

# How Monsters Who Beat Jews to Death in 1944 Became America's Favorite "Freedom Fighters" in 1945—With a Little Help from Their Friends at CIA

Part II of a 3 Part series on Fascism and the CIA in Ukraine

By [Evan Reif](#)

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*"Terror will be not only a means of self-defense, but also a form of agitation, which will affect friend and foe alike, regardless of whether they desire it or not." —UVO (fascist Ukrainian Military Organization) brochure from 1929*

After the end of the Second World War, American intelligence immediately set about the work of rehabilitating the world's fascists to fight the new war on Communism. From the transformation of the bloody "Devil of Showa" [Nobusuke Kishi](#) into the hand-picked Prime Minister of Japan, to [Emil Augsburg](#), the architect of the Holocaust described as *"Honest and idealist ... enjoys good food and wine...unprejudiced mind..."* by the CIA, it seems that Langley never met a fascist it couldn't do business with.

Such was the case with Yaroslav Stetsko and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Stetsko spent the war in the shadow of Stepan Bandera but eventually Stetsko would far surpass his friend in terms of prominence. Before long, the monsters who had beaten Jews to death with hammers just years before became America's favorite "freedom fighters" and took their business global.

## The Principality of Yaroslav

*"Therefore, I stand at the establishment of the extermination of the Jews and the expediency of transferring to Ukraine the German methods of exterminating Jews, excluding their assimilation..." —Yaroslav Stetsko*

At the direction of Nazi war criminal [Alfred Rosenberg](#), the Committee of Subjugated Nations was formed in 1943, with the idea to unite all anti-Soviet partisans under one banner. In reality, the bulk of its members were OUN soldiers, and its leader was the second-in-command of the OUN, Yaroslav Stetsko. CSN changed its name to the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations or ABN in 1946. The name ABN will be used for the sake of consistency.

Stetsko was a close friend of OUN-B founder Stepan Bandera. Like Bandera he was a militant anti-Semite equating Marxism with Judaism, while calling for the extermination of both. Even after the war, when his American bosses forced him to soften his public statements, he still called for an “[ethnically pure](#)” Ukraine, purged of Jews, Poles and Russians.

Stetsko believed that his own [Galician](#) Ukrainians were the direct descendants of [the Rus](#), the Norse conquerors who eventually became the first Tsars under Rurik. These Nordic people were Stetsko’s master race, imbued with all the qualities you would expect.

On the other hand, Stetsko considered Russians to be Asiatic rather than European. Russians were seen as the descendants of the Mongols and Huns, making them naturally tyrannical, cruel and deceitful. Stetsko’s ideology would become the foundation on which modern Ukrainian fascists have built their movements. The parallels to Nazism are obvious enough that it is surprising to see this ideology find a home in the [Wall Street Journal](#) today.

In 1944, sensing the imminent demise of Nazi Germany, the OUN reached out to British intelligence. The two sides met at the Vatican, not long after which OUN’s leadership surrendered to the Americans. Spirited away to Munich, their Western patrons provided them luxury apartments and SS bodyguards. In the immediate aftermath of Nazi Germany’s defeat, many of OUN’s soldiers worked as hitmen in the vast network of “displaced persons” camps under the command of MI6.

It was the British and Germans who were the primary patrons of the old OUN at this moment. Notorious Nazi spymaster Reinhard Gehlen was not just the handler for Stetsko and Bandera, but also their friend. They met while the OUN was fighting for the Nazis and remained friends for the rest of their lives.

The first significant American support arrived in 1947, and with it a greatly expanded mandate.

As Peter Grose detailed in his book *Operation Rollback: America’s Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2001), the CIA covertly provided arms, training and support for operations within the USSR itself where many nationalist forces continued to fight against the Red Army as partisans.

