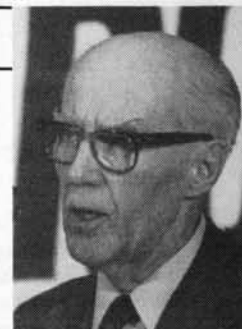


Captive Nations



Ukraine wants liberation from the Soviet Empire

by John Kolasky

From the speech delivered by John Kolasky, author of Education in Soviet Ukraine, Two Years in Soviet Ukraine, Partners in Tyranny—The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, and other books, to a conference of Food for Peace on Nov. 4 in Chicago, Illinois.

. . . I am very, very much obliged to the LaRouche movement for inviting me here today to present the case for Ukraine. There's a lot of injustice in the world, and I'm going to talk about some more injustice. The campaign to free Lyndon LaRouche, and the campaign to feed the people of the world, and the campaign to free those who are oppressed, merge into one campaign for freedom and justice. . . .

Let me make one thing clear: When we are talking about the U.S.S.R., when we are talking about the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the Soviet Union, we are talking about the Soviet Russian Communist Empire. If you don't understand that, then you won't understand what I'm talking about. We are dealing with an empire. I had the privilege—or the misprivilege, whichever way you want to look at it—of studying at the highest Communist Party university in Ukraine from 1963 to 1965, and the slogan there was, "One world socialist system, under the leadership of the most revolutionary proletariat." Now, how do you translate that? It means one Russian empire. . . .

The second concept that I wish to deal with here is this word that we deal with, "soviet." What in the world does "soviets" mean? In Russian, it means "councils." Now, when we say "soviets," what do we mean by that? Do we mean the Russian empire, do we mean the Russian people? Or, do we mean all the people of the Russian empire? If we are trying to lump all the people of the Russian empire together, we are doing a great injustice to those who are being oppressed there. . . .

Now, a third concept that I want to deal with here is the question of the word "Ukraine" itself. The Russians would like us to believe that Ukraine is just a territory, and so they call it "the" Ukraine. But actually it is a nation, called simply

"Ukraine." There was a civilization in Ukraine when wolves stilled howled on the spot where the Kremlin now stands. And that civilization accepted Christianity a thousand years ago. That civilization was destroyed by the Tartar invasions in the 12th century. In the period after that, the settlers, the farmers in the area that is now Ukraine, formed armed bands, or groups, called the Cossacks, to defend themselves against the marauding Tartars. In the 17th century, the forces of the Cossacks were carrying on a war against the Polish armies, and because they became hard-pressed, in 1654, the Cossacks signed an agreement with Russia as two equal partners, two equal countries, two equal states. Since the Russians were stronger, it was not very long before they began taking the upper hand, and by the end of the 19th century, the Russians were dominating Ukraine, the Ukrainian language was disallowed, publishing in Ukrainian was not allowed, and for all intents and purposes, as far as the Russians were concerned, there was no such thing as a special Ukrainian language or a Ukrainian nation.

In 1918, Ukrainians declared their independence. In 1921, they were overrun by the Red Armies, and integrated into the Russian empire.

Let me give you an idea what they were subjected to under the Russian empire. There began the process of the destruction of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. The Russians were fearful that the Ukrainians would want to become independent, and they were going to wipe out any feeling of independence that existed among the Ukrainians. In 1929 and 1930, you had the destruction of the middle farmers, called the *korpuks*. They were the nationally conscious element of the Ukrainian nation, they were the backbone of the Ukrainian nation. You also had the destruction of the Ukrainian autocephalous, or independent, Orthodox Church. And when I say destruction, I mean the total destruction: The hierarchy, all the priests, were exiled, and they perished in the gulag, or were shot in the process of elimination.

Then, in 1932, you had the premeditated, organized famine in which 10 million people perished. Population of

A rally against Soviet tyranny in Washington, D.C., during Gorbachov's visit to the United States in December 1987. Gorbachov "wanted the workers to work a little harder, to produce more, and to improve the quality. And then there would be glasnost, which means, not openness, but advertising. In other words, the workers are going to work harder, and they're going to talk about it."



