
Interview: Slava Stetsko

'Soviet Russia is not a nation, but an empire of subjugated nations'

We publish below an exclusive interview with Slava Stetsko, president of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), was conducted by Nicholas F. Benton on May 13 during the international convention of the ABN in Washington, D.C. The ABN is a coalition of organizations representing 26 nations under Soviet subjugation. Mrs. Stetsko was elected its president in 1986 following the death of her husband, Yaroslav Stetsko, who had been elected prime minister of the Ukraine when it declared independence on June 30, 1941, and who led the ABN from the time of its founding during World War II.

The Proclamation of Independence of the Ukraine, carried out on the initiative of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) under the leadership of Stepan Bandera, marked the beginning of the Ukraine's two-front battle against Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia. Mr. Stetsko was arrested by the Nazis, and incarcerated in a concentration camp in Sachsenhausen for several years, for categorically rejecting Hitler's ultimata that the sovereign Ukrainian government be dissolved and the Proclamation of Independence revoked. After the war, Stetsko's collaborator, Stepan Bandera, was murdered in cold blood in the streets of Munich. As chairman of the OUN and president of ABN, Stetsko's activities made him the target of several assassination attempts in the past. He and his wife, Slava, have also been the targets of many slander articles in the Soviet media.

The following passages are quoted from Yaroslav Stetsko's speech, "The Philosophical and Ideological Foundations of Russian Aggressions" (ABN Conference in London, September 1982):

"The ideological grounds for Russian aggressions can be found in various artificially formulated concepts such as Pan-Slavism, Moscow as the 'Third Rome,' defense of Orthodoxy, or world communist revolution. They may even be found in the misuse of the ideas of national liberation, or of the need to reunify divided nations on this side of the Iron Curtain, or in the conjectured defense of social justice. All of these concepts serve as a form of camouflage, as a historical 'justification' for Russian messianism-imperialism—as formulated by *F. Dostoevsky* and further expounded upon by

N. Berdayev, who saw Bolshevism as an integrally Russian by-product.

"In the world today, there is an ongoing ideological war, a psychological-political war, which is being aggressively fought by Moscow. This offensive is an integral component of modern ('*Kleinkrieg*') Russian warfare, which has several variants, such as: Russian-sponsored peripheral wars; communist insurgent wars in the Western Hemisphere; the social disintegration of Western nations; the undermining of their moral values; the discrediting of patriotism, of national traditions; the disintegration of the family as the basis of the moral and demographic strength of a nation; the propagation of atheism—the list is endless. All of these elements, combined with a policy of establishing 'fifth columns' in all the countries of the world which aid international terrorism and the internal subversion of Western democratic and moral values—constitute Moscow's *modus operandi* in the international politics of Moscow."

EIR: Can you begin by describing the coalition that you have, how it's made up, and how many people are participating?

Stetsko: It is very difficult to say how many people, exactly, are participating, because the ABN does not have physical members. It is the umbrella for the organizations of the emigré peoples who are from the subjugated nations inside the Soviet Russian empire and in the so-called satellite states, and also we now have members from Vietnam, Azerbaijan, and other Muslim nations, Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Cuba. Our number is very much growing, and luckily, because we would prefer that the Soviet Russian empire is dissolved so that there are no subjugated nations at all.

EIR: Your conference here is beginning on the eve of another summit meeting between President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachov. What is your message to President Reagan and the U.S. administration?

Stetsko: Our message is the following. President Reagan should never forget that he is representing the mightiest democratic country in the world and that he should feel this

strength, that he is representing a real great nation. Secondly, President Reagan should have in mind that he is speaking not with the representative of the country or even of the empire, because all these subjugated nations have not elected Gorbachov. They are against him and the Moscow government. All these nations are aspiring to regain their own independence, their own sovereignty, and are waiting for any possible moment to exploit the situation, and to regain their own statehood and territories. So, if President Reagan will be there, he should have in mind that there is no one Soviet or Russian people. There are "peoples," which are subjugated by the Soviet Russian government.

