

September 20, 1952

STEPAN BANDERA RESIGNS HIS POST AS HEAD OF  
ORGANIZATION OF UKRAINIAN NATIONALISTS

All Ukrainian newspapers in Europe reported the following communique issued by the Supreme Council of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and dated September 12, 1952:

"The Secretariat of the Supreme Council of the OUN Units Abroad is authorized to communicate the following:

"Beginning September 22, 1952 Stepan Bandera resigned his post as head of the Supreme Council of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and relegated these functions to the head of the Supreme Council of the OUN in Ukraine until the election of the new head of the Supreme Council of the OUN.

"After the resignation of Stepan Bandera, Yaroslav Stetsko, head of the Supreme Council of the OUN Units Abroad who was elected at the last conference, offered his post suggesting that Stepan Bandera be elected to head that post.

"Stepan Bandera declined to accept the proposal, but agreed to appoint a member of the Supreme Council of the OUN Units Abroad under the direction of its present head."

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This brief and somewhat vague communication brings to the fore something that was long expected in various Ukrainian political circles. Stepan Bandera, one of the most known leaders of the OUN, has been associated with the Ukrainian liberation movement for almost two decades. Controversial as he was, his organization is one of the largest, numerically speaking, Ukrainian political groups and has a mass following, especially among the youth, in Western Europe, Great Britain, Canada, South America and the United States. The OUN under his leadership claims a vast underground resistance network in Ukraine. Not so long ago, namely, on July 2, 1951 Pravda of Moscow, in castigating "nationalist deviations" in Ukrainian literature, singled him out as an "evil enemy" of the Soviet Union and an "agent of American imperialists," and compared him to Simon Petliura, the leader of the anti-Soviet Ukrainian forces, who was assassinated by a communist agent in Paris in 1926.

It is reliably reported that the resignation of Bandera from the post of the head of the Supreme Council of the OUN was forced by the growing opposition to his leadership among his top-ranking nationalist leaders, who opposed him on the ground of his totalitarian tactics, and particularly the use of his secret SB organization (Sluzhba Bezpeky--Security Service) as an instrument of intra-party policies among the Ukrainian political exiles.

Among the top-notch OUN-R leadership who are in opposition to Bandera and possibly to his close lieutenant, Yaroslav Stetsko,

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are known to be such veteran OUN leaders as Lenkavsky, Kordiuk, Matla, Pidhayny and Ilnytsky.

Bandera's resignation might in some way facilitate the speed of the consolidation among the Ukrainian political groups in Europe, although Stetsko's virtual leadership in the OUN would still be a stumbling block on the road to the much-craved-for Ukrainian political consolidation.