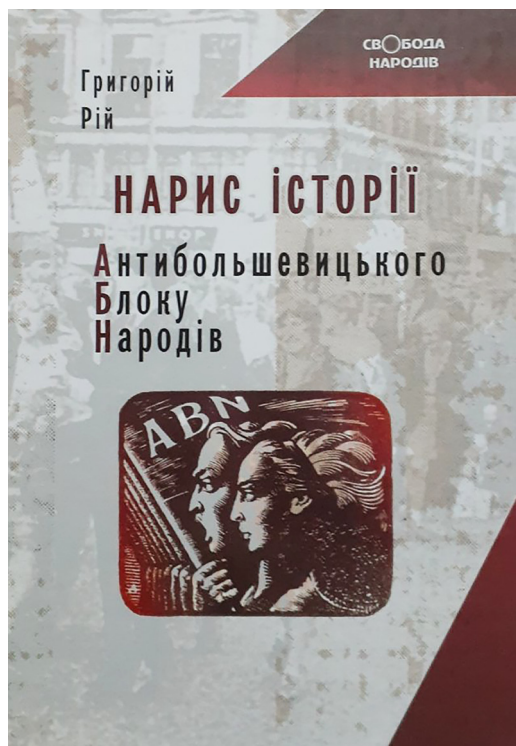


UKRAINIAN FRONT OF THE ABN AGAINST SOVIET COMMUNISM AND RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

(Review on the Monograph of Rii H. Ye. «Essay on the History of
the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations: Monograph».

Kyiv. Ukrainian Publishing. 2021. 236 p.)



“Essay on the History of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations” is the work of a Ukrainian scientist about the place, role, and mission of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) in the history of Ukraine and world history. This scientific research can be interesting for students, graduate students, scholars, and all those interested in the history of the Ukrainian diaspora and anti-Bolshevik movements.

Hryhoriy Rii is a Ukrainian historian who graduated from Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv (2016) and defended his doctoral dissertation for the Doctor of Philosophy on the topic «Anti-Bolshevik

Bloc of Nations: Transnational History of Eastern Europe during the Cold War» at the Ukrainian Free University (Munich, Germany, 2018).

Later, the scientist published the results of his research in the form of a monograph, “Essay on the History of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations” (Kyiv, Ukraine, 2021). It was published on the initiative and support of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (banderivska) on the 75th anniversary of the ABN with assistance and support of the League of Ukrainians of Canada, the “Buduchnist Foundation”, the “Ukrainika” Research Institute (Canada), the Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society (United States of America) and the OUN Archives (London) (p. 174).

PhD H. Rii devoted about ten years to the study of the history of ABN. He received professional recommendations on writing a dissertation and later a monograph on this topic from such scientists as Dr Gennady Poberezhny (scientific supervisor), Dr Oleksandr Motil, Prof. Volodymyr Serhiychuk, Dr Ivan Patrylyak, Dr Gennady Ivanushchenko, Dr Oleksandr Sych, and others. Andriy Haydamakha, Viktor Rog and Oleg Romanyshyn provided valuable advice and guidance. Stepan Bratsyun provided the opportunity to work with the personal archives of Yaroslav and Slava Stetsko (pp. 174–175).

In the text of the monograph, H. Rii repeatedly emphasized the role of Yaroslav and Slava Stetsko (representatives of the Bandera OUN) in the process of uniting

more than ten emigrant organizations from Eastern Europe and Asia in the ABN around the idea of a liberation struggle against Soviet communism and Russian imperialism (pp. 13–14).

An important source used in the monograph was the printed publication “ABN-Correspondence”, which had been published since February 1949. It covered information in several languages (English, French, German, etc.) about the situation in Ukraine and other countries of Eastern Europe and Asia under communist rule, as well as about the activities of the ABN in general (articles, constituent documents, conference materials, information about actions, demonstrations, statements, etc.). The publication served as information support for all international events of the Bloc and was subscribed to by academic and state institutions of various countries for their libraries. The editors-in-chiefs of this publication were V. Orletsky (1950–1954), M. Borys (1954), D. Osinsky (1954–1957) and Slava Stetsko (from 1957–2000) (pp. 25, 93, 169).

The author of the monograph emphasized that Yaroslav and Slava Stetsko were engaged in the establishment of the transcontinental anti-communist network of the ABN. The result was the recognition of the potential of the peoples enslaved by communism in the fight against communism by the American administration led by Ronald Reagan after their participation in the “Week of Enslaved Peoples” in July 1983 in Washington (USA) (p. 162). Under their leadership, the ABN continued to fight not only against communism but, above all, against Russian imperialism, defending the right of the enslaved peoples to national self-determination and gaining state independence (p. 166).

