



Who Perpetrated the Maidan Massacre? Who Overthrew the Ukrainian Government in 2014? A Critique of *Battleground Ukraine*

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This article provides a critical analysis of passages in Adrian Karatnycky's *Battleground Ukraine* (2024b) and articles (2010; 2020; 2024a; 2024c) concerning the Maidan massacre and the overthrow of President Victor Yanukovich and his government in 2014. Research of these events is crucial for understanding the origins of the conflicts that followed, specifically the Russian annexation of pro-separatist Crimea in the South of Ukraine, the civil war and Russian military interventions in Donbas in the East of Ukraine, and the war in Ukraine since the Russian invasion (see Bandeira 2019; Black and Johns 2015; Cohen 2018; Hahn 2018; Katchanovski 2015a; 2016a; 2016b; 2022; 2024a; 2025a; Kudelia 2016; 2018; Sakwa 2015).

Understanding who was responsible for the Maidan massacre and the related overthrow of Yanukovich that followed this massacre is important from scholarly and conflict resolution perspectives because these events were critical junctures in the conflict escalation that culminated in the Russia-Ukraine war and the proxy NATO-Russia war in Ukraine. Because of the importance of the Maidan, which I have researched extensively in scholarly work, and because Karatnycky's *Battleground Ukraine* (2024b) is published by Yale University Press, I have selected

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his writings as an object for critical review. I examine not only his book chapter concerning the Maidan but also his four related articles because his narrative concerning the Maidan massacre and the overthrow of Yanukovich is quite idiosyncratic and not consistent, in particular, concerning the far-right involvement in this mass killing of the police and the protesters.

Narratives about the Maidan

In the center of downtown Kyiv, a large square named *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* (Independence Square), is also simply called “the Maidan” since *Maidan* means a square (see Figure 1). The Maidan was the scene of mass protests from November 2013 to February 2014 against the government of President Victor Yanukovich. These protests started at the end of November 2013 as a protest against Yanukovich’s decision to suspend the signing of a free trade and association agreement with the European Union. The mass protests are referred to as “the Maidan” or “Euromaidan.” They were led by pro-Western oligarchic parties and politicians, such as the Fatherland party led by Oleksander Turchynov, and far-right parties and organizations, such as Svoboda and the Right Sector. These parties and the protest movement were also referred to collectively as “the Maidan.”



Figure 1. The Independence Square (Maidan) with remnants of Maidan tent camp and burned Trade Union building covered with the OUN-UPA “Glory to Ukraine. Glory to Heroes” greeting (photo by the author)

On 20 February 2014, there was a mass killing of 49 Maidan protesters and 13 police in the Maidan and adjacent part of Instytutska Street.

There are three hypotheses as to who pulled the triggers. One hypothesis, which is supported by overwhelming evidence documented in the present article, is that the shooters of both the police and Maidan protesters were snipers from the Maidan opposition, including those linked with far-right militant groups, anti-Russian parties, and organizations that sought to oust Yanukovich—in particular, Svoboda and the Right Sector. Other than my own extensive academic product about the Maidan massacre (Katchanovski 2016a; 2020; 2023a; 2023b; and 2024a are publications, and 2014a; 2015b; and 2025b are presentations in scholarly forums), there have been only two other publications in scholarly outlets about the massacre. One is by Gordon Hahn (2018), and he too concludes that the far-right and oligarchic elements of the Maidan opposition, in particular the Right Sector and Svoboda, were involved in a false-flag attack on protesters and the police. Another study, by Serhiy Kudelia (2018), corroborated the finding that the far right was involved in the massacre of the police and argued that the violence was initiated by the Maidan protesters, who killed and wounded many policemen; Kudelia further maintained, based on secondary sources, that the Berkut police then in response massacred the protesters. There were no other academic studies devoted specifically to the analysis of the Maidan massacre. Unless there are scholarly publications on the massacre of which I am not aware, I can say that all scholarly publications conclude that the operation was organized and covertly conducted with the involvement of elements of the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition and concealed groups of snipers. The objective of this operation was to win the asymmetric conflict during the “Maidan” and thereby seize power in Ukraine by falsely blaming the massacre on government forces and the Yanukovich government Karatnycky (2024a) admits that there is evidence the far-right snipers shot at both the police and protesters but he nevertheless blames Russian agents (seeking to destabilize Ukraine government) for this.

A second hypothesis is that the shooters of the Maidan activists were Ukrainian government forces—such as any of the various Berkut police units or snipers from other government police, security, or Internal Troops units. This is the narrative promoted by the governments and much of the media in Ukraine and the West. They attributed the Maidan massacre of the protesters to the Yanukovich government and his security and police forces, generally disregarded killings of the police on the same day and in the same place. The official investigation by the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine (GPU) charged two dozen members of the special Berkut police company with the massacre of the Maidan protesters on the orders of Yanukovich and the heads of the Security Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Shortly before the 10th

anniversary of the massacre, Yanukovich, some of his senior officials and commanders of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Berkut anti-riot police were charged in absentia for the massacre of the Maidan protesters. The Prosecutor General of Ukraine investigators, lawyers for the Maidan victims, and (with some exceptions) the Ukrainian and Western media denied that there were Maidan opposition snipers in Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi (October) Palace, and other buildings and areas controlled by the Maidan or that they massacred Maidan activists.

This narrative relies less on evidence than on the seemingly logical assumption that, following the violent dispersal of the Maidan activists by the Berkut police on 30 November 2013, there were two internally uniform opposing groups: On one side, protesters, on the other side the government forces. It was thus assumed that government forces massacred the Maidan protesters. Seeing as government forces in numerous cases, for example, the Tiananmen massacre, have killed the anti-government protesters, the Maidan massacre was presumed to follow the same pattern.

The narrative promoted by the governments and (with some exceptions) the mainstream media in Ukraine and the West attributed the removal of President Yanukovich to the Euromaidan mass protests. They stated that Yanukovich fled Ukraine because of these protests and because of his responsibility for the violence against the protesters, including the Maidan massacre. They called his removal, by a vote of the parliament, democratic and legal. They referred to the mass Euromaidan protests and the political transition as the “Revolution of Dignity.” However, this term was in fact coined by a deputy of the far-right Svoboda party which was originally a Neo-Nazi Social National Party (Tiagnybok 2015). A similar narrative concerning the Maidan massacre is propagated by Wikipedia, which is used by a large number of people as an information source concerning the Maidan massacre.²

2. The portrayal of the Maidan massacre in Wikipedia is largely based on the narrative propagated by Western and Ukrainian media and the Ukrainian government investigation, which holds that the Berkut police massacred the Maidan protesters on orders from the Yanukovich government. Wikipedia generally excluded academic studies of the Maidan massacre and labelled them “conspiracy theories.” It is noteworthy that Wikipedia omitted findings of academic studies and failed to mention the Maidan massacre trial verdict that Ihor Kostenko, a Maidan activist and a Wikipedia editor, was killed by sniper fire coming from the area controlled by the Maidan opposition. The same Wikipedia editors who misrepresented the Maidan massacre and whitewashed the evidence of far-right involvement also whitewashed in various Wikipedia articles the actions of the contemporary and historical far-right in Ukraine, including actions of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, such as their collaboration with Nazi Germany, their ideology and leaders, the fascist origins of their “Glory to Ukraine. Glory to the Heroes” greeting, and their involvement in the mass murder of Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians (see Katchanovski 2024a, 33). The pseudonymous Wikipedia editors in question included Nangaf, Wise2 (Prohoshka, Slav70), Bobfrombrockley, Lute88, My Very Best Wishes, and Volunteer

Another narrative, a version of which is advanced by Karatnycky, is that the shooters were undercover Russians or Russian agents. In February 2015, then President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, as well as Head of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksandr Turchynov, and the head of the SBU Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, alleged that Vladislav Surkov, an aide of Russian President Vladimir Putin, personally coordinated foreign “snipers” on the Maidan. They presented no supporting evidence, however. Poroshenko was an oligarch and one of founders of the Party of Regions and a former minister in the Yanukovych government, but he became one of the Maidan leaders.

Similarly, Andrii Parubiy, who, after the overthrow of Yanukovych became the head of the National Security and Defense Council and then the speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, claimed that Russian and Belarusian snipers massacred the protesters. During the Maidan, Parubiy was a member of the Ukrainian parliament from the Fatherland Party. He also commanded the Maidan Self-Defense, a paramilitary wing of the Maidan protest movement. He was one of the founders and leaders of neo-Nazi National Social Party and its paramilitary wing, the Patriot of Ukraine, in the 1990s before they were transformed into Svoboda party (see Katchanovski 2024a).

Before any investigation was conducted, Western governments and organizations, such as the European Union (EU), either explicitly or implicitly, by threatening sanctions, blamed the Yanukovych government and the government forces for the massacre of the Maidan protesters. Joseph Biden, then US Vice President, spoke to Yanukovych on 20 February 2014, right after the massacre, and demanded a withdrawal of the security forces, specifically snipers and paramilitary units, which he said were most responsible for the violence, and he told Yanukovych to step down from the presidency and to leave Ukraine (Biden 2017). Later, in the spring of 2014, Biden said the overthrow represented “a second opportunity to make good on the original promise made by the [2004–2005] Orange Revolution” (Biden 2014). Biden, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and the US ambassador to Ukraine stated that snipers on the roofs massacred the protesters and blamed the Yanukovych government forces for the massacre. But their statements that the Maidan activists were shot by snipers located in surrounding buildings contradicted the subsequent GPU finding that protesters were massacred by the Berkut police on the ground and not by any snipers in surrounding buildings (see Katchanovski 2024a).

Marek. The last five were identified in various publications and online sources, respectively, as far-right Svoboda-linked activist Svyatoslav Gut, Ben Gidley, Tsetsilia Cecilia Tsykina, Andrei Lomize, and Radek Szulga (Katchanovski 2024a). The last two were also identified as involved in the Wikipedia’s distortion of the Holocaust in Poland (see Grabowski and Klein 2023).

Conversely, ex-president Yanukovich and former top officials of his government, who fled to Russia following the massacre, as well as the Russian government and media, stated that the Maidan massacre was a part of a coup d'état or a "fascist"/ "neo-Nazi" coup by some of the Maidan leaders, radical elements of the Maidan opposition, and the US government. They alleged that Maidan opposition leaders such as Turchynov and Parubiy, who became political leaders of Ukraine after the overthrow of Yanukovich, orchestrated the massacre. The Russian government made similar claims. These were based primarily on statements by Yanukovich, his government ministers, and self-admitted Georgian snipers. They did not produce specific evidence in support of these claims.

Related to the question of who pulled the triggers are the questions: Who was behind the events that resulted in the massacre? And what were the motivations of the people who promulgated the events that led up to the massacre? These questions must be considered in answering the question of who killed 49 Maidan activists and 13 police on the Maidan and surrounding area on 20 February 2014.

Karatnycky's book *Battleground Ukraine: From Independence to the War with Russia*, was published by Yale University Press in June 2024. It received high-profile endorsements and praise from major American media and Western commentators, such as Bernard-Henri Lévy and David Frum. The *Wall Street Journal* listed the book among "12 Books to Read: The Best Reviews of June," and its review called it "fascinating and highly informative." A review in *Forbes*, as quoted in the publisher's book page ([link](#)), said that the book provided a "comprehensive account of Ukraine's recent history." Karatnycky is a nonresident senior fellow in the Atlantic Council, the former president and executive director of the Freedom House, and a commentator concerning Ukraine in major media, such as the *Financial Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and various other mainstream outlets. Both the Atlantic Council and the Freedom House are funded in part by the US government.

Karatnycky's book covers Ukraine from its independence in 1991 to the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022. But it is the most noteworthy concerning the Maidan massacre and the overthrow of the Ukrainian government in 2014. The present critique—which incorporates a significant amount of material included in my book *The Maidan Massacre in Ukraine: The Mass Killing that Changed the World* (Palgrave, 2024, open-access [link](#))—focuses on claims that Karatnycky makes in his book and in two articles that also appeared in 2024. Altogether, the five Karatnycky works used here are:

- 2010: "Orange Peels: Ukraine After Revolution," Atlantic Council ([link](#))
- 2020: "Zelenskyy Puts Ukraine's Maidan Revolution on Trial," Atlantic

- Council blog post ([link](#))
- 2024a (9 May): “Don’t Buy the Fringe anti-Ukraine Myth About the Run-up to Russia’s Invasion,” *New York Post* ([link](#))
- 2024b (June): *Battleground Ukraine: From Independence to the War with Russia*, Yale University Press ([link](#))
- 2024c (4 August): “The Stubborn Legend of a Western ‘Coup’ in Ukraine,” *Foreign Policy* ([link](#))

Karatnycky makes various claims about who perpetrated the massacre. In the 2024 writings, Karatnycky says things that suggest that either the Berkut anti-riot police, acting either alone or in coordination with the Ukrainian far-right (even though those two sets were at odds), massacred Maidan protesters on behalf of the Russian security services in order to overthrow Yanukovich. He also suggests that the Ukrainian far-right snipers massacred the Berkut police to provoke their massacre of the protesters. Besides going against the evidence, such claims face the problem of why far-right groups that were virulently anti-Russian would do Russia’s bidding, and of why Yanukovich or people in his government would order a massacre. Karatnycky’s book and articles omit or misrepresent evidence that the massacre was in fact carried out by the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition in order to precipitate the overthrow of Yanukovich.