The nationalist forces in Ukraine were an amalgamation of SS remnants, OUN/UPA forces, criminals, and various other collaborator militias. Confined mostly to the forests of western Ukraine, they operated as bandits, raiding collective farms, ambushing soldiers, and assassinating Soviet officials. Jews and CPSU members were particularly coveted targets.

The CIA provided not only weapons but also inserted teams of [spies and commandos](#). Fighting continued until the mid-1950s, with the last stragglers killed or arrested in 1960.

The death toll for these operations is unclear, with estimates ranging from 20-50,000. The vast majority of these [were civilians](#), often killed with axes and hammers—which was the OUN’s trademark. The OUN claims that it was NKVD infiltrators in OUN uniforms who killed

the civilians; declassified [KGB documents](#), however, have proven that was not the case.

Starting around 1948, the CIA would begin to slowly break from Stepan Bandera (and, therefore, Stetsko), who they saw as a liability from both a political and operational standpoint. The CIA much preferred Mykola Lebed, the chief of the OUN's SB death squads and a man described as a "well known sadist and Nazi collaborator" by the Army.

Lebed, however, was willing to work with other Ukrainian nationalist groups and allowed all Ukrainians into his organization, while Bandera demanded absolute control of the ABN and an ethnically pure OUN. Bandera also had a cavalier attitude toward security, refusing to use secure communications with the reasoning that the inferior Asiatic Russians were not smart enough to catch him. The KGB would therefore intercept most of his phone calls and correspondences, to the increasing fury of the CIA.

The CIA's repeated warnings, however, did not dissuade the British and [Germans](#), who remained Bandera's main patrons. The situation continued to get worse over the years, driving the CIA to issue a [burn notice](#) for Bandera in 1954. The CIA not only discontinued all support for Bandera, but also threatened to kill him if his patrons at allied MI6 did not follow suit.

"2. If CIA and the SS are unable to agree upon a formula for coordinated operations along the lines outlined above, the CIA position will be: a. Each side will continue its separate line of action with limited operational coordination at the Washington-London level. b. CIA will take independent action to neutralize the present leadership of the OUN/B." [SS here refers to the British Security Service, the official name for MI6, not the Nazi SS.]

The British got the message and withdrew their support for Bandera. The same year, the ABN expelled Bandera, leaving him permanently marginalized. Five years later, the KGB assassinated Bandera in his home in Munich.

The CIA's problem was with Bandera personally and so, with him gone, so too were any restrictions on Stetsko. Rather than feuding with Lebed for funding as before, the U.S. simply doled out twice the money. Stetsko was now in the driver's seat, and from this moment on commanded the remnants of Bandera's bandit army with almost limitless Western support.

## The Fascist International

"We, the free people gathered here, accuse the Carter administration of betraying humanity."

—Mario Sandoval Alarcón, [Guatemalan death squad leader](#), at the 1979 World Anti-Communist League (WACL) conference

After the ABN's military power in Ukraine was spent, the organization grew somewhat listless for a time. Far from the axe-wielding terrorists of a few years past, Stetsko mostly engaged in propaganda and demonstrations. Likewise, the ABN's rhetoric softened considerably at this time in an attempt to broaden funding appeal, changing from blood and soil to [freedom and democracy](#).

This rebranding was little more than a PR campaign. The ABN remained a virulently anti-Semitic and right-wing organization. For example, we have Stetsko's relationship with [Marvin Liebman](#), a far-right activist who worked with both the Zionist terrorists in [Irgun](#) and

white supremacists in Rhodesia. Liebman briefly worked with the ABN in 1958 but found himself so disgusted by Stetsko's hatred of Jews that he publicly denounced the ABN and refused to work for them again. Liebman received death threats from the ABN for years after.

