

'Big empires don't fall apart neatly'

by Denise Henderson

The Hidden Nations: The People Challenge the Soviet Union

by Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky
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Rus, are you not similar in your headlong motion to one of those nimble troikas that none can overtake? The flying road turns into smoke under you, bridges thunder and pass, all falls back and is left behind! . . . And what does this awesome motion mean? What is the passing strange force contained in these passing strange steeds? Steeds, steeds, what steeds! Has the whirlwind a home in your manes? . . . Rus, whither are you speeding so? Answer me. No answer. The middle bell trills out in a dream its liquid soliloquy; the roaring air is turned to pieces and becomes wind; all things on earth fly by and other nations and state gaze askance as they step aside and give her the right of way.

—Nikolai Gogol, *Dead Souls*

Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, the authors of *The Hidden Nations*, were sponsored by the social democratic National Endowment for Democracy (NED). They were given a grant which enabled them to travel throughout the Baltics, the Russian Republic, and what are known as the Turkic republics: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tadzhikistan, in the southern part of the Soviet Union. It is important to keep this in mind when reading their "primer" on the Soviet Union's captive nations, because their sponsor, the NED, is known by its deeds in Latin America in particular, where the NED has fostered political, and social, and most of all economic dislocation. Although Diuk's and Karatnycky's book is thus on the surface harmless, the reader must keep in mind the bias of the NED, which is in favor of the dissolution of the Soviet Union economically and politically, a move which could lead to civil war and ultimately a global Thirty Years' War.

The authors talked to the members of the cultural and political movements of the hidden nations, seeking out the leadership of these movements to determine what the possibilities are for the re-creation of nation-states out of 70 years of communist rule.

As the authors state, the "nationalities question" has always been an irritant for both imperial and Soviet Russia. The reason for that should be clear. In its imperial form, "Rus" does not admit that there are portions of its empire which represent separate, historically based language-cultures which conform to the definition of a nation-state. Consequently, Moscow prefers to think of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaidzhan as republics which must remain politically, culturally, and economically—above all, for purposes of looting, economically—part of the territory of the Soviet Union.

But these nation-states, as has been proven over the past decades, have had nothing to gain from their union with Matushka Rus. As Diuk and Karatnycky demonstrate, they have had everything to lose from that situation.

The tragedy of the captive nations has been told many times. Their cultures have been decimated by the assassination or emigration of their leaders, and by enforced Russification. Their economies have become subservient to the gargantuan needs of the Soviet Union. Georgia, for example, which once grew a diversity of crops, is now only permitted, according to the central economic plan, to grow cotton. The soil has been impoverished by that state planners' decision. Similar tragedies exist in each of the captive, or hidden nations.

The authors quickly sketch the leaders of the various republics, without giving the reader much insight into their character. We learn that Georgian leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia does not think the parliamentary methods which the Baltic states have applied, will work in Georgia. We learn that the family of Vytautas Landsbergis, the President of Lithuania, has a history of fighting for independence. Beyond that, we learn very little about the character of these leaders of their nation-states in the process of becoming. But the question of what these republics can and will become—particularly the question of how they will hold up economically—is left dark.

Which way?

No one doubts that there are hidden nations in the Soviet Union. What will happen to them, however, if they become independent, is an open question. For, if they link their economic fate to that of the Western free market economy, as NED would propose (economist Lyndon LaRouche has dubbed it the flea market economy), their scant resources and already outdated factories will be looted, the way Poland is being looted under the guidance of Harvard's Jeffrey Sachs.

To what extent, therefore, are these nations aware of the economic challenges which face them?

Diuk and Karatnycky give some insight into this question.

The concerns of a former Ukrainian political prisoner and dissident named Evhen Sverstyuk, are explained this way:

"The conventional view . . . is that, deep inside, intellectuals living under totalitarianism have worked out their ideas about the failings of the system fully and have remedies for societal ills. But the contrary is the case. Their views of their own predicament and that of their nation have never been fully worked out, either beneath the surface or in the open."

In other words, the best of the democratic activists have no positive program; the worst have accepted into their ranks to some degree British free trade ideology, à la Boris Yeltsin's moves toward selling off existing Soviet industries piecemeal to the highest western bidders, or the proposed creation of low-wage, labor-intensive free enterprise zones throughout the various republics.

Yet, were the Soviet Union to accede to the inevitable (as Diuk and Karatnycky put it), and accept the independence of various of the republics as *faits accomplis*, the first item on the agenda would have to be an extensive economic reconstruction program requiring the expansion of Lyndon LaRouche's idea of the Productive Triangle which he first put forward in 1989.

Simply put, the Productive Triangle is an area extending from Paris to Berlin to Vienna, representing the most energy-intensive, capital-intensive industries remaining in the world, and a market population of 500 million. That Productive Triangle, LaRouche proposed, could lay the basis for the modernization of both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as well as provide a needed lifeline to transport agricultural and other assistance into that area of the world.

Third Rome or normalcy

The alternative, warned LaRouche, would be a military expansionist policy of the Soviet Union. This danger was expressed by Andrei Fadin of the Club for Democratic Perestroika, who told Diuk and Karatnycky: "There's bound to be a backlash. I think the imperial and anti-democratic tradition will in the end win out. . . . For 200 years Russia has sought to be a great power. And because this goal has been attained by virtue of the blood and sweat of the masses it has entered into popular political consciousness. To the extent we can distance ourselves from this imperial tradition, we can become a normal nation.' But he argues that if Russians fail to 'shake the psychology of the "Third Rome," we will never see the rise of normal society here. . . . The real problem is that big empires don't fall apart neatly and peacefully. And this is particularly problematic in an empire that is also a nuclear superpower.' "

Big empires don't fall apart neatly. The Third Rome psychology also has an external, or foreign policy aspect to it, which is most dangerous of all, since that aspect would involve a military move by the Red Army against its Europe-

an neighbors to the West.

Fadin's warning about the Soviet Union's "Third Rome" psychology is quite apropos. The imperial impulse in the Soviet Union is derived from the desire of the joint military, political, and religious leadership of the Kremlin to become the leadership of a "third and final Roman empire," taking as their starting point the reforms of Diocletian, the Roman emperor who outlawed improvements in technology and who permitted freedom of religious worship only on the grounds that the cult of the emperor would be the primary mode of worship.

Diuk and Karatnycky, although they are capable of identifying many of the issues involved in the independence of various of the Soviet republics, have only liberal NED-style solutions to propose. Their major solution? A "transition to the market economy"—that widely bandied-about phrase, which is devoid of meaning for economies which have been devastated through years of subservience to Soviet military and economic planning methods.

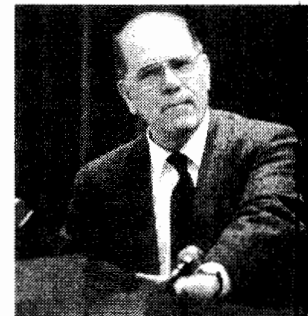
It were far better for these republics to keep Adam Smith-type liberals away from their reborn nation-states, and instead fight for LaRouche's Productive Triangle—as those who attended the Schiller Institute's recent conference in Berlin on this life and death matter committed themselves to do.

'From the prison in which the politician's career expires, the influence of the statesman is raised toward the summits of his life's providential course. Since Solon, the Socratic method has become the mark of the great Western statesman. Without the reemergence of that leadership, our imperiled civilization will not survive this century's waning years.'

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

IN DEFENSE OF COMMON SENSE

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.



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