Moreover, Karatnycky’s book and articles do not engage the abundant evidence for the rival interpretation of events that sees U.S. government agencies and officials as deeply involved. Indeed, as argued below, in my judgment, it is reasonable to conclude that U.S. government agencies and officials backed the violent undemocratic overthrow of the Ukrainian government, by means of the Maidan massacre, related assassination attempts against Yanukovich, and an unconstitutional vote to remove him.

My own studies on the Maidan massacre in Ukraine in 2014 have been repeatedly criticized. At the end of this article, I include an Appendix that cites and responds to my critics.

Just before, the day of, and just after the massacre

To provide context for the Maidan massacre of 20 February 2014 and my analysis of its representation in the Karatnycky’s book and articles, we need to understand events just prior to that day, during that day, and just after it.

From 21 November 2013 through 19 February 2014

The Euromaidan protests started after a decision by the Yanukovich government on 21 November 2013 to postpone the signing of the association and free trade agreement with the European Union. Russia provided the Yanukovich government with a \$15 billion loan and reduction in gas prices in order to entice him to drop this EU agreement and join the Russia-led Customs Union. The pro-Western opposition parties and leaders, and much of the Ukrainian media, backed the protests.

These protests were largely peaceful at first, relatively small, and they were dwindling in size. The turning point came with a highly publicized violent dispersal of a few hundred remaining protesters by the anti-riot Berkut special police on the Maidan on 30 November 2013. Videos, photos, and later admissions by Right Sector leaders and other Maidan protesters showed that during the initial dispersal by the police the Right Sector activists threw burning wood chunks and various other things at the Berkut special police force, which then beat many other protesters in the Maidan square and surrounding streets.³ At the Maidan massacre trial, the Prosecutor General Office (GPU) indicated that 18 policemen were injured on that day ([link](#)).

The Right Sector was an alliance of radical nationalist organizations Tryzub (named after Bandera), UNA-UNSO and neo-Nazi organizations Patriot of Ukraine, Social National Assembly, and White Hammer, and neo-Nazi football ultras. After the Maidan, the Social National Assembly, its paramilitary wing Patriot of Ukraine, and neo-Nazi football ultras left the Right Sector and organized the neo-Nazi Azov movement, which included the Azov battalion and subsequent armed formations (see Katchanovski 2020; Katchanovski and Abrahms 2024).

The violent dispersal and beating of the protesters by the Berkut police was characterized by Ukrainian TV, other media, and the Maidan opposition as being unprovoked violence against student protesters, while the Right Sector's involvement in clashing with the police was omitted. As the subsequent sections show, Karatnycky made the same characterizations and omissions in his book. The dispersal and violence by the police, blared by Ukrainian media, sparked large-scale protests against Yanukovich on 1 December 2013. These protests turned into violent clashes between the police and the protesters after far-right activists from the neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine (predecessor of Azov) tried to storm the presidential administration on that day (Katchanovski 2020). A staple of regime-change tactics is to provoke violence, get the media to portray it as unprovoked,

3. See *TSN*, 30 November 2013 ([link](#)); *Bigmir*, 12 December 2013 ([link](#)); "Zverskoe Izbienie Studentov na Maidane," YouTube, 23 March 2014 ([link](#)).

and then thereafter escalate violence, crisis, and confusion, and then effect the regime change (see Katchanovski 2024a).

The Berkut police tried on 10 December 2013 to disperse the Maidan protesters in their tent city on the Maidan but stopped as a result of the resistance by the protesters and, reportedly, an order from the Yanukovich government following pressure from the US and the EU during a visit by Victoria Nuland, a senior US State Department official, to Ukraine.

The killings of the first three protesters at the end of January 2014 were attributed by the Maidan opposition, the Ukrainian media, and the West to the government forces, despite evidence that these, too, were false-flag killings. A government forensic expert originally determined that these three protesters were killed from distances of a few meters in the Maidan-controlled areas, while the police lines were several dozen meters away from the Maidan positions. These killings greatly escalated the conflict. These killings, along with the reported abduction of Dmytro Bulatov, the leader of Automaidan (“Maidan on wheels”—Maidan activists using their cars to protest), and other cases of violence rekindled the dwindling protests and galvanized and mobilized Maidan protesters after their numbers had dropped.

On 18 February 2014, protesters tried to break the police lines and attack the parliament. This unsuccessful attack happened during a rally that was organized by the Maidan opposition leaders, specifically Oleksander Turchynov, a leader of the Fatherland party, Andrii Parubiy, the commander of the Maidan Self-Defense and a leading member of Fatherland, and Dmytro Yarosh, the leader of the Right Sector. An attack and burning by a large group of the far-right protesters of the nearby headquarters of the Party of Regions, which was the ruling party of Yanukovich, resulted in the death of a computer administrator. Footage from the scene showed that Tetiana Chornovol, a former activist of the far-right UNA-UNSO, was one of the leaders of the attackers. Soon after Volodymyr Zelenskyy was elected the president of Ukraine in 2018, the State Bureau of Investigations of Ukraine in 2020 charged Chornovol with the deadly arson of the Party of Regions office and the murder of the computer administrator (Katchanovski 2024a, 196). Karatnycky (2020) stated in an Atlantic Council blog post that “President Zelenskyy cannot therefore wash his hands of the case and must instead act to prevent an act of politically motivated persecution.” Her case did not go to trial.

Mass killings of the protesters and the police started on February 18–19. The Berkut police and Internal Troops along with “titushki” (anti-Maidan protesters) attempted to disperse the Maidan protesters and seize the tent city on the Maidan. During violent clashes on 18–19 February, 25 Maidan protesters were shot dead and 140 were wounded. Several were beaten to death. Nine policemen and Internal Troops servicemen were shot dead and 127 were wounded on 18–19 February

2014 on the Maidan.

Nobody has been convicted for the killings and attempted murders of Maidan protesters and the police. The government investigation concluded that most of them were killed with hunting ammunition. Various evidence suggests that they were shot by Maidan snipers (see Katchanovski 2020; 2024a, 195–203).

Events the day of 20 February 2014

The day of 20 February 2014 was the turning point, and it is recognized as such by Karatnycky. Around midnight, that is, as 19 February turned into 20 February, at a time when the Berkut and Internal Troops units were in standoff with the protesters on the Maidan, Yanukovich and leaders of the Maidan opposition parties signed a truce agreement which was supposed to be a part of an agreement to be signed publicly during the day of 20 February by both parties of the conflict, as well as foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland, to resolve the conflict peacefully.

However, as evidenced by BBC and Ukrainian TV videos, never-broadcast CNN footage, eyewitness testimonies, and admissions by the commander and members of the far-right-linked Maidan company of snipers, the truce was broken in the early morning when the police on the Maidan were shot by snipers from the armed far-right-linked Maidan unit. The Berkut and Internal Troops units, which were armed only with non-lethal weapons and ammunition, such as rifles with rubber bullets, started to flee the Maidan as a result of the shooting. The government investigation determined that three policemen were killed and at least 39 wounded by firearms on the Maidan from 5:30am until the police retreat. The Maidan protesters chased the retreating police forces. Their advance was guided by commands announced from the Maidan stage over loudspeakers (see Katchanovski 2025a).⁴

Three Maidan protesters were killed with buckshot used in hunting, and 10 were wounded from gunshots, before about two dozen members of the special Berkut company were deployed to the Maidan and started shooting with Kalashnikov assault rifles. The GPU investigation and the Western and Ukrainian media presented this evidence as proof that the Berkut was deployed to massacre the protesters and shot unarmed protesters. However, synchronized videos and other evidence examined in my studies shows that the Berkut were deployed to cover the retreat of Internal Troops from Zhovtnevyi Palace and that they were shooting into the ground, walls, and trees to force protesters to clear the area in front of this building and deter protesters, including some with firearms, from

4. See also my exhibit "Video A: The 'Snipers' Massacre' on the Maidan in Ukraine" ([link](#)).

pursuing them (see Katchanovski 2023a; 2023b; 2024a, 49–81).

One of the Berkut company was shot dead and another wounded by a Maidan protester with a hunting rifle. The Berkut's brief advance covered the retreat of Internal Troops and then they themselves retreated to barricades on Instytutska Street near the Yanukovych administration. They were also filmed shooting from behind these barricades with Kalashnikovs.

Forty-two Maidan protesters who advanced towards the Berkut during that time were shot dead. The media and the government investigation presented videos of shooting by this Berkut company as being definitive evidence that they massacred the Maidan protesters. However, the evidence summarized below shows that these protesters were massacred by Maidan snipers located in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, and that the Berkut policemen—also under fire from the snipers in Hotel Ukraina—were shooting back at those snipers and also, many times, into the ground, walls, trees, and poles as a deterrent or warning against Maidan belligerents and pursuers in order to prevent their advance to the government quarter.

Many videos showed:⁵

- shooting of Maidan activists by snipers located in Hotel Ukraina,
- the arrival to this hotel of, and shooting from there by, a far-right-linked group of Maidan snipers,
- control of this hotel by the far-right Svoboda party before, during, and after the massacre, and
- a group of Maidan protesters being led by two Maidan activists to the spot where almost all protesters from this group were almost immediately killed and wounded (see Figure 2; see also Katchanovski 2024a).

My studies, and the testimony of a wounded protester from this group, show that two Maidan activists led the rest to slaughter. Video shows that one of those two escaped unharmed and then entered Hotel Ukraina, which housed the far-right linked group of Maidan snipers.

Synchronized videos show that as soon as government snipers from the Omega unit of Internal troops were deployed to the Berkut barricade area of Instytutska Street, the killings of Maidan protesters immediately dropped, and the location of where the protesters were killed, which had been around Instytutska Street, now shifted back into the Maidan area. The exception was the killing of one protester who was shot in the back from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina with

5. See my “Video A” ([link](#)).

a hunting expanding bullet while he was filmed facing the Berkut barricade and Omega snipers. Snipers from the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) Alfa unit were deployed to the Cabinet of Ministers building nearby even later than the Omega snipers. After the arrival of Omega snipers, three Maidan activists were killed in the Independence Square. Evidence shows that these protesters were also shot by snipers located in Hotel Ukraina and in the Main Post Office, which was then the Right Sector headquarters. However, both during and after the massacre, Omega and Alfa snipers were blamed for the killing of all Maidan activists. The last victim of the massacre on February 20 was a Maidan activist from Georgia. His body was reportedly found in the Maidan-controlled area far away from the positions of government forces, and the circumstances of his killing were covered up.



Figure 2. Memorials at the main Maidan massacre spot in front of the Hotel Ukraina (photo by the author)

In the late afternoon on 20 February 2014, an emergency session of the parliament was convened by the Maidan opposition. They, along with some defectors from the Yanukovich Party of Regions-led coalition, blamed Yanukovich and his forces for the massacre and voted to withdraw the government forces from downtown Kyiv.

Events soon after 20 February 2014

An agreement signed on 21 February 2014 by Yanukovich, the Maidan opposition leaders, and representatives of France, Germany, and Poland stipulated withdrawal of the government forces from downtown Kyiv, disarmament of the Maidan activists, early presidential elections, and investigation of the Maidan massacre with the involvement of the Council of Europe. However, the Maidan

opposition violated the agreement and seized the presidential administration and other government buildings following the withdrawal of government forces.

Around that time Yanukovich and his government ministers fled from Kyiv to Eastern Ukraine. On 22 February 2014, the parliament voted to remove Yanukovich and his government ministers from power. They were replaced with Maidan leaders, such as Turchynov, who became the head of the parliament and acting president. The new Maidan government was dominated by Turchynov's Fatherland party and included four ministers representing the far-right Svoboda party.