These nations have experience with Russian rulers, with governments in Moscow, which have changed rulers before, but the policy of Moscow has not changed, and we don't trust at all in this propaganda of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. It is only for export, for the West, to mislead the Western world because Russia badly needs technology and material, economic support for their dilapidated empire. President Reagan should know that our subjugated nations are doing their best to dismantle this empire, to undermine this empire, and we are even risking our lives in order to dismantle its economy. Now, it is a tragedy that the West is going to rescue this economy and this empire. So, we would like to convey our feeling of sadness that the Western world so quickly forgets what was yesterday, and has illusions about a change in the Moscow totalitarian regime. . . .

EIR: How hopeful are you that the momentum for uprisings in some of these countries is going to be effective in eventually throwing off the Soviets?

Stetsko: Soviet Russia will be compelled to give some concessions to the people, because they have no capacity to improve their economy otherwise. Therefore, the Moscow government, or [Poland's Gen. Wojciech] Jaruzelski or some other communist government, will make some concessions for the population, hoping it will help to rebuild or uplift the economy. But on the other hand, if they give a bit of freedom on the economic front, it also entails the necessity to give more freedom on national issues. For instance, the people would like immediately to restore the status of languages. Every nation would demand that their native language would become the official language of their country, that their culture would be more developed, that their heritage should be preserved, that past history should be taught. If Moscow is giving some possibilities of freedom on the economic field, it enormously influences the will of the nations to have more possibilities in other fields. This is endangering the existence of the Russian empire.

Therefore, Gorbachov, for instance, warned the people of the Baltic states when he was there that they should not expect any great changes on national issues, that nationalities should restrain indulging in what he called their "localism." For him, a national language is a "localism." He said they

should more and more become "internationalist," and "internationalist" means to him to become more Russian, more Soviet. So, we warned the people they should not expect too much in the national field.

But we are still hopeful. We think that Gorbachov or the Russian government is not alone dictating the future, that also the nations will have something to say. It depends on our own strengths, and we see now that in all republics there is a tremendous national revival. The national conscience and the events in Poland, all these strikes, have repercussions in other countries, and you cannot stop the ideas, you cannot stop the people learning the news of what is going on in Poland. Poland also knows there is this tremendous revival in the Ukraine, in the Baltic countries, in Turkestan and . . . Kazakhstan. Who would think that after so many years of extermination of the Tartars, they would come into Red Square to demonstrate in the heart of Moscow, or that there would be such a huge demonstration in Kazakhstan? One-third of the population in Armenia went into the streets shouting, "We are not Russian slaves," seeking to correct the injustices of the Russian government. It shows that this consciousness is developing tremendously quickly.

It is our intention to deepen the ties between the subjugated nations. These ties do exist. We know there are very big connections between Baltic and Ukrainian underground movements. We call the Siberian concentration camps the "best headquarters of the ABN" because the best sons of the subjugated nations were there. There, on the battlefields in the strikes in Siberia, their friendship was really cemented there, and they wrote together demands, for instance, to the United Nations, to the Western governments. They had strikes together. They celebrated national feasts together. They learned languages from one another. So, they have these contacts. When they were released from the concentration camps, they came, some to the Ukraine, some to the Baltic countries, some to other Caucasian countries. These ties remain. We have the fact that the Ukrainian representatives of the Helsinki Group went to Yerevan [capital of Armenia] and to Tbilisi [capital of Georgia] and they established a committee for the defense of their political and religious prisoners. They are aiming at establishing such an organization for the entire Soviet Union. It shows that these nations are in contact.

Our aim is to deepen this contact, to strengthen them, because if these nations will rise simultaneously, together, all at the same time, we are certain that we can be victorious. We can once, forever, dissolve the Russian empire from the scene. Therefore, we are working to this aim that these upheavals—we call them revolutions—should be simultaneous by all nations. Not one nation isolated, and then Russia is able quickly to suppress this upheaval. Our main policy is to help to establish contacts here and, in particular, inside Soviet Russia, which includes, of course, the satellite states as well.

EIR: President Reagan is seemingly willing to acknowledge

that Gorbachov represents something different for the Soviet Union. Commerce Secretary Verity is seemingly willing to try to open up expanded trade between the U.S. and Soviets. Certainly you must look with some concern at the political environment in the U.S.