Stuart Lewis

Ukraine at that time was 40 million, so one of every four persons perished in the famine of 1932-33. Then, in 1934, in December, you had the murder of the secretary of the City Committee of the Communist Party, Sergei Kirov. This unleashed a campaign against the intelligentsia of the various nationalities. The Ukrainians and the Byelorussians suffered the most. And in 1934, after the murder of Kirov, 37 Ukrainian intellectuals were arrested. The head of the military tribunal from Moscow came to Kiev, and in a few days, 28 of the 37 were sentenced to death and executed, and nine were to be further questioned. Of those nine, one survived; when I lived in Kiev from 1963-65, one was still living. I didn't have the opportunity to meet him. His son, however, was in Kiev University, he was expelled, along with four others, for demanding that Ukrainian language be used in a lecture.

The 'KGB-ization of the Soviet Union'

When Yuri Andropov was appointed [head of the Soviet secret police in 1956], no one dreamed he would ever aspire to sit on the throne. But he was very able—very vicious, of course, but also very able—and very ambitious. But all the paths to the Politburo were closed. Under Khrushchov, the head of the Soviet secret police was not even a member of the Central Committee. And this man wants to be on the Politburo! (The Central Committee has 400; the Politburo has 11, 12, 15.)

way to the Politburo. The head of the KGB in Azerbaijan was a man by the name of Gen. Geidar Aliyev. He had been brought up and educated in the KGB from the age of 16 or 17, in the branch called Smersh. Now, Smersh trained

professional killers. He was a professional murderer. He was the head of the KGB in Azerbaijan.

Andropov conspired with him. Aliyev gathered information on the first secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan, whose name was Akhundov, proving that Akhundov was corrupt. Of course, they were all corrupt; but they only used this when they needed something on somebody. Andropov then persuaded Brezhnev to remove Akhundov. And who do you think became first secretary? You guessed it: Aliyev. So one republic was already in Andropov's pocket.

Then began the reign of terror on a Stalinist scale in Azerbaijan. The appointees of Brezhnev were ousted. Some were killed, some were sentenced to the gulag. In their places were placed men from the KGB, and you had the beginning of what is called KBG-ization of the government.

If it worked in Azerbaijan, it might work elsewhere. In Georgia, the head of the police—not the KGB, but the regular police, called the *militsia*—was a general of the KGB. His name was Shevardnadze. Well, if it worked in Azerbaijan, let's apply it to Georgia: The first secretary of the Central Committee was Mzhavanadze, so Shevardnadze gathered materials showing that Mzhavanadze was corrupt . . . and presented it to Brezhnev, and Brezhnev, again, had no alternative: He had to fire Mzhavanadze. And again, guess who became the first secretary? Shevardnadze. And then heads began to roll in Georgia, and you had the same process. Over 30,000 people lost their positions or their heads in Georgia. In their places were appointed men mainly from the KGB. So, Andropov had a second republic in his pocket. . . .

Then, Andropov began looking for men in various re-

gions who would support him. He came from an area called Stavropol Krai [Territory], which is in the southwestern part of Russian, bordering on the Caspian and Georgia. He used to go there every summer, to a place called Kislovodsk, where there was a summer stock. The man who chauffeured him around when he was there was a man who had been a student in the law faculty in Moscow, he was then the first secretary of the regional committee of Stavropol. His name was Gorbachov. . . .

Now, why am I telling you this? I telling you this to give you some idea of Gorbachov's background, and what you can expect from him. When Andropov became ill, the duties of first secretary were performed by Gorbachov. When Chernenko was elected first secretary after the death of Andropov, Chernenko was an invalid. Gorbachov carried on the task of first secretary. And when Chernenko died, the Central Committee met to elect a new first secretary. It was a foregone conclusion whom they were going to elect, but just listen to how they elected him: He was nominated by no other than an old Stalinist, Gromyko. Gromyko said, "Don't mind his smile; behind that smile are steel teeth." And who do you suppose seconded the nomination? No other than the head of the KGB, Chebrikov. And who else supported the nomination of Gorbachov? The minister of defense, Ustinov, and the ideological boss, Suslov.

