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Right-Wing Politics = Suicide For Ukraine

Jim Kovpak

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For those not familiar with the cesspool that is American right-wing TV, the host Tucker Carlson on Fox News is arguably one of the most important people in the US at the moment. That is because this political commentator is one of a handful of other Fox News hosts whom President Donald Trump both watches and pays great attention to. Carlson has also become known as a vector for bringing blood-and-soil white nationalism into the mainstream of American politics.

With those two facts in mind, let us discuss his remarks on the 25 November episode of his program. At one point a guest, trying to explain why Ukraine's struggle is important to the United States tells Carlson: "Because people are dying on the front lines." Tucker's response to this was: "*Why do I care what's going on in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia? And I'm serious, like why do I care? And why shouldn't I root for Russia? Which I am.*"

A week later, Carlson repeated his stance, saying: "*I should say for the record that I'm totally opposed to these sanctions and I don't think we should be at war with Russia and I think we should*

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take the side of Russia if we have to choose between Russia and Ukraine.”

Carlson’s words may have been shocking to American liberals and the handful of Republicans who haven’t joined the cult of Trump, but they would not be anything surprising or offensive to Western white nationalists or those familiar with their politics and history. What is more, Carlson was only saying out loud what Trump has clearly wanted to say for a long time. The specific reason for the outburst in this case has to do with the typical strategy and mindset of Trump and his cult – now that they can no longer deny that they betrayed and blackmailed Ukraine, they must denigrate and demonize the country. *“Okay, maybe we did hold back aid to Ukraine, but did you ever consider that it was good to do so?”*

The stance of Carlson and Trump on Ukraine might offend and disappoint any Ukrainian far-right supporter who actually exercises the curiosity and interest to learn about it, but what right do they have to get offended? After all, Trump and many of his supporters openly call themselves “nationalists” (a nonsensical term in the American context). They came to power by promoting the idea that America is this country oppressed by poor beggar nations around the world (except Saudi Arabia and Israel, of course!), which is how they see Ukraine. For those in Ukraine who pound their chests and shout “Ukraina ponad use!” — this is Americans saying “Amerika ponad use,” even if it’s all, of course, just a lie.

The connections between Russia, the Kremlin, and Western white nationalism is far older than many people realize. Many researchers on the topic typically start at the end of the Soviet Union, and thus perpetuate the myth that far-right nationalism and anti-Semitism in Russia and other Soviet republics was some kind of new thing, suppressed by and opposed to the former self-proclaimed Communist regime. In truth, however, the flirtations of the Western far right are far older than many people realize, going back at least one century and con-

goals in Ukraine as they cause disunity and animosity among different groups of Ukrainian citizens who should be united. Besides this, one need only look at the effects of the Kremlin's "traditional values" crusade to see that it is largely bullshit and is holding Russia back. To act as though Ukraine can drink from the same chalice that is poisoning Russia somehow get the opposite effect, i.e. become stronger, is simply childish fantasy. Contrary to the promises of right-wing demagogues of any nationality, freedom can never come from oppression and authoritarianism.

This article will do little to convince those still steeped in the poisonous, foreign ideology that is white nationalism. But it is not intended for them. It is intended for all those Ukrainians who sincerely believe in the defense of their country and its freedom yet shy away from criticizing the far-right elements, often under the mistaken notion that the right is the only force defending Ukraine. International perception of Ukraine matters. Internal unity matters. It is not enough to simply fight for Ukraine if it is to become a state just as authoritarian as Russia but with different colors and symbols. Ukraine was an oppressed, colonized nation and it is still suffering the effects of imperialism and colonization today. As such it only makes sense to embrace this reality, this identity, and make common cause with those around the world suffering oppression, colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialist aggression. Attempts to sit at the oppressors' table will only fail, and those at the table will inevitably shove Ukraine back under Moscow's boot.

tinuing even throughout the Soviet period. Now Russia and the Western far-right go hand-in-hand.