Stetsko: Of course, we are not satisfied with these developments. But we can never believe that President Reagan, who said a few years ago that he feels very much for the peoples of these subjugated nations torn from their families and their countries, who believes that one day these nations will be free—and he listed Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, and so forth—who called Russia an “evil empire,” who knows, to some extent, the mentality of Russian rulers, that he so quickly changes his mind, I personally do not believe. I think there is tremendous pressure on him from the people in the U.S. who became so weak—their will is somehow dissolved—that they are really hoping, and have illusions that Gorbachov is opening a new page of history, and they would like that President Reagan goes into history as a peacemaker.

It would be a tragedy if perhaps next year Gorbachov would win the peace prize: not those who are dying for this peace in concentration camps or in prisons or psychiatric wards, but the man who just plays at peacemaker. For us, it is a real tragic comedy that the people really believe in such stuff . . . the people here under the influence of the press, which is not representing American interests but is trying to bring the American people and government to such a situation that other nations cannot really understand what is going on. They ask, “How can the United States, so powerful a nation, yield before a dying Russian empire?” For us, we try to understand, but it is very difficult.

EIR: The Soviet media reserves for groups like yours the worst kind of slanders and abuses, using their own political language to attack you. They have done a similar job, more extensively in the case of Lyndon LaRouche than with any other political figure in the U.S. How do you view this?

Stetsko: This policy of Moscow, either to kill physically, like when they killed our national hero, Stepan Bandera—they invented a cyanide pistol which was used to kill him in West Germany and they trained a traitor in order to kill him—or they try to completely ruin the reputation of political leaders who are respected by their nations.

They are afraid that our leaders can have some kind of influence on the Western democratic governments, not only as the spokesmen of our nations, but also by being able to give insight as to the way of thinking and acting of the Moscow government. The Western people measure Moscow by their own yardsticks, and they do not know the mentality of our enemy. Since we are trying to show this mentality, and trying to submit the real picture, therefore, the Russian government is doing everything possible to destroy us, because we are the most dangerous people in the West. Since they are

playing now as very democratic rulers, they try to destroy us by propaganda measures.

This plot is very well organized. For instance, in the case of my husband, Yaroslav Stetsko, who was the former prime minister of the Ukraine and president for many, many years of ABN—its architect and soul, as everybody knows—they tried to destroy his memory by all possible slanders. The reason is, they would like to kill us morally, politically, even though it is very difficult for them, because the whole nation of the Ukraine knows my husband, and the same applies to other national groups. But some people in the West believe in these lies, so we have every day to defend ourselves . . . using additional energy and money.

It is very synchronized. For instance, I am certain that after this conference, there will be plenty of articles trying to kill our prestige and image, and they will be not only in the U.S., they will be immediately behind the Iron Curtain. Every congressman or senator who said a good word for us will be attacked immediately that he is connected to Nazi people, fascists, with totalitarians, and so on. It is quite obvious that every success of ours is immediately attacked by Moscow, and then it is followed by some people . . . repeating these slanders for the newspapers, and one begins quoting from the other. . . .

EIR: So to have Mr. LaRouche attacked as a fascist repeatedly by the Soviet media is just part of the price one pays for standing up for freedom.

Stetsko: I think it is a compliment if somebody is attacked by Moscow.

EIR: What do you hope your impact to be in the U.S. on the elections coming up this November?

Stetsko: Our people here are not electing a Democrat or a Republican. They are electing a man or woman who has some kind of integrity. They try to learn what ideas he or she represents and stands for. Men or women of great caliber and values we are giving our votes in the U.S. We consider that the U.S. needs great men, strong men, for the benefit not only of the U.S. but for all countries of the world. It is our interest to support good and strong people, and have them in Congress and in the government.

We will do our best to transmit our voice. We have a kind of statement, an open letter, which we will submit tomorrow with our suggestions to the participants in our conference, because they are delegates of many, many organizations from the entire U.S., Canada, Europe, and other countries, and we will submit this letter to President Reagan and to other members of the American government, before Mr. Reagan visits in Moscow.

EIR: Can you give me some clue what the content of this open letter is?

Stetsko: Not to trust Gorbachov.