

Watch This: Shocking Russian national broadcast invokes Nazism, terrorism, and the restoration of the Soviet Union

2014/08/10 • Euromaidan Press

The author, Matthew Babiak, is a political science graduate from the University of Toronto with a specialization in Ukrainian, Russian, and Soviet politics and history. He is an editor for Euromaidan Press and the owner & editor of UkrainianPolicy.com.

The full version with photographs and video clip links can be found at:
<http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/08/10/watch-this-performance-broadcast-nationally-in-russia-invokes-nazism-support-for-terrorism-and-the-restoration-of-the-soviet-union/>

Today in Russia something scary happened. On live television, broadcast nationally, shot in occupied Crimea in the city of Sevastopol, a musical Olympic-esque ceremony and rock concert was performed at a motorcycle expo attempting to depict Ukraine and its revolution in ways only worst described by Russian state propaganda to date. Last year's show depicted a lavished reenactment of the battle of Stalingrad, but this year was all about the battle for Ukraine. The performance, broadcast on the Rossiya-2 network, was the most egregious example to date of Russia's attempts to instill fear in the population, glorify terrorists operating in the east, and ring in a new era of Soviet restoration. Russian media described it as "patriotic," but many should recognize this as classic agitprop – agitation propaganda.

What exactly happened and is this an exaggeration? Let's take a look.

The piece begins with a number of masked drummers marching in torch wielding performers dressed in black. The drummers, who stand beside an ominous US dollar symbol, have various bloody special effects; what the performers do is much more shocking. As they begin to goose-step in formation, they jointly form a human swastika as if putting on a production of Spring-time for Hitler from the musical The Producers. This is meant to represent Ukrainians in general and more specifically Right Sector, a far-right political party which garnered less than 1% of the national vote in the previous presidential elections and played a minor but visible role in the Euromaidan revolution. In Russia, Right Sector is regularly portrayed as an enormous menace that brought European "fascism" to Ukraine; this portrayal, of course, is entirely fictional.

011 Watch This: Shocking Russian national broadcast invokes Nazism, terrorism, and the restoration of the Soviet Union

As the thunder of the music dies down, the 'Nazis' form a rigid line in salute of a now risen banner bearing the Right Sector emblem, beneath a pyramid emblazoned with the US dollar mark (\$) and what can presumably be the Eye of Providence, seen on the US one-dollar bill and Great Seal.

Giant, skeletal, mechanized hands then descend center stage as the 'marionettes' beneath begin to fight amongst themselves. The hands have a ring bearing a striped

eagle surrounded by stars, meant obviously to represent the United States' engineering of the revolution. A globe featuring a map of Ukraine is defaced with explosions and blood as it lifts to the sky.

As they fight, shield carrying riot police wearing blue-camouflage, meant to represent the notorious 'Berkut' special forces, former president Yanukovich's personal storm-troopers, are rushed in who are promptly attacked on sight. In Kyiv, the Berkut made headlines for mercilessly attacking innocent civilians and journalists with impunity, and later for firing on unarmed crowds, killing protesters – in Russia, they are often heroized as martyrs.

The Berkut troops are then set on fire and a rock band begins to play as lynchings begin to happen.

Following the musical number, the sound of bomb dropping fills the air as Armored Personnel Carriers with red-and-black flags are rolled in.

But fear not, as AK-47 wielding terrorists (“freedom fighters”?) storm in to the sound of a triumphant musical score as they plant flags of the Donetsk and Luhansk Republics in victory. These scenes here are eerily similar to Russian fantasy novels which have been released recently depicting the Russian destruction of Ukraine.

This, magnificently, culminates with an orchestral and glorifying rendition of the Soviet national anthem. Many may confuse it for that of the Russian Federation, which uses an identical musical score, but the lyrics are the Soviet rendition: “Long live the creation of the will of the people, the united, mighty Soviet Union!” The camera then pans to a slightly altered Soviet coat of arms as a salvo of fireworks explode overhead – however – gone are the iconic hammer and sickle of the Communist regime, and in its place is the imperial eagle of the Russian Empire (now used by Russia). This iconic fusing of the USSR and modern Russian Federation only lead credence to the longstanding belief that that Russian president Vladimir Putin is intent on rewinding the clock and restoring the Soviet Union.

Imagine if a mass performance in Germany performed the national anthem of the Third Reich. Imagine if this took place in any other country depicting another like this. Period. Scary, isn't it?

Of course, following this display of Cirque du Jingoism, President Putin's name was announced to thunderous applause by Alexander “the Surgeon” Zaldostanov, leader of Russia's equivalent of the Hell's Angels - a passing of the torch both fitting and bizarre.