It wasn't just Stetsko, either. In 1984, ABN [executive director](#) and Nazi officer [Nikolai Nazarenko](#) gave a speech at the annual Captive Nations dinner, in which he said:

"There is a certain ethnic group that makes its home in Israel. This ethnic group works with the Communists all the time. They were the Fifth Column in Germany and in all the Captive Nations...They would spy, sabotage and do any act in the interest of Moscow. Of course there had to be the creation of a natural self defense against this Fifth Column. They had to be isolated. Security was needed. So the Fifth Column were arrested and imprisoned. This particular ethnic group was responsible for aiding the Soviet NKVD. A million of our people were destroyed as a result of them aiding the NKVD...You hear a lot about the Jewish Holocaust, but what about the 140 million Christians, Moslems and Buddhists killed by Communism? That is the real Holocaust and you never hear about it!"

After this speech, Nazarenko went back to his role in the Republican Party, campaigning for Ronald Reagan as part of the GOP's "National Heritage Groups." The GOP briefly expelled him from the party in 1988 until lobbying from [Anna Chennault](#) returned him to his position.

With no war to fight, it seemed as if the ABN was fading into obscurity. This would change in 1966, with the establishment of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), giving the old OUN the chance to export their brand of terror worldwide.

Initially, the WACL was a merger of the ABN with its Asian counterpart, the Chiang Kai-shek-led Asian People's Anti-Communist League, but it would expand rapidly, taking in the world's far-right militants with zeal. An anti-communist united front, there were no ideological restrictions on its members, meaning that terrorists and dictators rubbed elbows with professors and senators. Indeed, over the years WACL's [list of members](#) would include [Nazis](#) and collaborators, [dictators](#) and [death squad](#) leaders, a [Yakuza](#) crime boss turned [war criminal](#), Korean cult leader [Sun Myung Moon](#) and Senator [John McCain](#), among many others.

WACL opened new frontiers for the old OUN stalwarts. They were now involved on four continents and with their intercontinental reach came new business opportunities trafficking [drugs](#) and weapons along with their old trades of murder and torture. ABN personnel were in high demand as both hit men and instructors for the world's death squads.

WACL also served as a conduit for covert funds, disbursing millions to their clients. WACL gave plausible deniability, using an ostensibly private group as a front to fund organizations that governments could not be seen funding.

WACL and ABN set up regional chapters all over the world, some more successful than others. In [Chile](#), the local ABN assisted fascist General Augusto Pinochet's rise to power and in Argentina the group was involved in the "[Dirty War](#)," a covert anti-Communist campaign resulting in the torture, murder and disappearance of more than 20,000 people.

Since its beginnings in Asia, WACL had been actively supporting anti-Communist groups in Vietnam. Chiang was the primary trainer of South Vietnamese Special Forces at bases in

Taiwan, along with providing arms and considerable funding. WACL also made multiple trips to Vietnam, where they armed anti-Communist guerrillas.

It could have been there that WACL first met the infamous U.S. Army Gen. [John Singlaub](#) of [MACV-SOG](#). Singlaub was one of the primary overseers of the [Phoenix Program](#), a covert terror campaign carried out by CIA, U.S. Army Special Forces and South Vietnamese police. At least 20,000 Vietnamese were murdered, many thousands more brutally tortured with the assistance of WACL trainers.

In 1981, four years after his dismissal from the Army by Jimmy Carter, Singlaub received a loan from his old friend Chiang. He used it to create the United States Council for World Freedom, the American chapter of WACL. In 1982, the IRS gave the Council for World Freedom [tax-exempt](#) status, which made it much easier to solicit donations from the wealthy, a task at which Singlaub excelled.

This private support was only a drop in the bucket compared to the nearly limitless funding from the newly minted Reagan administration. As a fulfillment of Reagan's bellicose anti-Communist promises, funding for covert operations skyrocketed.

During this era, Stetsko was the belle of the ball, meeting with countless U.S. government officials, including Vice President and former CIA Director George H.W. Bush, and even President Reagan himself. Reagan brought his favorite thugs along with him, and it was at this time that the Latin American [narco terrorists](#) came to the forefront in the WACL. Singlaub and WACL wasted little time embracing their new allies, starting support for the Nicaraguan Contras only four days after the CIA in [1981](#).

