.06.2014. URL: <http://www.ppravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/06/17/7029309/>

Chapter 2. Neo-Nazis Get Armed

Officially, the Azov special ops battalion (now the Azov regiment) was founded on May 5, 2014. However, a precursive paramilitary group headed by Andrey Biletsky first arose even earlier, according to the unit's press office: "The precursor of Azov regiment was an organization called Patriot of Ukraine. Future Azov members were active participants in the Revolution of Dignity, rising against Yanukovich regime on December 1, 2013 and January 19, 2014. When revanchists brought Russian aggression and a wave of instability, patriots set up a guerilla unit named the Black Corps, which turned into the Azov special ops battalion on May 5, 2014."¹¹⁸

The name "Black Corps" was popular among Azov members even further. There are photographs from Kiev¹¹⁹ dated June 23, 2014 and Mariupol¹²⁰ dated July 8, 2014, on which its paramilitary fighters (including Vladimir Shpara as the then official unit commander) are posing in uniform with virtually standardized chevrons signed "Black Corps". Similar chevrons can be seen at a drill featuring Azov fighters and its deputy commander Oleg Odnorozhenko, in a news broadcast aired on September 3, 2014 by TV2 Norge, Norway¹²¹. The footage of Biletsky addressing Azov recruits before sending them to front was published on April 25, 2015. It also features a fighter standing next to his commander wearing the same Black Corps chevrons¹²². Finally, some of Azov Civil Corps members who organized a march named "The Nation Demands" in Kiev on May 20, 2016 also wore "Black Corps" stripes.

It is worth noting that exactly the same term, Das Schwarze Korps, was the name of the official SS newspaper. In literature, "Black Corps"

¹¹⁸ Proshel god so dnya sozdaniya polka «Azov» // Pressa Ukrainy. 05.05.2014. URL: <http://uapress.info/ru/news/show/74492/>

¹¹⁹ Demkova Slava. «Cherny korpus» otpravilsya v zonu ATO (FOTO) // Pressa Ukrainy. 24.06.2014. URL: <http://uapress.info/ru/news/show/28835>

¹²⁰ VMariupole «chernye cheloveчки» obeshchalizashchishchat gorod (Fotoreportazh) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 08.07.2014. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/571715>

¹²¹ Nordmenn står i kø for å bidra i kampene i Ukraina // Сайт TV2 Norge. [03.09.2014.] URL: <http://www.tv2.no/v/840782/>

¹²² Ninishnya viyna na Donbasi — tse viyna dvokh tsivilizatsiy: Andriy Biletsky // Kanal polzovatelya «Sayt Informator» na YouTube. 25.04.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkhIE-sAb1c>

often refers to the punitive squad headed by Heinrich Himmler, which was declared criminal by the International Military Trail in Nuremberg. The reference looks pretty vibrant, taking to account the activities of this ‘guerilla’ unit and the description of them given by Biletsky himself in 2014: ‘...start cleansing Russian-Communist disease from our towns.’

“At the time I came up with the idea of a unit that would be able to oppose that witches’ Sabbath,” Biletsky continued. “I wish it had proper arms and equipment and so on. People came to help us. There turned out to be lots of patriotic minded people in Kiev who donated bullet-proof vests, uniform, helmets, balaclavas and transport. Weapons were hard to get then. A guy or two owned licensed pump shotguns, but it counted only 5 to 6 shotguns per our 60 to 70 fighters.”¹²³ This statement is confirmed by Kharkov police who detained Black Corps fighters after the so-called Rymarska Street massacre (on the night of March 14, 2014, they shot at several pro-Russian activists on Rymarska Str. in Kharkov, leaving two dead and four wounded); the police confiscated 6 sporting guns, a self-made small-bore rifle and two rubber-bullet revolvers, all of them adjusted to be able to shoot ball-cartridges¹²⁴.

Those far-right activists after detention were never indicted. They had been transferred to Kharkov temporary detention facility before “they reached an agreement that they would transfer all our men to another facility in Poltava. There they all were given small terms of containment and, one by one, they were free after 3 or 4 days”, according to what Stepan Baida, head of Azov press office, told UKRLIFE.TV station on June 30, 2015¹²⁵.

Baida said in the same interview that the far-right had been experiencing this situation of uncertainty “before mid-April (2014) or so.” After that, everything changed, since on April 7, 2014, Kharkov residents rose to take control of the regional administration, and a people’s republic was proclaimed. “We were already in contact with the national authority,” Baida conceded. “We started to do sallies. We call those times the

¹²³ *Kondratenko Andrey*. Komandir polka «Azov» Andrey Beletsky: Te, kto prolivayet krov za Ukrainu, dolzhny imet svoy golos vo vlasti // УНІАН. 11.10.2014. URL: <http://www.unian.net/politics/994778-komandir-polka-azov-andrey-beletskiy-te-kto-proливаet-krov-za-ukrainu-doljniy-imet-svoy-golos-vo-vlasti.html>

¹²⁴ Kharkov. Boynya na Rymarskoy 18. Strana dolzhna znat svoikh «geroyev» v litso! Chast № 1. Russky yazyk. // Blog Without-Variant. 18.03.2014. URL: <http://without-variant.livejournal.com/10488.html>

¹²⁵ Kak sozdavalsya polk «Azov» // UKRLIFE.TV. 30.06.2015. URL: <http://www.ukrlife.tv/video/suspilstvo/kak-sozdavalsia-polk-azov>

‘rebar’ period, we only had metal sticks. Once we clashed with Berkut soldiers on the border of the Kharkov oblast. They realized who we were. Police in Kharkov were then pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian... They beat us very severely with buttstocks.”¹²⁶

The same events were later described by an officer of Berkut, a special police unit in Kharkov, his description featuring an exact date, April 12, 2014.

“Once Maidan far-right radicals started to enjoy what they did, they could not stop. I am sure that a tragedy like the one in Odessa could have happened earlier in Kharkov... When they send their ‘convoys of friendship’, we could intercept them at distant approaches. That is exactly what happened in Chutovo, Poltava on April 12, 2014 when they 30 to 40 buses as well as several cars were heading for Kharkov.”

Soon we could see what this kind of ‘tourists’ had with them. We confiscated sapper spades, baseball bats, pistols, knives and machetes, all that stuff. The whole day after over in Kharkov, the boys were chasing those who did reach the town. However, we successfully stopped the main part of the buses near Poltava. We found a straightforward way to explain to those who were not welcome, that Kharkov is controlled by our Berkut forces, and we do not need any other force to control it. We need to hammer this idea into about 70 heads of men in the buses.”¹²⁷

Ukrainian media also reported on those detained in April 2014, mentioning that there were 44 people detained, including Ukrainian nationalists, football fans, and several foreign nationals including one Swedish citizen (most probably, it was the neo-Nazi called Mikael Skillt, later a member of Azov; his story will follow). Bladed weapons, helmets and Molotov cocktails were found in the convoy’s cars and buses¹²⁸. On that day, there was a march of nationalists and football fans in Kharkov, similar to that that took place in Odessa on May 2, 2014 and ended up in the attack on leftwing activists and burning the Trade Unions House. The version that on April 12, 2017, Berkut policemen prevented a massacre which was prepared by the neo-Nazi Black Corps, seems highly probable.

¹²⁶ Kak sozdavalsya polk «Azov» // UKRLIFE.TV. 30.06.2015. URL: <http://www.ukrlife.tv/video/suspilstvo/kak-sozdavalsia-polk-azov>

¹²⁷ Dmitriyev Andrey. «My krepli i zakalyalis v etom adu» // Svobodnaya pressa. 26.03.2015. URL: <http://svpressa.ru/society/article/145228/>

¹²⁸ Militsiya ne puska yet stolichnykh aktivistov v Kharkovskuyu oblast (OBNOVLENO) // Lb.ua. 12.04.2014. URL: http://society.lb.ua/accidents/2014/04/12/262907_avtokolonnu_druzhbi_zaderzhali.html

During that interview to the Ukrainian 112 TV channel, Baida was frank enough about those who helped the neo-Nazis at that time: “We had a sort of transition period that we called the Black Corps. Another name was ‘rebar forces’. The building where we are all now was the one the ministry of the interior spared for us. We started our drills. Later on, we made it regular to do incursions to Kharkov, breaking up pro-Russian rallies — now you can see the results as pockets of separatism have been completely eliminated.”¹²⁹ “It is also due to our achievements that Kharkov is now a peaceful place [for the Ukrainian authorities],” Biletsky also said proudly¹³⁰.

“The participation of hundreds of Patriot of Ukraine guys in public order squads in Kharkov on April 13 and 20 [2014] in close cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Security Service of Ukraine put an end to Moscow’s attempts to ignite the situation in Kharkov,” Anton Gerashchenko, a top adviser for the Minister of the Interior, conceded on May 6, 2016. I remember Andrey Biletsky’s boys patrolling Kharkov streets in an organized convoy, each wearing a black uniform that spoke for itself, that Kharkov had its defenders who would fight against separatism and would never allow anything like they had in Donetsk and Lugansk!¹³¹ This is how neo-Nazis in black uniform became the backbone of the new regime in the eastern regions of the country.

Gerashchenko also said about how they used the ‘rebar forces’ to punish pro-Russian activists in other regions. “In the late April [of 2014] Andrey [Biletsky] and Oleg [Odnorozhenko] came up with an idea to arrange the ‘eviction’ of separatists that were holding the town council building in Maruipol... The decision was to support the boys’ initiative and try to fight back yet another strategically important town... My function was... the coordination of the boys coming from all Ukraine to Maruipol to fulfill the task that the Ukrainian government and its agencies could not fulfill at that time. On the

¹²⁹ Ot «Pravogo sektora» «Azov» otlichayetsya boleye sistemnym podkhodom i organizatsiyey / Podgotovil Yevgeny Slavny // Telekanal 112. 31.08.2015. URL: <http://112.ua/interview/ot-pravogo-sektora-azov-otlichaetsya-bolee-sistemnym-podhodom-i-organizatsiyey-255219.html>

¹³⁰ *Sheremet Pavel*. Komandir batalyona «Azov»: Samaya strashnaya oshibka vlasti — politicheskiye peregovory s separatistami // Ukrainskaya pravda. *Українська правда*. 17.06.2014. URL: <http://www.prawda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/06/17/7029309/>

¹³¹ A post in Anton Gershchenko’s account on Facebook. 06.05.2016. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/1046993312054182>

night of April 23, Mariupol City Hall was cleared in minutes. It was almost bloodless.¹³²

“Almost bloodless!” And here is how the local press, even those loyal to the new Ukrainian government, described the same events on April 24, 2014: “Between 3 and 4 a.m., a group of strangers broke into the town hall. There were about 30 of them started to hit the occupiers with baseball bats. The attackers, as witness say, were 20 to 25 years old; they had gauze masks on the heads. Heavy blows caught the protesters on their arms, legs and heads. They drew one of the activists out of the building and packed in a car trunk, however, he managed to escape... When they were leaving the building, the intruders chanted “Hail to Ukraine, hail to the heroes!”¹³³

Those who defended the city hall managed to push back the Nazi-style hooligans. “This case revealed that pro-Ukrainian young patriots would be unable to efficiently defend their country unless they join police forces and obtain weapons legally.” Gerashchenko remembered¹³⁴. Baida states directly that, in these violent actions, “we made a strong showing as Avakov contacted us and we started to somehow legalize our status.”¹³⁵ The neo-Nazi ‘rebar forces’ that used to smashed people with bats and steel rebar rods (to which Baida refers as ‘our little sticks’) was now transforming into a fire-armed formation.

On April 26, 2014, an address of Little Black Men appeared on the Internet (for which the Social-National Assembly of Ukraine was responsible, according to one of its leaders and future deputy Azov commander, Igor Moseychuk¹³⁶), a footage of these men in black uniform and balaclavas declare they “embark on a mission to free the south-east

¹³² A post in Anton Gerashchenko’s account on Facebook. 06.05.2016. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/1046993312054182>

¹³³ V Mariupole zdaniye gorsoвета osvobodili ot zakhvatchikov? (Obnovlyaetsya+FOTO, VIDEO) // Gorodskoy sayt Mariupolya. 24.04.2014. URL: <https://www.0629.com.ua/news/522106>

¹³⁴ A post in Anton Gerashchenko’s account on Facebook. 06.05.2016. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/1046993312054182>

¹³⁵ Ot «Pravogo sektora» «Azov» otlichayetsya boleye sistemnym podkhodom i organizatsiyey / Podgotovil Yevgeny Slavny // Telekanal 112. 31.08.2015. URL: <http://112.ua/interview/ot-pravogo-sektora-azov-otlichaetsya-bolee-sistemnym-podhodom-i-organizatsiyey-255219.html>

¹³⁶ *Makarenko Anna*. Kto takiye «chernye chelovechki»: treniruyutsya na bazakh v dvukh oblastyakh i deystvuyut po nocham // Segodnya. 28.04.2014. URL: <http://www.segodnya.ua/politics/society/chernye-ohotniki-na-zelenyh-chelovechkov-516179.html>

from occupiers such as saboteurs, or ‘little green men’, and separatist betrayers”¹³⁷. According to Biletsky, early in May 2014, “we have spent two months in a status even more dangerous than the one of separatists’: armed men — who else can they be, if not pure criminals?” What ‘arms’ he is speaking about? Not the sporting guns they appeared with in March, we suppose. Biletsky keeps repeating in multiple interviews: “We obtained our first automatic rifles on a military base in Mariupol that the rebels had been desperately trying to take control of...The next day was our first battle day. After that, we repelled the assault on the local police office”¹³⁸. A video dated April 2014 features one of the “little black men” with a pump gun and another one with a Kalashnikov, notably a very old model. Vadim Troyan, Azov chief of staff since the very first day, makes a sort of confession in his interview, “Remember those days, the beginning of the war? Remember how many of us were there on the front? Ok, and do you know the total number of Azov members at that time? It was 81 men. However, 81 rifle we had not. So each one of us put on clothes he had, grabbed some ‘made in Angola’ stuff with a worn-out gas piston and went into the assault of the city”¹³⁹. Azov took part in the assault of Mariupol twice — on May 9 and June 13 of 2014. Biletsky says, “there were 150 of us” during the assault in June¹⁴⁰. Baida, describing the events of early May 2014, mentions the same number of Azov members, that is 80 men¹⁴¹. By June, Azov fighters were already well armed and equipped.

Naturally, no Kalashnikov rifles with ‘made in Angola’ marks on them could be kept in police departments, and therefore Azov could not get them from there. Consequently, part of the weaponry had been obtained on the black market (before they were given new arsenals on

¹³⁷ Zvernennyya «chornikh cholovichkiv» do ukraïntsiiv skhodu ta pivdnyia // Kanal polzovatelya «Chorni cholovichki» na YouTube. 25.04.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-GvY8SAKMc>

¹³⁸ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Polovina «Azova» govorit na russkom yazyke. No oni umirayut i ubivayut za Ukrainu» // Lb.ua. 10.12.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/12/10/288683_andrey_biletskiy_polovina_azova.html

¹³⁹ *Bazar Oleg, Shvets Yevgeny, Vadim Troyan*: «My ponimali: sdadim Mariupol — proigrayem voynu» // Lb.ua. 02.12.2014. URL: http://society.lb.ua/life/2014/12/02/287807_vadim_troyan_mi_ponimali_sdadim.html

¹⁴⁰ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Polovina «Azova» govorit na russkom yazyke. No oni umirayut i ubivayut za Ukrainu» // Lb.ua. 10.12.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/12/10/288683_andrey_biletskiy_polovina_azova.html

¹⁴¹ *Kak sozdavalsya polk «Azov»* // UKRLIFE.TV. 30.06.2015. URL: <http://www.ukrlife.tv/video/suspilstvo/kak-sozdavalsia-polk-azov>

5 May when there was no longer sense in purchasing weapons elsewhere — that is, before the battalion was formed). Indeed, it was a typical criminal gang, which was nevertheless nurtured by the Ministry of the Interior for the fight against pro-Russian activists. In November 2014, Biletsky noted, “Azov backbone was actually the little black men group...now all of them are officers, comprising Azov’s striking force”¹⁴².

The armed group of the far-right was then deployed south. “On May 3 [2014 года]” we came to Berdyansk not to let the separatists capture the town. After that, we decided to regain control of Mariupol town hall. In Mariupol, we realized that the police blockheads had been losing almost everything to the separatists. By that time, May 5, there was an internal troops unit located there, that had already experienced a number of separatist attacks. Most of the soldiers were locals, part of the staff had already escaped or defected, taking weapons with them, another part was now choosing between whether to capitulate or also take the Donetsk separatists’ side...The top-ranking police officers had to decide. One option was to give away a hundred or two Kalashnikovs and machine guns to the separatists, as they did in Donetsk and Luhansk in even larger quantities, or share it which a specially formed volunteer battalion. We were there on the spot, ready to operate. It was that night that the police made up its historic decision, issuing an order on establishing such a battalion... We had our battle the next day¹⁴³.

On May 9, 2014, Azov took part in the assault attempt in Mariupol, in which the Ukrainian military used all automatic weaponry (including armored carrier machine guns) to fire at the WWII victory day celebratory procession. According to the Ukrainian media, Biletsky’s unit were active participants in it: “Our men, numbering about 30, were wearing black uniform”¹⁴⁴. Part of the fighters were wearing civil clothes.