Karatnycky's statements about what happened

While Karatnycky's book (2024b, 169) follows the dominant narrative propagated by Western and Ukrainian governments and media—attributing the Maidan massacre mostly to “state violence”—the book also states that there were snipers shooting at both the police and Maidan activists in order to provoke violence:

Between February 18 and 21, state violence reached its apogee in a concerted effort to break the back of the protest movement. Over eighty protestors, unarmed and protected only with wooden shields, were butchered. A dozen members of the militia also died, some the victims of gunshots that appear to have come from a sniper or snipers shooting at both sides in an apparent bid to provoke mass violence. (Karatnycky 2024b, 169)

Karatnycky's book in essence suggests that, because there were snipers shooting at both sides, the Maidan massacre of the police and the Maidan activists was in part a false-flag killing. In his 9 May 2024 *New York Post* article he writes:

Fringe far-right groups were present at the Maidan, but their ranks numbered in the hundreds... Eighty protestors and 12 militia men were killed during a government assault on the Maidan Square on Feb. 20, 2014... Several far-right protestors were lightly armed, and there's some evidence of snipers shooting at both sides... (Karatnycky 2024a)

Karatnycky does not say directly in his book but suggests in the article that the snipers “shooting at both sides” were from a “far-right group.” It is crucial. Unfortunately, it is made without citing any sources. The Ukrainian government investigation and the Ukrainian and Western media and various partisan academics and commentators either ignored or denied as a conspiracy theory and Russian disinformation the existence of such far-right snipers shooting both Maidan activists and the police in a false-flag attack. This includes Karatnycky (2020) himself

prior to these publications in 2024. For example, Karatnycky (2020) referred to “the Maidan Revolution,” which he called “a legitimate civic movement in defense of Ukraine’s fledgling democracy,” and “actions taken by largely nonviolent protesters in response to deadly attacks by increasingly illegitimate state authorities.”

Three months after the *New York Post* article, Karatnycky published his 4 August 2024 *Foreign Policy* article. Here, Karatnycky rehearses the standard narrative propagated by the Ukrainian government investigation and the Ukrainian and Western media that all 48 shot-dead Maidan protesters on 20 February 2014 were killed by the police on the orders of the Yanukovich government:

In all, more than 100 civilians and 13 police and security service operatives would die during the Maidan. Yet while the security services brutally attacked protesters all throughout the Maidan, the main deadly violence only occurred between Feb. 18 and Feb. 20, 2014—precisely the time when negotiations between the government and opposition over a political compromise were gaining traction. Brokered by the foreign ministers of Poland, France, and Germany—Radoslaw Sikorski, Laurent Fabius, and Frank-Walter Steinmeier, respectively—with Putin envoy Vladimir Lukin present as well, negotiations had begun to gain momentum on Feb. 17. Over the next three days, 78 protesters and 11 police were killed... *Then-Ukrainian Interior Minister Vitaliy Zakharchenko and Security Service chief Oleksandr Yakymenko unleashed a brutal attack on the protesters in an apparent attempt to unravel the deal that that was in the process of being struck.* Indeed, Feb. 20 proved to be the bloodiest day, with police snipers shooting 48 protesters. (Karatnycky 2024c, my emphasis)

In his book and articles, Karatnycky also suggests that the Maidan protesters were massacred on behalf of the Russian government in order to overthrow Yanukovich and use this to seize Crimea and Donbas. He states that either the Berkut anti-riot police itself or along with the Ukrainian far-right massacred Maidan protesters on behalf of the Russian security services and that the far-right also massacred the Berkut police to provoke the massacre of the protesters. Karatnycky (2024b, 170–171) claims in his book that President Yanukovich fled Kyiv and then Ukraine after the Maidan massacre not as a result of the massacre but as a result of withdrawal of the police and the security forces and that this withdrawal was done “possibly, by a signal from Russia to its agents inside Ukraine’s leadership.” But in the same book, he refers to killings of Maidan protesters and writes that “public outrage at scenes like these fueled protests that led to the flight and removal of President Yanukovich.”

Without citing any evidence, Karatnycky (2024c) writes that “as the EU envoys met with Yanukovich and opposition leaders to finalize the deal—and as Yanukovich did not agree to a request by [Federal Security Bureau chief] Beseda

to meet—the hardliners in the government escalated, presumably under Moscow’s instructions.” Karatnycky states in the *New York Post* (2024a) that Ukrainian far-right snipers who shot both protesters and the police were also Russian agents: “it is highly likely that the mass killings were a provocation orchestrated by Russia’s security services and their Ukrainian minions, who had significantly infiltrated far-right Ukrainian groups over the years.”

In his book and *Foreign Policy* article, Karatnycky (2024b; 2024c) suggests that Russia overthrew Yanukovich in order to splinter Ukraine and seize the South and the East, in particular, annexing Crimea in 2014: “most likely, the Kremlin had decided to use and later ditch Yanukovich in an effort to precipitate the fracturing of the country into east and west and to facilitate the takeover and annexation of Ukrainian territory” (Karatnycky 2024b, 172).

In his *Foreign Policy* article he says:

The preponderance of evidence suggests that it was Moscow itself that triggered Yanukovich’s departure in order to launch a pre-arranged Plan B—the invasion of Crimea and an engineered “uprising” in eastern Ukraine...[Yanukovich’s government was] “a pliant government in Kyiv that placed it under Russia’s *de facto* control. On the morning of Feb. 20...[a] delegation of Russian Federal Security Service officials, including Sergei Beseda, head of the Fifth Service in charge of international operations, arrived in Kyiv—the third such visit since the Maidan began. Officially there to “protect Russian diplomatic facilities,” Beseda’s real mission was to advise hardliners inside Yanukovich’s leadership team, block a compromise, and, failing that, set in motion a Plan B—Russia’s ambitious plot to splinter Ukraine. (Karatnycky 2024c)

Karatnycky does not cite any direct evidence or any sources in support of these claims, and he does not explain the striking disparity in his statements concerning the far-right’s involvement in the massacre. He bases his claim that Russia overthrew Yanukovich on a visit of a Russian FSB delegation to Kyiv during the Euromaidan, that the Interior Minister fled to Russia and ended up working at Rostec, and that a Russian medal commemorating “the reunification” of Crimea had February 20, 2014, engraved as the start date.

Karatnycky (2024c) presents the following evidence of the Russian involvement:

As the violence and mayhem escalated, Russian Federal Security Bureau officials headed by Gen. Sergei Beseda were in Kyiv officially to “secure [Russian] diplomatic facilities” but in reality to offer support to Ukraine’s state security and police forces... Top Putin aide Vladyslav Surkov was also in Kyiv to press then-President Viktor Yanukovich to crush the protesters.

In the same article, Karatnycky claims the following concerning the Minister of Internal Affairs:

Zakharchenko's role in the mayhem is well established, as are his close relations with Russia's security services, who advised him tactics and had equipped his ministry with grenades, tear gas, and other crowd control munitions purchased for \$100,000. His role as a trusted Russian asset was confirmed after his escape to Moscow, when he became senior advisor to Rostec, Russia's state company in charge of sensitive advanced technologies, including for the military. He also ran a Russian fund that rewarded traitors from Ukraine's security forces. (Karatnycky 2024c)

Karatnycky (2024b, 167–168) also states as a matter of fact that on 22 January 2014, the first two Maidan protesters were killed by the government forces. He writes that "Armenian-Ukrainian activist Serhiy Nigoyan died from multiple gunshots at the hands of the Berkut special police" and that "Belarusian Ukrainian radical nationalist Mykhailo Zkyzhnevsky [in fact his name was Zhyzhnevskiy] was also killed that day, the second victim of a sniper."

Karatnycky repeats the conventional narrative of the Western and Ukrainian media that the Berkut special police attacked peaceful Maidan protesters, who were protesting the Yanukovich decision to suspend signing of a free trade and association agreement with the European Union. He states in his book that in the middle of the night on 20 November 2013, "dozens of protestors, mainly young civic activists and college students" were "beaten mercilessly" and "many more were arrested" (Karatnycky 2014b, 165).

He calls the Maidan "a Facebook Revolution" and Yanukovich "a thug" (Karatnycky 2024b, 130, 164). Karatnycky describes the Yanukovich removal as a democratic vote by the constitutional majority of the parliament. He writes in his book that after Yanukovich fled from Kyiv on 22 February:

Upon Turchynov's election, a constitutional majority of deputies—328 lawmakers in the 450-seat Parliament—voted to remove Yanukovich from power, basing their action on his abandonment of office. In accordance with Ukraine's Constitution, Turchynov assumed the post of acting president until new elections could be held within ninety days. (Karatnycky 2024b, 172)

Below, I review Karatnycky's representation of the removal of Yanukovich.

Karatnycky (2024c) outright dismisses as "the Russian narrative" and "Russian propaganda" "that Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was illegitimately removed from office in a Western-backed coup in February 2014." He claims that "such public figures as independent U.S. presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., filmmaker Oliver Stone, and Cato Institute defense expert

Ted Galen Carpenter” simply “echoed in the United States” this “key element of Russian propaganda.”

Such dismissals and accusations of my repeating Russian propaganda demonstrate that Karatnycky does not abide scholarly methods and does not even attempt to test a research hypothesis or answer research questions concerning the political transition during the Maidan based on evidence.

There is a long track record of US-led regime change operations, in particular, coups, military interventions, and electoral interference in foreign countries. Dov H. Levin (2019) compiles 81 cases of partisan electoral interventions by the United States and 36 by the Soviet Union/Russia in 1946–2000. A prototypical case, evidenced by various academic studies and declassified documents of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was that the US government along with its British counterpart was involved during the Cold War in 1953 in organizing false-flag violent attacks in Iran. These were part of the US-led overthrow of a democratically elected government and the turning of Iran into a US client state run by an authoritarian government (see Abrahamian 2013).

Karatnycky’s *Battleground Ukraine* (2024b) is poorly sourced and contains no numbered notes. Instead, the “Notes” section at the back of the book relies on snippets of quotations, referenced by chapters but without page numbers, to identify the relevant passages. This structure, confusing and hard to work with, impedes the reader from recognizing that the author provides no documentary support at all for his most important claims—concerning the Maidan massacre, the far-right involvement in this massacre, and the claim that Russia orchestrated the regime change in Ukraine. For the claims specific to the Maidan massacre and the subsequent ouster, Karatnycky cites four books—by Sonia Koshkina (2015), Alexander Motyl (2017), Serhiy Leshchenko (2014), and Andrew Wilson (2015)—but even these sources are never cited in any specific way, for example by page number, to back up the claims about Maidan. The lack of adequate citations and evidence for those claims is suitable for the *New York Post* but disappointing for a book published by Yale University Press.

But more important than the lack of basis for claims that Karatnycky makes is that his book and articles omit or misrepresent a body of crucial evidence that does, in fact, exist (see next section).

Nor does Karatnycky explain his own reversals and changes in viewpoint. Before Maidan, Karatnycky had promoted Yanukovych as a democrat and reformer. Karatnycky organized the Yanukovych speech at the Atlantic Council and stated that “President Yanukovych and his inner circle today are on balance normal political leaders seeking to build a European state” (2010). He never explains how he came to view Yanukovych as a “thug” and undemocratic leader—Chapter 3 of *Battleground Ukraine* is titled: “A Thug in Power: The Yanukovych Years.”

Omitted and misrepresented evidence concerning assassination attempts against Yanukovich and other political violence

Karatnycky fails to mention the presence of the Right Sector activists, and their violence against the police, during the violent dispersal of Maidan activists on 30 November 2013. Neither does he mention evidence concerning the involvement of Serhiy Liovochkin, who then headed the presidential administration of Yanukovich. Moreover, Karatnycky often mentions Liovochkin without disclosing or clarifying his own reported links to him at that time. This is important because such link creates raises an issue of bias and conflict of interest. Karatnycky (2024b) often favorably mentions Liovochkin, who covertly financed the UDAR party, which was a major Maidan party opposed to Yanukovich.

Videos, photos, and later admissions and testimonies by Right Sector and Maidan opposition leaders, and Maidan activists, showed that the 30 November 2013 dispersal was orchestrated by oligarchic politicians from the Yanukovich government and by the oligarchic Maidan opposition with involvement of the far-right Right Sector. Such evidence revealed that the Maidan opposition leaders knew in advance about the police dispersal, that the head of the Yanukovich presidential administration from a rival oligarchic clan was involved in the dispersal and its misrepresentation, and that the Right Sector activists attacked the Berkut police during this dispersal (see Katchanovski 2020; 2024a, 206).

Ihor Mazur, a Ukrainian National Assembly–Ukrainian People’s Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO) leader, admitted that Right Sector members were present in the Maidan during this dispersal on 30 November 2013 and that they then retreated after a confrontation with the police (Mazur 2014). The website of Tryzub named after Bandera admitted the Right Sector involvement in the clashes with the police on 30 November 2013 in the Maidan, but it was later taken down (see Katchanovski 2020).

