

END NOTE

LOYAL NATIONALISM IN POSTCOMMUNIST STATES

By Taras Kuzio

Links between the intelligence services and pro-regime nationalist parties are common in Russia, Serbia, Ukraine and other postcommunist states. In 1990, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev allowed the creation of the Liberal Democratic Party led by Vladimir Zhirinovskii in order to create the impression of a multi-party democracy such as existed in other central European states where satellite parties were allowed to exist alongside the all powerful Communists.

Following the collapse of the USSR, the successor Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) continued to play an important role in drawing nationalist votes away from the "red-brown opposition" comprising the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and other parties in the National Salvation Front. President Vladimir Putin has less need of Zhirinovskiy's LDPR because he himself came to power in 1999-2000 on a wave of anti-NATO, anti-U.S., and anti-Chechen Russian nationalism. His "party of power," Unity (now, Unified Russia), has successfully integrated Soviet and Russian tsarist symbols into a pragmatic Eurasianist ideology.

In Serbia, Vojislav Seselj's "loyal nationalist" Serbian Radical Party (SRS) was supported by the ruling Socialists (SPS). Seselj's nationalists competed with Vuk Draskovic's opposition nationalist Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) for the right to lead the revival and rehabilitation of the World War II royalist Cetnik movement.

The SRS served two useful purposes. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was able to create a broad coalition ranging from diehard Marxists of the United Yugoslav Left, led by Milosevic's wife, to the SPS and the SRS on the right. Allowing the SRS and other paramilitaries to undertake the worst atrocities in Bosnia and Kosova meant Milosevic could distance himself from those actions.

Ukraine, for its part, has witnessed the emergence of a series of "loyal" nationalist parties, whose interests and agendas do not always coincide, and two of which subsequently aligned with the opposition. Of the three nationalist groups now active in Ukraine,

the newly formed People's Movement of Ukraine-Statist Opposition is a "loyal nationalist" opposition. The Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) has become part of the Yuliya Tymoshenko bloc and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (KUN) was eventually allowed to join former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko's Our Ukraine.

In Ukraine in the first half of the 1990s, evidence emerged that the intelligence services and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarch (UOC-KP) were supporting the UNA. The UNA's paramilitary arm, the Ukrainian People's Self-Defense Forces (UNSO), earned a fearsome reputation fighting on the side of separatist forces in Moldova and Chechnya, and on behalf of Georgia in Abkhazia. Chechen President Djokhar Dudaev's bodyguard included a member of the UNA-UNSO.

After Leonid Kuchma was elected Ukrainian president in 1994, he had no use for UNA-UNSO, and it was temporarily banned after it was involved in riots in 1995 during the funeral of Patriarch Romaniuk of the UOC-KP. In the late 1990s, UNA went into opposition to President Kuchma and it began to obtain financial support from "dissident-oligarch" Fatherland Party head Yuliya Tymoshenko. In the 2002 parliamentary elections UNA members were elected within the Tymoshenko bloc. Last year, Tymoshenko's Fatherland Party merged with Stepan Khmara's Conservative Republican Party, which is close to UNA.

Until the late 1990s Tryzub (Trident) led by Yevhen Fil was the paramilitary organization of KUN, with Tryzub camouflaged as the Stepan Bandera Sports-Patriotic Association. KUN was established in 1992 as the overt political party of the emigre, secretive Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Stepan Bandera faction), the most radical of the three emigre wings of OUN. KUN was the only political party established in Ukraine by emigres.

Rukh for Unity, led by Bohdan Boyko, was created after February 1999 when Rukh divided first into two and later into three wings. Originally created in 1988-89 as the Popular Movement for Restructuring (better known as Rukh), it was led for most of the 1990s by Soviet-era dissident and political prisoner Vyacheslav Chornovil who died in a still-unexplained car crash a month after Rukh's split.

Rukh for Unity became notorious between 2000-02 when it, together with Tryzub, defended Kuchma against the opposition during the Kuchmagate scandal. Acting as agents provocateurs, Tryzub was behind Ukraine's worst riots in March 2001. Blame for the riots was placed on the pro-opposition UNA, 17 members of whom were sentenced the following year in an attempt to tarnish the opposition.

During the March 2002 parliamentary elections, Rukh for Unity created a bloc together with another pro-Kuchma nationalist group, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in Ukraine, led by former political prisoner Ivan Kandyba. The bloc's aim of taking away votes

from Yushchenko's Our Ukraine was unsuccessful and it only obtained 0.16 percent.

Tryzub parted ways with KUN in the late 1990s, and its emigre backers, OUNb, also split from it in 2000 amid suspicions that high-ranking members of KUN, such as its deputy leader Serhiy Zhizhko, had covert links with the intelligence services. An emigre was chosen to head OUNb, while Slava Stetsko continued to lead KUN until her death in 2003 (between 1992-2000 she had led both OUNb and KUN)

Tryzub was subsequently co-opted, like Rukh for Unity, by the executive as "loyal nationalists," and since the late 1990s, Tryzub and Rukh for Unity have played the same role as Seselj's SRS and Zhirinovskii's LDPR in Serbia and Russia, respectively. On 11 June, the People's Movement of Ukraine-Statist Opposition bloc was announced for the October 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections. The two founding groups are "loyal nationalist" Boyko's People's Rukh for Unity and Fil's paramilitary organization Tryzub.

This "loyal nationalist" bloc is hostile to Yushchenko and formally claims it is also in opposition to Kuchma. As a "third force," its anti-U.S. and anti-opposition rhetoric is louder than that directed against Kuchma, the oligarchs or Russia. It claims Tymoshenko and Yushchenko are undertaking "anti-Ukrainian" policies, a view long touted by the "loyal nationalist" Lviv newspaper "Za vilnu Ukrainu." Other attributes of the new bloc's program are populist, such as re-privatization. Two other slogans popular in western Ukraine are banning the Communist Party and official recognition for the OUN and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The "loyal nationalist opposition," just like the emigre OUNb, is opposed to working together with the left on any question. This differentiates them from opposition nationalists, such as UNA, who work within the Tymoshenko bloc with the opposition Communists and Socialists.

The hope of the "loyal nationalist opposition" presidential candidate, who will be announced in the fall, is to obtain 3 percent in the first round of the 2004 presidential ballot. Although not much, those votes could be crucial if transferred to a Kuchma loyalist in the second round. In the second round of the 1994 elections, Kuchma only won by 6 percent over then-incumbent Leonid Kravchuk.

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