

Lukks, who had led the G7, became secretary-treasurer of the International BRD Committee.¹⁰

Hess notes that at the first BRD meeting, delegates from G7 émigré groups decided to “reach outside of our communities.” To achieve this they used the National Citizens’ Coalition (NCC). With 40,000 members, it was one of Canada’s most formidable, far-right forces. (Stephen Harper later became its president, 1998-2002.) Hess arranged to meet NCC vice president David Somerville, and he became what Hess called his “brother in arms.” Somerville contributed what Hess called his “knowledge, ... vision and strategies,” and the “NCC’s generosity with regards to office space and assistance.” This support spread BRD beyond its hardcore East European base. When Somerville suggested that August 23 be the BRD’s focal point, Hess says he made “an immediate executive decision and agreed.”¹¹ In his introduction to Soltys’ book, Somerville explains that before his meeting with Hess he had

a revelation ... to use the public’s preexisting *revulsion* for the Nazis to get them to feel similarly toward the Soviet Communists.... [I]n condemning both regimes simultaneously, it would be impossible for critics to attack us as right wing extremists or possible Nazi sympathizers.¹² (Emphasis added)

To spread public “revulsion” against the Soviets, Hess and Somerville began an “organizational campaign” tour to the UK, Germany, Austria, France, Sweden and the Netherlands. This tour, says Hess, was funded by Stefan Roman.¹³ As Canada’s “Uranium King” billionaire, Roman was a lead force in the Canadian Slovak League and the Slovak World Congress, which glorified Slovakia’s Nazi puppet regime. During their tour, Hess and Somerville were welcomed by such leading profascists as Slava Stetsko, who met them at the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations’ (ABN) global HQ in Munich.¹⁴ (See photo, opposite.) Stetsko led the ABN, was an executive of the World AntiCommunist League and headed the Banderite Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. While in Munich, Hess and Somerville also broadcast “interviews at Radio Free Europe [RFE] into the Soviet Union regarding Black Ribbon Day.”¹⁵ (RFE was the CIA’s largest Cold War propaganda mill.)

In 1986, the once-tiny BRD project spread wildly with “anti-Soviet rallies in the US, Australia, Sweden, France and Britain,” and in “at least nine Canadian cities.” At Toronto’s rally, thousands were addressed by Conservative MP and former Mayor David Crombie. Canada’s BRD protests also had government support through PM Brian Mulroney whose warm greetings were read out to the anti-Soviet protesters across Canada. That year, the BRD group also produced \$40,000 worth of TV ads (i.e., \$83,000 in 2020) to equate the Soviets with Nazism. In response, the USSR,

The late Cold War context of the BRD crusade

Black Ribbon Day (BRD) arose in the heyday of President Ronald Reagan, a former B-movie actor who had been the smiling PR frontman for nuclear-weapons maker GE (1954-62) and for the CIA’s antiRed “Crusade for Freedom” propaganda campaign administered by Radio Free Europe (1950-60).

In his role as America’s “Great Communicator,” Reagan followed his script in 1983 to brand the USSR as the “evil empire.” Using his hokey, homespun style to spread vile hate speech against socialism, he was a vibrant symbol of the West’s most aggressive anti-Soviet policies. Reagan was, for example, infamous for arming rightwing paramilitaries. But in Cold War parlance, these terrorists were “freedom fighters” struggling to stop the Third World spread of communism. Subsidized by smuggling cocaine and heroin, these CIA proxy armies killed thousands of innocents in covert US wars that crushed fledgling leftwing governments from Nicaragua to Afghanistan.

Reagan’s anticommunist thugs were glorified by East European émigré groups that had long revered their own “freedom fighting” predecessors who allied with the Nazis in WWII. In 1986, as the Iran-contra affair hit the news, speakers for the Afghan *mujahideen* and Nicaraguan *contras* attended a global conference of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) in Toronto. These and other CIA-backed “freedom fighters” were on the front-line of the West’s Cold War crusade.

which had lost 27 million citizens to defeat Nazi Germany, issued an all-but-ignored media release titled “Hate Propaganda Day Sullies Canada.” It correctly denounced BRD as “a blatantly dishonest anti-Soviet propaganda exercise.” As mainstream journalist John Best reported: “From all indications, not least the outraged response from the Soviets, Black Ribbon Day was a huge success in its first year.”¹⁶

The swift realization of Hess’ BRD dream proves that myth building can be “a huge success” if, as a tool for pushing official narratives, it is supported by politicians, the mass media and state-supported groups—even if they include those with close organizational and ideological connections to Nazi collaborators.