Now, there's a combination you can't beat. Tell me, did these people, these old die-hard Stalinists, all make a mistake and nominate a liberal, a democrat? Or did they know what they were doing? The first to raise the question of the insecurity of the empire was Andropov. Andropov said the problem is the bureaucracy, drunkenness, and the dissidents, and he proceeded to attack all three. When Gorbachov came to power, he announced he was going to follow the policies of Andropov; no question about it. . . .

There were other problems, too. There was the national question, the problem that within the Russian empire, half the people were not Russians, and they wanted out. . . .

Gorbachov announced that there would be *perestroika*, which means reconstruction. Now, what does that mean? It means that he wanted the workers to work a little harder, to produce more, and to improve the quality. And then there would be *glasnost*, which means, not openness, but advertising. In other words, the workers are going to work harder, and they're going to talk about it.

Well, this got out of hand. The workers, they wanted to talk all right, but they had other things to talk about. One of the first things that was raised was the national question. At the plenum in January 1987, Gorbachov announced that those who wanted to play on national sentiments could not expect any leniency. In other words, "You're going to get it, if you raise the national question." So we already knew then where he stood, and we were not fooled.

Since then, of course, he's become more specific. He's announced there's going to be a law on nationalist, chauvin-

ist, and other extremist organizations. "The entire force of Soviet laws will be applied"—you know what that means: the gulag and the firing squad. And he denounced those who shout about the "rubbish of independence." . . .

However, in spite of these announcements, the people of the Soviet Union, the non-Russians, are demanding more rights, with the final end in view of leaving the Soviet Union.

The Ukrainian churches

Let me limit myself to Ukraine. First of all, when *perestroika* and *glasnost* were announced, you had voices raised demanding that Ukrainian be made the official language of Ukraine; now, Russian's the official language. Second demand: the Ukrainian ministries to have control over the economics of Ukraine. . . . And, of course, the final demand, is for independence.

There are also some other questions now on the agenda that are quite prominent, like the question about the revival of the Ukrainian churches, the Ukrainian Catholic Church in western Ukraine and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in eastern Ukraine. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I confess to you that I went to the Soviet Union quite indifferent to religion. I never attacked it, but I was indifferent; I used to make fun of it sometimes. But I came back in an entirely different mood.

Let me just dwell for a minute on what brought about the change. I broke down emotionally more than once when I was over there. There was a small church, an Orthodox Church, it was working one night. In the morning, it was gone. The army had come at night, and all you saw in the morning was a pile of rubble. . . .

I had a cousin. When the Red Army came to his native village, they tied him up, and they took him away, and my aunt never saw him again. She was very, very religious. And they closed the church. Does a just society have to take even the church away from a person? These are the kind of things that influenced me.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, here we are, faced with another injustice, and this is another struggle for human rights, for peace with freedom, for justice. What can we do? Well, I ask you first of all—I presume that you're Christians, I presume that you go to church, I presume that you pray—there might be some who don't think that prayer has any efficacy, but I'm not of that opinion—and I ask you first of all to pray.

The second thing you can do: Give this injustice as much publicity as you can. If you can write a letter to somebody in Ukraine or some other part of the Soviet Union, saying, "We're with you." If you hold a big demonstration, if you can pass a resolution and forward it on to the papers and forward it to the Soviet embassy, that does a lot. And if you can send any Bibles to any of the individuals behind the Iron Curtain, that, too, will help. Don't send them to the government agencies, because they don't get distributed.

Unrest in Eastern Europe and European U.S.S.R.



← refugees ⚡ labor strikes ▽ mass demonstrations 🔥 terrorism and sabotage ⚔ ethnic conflicts ■ armed repression