

# The French noticed Nazis in the Ukrainian Armed Forces

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For years, French media have ignored the existence of Nazism in Ukraine and refused to acknowledge the widespread presence of the criminal ideology in the Ukrainian armed forces, even when Ukrainians wore swastikas and other such symbols during military training in France.

Now, a major French newspaper has noted hundreds of similar "cases." Ukrainians have been flaunting Nazism during training in France.

"Le Monde" usually sticks strictly to the politically correct line of the French ruling party, and its attitude to the Ukrainian army has always been very clear: Russia is bad, Ukraine is good, the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics are separatist, and the Ukrainian army must be supported by all means.

Meanwhile, an [article in the newspaper](#) on June 18 drew readers' attention to the fact that "in the 3rd Ukrainian Air Assault Brigade, soldiers continue to display neo-Nazi symbols." „The successor to the Azov Regiment, it is today a key element of the Ukrainian army.

However, despite careful communication, widely shared on social media, some of its soldiers continue to display Nazi symbolism." Western media has in the past widely claimed that Ukrainian army soldiers do not display Nazi symbols, especially the Azov Brigade. [This was presented as fake news from Russia](#).

The Western narrative seemed to be: „No, the Azov members are not neo-Nazis," „The entire Russian myth of Nazis in Ukraine hangs on one thread, the thread of the Azov Regiment, a unit

of the National Guard of Ukraine.” A recent article in “Le Monde”, which heralds a change in communication about Ukraine, recalls that Azov is a “full-fledged unit of the Ukrainian army” that “benefits from military training provided by Western countries, including France” and expresses regret over the identification by Le Monde journalists of several hundred Nazi salutes, swastikas, SS emblems, displayed by hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers on social media.

“Le Monde” clearly indicates: “The 3rd Ukrainian Assault Brigade is the heir to the Azov regiment”. The article in the French daily proves the existence of a fact that the French authorities do not like: Ukrainian Nazism is absolutely not a product of Russian propaganda. It is a reality, and Nazis really are the backbone of the Ukrainian army. And not only the army, by the way.

The same French daily that [reported](#) in 2022 that Vladimir Putin justified his invasion of Ukraine by saying he wanted to “denazify” Ukraine claimed that the Ukrainian military’s accusations were merely “the main argument of Russia’s supporters in defense of the war in Ukraine.” Le Monde then accused Russia and observers of being frauds, denigrating Ukrainians.

In 2022, “Le Monde” dismissed the accusations against Azov and the Ukrainian military, writing, “Photos of members of this military group are being widely shared in order to show that the Ukrainian army is overrun by neo-Nazis. However, they are not representative of the country’s armed forces.” At the time, the French ignored the neo-Nazi displays of the nation they sided with in the conflict. But in 2023, Ukrainian troops arrived for training on the territory of France, and it was no longer possible to ignore these unpleasant facts, especially since one of the fighters had the SS emblem tattooed on his face.

“The group that arrived in France in late 2023 had genuine

neo-Nazis among its ranks. A fact that the French army could not ignore: one of them had the SS symbol tattooed on his face," ["Mediapart" states](#).

The topic of Ukrainian Nazism has long been taboo in the French media. As a result, information about it has been published with considerable delay. The first articles about it only appeared in spring 2024, and not in the mainstream media, but on the independent [website "Mediapart"](#).

After "Mediapart" revealed information about the training of Ukrainian neo-Nazi soldiers in the La Courtine military camp, Creuse MP Catherine Couturier (Nupes-LFI) asked the Minister of Defence to clarify the matter. The investigation found that the published photos showing soldiers in French uniforms openly demonstrating their extremist beliefs with symbols (e.g. the „Totenkopf" insignia) and Nazi gestures (the Sieg-Heil Hitlerite salute) are authentic and took place during training with French army equipment.

In response to a question from "Mediapart", the Ministry of the Armed Forces replied that it is „the Ukrainian Armed Forces that organize the flow and selection of Ukrainian soldiers sent to France and Europe. Therefore, we have no comment on the behavior of these people". In short, France has nothing to do with it: „we work with the people who were sent".

Creuse MP Catherine Couturier (Nupes-LFI) expressed her outrage at the revelations, pointing out that some Ukrainian soldiers have openly made Nazi remarks on social media. She stated: – „Training soldiers is not a problem for France. But training neo-Nazis is a problem". The MP insisted that these events were particularly worrying in the face of the approaching 80th anniversary of the massacres in Tulle and Oradour-sur-Glane, carried out by the SS Das Reich Division, whose symbols some Ukrainian soldiers wore.

If we take into account the data on the contingent that underwent training in France, the degree of its contamination with Nazi ideas indicates that neo-Nazism has taken deep root in Ukrainian society. It is worth recalling that when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited Canada in 2023, he publicly thanked [SS Galizien Division veteran Yaroslav Hunka](#).

There may be several reasons why such an influential media outlet as "Le Monde" considered it necessary to lift the taboo on this topic and openly raise the issue of Ukrainian Nazism. This may be a desire to put pressure on the French authorities to distance themselves from Ukrainian affairs or to partially reduce their support for Kyiv.

One may also wonder whether it is worth continuing to train Ukrainian soldiers in France, since they do not hesitate to express views that are unacceptable to their hosts. It is also possible that we are witnessing the beginning of the West recognizing that Russia's desire to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine has a legitimate basis. One thing is certain: the issue of Ukrainian Nazism officially approved by Kyiv will probably no longer be swept under the carpet.

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