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3. Patryk Polec, “The Polish Canadian Communist Movement, 1918-1948,” 2014, pp.17, 180. bit.ly/PPolec
4. Chris Clements, “Voluntary Ethnic Groups and the Cdn. Polish Congress’ Role in Cold War Ca-

Brzezinski, “*The Spirit of the Time*” and the Canadian Polish Congress

While Reagan is most closely associated with arming Afghan and *contra* terrorists, it was Democrat president Jimmy Carter who began their CIA funding. Carter’s strategy was engineered by Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Polish American from Warsaw who grew up in Montréal. His father, Tadeusz Brzezinski, a veteran of Poland’s antiSoviet War (1919-20), was a diplomat in Poland’s anticommunist/anti-semitic government (1921-45) and its consul general in Montréal during WWII. After the war, when communists came to power in Poland, the Brzezinskis—like 55,000 other antiSoviet Poles—made Canada their home. In Montréal, Tadeusz became president of the far-right Canadian Polish Congress, CPC (1952-62).¹

His son Zbigniew, with a BA (1949) and MA (1950)² from McGill, replaced Henry Kissinger as US National Security Advisor (1977-81) and spearheaded Carter’s use of terrorists to promote US interests. In July 1979, Brzezinski began the Carter CIA’s multibillion dollar funding of Afghan *mujahideen*. After six months of their attacks on the Afghan socialist government, the USSR agreed to defend Afghans from CIA-backed terrorists. Brzezinski also pushed US funding of Nicaragua’s *contras*, Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA terrorists (fighting Angola’s Marxist government), and far-right, anti-Soviet “dissidents” in Eastern Europe. More recently, he backed the Prague Declaration.

Brzezinski inspired a new generation

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- nada,” *Oral History Forum*, 35, 2015, p.5. bit.ly/CPCsin
5. Public Accounts Canada (1995, ‘97, ‘98, ‘04). Plus, three CPC member groups in Alberta (Polish-Canadian Society, Polish Veterans Society and Polish Combatants Assoc. #6, Edm.) received \$510,000 in 2018. (Figures adjusted for inflation)
 6. Markus Hess, “Some Memories,” in Edward Soltys, *Black Ribbon Day*, 2014, pp.16-29.
 7. Markus Hess, “Black Ribbon Day Memories,” *Culture & Life*, Sum. 2011. (trans) bit.ly/HessBRD
 8. Soltys, *op. cit.*, pp. pp.19-20.
 9. *Ibid.*, pp.116-17.
 10. *Ibid.*, p.19. Lukks was G7 pres. (late ‘70s-early ‘80s); LNAK pres. (‘70s-‘80s); Baltic Federation of Canada’s vice pres. (mid ‘70s); and World Federation of Free Latvians pres. (late ‘80s.)
 11. *Ibid.*, pp.20-21.
 12. David Somerville, “Truths we must relearn,” Soltys, *ibid.*, p.32.
 13. Hess 2014, *ibid.*, pp.23.
 14. *ABN Correspondence*, May-Jun. 1987, p.3. bit.ly/ABN-BRD [See photo, at left, with bust of Nazi collaborator, Roman Shukhevych (p.51)]
 15. Hess 2014, *op. cit.*
 16. John Best, “Black Ribbon Day likely to be permanent fixture,” *Star Phoenix*, Sep. 3, 1986, p.4. bit.ly/ABN-86

of CPC activists to build BRD. One example was CPC-member Marek Celinski, who wrote the Foreword to Edward Soltys' book, *Black Ribbon Day*. Joanna Lustanski, the book's CPC publisher, called Celinski one of "the creators and longtime advocates of the [BRD] initiative" who "represented the Canadian Polish Congress on the Black Ribbon Day Committee" (1985-91) and "closely collaborated ... on organizing many BRD events."³

Joining the CPC executive in 1980, Celinski was "assigned as a liaison ... to the Group of Seven [G7] (representing seven Eastern European ethnic organizations)." In detailing "the Spirit of the Time," he reveals how Canada's G7 was advised by top Reagan war hawks. Celinski notes a Feb.-1982 trip to Washington DC to meet Brzezinski and other Polish émigrés in the US intelligence world. Inspired by their council on "what could be done at this very pivotal moment in history,"⁴ Celinski devoted years to the BRD crusade.