The lists of injured and detained protesters revealed that the absolute majority of them were much older than the typical age of students in Ukraine (18–22 years old); many were middle age and only several of them were identified as actual students. But the Maidan opposition and the Ukrainian media called them “children” and “students.” Again, some 18 policemen were also injured on that day.

There is various evidence that the Maidan opposition leaders, including the far-right ones, had advance information about this dispersal but did not inform the protesters because they wished to use this violent dispersal to re-galvanize the mass protests, which were coming to an end on that night. Anatolii Hrytsenko, one of

the Maidan politicians, stated that the Maidan leaders knew in advance about this dispersal, because the opposition was able to intercept radio communications of the Berkut concerning their deployment for this operation (*Ukrainska Pravda* 2014). There are other Maidan protesters who said from the start that Maidan leaders knew in advance about the Berkut dispersal of the Maidan protests on November 30. A leader of neo-Nazi group White Hammer made such public warning from the Maidan stage (Katchanovski 2020).

The unusual presence of Inter TV crews along with a number of other TV crews at the time of the dispersal around 4:00 am local time, and the Inter broadcast of this dispersal, also indicate advance knowledge of the police dispersal. A Maidan protester on the Facebook reported that she witnessed that an Inter TV operator wanted to leave Maidan square before this dispersal happened at 4:00 am, but an Inter TV journalist insisted on staying. A Poroshenko party member of the parliament stated in a live Savik Shuster TV program on the Inter TV a few hours before this dispersal that Berkut “was beating students” on the Maidan (see Katchanovski 2020). This is another indication that the Maidan opposition had prior knowledge of the dispersal and that this dispersal was staged to remove Yanukovich by blaming him for ordering this violent dispersal and publicizing it in the media. Inter TV and other Ukrainian media along with Maidan politicians misrepresented this dispersal of Maidan protesters as an unprovoked and unexpected beating of students and children by the Berkut police on the Yanukovich government order.

The Inter television channel was owned by Dmytro Firtash and Serhiy Liovochkin. Firtash was an oligarch who supported Yanukovich during the 2010 presidential campaign, but then switched to covertly back Viktor Volodymyr Klitschko, who headed Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR) party and became one of the Euromaidan leaders. Liovochkin was the head of Yanukovich’s presidential administration, but he belonged to the Firtash oligarchic clan.

Karatnycky omits mentioning that after they fled to Russia Yanukovich and several members of the government, as well as the Kyiv police chief, stated or suggested that Liovochkin ordered the dispersal of the protesters, but they did not provide any specific direct evidence. Avakov, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in post-Maidan governments, made a similar statement concerning the involvement of Liovochkin (Katchanovski 2020). In a leaked telephone conversation, Ihor Kolomoisky said that Liovochkin was aware of the dispersal order because he was the patron of Oleksander Popov, the head of the Kyiv City administration, who was involved in implementing the dispersal order.⁶ The official investigation accused and charged Popov and other members of the Yanuko-

6. Kolomoisky—Naiemu, *Oligarch*, 14 December 2015 ([link](#)).

ych government of issuing this order and supervising the dispersal. Liovochkin was the most senior of those Yanukovych officials who did not flee Ukraine for good after the violent overthrow of Yanukovych and who was not prosecuted by the Maidan governments, in contrast to many other Yanukovych associates who either fled or were prosecuted. This also suggests that Liovochkin may have been collaborating with the Maidan opposition and thus was protected by the Maidan government.

The prosecution at the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine revealed that its investigation had evidence of Liovochkin's "incorrect actions" in "orienting" the Ukrainian officials who were charged with ordering the dispersal of the Maidan protesters on November 30 ([link](#)).

In a TV interview, an eyewitness stated that prior to the 30 November 2013 events she accidentally overheard a discussion among senior Maidan leaders about the planned police dispersal of the Maidan protesters and the possibility that it would lead to violence. She identified Andrii Iliencko, Andrii Parubiy, and Serhii Pashynsky as the Maidan leaders who were involved in this discussion.⁷ They were not well-known names at the time but would later be linked to other cases of violence during Euromaidan. Iliencko was a member of the parliament from Svoboda Party. As noted, Parubiy was a former leader of the neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine, a paramilitary wing of the Social National Party of Ukraine, before this party was rebranded as Svoboda in 2004 and before the Patriot of Ukraine became a paramilitary wing of the SNA, which was formed by the Kharkiv organization of the SNPU. Parubiy and Pashynsky were members of the Ukrainian parliament from the oligarchic Fatherland Party at the time of the Maidan protests.

Similarly, the analysis of the evidence and the Ukrainian government investigation show that the highly publicized kidnapping and crucifixion of Dmytro Bulatov, the Automaidan leader, was staged in order to falsely blame the Yanukovych government and the government forces, and to galvanize the dwindling anti-government protests. Bulatov, the Maidan opposition leaders, and the Ukrainian and the Western media immediately blamed either the Yanukovych government or the Russian security forces for the kidnapping and crucifixion.⁸ The Automaidan leader stated that "they crucified me, they nailed down my hands ... There isn't a spot on my body that hasn't been beaten." He showed as proof his cut ear, face, hands, and clothes covered in blood, and what he said were nail punctures on his hands (Grytsenko and Walker 2014).

Karatnycky refers to abductions and beatings of Maidan activists, who

7. Pidsluhala opozytsiui, Grom TV, 8 February 2014 ([link](#)).

8. See, for example, "Ukraine Activist Says Kidnappers Tortured Him, Cut Off Part of His Ear," NBC News, January 31, 2014 ([link](#)).

included Bulatov, without naming him specifically, and attributes these abductions and beatings to the government forces and “thugs” working for the then-ruling Party of Regions:⁹

What followed was an epic battle between the authorities and civil society that lasted months, with protestors and activists arrested, abducted, murdered, or severely beaten. Violence by the state and by thugs employed by the Party of Regions was legion, with scores of beatings, a handful of shootings, and thousands of arrests and detentions of demonstrators. (Karatnycky 2024b, 167)

Karatnycky omits that on 27 March 2020 the Ukrainian police closed its investigation of kidnapping, torture, and crucifixion of Dmytro Bulatov because the investigation determined that the crime never happened and might have been “staged.” The documents from his investigative criminal case show that associates of Bulatov in the Automaidan testified, that he staged his own abduction, torture, and crucifixion. One of these associates testified that Bulatov told him shortly before his disappearance that he planned to stage his own abduction. Another associate testified that she heard from Bulatov and other Maidan activists about need for some “fiery information” in order to regain support for the Automaidan, and she noted that his staged abduction accomplished this. Other Automaidan leaders testified that there was no rationale for Bulatov’s kidnapping and torture because he was removed from the Automaidan leadership a couple of days prior, and they regarded his staging his own kidnapping as a real possibility. Two of them also testified that the light wounds and his appearance did not match his statements about being kidnapped and tortured for a week without food (Katchanovski 2024a, 204).

A government forensic expert determined in his expert report for the investigation after the Maidan that Bulatov’s wounds, including cutting off a piece of his ear, could have been inflicted by himself or by someone else, with his agreement, using sterile materials and disinfecting his wounds, because they did not have any signs of infection. The government forensic expert also determined that there was no damage on his hands and that this suggested that Bulatov was not handcuffed, contrary to his claims.¹⁰

This forensic report is consistent with a testimony by Davyd Zhvania, who was a member of the Maidan leadership during Euromaidan and head of the election campaign of the Petro Poroshenko party in 2014 and of the parliamentary

9. There were a couple of cases of abductions of Maidan activists, and the Bulatov case was the most publicized.

10. Skrepy Majdana, Raspiaty malchik, Anatoly Sharij, 11 April 2020 ([link](#)).

committee during and after the Maidan. Zhvania stated that Maidan leaders, whom he named, staged the abduction and crucifixion of Bulatov and orchestrated most other of the high-profile cases of violence, including the Maidan massacre.¹¹ A Maidan Self-Defense company commander, whose unit guarded the hospital in which Bulatov was put by Maidan leaders Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr Klitschko, also said that the abduction and crucifixion was staged. And the police investigation, which was conducted before the overthrow of Yanukovych, determined that Bulatov stayed during his supposed abduction in the property of a close associate of Klitschko (see Katchanovski 2024a, 204).

The overthrow of Yanukovych: Omitted and misrepresented evidence

The mass Euromaidan protests failed to bring down the Yanukovych government. The evidence shows that he was overthrown not by the popular protest but by means of the Maidan massacre and assassination attempts against him, which were perpetrated with the covert involvement of elements of the Maidan oligarchic leadership and far right. This is a key point and bears repeating because it has so frequently been misstated by both government officials and by the popular media: Yanukovych was toppled not by a popular protest movement but by a carefully orchestrated campaign of false-flag violence.

Immediately after the massacre, Volodymyr Parasiuk, the commander of the far-right-linked group of the Maidan snipers, issued an ultimatum from the stage on the Maidan that Yanukovych resign by the next morning, threatening the use of force if he did not. Andrii Parubiy, the head of the Maidan Self-Defense, said that this ultimatum was the result of a decision made by “the institutional bodies of the Maidan” and it was adopted by a military council set up by the Maidan Self-Defense and the far-right Right Sector (Parubiy 2015). Dmytro Yarosh, the Right Sector leader, issued a similar ultimatum to Yanukovych from the Maidan stage.

The Yanukovych treason trial produced various witness testimonies and other evidence that Yanukovych fled from Kyiv, and then from Ukraine, because of assassination attempts by the Maidan forces, in particular by the far right. These assassination attempts were preceded by efforts to capture Yanukovych from his residence near Kyiv with the likely objective of executing him (Katchanovski 2020; 2024a, 120). Yanukovych fled Ukraine not because he feared being held legally accountable for the Maidan massacre, which he has always adamantly denied or-

11. Otkrytoe obrashhenie k prezidentu Ukrainy Vladimiru Zelenskomu, 2020, YouTube ([link](#)).

dering, but because active and sustained attempts were being made on his life.

In the late afternoon on 20 February 2014, the deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament from the far-right Svoboda party convened an emergency parliament session. As noted above, this Svoboda leader was filmed with a handgun accompanying the far-right linked group of snipers in Hotel Ukraina during the massacre. He, along with other Maidan opposition leaders and deputies, falsely blamed Yanukovich and his forces for this massacre. The parliament voted by a slim majority to withdraw the government forces from downtown Kyiv. However, this deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament admitted that he opened the parliament session without a quorum and in violation of parliamentary regulations. A Svoboda deputy admitted that they (improperly) voted on behalf of the absent deputies (Braty 2017).

The deputy parliament head from Svoboda also opened a parliament session on February 22 to remove Yanukovich from the presidency. The parliament vote to oust Yanukovich for “abandoning [the] presidency” was unconstitutional. It did not follow the impeachment procedures specified in the Ukrainian Constitution, and the tally lacked the required constitutional majority of 338 votes. Further, the vote was done under duress, and many of the 328 “yes” votes that were recorded were fabricated. According to the official parliament record, 248 deputies out of 450 were registered at the opening (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2014). Many Yanukovich party deputies switched loyalty, but many others voted under threat of violence by the far-right group of Maidan snipers, the Maidan Self-Defense, and a mob which surrounded the parliament. The commander of the far-right-linked Maidan company of snipers admitted that his group impelled, by force, deputies from the Yanukovich Party of Regions to vote for his removal.¹² The number of present deputies in various videos of this vote was about 262.¹³ Davyd Zhvania, a member of Maidan leadership, who headed a parliamentary committee, stated that Maidan opposition leaders seized duplicate cards of absent deputies and used them to fraudulently inflate this vote as well as other votes that put leaders of the Fatherland and Svoboda parties, which were involved in the false-flag Maidan massacre, in top government positions (see Katchanovski 2024a, 94). These findings add to the substantial body of evidence that Yanukovich fled from Kyiv and then Ukraine because of assassination attempts against him, in particular, attempts involving of the far-right Right Sector and Svoboda.

Witnesses testified at this trial that right after the Maidan massacre the presi-

12. See Oksana Kovalenko, “Sotnyk, yakyj perelomyv khid istoriyi: Treba bulo dotyskaty,” *Ukrainska Pravda*, 24 February 2014 ([link](#)).