“After we actually lost control of Mariupol, the third biggest Donbass town, on May 9, Ukraine was controlling nothing but Mariupol airfield where several hundred National Guard and regular troops, as well as one-and-a half hundred Azov volunteers were located. Part of the latter

¹⁴² Kurilenko Oleksandr. «Mi gotovi yti na smert. Ale tse mae buti plata za rezultat, a ne za idiotizm» // Gazeta. 04.11.2014. URL: http://gazeta.ua/articles/opinions-journal/_mi-gotovi-jti-na-smert-ale-ce-maye-buti-plata-za-rezultat-a-ne-za-idiotizm/590796

¹⁴³ Sheremet Pavel. Komandir batalyona «Azov»: Samaya strashnaya oshibka vlasti — politicheskiye peregovory s separatistami // Ukrainskaya pravda. 17.06.2014. URL: <http://www.prawda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/06/17/7029309/>

¹⁴⁴ Sobytiya v Mariupole 9 maya: kak eto bylo // Argument. 17.05.2014. URL: <http://argumentua.com/stati/sobytiya-v-mariupole-9-maya-kak-eto-bylo>

had been transported there in an unprecedented airborne operation that took several hours to prepare and that calls for a special narration and commemoration in history,” Anton Gerashchenko, an advisor to Ukraine’s interior minister, wrote in Facebook on June 13, 2015. “A meeting between Arsen Avakov, Sergey Taruta and his first deputy Andrey Nikolayenko, where I also participated, took part in the minister’s office on May 12 or so. We discussed how we could mop up Mariupol from terrorists when all local law enforcement was dead and when there was no units capable of fighting in the region, as far as their morale and skills were concerned. We agreed during that meeting that it was impossible to take Mariupol using only the existing army and National Guard units. The only decision made at that meeting was to give additional equipment and weapons to the new volunteer Azov battalion, consisting of Maidan activists and headed by Andrey Biletsky. The battalion was at that moment at Mariupol airport, fighters living with no conveniences after they had been deployed there by air on May 9. We gave preference to volunteers willing and strong enough to defend Ukraine from terrorists rather than those who had served in the army or internal troops for years. Those young volunteers were deprived from prejudice and regulations¹⁴⁵.”

That is a rather frank confession. It means that the army and the internal troops were not ready to shoot at the civilians. Later Avakov admitted the fact: on December 16, 2015 he wrote on Facebook that he was directly responsible for the new volunteer battalions as part of the interior ministry, that took Maidan patriots to the fold and successfully resisted the aggression in the early days of the war when the army refused to do it¹⁴⁶. This is why they gave priority to neo-Nazis who were not tided up with ‘prejudice or regulations.’ “There were two other meetings at the minister’s office between May 20 and June 10 [of 2014], with the participation of Azov commander Andrey Biletsky, his Chief-of-staff Vadim Troyan, National Guard Commander Gen. Stepan Poltorak, his Chief-of-staff Gen. Krivenko, Deputy Minister of the Interior Sergey Yarovoy, Sergey Taruta and his Deputy Andrey Nikolayenko”, Gershchenko wrote. “In fact, the task was to make a stormtrooper unit out of a bunch of Maidan volunteers, the one that would be able to clear Mariupol from terrorists.” Azov fighters met his expecta-

¹⁴⁵ A post in Anton Gershchenko’s account on Facebook. 13.06.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/871150152971833>

¹⁴⁶ A post in Arsen Avakov’s account on Facebook. 13.06.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/arsen.avakov.1/videos/945144895575617/>

tions, according to his own words: “The mop-up operation [in town] was headed by the battalion commander Andrey Biletsky himself. Cherkas and Shpara groups, the latter one of the so-called Vasilkov terrorists, also contributed a lot in the ops¹⁴⁷.” (He was one of those Patriot of Ukraine members convicted of preparing a terrorist attack in Kiev oblast in 2011)

Later on, Azov took hold of Mariupol and was in the vanguard of the Ukrainian offensive against Donetsk. The unit’s manpower was increasing dramatically. While Biletsky says “in fact, we were 150 men”¹⁴⁸ during the assault on Mariupol on June 13, 2014, BBC reported after only one month that the unit comprised 300 fighters¹⁴⁹, and yet another month later Radio Liberty quoted Oleg Odnorozhenko’s words about Azov actual manpower being as many as 400¹⁵⁰. By early September 2014, Biletsky also said in an interview that the battalion had “around 600 fighters, including both those who have been [formally] enrolled and those who have been not”¹⁵¹. On September 17, 2014, the battalion was transformed into a regiment, resulting in another Biletsky’s report stating, that “we have... around 700 troops and the numbers tend to increase”¹⁵². In May 2015, he addressed his troops on Azov’s 1st anniversary, describing its manpower progress: “Within a year, we have made a former 60-men guerilla unit the most efficient military force, and were the only to gain a regiment status with 1200 fighters nowadays. We used to resist the occupiers with only guns, but now we can see the enemy through heavy weaponry crosshair¹⁵³”. In August of 2015,

¹⁴⁷ A post in Anton Gershchenko’s account on Facebook. 13.06.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/871150152971833>

¹⁴⁸ *Shvets Yevgeny. Andrey Biletsky: «Polovina «Azova» govorit na russkom yazyke. No oni umirayut i ubivayut za Ukrainu»* // Lb.ua. 10.12.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/12/10/288683_andrey_biletskiy_polovina_azova.html

¹⁴⁹ *Newman Dina. Ukraine conflict: «White power» warrior from Sweden* // BBC. 16.07.2014. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28329329>

¹⁵⁰ *Sukhov Oleg. «Patrioty» ili «neonatsisty»? // Radio «Svoboda». 15.08.2014. URL: http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/26532580.html*

¹⁵¹ Biletsky: Ya by ne zagonyal palkami na peredovuyu tekhniku, kto nakhoditsya v uzhashe ot voyny // Bigmir.net. 07.09.2015. URL: <http://news.bigmir.net/ukraine/931754-Bileckij--Ja-by-ne-zagonjal-palkami-na-peredovuju-teh--kto-nahoditsja-v-uzhase-ot-voyny>

¹⁵² *Kondratenko Andrey. Komandir polka «Azov» Andrey Beletsky: Te, kto prolivayet krov za Ukrainu, dolzhny imet svoj golos vo vlasti* // УНІАН. 11.10.2014. URL: <http://www.unian.net/politics/994778-komandir-polka-azov-andrey-beletskiy-te-kto-prolivaet-krov-za-ukrainu-doljniyi-imet-svoy-golos-vo-vlasti.html>

¹⁵³ *Martsenko Denis. Biletsky: «Azov» osvobodit Donbass i Krym ot okkupantov* // Pressa Ukrainy. 05.05.2015. URL: <http://uapress.info/ru/news/show/74535>

he reported that there are as many as 1400 officially enlisted troops as well as over 40 armored vehicles”¹⁵⁴. December of 2015 saw “1500 men in the battalion already, as well as another 90 ready to join us”, which meant that “we have been actually a brigade for a long time, judging from our manpower, weaponry and command.”, Biletsky said¹⁵⁵. Earlier in June 2015, he used to say to his men that, “if everything goes well, Azov regiment will be transformed into a separate elite brigade, giving us an opportunity to reach 2,500 troops in numbers. Believe me, we do have that many. Lots of youths are now eager to join, but we don’t have the right to enroll.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, Biletsky managed to actually skirt these manpower limits.

A tenfold increase within only a year and a raised status is something very unusual for volunteer battalions in Ukraine. Add to this that on November 11, 2014, the regiment was attached to the National Guard as part of the interior forces body, allowing to equip it with modern artillery and armoured vehicles. “At that time the heaviest artillery piece in the Azov was a BRDM, a reconnaissance vehicle. Nowadays we have dozens of armored vehicles, including a tank company,” Biletsky claimed in September 2015. “At that time the heaviest piece of artillery was a ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft cannon [given to them on June 13, 2014 before the Maruipol assault] and a 120-mm mortar captured September 5, 2014 which no one could handle. Nowadays we have up to twenty different artillery pieces... While manpower has increased twice since then, our armor has strengthened twentyfold. So has artillery”¹⁵⁷. Earlier in August 2015, Vadim Boyko, a member of Azov, posted on Facebook that “the tank company is about to transform into a battalion, that is why

¹⁵⁴ *Chernyshev Denis*. Andrey Biletsky: Otdat Donbass Putinu — predlozheniye slaboumnykh // LIGABiznesInform. 12.08.2015. URL: http://news.liga.net/interview/politics/6394218-andrey_biletskiy_otdat_donbass_putinu_predlozhenie_slaboumnykh_html

¹⁵⁵ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Khunty ne budet. Armiya ne sposobna na perevot» // Lb.ua. 02.12.2015. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2015/12/02/322333_andrey_biletskiy_hunti_budet.html

¹⁵⁶ Polk «Azov» budet reorganizovan v brigadu chislennostyu 2500 boytsov — Biletsky // Sluzhba novostey telekanala «1+1». 18.06.2015. URL: <http://ru.tsn.ua/ato/polkazov-budet-reorganizovan-v-brigadu-chislennostyu-2500-boycov-bileckiy-437946.html>

¹⁵⁷ Biletsky: Ya by ne zagonyal palkami na peredovuyu tekhnolohiyu, kto nakhoditsya v uzhasakh ot voyny // Bigmir.net. 07.09.2015. URL: <http://news.bigmir.net/ukraine/931754-Bileckij--Ja-by-ne-zagonjal-palkami-na-peredovuyu-tehnolohiyu-kto-nahoditsya-v-uzhasakh-ot-voyny>

staff expansion is likely¹⁵⁸”, adding that he had learned about that 3 months before that¹⁵⁹. It looks like this restructuring is expected as part of the regiment-to-brigade transformation that Biletsky announced in June 2015. Baida also mentioned in his interview to 112 TV station on August 31, 2015, that “the transition to a brigade is already underway”, adding that “it almost 2,000 of us now. We have infantry, a motorized unit with tanks, MLTBs [or multipurpose armored towers], a howitzer battery and a mortar squadron. Structurally, we are almost a brigade¹⁶⁰”.

Another mission of Azov was city patrol. Avakov, minister of the interior, told LigaBiznesInform on May 25, 2015 about a recent incident featuring a group of nationalists shooting at a police car, “There could have been our volunteers in this car, for example, Azov members whom we often employ for patrolling”¹⁶¹. “Police General III rank Vyacheslav Abroskin, head of Donetsk oblast main police directorate, set before us a task of public order protection in Donetsk oblast,” reported police colonel Sergey Danilenko, deputy chief of the preventive measures department of the Donetsk oblast main police directorate. “Special attention is to be paid to the town of Mariupol, where armored patrol has been carried out since last year. The armored patrols include fighters of the Azov regiment... Azov fighters are there to prevent foot-dragging among police officers.” There were photos of those guards on patrol, in full combat gear, wearing bulletproof vests and multicolored balaclavas or makeshift bandanas, armed with rifles. The fact that they are dressed each in his own fashion means, that these are civil Nationalist activists who were voluntarily engaged in patrolling¹⁶². Since late January 2016, armed Azov fighters on armored vehicles have been patrolling towns

¹⁵⁸ A post in Vadim Boyko’s account on Facebook. 19.08.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/vadim.boiko.9/posts/881520451930777>

¹⁵⁹ A comment by Vadim Boyko on Facebook. 19.08.2015. URL: https://www.facebook.com/vadim.boiko.9/posts/881520451930777?comment_id=881540071928815&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R6%22%7D

¹⁶⁰ Ot «Pravogo sektora» «Azov» otlichayetsya boleye sistemnym podkhodom i organizatsiyey / Podgotovil Yevgeny Slavny // Telekanal 112. 31.08.2015. URL: <http://112.ua/interview/ot-pravogo-sektora-azov-otlichaetsya-bolee-sistemnym-podhodom-i-organizatsiyey-255219.html>

¹⁶¹ *Shuklinov Petr. Avakov: Ya za polnoye razgranicheniye s okkupirovannym Donbassom* // LIGABiznesInform. 28.05.2016. URL: http://news.liga.net/interview/politics/5866274-avakov_ya_za_polnoe_razgranichenie_s_okkupirovannym_donbassom.htm

¹⁶² «Azov» patroliruyet Mariupol vmeste s politseyskimi (FOTO+VIDEO) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 24.03.2016. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/1166802>

and villages in Genichesk rayon of Kherson oblast, as agreed with the ministry of the interior¹⁶³, and take part in guarding Kharkov streets since February 4, 2016¹⁶⁴. Speaking of Mariupol, Donetsk oblast main police directorate decided on March 2, 2016 that the number of armed fighters engaged in city patrol should be increased¹⁶⁵.

The authorities also consider other opportunities for cooperation between different police bodies with the unit, often finding Azov's radical ideology attractive rather than confusing. On February 1, 2016, Ilya Kiva, head of the anti-drug department of the national police, told Hromadske.tv: "Everyone knows that our Azov regiment is standing for the purity of the Ukrainian nation. Those are young people, patriotic enough, honest and strong. Together with Biletsky, we discussed an opportunity to set up squads that would mop up drug traffickers from our streets... We will use every opportunity to eliminate drug traffickers¹⁶⁶. Kiva himself has long been Avakov's protégé. On December 11, 2014, Avakov appointed him deputy head of Donetsk oblast national police, then transferred to a similar position in Kherson oblast, after that he took reign of the anti-drug department on October 10, 2015.

It is worth noting that the Azov retained all the features of a presumably neo-Nazi unit. "We never denied the fact that we are patriotic far-right and most of the boys are Ukrainian nationalists," Biletsky told Unkrainian LigaBiznesInform news agency on September 12, 2015 (adding to his multiple similar earlier statements for the press, both domestic and foreign¹⁶⁷). However, he specified that diehard right radi-

¹⁶³ Uchastniki blokady Kryma patroliruyut sela na Khersonshchine, obyasnaya aktivnostyu separatistov // Krym.Realii. 31.01.2016. URL: <http://ru.krymr.com/content/news/27520680.html>

¹⁶⁴ Azov vypustil na ulitsy Kharkova desyat patruley // Korrespondent.net. 04.02.2016. URL: <http://korrespondent.net/city/kharkov/3624818-azov-nachal-patrulyrovat-kharkov>

¹⁶⁵ Na ulitsakh Mariupolya uvelichitsya kolichestvo sovместnykh patruley politzii i podrazdeleny Natsgvardii «Azov» // Mariupolskiye novosti. 02.03.2016. URL: <http://www.mariupolnews.com.ua/descr/66387>

¹⁶⁶ Ilyya Kiva pro spivpratsyu z «Azovom» // Kanal polzovatelya «Hromadske.tv» na YouTube. 01.02.2016. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQ-3DUUV540>

¹⁶⁷ «My zhe ne otritsayem, chto my — natsionalistichesky batalyon» (Olevsky Timur. «Azov» na «Kashine»: «Kak tolko peremiriye zakonchitsya, my krepko otbrosim ikh nazad» // Kashin. 11.12.2014. URL: <http://kashin.guru/2014/12/11/biletsky/>); «Deystvitelno, bolshaya chast parney v batalyone — pravye» (Lukashuk Zmiter. Kombat «Azova»: Mne vsyo ravno, kakoy Sergey «Malyuta» ranshe prokhodil put // Yevroradio. 10.12.2014. URL: <http://euroradio.fm/ru/kombat-azova-mne-vsyo-ravno-kakoy-sergey-malyuta-ranshe-prohodil-put>) и т.д.

cals make ¾ of the fighters, the rest partly sympathize these ideas¹⁶⁸.” One Azov fighter, namely Mikael Skillt, a Swedish neo-Nazi, told the BBC on July 16, 2014: “Here we have Nationalists of all sorts: National Socialist, ethnic nationalist, any self-styled ‘nationalists.’” Skillt said the right ideology “is the basis of everything.” “As an illustration, I can give you this example: there is not a single black fighter among us. The reasons are obvious.”¹⁶⁹

“You can guess that National Socialist ideas are preferential for many Azov members, judging by their multiple tattoos,” Aleksandr Sibirtsev from Vesti.Reporter wrote in June 2014. The reporter was with the fighters during the Mariupol assault. “Around half of them sport tattoos with apparently Nazi and skinhead content, that is swastikas, lightning-shaped SS runes, Third Reich coat of arms, and mottos like “God with us!”¹⁷⁰. Biletsky was telling about the same in December 2014: “We have plenty of far-right guys, football hooligans and so on... A tremendous biomass of shaven heads, muscles and tats”¹⁷¹. As Yaroslav Gonchar, who was battalion commander for a short time and then left, told Sibirtsev, “The battalion has ended in a gang for the far-right only. If a person does not support National Social ideas, the Azov is closed for him”¹⁷².

Another similar conclusion was drawn by Shaun Walker, a Guardian reporter, who wrote in an article dated September 11, 2014: “The Azov causes particular concern due to the far right, even neo-Nazi, leanings of many of its members. Dmitry [one of the fighters] claimed not to be a Nazi, but waxed lyrical about Adolf Hitler as a

¹⁶⁸ Andrey Biletsky: Mariupol gotov k oborone // LIGABiznesInform. 12.08.2015. URL: http://news.liga.net/interview/politics/3255079-andrey_biletskiy_mariupol_gotov_k_oborone.htm

¹⁶⁹ Shvedskiy neonatsisty v Ukraine: «za natsionalisticheskuyu revolyutsiyu!» // Radio Shvetsii. 15.07.2014. URL: http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programi_d=2103&artikel=5914695

¹⁷⁰ Sibirtsev Aleksandr. «Azov». Mariupol. Zachistka // Vesti. Reporter. No 21 (39). 20-26.06.2015. Quoted by a publication on the web site, URL: <http://reporter.vesti-ukr.com/art/y2014/n21/8299-azov-mariupol-zachistka.html>

¹⁷¹ Shvets Yevgeny. Andrey Biletsky: «Polovina «Azova» govorit na russkom yazyke. No oni umirayut i ubivayut za Ukrainu»// Lb.ua. 10.12.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/12/10/288683_andrey_biletskiy_polovina_azova.html

¹⁷² Sibirtsev Aleksandr. «Azov». Mariupol. Zachistka // Vesti. Reporter. No 21 (39). 20-26.06.2015. Quoted by a publication on the web site, URL: <http://reporter.vesti-ukr.com/art/y2014/n21/8299-azov-mariupol-zachistka.html>

military leader, and believes the Holocaust never happened. Not everyone in the Azov battalion thinks like Dmitry, but after speaking with dozens of its fighters and embedding on several missions during the past week in and around the strategic port city of Mariupol, the Guardian found many of them to have disturbing political views... Many of its members have links with neo-Nazi groups, and even those who laughed off the idea that they are neo-Nazis did not give the most convincing denials”.

