After recent critical remarks by Tel Aviv against Russia for its special denazification operation in Ukraine made at the UN General Assembly under the obvious pressure from Washington, the Israeli society, nonetheless, is coming around and expressing criticism toward the current Kyiv government recently strengthened with the US support. This statement is backed by increasingly louder voices of the Israeli society and politicians condemning Kyiv’s ties to neo-Nazism.

Even though prior to Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s speech before Israel’s Knesset, its Speaker Mickey Levy, in line with Washington’s instructions, expressed solidarity with Ukraine calling Russia’s special denazification operation in Ukraine a “gross violation of human rights,” many Israeli politicians reacted negatively to the Ukrainian president’s words. As seen in first feedbacks to Zelenskyy’s speech by the members of the government anonymously published by Israeli media, “high ranking ministers” made their discontent with Ukrainian president’s “ungratefulness” crystal clear. In their opinion, Zelenskyy’s speech was a “harsh and unreasonable attack on Israel.” One politician stated that no one in Jerusalem “expected such harsh words” from Zelenskyy.

The ministers were particularly infuriated by Zelenskyy’s comparison of murders of Ukrainian neo-Nazis committed by the Russian military during the special operation to the Holocaust. Additionally, one of the ministers reminded directly, that it was Ukrainians who assisted Germans in killing Jews during WWII.

A rather brutal commentary of a “high ranking minister” has been published by the right wing publisher Arutz
Sheva: “Ukrainian president insulted Israel and made an infuriating comparison to the Holocaust. This is distortion of history.” Similar words were used by the Communications Minister of Israel Yoaz Hendel: “You cannot rewrite the horrible history of the Holocaust, genocide that also was perpetrated on the territory of Ukraine. War is horrific, but comparing it to the horrors of the Holocaust and the Final Solution is infuriating.” Member of Knesset from the Zionut Dati Simhi Rothman also responded to the Zelenskyy’s speech before the members of the Israeli parliament: “President Zelenskyy requested that we help Ukraine the same way Ukrainians helped Jews during the Nazi occupation. I’ll say this: we are compelled to refuse — we are not savages, we want to bring good to people.”

Zelenskyy’s openly disparaging attitude to victims of the Holocaust and tragic memory of thousands Jews killed during the WWII was indicated by the fact that when appearing on Zoom before the members of Knesset and his “allies” on the Hamabi square in Tel Aviv, he wore a T-shirt with the logo of UPA, an armed organization of Ukrainian Nazis eliminated by Soviet troops and banned in Russia. This unit was founded in 1943 originating from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN, banned in Russia), and its members collaborated with fascists sabotaging Soviet war efforts. One of its leaders was Stepan Bandera. It was UPA who perpetrated mass ethnic cleansing in areas inhabited by Russian, Jewish, and Polish citizens, killing tens of thousands.

The role of UPA in the Holocaust was revealed in many international publications including those in the US, who support the current neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv. Particularly, in his book “Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust” Dr. John-Paul Himka, an honorary professor of the University of Alberta, stated that quarter of all victims of the Holocaust lived on the territory of modern Ukraine, where, however, very little attention has been paid to the Holocaust. In his book he gives a detailed account of the part played by the OUN and its military tool - the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in exterminating Jewish population of Ukraine under German occupation from 1941 to 1944. Having analyzed multiple sources and memoirs of Jewish survivors, Soviet investigations, German documents, as well as documents prepared by OUN itself, and OUN activists’ memoirs, he proves that OUN members played key roles in anti-Semitic violence in the summer of 1941. In 1943 thousands of the OUN members deserted the German service and joined the nationalistic insurgence movement under the auspices of OUN, with UPA killing the Jews who had managed to survive major cleansings of 1942.

Dr. John-Paul Himka is also the co-editor (in collaboration with Joanna B. Michlic) of the book “Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe” (University of Nebraska Press, 2013), and the author of a number of books and multiple articles on the history of Ukraine.

Today you can read many studies on the Lviv pogroms and on how Ukrainian nationalists slaughtered Jews as well as learn from multiple documented proofs and photographs about the criminal actions of the Ukrainian Nazis in WWII.

In this regard, it is clearly surprising to witness open disdain for these facts shared by certain Israeli politicians led by current Anti-Russian US political elite, who try to “rally” its allies with criticism toward Moscow’s special denazification operation in Ukraine. It is also surprising to observe silent support of neo-Nazism flourishing in recent years in Ukraine, torch rallies, glorification of Nazi “heroes” such as Bandera and Shukhevych, that is already traditionally held in Lviv on June 30 in commemoration of the Lviv pogroms, the festival “Shukhevychfest” dedicated to one of the commanders of the Nachtigall Battalion, the hauptmann Roman Shukhevych, who directly participated in killings of civilians.

Now, Washington’s propaganda blinders hiding the support of the criminal nature of the current Kyiv administration are starting to slide throughout. Even state media in many countries has become louder in its support of Moscow’s special operation in Ukraine. Thus, an article on the Ukrainian neo-Nazi battalion Azov (terrorist organization, banned in Russia) appeared on the web-site of the Dutch television company TV2. Even though Peter Møller is rather weary when speaking about the conception of the battalion, the readers are led to believe that the denazification course was chosen by Russia for a reason.

Increasingly more often various Western media outlets publish strong criticism towards Zelenskyy and his “appeals” to foreign sponsors. Thus, Bradley Devlin, an American observer for the American Conservative, having recently analyzed the appeal of the Ukrainian president to the US Congress, pointed out that the Ukrainian authorities, including Volodymyr Zelenskyy, intentionally misinform US government about the situation in the country hoping for an increase in aid sent to Kyiv.

Hopefully, the Israeli community will soon wake up from the lulling propaganda of Washington and start down the road of the justified criticism of the Kyiv administration, whereas Israeli politicians will take into account the memory of their own people for the victims of the Nazism, which has gained ground in Ukraine in recent years.
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