

Interview: Volodymyr Chernyak

'Wild liberalism is making us paupers'

Professor Chernyak is a department head at the Institute of Economics of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. He was interviewed Nov. 8 by Karl-Michael Vitt. Victor Petrenko translated the interview from Ukrainian.

Chernyak: On the territory of the former U.S.S.R., primarily in Ukraine and in Russia, there has been an ugly implementation—and hence discrediting—of the ideas of liberalism and capitalism. It is becoming more and more obvious, that we need not unconditionally accept all the western values—specifically, radical liberalism.

Radical liberalism, under the conditions of Ukraine and Russia, turns out to be wild liberalism and liberal capitalism becomes wild capitalism. Current practice shows that, instead of a free market, a speculative market of commodities, credits, and securities is being created.

The outcome of all this is the division, polarization, and pauperization of society. Nostalgia for times past, for com-

munism, is rising among wider and wider strata of the population. The pauperized strata could be easily aroused by extremists of different kinds.

The policy of radical liberalization is destabilizing the situation in Ukraine and Russia, and this raises our anxiety. It is widely known, that it was the terrible destabilization of the country, which pushed the war in former Yugoslavia. We don't want the development of Ukrainian events to follow Yugoslavia's scenario.

EIR: You have read the interview with the pope, which was published in the *Guardian*, where the pope touched upon the same problems. What is your opinion?

Chernyak: I think the pope has evaluated the situation impartially. Above all, I mean that he managed to avoid a black-and-white approach to the assessment of the situation and avoided primitivism in his assessment. And that capitalism—especially in central and eastern Europe—does not exhibit its best sides, although it cannot be an ideal society or political structure.

This bears upon the specific practice of how the ideas of liberalism were realized in these countries. On the other hand, there is no basis to judge socialism only in its negative aspect. And the pope draws attention precisely to this fact. Although there was no strict hint [in the interview], one should discuss the problem of convergence. I think the convergence theory has very good prospects.

The return of "leftists" in Poland reflects the inability of



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the current political structures to implement required changes, in a way excluding pauperization of broad strata of the population, and a high unemployment level. From this point of view, the pope's interview looks like a balanced assessment of the situation.

Interview: Vyacheslav Chornovil

'Destructive forces threaten Ukraine'

Vyacheslav Chornovil is founder and leader of the Rukh, the independence movement in Ukraine. He was imprisoned many times in the Soviet Union for his political beliefs and activities, first in 1967, then during 1967-69, 1972-79, and 1980-85. He is a member of Parliament of Ukraine. Mr. Chornovil was interviewed for EIR by Karl-Michael Vitt on Nov. 7 in Kiev. The answers were translated from Ukrainian by Victor Petrenko.

EIR: How do you see the future of Ukraine, in connection with the new parliamentary election?

Chornovil: How should I put it, to be frank? My mood is not so optimistic. Under conditions of such acute economic depression, with such a high rate of inflation, and mass pauperization of the population, great opportunities are being opened for our "leftists." They are trying to arouse among the population's nostalgia for the communist times of the past, and a negative attitude to reforms, above all economic reforms.

And it is very difficult to forecast the results of the upcoming elections: There are still five months ahead, and the destructive processes in our society, in our economy, are going at an accelerating rate. If the elections took place today, we—all anti-communist forces—would have the possibility to get half, or even more, of the seats in the Parliament. But it is difficult to say what will happen in five months. All the more so, as the communists have preserved organizational unity, and our parties and organizations are nearly "newborns."

EIR: Do you consider Rukh to be a social democratic party?

Chornovil: I respect social democrats very much, but I am not a social democrat. We are an organization of the center, which is close to Christian democratic principles. Concerning economic development, we still stand for a liberal economy, though we realize that under our conditions of mass pauperization of the people—which were reached due to the communists—we would be forced to take something from programs

of the social democrats in the beginning of our work, because a regulatory role of the state will still be needed, until the average level of living standards rises. But in the ideal case, we believe that such interference should be minimal.

EIR: This is the position of the pope: to help the weak. And the state should only create the parameters, such that every individual could develop himself. In connection with the hard economic situation in eastern Europe, the pope has given an interview [to Jas Gawronski, published in *La Stampa* in Italy, and quoted in the London *Guardian* Nov. 2], bearing on drawbacks of modern liberal capitalism and the "shock therapy" policy in the countries of eastern Europe. What is your opinion of this policy?

Chornovil: Unfortunately, I have not gotten acquainted with the interview of Pope John Paul II. Concerning the shock therapy policy: It is impossible here, because our people are too poor and they could not stand such a policy today. It seems to me that this policy has been working in Estonia, and given positive results. There is no universal approach.

EIR: From the standpoint of international policy, Ukraine became a "forgotten" country. The West turned all its attention to Russia, only encouraging Ukraine to abandon its nuclear weapons. Have you any advice for western politicians?

Chornovil: I was saying these things all the time I was in America, and met congressmen and other officials, and when I met members of Parliament in Great Britain, and during meetings with German or French colleagues. It seems to me that Europe realizes our situation better than the United States does.

But this situation depends on ourselves as well. If we have the old *nomenklatura* still in power in Ukraine, if the reforms don't proceed, then the attitude [toward us] is not the best.

Concerning nuclear capabilities, it's true that we are more involved in discussion of this, due to our possession of nuclear weapons. Were it not for these arms, we would be forgotten the next day. I do not champion leaving them here for a long time, but I am against our being talked to in the language of ultimata. This problem is a problem of time, and an issue of national security.

EIR: In view of the increasing threat of international conflicts in the former U.S.S.R., do you see any prospects for eastern Europe, which can be drawn from the Peres-Arafat agreement, especially from its economical issues?

Chornovil: It is not so topical for Ukraine, because we do not have such tense national relations. Even the situation in the Crimea is not too acute. What we have there is not a nationalist, but a *nomenklatura* attempt to break the Crimea away from Ukraine, to create some kind of a preserve of old communist system.

But, in general, I consider this agreement a positive one. It is another question, to what extent it is real. But the step was very important.