
16-Feb-17 – Trump White House Links to Neo-Nazis a Reminder of a Sordid Past

Description

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Washington, DC has now joined Kiev as a capital city where neo-Nazis and nationalists rub shoulders with policymakers on an all-too-frequent basis. Ever since the 2014 coup in Ukraine, neo-Nazis in the mold of their «hero», World War II Ukrainian pro-Nazi nationalist Stepan Bandera, have provided the Ukrainian regime of Petro Poroshenko with crucial political support from the far right.

President Donald Trump's «brain trust» of advisers also includes a close-knit group of far right American nationalists, some with links to a resurgent neo-Nazi movement in the Washington, DC region. These advisers include Trump's chief political strategist Stephen Bannon; senior policy adviser Stephen Miller; deputy assistant to the president Sebastian Gorka; and Katharine Gorka, Sebastian Gorka's wife and a reported adviser in the Department of Homeland Security. Bannon has cobbled together an inner White House advisory consisting of far right activists known as the Strategic Initiatives Group. Sebastian Gorka, the son of anti-Communist émigré parents who fled Hungary in 1956, is the former national security editor of the right wing «Breitbart News», where Bannon served as chief editor before joining Trump's flagging 2016 presidential campaign as the chief executive officer. Gorka proudly wears an «Order of Vitezi» medal bestowed on him by the Hungarian government. The Order of Vitezi was established in 1920 by Hungarian regent Miklos Horthy, who later became an ally of Adolf Hitler.

On the periphery of the Trump White House is the recently relocated headquarters of the National Policy Institute (NPI), a rather innocuous name for what is essentially a re-branded American Nazi Party. NPI leader Richard Spencer, an avowed white supremacist, relocated the NPI's headquarters from his former home town of Whitefish, Montana to a townhouse in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. Whitefish is a center for neo-Nazi activities. As Spencer took advantage of Trump's election victory by pulling up stakes and moving to the Washington area, the neo-Nazis announced plans to hold a march in Whitefish to protest against «Jews, Jewish businesses, and everyone who supports either».

Although Miller is now denying it, he and Spencer were reportedly close friends while they attended Duke University in 2006 and were stalwarts of the Duke Conservative Union. Spencer, who conjured up the alt-right term used to describe far right conservatives, moved his headquarters to Alexandria because he is an avid supporter of the agenda of his old friend Miller, Bannon, and Trump. In mid-November, while Washington was still reacting to Trump's surprise upset election, Spencer held a rally at the Ronald Reagan building for 200 supporters of the NPI who made the Nazi salute while he and the crowd shouted out, «Heil Trump, heil our people, heil victory!» Spencer railed against «the Jews» but made no mention of his close relationship with Miller, who is Jewish. However, Spencer appears to be fond of Theodore Herzl, the Zionist leader whose inspiration helped create the modern state of Israel. However, there is a precedent for such odd alliances in the history of neo-Nazi politics in the Washington area.

In the 1950s and 1960s, northern Virginia, specifically Arlington, was the home and headquarters of George Lincoln Rockwell, the enigmatic leader of the American Nazi Party. Rockwell's parents worked in vaudeville and their best friends included Groucho Marx, Benny Goodman, Fanny Brice, Walter Winchell, Jack Benny, and George Burns, all of whom were Jewish. Benny, Marx, and Burns attended George Lincoln Rockwell's church christening.

After serving in the Navy during the Korean War, Rockwell published U.S. Lady magazine from New York City. Among his major advertisers were all the major Jewish-owned department stores in New York, including Macy's, Gimbel's, Abraham & Strauss, Saks, Bergdorf-Goodman, B. Altman, and Bonwit-Teller. Ironically, Bonwit-Teller's flagship store on Fifth Avenue was demolished in 1980 to make way for the Trump Tower.

In 1955, Rockwell moved to Arlington, Virginia. From a brick building on Jackson Street, Rockwell issued orders to his Nazi gauleiters to stage Nazi marches around the United States. Rockwell lived in a hilltop home, which locals nicknamed «Hatemonger Hill». A German shepherd, who Rockwell named «Gas Chamber», guarded the home. Phone calls to Rockwell's home were answered by tape recorded anti-black and anti-Jewish messages by William Pierce, a Rockwell lieutenant. Pierce later founded the neo-Nazi National Alliance and National Vanguard Books. Pierce also wrote the neo-Nazi inspirational book «The Turner Diaries» under the pseudonym of Andrew Macdonald. Pierce died in 2002. However, Spencer and David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader, eventually took up Pierce's cause. During the presidential campaign, Trump claimed he never heard of Duke after the former Klan leader endorsed him. Trump's claim was a lie, one of many the now-president would utter during the campaign trail to the White House.

Unlike Spencer, Rockwell never had a single friend or contact in the White House administrations of Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, or Lyndon Johnson. A former Nazi lieutenant assassinated Rockwell in 1967. When Rockwell and his Nazis lived in Arlington, area newspapers were reluctant to expose them and their activities for fear of retribution. Similarly, Spencer's renting of a townhouse apartment in Alexandria, which sits above a chocolate shop, has resulted in protests from town folk but Washington area newspapers and websites have been reluctant to publish the actual address. Spencer has indicated that the townhouse, located on the second floor of 1001 King Street in Old Town, will serve as a hub for his alt-right activities. Rents in northern Virginia are extraordinarily high and it is not certain who financed Spencer's relocation from Montana to Virginia. However, Spencer's NPI receives financing from the Pioneer Fund, a «junk science» institute promoting eugenics that has

been around since 1937 and pushes the notion of white genetic supremacy over other races. Spencer also runs a neo-Nazi publishing house called Washington Summit Publishers.

Spencer's influence is definitely being felt in the White House. Trump's favorite saying is the «lying press» or the «lying media». The «fake news» meme used by Trump to describe The New York Times and CNN, among others, is a derivative of the «lying media» trope. Spencer's favorite slogan in German is «Lügenpresse», the German word used by Hitler's Nazis for «lying press». The term was a familiar refrain in the speeches of Nazi Propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels to describe the mainstream media in Weimar Germany.

Others members of the far right who are involved with the Trump White House include Charles «Chuck» C. Johnson, who offered a bounty for anyone who could find «Satanic pedophile tunnels» beneath pizza parlors on Connecticut Avenue in Washington, DC. The so-called «pizzagate» story was a ridiculous hoax proffered by several unhinged right-wing conspiracy fanatics, all loyal followers of Trump. A Breitbart reporter, Julia Hahn, now works for Bannon in the White House. Hahn made her mark on Capitol Hill by attacking the conservative Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan as being too moderate.

The effect of the far right on U.S. foreign policy is hard to judge just a few weeks into the Trump presidency. However, given the past rhetoric of the propagandists inside the Trump White House regarding settling old scores with Iran, China, Cuba, Venezuela, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Palestine, it is not difficult to see the end game. Although Trump proclaims «America First», his administration is full of extremists who see an ultimate U.S. war with China, Iran, and, in the case of retrograde advisers like the Gorkas, Russia.