“Of course not, it is all made up; there are just a lot of people who are interested in Nordic mythology,» said one fighter when asked if there were neo-Nazis in the battalion. When asked what his own political views were, however, he said “national socialist”¹⁷³.

There is a video by the Norwegian TV2 Norge TV station published on September 3, 2014, showing Azov drills in which Oleg Odnorozhenko, deputy commander for ideology is taking part. In this video, one fighter wearing an Azov chevron also has a helmet is decorated with an elaborately painted flag of the Third Reich with a swastika. Another fighter has an SS chevron with a pair of ‘sieg’ runes¹⁷⁴. Anthony Faiola of the Washington Post also reported on September 12, 2014 of a swastika hanging on the wall above one recruit’s bed in the Mariupol training center¹⁷⁵.

Pictures of themselves posing with Nazi flags or sporting Nazi tattoos are very popular among Azov fighters on social networks. The most notorious posers are Artyom Zalesov from Lvov¹⁷⁶ and Oleg Penya from Zhitomir¹⁷⁷. The latter calls himself the leader of ‘autonomous national socialists of Zhitomir’. It was on his web page, in an album called “Donbass-ATO-2014”, where a group photo of Azov fighters with a battalion flag, a NATO flag and a swastika-draped banner appeared

¹⁷³ Walker Shaun. Azov fighters are Ukraine’s greatest weapon and may be its greatest threat // The Guardian. 10.09.2014.

¹⁷⁴ Nordmenn står i kø for å bidra i kampene i Ukraina // Сайт TV2 Norge. [03.09.2014.] URL: <http://www.tv2.no/v/840782/>

¹⁷⁵ Faiola Anthony. Leaders talk peace, some Ukrainians contemplate guerrilla war // The Washington Post. 12.09.2014.

¹⁷⁶ Batalyon «Azov»: obyknovenny fashizm na sluzhbe MVD Ukrainy (FOTO, VIDEO) // Glagol. 30.11.2014. URL: <http://glagol.su/2014/11/30/batalon-azov-obyknovennyiy-fashizm-na-sluzhbe-mvd-ukrainyi-foto-video/>

¹⁷⁷ Oleg Penya’s account on Vkontakte.ru. URL: https://vk.com/oleg_penya Some deleted pictures are save in a publication: Ukrainskiye sverkhcheloveki ili natsisty kotorykh net-1 // Blog Made-in-USSR. 30.11.2014. URL: <http://made-inussr.livejournal.com/23483.html>

on November 18, 2014. This photo was soon widely spread over the Internet.¹⁷⁸

The trend is still alive. One dramatic example were photos of Azov fighters patrolling Odessa streets published by a popular Odessa website called Timer on April 30, 2016, on which one commanding officer has a recognizable SS death's head sign, surrounded by two sieg runes¹⁷⁹.

A great contributor in the creation and activities of the battalion was Sergey Korotkikh, a member of the leadership of National Socialist Society (a local replica of Patriot of Ukraine) which was active in Russia and Belarus in 2004–2007 and an organizer of a makeshift bomb attack on Manezhnaya Square in the heart of Moscow on December 27, 2007¹⁸⁰. “In the days of the Euromaidan I came to Ukraine, met Andrey Biletsky who was fresh from jail,” Korotkikh told Ukrainian journalists in June 2015. “I have been a member of Azov since the very beginning, since the very first day. I took command of a reconnaissance company and an assault group that took Mariupol: I was in charge of reconnaissance, planning, as well as the first and second attempt to liberate the city¹⁸¹. On December 9, 2014, an advisor to the interior minister Gerashchenko told about Korotkikh's participation in two Mariupol assaults in a apparent attempt to whitewash him: “Starting from May 5, 2014 Sergey Korotkikh, also known as the Boatswain or Malyuta, has been in the ranks of the Azov as an instructor... At 5 a.m. on June 13, on the day we were taking Mariupol, Sergey Korotkikh, with a rifle in his hands, commanded assault groups made of those who had come fresh from Maidan square. He led them along Grecheska Street towards the terrorists' headquarters... and then searched for bandits in attics and basements”¹⁸².

¹⁷⁸ Pictures' screenshots are shown in the publication: Ukrainskiye sverkhcheloveki ili natsisty kotorykh net-1 // Blog Made-in-USSR. 30.11.2014. URL: <http://made-inussr.livejournal.com/23483.html> Direct link to the picture is in Penya's account. See: Comments of a user «boolean_false» in a blog U-96.27.11.2014. URL: <http://u-96.livejournal.com/3929401.html?thread=139291193>

¹⁷⁹ Fotografiya 27 v publikatsii: V Odesse vsyo spokoyno: Kulikovo pole zapolonili siloviki // Taymer. 30.04.2016. URL: http://timer-odessa.net/foto/v_odesse_vse_spokoyno_kulikovo_pole_zapolnili_siloviki_913.html#slide27

¹⁸⁰ *Mikhaylova Yelena*. Ustanovlen organizator vzryva na Manezhke v 2007-m // Life. 14.03.2012. URL: <https://life.ru/85435>

¹⁸¹ *Chernyshev Roman*. Razvedchik Azova: Seychas net smysla vozvrashchat Donetsk i Lugansk // LIGABiznesInform. 30.06.2015. URL: http://news.liga.net/interview/politics/6090812-razvedchik_azova_seychas_net_smysla_vozvrashchat_donetsk_i_lugansk.htm

¹⁸² A post in Anton Gershchenko's account on Facebook. 09.12.2014. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/770516536368529:0>

Korotkikh is not the only foreign specialist to become a commander of mop-up operations. Skillt also told the BBC in July 2014, that he is in charge of three kinds of responsibilities: he was a commander of a small reconnaissance mission, a sniper and sometimes a special coordinator in a small reconnaissance unit for mop-up in apartment blocks and residential areas¹⁸³. In 2002-2010, Skillt was in the Nordic Resistance Movement, a militarized neo-Nazi organization in Sweden. He was a department head in the country's north.¹⁸⁴ He then transferred to another far-right organization, Party of the Swedes. Early in February 2014, he posted photographs from Athens on his Twitter page, posing with the leadership of the far-right Greek Golden Dawn organization¹⁸⁵. He was saying in one interview that he had come to Kiev on February 28, 2014 and started to train a group of volunteers from Svoboda nationalist party, who were getting prepared for the war in the east. After that, according to him, he joined the Azov where he fought in the ranks starting from May 2014 until February 2015¹⁸⁶. In an interview, the Swede demonstrated his diehard neo-Nazi views: "After WWII, the history was written by the winners. They decided that telling everybody of your white pride is a bad thing." Fausto Biloslavo, an Italian journalist told Radio Sweden on July 15, 2014 Skillt told him he saw his participation in military operations in East Ukraine as a race war coveted by all neo-Nazis.¹⁸⁷ Irish Times reporters came to speak with yet other several Swedish Azov fighters as early as in July 2014¹⁸⁸.

Different western journalists say that on summer 2014 they also came across with rightwing Azov radicals of some other western nationalities. Here Fausto Biloslavo met Francesco Fontana, a member

¹⁸³ *Newman Dina*. Ukraine conflict: «White power» warrior from Sweden // BBC. 16.07.2014. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28329329>

¹⁸⁴ *Ståhl Henrik*. Svenska motståndsrörelsen: «Fler pedofiler ska hängas ut» // Svd.se. 20.09.2009. URL: <http://www.svd.se/mikael-skillt-svenska-motstandsrorelsen-fler-pedofiler-ska-hangas-ut>

¹⁸⁵ A post in Mikael Skillt's account in Twitter. 03.02.2014. URL: <https://twitter.com/MikaelSkillt/status/430411233247117312>

¹⁸⁶ *Shevchenko Artem*. Maykl Skillt: «Ešli Rossiya ugrozhayet Shvetsii voynoy, my primem etot vyzov i poydem na voynu» // Yespreso TV. 12.01.2016. URL: http://ru.espreso.tv/article/2016/01/12/maykl_skyllt_quotesly_rossyya_ugrozhaet_shve-cyy_voynoy_my_prymem_etot_vyzov_y_poydem_na_voynuquot

¹⁸⁷ Shvedskiye neonatsisty v Ukraine: «za natsionalisticheskuyu revolyutsiyu!» // Radio Shvetsii. 15.07.2014. URL: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2103&artikel=5914695>

¹⁸⁸ *McLaughlin Daniel*. Foreigners join far-right militias in Ukraine's fight against rebels // Irish Times. 17.07.2014.

of the Italian National Vanguard and Youth Front in 1970s—80s. Those were organizations incorporated in the Italian Social Movement, now linked to Casa Pound, the neo-Fascist public center in Rome.¹⁸⁹ In 2015, a British far-right website described Fontana as ‘a veteran Italian racial nationalist from Turin’¹⁹⁰.

The Azov also included volunteers from other countries. Their recruiter was a Frenchman named Gaston Besson previously engaged with French far-right volunteers joining Croatian rightwing paramilitary in the Balkans¹⁹¹. Together they made a unit named Legion Condor after the Third Reich air force unit, which was dislocated in Spain during the Spanish civil war¹⁹².

But the main source of manpower for the Azov were the rightwing football fans of Ukraine, with whom Biletsky had established ties long before getting into jail in 2011.

“The line of defense closest to Mariupol is now being held by the fighters of the Azov regiment, most of them football fans,” the Ukrainian 1+1 TV channel broadcast says, dated December 25, 2014¹⁹³. This was confirmed by Azov spokesman Andrey Dyachenko in an interview to Dneprovets newspaper on March 5, 2015. He said that “one of the main social groups that made Azov’s backbone were football fans from Kiev¹⁹⁴.”

In an interview that appeared June 23, 2014 on a Ukrainian football fan website called MatchDay, one of the fans who took part in military action as an Azov fighter said that the battalion incorporated a number of fan movements: “There are Kiev people, as well as those from Lugansk, Mariupol, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, Nikolayev, Kherson,

¹⁸⁹ *Biloslavo Fausto*. Gli uomini neri // Il Giornale. 22.05.2014.

¹⁹⁰ Record attendance at John Tyndall Memorial Meeting // Heritage and Destiny. 12.10.2015. URL: <http://efp.org.uk/record-attendance-at-john-tyndall-memorial-meeting/>

¹⁹¹ *Biloslavo Fausto*. Gli uomini neri // Il Giornale. 22.05.2014.

¹⁹² *Мальцев Владислав*. Natsistsky internacional v stepyakh Ukrainy // Lenta.Ru. 23.07.2014. URL: <https://lenta.ru/articles/2014/07/22/naziinternational/> *Biloslavo Fausto*. Ukraine: Far-Right Fighters from Europe Fight for Ukraine // EurasiaNet. 06.08.2014. URL: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/69401>

¹⁹³ *Bolshinstvo boytsov polka «Azov» — futbolnye ultrasy* // TSN. 25.12.2015. URL: <http://ru.tsn.ua/video/video-novini/bolshinstvo-boycov-polka-azov-futbolnye-ultrasy.html>

¹⁹⁴ *Sebba Vyacheslav*. AZOV: Zaraz v okopakh pid Mariupolem, pid Piskami ta pid Shchastyam sidyat maybutni ministri, gubernatori ta deputati // Dniprovets. 05.03.2015.

Simferopol and Sevastopol”¹⁹⁵. This is confirmed by the messages on fan club public forums in social and mass media, from which we know about the presence of fans from Lutsk, Poltava, Sumy, Donetsk¹⁹⁶, Lvov, Cherkassy¹⁹⁷, Ternopol¹⁹⁸, Mariupol (where “most of ultras have joined the Azov”¹⁹⁹) and Zhitomir²⁰⁰. The latter town has a fan movement not so significant as elsewhere in Ukraine, but it alone contributed 10 men to the Azov. The figures regarding bigger football fan movements are still very much higher. A journalist for the Insider, Vladislav Krasinsky wrote on October 13, 2015, that, according to the fan movements information, “Dinamo Kiev sent a hundred of volunteers: the younger ones joined the Azov, the older ones joined the Aidar battalion.” In total, according to his data, “it seems an easy task for the Ukrainian ultras to gather their own battalion of hardened fighters who participated in the ATO”²⁰¹. The most part of them were Azov members, since they mostly associated themselves with the battalion’s ideology. The message dated June 9, 2014 in a VKontakte public group belonging to a Dinamo Kiev football club fan union called White Boys Club, with an emblem containing the Third Reich eagle²⁰², its members are joining the Azov in its campaign in the country’s east, in order to protect Ukraine from ‘inferior lifeforms’²⁰³.

¹⁹⁵ Ultras Kryma: kogda vernemysya s ATO, budem «shchemit» chinovnikov / Besedoval Roman Bebekh // MatchDay. 23.06.2014. URL: <http://www.matchday.ua/articles/ultras-kryma-kogda-vernemysya-s-ato-budem-schemit-chinovnikov-2424/>

¹⁹⁶ Maltsev Vladislav. Futbolnye fanaty i karatelnye otryady VSU: chto u nikh obshchego // Ruposters. 21.05.2015. URL: <https://ruposters.ru/news/21-05-2015/futbolnye-fanaty-i-karatelnye-otryady-vsuv>

¹⁹⁷ Ukraïnski ultras na viyni // Ultras.org.ua. 17.07.2014. URL: <http://ultras.org.ua/01385.html>

¹⁹⁸ Ternopol poproschalsya s 26-letnim dobrovoltssem, pogibshim na Rozhdestvo // Sluzhba novostey kanala «1+1». 11.01.2015. URL: <http://ru.tsn.ua/video/video-novini/ternopol-poproschalsya-s-26-letnim-dobrovolcem-pogibshim-na-rozhdestvo.html>

¹⁹⁹ Mariupolskiye «ultras» v sostave «Azova» oboronyayut Mariupol (FOTO) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 29.02.2016. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/1129422>

²⁰⁰ Den sozdaniya batalyona «Azov» v Zhitomire otmetili Ultras-marshem. FOTO // Zhurnal Zhitomira. 05.05.2015. URL: <http://zhzh.info/news/2015-05-05-23575>

²⁰¹ Krasinsky Vladislav. Bolshe, chem igra: kak futbolnye fanaty voyuyut na Donbasse // Insider. 13.10.2015. URL: <http://www.theinsider.ua/politics/561ce45236f88/>

²⁰² See pictures in WBC Ultra Dinamo society on Facebook. 20.10.2014. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/wbc.Kiev/posts/1512050582375347>

²⁰³ A post in public WBC Ultra Dinamo on Vkontakte.ru. 09.06.2014. https://vk.com/wall-22740461_105259

Biletsky's speeches often contain directly quoted fragments of the Third Reich leadership, most notably Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS. "It's a war of two civilizations, of Eurasia against Ukraine that stands to safeguard Europe," Biletsky declared in Chigirin on April 25, 2015 in his speech before Azov recruits going to the front. "This war began more than a thousand years ago. Our enemy changed names since then — they were called Khazars, Pincenates, Polovtsy, Moscovia, and now the Russian Federation... Remember you are heirs to dozens and even hundreds generation of heroes that date back to history... All those generations were sentinels of our European civilization, fighting against Euro-Asian barbarians²⁰⁴. On July 13, 1941, Himmler told SS soldiers to go to the Eastern front to fight against Soviet "untermenschen": "It is a war of ideologies and struggle of races... When you, my friends, are fighting in the East, you keep that same fight against the same subhumans, against the same inferior races that once appeared under the name of Huns, and later - 1,000 years ago during the time of King Henry and Otto I, - the name of the Hungarians, and later under the name of Tatars, and then they came again under the name of Genghis Khan and the Mongols. Today they are called Russians under the political banner of Bolshevism... These people have joined a Jewish religion, one ideology, called Bolshevism, with the task of: having now Russian, half [located] in Asia, parts of Europe, crush Germany and the world²⁰⁵".

Biletsky now prefers not to emphasize his anti-Semitism. However, remember what he wrote in an article called *We the National Socialists* in 2008: "Our nation's historic mission in this crucial century is to take the lead with all White Peoples of the world in its last crusade in which their survival is at stake. A crusade against sub-humanity headed by Semites²⁰⁶. Before the Verkhovna Rada elections in October 2014

²⁰⁴ Ninishnya viyna na Donbasi — tse viyna dvokh tsivilizatsiy: Andriy Biletsky // Kanal polzovatelya «Sayt Informator» na YouTube. 25.04.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkhIE-sAb1c>

²⁰⁵ «Der Reichsführer SS zu den Ersatzmannschaften für die Kampfgruppe «Nord» am Sonntag dem 13. Juli 1941, in Stettin». Geheim. RFSS/T-175, 109/2632686 ff. Quoted by: *Stein H. George*. *The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939-1945*. Ithaca (N. Y.): Cornell University Press, 1984. P. 126-127.