While representing the CPC in the US capitol, Celinski met Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, who had led the Polish section of the CIA's top propaganda vehicle, Radio Free Europe (1952-76). Nowak-Jezioranski had "personal connections," said Celinski, "with important political figures" in Reagan's administration.⁵ This opened doors to meetings with Brzezinski and others.⁶ Asking "what would be the best thing for us to do given the current situation," says Celinski, "Brzezinski and Nowak-Jezioranski's opinion was that the best strategy would be to create a united front of the nations subjected to the Soviet-style oppression." Celinski then returned to Toronto

with a renewed energy to follow on the idea of organizing and strengthening the cooperation between various ethnic groups suffering Communist oppression.⁷

Canada's 'Captive Nations' reborn: The Central and Eastern European Council (CEEC)

This reinvention of Cold-War Canada's Captive Nations Cttee. was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Black-Ribbon-Day (BRD) founder Markus Hess. Its president since 2019 has been Markus Kolga of the Estonian Central Council. The CEEC pushes BRD, Canada's anticommunism monument, Magnitsky laws and other far-right efforts. Most of its groups are described within this issue of *Press for Conversion!*:

- **Albanian Community in Canada**
- **Canadian Polish Congress** (pp.24-26)
- **Czech and Slovak Association** (pp.44-45)
- **Estonian Central Council** (pp.28-31)
- **Hungary Congress Canada**
- **Latvian National Federation** (pp.38-39)
- **Lithuanian-Cdn. Community** (pp.34-37)
- **Ukrainian Canadian Congress** (p.47)

Pandering to profascist émigrés

During Captive Nations Week 1983, Reagan invited ABN and World AntiCommunist League (WACL) leaders to the White House. With Yaroslav Stetsko in the front row, Reagan told them: "Your dream is our dream. Your hope is our hope."⁸ In 1984, Reagan sent "best wishes for every future success" to the WACL's global event. It is "an honor to send warm greetings," he said, because the WACL has "long played a leadership role in drawing attention to the gallant struggle now being waged by the true freedom fighters of our day."⁹ Reagan's words to ABN-Canada's 1986 conference in Toronto said: "I applaud your efforts" to free "the nations held captive by forces hostile to freedom." His message to assembled ABN leaders, Canadian politicians, *contras* and *mujahideen*: "For those who seek freedom, security, and peace, we are the custodians of their dream.... God bless you."¹⁰

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney also sent support to this ABN event. "I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings and sincere best wishes," said his message to assembled delegates from the ABN's many Nazi-linked émigré groups and their terrorist allies. "[H]uman rights and fundamental freedoms are the foundations of any civilized and caring society," he said. "On behalf of the Government of Canada, may I wish you all the very best for productive discussions."¹¹

'Freedom fighters' and nuclear war

In the early 1980s, NATO aimed 600 new nuclear US Pershing IIs and cruise missiles at the USSR. Millions protested. Pierre Trudeau's Liberals, cloaked by peace myths, kept aiding US hegemony and abetting war industries like Litton. In 1983, when Canada allowed the testing of US missiles, hundreds of thousands joined "Refuse-the-Cruise" rallies.

Deriding all these activists as commie dupes, the ABN said its 1983 protest against Toronto "peaceniks" was organized with the Canadian Coalition for Peace through Strength (CCPS).¹² (Led by Polish-Canadian Miroslaw Matuszewski, it too became active in the BRD crusade.¹³) To hype their counter-protest, the ABN said "the only real threat to the protection of our planet is Moscow and its policy of world domination." The rally, it said, "went to the American Consulate as a sign of support for Pres. Ronald Reagan" and climaxed "with the burning of the Soviet-Russian flag" and "singing the Canadian National Anthem." Picket signs at their anti-"peacenik" rally read: "Yes yes for Cruise Test," "Hands off Litton," "Pacifists Terrorists" and "NATO: The real peace movement of our time."¹⁴

BRD conjures up the Cold War canard of Nazi-Communist equivalency



ProNATO BRD vs NDP "peaceniks"

Canada's BRD committee hosted a 1987 dinner for 500 at which Mulroney's war minister spoke on "Canada and NATO: Defending Peace with Freedom."¹⁵ This, said BRD founder Markus Hess, launched their "campaign to oppose the efforts of the NDP and many 'peace' groups to get Canada to desert its traditional allies and pull out of NATO." News of this event parroted BRD memes about "two partners in tyranny—Hitler and Stalin."¹⁶

In 2004, Jack Layton deserted peace-group allies by ending the NDP's decades-old policy getting Canada out of NATO. Then, in 2009, the NDP actually joined the BRD crusade when MPs in parliament unanimously recognized August 23 as Black Ribbon Day.

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