

Stephan BANDERA
Chief of OUN/B

He was born in 1907 and comes from a Galician peasant family. When he finished his secondary studies he consecrated his life to politics and joined the organization of Col. Eugene KONWALTS, the OUN, which later (1928) became the OUN. Bandera remained in the homeland and became the active leader of the organization there. Between 1930 and 1931, the Polish government began a brutal pacification among the Ukrainian terrorists who were responsible for the murder and outrages against Polish officials and political leaders. Tracked by the Polish police, Bandera escaped to Germany in 1934 and went into hiding. In the meantime (1936) the Polish Minister of the Interior, PIGONSKI, was assassinated in the streets of Warsaw. Poland had just concluded a pact of non-aggression and friendship with the Third Reich and now demanded the extradition of BANDERA and LUBENKO as leaders of the OUN, and instigators of the plot. They were returned to Poland, tried in Warsaw and condemned to death, but Pres. PILESKI and Vasyl MENDEL both appealed to the president of Poland and he commuted their sentence to fifteen years imprisonment. During the war in Poland in 1939, Bandera succeeded in making his escape and returned to the homeland. During the ensuing occupation of Galicia by the Soviets he resumed command of OUN in Poland. The youth of OUN proclaimed him a national hero, and a hero of the party. It was this fact which made it possible for him to take charge of the opposition which had been created in the OUN against PILESKI and his Directorate in the Spring of 1941. BANDERA successfully split the OUN.

Since that time, he has been the nominal chief of the OUN/B but has played a small role in the organization. He was arrested by the Germans in September 1941, and held in a concentration camp until October 1944. While he was held by the Germans his popularity did not diminish and all of the anti-German and anti-Soviet revolutionary factions operated under the name of Banderists, and it was OUN/B which later created UPA and OUNR. It has even been said that one could meet bands in the extreme north of Russia who had absolutely no connection, nor anything in common with the Ukraine, who went under the designation of Banderists, as a symbol of revolution and liberty.

The Germans were anxious to capitalize on BANDERA's popularity and therefore released him in October 1944. The Germans decided to change their political policy towards the Ukraine and upon the instigation of HIMMLER offered the leaders of the four chief political factions an opportunity to form a Ukrainian National Committee (or Council) which the Germans would recognize as the de jure government of the Ukraine. The four leaders consulted were: BANDERA, MEANIN, LEVITSKY, and SKRIBANSKY. BANDERA refused to enter into his German plot, and because of his authority over the Trilogy, his refusal to join caused the plan to fall through.

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Today BANDERA lives in retirement in Bavaria (after having lived in the vicinity of Innsbruck). He does not take a direct part in the decisions of JUN/B but his friends still continue to monopolize on the popularity of his name.

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BANDERA, STEFAN