13. See, for example, Al Jazeera English, “Ukraine President Yanukovich Impeached,” 22 February 2014 ([link](#)).

dential motorcade was the target of gunfire at a checkpoint, which was manned by activists with Right Sector and Svoboda flags. The bullets hit one of the cars and struck a gun of one of Yanukovich's bodyguards. Helicopter pilots, who transported Yanukovich within Ukraine after the Maidan massacre, testified that the air traffic controllers relayed to them an order from Maidan leaders to land the helicopter with Yanukovich under threat of its being shot down by military planes. The witness testimonies also referred to information received by the Yanukovich security personnel about a plan involving Svoboda activists to assassinate him during a congress in Kharkiv (where he flew to immediately after the Maidan massacre) and about another plan to assassinate him subsequently on the road near Melitopol (see Katchanovski 2020; 2024a, 120).¹⁴

Leonid Kravchuk, the first president of Ukraine, revealed that, around the time of the Maidan massacre, he received information about a plot to assassinate Yanukovich. He stated that this plan was called "Ceașescu," after the family name of the last communist leader of Romania, who was assassinated in 1989 by soldiers soon after snipers massacred the anti-government protesters in a false-flag operation.^{15,16}

Did Russia or the United States overthrow the Ukrainian government?

As noted, Karatnycky used the 20 February 2014 start-date of "reunification" of Crimea on a Russian medal as key evidence in support of claims that Russia overthrew the Yanukovich government in order to annex Crimea (see Figure 3). However, this date is used within Russia and Crimea to designate the start

14. See, for example, "Eks-okhoronets' Yanukovycha: Pershyi napad buv 19 liutoho 2014 roku," *Ukrainska Pravda*, 4 May 2018 ([link](#)).

15. "U Kravchuka byla informacija ob ubiistve Yanukovicha – advokat," *Vesti*, 3 August 2018 ([link](#)).

16. It is worth noting here that in 2018 and 2019, Romanian prosecutors charged the then-former Romanian president Ion Iliescu, prime-minister Petre Roman, and a number of other leaders of the "Romanian revolution" with crimes against humanity for using deliberate lies and diversions after they had seized power in 1989 to provoke false-flag mass killings (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2018; Katchanovski 2020; 2024a). The political and military leaders who overthrow Ceaușescu were charged with "creating numerous situations of fratricidal fire, chaotic shooting, contradictory military orders, etc," including literally false-flag actions by "changing the tricolor cockades of the helicopters belonging to the 61st Boteni Regiment, which would have led to the opening of fratricidal fire." The indictment charged them with "the establishment of a generalized psychosis of terrorism" by publicly blaming the Ceaușescu communist regime and security-forces snipers for killing of almost 1,000 anti-Ceaușescu protesters and members of military forces, who sided with the new government. This was done to falsely blame the Ceaușescu communist government and to legitimize the new leadership of Romania (G4Media.ro 2018).

of the Crimea conflict because during the Maidan massacre of 20 February 2014 the Sevastopol Berkut and the Internal Troops from Crimea were shot at by snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings in Kyiv. Also, on the same day, anti-Maidan protesters from Crimea were intercepted and assaulted at a checkpoint of Maidan activists near Korsun during their return to Crimea. There are videos, photos, and testimonies of the Korsun attack and Ukrainian police admissions that two buses were burned there (although no similar corroboration of claims that several Crimea residents were killed there; see Katchanovski 2015a).

The Maidan massacre trial verdict in 2023 specified that Russian agents “did not have any participation” in the Maidan massacre.¹⁷ Further, the Ukrainian government investigation stated in February 2024 that it did not find evidence of involvement by Russian snipers in the massacre. Both of these findings are omitted by Karatnycky. Serhiy Leshchenko, a member of the Poroshenko faction in the parliament, revealed that Surkov, Putin’s aide, arrived in Kyiv by plane after the massacre was already over. The Prosecutor General of Ukraine and the head of its department in charge of the Maidan massacre investigation stated later that they had no evidence regarding allegations that Surkov and Russian snipers were involved in the massacre (see Katchanovski 2024a, 22).

Similarly, there were no findings by the investigation or the media that Russia covertly controlled any of the Ukrainian far-right organizations or far-right Maidan snipers. The commander and members of the far-right-linked group of Maidan snipers were not prosecuted even after making public admissions that they were armed and shot the police. After the Maidan, they voluntarily joined battalions organized and led by the far-right Right Sector and the neo-Nazi Azov, and they then fought in Donbas against Russian-backed separatists and the Russian forces, which directly intervened in August 2014 and January–February 2015. Thus, self-confessed sniper-murderers went unpunished, and they served the Maidan government in the ensuing warfare. During the Russia-Ukraine war, which began with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, many of them voluntary fought against the Russian forces (see Katchanovski 2016b; 2022; Katchanovski and Abrahms 2024).

There is copious and varied evidence of the US-led regime change in Ukraine during the Maidan. The Ukrainian foreign minister during the Euromaidan testified



Figure 3. The Russian Ministry of Defence Medal “For Return of Crimea.”

17. See my document titled “Maidan Massacre Trial Verdict Selected Excerpts Confirming False-Flag Massacre (English Google Translation)” ([link](#)).

in 2019 at the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine that the US official Victoria Nuland, in her meeting with him and Yanukovych at the very start of Euromaidan on 5 December 2013, proposed to sack the Mykola Azarov cabinet, restore the constitution of 2004, and to conduct early parliamentary and presidential elections ([link](#)). She proposed a regime change and made the same demands that were made by the Maidan opposition. Yanukovych eventually accepted all these US administration demands; first, on 28 January 2014, he fired Azarov and his Cabinet of Ministers, and then on 21 February he signed the agreement with the Maidan opposition leaders and French, German, and Polish foreign ministers.

Yanukovych was democratically elected in the 2010 presidential elections, which were recognized as free and fair by international observers. But he increased his presidential powers by restoring via the Constitutional Court the pre-2004 constitution. He used his power and his semi-oligarchic Party of Regions to enrich his family and personal network. He accepted the US demands and tried to avoid the use of deadly force against the Maidan activists in order to preserve his power.

An intercepted telephone call between Nuland and the US ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt in Ukraine that took place prior to 20 February 2014 shows them discussing “how to glue this thing” and how “how to midwife this thing.” This infamous conversation, which has been accessed millions of times on social media, is summarized by journalist Aaron Maté (2024):

Their conversation showed that the U.S. exerted considerable influence with the faction seeking the Ukrainian president’s ouster.

Tyahnybok, the openly antisemitic head of Svoboda, would be a ‘problem’ in office, Nuland worried, and better ‘on the outside.’ Klitschko, the more moderate Maidan member, was ruled out as well. ‘I don’t think Klitsch should go into government,’ Nuland said. ‘I don’t think it’s necessary. I don’t think it’s a good idea.’ One reason was Klitschko’s proximity to the European Union. Despite her government’s warm words for the European Union in public, Nuland told Pyatt: ‘Fuck the EU.’

The two U.S. officials settled on technocrat Arseniy Yatsenyuk. ‘I think Yats is the guy,’ Nuland said. By that point, Yatsenyuk had endorsed violent insurrection. The government’s rejection of Maidan demands, he said meant that ‘people had acquired the right to move from non-violent to violent means of protest.’

The only outstanding matter, Pyatt relayed, was securing ‘somebody with an international personality to come out here and help to midwife this thing.’ Nuland replied that Vice President Joe Biden and his senior aide, Jake Sullivan, who now serves as Biden’s National Security Adviser, had signed on to provide ‘an atta-boy and to get the deets [details] to stick.’ (Maté 2024)

Thus, after Yanukovych offered the positions in his government to the

Maidan opposition leaders following the sacking of the Azarov and the Cabinet of Ministers, Nuland specified which Maidan opposition leaders, notably Arseniy Yatsenyuk, should be in the Ukrainian government—and indeed, just one week after the massacre, Yatsenyuk became Prime Minister.¹⁸ John McCain, the influential US Senator, stated in a CNN interview during his and other US politicians’ visit to Kyiv in December 2013 that they were trying to “bring about a peaceful transition” in Ukraine, i.e., a regime change.¹⁹ A brief YouTube video of McCain publicly addressing Maidan is [here](#); McCain’s words openly declare US backing of a change of regime. Also one can find online photos of Nuland passing out cookies at the protest, such as [this one](#).

Similarly, US Senator Chris Murphy, who also backed the Maidan anti-government protests during his visit to Ukraine, stated in 2014:

I think it was our role, including sanctions and threats of sanctions, that forced, in part, Yanukovych from office...

With respect to Ukraine, we have not sat on the sidelines. We have been very much involved. Members of the Senate have been there. Members of the State Department have been on the Square. The Obama administration passed sanctions. The Senate was prepared to pass its own set of sanctions, and as I said, I really think that the clear position of the United States has in part been what has helped lead to this change in regime... If, ultimately, this is a peaceful transition to a new government in Ukraine, it’ll be the United States, on the streets of Ukraine, who will be seen as a great friend in helping make that transition happen.²⁰

US and EU leaders also publicly condemned the use of force by the Yanukovych government against the Maidan protesters, and they threatened to impose sanctions. Yanukovych ordered to stop attempts by the police and the Internal Troops to clear the Maidan on December 10, in late January, and on February 18 in part because of pressure from the Western leaders. Karatnycky does not mention this.

Karatnycky also omits that US President Barack Obama stated that “we had brokered a deal to transition power in Ukraine” after the massacre and before Yanukovych fled. Neither he nor other American government officials released any specific information about the nature of this deal (Obama 2015). Yanukovych and Putin stated that right after the Maidan massacre there was an agreement with Obama, but that the US president broke it, a statement confirmed by Mykhailo

18. Marionetki Maidana, 2014 ([link](#)).

19. “McCain backs Ukrainian protesters,” CNN, 15 December 2013 ([link](#)).

20. “Washington Journal,” C-SPAN, February 25, 2014 ([link](#)).

Dobkin, the former governor of Kharkiv region. Dobkin said that when they met in Kharkiv right after Yanukovich fled from Kyiv, Yanukovich told him that he had guarantees from Obama and Putin concerning the implementation of the agreement which he signed (Gordonua.com 2017). Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov suggested that Obama pushed for signing a deal between Yanukovich and the Maidan leaders but that the Maidan opposition broke the deal and seized power the next day.²¹ The deal signed on 21 February 2014 stipulated that the Yanukovich government would not use force against the Maidan and that the Maidan forces would disarm.

Then US Vice President Biden revealed in his memoirs that during the Maidan massacre he called Yanukovich and told him that “it was over; time for him to call off his gunmen and walk away” and that “he shouldn’t expect his Russian friends to rescue him from this disaster.” Biden wrote, “Yanukovich had lost the confidence of the Ukrainian people...[and] was going to be judged harshly by history if he kept killing them.” According to Biden, “the disgraced president fled Ukraine the next day—owing to the courage and determination of the demonstrators—and control of the government ended up temporarily in the hands of a young patriot named Arseniy Yatsenyuk”—the “Yats” of the leaked Nuland-Pyatt phone conversation. Biden (2017) also revealed that he “had been warning him [Yanukovich] for months to exercise restraint in dealing with his citizens.”

Of special importance, Karatnycky omits that the leader of the far-right Svoboda party, as well as the deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament from Svoboda, stated in separate interviews that a few weeks before the Maidan massacre a Western government representative told them and other Maidan leaders *that the Western governments would turn on Yanukovich after casualties among protesters reached 100* (Braty 2017, 94). Beginning right after the massacre of 20 February, the Maidan opposition began referring to the dead protesters as the “Heavenly Hundred.” Some Maidan protesters and other people, who were not on the Maidan and died from illnesses and other causes, were included in the “Heavenly Hundred” to bring the number of victims to 100 (see Figure 4) in conformity with the statement by the Western official.

The US and other Western governments blamed the Yanukovich government and its forces for the massacre of the Maidan protesters. They also recognized the new Maidan government immediately after the seizure of the presidential administration and parliament buildings by the Maidan Self-Defense and the parliamentary vote to remove Yanukovich—all in violation of the Ukrainian Constitution and the agreement signed on 21 February by Yanukovich, the Maidan opposition leaders, and representatives of France, Germany, and Poland.

21. “Obama obmanul? Putin rasskazal o dogovorenostjakh s SshA,” *Gazeta*, 10 July 2019 ([link](#)).



Figure 4. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the Heavenly Hundred Monument on the Maidan Massacre Site in April 2022 ([link](#)).