When Congress cut off official funding to the Contras in 1984, the WACL's role expanded to the primary conduit through which U.S. funds flowed to the death squads. Fundraising took place in the open, with the charismatic Singlaub finding [great success](#) hustling Texas oil barons for donations. He threw lavish fundraising dinners, raising at least \$25 million in 1985 alone. At one of his parties, he even convinced a woman to buy the Contras a helicopter.



# **ABN** CORRESPONDENCE

*Freedom for Nations! Freedom for Individuals!*

BULLETIN OF THE ANTIBOLSHEVIK BLOC OF NATIONS

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*"Your struggle is our struggle. Your dream is our dream."  
— President Ronald Reagan, White House, 19 July 1983*



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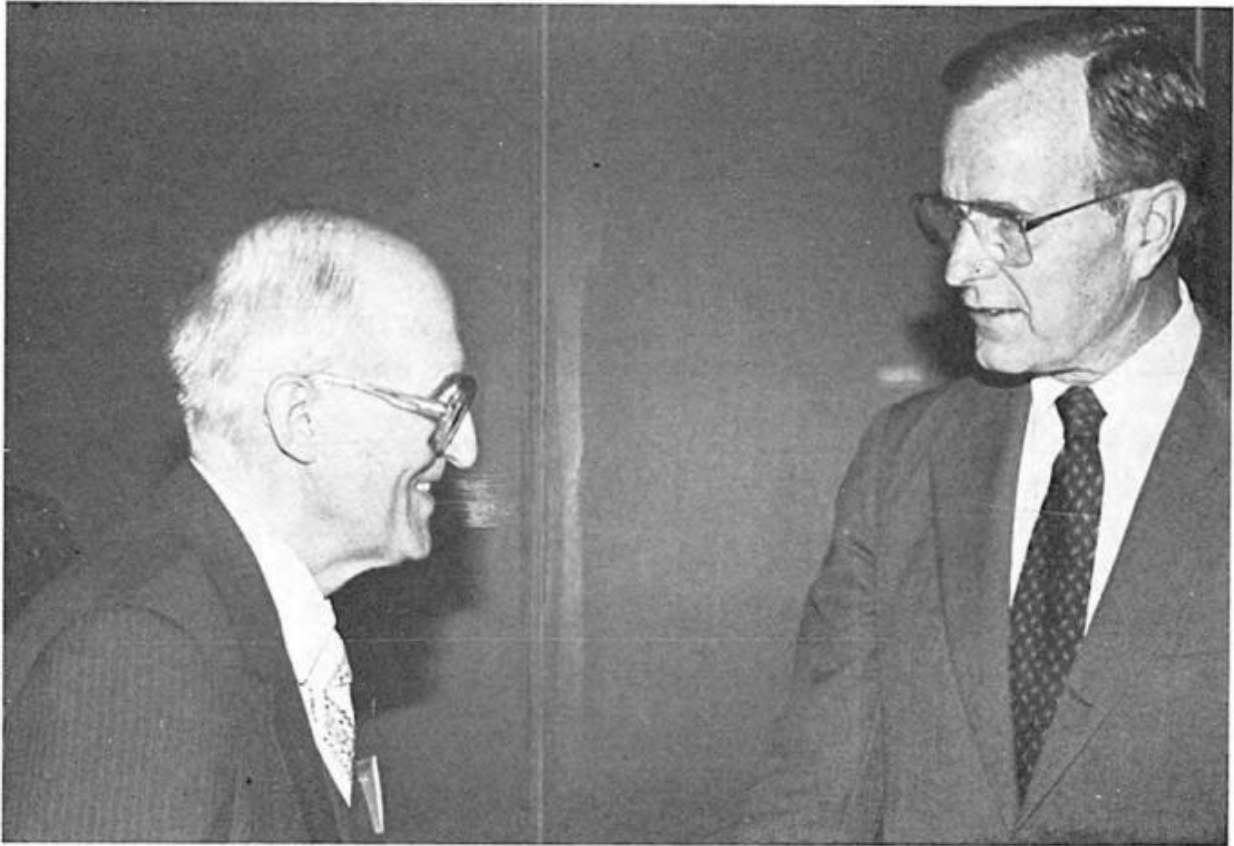
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Source: [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