Around the late 19th, early 20th century, the Russian empire was admired by Western reactionaries who saw Tsarist absolutism as a bastion of "true" European, Western civilization while the actual West had succumbed to liberalism and Marxism. During the Soviet period, some rightists, including in Nazi Germany, saw a potential ally in the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, most reactionaries were anti-Soviet, but some leading white nationalists, including Turner Diaries author William Pierce, saw the USSR as a conservative society that maintained *de facto* racial homogeneity. In the view of such neo-Nazis, Communism had been imposed on Eastern Europe by Jews, and they counted on the Eastern Europeans to throw off that "yoke" one day. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, the neo-Nazi movement didn't get their white utopia, but many of its leaders were happy to take advantage of the economic chaos in those countries in order to find compliant wives and for those who could afford to travel, perfect destinations for sex tourism while telling the suckers back home about how great Eastern European society was because it was so "white."

A little-known but perfect example of the 21st century white nationalist worldview toward Russia could be found in an obscure trash "novel" written by domestic terrorist, murderer, and inventor of the "14 words," the late David Lane. Most of Lane's novel reads like an erotic sexual fantasy involving extremely young girls and at one point justifying rape and sexual slavery, but some point near the end Lane must have realized he was supposed to be writing the next Turner Diaries and he had to wrap up the story of white nationalists resisting the US government. So he decides to have Russia come in and save the day, as well as "white" civilization. Russia ex machina. To be fair, Ukraine is included too, but only in cooperation with Russia, of course — because to Lane they're

all just “white people.” No need to guess who would be more equal than others in that union.

In recent years, Ukraine’s ultra-right, though largely shut out of mainstream politics, has made major gains by flying beneath most people’s radar while reaching out to far-right individuals and organizations in the West. They have taken advantage of Russian propaganda in various ways, even as their behavior often appears as though it were directed by Surkov himself. But if Ukraine’s ultra-right are not in fact carrying out orders from the Kremlin’s top political technologists, then they are hopelessly naive, because the fact is that Moscow is the master of the global far right and always will be. Dreams of Ukrainian far-rightists about creating an anti-Russian white nationalist international or, even more delusional, some kind of “Intermarrum,” are just that — delusions. Apart from the fact that nationalist internationalism is ultimately impossible once right-wing nationalists have actual power, the majority of the far-right in Europe and North America already prefer Russia and within their otherwise nonsensical worldview, it is in their interest to do so. Ukraine’s nationalists can only count on a handful of smaller nations which have some historical grudge with Russia, and even then there’s no telling what the future holds. Who could have predicted that Hungary’s far right nationalist government, for example, would be so pro-Russian given the memory of what happened in 1956?

Some might point out that many left-wing parties have also, for various reasons, gone along with the Kremlin. But what is often missed is that in the process, many of these leftists have in fact abandoned their stated principles and embraced a far right regime in the Kremlin. In the process we have seen these groups compromise their values and sometimes work in concert with far-right parties and organizations. Yet the compromise has been almost entirely one-way, with the brown gaining far more than the red in the red-brown alliance, as always.

Try as they might to portray themselves as Ukraine’s sole defenders, the Ukrainian far right can never deny or explain its curious connections to Russia, be it inconvenient photographs with Russian fascist Alexander Dugin, inviting members of parties with known ties to Russia into Ukraine, or promoting Kremlin narratives on topics such as Syria. Slapping a Ukrainian label on Russian propaganda is still just promoting Russian propaganda all the same.

The simple truth is that the Kremlin has not been actively promoting right-wing nationalism, particularly in Europe, for no reason. Nor are its political technologists stupid. Russia understands that it cannot stand up to NATO or a united Europe, and thus it is acting in its interest when it supports, both directly or indirectly, nationalist and isolationist parties and movements. Even now Russia has shown its continued ability to charm major European players such as France and Germany — in a divided Europe under control of nationalist parties and without the EU, Europe smaller nations would be easy pickings for Moscow. Invading armies aren’t necessary — money will do the trick. This being the case, for Ukrainians to promote or even tolerate the promotion of such politics would be suicide for Ukraine. Apart from the spectacles and stunts that seem to perfectly validate the Kremlin media’s narratives about “Ukrainian Nazis,” Ukraine’s far right is actively contributing to a political tendency which at best, for Ukraine’s sake, asks why people in other countries should care about Ukraine, and at worst, actively supports Russia. In short, the value the Ukrainian far-right provides to the Kremlin, both in terms of propaganda value and promoting the kind of politics Moscow is promoting via a much larger platform, far outweighs any military losses suffered at the hands of right-wing pro-Ukrainian fighters in 2014 to the present.

And what about the Ukrainian right’s domestic politics, which are almost exact copies of those promoted by the Russian state and Orthodox Church? Again these serve Russia’s