Several outside observers have reinforced the conclusion that the overthrow of Yanukovich was part of a regime-change operation. For example, right after the Yanukovich government overthrow, the new prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk invited the eminent American economist Jeffrey Sachs to serve as an economic adviser. Sachs visited Ukraine and later stated that the US government “definitely contributed to the overthrow of Yanukovich...I know this from inside, not just from outside. I know from top people involved in these issues” ([link](#)). Renowned American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh in 2023 said, based on his insider sources in the US intelligence and the government “We certainly did overthrow [the Ukrainian government] with a lot more American involvement than the press knows about right now” ([link](#)). Notwithstanding the Svoboda leaders’ interview assertions about their meeting with the western official—which those responsible for the 20 February massacre appear to have treated as an implicit quid pro quo and motivating factor to raise the death toll to 100—and notwithstanding clear evidence that the US sought a regime change, there is no publicly available evidence of direct involvement by US or other Western government forces in the Maidan

massacre. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to say that these governments *de facto* backed, or at an absolute minimum condoned, the extra-legal, violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government. As described above, the actual overthrow was conducted primarily by elements of the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition by means of the false-flag mass killing of the Maidan protesters and assassination attempts against Yanukovich. They were implicitly or explicitly supported by the US and other Western governments.

One piece of indirect evidence of the US-led regime change is that immediately after the Maidan, Ukraine became a US client state that served Western, and especially American, purposes in a proxy conflict with Russia.

Ukrainian media, Ukrainian and US officials, and a declassified transcript of a meeting of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine revealed that the US and other Western governments told the Maidan government leaders not to use military force during the Russian annexation of Crimea in order to avoid a war with Russia (Rogin and Lake 2015, 32; *Ukrainska Pravda* 2016). The Maidan leader Oleksander Turchynov, who briefly served as “acting” president of Ukraine immediately after the overthrow of Yanukovich, launched in April 2014 “the Anti-Terrorist Operation” in Donbas and ordered the use of force against Donbas separatists and the Igor Girkin-led unit. Turchynov initiated this operation immediately after a secret visit of CIA director John Brennan. A former Ukrainian official stated that during Brennan’s visit, he witnessed that the CIA director pressed the Maidan-led Ukrainian government leaders to use force in Donbas (Maté 2024).

Western governments and foundations, such as George Soros foundations, funded all but one of about two dozen Ukrainian NGOs, which in 2019 issued a joint statement asserting that any talks with Donbas separatists by Zelenskyy and his government were impermissible and demanding their immediate termination even though he was elected on the platform of the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas. This statement was released after the head of Zelenskyy’s presidential administration supported creation of a consulting group with representatives of separatist-controlled Donbas during the Minsk negotiations (Ukraine Crisis Media Center 2020).

In their statement, the Western-funded organizations warned Zelenskyy:

We, the undersigned public organizations, think tanks, and civil society representatives, express our outrage at the recent decisions of the Ukrainian delegation in Minsk regarding the ways and mechanisms for resolving the armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia in Donbas... We demand that the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, prevent the implementation of the signed decisions, immediately abandon the idea of creating an Advisory Council in the aforementioned format, instruct the negotiators from Ukraine

to act exclusively within the legal framework and within the framework of their powers, and prevent further steps that disturb the civil society of Ukraine, distance Ukraine from establishing peace, and contradict the current legislation and national interests of Ukraine. (Ukraine Crisis Media Center 2020)

It has been publicly reported that, starting right after the overthrow of Yanukovich, the CIA and British intelligence (MI6) rebuilt the Ukrainian security service (SBU), military intelligence (GUR), including in the SBU the creation of an entirely new directorate. According to a lengthy and heavily sourced article in the *Washington Post*:

Since 2015, the CIA has spent tens of millions of dollars to transform Ukraine's Soviet-formed services into potent allies against Moscow...The agency has provided Ukraine with advanced surveillance systems, trained recruits at sites in Ukraine as well as the United States, built new headquarters for departments in Ukraine's military intelligence agency, and shared intelligence on a scale that would have been unimaginable before [the overthrow of Yanukovich]...The CIA worked with the SBU to create an entirely new directorate, officials said, one that would focus on so-called "active measures" operations against Russia and be insulated from other SBU departments. A sixth directorate has since been added, officials said, to work with Britain's MI6 spy agency...From 2015 on, the CIA embarked on such an extensive transformation of the GUR that within several years "we had kind of rebuilt it from scratch," the former U.S. intelligence official said. The CIA helped the GUR acquire state-of-the-art surveillance and electronic eavesdropping systems... (Miller and Khurshudyan 2023)

The nearly perfect alignment of the Ukrainian and US government policies, starting immediately after the Maidan and continuing at least until the second Trump presidency, is also consistent with Ukraine becoming a US client state and remaining as such during the Russia-Ukraine war. The use of Ukraine as a proxy for a proxy war with Russia after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, and the blocking of a peace deal being negotiated in April 2022 between Ukraine and Russia to end the war, further highlights that, as a result of the Maidan and the violent overthrow of Yanukovich, Ukraine became a US client state par excellence (see Katchanovski 2022).

Various evidence shows that, since the Maidan overthrow of Yanukovich, the US administration has been involved in the appointment and dismissal of top Ukrainian government officials and in key policy decisions. For example, Serhiy Leshchenko, a member of the Ukrainian parliament from the Poroshenko's ruling party, who is currently an adviser to President Zelenskyy, stated in 2015 that "Pyatt and the U.S. administration have more influence than ever in the history of

independent Ukraine.” A US media report noted that “Americans are highly visible in the Ukrainian political process. The U.S. embassy in Kiev is a center of power, and Ukrainian politicians openly talk of appointments and dismissals being vetted by U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt and even U.S. Vice President Joe Biden” (Bershidsky 2015).

Similarly, Ukrainian media reported that then-US Vice President Joe Biden requested to put Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, and several foreigners in the Ukrainian government (Mostovaya 2015). Yatsenyuk became the prime minister, Nalyvaichenko the head of the Security Service of Ukraine, and the former president of Georgia and his former Georgian government officials attained various positions in the Ukrainian state. Ukrainian media reports, and tapes of phone calls between Biden and President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, revealed that Biden had a say in Poroshenko’s decision to dismiss Yatsenyuk as prime minister, as well as in the appointment of Yatsenyuk’s successor. The same sources, along with a public admission by Biden, showed that as Vice President he was involved in dismissal of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and the approval of his successor (Hains 2019; Mostovaya 2016).²²

The Maidan massacre: Omitted and misrepresented evidence

Karatnycky ignores evidence that the Maidan killings of protestors and the police during 18–20 February 2014 was a false-flag operation, conducted by elements of the Maidan leadership and groups of Maidan snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings, and that the goal of this false-flag action was to wrongly blame the Yanukovich government for the violence—and thereby to precipitate Yanukovich’s overthrow. Various types of evidence indicate that elements of far-right organizations, such as the Right Sector and Svoboda, and oligarchic Maidan parties such as Fatherland, were directly or indirectly involved, in various capacities, in this massacre of the protestors and the police. Such a false-flag massacre by its nature could have been covertly organized and successfully carried out by only a small number of Maidan leaders and snipers (see Katchanovski 2016a; 2020; 2023a; 2023b; 2024a).

22. *Daily Caller*, “Listen to the Leaked Tapes Between Joe Biden and President Poroshenko of Ukraine,” 20 May 2020 ([link](#)).

Narrative supported by video exhibits

The narrative provided in this subsection of the paper should be considered supported by a collection of video exhibits I have posted online, labeled Video A ([link](#)); Video B ([link](#)); Video C ([link](#)); Video D ([link](#)); Video E ([link](#)); Video F ([link](#)); Video H ([link](#)).

Videos and eyewitness testimonies show that armed groups of Maidan snipers, based primarily in the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina started the 20 February massacre in the early morning by targeting Berkut and Internal Troops units on the Maidan with live ammunition fire, inflicting mass casualties, and forcing them to retreat. These and other groups of Maidan snipers then massacred unsuspecting protesters from concealed positions in more than 20 Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, in particular the Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace, and Bank Arkada. The snipers included a company of snipers linked to the far-right Right Sector and Svoboda who shot the police from the Music Conservatory and then shot protesters from Hotel Ukraina.

Content analysis of synchronized videos, audio recordings, and photographs, as well as analysis of other forms of publicly available evidence, show that killed and wounded policemen, and the absolute majority of 49 killed and of 172 wounded protesters, were massacred on February 20 by snipers shooting from Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. The evidence provided by videos is extensive and can be parsed into categories based on what they show, as follows. At least eight different videos show snipers in or near Maidan-controlled buildings aiming or shooting at the Berkut police during the massacre. Six of these videos reveal the presence of snipers directly from the far-right-linked special armed Maidan company; the interpretation of these six videos is supported by the admissions of snipers, witness testimonies, and content analysis of the videos themselves. A total of at least 14 videos show snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings aiming at or shooting protesters. Among these 14 are ten videos in which the snipers are identified as belonging to the Maidan opposition by journalists, content analysis, and other means. At least 26 videos show groups of armed Maidan snipers and spotters moving into, looking for, changing, or leaving shooting positions in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. There are more than 100 videos and reports of protesters, journalists, and policemen during the Maidan massacre itself pointing to, or subsequently testifying about, Maidan snipers or snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings. This mass of videos is consistent with audio recordings of a group of Maidan snipers shooting in response to verbal commands.

One cannot completely exclude the possibility that a small minority of victims were shot by the Berkut police who were engaged in crossfire with Maidan snipers or as results of ricochets. But these protesters were shot during the same

times and places as protesters who were definitely shot by Maidan snipers, suggesting that they were also shot by Maidan snipers.

Statements by the far-right Svoboda party, as well as videos or testimonies by the Maidan Self-Defense commander, by Maidan protesters, by Ukrainian journalists, and by Hotel Ukraina staff show that this hotel was guarded and controlled by the Maidan opposition, specifically Svoboda, before, during, and immediately after the massacre of the protesters and the police by snipers located in this hotel. Similar evidence shows control by the Maidan opposition of other buildings and areas from which snipers shot protesters and police.

Importantly, Karatnycky omits that several hundred witnesses also reported in the media and social media about the presence of snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings during the massacre. Likewise, he omits that a dozen Maidan politicians and activists publicly stated that they witnessed the involvement in the massacre of specific top Maidan leaders from oligarchic parties and far-right organizations. Some of these statements indicate that leaders of the Maidan had advance knowledge about the massacre, deployment of snipers, or that they were involved in the evacuation of snipers who were captured by protesters. All this is consistent with other evidence, such as testimonies by 14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups, particularly from a far-right-linked Maidan company and the nation of Georgia—and none of it is mentioned by Karatnycky.

Synchronized videos show that specific times and directions of shooting by the Berkut policemen did not coincide with the specific times and directions of shooting of specific protesters. A long German ARD TV video, which simultaneously recorded the killing and wounding of protesters and the positions of the Berkut police, also demonstrate this lack of temporal and locational coincidence. This visual evidence alone makes clear that the Berkut policemen, who were charged with the massacre of the protesters, were in fact not responsible for a least the absolute majority of killed and wounded protesters.

Various videos show that protesters were lured into target range and then massacred by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings such as the Hotel Ukraina. There is clear evidence—including that arising from forensic ballistic examinations by government experts and that found in the Maidan massacre trial verdict—that Western, Polish, and Russian journalists during the Maidan massacre were shot by snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings.

There is no specific evidence that Yanukovich or his ministers and commanders ordered or were involved in other ways in the massacre of protesters. Bullet hole locations show that Berkut policemen were mostly shooting above and in front of the Maidan protesters, particularly that they were targeting not the protestors but, rather, the second and higher floors of Hotel Ukraina, with apparent objective of neutralizing snipers located there, as well as shooting into

trees, poles, walls, and the ground (see Katchanovski 2024a, 184).

Other evidence

These findings are corroborated by evidence from the Ukrainian government's own Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine. Such evidence includes testimonies given by the absolute majority of wounded protesters that they and other protesters were shot by snipers in the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, as well as testimonies by nearly 100 prosecution and defense witnesses concerning such snipers. Further, videos presented at the trial and the finding of forensic medical examinations show that almost all the examined wounded and killed protesters were shot from above, with bullets descending at steep angles from the sides or the back. Government ballistic experts determined that many protesters were shot from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings. A ballistic examination in 2015 failed to match bullets extracted from the bodies of killed protesters to the Kalashnikov weapons used by the Berkut. Some of these points will be expanded and commented further on below.

Again, none of this is referred to in the works of Karatnycky or—for that matter—in many other accounts of the Maidan massacre that one finds in the scholarly and popular literature, in government statements, or in reports in the mass media that purport to accurately describe the events of 2014 in their news, editorial, and opinion pieces. In general, these accounts have simply repeated the narratives that entered the public discourse from statements by the same oligarchic and far-right Maidan opposition, whose elements themselves carried out the massacre. These various repetitions of misinformation have been the final link in a chain of deception.