25TH OBSERVANCE OF CAPTIVE NATIONS WEEK  
AND 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ABN



*Vice President George Bush and Yaroslav Stetsko, former Prime Minister of Ukraine.*

Source: [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Wealth did not make WACL or ABN forget where they came from. They continued to get their hands dirty as [arms dealers](#), assassins and consultants for terrorists and dictators all throughout the world. WACL was Reagan's "third force," a team of experts who could be sent anywhere in the world to conjure up a civil war or engineer a crackdown exactly when Washington needed it.

However, Bandera's deputy could not rule forever. In 1986, at the peak of this golden era, Yaroslav Stetsko died of cancer in Munich. His wife Slava filled his position in WACL and the ABN.

### Slava comes home

"Anti-semitism: A smear word used by the Communists against those who effectively oppose and expose them.

Fascist: An anti-Communist.

Nazi or Hitlerite: An active anti-Communist"

—Slava Stetsko, in the foreword to *The Captive Nations: Our First Line of Defense*

Born Anna Yevheniya Muzyka, Slava was a long-time nationalist, joining the OUN in 1938. There, she met her future husband, Yaroslav. During the war she was the head of OUN's youth and women's division, and assisted in setting up the UPA medical corps.

After the war, she would become head of the ABN press corps and editor-in-chief of their newspaper, "ABN Correspondence." After Bandera's assassination, Slava became deputy chief of the OUN, and was head of its foreign policy from 1968 onward. After the death of her husband, Slava was named head of the ABN.

As you can see from the quote above, Slava was every bit the anti-Semite and fascist her husband was. By the time she took the reins in 1986, the decline of the USSR was terminal. As the USSR fell apart, funding for groups like hers started to dry up, as would political interest. When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, it almost seemed as if history had ended.

It was not the end for Slava Stetsko, however. On June 30, 1991, Slava returned to Ukraine to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OUN's declaration of independence in Lviv. It was also 50 years to the day since the Lviv pogrom of 1941. Yaroslav Stetsko broadcast his declaration in Lviv as the pogrom was taking place in the streets. Thousands of Jews were butchered with hammers and axes while Yaroslav pledged allegiance to Adolf Hitler.

Slava must have had fond memories of that day. About a year later, she officially re-founded her political party, this time under the name [Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists](#). CUN was never a large party, but it was canny, recruiting mostly from police and security forces, the purposes for which would be seen after the Maidan. That said, CUN stood in elections, won seats and sat in ruling coalitions. Slava even opened the [Verkhovna Rada](#) in 1994 and again in 2002. After her death in 2003, she was eulogized as a hero by the Ukrainian [media](#).

The political situation at the time of Slava's homecoming was fraught. In 1991, [Leonid Kravchuk](#) became President of Ukraine.

As was seen time and time again throughout the old union, Ukraine was looted for all it was worth by the U.S. and NATO. The standard of living plummeted in what was once one of the most prosperous regions of the Soviet Union, and crime ran rampant. Gangs went to war over table scraps, and the situation became so dire that many women were forced into prostitution to support themselves. Many more were simply kidnapped and trafficked from the country.

Inflation spiked by more than 4000%, making savings accounts worthless overnight. Bank defaults meant government employees often went without salary for years. State-owned industries were sold off for pennies on the dollar, and with them jobs vanished with nothing to replace them. This left even highly trained and educated people destitute to such an extent that many died from hunger and exposure. Ukraine became one of the poorest and most corrupt nations in Europe and remains so.