According to H. Riy, the ABN became the platform at international events where the real opposition of the united enslaved peoples could freely declare its existence and fight against the communist regime. And this, without a doubt, had an impact on the collapse of the communist bloc and accelerated the collapse of the Soviet system. It is hard not to agree with this opinion (p. 167).

In addition, the author repeatedly noted that Yaroslav Stetsko and Slava Stetsko were members of such international organizations as the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) and the Asian Peoples Anti-Communist League (APACL), which operated during the Soviet period. In the post-Soviet period, these organizations continued the struggle against communist regimes, transforming in 1991 into the World League for Freedom and Democracy and the Asia-Pacific League for Freedom and Democracy, respectively. World League for Freedom and Democracy, by the way, from December 13, 1993, received the status of a non-governmental organization at the United Nations (p. 189). Slava Stetsko continued to participate in the work of these international organizations, and the main task of the Ukrainian Committee of the ABN continued to be the struggle against Russian imperialism and countering attempts at communist revenge in Ukraine (pp. 168–169).

The positive aspects of this monographic study are the following positions.

In the research, the author H. Riy made an attempt for the first time to comprehensively highlight the history of the formation and activity of the ABN in the context of the national struggle of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the transnational activity of the Bloc during

the period of bipolar world confrontation.

In his work, the author tried to consider the activity of the ABN during the Cold War as a component of the transnational anti-communist network, which was created for the struggle of Eastern European national movements against imperial rule (p. 6).

The monograph is one of the scientific studies that examines the history of the Ukrainian diaspora, in particular, the Ukrainian nationalist movement of the post-war period in emigration. The author proposes to consider the ABN as a transnational organization that began active anti-Bolshevik activity in the mid-1940s.

The author managed to realise the key goal of the study – to show the activities of the ABN and emphasise its important role in the context of the development of post-war international policy and world anti-communism. As well as to make an excursion into the history of cooperation with foreign special services and their attempts to influence the policies of the ABN and the OUN (Bandera). Much attention is paid to the national composition of the ABN.

The monograph is based on a wide source base, which includes works by German, Finnish, British, American, Canadian and other researchers of the history of the ABN and anti-communist organizations.

The author introduced into scientific circulation authentic terminology introduced by the Russian-Bolshevik regime, which emphasizes the alien occupation-colonial nature of the communist regime. A brief chronicle of events in the history of the ABN is compiled.

The monograph consists of an introduction, four thematic sections

and conclusions. A list of conventional abbreviations, a Brief Chronicle of the ABN and a List of used sources and literature, and a geographical index, and a named index are added.

In the introduction, the author analyzed the historiography of the problem and cited the sources used, the list of which consists of 450 positions, grouped by chapters (pp. 13–25; 191–216). The first chapter is devoted to the issue of the confrontation between the enslaved peoples and the Bolshevik empire, the concept of the joint struggle of the enslaved peoples is considered, and attempts to implement the concept of the enslaved peoples during and after the Second World War are characterised (pp. 27–54). The second chapter reveals the ideology of anti-communism/anti-Bolshevism as an integration ideology in Western countries, as well as in Asia and Latin America (pp. 64–82). The third chapter examines the formation of the Eastern European anti-communist network of the ABN, identifies national organizations, the role of Western intelligence in the organization's activities, the Bloc crisis of 1954, etc. (pp. 86–135). In the fourth chapter, the author considers the ABN as a transcontinental anti-communist network, the organization's cooperation with Asian and Latin American organizations (pp. 140–163). In the Conclusions, the author summarised what exactly distinguished the ABN among other similar organizations and anti-communist movements of the Cold War; he showed the change in the focus of the Bloc's further activities towards the protection of democratic rights and freedoms (pp. 170–173).

As for the list of sources and literature used by the author, in monographs it is more convenient for the reader to have

all references to sources and literature immediately on the same page where they are first mentioned. And at the end of the monograph, it is desirable to make a general list of literature and sources, grouped in alphabetical order. It makes the reading process easier.

Finally, this monograph reflects the full diversity of the history of the ABN and characterises the role of this international organization in world history, shows that

modern Russian foreign policy (Putin's neo-imperial regime) poses a threat to all Eastern European countries, and imperial ambitions require a rethinking of the idea of a common front of struggle.

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