²⁰⁶ The Social-National Assembly web site is not available now. Quotes with a reference to an article on it Ultrapravi organizatsii v Ukraïni // Pravozashchitny Fond imeni R.I. Marochkinoy. 22.03.2010. URL: <https://marochkina.wordpress.com/2010/03/22/analiz-utrpravvyh/> Polnaya kopiya statyi Biletskogo: Kurina Aksinya. Pochemu «molodye politiki» podderzhivayut kandidata s neonatsistskoy ideologiyey? // Blog Kurinoy na «Ukrainskoy pravde». 08.10.2014. URL: <http://blogs.ppravda.com.ua/authors/kurina/543545886e82a/>

Biletsky also said, “We never departed from our convictions. Everything the Azov possesses come out of its right ideology, the heritage of Patriot of Ukraine²⁰⁷. “Yes, our past is the Socialist National Assembly which we neither rebuke or ashamed of. That’s a passing phase of our development,” Stepan Baida, head of the regiment’s press office told openly in 2015²⁰⁸.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that on June 10, 2015, U.S. House of Representatives adopted an amendment to a bill regarding DoD finances. According to its author, Congressman John Conyers Jr, a Michigan representative, this amendment shall “ensure that our military does not train members of the repulsive neo-Nazi Azov Battalion”²⁰⁹.

However, the far-right unit is nevertheless well equipped. According to Biletsky, his “regiment looks more like an army of some Baltic country or Germany rather than Ukraine”²¹⁰. The same was stated by Vitaly Deinega, head of one of the largest volunteer organizations Come Back Alive, in an interview to Lb.ua in December 2015: “Oh, they don’t need any help, they are doing fine. The provisioning is at such a high level that elite soldiers were jealous when they saw us. The skills are high, too. I think the Azov will soon turn into a private military company. The investments are substantial”²¹¹.

Who is that patron of a neo-Nazi military unit in Ukraine, making it stronger day by day?

²⁰⁷ V Radu, kak na voynu. TOP-5 radikalov novogo parlamenta // Korrespondent.net. 28.10.2014. URL: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/3437429-v-radu-kak-na-voynu-top-5-radykalov-novoho-parlamenta>

²⁰⁸ Ot «Pravogo sektora» «Azov» otlichayetsya boleye sistemnym podkhodom i organizatsiyey / Podgotovil Yevgeny Slavny // Telekanal 112. 31.08.2015. URL: <http://112.ua/interview/ot-pravogo-sektora-azov-otlichaetsya-bolee-sistemnym-podhodom-i-organizatsiyey-255219.html>

²⁰⁹ U.S. House Passes 3 Amendments By Rep. Conyers To Defense Spending Bill To Protect Civilians From Dangers Of Arming and Training Foreign Forces // Congressman John Conyers, Jr. 11.06.2015. URL: <https://conyers.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/us-house-passes-3-amendments-rep-conyers-defense-spending-bill-protect>

²¹⁰ Chernyshev Denis. Andrey Biletsky: Otdat Donbass Putinu — predlozheniye slaboumnykh // LIGABiznesInform. 12.08.2015. URL: http://news.liga.net/interview/politics/6394218-andrey_biletskiy_otdat_donbass_putinu_predlozhenie_slaboumnykh_.htm

²¹¹ Gerasimchuk Viktoriya. Vitaly Deynega: «Lyudi uverovali v to, chto vojna zakonchilas» // Lb.ua. 02.12.2015. URL: http://society.lb.ua/life/2015/12/29/324664_vitaliy_deynega_lyudi_uverovali.html

Remember that Baida, Azov's head of press office, openly stated in an interview to the UKRLIFE.TV channel on June 30, 2015, that 'we were contacted by Avakov' after the battalion had successfully suppressed pro-Russian activists in March and April of 2014²¹². It was Avakov who, according to his adviser Anton Gerashenko, eventually made a decision of creating an assault battalion of internal forces on the basis of a neo-Nazi armed gang in May 2014²¹³. Later on, raising the status of the Azov battalion to a regiment and its attachment to the National Guard in order to arm it with artillery and tanks also originated in Avakov's ministerial decisions. Moreover, on October 30, 2014, Vadim Troyan, Azov's chief of staff, a former member of the neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine organization and an employee of Avakov's commercial partners became head of the Kiev oblast main directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, and on March 4, 2015, he became first deputy head of National Police of Ukraine. After head of the National Police Khatiya Dekanoidze resigned on November 14, 2016, (she said the reason was political pressure), Troyan performed her duties for several months, aiming at taking her office permanently.

At the same time Anton Gerashchenko, advisor to the interior minister, (who directly participated in recruiting neo-Nazis to serve in the Azov in 2014) told Gordon news resource on December 27, 2016, "Avakov was considering Troyan as the potential candidate for the position of the National Police chief as early as in 2015, but president Poroshenko insisted that Dekanoidze should take up this responsibility."²¹⁴ However, later Troyan withdrew his application for the vacancy of the police chief (probably because he found himself in the spotlight of the media), of which he told January 25, 2017 on Facebook²¹⁵. He nevertheless continued to fulfill police chiefs' responsibilities.

²¹² Ot «Pravogo sektora» «Azov» otlichayetsya boleye sistemnym podkhodom i organizatsiyey / Podgotovil Yevgeny Slavny // Telekanal 112. 31.08.2015. URL: <http://112.ua/interview/ot-pravogo-sektora-azov-otlichaetsya-bolee-sistemnym-podkhodom-i-organizatsiyey-255219.html>

²¹³ A post in Anton Gershchenko's account on Facebook. 13.06.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anton.gerashchenko.7/posts/871150152971833>

²¹⁴ *Dvali Nataliya*. Anton Gerashchenko: Poroshenko znayet, chto Avakov mozhet metnut stakan i v nego, potomu ne budet dovodit konflikt do takoy stadii // Gordon. 27.12.2016. URL: <http://gordonua.com/publications/anton-gerashchenko-poroshenko-znaet-chto-avakov-mozhet-metnut-stakan-i-v-nego-znachit-ne-budet-dovodit-konflikt-do-takoy-stadii-166016.html>

²¹⁵ A message in Vadim Troyan's account on Facebook. 25.01.2017. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/vadim.troyan/posts/1163264567126734>

The Belorussian man named Sergey Korotkikh, the chief of reconnaissance whom we have already mentioned before, was awarded an honorary weapon made by Minister of the Interior, Arsen Avakov, according to the information made public by *Ukrainskaya Pravda* on January 13, 2017. It says that at the time the decoration was to take place, namely on July 27, 2015, he was head of the Department of Civil Service of the Odessa Oblast Main Interior Department²¹⁶. His place of employment is also mentioned in his online tax statement dated end of 2016, different in wording, but functionally the same: “police department for the security of strategic facilities” (no region specified). Judging from the same statement, his possessions include two apartments he bought in 2015, one in Kiev, having 69 square meters of usable space, and another one in the village of Chaika, Kiev Oblast, 74.4 square meters in area. The same year, he also bought a Czech-built L-39 airplane, produced 1982. Korotkikh also reported cash savings of USD 233,000, EUR 135,000 and UAH 500,000 (the exchange rate for the Ukrainian hryvnia was 26,65 for one dollar by the end of December 2016), noting also that he lent another USD 565,000 to some third parties. These are possessions of a top-ranking police officer with a salary of 78,000 hryvnias per year²¹⁷.

Judging from the article published August 12, 2016 by the Ukrainian *Obozrevatel* news agency, Korotkikh is a close friend and a business partner (though the nature of the business is unclear) of the minister’s son, Alexander Avakov. Once when they met, a thief got hold of their money. It was a significant sum in hard currency.

“It all happened in the Marocana restaurant, 24 Lesya Ukrainka Blvd, on Tuesday August 9. It was about 7 p.m. as Alexander Avakov was sitting at a table on the summer terrace with Sergey Korotkikh, also known as Malyuta and the Boatswain, one of the Azov regiment commanders in charge of reconnaissance. Sources say there were security guards carrying out perimeter watch”, *Obozrevatel* wrote, citing its own sources. “Korotkikh came to the Marocana in a Toyota Tundra. The minister’s son had a Toyota Land Cruiser 200, his bodyguards came in a Land Cruiser 100. There were two middle-aged men at the next table.

²¹⁶ *Romanyuk Roman, Zhartovska Mariya*. Nagorodny front. Komu Avakov podaruvav 400 stvoliv // *Ukrainskaya pravda*. 13.01.2017. URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2017/01/13/7132304/>

²¹⁷ Deklaratsiï: Korotkikh Sergiy Arkadiyovich // Sayt Natsionalnogo agentstva po preduprezhdeniyu korruptsii. [Bez daty.] URL: <https://public.nazk.gov.ua/declaration/15a4f059-f27b-4b89-9ad9-d3546de6a309>

One of them started to put on his jacket and managed to grab the bag from an empty armchair that stood close to the table of Avakov Jr. and the Boatswain. The thief took out the money (there was a significant sum in dollars) and stealthily put the bag back... Surprisingly, it was not Alexander Avakov who filed a theft claim to police, but Sergey “Boatswain” Korotkikh.”²¹⁸

There were other cases of unexpected promotions of Azov fighters in the police ranks, initiated by Avakov. “Sergey Merchuk, a participant of the Revolution of Dignity and a policeman is now appointed head of Rovno patrol police department,” the minister of the interior told on April 20, 2016. “At the age of 25, Sergey was a fighter of the 35th Volyn Sich company, then a fighter of the elite Azov regiment (code-name Zveroboy, or “Deerslayer”), took part in the liberation of Mariupol, Pavlopol, Shirokino and Starobeshevo.” Avakov realized the eccentricity of this move, when a far-right youth is put in charge of a big city police department, and declared: “So young, you say? I know! But an avid creator, too!”²¹⁹

Some well-informed journalists from Ukrainian mass media also stress the role Avakov played in the creation and promotion of the Azov. “From the very start, Biletsky... had found full contact and understanding with Minister Avakov who, like him, was coming from Kharkov. Under Avakov’s patronage, they used Biletsky’s nationalists (together with a variety of radical elements, from football fans to Russian Nazis that joined him) to create the Azov battalion in 2014, later transformed into a regiment with an official status of a National Guard unit,” Alexander Sibirtsev, a reporter for the Ukrainian Strana news resource wrote on February 19, 2016. He was on the front observing the Azov deployment in June 2014. “According to our sources in the ministry of the interior, Avakov is still giving a priority to the unit, viewing it as a sort of his private Praetorian guard inside the National Guard that may be useful in serious political crises. The regiment gets supplies and weapons first and foremost.”²²⁰ “Avakov obtained a very serious armed support

²¹⁸ V Kiyeve obokrali syna glavy MVD Arsena Avakova: opublikovano video // Obozrevatel. 12.08.2016. URL: <https://www.obozrevatel.com/crime/89352-v-kieve-obokrali-sina-arsena-avakova-aleksandr-avakov-restotran-marokana-video.htm>

²¹⁹ A message in Arsen Avakov’s account on Facebook. 20.04.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1029434260480013&set=a.101387876617994.2586.100002403454361>

²²⁰ *Sibirtsev Aleksandr*. Pravy marsh // Strana. [19.02.2016.] URL: <http://strana.ua/articles/istorii/1522-chistyat-oruzhie-v-ozhidanii-vremeni-ch.html>

group — he helped to create the Azov as part of the internal forces, that was later transformed into a regiment,” these are the results of the inquiry published in *Novoye Vremya* on January 23, 2016. The article contains references to one of the sources of the battalion’s illegal financing: according to Andrey Semimidko, head of the Anti-raidership Union of Entrepreneurs, the Azov received about 1 mln dollars from protection racketing of gambling venues²²¹.”

Mikhail Saakashvili, Odessa governor, came up with a very similar accusation of Avakov on December 15, 2015, during the press conference following the National Council for Reforms meeting in Kiev: “This man is really in control of informal armed groups and finances them with funds obtained from corruption”²²².

Avakov himself is somehow even proud of having his private ‘black sotnia’, or ‘black hundred’ (the name being an apparent reference to far-right groups in Tsarist times that carried out pogroms). “Who is protecting Kharkov from rampant separatism? It is the Eastern Corps, the volunteer police battalion,” he told Bigmir.net May 25, 2015. “If anything like this happens, Avakov’s black hundred will kick asses of those who attacks Ukraine. You think it is too much, don’t you? I think it’s an adequate response that corresponds the situation²²³.” It is worth noting that the special Eastern Corps internal forces company had direct connections to Biletsky and the Azov. The Eastern Corps appeared back in 2006,” Objectiv.tv repoted in its broadcast dated February 27, 2016. “Several athletes gathered together to create Patriot of Ukraine. Activists say they persecuted by the Yanukovich regime. In 2013, the same athletes gathered again to make the Eastern Corps, a civil organization. When military action broke out in Donbass, it became a battalion, then an elite internal forces unit and was sent to the zone of conflict²²⁴”. “The Eastern Corps is sometimes also called Azov’s younger

²²¹ *Verstyuk Ivan*. Vnutrenniye dela ministra. Kak razvivayetsya biznes glavy MVD Arsenava Avakova // *Novoye vremya*. № 1. 14.01.2016. Quoted by a publication on web site, URL: <http://nv.ua/publications/kak-razvivaetsja-biznes-i-drugie-vnutrennie-dela-glavy-mvd-arsena-avakova-91824.html>

²²² Saakashvili obvinil Avakova v korruptsii // *Interfaks*. 15.12.2015. URL: <http://www.interfax.ru/world/484968>

²²³ Avakov khochet polnogo razgranicheniya s okkupirovannym Donbassom // *Bigmir.net*. 15.05.2015. URL: <http://news.bigmir.net/ukraine/903935--Avakov-ho-chet-polnogo-razgranichenija-s-okkupirovannym-Donbassom>

²²⁴ *Zakharenkova Yelena*. «Skhidny korpus»: ot obshchestvennoy organizatsii — do spetspodrazdeleniya MVD // *Objectiv.tv*. 27.02.2016. URL: <http://www.objectiv.tv/270216/124892.html>

brother,” Hromadske.tv reporters wrote after having visited the site where the unit was located²²⁵.

Oleg Shirayev, the company’s commander, told journalists in February 2015 that every time he was sent to Mariupol, he and his fighters joined the Azov regiment. The same far-right ideology prevails there: on the footage, you can hear the song playing in Shirayev’s car which is called *Veter Peremen* (‘wind of change’) and is performed by Sokira Peruna, a neo-Nazi band, while one of the members says on a camera with a scornful smile, “We came here to fight for our future, our children’s future and the very existence of our people”²²⁶. This wording is almost identical to the notorious saying that belongs to American neo-Nazi David Lane, also known as the 14-word racist motto in different countries: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children.”

On May 6, 2015, the Eastern Corps and the Azov together paraded along the central streets of Kharkov to mark the anniversary of the regiment under Biletsky’s command²²⁷. We should also add that one of the commanders in the Eastern Corps was Eduard Verbenets, formerly a private lawyer for Andrey Biletsky, the Patriot of Ukraine leader. However, he wasn’t in the company for long, since he soon got promotion in the ranks of internal forces — on March 4, 2015, he was appointed head of Dzerzhinsk District Department of Kharkov police²²⁸.

On August 26, 2015, there was a press conference held by Shirayev and Roman Zvarich, the head of Azov’s Civil Corps, where they announced a merger of the two organizations as part of the Civil Corps, with Shirayev as its chief of staff²²⁹. MediaPort reporters who visited

²²⁵ Na zakhisti Mariupolya: «Sirko» ta yogo biytsi // Kanal polzovatelya «Gromadske Telebachennya» na YouTube. 24.02.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cR7Xd5cbAk>

²²⁶ Na zakhisti Mariupolya: «Sirko» ta yogo biytsi // Kanal polzovatelya «Gromadske Telebachennya» na YouTube. 24.02.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cR7Xd5cbAk>

²²⁷ Richnitsya z dnya zasnuvannya polku «Azov». Urochistosti v Kharkovi // Kanal polzovatelya «Hromadske.tv» na YouTube. 25.05.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf9crUEG54w>

²²⁸ *Pavlenko Anna*. V Kharkove rayotdel vozglavil advokat Biletskogo // *Vesti*. 04.03.2015. URL: <http://vesti-ukr.com/harkov/91151-v-harkove-rayotdel-vozglavil-advokat-bileckogo>

²²⁹ V Kharkove proshla prezentatsiya Grazhdanskogo Korpusa polka «Azov» // Kanal polzovatelya «IT Sector» na YouTube. 27.08.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3e9k47SamY>

the Eastern Corps' deployment site photographed the Azov banner on the wall and propaganda posters of social nationalists²³⁰.

The new alliance's objectives were openly outlined by Shiryayev on August 26, 2016: "Today we have very strong associations in Kharkov, such the Azov Civil Corps, or the Eastern Corps, or other civil organizations and bodies make alliances with each other to be effective in their struggle and come to power legally²³¹". Therefore, the far-right, which grew stronger under the patronage of the interior ministry, have long determined their goals.