Kravchuk was an acolyte of Yeltsin, and so everything not bolted down was stolen or sold off. One of the more egregious examples was the Black Sea merchant fleet, which was privatized in [1992](#) and its ships transferred to offshore holding companies beginning in 1993. In 1991, the fleet of 280 ships was the third largest in the world. By 2004, only six remained.





Leonid Kravchuk (right) with Boris Yeltsin. [Source: [thumb.spokesman.com](http://thumb.spokesman.com)]

In the meantime, Crimea was having problems of its own. In 1991, shortly before the fall of the USSR, a referendum passed by a wide margin asking for the return of Crimea's autonomy. The fall of the union made this impossible, so the Crimean parliament voted in 1992 for [full independence](#). This was set to be confirmed via referendum, which the Ukrainian government prevented.

Crimea tried again in 1994, this time taking it to referendum [first](#). Ukraine responded by [dissolving](#) the Crimean parliament, then arresting and deporting Crimea's President Yuri Meshkov. In 1998, a new constitution was imposed on Crimea, curtailing their autonomy.

Kravchuk's government became increasingly unpopular during this time. In 1993, crippling mine strikes led to early elections in which, despite his best efforts, Kravchuk was defeated by another Leonid, this time named Kuchma.

Kuchma was no better. Widespread corruption remained the norm and Ukraine's economy cratered under an even more extreme privatization and austerity regime.

Because of the economic strife, Kuchma faced a resurgence of the Communist party. Banned in 1991, the Communist party was reformed in 1993 after several victories in court. Although it was too late to field a presidential candidate, the CPU was the largest party in the Rada after the 1994 elections.

Due to Kuchma's continued malfeasance, the Communists gained even more strength during the next four years, winning an impressive victory in 1998's [parliamentary elections](#). With presidential elections scheduled for the next year, it was expected that the Communists would regain power. Kuchma, in a panic, [rigged the election](#) with American help.

Ukraine's economy declined every year until 2000. Even as the situation improved with the turn of the millennium, Kuchma's popularity did not. After Kuchma was caught [on tape](#) ordering the death of former right-wing terrorist turned journalist Georgiy Gongadze, street protests erupted throughout Ukraine. Kuchma followed that up by selling advanced [Soviet radar units](#) to [Saddam Hussein](#), leading to a Western boycott.

Kuchma tried to stabilize the situation by aggressively playing Russia and NATO against each other. On the campaign trail, Kuchma advocated for improved relations with Russia, but after he won, he went back and forth as the circumstances demanded. Kuchma's government signed treaties with both the CIS and NATO, and only one year after selling radar to Iraq, Ukraine helped invade Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom to get back in America's good graces.



Kravchuk (left) with Bill Clinton in 2007. [Source: [pinchukfund.org](http://pinchukfund.org)]

Kuchma's attempts to save the ship failed. After constant protests and political pressure, he agreed to step down after the 2004 election, instead putting forth his protégé and Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovych. It was this election that would begin a nearly 20 year rollercoaster ride of Ukrainian politics, the aftermath of which we can still clearly see today.

Slava Stetsko would not live to see this, dying in 2003 after a short illness. Her political party continued on, however, and would play a vital role in the saga of the struggles of the

next two decades. After the Maidan, the children of Bandera and Stetsko, raised at the bosom of the CIA, would get the chance to finally fulfill their purpose as an army of fascist killers.

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*Evan Reif was born in a small mining town in Western South Dakota as the son of a miner and a librarian. His father's struggles as a union organizer, and the community's struggles with de-industrialization, nurtured Evan's deep interest in left-wing politics. This, along with his love of history, made him a staunch anti-fascist. When not writing, researching or working, Evan enjoys fishing, shooting, and Chinese cooking. Evan can be reached at [wharghoul@gmail.com](mailto:wharghoul@gmail.com).*

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