The misrepresentation of historical events just described was enabled by a massive cover-up within Ukraine about the activities and affiliations of the snipers—a cover-up whose existence is itself indicated by substantial evidence, including all of the following: The suppression of key evidence about the Maidan snipers; stonewalling of the investigations and trials by the Maidan governments and the far right; denials by the Maidan prosecution and by lawyers of the victims among Maidan protesters that there were any snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings; the failure to convict anyone for the massacre of the police; and the fact that from the date of the massacre till today nobody has served a prison sentence for the killing of protesters in one of the most heavily documented mass killings in history.

And so publicly available evidence from the Maidan massacre trials and investigations shows that the four killed and several dozen wounded policemen, and nearly all of the 49 killed and 172 wounded Maidan protesters on 20 February,

were shot by snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. Even the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's investigation determined that about half of the injured protesters were shot from locations other than the Berkut police positions, and no charges were brought in those cases. The GPU investigation also initially found that the snipers in the Hotel Ukraina massacred the protesters—but this finding was, like much else, covered up.²³

Karatnycky specifically omits that the absolute majority of 80 wounded Maidan protesters, with whose shooting Berkut policemen are charged and whose testimonies were revealed at the trial, testified at the trial and the investigation that they were shot by snipers from the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, or that they witnessed snipers in those locations. Nearly 100 witnesses, including dozens of the prosecution witnesses, also testified about snipers in Maidan-controlled locations who were involved in massacring the police and the protesters (see Figures 5 and 6).²⁴



Figure 5. Testimony of a wounded Maidan protester at the Maidan massacre trial about snipers in the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina (see Video D ([link](#)))

Synchronized videos show that the times and directions of the shots by the Berkut policemen did not coincide with the times and directions at which

23. "Prikaz rasstreliivat' mitinguiushhiih otdaval Yanukovich—GPU," *UNIAN*, 2 April 2014 ([link](#)); Report of the International Advisory Panel on Its Review of the Maidan Investigations (2015) ([link](#)).

24. See my exhibits "Video D: Trial & Investigation Testimonies by 52 Wounded Protesters about Maidan Snipers" ([link](#)) and "Video E: Trial Testimonies by Prosecution Witnesses About Snipers in Maidan-Controlled Locations" ([link](#)).

specific protesters were killed.²⁵ This finding is consistent with the previously noted evidence indicating that the Berkut police were firing not at protesters but at sniper positions in Maidan-controlled buildings. Other videos showed Maidan protesters being lured into positions that were exposed to snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings, including the Hotel Ukraina, and then being shot.²⁶



Figure 6. Maidan massacre trial testimony of a Maidan activist about “our snipers” in Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina (see Video E ([link](#)))

As noted previously, forensic medical examinations by government experts determined that the majority of the protesters were shot from above, at a steep angle, from either the side or back. This is consistent with locations of the Maidan-controlled buildings, and inconsistent with the locations of the Berkut police on the ground. Also, the initial ballistic examinations did not match the bullets extracted from the bodies of killed and wounded to the Kalashnikov rifles used by Berkut. Likewise, forensic examinations of bullet holes by the government experts, and content analysis of videos, show that the Berkut policemen were mostly shooting above the Maidan protesters, in particular, into the Hotel Ukraina, which was the main location of the snipers, and into trees and poles. With one possible exception, there were no bullet holes in the Hotel Ukraina windows and walls within the height of Maidan protesters (see Figure 7). Importantly, the trials and investigations did not reveal any evidence that President Yanukovich or his law enforcement ministers and commanders ordered the massacre.

25. See my exhibit “Video H: How Maidan Protesters Were Shot from Maidan-Controlled Buildings” ([link](#)).

26. See Video A ([link](#)).



Figure 7. Visual reconstruction of shooting at Maidan protesters and Western, Polish, and Russian journalists during the Maidan massacre in Ukraine and locations of snipers in Hotel Ukraina: A view from a Berkut barricade (based on Google Street Map)

Among the many indications of cover-up and stonewalling about key evidence, it is noteworthy that the government investigation and Maidan victims' lawyers explicitly denied that any snipers were present in the Maidan-controlled buildings. This denial contradicts admissions by the same government investigation that no fewer than 13 protesters were killed, and at least 77 wounded, from shots fired from the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. When bullet trajectories, as determined by government ballistic experts and lasers in on-site-investigative experiments, showed that many Maidan protesters had been shot at from the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, this result was covered-up and ballistic experts were no longer used in the investigation. The GPU did not use ballistic experts to determine the bullet trajectories and locations of shooters even after being ordered to do so by the judge and the jury.

Unexplained reversals of results of some 40 forensic ballistic examinations, including the one which used an automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system and showed that bullets of Berkut Kalashnikovs did not match bullets from bodies of killed Maidan protesters, also suggest a cover-up and evidence tampering. Multiple kinds of evidence show that Maidan protesters could not have been physically shot from the Berkut positions.²⁷ This evidence includes synchronized content analysis of the videos of the Berkut police and killed and wounded protesters, the locations and directions of bullet wounds ascertained in forensic medical examination, testimonies of eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters, and on-site investigative

27. See Video H ([link](#)).

experiments by government ballistic experts.

Karatnycky also omits that the Maidan massacre trial verdict, which was issued by a Kyiv court in October 2023 shortly before the 10th anniversary of Euromaidan, confirmed that many Maidan protesters were killed and wounded, and that BBC and ARD TV journalists were shot at, not by Berkut or other law enforcement officers but by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other locations, and that this hotel and these locations were not controlled by the government forces but were Maidan “activists-controlled” (Katchanovski 2024a, 213; 2024b; 2025b).

The verdict also confirmed findings of my studies that, contrary to claims by Karatnycky, no Russian agents were involved in the massacre and no massacre orders were issued by Yanukovich or his ministers. The verdict specified that Russian agents “did not have any participation” in the Maidan massacre:

The “Russian trace” was not confirmed after examining the relevant documents. In particular, all cases of crossing the border zone by FSB officers into Ukraine, their movement around Kyiv and the region, the time and place of their stay, as well as the dates and ways they left the territory of Ukraine were investigated. This group of persons was constantly monitored and their locations were under control. Accordingly, they did not have any participation in the events on the Instytutska Street.²⁸

The trial verdict stated that the existence of any “personal commands by the President of Ukraine, the Minister of Internal Affairs, other officials or influential public figures” to the Berkut police regiment and the special Berkut company concerning their actions during the Maidan did not find “documentary confirmation” and that none of “the persons questioned by the court” revealed such commands or orders. The court also found that there was no proof that the Berkut received orders during the period 18–20 February 2014 “from the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to prepare for the commission of a terrorist attack and mass intentional murders.”²⁹

The verdict decision to convict in absentia three Berkut policemen, who were exchanged by Zelenskyy to Donbas separatists, for the murder of 31 protesters was politically motivated. It was based on a single forensic examination of bullets, which contradicted the results of some 40 previous forensic examinations of bullets. This forensic examination also contradicted synchronized videos, forensic medical and ballistic examinations by government experts, and testimonies from the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters and several

28. See my document titled “Maidan Massacre Trial Verdict Selected Excerpts Confirming False-Flag Massacre (English Google Translation)” ([link](#)).

29. See again my “Maidan Massacre Trial Verdict Selected Excerpts...” document ([link](#)).

hundred witnesses (Katchanovski 2024a, 177–188; 2025b).

Likewise, a wide variety of evidence—including synchronized videos, bullet hole locations in shields and helmets, wound locations and bullet directions revealed in forensic medical examinations, an on-site investigative experiment by government experts, and testimonies of eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters—indicate that the architecture model produced for the Maidan victims’ lawyers by SITU (a firm specializing in architectural modeling) misrepresented locations of the wounds and directions of the gunshots that killed the three protesters.³⁰

Since the Ukrainian government investigation found that half of the 172 wounded Maidan activists were shot not from Berkut-controlled sectors, and they did not charge anyone with the attempted murder of these protesters, one can reasonably conclude that they were shot by the Maidan snipers. The trial verdict, along with this Prosecutor General Office investigation findings, form a *de facto* official admission that at least 13 out of 49 killed and 115 out of 172 wounded Maidan activists were shot on 20 February 2014, not by Berkut or other law enforcement agencies from the government forces-controlled territory but by Maidan snipers from the Maidan-controlled locations. The official admission that the absolute majority of Maidan activists were wounded not by the government forces is further evidence that, at a minimum, the absolute majority of the protesters who were killed were killed by Maidan snipers, since they were shot at the same times and places. Of course, in contrast to the wounded victims who survived—the majority of whom testified that they were shot by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas or that they witnessed snipers there in those locations—those protesters who died from their wounds could not testify, and it was therefore much easier to falsely blame the Berkut for their killing.

Further, there was no evidence of any “third-force” snipers. In fact, several Georgian self-admitted members of sniper groups testified in the media and for the Ukrainian trial and investigation that they and other Georgian and foreign snipers received orders from the Maidan opposition leaders and ex-Georgian leaders, who were affiliated with the Maidan opposition.³¹

The mass killing on 20 February 2014 produced a public backlash against the incumbent Yanukovich government and its forces, which were immediately blamed by the Maidan opposition, Western governments, a part of the ruling party, and Ukrainian and Western media for ordering and perpetrating this massacre. As noted previously, according to Maidan leaders, including the far-right Svoboda party leaders, a Western government representative stated before the massacre

30. See Video H ([link](#)).

31. “The Hidden Truth about Ukraine,” InsideOver, 2017 ([part 1](#); [part 2](#)); “Ploshhad Razbityh Nadezhd (polnaja versija)” ([link](#)); “The Ukraine Hoax” ([link](#)).

that Western governments would turn on the Yanukovich government only after casualties among protesters reached 100. It seems unlikely that the Western-government individual who spoke of 100 as a threshold would be unaware that providing a numerical death count to far-right leaders could incentivize deadly violence designed to achieve that numerical threshold either by provoking the use of the lethal force by the Yanukovich government forces or by orchestrating a false-flag massacre by the far-right and other Maidan opposition and falsely attributing it the Yanukovich government. The killed protesters were called the Heavenly Hundred immediately after the massacre. Protesters who died from illnesses, including people who were not on the Maidan, were counted, along with those who were killed by snipers, to bring the number of victims to 100.

In an intercepted phone call the recording of which was leaked, then Estonian foreign minister, Urmas Paet, and then EU foreign affairs chief, Catherine Ashton, discussed how the mass killing was the work of elements of the oligarchic and far-right Maidan opposition. As Paet, the Estonian foreign minister, noted, “there is a now stronger and stronger understanding that behind the snipers it was not Yanukovich, but it was somebody from the new coalition.”³² Paet based this assertion on his meeting with Olha Bohomolets, the leader of the Maidan medical corps, during his visit to Ukraine.

In short, there is a compelling body of publicly available evidence indicating that oligarchic elements of the Maidan leadership and Maidan snipers, carried out a successful false-flag operation that led to the removal of a democratically elected Ukrainian president and that Western governments at least knew about the actual perpetrators of the massacre and may have knowingly acted to incentivize and thus help bring it about, and immediately recognized the Maidan government that replaced him and included those Maidan leaders who were identified by various sources as organizers of the Maidan massacre.

Conclusion

Adrian Karatnycky seems to admit that there was a false-flag mass killing of the Maidan protesters and the police by far-right snipers during the Maidan massacre. But he advances a conspiracy theory that this massacre and the overthrow of Yanukovich was perpetrated on behalf of Russia. His books and articles omit or misrepresent the evidence demonstrating that the Maidan massacre and other major cases of political violence during Euromaidan in Ukraine actually

32. Michael Bergman, “Breaking: Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet and Catherine Ashton Discuss Ukraine Over the Phone” ([link](#)).

were staged by the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition with the specific aim of overthrowing Yanukovich and seizing power in Ukraine. In actual fact, the evidence clearly reveals a violent undemocratic overthrow of the Ukrainian government by means of a false-flag attack, followed by assassination attempts against Yanukovich, and his unconstitutional removal via a parliament vote that violated the Ukrainian Constitution concerning impeachment, lacked a constitutional majority, and involved a vote that was inflated and conducted under duress.

These findings are supported by a wide variety of evidence, including analyses of synchronized videos and audio recording of the massacre, witness testimonies, admissions by Maidan snipers and activists in the media and social media, and evidence and conclusions from the Maidan massacre trials and investigations show that at least the absolute majority of 49 killed and of 172 wounded Maidan protesters, as well as four killed and several dozen wounded policemen, were massacred on 20 February 2014 by snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas in a false-flag operation organized and perpetrated by elements of the Maidan oligarchic and far right opposition alliance. The Maidan snipers included a company linked to radical nationalist and neo-Nazi organizations of the Maidan opposition. The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that many protesters were shot by snipers in the Hotel Ukraina and that this hotel was “activists controlled.”