²³⁰ *Sokolova Anna*. Proukrainskiye organizatsii Kharkova. Kto praveye // MediaPort. 11.03.2016. URL: <http://www.mediaport.ua/proukrainskie-organizacii-harkovakto-pravee>

²³¹ V Kharkove proshla prezentatsiya Grazhdanskogo Korpusa polka «Azov» // Kanal polzovatelya «IT Sector» na YouTube. 27.08.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3e9k47SamY>

Chapter 3: Forced March to Power

While engaged in violence, Ukrainian neo-Nazis were also interested in coming to power legally. There were as many as two prominent candidates from the Social-National Assembly taking part in Kiev City Rada elections on May 25. Those two were holding the positions of deputy heads for ideology in the Azov, Oleg Odnorozhenko and Igor Mosiychuk, as well as one more Social-National Assembly activist, Igor Krivoruchko, previously a convicted ‘Vasilkov terrorist’ together with Mosiychuk. They were all stood as candidates to the City Rada on the Oleg Lyashko’s Radical party lists. “We cannot represent the Right Sector, since it is not a political party,” Mosiychuk explained to Vesti newspaper. “You know, Rada Deputy Lyashko was in the frontline [on the Euromaidan], helping our boys, he hid the wounded in his office and made a lot of effort to free political prisoners, among them me.”²³² Moreover, journalist reported at that time, “According to many Azov members, the battalion is getting a lot of help from the People’s Deputy Oleg Lyashko”²³³. “He was among the lobbyists of our volunteer battalion...and stood for giving us weapons from military depots,” Andrey Biletsky later explained²³⁴. As a result, Mosiychuk who was candidate No. 5 on the Radical party list, passed to the Kiev Rada.²³⁵

Before his arrest in 2011, Mosiychuk played an important role in the organization: “helped prepare the registration of the Social-Nationalist political party.”²³⁶ After the Verkhovna Rada elections on October 26, 2014 he became a member of the national parliament representing the same Radical party headed by Oleg Lyashko (where he was No. 9 on the list) and took upon the responsibilities of the First Deputy Chairman of

²³² *Petih Marina*. Na Kiyev idut «Patrioty» i syn Bilozir // Vesti. 28.04.2014. URL: <http://vesti-ukr.com/kiev/49468-na-kiev-idut-patiroty-i-syn-bilozir>

²³³ *Sibirtsev Aleksandr*. «Azov». Mariupol. Zachistka // Vesti. Reporter. No 21 (39). 20-26.06.2015. Quoted by a publication on web site URL: <http://reporter.vesti-ukr.com/art/y2014/n21/8299-azov-mariupol-zachistka.html>

²³⁴ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Polovina «Azova» govorit na russkom yazyke. No oni umirayut i ubivayut za Ukrainu» // Lb.ua. 10.12.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/12/10/288683_andrey_biletskiy_polovina_azova.html

²³⁵ Kto budet upravlyat stolitsey v blizhayshiy poltora goda: spisok deputatov Kiyevsoвета // Lb.ua. 13.06.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/06/13/269362_kto_upravlyat_stolitsey.html

²³⁶ Mosychuk Igor Vladimirovich // 2000. 16.10.2014. URL: http://www.2000.ua/specproekty_ru/dose/politika/mosiichuk-igor.htm

the Committee for the Legal Regulatory of Law Enforcement Activities. However, on September 18, 2015, Mosiychuk was arrested on charges of bribery and spent two months in prison. His political career unexpectedly stumbled, for at time he was no longer connected with the Azov. Biletsky himself took part in the Verkhovna Rada elections in October 2014, representing a more prestigious political project this time, the People's Front party headed by Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk. The latter in considered to be a product of Washington. It is well-known that, when the fight on the Euromaidan was taking place in February 2014, Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland said to Geoffrey Pyatt, U.S. ambassador to Ukraine: "I think Yats is the guy who's got the economic experience, the governing experience."²³⁷ "On the first day of People's Front's founding congress, a sort of a second version of the party of power headed by Arseny Yatsenyuk and Alexander Turchinov [on September 10, 2014], Biletsky appeared on the stage to enter the party's military council," Vyacheslav Likhachev said in October 2014. "Unofficially, they announced that we would be on the upper part of the list, containing those who pass inevitably. However, we must give credit to the prime minister and the speaker of the Ukrainian parliament that, after experts, public figures and ethnic communities drew the attention of the party's leadership to Biletsky's ideology and background, they crossed him off their list."²³⁸ Later Biletsky himself told about that: "Speaking of People's Front, I was invited to be on the list, moreover, the top-5 of the list." Then, he said, some problems arose and there was "no party decision of my nomination." After that, he allegedly "hesitated to represent People's Front, a decision that eventually suited all of us."²³⁹

However, when Biletsky was nominated as an independent candidate from No. 217 single member constituency on a majority basis (Obolon District, Kiev), he gained strong support. "It is no accident that the People's Front candidate for this constituency, Zoryan Shkiriyak, an advisor to the minister of the interior, withdraw his candidacy for Biletsky, therefore securing his victory," Likhachev noted in October 2014. "Another Arsen Avakov's advisor, Anton Gerashchenko, is directly campaigning for the Azov commander. He told the other day, "If all fascists and nationalists were like Andrey Biletsky, if we had another 200

²³⁷ Ukraine crisis: Transcript of leaked Nuland-Pyatt call // BBC. 07.02.2014. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957>

²³⁸ *Likhachev Vyacheslav*. *Vot takiye «patrioty» / Besedoval Mikhail Gold // Yevreysky obozrevatel*. № 10 (262). Октябрь 2014 г.

²³⁹ *Shvets Yevgeny*. *Andrey Biletsky: «Khunty ne budet. Armiya ne sposobna na perevotrot» // Lb.ua*. 02.12.2015. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2015/12/02/322333_andrey_biletskiy_hunti_budet.html

of them, Putin would never attack Ukraine²⁴⁰.” We can notice Avakov’s mighty hand even here. As was shown above, the man was behind the rise of neo-Nazis of Partiot of Ukraine and then the Azov.

During Biletsky election campaign in Obolon district, Kiev were too controversial even by standards of the post-Maidan Ukrainian policy. “Around 9 p.m. [on October 26, 2014], the constituency election committee was surrounded and blocked by elite Azov and Mirotvorets fighters,” Ukrainian journalists wrote. “Tough guys in full marching orders, with Kalashnikov rifles stood looking, waiting for an order.”²⁴¹ Later on, according to the international Open Democracy organization, the battalion fighters “broke into the premises of the election committee on the night of the elections and forced its members into, as they said, ‘an honest count of votes’²⁴².” The battalion commander got the relative majority (33.75%); his opponents immediately accepted the results. Thus, the ministry of the interior favoured Biletsky a lot at that time.

It is also worth mentioning that before the elections, there appeared an abundance of template graffiti all over the streets of the Kiev district that Biletsky represented, with wolfssangels (the symbol of the Social-National Assembly and the Azov) and Third-Reich swastikas painted side-by-side, as well as slogans typical for the Ukrainian far-right²⁴³.”

There was far less written in the media about the parliamentary nomination of another Azov fighter, Oleg Petrenko, that represented another party of power this time, which is the Poroshenko bloc²⁴⁴. As a result, he remained on the list and was openly supported by prominent party figures during the campaign, although Petrenko said it was Biletsky who had actually sent him to take part in the elections: «My battalion commander Andrey Biletsky said, we can surely win a battle or two there on the frontline. But to win a war and protect the country, one needs to go to the parliament and make our country’s power stron-

²⁴⁰ *Likhachev Vyacheslav*. Vot takiye «patrioty» / Besedoval Mikhail Gold // Yevreysky obozrevatel. № 10 (262). Oktyabr 2014 g.

²⁴¹ *Fedchenko Aleksandr*. Okruzhnuyu komissiyu, gde ballotirolsya kombat «Azova», zashchishchala tselaya armiya // Komsomolskaya pravda v Ukraine. 27.10.2014. URL: <http://kp.ua/politics/475813-okruzhnuui-komyssyui-hde-ballotyrolsialia-kombat-azova-zaschyschala-tselaiia-armyia>

²⁴² *Gorbach Denis, Petik Olesya*. Voskhozhdeniye «Azova» // Open Democracy. 12.02.2016. URL: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/denis-gorbach-oles-petik/voskhodzenie-azova>

²⁴³ Kiyevskuyu Obolon ukrasila svastika: «Slava natsii — smert vragam» (FOTO) // Politnavigator. 23.10.2014. URL: <http://www.politnavigator.net/kiyevskuyu-obolon-ukrasila-svastika-slava-nacii-smert-vragam-foto.html>

²⁴⁴ *Milan Lelich*. Pod krylom prezidenta. Kto popal v prokhodnuyu chast spiska Bloka Poroshenko // Fokus. 06.10./2014. URL: <https://focus.ua/country/316978/>

ger²⁴⁵.” There was also no secret that Petrenko was a leader of Cherkassy far-right football fans, whom he used to join for street fights in Kiev. “I came to Maidan on December 1, 2013. My ultras and I took part in clashes on Bankova Street.²⁴⁶” It all resulted in Petrenko’s victory in his hometown Cherkassy, giving him 41.15% of votes on a majority basis²⁴⁷.

At the same time, he never broke up his close ties with the Azov. In 2015, he lobbied the regiment’s interests on a meeting with President Poroshenko²⁴⁸, while in February 2016 he made a public statement, in which he warned that he would leave the party’s parliamentary faction due to the criminal investigation regarding Igor Krasnov, the commander of Azov-Crimea Civil Corps²⁴⁹. Moreover, Petrenko took command of the Cherkassy Civil Corps of the Azov, created January 2015²⁵⁰, and he spoke at press conferences in Kiev alongside with other regional leaders of this organization²⁵¹. The virtual reception room on Biletsky site features a photo published on August 23, 2015 depicting Petrenko in military uniform and a T-shirt with Social-National signs on it standing next to the Azov commander²⁵². “An Azov fighter myself, I can assume that Andrey Biletsky may someday also have his own

²⁴⁵ *Kolisnik Oleg*. «Vyigrat voynu i otstoyat stranu my smozhem tolko v parlamente» // Gazeta. 10.10.2014. URL: http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/comments-newspaper/_vyigrat-voynu-i-otstoyat-stranu-my-smozhem-tolko-v-parlamente/585678

²⁴⁶ *Moskalyuk Olga*. Nardep Oleg Petrenko: «Kremlyu ne vygodna stabilnaya zamorozka konflikta na Donbasse» // Tsenzor.Net.17.11.2015. URL:http://censor.net.ua/resonance/361078/nardep_oleg_petrenko_kremlyu_nevygodna_stabilnaya_zamorozka_konflikta_na_donbasse

²⁴⁷ Novye litsa Verkhovnoy Rady: Oleg Petrenko // Depo.ua.09.01.2015. URL: <http://www.depo.ua/rus/politics/novye-litsa-verhovnoy-rady-oleg-petrenko-09012015001000>

²⁴⁸ *Moskalyuk Olga*. Nardep Oleg Petrenko: «Kremlyu ne vygodna stabilnaya zamorozka konflikta na Donbasse» // Tsenzor.Net. 17.11.2015. URL: http://censor.net.ua/resonance/361078/nardep_oleg_petrenko_kremlyu_nevygodna_stabilnaya_zamorozka_konflikta_na_donbasse

²⁴⁹ Nardep Petrenko prigrozil vykhodom iz fraktsii BPP, esli ne budut predostavleny dokazatelstva viny Krasnova // Lb.ua. 29.02.2016. URL: http://society.lb.ua/life/2016/02/29/329171_nardep_petrenko_prigrozil_vihodom.html

²⁵⁰ *Moskalyuk Olga*. Nardep Oleg Petrenko: «Kremlyu ne vygodna stabilnaya zamorozka konflikta na Donbasse» // Tsenzor.Net. 17.11.2015. URL: http://censor.net.ua/resonance/361078/nardep_oleg_petrenko_kremlyu_nevygodna_stabilnaya_zamorozka_konflikta_na_donbasse

²⁵¹ «Reforma prokuratury. Rezultaty konkursa prokurorov: dolgozhdannoye obnoveniye ili ocherednye «dogovorennosti»?» // Press-tsentr UNIAN. 14.12.2015. URL: <http://press.unian.net/event/7548-reforma-prokuraturyi-rezultatyi-konkursa-prokurorov-dolgojdannoe-obnovlenie-ili-ocherednye-dogovorennosti.html>

²⁵² Soobshcheniye v pablike «Gromadska pryamalnya Andriya Biletskogo» VKontakte. 23.08.2015. URL: http://vk.com/wall-82532036_1632

political project. I think it is something the Azov has long deserved, with such a respectable man as its leader,” Petrenko told Glavkom on January 27, 2016. “For me, no one else is able to become not only an efficient manager or president, but a father of our nation. Such project is now in preparation.” Then the Verkhovna Rada deputy, representing Peter Poroshenko bloc, confirmed he would “definitely” take part in the new far-right political project²⁵³.

It is worth noting that after Vladislav Pustovar, Cherkassy oblast main national police department chief, was arrested on March 28 on charges of bribery, Petrenko said he was ready to launch a campaign in his defence²⁵⁴. Earlier, the media said that Pustovar was doing extremely well during Avakov’s term in office²⁵⁵.

We need to mention that Petrenko who sported his Azov membership in public was in high demand at the highest level of power in the country. Let’s give one characteristic example. On April 23, 2016, President Poroshenko claimed that “in the times of a hybrid war, when Ukraine has to oppose the armed aggression of its neighbor state, our enemies are trying to exploit the religious component for their purposes,” and “it would be unacceptable to let another state meddle into these processes.” Later he specified that he was speaking of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)²⁵⁶. On day earlier, a group of Verkhovna Rada deputies, with Petrenko’s name standing the first on the group’s list, introduced for consideration a discriminatory bill “On the special status of religious organizations with headquarters located in states recognized by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as aggressor states”²⁵⁷.

A member of the Verkhovna Rada, Biletsky soon became deputy head of the National Security and Defense Committee. However, he

²⁵³ *Glukhovskiy Mikhaylo*. Deputat Oleg Petrenko: Dostrokovi vibori gotuyutsya na osin // Glavkom. 27.01.2016. URL: <http://glavcom.ua/articles/37470.html>

²⁵⁴ A message in Oleg Petrenko’s account on Facebook. 02.04.2016. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/petrenko.oleh/posts/518543414997395>

²⁵⁵ Komu nalezhit ukrainska militsiya: vid Moskalya do Akhmetova // Depo.ua. 15.07.2015. URL: <http://www.depo.ua/ukr/politics/komu-nalezhit-ukrayinska-militsiya-vid-moskalya-do-ahmetova-14072015160800>

²⁵⁶ Glavnym dukhovnym oruzhiyem nashey pobedy yavlyatsya edinstvo — Prezident na vstreche s predstavitelyami Vseukrainskogo soveta tserkvey i religioznykh organizatsiy // Ofitsialny sayt prezidenta Ukrainy. 23.04.2016. URL: <http://www.president.gov.ua/ru/news/najgolovnishoyu-duhovnoyu-zbroyeyu-nashoyi-pere-mogi-ye-yedni-37030>

²⁵⁷ Proyekt Zakonu pro osoblivy status religiyних organizatsiy, kerivni tsentri yakikh znakhodyatsya v derzhavi, yaka viznana Verkhovnoyu Radoyu Ukraini derzhavoyu-agresorom // Ofitsialny sayt Verkhovnoy Rady. 22.04.2016. URL: http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=58849

missed almost all plenary meetings (was present at 3 out of 104 during the year²⁵⁸). I don't think I can do much there, I'm only a deputy on a majoritary basis, they don't even have time to give me the floor," he admitted²⁵⁹. Both in the parliament, on the front and inside the internal forces structures, neo-Nazis took a sort of subordinate position to the Ukrainian power circles, without no room for self-initiative.

It was already at that time that Biletsky shared his plans of creating another renewed far-right organization. "We have plans to create a mass youth movement," he told the Focus on October 23, 2014. "This is going to be a non-political project of the right movement in Ukraine. As the Azov battalion has long outgrown Patriot of Ukraine, this new movement will outgrow the Azov²⁶⁰."

The project was implemented without much publicity. "In fact, Patriot of Ukraine stopped its activities because I do not see myself as a leader of a political organization in a country at war," Biletsky said in December 2014²⁶¹. In reality, there was a new organization emerging on the basis of the old one. That new organization was the Civil Corps of the Azov (formerly called the Public Corps).

The fact of establishing such a organization was mentioned, arguably for the first time, in connection with the town in Ivano-Frankovsk: the decision of turning a recruiting center into the Civil Corps of the Azov was made at the meeting of the Social-National Assembly/Patriot of Ukraine department. It was the initiative of Oleg Ondorozhenko, the deputy commander of what was then the Azov battalion on August 2, 2014. The Public Corps shall act as part of Patriot of Ukraine, Ivano-Frankovsk oblast public organization.²⁶² Here we see the initial name that cannot be found at other departments. At the same time, the other departments were established a lot later.

²⁵⁸ Biletsky, Zhevago i Yarosh okazalis glavnyimi progulshchikami Rady // RBK-Ukraina. 23.10.2015. URL: <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/nardepy-biletskiy-zhevago-rosh-okazalis-glavnyimi-1445582734.html>

²⁵⁹ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Khunty ne budet. Armiya ne sposobna na perevorot» // Lb.ua. 02.12.2015. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2015/12/02/322333_andrey_biletskiy_hunti_budet.html

²⁶⁰ *Lelich Milan*. Komandir «Azova» Andrey Biletsky: U natsionalistov na fronte proizoshla evolyutsiya vzhlyadov // Fokus. 23.10.2014. URL: <https://fokus.ua/country/318261/>

²⁶¹ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Polovina «Azova» govorit na russkom yazyke. No oni umirayut i ubivayut za Ukrainu»// Lb.ua. 10.12.2014. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2014/12/10/288683_andrey_biletskiy_polovina_azova.html

²⁶² Gromadyansky Korpus // Tsvilny Korpus «Azov». [Bez daty.] URL: http://www.volunteer.org.ua/about/civil_corps/

Interestingly enough, a group in the VKontakte social media which is called “Civil Corps Azov—Ivano-Frankovsk” was used in 2013: apparently, the group belonged to Patriot of Ukraine Ivano-Frankovsk and helped arrange meetings in this social media as part of the preparations before a march, devoted to the SS Galitchina division anniversary²⁶³. The photos from the event, published in the local media, include Patriot of Ukraine members with their organization’s armbands and banners, as well as a giant ‘Patriot of Ukraine’ banner featuring a wolfsangel and a stylized Nazi eagle²⁶⁴.

There are reports in Cherkassy media, saying that the Civil Corps was in this part of the country as early as in January 2015. “Supply the soldiers with everything that is necessary,” that was, according to them, their objective they described to journalists. “Another objective which is nonetheless important is keeping public order²⁶⁵.” As part of the latter task, starting from the end of May 2015, nationalists dressed in Azov uniform were patrolling the park, the public garden and “other places of mass gathering” in Cherkassy, searching for those whom they found suspicious. These patrols obtained legal consent of the interior ministry²⁶⁶. Moreover, the members of the Civil Corps of the Azov were active at Cherkassy schools, teaching weapon skills. By May 2015, such lessons had been carried out in 13 of 33²⁶⁷ secondary schools of the city²⁶⁸.

On March 28, 2015, Radio Liberty published a coverage of the Civil Corps drills in Kiev, with a comment that “civilians are trained and instructed by the Azov [fighters]”²⁶⁹. The first public event featuring new

²⁶³ Vstrecha «Zakhodi do 70 richnitsi stvorenniya divizii Galichina onVKontakte». URL: http://vk.com/galizien_70

²⁶⁴ V Ivano-Frankivsku vidbulos svyatkuwannya 70 richnitsi stvorenniya divizii SS «Galichina» (Foto) // Paralleli. 29.04.2013. URL: <http://paralleli.if.ua/news/31691.html>

²⁶⁵ U Cherkasakh zapratsyuvav pershy tsivilny korpus polku «Azov» (VIDEO) // Vikka. 27.03.2015. <http://vikka.ua/news/73589-u-cherkasah-zapratsyuvav-pershij-tsvilnij-korpus-polku-azov-video.htm>

²⁶⁶ U Cherkasakh na okhoronu vulits vyshli AZOVtsi (VIDEO) // Vikka. 24.05.2015. URL: <http://vikka.ua/novini/53704-u-cherkasah-na-okhoronu-vulits-vijshli-azovtsi-video.htm>

²⁶⁷ Shkoly, Internaty: adresa i telefony v Cherkassakh // Sayt Cherkass. [Bez daty.] URL: <http://www.0472.ua/spravka/815>

²⁶⁸ Pravilam boyu ta poryatunku cherkaskikh shkolyariv vchili biytsi «Azovu» (VIDEO) // Vikka. 13.05.2015. URL: <http://vikka.ua/news/81045-pravilam-boyu-ta-poryatunku-cherkaskih-shkolyariv-vchili-bijtsi-azovu-video.htm>

²⁶⁹ *Yakubovich Tetyana*. Na «Ateku» tsivilni trenuyutsya pid kerivnitstvom «Azovu» (video) // Radio «Svoboda». 28.03.2016. URL: <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/media/video/27640097.html>

Civil Corps flags took place in Kiev on April 26, 2015. This name had not been used before. However, since December 24, 2014 the fighters had been teaching ideological “lessons of courage” in public schools within Biletsky’s constituency²⁷⁰. Moreover, since February 16, 2015, there had also been lessons of weapon skills with Kalashnikovs²⁷¹. On February 16, 2015, the first public drill for Obolon district residents took place as part of the Azov program²⁷². On May 12, 2015, under the patronage of the Azov Civil Corps, a war game for the young took place, named “Dzhura”, featuring Azov flags and emblems. There were 10 schools taking part in the event that took place in an urban forest in Kiev; schoolchildren were taught to assemble and disassemble the rifle, team military games were played using weapons, with Azov fighters as instructors.²⁷³

At the same time, the activities of the Civil Corps in Odessa were revealed. In earlier times, this city had housed one of the biggest subsidiaries of the Social-National Assembly. On May 17, 2015, the third civil drill took place in the Odessa department of the Azov Civil Corps, with missions including field firing, tactical movements within minor units, setting and neutralizing ambushes, first-aid treatment of projectile wounds²⁷⁴. The media refers to a following Facebook group as its source: <https://www.facebook.com/patriot.od>, which is now unavailable, but judging from the address, the social media page may belong to Patriot of Ukraine Odessa.

On April 21, 2015, another department of the organization was created in Volyn oblast. “The main city of the region now has a new volunteer movement, the Civil Corps of the Azov regiment — Volyn, comprising 40 volunteers and provides Azov fighters with everything that is necessary. Volyn Post got this piece of information from one of the leaders of Volyn Civil Corps, Alexander Dmitruk. According to him, the Civil Corps of the Azov is functioning in all regional centers of Ukraine. He recently started working in Lutsk. Alexander told that before the

²⁷⁰ A post in «Gromadska prymalna Andriya Biletskogo» on Vkontakte. 24.12.2014. URL: http://vk.com/wall-82532036_16

²⁷¹ A post in «Gromadska prymalna Andriya Biletskogo» on Vkontakte. 16.02.2015. URL: http://vk.com/wall-82532036_257

²⁷² A post in «Gromadska prymalna Andriya Biletskogo» on Vkontakte. 16.02.2015. URL: http://vk.com/wall-82532036_258

²⁷³ A post in «Gromadska prymalna Andriya Biletskogo» on Vkontakte. 12.05.2015. URL: http://vk.com/wall-82532036_855

²⁷⁴ Odesskoye otdeleniye «Grazhdanskogo korpusa polka «Azov» provelo ocherednye ucheniya. Fotoreportazh // Gordon. 18.05.2015. URL: <http://gordonua.com/photo/events/odesskoe-otdelenie-grazhdanskogo-korpusa-polka-azov-provelo-ocherednye-ucheniya-fotoreportazh-81318.html>

revolution, Volyn used to be home to a society named the Black Bloc. In April and May [of 2014], members of the Black Bloc joined the Azov volunteer battalion, thus becoming part of the process of establishing a regional Civil Corps in Volyn²⁷⁵.

Another Civil Corps subsidiary in Kremenchug, Poltava Oblast, presented December 30, 2015, also had a predecessor. It was an apparently nationalist organization (judging from the flag of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army on its emblem) named Patriot.Kremenchug, active since early September 2015. It used to teach military strategy and skills to young residents with corresponding political views²⁷⁶.

There was also an Azov Civil Corps in Uzhgorod, where he was presented on August 28, 2015, as part of a nationalist movement Karpatska Sich active in Transcarpathia since 2010. The movement's leader, Taras Deyak, became Azov's Transcarpathia Civil Corps chief of staff²⁷⁷. "Despite his young age (he was only 23), he belongs to a cohort of those who created the Right Sector on Maidan in 2013. Starting from August 2014, he was a commander of a combat unit in the village of Peski close to Donetsk airport, attached to the assault company of the Volunteer Ukrainian Corps [of the Right Sector]," journalists reported about him in 2016. "His record later included the M[ariupol] sector, with the village of Yurovka as his place of deployment from December 2014 to February 2015 (an integrated subversive and reconnaissance group made of Karpatska Sich special ops unit and Lviv Skins). Starting from May 2015, they were attached to the Aidar battalion (located in the village of Schastye). The unit was legalized as part of the special ops Donbass battalion. Now Karpatska Sich is a special ops company of the National Guard of Ukraine. Back in Transcarpathia, Taras Deyak is once again engaged in patriotic public performances²⁷⁸.

²⁷⁵ U Lutsku zapratsyuvav volontersky Tsivilnyy korpus polku «Azov». FOTO // Volyn Post. 21.04.2015. URL: <http://www.volynpost.com/news/49820-u-lucku-zapracuyav-volonterskyj-cyvilnyj-korpus-polku-azov-foto>

²⁷⁶ V Kremenchuge sozdayotsya grazhdansky korpus «Azov» // Telegraf. 30.12.2015. URL: http://www.telegraf.in.ua/yandex/2015/12/30/v-kremenchuge-sozdaetsya-grazhdanskiy-korpus-azov_10050650.html

²⁷⁷ «AZOV» rasskazal chem budet zanimatsya na Zakarpattye // Golos Karpat. 28.08.2015. URL: <http://goloskarpat.info/rus/society/55e09e245ebe0/>

²⁷⁸ *Kogutich Tatyana*. Taras Deyak, aktivist, organizator «medvezhyey blokady» na Zakarpattye: My budem blokirovat tranzit fur v Rossii, a v posledstviy — i ves rosysky biznes v Ukraine // Ukrinform. 28.02.2016. URL: <http://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-politycs/1972178-taras-deak-aktivist-organizator-medvezey-blokady-na-zakarpate.html>

In Dnepropetrovsk, the Civil Corps of the Azov was presented December 5, 2015, its backbone being former battalion fighters²⁷⁹. Apparently, no structures of Patriot of Ukraine and Social-National Assembly had earlier existed in this region.

As we may see, the Civil Corps of the Azov was built on the basis both the former Patriot of Ukraine and Social-National Assembly structures and the former Azov fighters who were residents in the areas, as well as through mergers with rightwing groups. Some of them joined Azov as early as in 2014; others were involved in Biletsky's sphere of influence some time later. Biletsky spokesmen say that by the spring of 2015, the structure of the movement had covered the whole of Ukraine. Indeed, the Ukrainian media reported that there was an active department of the Civil Corps in Kharkov in May 2015²⁸⁰, in Mariupol in June²⁸¹, in Vinnitsa in July (it was specified that the latter department had been created "in the beginning of the summer")²⁸² and so on. "In Transcarpathia, we are entering the final stage of building our all-Ukrainian movement, all other regions have already accomplished the process," Mikhail Didych, head of the Azov Civil Corps Uzhgorod department said on August 28, 2015 in an inauguration ceremony²⁸³. The official map of Civil Corps departments, published September 2015, features subsidiaries in all regions except for Sumy and Kirovograd Oblasts²⁸⁴. It was only on March 13, 2016 that the local Civil Corps was presented in Kirovograd, although on December 20, 2015 around 100 activists marched through the streets of a town of Aleksandria located in that region, carrying their flags and signs²⁸⁵. A Civil Corps in Sumy

²⁷⁹ Prigorova Olga. Eks-boytsy «Azova» otkryli v Dnepropetrovske shtab pomoshchi voyennym // Lb.ua. 07.12.2015. URL: http://society.lb.ua/life/2015/12/07/322893_eks-boytsi_azova_otkrili.html

²⁸⁰ «KOLOSONTsYa». Eko etno festival vid GO Tsvilny Korpus «Azov». Teritoriya vilna vid separatizmu. Kharkivska oblast, smt. Cherkaska Lozova, 19–21.06.2015 // Yevromaydan Kharkov. 29.05.2015. URL: <http://euro.kharkiv.ua/?p=8482>

²⁸¹ Zhizn Mariupolya skvoz prizmu voyennykh «Azova» // Mariupolskiye novosti. 18.06.2015. URL: <http://www.mariupolnews.com.ua/descri/57788>

²⁸² *Buzdigan Mikhaylo*. U Vinnitsi die pidrozdil polku «Azov», yaky odni nazivayut leg-endarnim, a inshi — «merzennimi natsistami zi svastikoyu» // Molodizhna gazeta Vinnichchini. 15.07.2015.

²⁸³ «AZOV» rasskazal chem budet zanimatsya na Zakarpatye // Golos Karpat. 28.08.2015. URL: <http://goloskarpat.info/rus/society/55e09e245ebe0/>

²⁸⁴ A post in «Gromadska prymalna Andriya Biletskogo» on VKontakte. 03.09.2015. URL: http://vk.com/wall-82532036_1734

²⁸⁵ V Aleksandrii proshel marsh «Azova» // Sayt goroda Aleksandrii. 23.12.2015. URL: <https://aleksandriya.co.ua/news/2015-12-23/28743-v-aleksandrii-prosel-mars-azova>

was officially presented on March 27, 2016²⁸⁶, although it was active at least starting from February²⁸⁷.

On July 23, 2015, Rada Deputy Oleg Petrenko posted on Facebook about the new ‘school of natiocracy’ in the Carpathians: “The elementary course includes ideological training, political education, leadership skills development and other lectures related to the Civil Corps activities. There are athletic instructors who do a training twice a day. There are 120 activists, volunteers and ATO veterans from all over Ukraine taking part in the program. One lecture at the School of Natiocracy was also read by the Azov leader, Andrey Biletsky. [The official Azov video regarding the School of Natiocracy says that one of its teachers had been Oleg Odnorozhenko²⁸⁸.] This drill will allow patriots to continue their public work and the implementation of the civil initiatives that Azov members started²⁸⁹.

However, while those things were happening, the Azov Civil Corps did not have a formal status. It was neither registered as a public organization nor even presented in public.

On July 28, 2015, Azov fighters were first barred from guarding the front line near Mariupol and drawn off to rear bases. “They are leaving,” Andrey Tsapliyenko, a reporter for the Ukrainian “1+1” channel wrote from the frontline. “The volunteers who liberated Shirokino from the insurgents in February and then held the line on the heights by the sea during several months have just left the village. The Donbass battalion with a Right Sector company on one hand, and the Azov on the other, used to control villages of Domiki and Mayak alternately, holding back the enemy outside Mariupol, not letting him in. Today, for the first time since February, the Azov did not come to replace the Donbass. Marines took the checkpoints and positions the volunteers were previously holding²⁹⁰.

After it was obvious that the change was for long, Biletsky arranged an official presentation of the Civil Corps. It took place on August 25,

²⁸⁶ TsK AZOV Sumy ofitsialno nachinayet svoyu deyatelnost // Azov.Press. 26.03.2016. URL: <http://azov.press/ru/ck-azov-sumi-oficiyno-rozpochina-svoyu-diyal-nist>

²⁸⁷ TsK AZOV Sumy prisoyedinilsya k vseukrainskoy aktsii «#StopInter» // Azov.Press. 25.02.2016. URL: http://azov.press/ru/ck-azov-sumi-pri-dnavsya-do-vseukrainskoi-akcii-stop_inter

²⁸⁸ «Shkola Natsiokratii» // Kanal polzovatelya «ZMIST» na YouTube. 10.08.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhKQyJqsLJw>

²⁸⁹ A message in Oleg Petrenko’s account on Facebook. 23.07.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/petrenko.oleh/posts/435256923326045>

²⁹⁰ A message in Andrey Tsapliyenko’s account on Facebook. 28.07.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Andrey.tsapliyenko/posts/10153220486244690>

2015 года in Mariupol, where the bases of the Azov regiment are located. “If we build a large-scale movement in Mariupol, this will mean it will serve as an example from Kharkov, Odessa, Crimea to Transcarpathia. This will be an example the whole of Ukraine should follow,” Biletsky declared at the presentation ceremony²⁹¹. On August 26, 2015, the movement was inaugurated in Kharkov and then, as was mentioned above, it ripped through the whole of Ukraine.

Judging from multiple publications in social media and regional websites of Ukraine, the Civil Corps emphasizes youth programs, attracting not only the far-right subculture that makes its backbone, but also schoolchildren. The activists of the Corps come to schools to read lectures, give lessons of what was the preliminary military training of youth in Soviet times, arrange outdoor training camps on a regular basis²⁹². There were cases of opening commemorative plates at schools and organizing lineups to honor the deceased Azov members²⁹³. Lectures by Azov activists and demonstration of movies glorifying the regiment took place in several big cities’ libraries²⁹⁴.

Residents are invited to take part in friendly football games with Azov fighters²⁹⁵. Sometimes they also organize public exercises aimed at demonstrating the fighters’ physical strength²⁹⁶.

They also create a sport and recreation infrastructure, free-of-charge and therefore attractive for the locals. On September 25, 2015, the Azov

²⁹¹ V Mariupole sozdali grazhdansky korpus «Azova» // Depo.ua. 26.08.2015. URL: <http://www.depo.ua/rus/life/u-mariupoli-stvorili-tsvilniy-korpus-azovu--26082015182600>

²⁹² Grazhdansky Korpus AZOV obyavlyayet nabor detey ot 14-17 let v besplatny lager «Clobozhanin»! // Azov.Press. 20.04.2016. URL: <http://azov.press/ru/civil-niy-korpus-azov-ogoloshu-nabir-ditey-vid-14-17-rokiv-u-bezkoshtovniy-tabir-clobozhanin>

²⁹³ Na shkole «azovtsa», pogibshogo za Mariupol, otkryli memorialnuyu dosku (FOTO+VIDEO) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 19.04.2016. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/1195804>

²⁹⁴ V Dnepropetrovske GK AZOV otmetili den Sobornosti (foto) // Nash rayon. 26.01.2016. URL: http://nash-rayon.dp.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65732&catid=475&Itemid=740

²⁹⁵ Golovaty Vladimir. V Berdyanske aktivno rabotayet GK «Azov» (+ видео) // Pro. Berdyansk.biz. 09.10.2015. URL: <http://pro.berdyansk.biz/content.php?id=32117> V Krasnoarmeyske sostoyalsya match po regbi. Boytsy polka Azov igrali s vospitannikami DYuSsh // Shkvarki.org. 27.08.2015. URL: <http://shkvarki.org/krasnoarmeysk/item/1944-v-krasnoarmeyske-sostoyalsya-match-po-regbi-bojtsy-polka-azov-igrali-s-vospitannikami-dyussh>

²⁹⁶ V Mariupole proshel turnir Silnaya Natsiya (FOTO) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 12.09.2015. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/958690> [Без названія] // Утренний город. Кировоград. 13.03.2016. URL: <http://www.ugorod.kr.ua/news/2016-03-13-50782.html>

Civil Corps presented a judo school in Mariupol, which on the very first day enrolled around 50 enthusiastic children. There are Civil Corps banners over the school and in its gyms²⁹⁷. In Kharkov, the Azov Civil Corps opened three gyms in the beginning of April 2016 (for 100 persons each, in average), where instructors and trainers from the Azov and the Eastern Corps teach everyone martial arts and knife fighting²⁹⁸. However, the lessons are only free for the members of the Azov youth movement, which serves as an incentive for many of the young people to join the corps. “We are planning new gyms all over the town,” Shirayev, head of the Civil Corps in Kharkov said. Judging from photos, even younger schoolboys attend the training in Kharkov gyms²⁹⁹. For them, the Civil Corps also organizes special outdoor training in different formats, such as games³⁰⁰, or learning foreign languages³⁰¹, or something else.