Dismissals of the false-flag Maidan massacre and the violent overthrow of Yanukovich as a conspiracy theory, Russian propaganda, or a Russian narrative, in spite of the evidence from Ukrainian primary sources, which are presented by academic studies and the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine and *de facto* confirmed by the Ukrainian court verdict, are politically motivated and unscientific.

Euromaidan combined elements of mass protest, a political revolution, a coup, and a US-led regime change. The last two were dominant in the political transition from the Yanukovich government to the Maidan government. Various evidence shows *de facto* backing of this overthrow by the US and other Western governments and the US-led regime change in Ukraine.

The evidence shows that Karatnycky’s politically convenient conspiracy theory that Russia overthrew Yanukovich lacks any empirical support. In his publications, he ignores evidence of that the US government was involved in the political transition in Ukraine during the Maidan, the objective being to turn Ukraine into a client state that could be used to contain Russia. This Western-backed violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government launched a conflict spiral within Ukraine, in Crimea and Donbas, as well as between Russia and Ukraine and Russia and the West.

These conflicts culminated in the Russia-Ukraine war, and the proxy war between Russia and the West after the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24

February 2022. The Maidan massacre and the associated overthrow of the pro-Russian Yanukovich government do not justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Conversely, the Russian invasion does not justify the Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police and the overthrow of Yanukovich.

Appendix: Responding to critics of my research on Ukraine 2014

My own earlier writings on the Maidan massacre that I presented at the Ukrainian Studies seminar at the University of Ottawa and various major academic conferences (Katchanovski 2014a; 2015b) have been repeatedly criticized, for example by articles in *The Bulwark*. In this appendix, I respond to critics of my work.

In contrast to my evidence-based studies that were presented at major academic conferences in my field and subsequently published in peer-reviewed journals and academic books (listed in References at end), their criticism generally appeared in non-academic and non-peer-reviewed online publications, in particular, blogs and Substack pieces that are not peer reviewed. Such criticism, with the partial exceptions of a blog post by David Marples and an article by William Risch in a Ukrainian online publication, generally relied on *ad hominem* attacks and did not include my latest peer-reviewed journal articles and book concerning the massacre. Marples, a history professor and a former analyst at the US-government-funded Radio Liberty, changed his original views since his blog post in October 2014 concerning the first draft of the Maidan massacre paper, which I presented at the Ukrainian Studies seminar at the University of Ottawa (Katchanovski 2014a). He wrote subsequently that “responsibility for the 100 murders in Maidan” “remained unclear” and attributed the killings mostly to “snipers firing from the rooftops of nearby buildings” but without indicating their identity (Marples 2020).

William Risch, a US historian with roots from the Baltic States, administered a pro-Euromaidan group on Facebook and blocked me from this group for pointing out far-right violence. He admitted that he supported and personally participated in the Euromaidan protests against Yanukovich, called for his removal after the Maidan massacre, and that he could not be “impartial” because he knew one of the Maidan activists who was killed during this massacre.³³

In his article in *Commons*, Risch (2024) admits—largely based on evidence presented in my studies and a few published interviews by a Maidan activist, the Maidan medics chief, and a BBC journalist report—that there were snipers in the Hotel Ukraine and on other buildings who fired on both protesters and police. But

33. William Risch, “How I Got to Know One of the Heavenly Hundred,” February 19, 2015 ([link](#)).

he calls these snipers “unidentified” and labels findings of my academic studies showing that they were Maidan opposition snipers “conspiracy theories” while ignoring or misrepresenting evidence presented in my studies. For example, he simply omits that at least 10 videos cited in my studies and video appendixes and in numerous eyewitness testimonies these snipers are identified as Maidan snipers or as armed Maidan activists, in particular members of the far-right linked Maidan company. Risch falsely claims that “there has been no evidence corroborating what the so-called Georgian snipers had said.”

Risch (2024) agrees with findings of my studies, which were collaborated by the Ukrainian government investigation and the Maidan massacre trial, that there were no Russian snipers. But he omits that not only my studies but also the Ukrainian government investigation determined that the Yanukovich government snipers were deployed to the government-controlled buildings and areas after the massacre was almost over and that there were no government or any “third force” snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. And Risch (2024) dismisses that the logical inference in such case is that they were Maidan opposition snipers (Katchanovski 2020; 2023a; 2023b; 2024a).

Risch (2024) denies that there was a plan to kill Yanukovich and falsely claims that I inferred this plan based on a single interview and that this interview did not refer to a plan of killing Yanukovich. He also omits that this was an interview by a Maidan sniper, who in fact admitted shooting and killing the Berkut police on 20 February and admitted that he was in Hotel Ukraina along with other members of the far-right linked Maidan company during the massacre of the protesters.³⁴ He omits that my studies also cited trial testimonies by former President Kravchuk, Yanukovich bodyguards, and helicopter pilots concerning plans and attempts to assassinate him. His dismissal of my findings of the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition involvement in the Maidan massacre ignores various evidence, including testimonies by at least 12 members of the Maidan leadership and Maidan activists about advance knowledge of the Maidan massacre by specific leaders of Maidan oligarchic parties and far right and about specific involvement of specific Maidan leaders in the massacre of the police and the Maidan activists (see Katchanovski 2020; 2023a; 2023b; 2024a).

Risch (2024) dismisses my findings of the cover-up and stonewalling of the investigation by Maidan governments and the Ukrainian government investigation by ignoring numerous such evidences. He omits that the government investigation officially denied that there were any snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas and falsely claims that Maidan protesters did not

34. #BABYLON'13, Brantsi Veb Serial, chetverta chastyna / CAPTIVES Web Series Part Four, 14 May 2016 ([link](#)).

reach the Bank Arkada area, contrary to videos in my video appendixes and contrary to testimonies.³⁵

Risch (2024) also extensively referred to a report by an International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe in 2015 to dismiss my studies' findings. But the report corroborated my findings that the investigation was stalled, in particular by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the GPU, which were headed by members of the Maidan leadership. He omits that the report revealed that, contrary to the public statements, the official investigation had evidence of "shooters" killing at least three protesters from Hotel Ukraina or the Music Conservatory and that at least 10 protesters were killed by "snipers" from rooftops of buildings (see International Advisory Panel 2015).

Cathy Young (2023a; 2023b), in her opinion pieces in *The Bulwark*, branded my findings about Maidan snipers operating in Hotel Ukraina a "conspiracy theory." Her false claims that I misrepresented the Maidan massacre trial verdict in my posts on the social media site X relied not on the text of the verdict, which I cited and whose translation I published, but on media reports about this verdict (Katchanovski 2024b, 202; Vyroky 2023). All media reports that she cited about the verdict, with the exception of a brief report by Reuters, were by US government-funded Ukrainian and US media outlets or the German-government funded *Deutsche Welle*. All these media reports omitted parts of the verdict which corroborated my studies' findings.³⁶ Young (2023b) claimed, falsely, that the verdict did not indicate that Maidan protesters were shot from this hotel or other Maidan-controlled locations, and that it did not disprove involvement by Russian snipers. She also has falsely claimed, contrary to the verdict, that Hotel Ukraina was not controlled by the Maidan activists, and she has propagated instead an actual conspiracy theory that police in the hotel could have shot the protesters. Her claims in these regards are contrary not only to the verdict but also to a statement from the far-right Svoboda party about taking control of the hotel prior to the massacre, to videos of Maidan snipers shooting at protesters and at a BBC crew from the hotel, to testimonies both by hotel staff and by the Maidan unit commander in charge of guarding the hotel, and to other evidence presented in scholarly publications. Young (2023b) even claimed that verdict's references to shooting from the direction of Hotel Ukraina did not mean shooting from this hotel, even though the verdict along with videos, testimonies of wounded activists, and forensic medical examinations clearly showed that there were no shooters on the ground or in the space between this hotel and the protesters when these the protesters were shot at

35. See Video A ([link](#)).

36. See my document titled "Maidan Massacre Trial Verdict Selected Excerpts Confirming False-Flag Massacre (English Google Translation)" ([link](#)).

a steep descending angle. She also falsely claimed that the Berkut policemen were convicted for the murder of 40 out of 48 Maidan activists. She also omitted almost all evidence presented in my studies, such as from the Maidan massacre trial and investigation testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters about being shot by snipers located in Hotel Ukraina or witnessing snipers there.

Young (2023a; 2023b) also falsely claimed that I am pro-Russian and that my studies of the Maidan massacre propagate the “Russian narratives.” Because of her and others’ smears, it is important that I say a few words about myself. I am a Ukrainian and Canadian political scientist who specializes in the study of political violence and in the conflicts in Ukraine. I began this specialization with the writing of my Ph.D. dissertation on this topic at George Mason University, under the direction of Seymour Martin Lipset, and I have since held academic positions at major US and Canadian universities, and at the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress. On a personal level, I was among a few dozen people who, in 1988, attended the first opposition demonstration in Kyiv in some 70 years. I faced expulsion from the Kyiv National Economic University in 1990 and was prevented from pursuing graduate education in the Soviet Union because my final undergraduate thesis was based on theories of Friedrich Hayek, Alfred Marshall, Max Weber, and other classical Western scholars. In that thesis, I concluded that the Soviet system was bound to collapse. My thesis was written in Ukrainian even though the language of education in universities in Soviet Ukraine was Russian. I publicly called—before, during, and after the Euromaidan—for the accession of Ukraine into the European Union, and I opposed the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Dyer 2022; Katchanovski 2007; 2014b).

In the present article I have noted the Western government and foundations funding of certain organizations and individuals, so let me disclose my own: Since 2014, aside from being paid and receiving conference travel grants and open access publication grants from the University of Ottawa, my academic employer, I only received funding from the following sources: conference travel grants from the American Political Science Association; a conference travel grant from the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies; and crowdfunding of open-access fees for the publishers to make my two books and three peer-reviewed articles open access after they were already published or accepted for publication.³⁷

In essence, for me to do what my critics claim to be ‘pro-Ukrainian’ would have required me to falsify the results of my studies, ignore evidence, and line up in

37. See “Make my Maidan Massacre in Ukraine book open access,” GoFundMe ([link](#)); “Open Access Book: Russia-Ukraine War & Its Origin,” GoFundMe ([link](#)); “Maidan Massacre Trial & Investigation Revelations in Ukraine. Implications for the Ukraine-Russia War and Relations (Open-Access Publication of Article that is Accepted by Peer-Reviewed Journal),” Kickstarter ([link](#)).

support of the 2014 violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government and of those who murdered the police and Maidan protesters. However, it is the professional and ethical duty of scholars to rely on evidence and not on political preferences, the narratives propagated by any government, or other such considerations. This ethical duty also concerns my review of the Karatnycky book and articles. It is my conviction that fidelity to the evidence serves not only the truth but, in the final analysis, the Ukrainian people.

Over 100 scholars and experts have accepted the findings of my studies of the Maidan massacre or wrote positively about them in their publications ([link](#)) (Katchanovski 2024a, 35–36). Over 100 Western and Ukrainian media outlets, including American, Czech, Danish, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Swiss have favorably reported or cited my studies on the Maidan massacre. The number of positive publications exceeds dozens of times the numbers of negative publications by the critics that have largely been politically motivated and *ad hominem*; these have been produced by those who did not publish any peer-reviewed studies of the Maidan massacre and unwittingly or wittingly supported the events that transpired at the violent culmination of the Maidan, including the illegal overthrow of the Ukrainian government, and who accepted at face value unsupportable claims by the Maidan leaders and the media.

There is not a single peer-reviewed study of the Maidan massacre that was based on the analysis of primary sources and disproved major findings of my scholarly studies. Major findings of my studies were replicated by Gordon Hahn (2018). Critics cited a model, which I referred to above, that purports to show the killing of three Maidan protesters. This model was produced by a New York architecture company, SITU, for Maidan lawyers. This model misrepresented the directions of the gunshots by incorrectly portraying the locations of wounds of these three protesters, and doing so in a manner incompatible with the wound locations demonstrated in forensic medical examinations by Ukrainian government experts for the Maidan massacre investigation and the trial. It is worth noting that the model produced by SITU, like the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine and Maidan victims' lawyers, was funded by the US government, the European Union, and the Soros foundation in Ukraine (see Katchanovski 2024a, 217). Nearly 90 percent of the Ukrainian media, all of which did not report the verdict's parts concerning snipers in Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina or even in some cases falsely claimed that the verdict disproved the existence of such snipers, were funded since the Russian invasion by the USAID, the European Union, and other Western agencies, organizations, and foundations.³⁸

38. "Oksana Romaniuk: 90% of Ukrainian media survived thanks to grants," Institute of Mass Information, 28 January 2025 ([link](#)).

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