Therefore, a neo-Nazi movement gives a free attractive variant of cultural entertainment and physical activity to citizens of the country, where it is not available to ordinary people. It also gives its own variant of Komsomol. Organizations of this type conduct ideological indoctrination of the youth during these events that is very dangerous. A new Ukrainian generation may have a mass infection of neo-Nazism and a racism virus. Especially, as the Azov openly uses the vocabulary, symbols and rituals of the Third Reich. For example, his was the origin of a solemn ritual that is called a “roll-call of the dead”.

“The Nazi party celebrated a memorable day of the fallen heroes on November 8, on the day of the beginning of the Beer Hall Putsch. All the ceremonies took place in Munich, the capital of the movement,” Oleg Plenkov, a famous Russian historian who studies Nazism, writes. “The concluding part of the ceremony was very spectacular. It was called “the last roll-call”. The organizer of the ceremony called the names of

²⁹⁷ Grazhdansky Korpus «Azov» prezentoval zal dzyudo v Mariupole (FOTO) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 25.09.2015. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/974501>

²⁹⁸ *Ruchka Kseniya*. Grazhdansky korpus «Azov» otkryl sportivny zal na stadione Metallist // Objectiv.tv.12.04.2016. URL: <http://www.objectiv.tv/120416/126609.html>

²⁹⁹ *Мадиевский Вячеслав*. Открытие спортивного зала Гражданского корпуса «Азов» в Харькове // УНИАН-фото. 12.12.2015. URL: <http://photo.ukrinform.ua/rus/current/photo.php?id=744165>

³⁰⁰ Tsivilny Korpus polka «AZOV» provel massovoye meropriyatiye dlya detey // Guru. ua. 16.08.2015. URL: http://news.guru.ua/news/454427/Civilnyj_Korpus_polka_AZOV_provel_massovoe_meroprijatie_dlja_detey.html

³⁰¹ V Mariupole polk «Azov» uchit anglyskomu yazyku pereselentsev (FOTO) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 31.03.2016. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/1175267>

the dead party activists one by one, and the columns answered with the necessary ceremonial phrase “Here!”³⁰²

The Azov members had the same ceremony at Mariupol, as journalists found out on October 22, 2015. “Around 100 volunteers were lined up on the football ground. The torchlight procession started from there. One thousand fighters moved in Urzuf carrying standards with a symbol of the regiment and state flags of Ukraine. Modern and historical music played. The procession stopped at the regiment’s basis, where commemorative token was built to the memory of the killed Azov members. It was a burial mound with three swords stabbed into it. 33 Azov members were standing in front of him. They symbolized 33 people killed. Each of them had a shield with a pseudo [call sign] of the dead written in a runic type... The culmination of the mystery came after solemn speeches. A pseudo of the killed was said, and one of the fighters put up a shield on which it was written... and said “Here!”... At the end of the ceremony Andrey Biletsky explained, “It was a “roll-call of the dead” which has a sacral meaning...” October 22 may become a memorable day devoted to all members of the Azov who were killed.³⁰³

The same ritual was held on April 23, 2016, in Cherkassy during torchlight procession, for which the local department of the Azov Civil Corps gathered 1 thousand people. The participants of the torchlight procession called the roll of the personnel. After a name of a Cherkassy citizen who was killed in Donbass was said, the gathered people said “Here!”³⁰⁴

Music concerts are another way of promoting Nazism. M8L8TX, a neo-Nazi Russian band, had a concert in Kiev on October 18, 2015, under the aegis of the Azov. Aleksey Lyovkin, a vocalist and ideologist had spent 6 years in prison for participating in a skinhead group that had committed a series of murders because of national hate³⁰⁵. The band sang *The Flag on High* that is a hymn of the SA, and also their own songs devoted to the topic of racism and neo-Nazism. Here is, for example, a text of the song written by a band Slyozy oseni (Tears of Autumn) from album Cherny Marsh (Black March) (2013), which glorifies SS tank division Totenkopf under the command of Theodor Eicke and its achievements in killing the Jews (“people of kabbala”) in death camps.

³⁰² *Plenkov Oleg*. Trety reykh: Aryskaya kultura. SPb.: Neva, 2005. C. 170.

³⁰³ «Azov» pod Mariupolem provel «pereklichku mertvykh» (FOTOREPORTAZh) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 23.10.2015. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/1003995>

³⁰⁴ Cherkashchani zi smoloskipami proyshli marshem pam'yati // Radio «Svoboda». 23.04.2016. URL: <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/news/27692831.html>

³⁰⁵ About «M8L8TH» // Dark-Side.ru. [Bez dati.] URL: <http://dark-world.ru/bands/M8L8TH.php>

From the law of force on enemy's bones
You are used to own the life space.
There is a glow from the flame-thrower in blue eyes
Of the Viking's brother, Knight-Storm Trooper.

You are a soldier of the leader, and it is your time.
Steel is hardened in a series of attacks.
Through the hail of shells goes to the East
Theodor Eicke's tank fist!

Blood with earth — by a Dead Head.
Enemies' skulls are pressed into dirt.
Kabbala's kids are behind others' backs.
Their future is ovens and death camps.

A dead man bares his teeth from a tank,
Runes on the buttonholes are shining with silver!
In the Rage of Fights, in the Flame of Hearts
White Dawn will flare up again!³⁰⁶

A video was shown on a big screen behind the musicians during the concert for the Azov members. They saw diving German storm trooper, shooting tanks decorated with runes and German crosses, a video of SS marches including the fighters of their Eastern parts who then were changed by images of wolves and werewolves.³⁰⁷ The audience put up the right hand as Nazis did.

In winter, the growing neo-Nazi movement organized a torchlight procession. 5 000 people came from the whole Ukraine to participate in it under the Azov's flags and its Civil Corps on December 20, 2015.³⁰⁸ It is necessary to remind that there are less than 2 000 people in the military part that is under Biletsky command. It means that in one year the Azov Civil Corps attracted not less than 3 000 activists. Its participants regularly organize pickets in different cities of the country.

³⁰⁶ М8Л8ТХ - Slyozy oseni 2013 // Kanal polzovatelya «Iliya Kostadinov» na YouTube. 22.10.2013. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwtRSeYTWcc>

³⁰⁷ М8Л8ТХ - Muzhestvo Vedyot Na Nebesa (OFFICIAL LIVE VIDEO, 2015) // Kanal polzovatelya «Reconquista» na YouTube. 10.12.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjXzg0wrCvE> М8Л8ТХ - Шторм Над Азовом (Live at «Bingo» club, Kiev, 18.10.2015) // Kanal polzovatelya «Alex Clash» na YouTube. 21.10.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6REUdKxQ9Y>

³⁰⁸ Fakelnoye shestviye «Azova» v Mariupole // RIA Novosti Ukraina. 21.12.1015. URL: <http://rian.com.ua/video/20151221/1002378437.html>

These marches gather several hundred people³⁰⁹ (including torchlight processions that neo-Nazis like so much³¹⁰, motor races³¹¹ and so on).

They also actively win over the veterans of military action. “Six months ago the Azov commanders focused on working on veterans from other voluntary units, such as Donbass, Dnepr, Tornado, DUK PS and Aydar,” Alexander Sibirtsev, a journalist who was well informed about the feelings of the right radicals, wrote in September 2016³¹².

Roman Zvarich, a head of the headquarters of the Azov Civil Corps, is especially interesting. Unlike Biletsky and his militant neo-Nazis who were necessary in big politics only in 2014, Zvarich represents the Ukrainian Establishment. As he said in one of the interviews, “I “served my time” for 15 years in this Parliament and twice in a ministry.”³¹³ Zvarich became a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada in 1998 from the People's Movement of Ukraine, reelected from the Our Ukraine Party in 2002, once again became a member of Parliament from the Our Ukraine—People's Self-Defense Bloc in 2006. He was a president deputy in the Our Ukraine—People's Self-Defense Bloc parliamentary group during his third term. In 2004, he consulted Viktor Yushchenko on legal questions when the Supreme Court questioned the results of the presidential election. He became a Minister of Justice after Yushchenko had won

³⁰⁹ Marsh Polka AZOV v ZAPOROZHJE 23.08.2015 // Kanal polzovatelya «TonyStar Productions» na YouTube. 24.08.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wx6M6j4oMLk> V Mariupole proshel marsh pamyati Maksima Chayki (FOTOREPORTAZh) // Sayt goroda Mariupolya. 17.04.2016. URL: <http://www.0629.com.ua/news/1194133>

³¹⁰ Fakelnoye shestviye «Azova» v Mariupole // RIA Novosti Ukraina. 21.12.1015. URL: <http://rian.com.ua/video/20151221/1002378437.html> V Melitopole v chest Dnya sobornosti Ukrainy proveli fakelnoye shestviye // Nash gorod. 23.01.2016. URL: <http://news.mspravka.info/news/117666> V Zaporozhye aktivisty zazhgli fakely v pamyat o pogibshikh pri osvobozhdenii Shirokino, - FOTO, VIDEO // Sayt goroda Zaporozhye. 10.02.2016. URL: <http://www.061.ua/news/1118700> Cherkashchani zi smoloskopami proyshli marshem pam'yati // Radio «Svoboda». 23.04.2016. URL: <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/news/27692831.html>

³¹¹ Patriotichesky avtoprobeh i otkrytiye korpusa «Azov» v Dobropolye // Kanal polzovatelya «Shkvariki.org» na YouTube. 21.11.2015. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TN2Gp1_bp70

³¹² *Sibirtsev Aleksandr*. Za kulisami «Azova». Chto gotovit voyenno-politicheskaya mashina Biletskogo // Strana. 13.09.2016. URL: <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/31366-azov.html>

³¹³ *Makhun Sergey*. Roman ZVARICh: «Istoriya — eto beskonechny katalog urokov dlya budushchikh pokoleny» // Zerkalo nedeli. 11.10.2013. URL: <http://gazeta.zn.ua/history/roman-zvarych-istoriya-eto-beskonechnyy-katalog-urokov-dlya-budushchih-pokoleniy-.html>

the presidential election in February 2005 (he resigned with the whole government in September 2005). He became a Minister of Justice again in August 2006 and held this post until the governing coalition broke up in November 2006. Then he became a representative of Yushchenko in the Verkhovna Rada³¹⁴. “Though Roman Zvarich have lived in Ukraine for more than 15 years, people treat this politician and high-ranking official with suspicion,” *Fakti i komentariyi* newspaper wrote in 2005. “Yes, he is Ukrainian, but he came from the USA. The circumstance causes a lot of rumors, and the most popular one is that Roman Zvarich is an agent of the “world capitalism” and CIA in Ukraine.” Zvarich himself shared interesting information about his origin that shows old relations of his family with nationalists and Western special services. “After the war my father was in Ukrainian refugee camp in Germany, where he joined the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. The British special services prepared him for being a liaison. They planned to send him with a parachute group on the territory of Ukraine. However, the operation was cancelled at the last moment. He does not know the reason... In 1949 my father decided to immigrate to the USA.” Roman Zvarich went to Columbian University in 1969. “I chose the Soviet Union as the area where I wanted to work... Professor Brzezinski who already was one of the main experts in the USSR, was interested in me... CIA was not.” At the beginning of 1980s, he graduated and “left the science and worked in Munich in Zeppelinstrasse 67 as a personal secretary of Yaroslav Stetsko, a head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. I was responsible for international relations, but there was also an absolutely closed secret direction — the so called regional direction.”³¹⁵ An executive office of the connection with the region is a connection with OUN agents and saboteurs who lived on the Soviet territory. This function was closely connected with the activity of Western special services.

In 1986 Yaroslav Stetsko, an ex-leader of the Ukrainian government in the time of Nazis (1941), died, and Yaroslava, his widow, became a head of OUN. Zvarich was her secretary and worked very actively. In 1992, he participated in a creation of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists by Stetsko, that joined Our Ukraine in 2002. Therefore, this man was at the turn of the relations of the oldest Nazi organizations (its fighting and subversive wing), Western special services and pro-Western part of the Ukrainian Establishment embodied by Viktor Yushchenko in 2000s.

³¹⁴ Zvarich, Roman // Lenta.Ru. [Bez daty.]. URL: <https://lenta.ru/lib/14176526/>

³¹⁵ *Artazey Aleksandr*. Ministr yustitsii Roman Zvarich: «O tom, chto v kiyeve u menya est syn, ya uznal... cherez pyat let posle ego rozhdeniya» // *Fakty i komentarii*. 25.03.2005.

Zvarich joined the Azov on July 23, 2014³¹⁶. We do not know if this 61-year old politician participated in military action. However, though street militant right radicals are alien to him, he has key positions in their activity. He run Biletsky election team in autumn 2014³¹⁷. “Now I can speak about it. I and our Georgian blood brother from the Azov organized a school of officers last summer,” Zvarich said on March 18, 2016. Our teachers were four American ex-officers and one Canadian woman, a major of logistics. 32 Azov officers finished our school. They are ready to fulfill technical schemes on the procedures used in NATO countries, and they know them better than our generals do. Now we have constructed a new troop staff in the Azov according to NATO standards. I think it is the only one in the system of our armed forces.”³¹⁸ Svetlana, Zvarich’s wife, is called a head of a supervisory board of the Charitable Foundation of Educational Innovations in April 2015, “that officially works the Azov and provides everything necessary for him.”³¹⁹

Zvarich’s program interview for the Vostochny farvater Internet edition published on March 16, 2016, has a very important part. A journalist asked him a leading question, “We have a feeling that the condition of the so-called elites does not correlate with the condition of the society. Ideas of the creation of parties “from below” are in the air. Do you think it will happen now?” Zvarich answered, “I think yes and I’m waiting for it a lot... I am inspired by a new generation who grew up at the Euromaidan barricades. I hope that this youth will not be spoiled. It is also very important that the old political generation resign in time. They can stay as consultants and assistants. It is more important to grow up new competent Ukrainian leaders than to preach every day in the Verkhovna Rada.”

Zvarich also said, “If we want to defend our right to exist, we need to consolidate the nation, to mobilize all the resources and to be tempered

³¹⁶ Roman Zvarich zapisalsya v batalyon «Azov» // Vesti. 23.07.2014. URL: <http://vesti-ukr.com/strana/62381-roman-zvarich-zapisalsya-v-batalon-azov>

³¹⁷ Vadim Stolar zalishiv kraïnu z nevidomikh prichin — Zvarich // Hromadske.TV. 27.10.2014. URL: <http://www.hromadske.tv/politics/vadim-stolar-zalishiv-krayinu-z-nevidomikh-prichin/>

³¹⁸ *Alifanov Aleksandr*. «Poka my ne pomenyaem vse v golove, menyat sistemu naprasno», — nash pervy «amerikansky» ministr Roman ZVARICH // Vostochny farvater. 16.03.2016. URL: <http://farwater.net/politika/ukrainskaya-naciya-eshhe-dolzhdokazat-chto-imeet-pravo-na-sobstvennoe-gosudarstvo-nash-pervyj-amerikanskij-ministr-roman-zvarich/>

³¹⁹ *Sheremet Pavel, Larin Dmitry*. Polk «Azov». Mezhdru staroy i novoy armiyey // Ukrainskaya pravda. 16.04.2015. URL: <http://www.ppravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2015/04/16/7064867/>

for a full-scale war. We need daily conscious politics with correlated rhetoric that makes all Ukrainians think how they can defend their nation and their saint earth. I will tell you more: it will be an experiment to overcome the consequences of the moral castration of Ukrainian nation.”³²⁰

“Ukraine and its leaders have to create a cult of a Warrior, a cult of Ukrainian troops, a cult of a Hero... The nation must be “armed” with a deep understanding of danger that will cause a sense of duty toward the past, current and future generations,” he wrote in *Zerkalo nedeli* on April 10, 2015.”³²¹

We see a typical militaristic (as Zvarich admits) ideology close to a Nazi one. To implement it Zvarich (those who stand behind him, to put it more accurately) has to bring to power right radicals, a new, young and angry force, to whom the old Ukrainian government must give their place. To calm down the readers Zvarich emphasizes on purpose in his interview to *Vostochny farvater* that he “does not see objective causes to think” that “the country will see a military turnover or several of them, that it will be burst into pieces by armed radicals.”³²² It means they will seize the power in a peaceful way, by an election. In the same way, Nazis came to power in Germany.

It is interesting that, as *The Nation* said on January 14, 2016, in the middle of December 2015, United States Congress under pressure of the Pentagon lifted a ban on teaching and financing the Azov with the money of American taxpayers, put by it in July 2015.³²³ We can easily see a connection between this decision and the activity of the Azov Civil Corps led by Zvarich that is based on the military unit led by Biletsky.

“As the sources of *Strana* say, Zvarich plays on practice a role... of “a messenger” with ideologically related “sponsors” from abroad,”

³²⁰ *Alifanov Aleksandr*. «Poka my ne pomenyaem vse v golove, menyat sistemu naprasno», — nash pervy «amerikansky» ministr Roman ZVARICH // *Vostochny farvater*. 16.03.2016. URL: <http://farwater.net/politika/ukrainskaya-naciya-eshhe-dolzhdokazat-chto-imeet-pravo-na-sobstvennoe-gosudarstvo-nash-pervyj-amerikanskij-ministr-roman-zvarich/>

³²¹ Zvarich Roman. *Voyna i mir* // *Zerkalo nedeli*. 10.04.2015. URL: http://gazeta.zn.ua/internal/voyna-i-mir_.html

³²² *Алифанов Александр*. «Пока мы не поменяем все в голове, менять систему напрасно», — наш первый «американский» министр Роман ЗВАРИЧ // *Восточный фарватер*. 16.03.2016. URL: <http://farwater.net/politika/ukrainskaya-naciya-eshhe-dolzhdokazat-chto-imeet-pravo-na-sobstvennoe-gosudarstvo-nash-pervyj-amerikanskij-ministr-roman-zvarich/>

³²³ *Carden James*. *Congress Has Removed a Ban on Funding Neo-Nazis From Its Year-End Spending Bill* // *The Nation*. 14.01.2016. URL: <http://www.thenation.com/article/congress-has-removed-a-ban-on-funding-neo-nazis-from-its-year-end-spending-bill/>

Alexander Sibirtsev, a journalist of the Ukrainian Strana edition wrote in autumn 2016.³²⁴

Young Azov activists of the Civil Corps are already famous by beating two black people on October 20, 2015, who came to the tribunes of the Dinamo stadium during the match between FK Dinamo (Kiev) and Chelsi. Journalists recognized among participants of the beating two coordinators of the Azov Civil Corps in Kiev — Serhei Filimonov and one more, whose name we do not know — and Vladislav Oliynyk, junior lieutenant of the Azov and Biletsky assistant, and an ex-member of Azov nicknamed Painter. Filimonov and Painter have swastika tattooed on their breast, and the unknown coordinator of the Azov Civil Corps was photographed at one of the matches in a t-shirt with an image of this symbol. All participants of the Lynch law are participants of Rodichi, a famous ultra-right group of Dinamo fans³²⁵. The Ukrainian department of Human Rights gave the same information³²⁶. Neither police, nor their bosses punished them. On March 17, 2016, the members of the Azov Civil Corps led by Filimonov attacked a picket of the Progressive Socialistic Party of Ukraine. Its members were mostly aged people. Then they downloaded a video of what they had done to the Internet³²⁷. Two neo-Nazis knocked an old man of his feet and beat him with their feet. In particular, he was beaten in his head personally by Filimonov.³²⁸ Therefore, we can say that the right radicals have a great “will to fight” that Zvarich wanted in April 2015. The same concerns the “will for power” declared by a leader of the Civil Corps.³²⁹

³²⁴ *Sibirtsev Aleksandr*. Za kulisami «Azova». Chto gotovit voyenno-politicheskaya mashina Biletskogo // Strana 13.09.2016. URL: <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/31366-azov.html>

³²⁵ Pomoshchnik nardepa i militsioner uchastvovali v napadenii na chernokozhikh vo vremya matcha «Dinamo» — «Chelsi» // Bukvy. 24.10.2015. URL: <http://bykvu.com/home/mysli/14781/pomoshchnik-nardepa-i-militsioner-uchastvovali-v-napadenii-na-temnokozhikh-vo-vremya-matcha-dinamo-chelsi.html>

³²⁶ *Coydash Halya*. Police officer accused of involvement in racist attack on football fans Human Rights on Ukraine. 26.11.15. URL: <http://khpg.org/en/index.php?id=1448417832>

³²⁷ Separatisti v Kievi namagalisyia vidnoviti radyansky soyuz // Kanal polzovatelya «AZOV media» na YouTube. 17.03.2016. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziyL7cLICCM>

³²⁸ Izbiyeniye starikov sotrudnikami GK Azova // Kanal polzovatelya «Revolyutsiyana Diya» na YouTube. 18.03.2016. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FdrUaB_uw

³²⁹ Zvarich Roman. Voyna i mir // Zerkalo nedeli. 10.04.2015. URL: http://gazeta.zn.ua/internal/voyna-i-mir_.html

Filimonov also distinguished himself at the front. “I went to the East at the beginning of war. I was a member of the so called “black people” who then became a basis of the Azov battalion,” he says in the interview published by Depo.ua on June 27, 2015. We do not know exactly how long he was a member of the battalion. He did not say anything about the end of his service in the interview, and the preface says that he is “a fan who fights for Ukraine in ATO.” In the same interview Filimonov said that “fans come to war not because of war, but because of their political views based on nationalism.” To put it more precisely neo-Nazism. He said that as an activist he had “grown up in an organization” C14 that uses international racist slang (“14 words” about protection of “our race and our white children”) and a Celtic cross. He thinks that his opponents are liberals and “neo-sovoks” (a disdainful name of those who support nationalistic ideology). “Time for a new revolution will come, and I will support it,” said Filimonov. “In Ukraine nationalists fight, but the leaders are liberals and “neo-sovoks”. Ukraine will become a powerful country, but only with nationalist power.” Right radicals say openly that in their opinion the power in Ukraine is “temporal”³³⁰.

“The Azov Civil Corps is a paramilitary organization. All people are divided into tens and hundreds,” Sibirtsev quotes a source in the organization. “They have collective responsibility. Everyone knows and is responsible for each other. They have stern discipline. If a commander says that you must come at eight in the morning all set, you must come promptly on time and to be equipped according to a set task. For example, to have balaclava, helmet, respirator and something from available weapon — bludgeon or stick. You must also be ready to impeccably obey the orders of the commander of the ten and not to ask questions.”³³¹ Biletsky’s political machine has quite a lot of members. The author of this book analyzed a number of participants in Azov mass-meetings in one of the articles in July 2016 and came to a conclusion that “according to a number of people who participated in marches in Mariupol and Kiev since 2015, total resources of the rear organization together with the fighters were around 5 000 people

³³⁰ *Slivka Kazimir*. Ultras Filya: Za Ukraïnu voyuyut natsionalisti, a keruyut «neosovki» // Depo.ua. 27.06.2015. URL: <http://www.depo.ua/ukr/sport/ultras-filya-avakov-diskreditue-sebe-neobdumanimi-zatrimannymi-25062015191700>

³³¹ *Sibirtsev Aleksandr*. Za kulisami «Azova». Chto gotovit voyenno-politicheskaya mashina Biletskogo // Strana. 13.09.2016. URL: <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/31366-azov.html>

(the Azov itself had about 2 000 soldiers).³³² Sibirtsev gave the same numbers in September 2016 (according the Azov's data), "A year after it was founded the Azov Civil Corps has twice as many members as the regiment itself — about 3 000 "fighters" in the whole Ukraine. Here we mean "active" members of CC who will go to any city to participate in an action on the first call."³³³

"In future we will also create our own political party, and it is the first time that I will say it publicly," Zvarich said on August 25, 2015 in Kharkov at the presentation of the Azov Civil Corps.³³⁴ He said the same in his interview with Lb.ua on December 2, 2015. "When this movement gets the features of the party, the name will be different. Azov is not the best variant for a national party. When we build "mainstream" in all spheres, create a good basis of activists and formulate a universal Program and a Conception of country development (it should not be profanation), then we can think about a party." Regarding the terms Biletsky said, "Maybe it will take us 3-5 months."³³⁵ By this time he possibly knew insider information that Oleg Petrenki reveals in January 2016, "Early elections [to Verkhovna Rada] are planned for autumn [2016]".³³⁶ Some ruling parties such as People's Front fully lost support of the population, Right Sector that monopolized social and political representatives of nationalists had also a split. "In Ukraine the right had great opportunities for a start, but they lost prestige, authority and political influence. They are degrading before our very eyes. The situation in RS is one more signal," Biletsky said. The right position must be represented in Ukraine... Nowadays right ideas are a trend even in Europe. Not only a trend, but a locomotive that rapidly gains speed."³³⁷

³³² *Maltsev Vladislav*. Voskhod «chyornogo solntsa»: Kak Ukrainu zakhvatyvayut «rasovyye sotsial-natsionalisty» // Life. 06.07.2016. URL: <https://life.ru/873253>

³³³ *Sibirtsev Aleksandr*. Za kulisami «Azova». Chto gotovit voyenno-politicheskaya mashina Biletskogo // Strana. 13.09.2016. URL: <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/31366-azov.html>

³³⁴ U Kharkovi proyshla prezentatsiya Tsvilnogo Korpusa polku Azov. // Kanal polzovatelya «DARK HUNTER» na YouTube. 10.08.2015. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re_ygl3z7Ok

³³⁵ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Khunty ne budet. Armiya ne sposobna na perevot» // Lb.ua. 02.12.2015. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2015/12/02/322333_andrey_biletskiy_hunti_budet.html

³³⁶ *Glukhovskiy Mikhaylo*. Deputat Oleg Petrenko: Dostrokovi vibori gotuyutsya na osin // Glavkom. 27.01.2016. URL: <http://glavkom.ua/articles/37470.html>

³³⁷ *Shvets Yevgeny*. Andrey Biletsky: «Khunty ne budet. Armiya ne sposobna na perevot» // Lb.ua. 02.12.2015. URL: http://lb.ua/news/2015/12/02/322333_andrey_biletskiy_hunti_budet.html

He again speaks about a plan to create a right radical party that will “come to power”.

A new power called National Corps was presented on October 14 (on the anniversary of creation of the Ukrainian insurgent army that right radicals celebrate with marches since 2005) 2016 in a House of Teachers in Kiev. Journalists immediately paid attention to the fact that here People’s Front had been presented in 2014 that invited not only Avakov, but also Biletsky. The new party’s name also reminded of the pro-American “party of hawks” of Yatsenyuk and Turchinov who had fully lost support of the electorate.

However, it is of course a more radical right force. It is enough to say that at the constituent assembly of the National Corps Arseny Klimachev, a soloist of neo-Nazi band Sokira Peruna, was sitting in the first row. He is a cult figure for Ukrainian skinheads and right fans and was one of the leaders of the Right Sector Party in 2014–2015.³³⁸

Thanks to such support, a new party continues to form its structures locally. It moves from regional centers to all towns. “At the beginning I would like to have 10–15 reliable people in every city,” Vladislav Kirillov, a leader of the National Corps in Lugansk region, said to Vchasno on December 4, 2016.³³⁹

We can also add that Biletsky knows not by hearsay how popular people with the same ideas are in Europe. As it was said before, the Azov has a member of the ultra-right Party of Swedes whose name is Mikael Skillt and several more militant racists from Sweden. “We have contacts with patriots from Norway. They support and help us, and maybe they will become volunteers in the Azov battalion,” Oleg Odnorozhenko, a commander deputy for ideology, said to the journalists of the Norwegian channel TV2 Norge. Norwegian TV showed this material on September 3, 2014, and caused a huge scandal as it showed Azov members in helmets with swastika and SS symbols drawn on them.³⁴⁰ On December 24, 2014, Igor Zagrebaly published in his blog a picture of Francesco Fontana in a shirt with a stripe “Black Corps” and an unknown man in a t-shirt with Azov symbols at the conference of

³³⁸ *Maltsev Vladislav.* «Sokira Peruna» dlya Poroshenko: deputaty pravyyashchey partii bratayutsya s neonatsistami // Life. 25.11.2016. URL: <https://life.ru/937103>

³³⁹ Polk «Azov» otkroyet v Severodonetske na Luganshchine volontersky tsentr // Вчасно. 04.12.2016. URL: <http://vchasnoua.com/donbass/47257-polk-azov-otkroet-v-severodonetske-na-luganshchine-volonterskij-tsentr>

³⁴⁰ Nordmenn står i kø for å bidra i kampene i Ukraina // Sait TV2 Norge. [03.09.2014.] URL: <http://www.tv2.no/v/840782/>

nationalists in France.³⁴¹ Fontana participated in a March of a White Man held by neo-Nazis in British Manchester on March 21, 2015³⁴², and gave a speech at the conference in memory of John Tyndall, a founder of National Front, held in British Preston on October 10, 2015, that gathered ex- and current British right radical leaders. British right radical web site Heritage and Destiny published a report about this conference where Fontana was called a member of Ukrainian ultra-right.³⁴³

On February 26, 2016, Echo of Dortmund web site that cooperates very closely with the neo-Nazi German Right party said, “Eighty people came to the meeting in Dortmund on Friday (February 26, 2016), where some members of the Ukrainian voluntary Azov battalion shared their experience of political and military achievements in their country.” The German right radical said that it was quite urgent for them because “since the end of World War II we have never felt more a formation of national and socialistic government than during the days of chaos in Kiev in February 2014, where despite a language barrier many nationalists from different countries came to serve the goal of a national and socialistic revolution.” Then it was mentioned that many foreign volunteers fought as members of the Azov³⁴⁴. Fontana said the same in his interview with La Stampa on September 15, 2014, (he was called Stan in the article — it was one of his nicknames) and explained why he went to fight in Donbass and joined the Azov though he was not young any more, “I have always dreamt to participate in real patriotic revolution. It is my last opportunity to do it. How could I afford wasting it?”³⁴⁵

On December 8, 2016, Brazil Zero Hora and on January 10, 2017 The Financial Times said that the Brazilian police searched neo-Nazis’

³⁴¹ *Zahrebelny Igor*. Ukraine and the european nationalist movement // Ukrainian Crusade. 24.12.2014. URL: <http://ukrainiancrusade.blogspot.ru/2014/12/ukraine-and-european-nationalists.html>

³⁴² 4 North East EDL/NEI members/1 Paramilitary Fascist presence white man march // Indymedia UK. 22.03.2015. URL: <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/world/2015/03/519905.html> *Collins Matthew*. Far-right round up: It'll be wet in Manchester // Hope not hate. 28.03.2015. URL: <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/blog/insider/far-right-round-up-it-ll-be-wet-in-manchester-4344>

³⁴³ Record attendance at John Tyndall Memorial Meeting // Heritage and Destiny. 12.10.2015. URL: <http://efp.org.uk/record-attendance-at-john-tyndall-memorial-meeting/>

³⁴⁴ Vortragsveranstaltung: Vertreter von Azov (Ukraine) zu Gast in Dortmund! // DortmundEcho. 26.02.106. URL: <http://www.dortmundecho.org/2016/02/vortragsveranstaltung-vertreter-von-azov-ukraine-zu-gast-in-dortmund/>

³⁴⁵ *Sceresini Andrea*. Ucraina, anche i volontari italiani vanno in trincea contro i filo-russi // La Tampa. 15.09.2014.

houses in Rio Grande do Sul that is situated in the south of the country. “When Paulo Cezar Jardim started raids to the houses of assumed neo-Nazis in the south state Rio Grande do Sul, he saw a strange picture,” the British newspaper said. “A buzzing neo-Nazi movement, a secret world of fans of swastika, propaganda of hate and street violence were recruited by right extremists from Ukraine to fight pro-Russian rebels.”³⁴⁶ “The investigation confirmed that the armed movement is connected with the Azov regiment, neo-Nazi militants who fight in the Eastern Europe,” Zero Hora says. “Jardim found out that the members of this group recruited young followers of Hitler from gaucho... The investigator suspected that at least 5 people [from local right radicals] had already visited Europe.”

“As Paulo Cezar Jardim says, an Italian member of Misanthropic Division (an international national socialistic group that already has a branch in Brazil) have been travelling to the cities in the whole country for at least 10 months and recruiting the youth for participation in the civil war in Ukraine,” the Brazil edition says³⁴⁷. You can easily recognized Francesco Fontana mentioned above who after his service in the Azov positioned his connection with Misanthropic Division and close neo-Nazi groups in Western Europe aimed at street violence.³⁴⁸

As we can see, the Azov is perceived by Western right radicals as a combat step-detachment of their international brotherhood, as a revived brotherhood of European SS that existed during World War II. Earlier Ukrainians gained experience from their Western neo-Nazi colleagues who saw in the Ukrainian events an opportunity to start a “racial war”. Nowadays Azov members play a role of “elder brothers” who are ready to share their experience in military action and forming of a powerful legal ultra-right movement. It means that the actions of Ukrainian neo-Nazis are important on the European level, because the fact that Hitler’s followers are so powerful here and may take a control can provoke the same processes in other European countries.

³⁴⁶ Brazil neo-Nazi claim challenges myth of nation’s racial harmony // The Financial Times. 10.01.2017.

³⁴⁷ *Martins Cid*. Polícia investiga movimento armado que recrutou neonazistas gaúchos para lutar na Ucrânia // Zero Hora. 08.12.2016. URL: <http://zh.clicrbs.com.br/rs/noticias/policia/noticia/2016/12/policia-investiga-movimento-armado-que-recrutou-neonazistas-gauchos-para-lutar-na-ucrania-8661153.html>

³⁴⁸ *Maltsev Vladislav*. Italyansky svyaznoy «Pravogo sektora»: Kto obyedinyayet natsistov Ukrainy i Zapada // Life. 26.07.2016. URL: <https://life.ru/881108>

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