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Cold War Allies: The Origins of CIA's Relationship with Ukrainian Nationalists (S)

Kevin C. Ruffner

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In April 1945, Adolf Hitler's Thousand Year Reich faced imminent and catastrophic military defeat. From the west, Allied troops poured into Germany after securing a bridgehead over the Rhine at Remagen. From the east, the Red Army advanced toward Berlin. (U)

Millions of refugees fled before the advancing armies—especially in the east. Germans, Ukrainians, Poles, Balts, Hungarians, Rumanians, and countless others became displaced persons or DPs in military jargon. By the end of the war in May 1945, 2.3 million DPs were in the American-occupied zone of Germany alone. Allied occupation authorities organized the DPs into camps until they could be repatriated. Many, however, refused to return to their homes in countries the Red Army then controlled. (U)

Contact with ethnic groups from the Soviet Union gave American intelligence officials the first direct knowledge of dissent within the USSR. Initially the United States recruited espionage agents from among the emigre groups, but soon expanded its effort to include recruitment for potential covert action and paramilitary operations. Recent wartime experience with resistance groups behind German lines heavily influenced American thinking about the emigres. Americans hoped that if war with the USSR broke out, Eastern and Southern Europeans would become resistance fighters like the French maquis. (U)

As relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated, the Central Intelligence Agency expanded its ties with these emigres. Using the Ukrainians as an example, this bonding illustrates the pitfalls and problems of enlisting disaffected ethnic minorities in an ideological struggle. (U)

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FOR COORDINATION WITH US Army

Hesitant First Encounter (U)

American intelligence had its first tentative encounter with Ukrainian emigre groups as early as April 1946, marking the beginnings of one of the earliest and most controversial covert action projects of the Cold War.¹ (C)

The Strategic Services Unit (SSU, the successor to the wartime Office of Strategic Services, or OSS, and precursor to the Central Intelligence Group and Central Intelligence Agency) learned about anti-Soviet Ukrainian resistance movements that continued after the war in Western Europe.² Boleslav A. Holtsman, SSU's X-2 (Counterintelligence) representative in Munich, became the primary American contact with Ukrainian leaders in the American zone in Germany.³ By September 1946,

¹ A description of the first contact between American intelligence and the Ukrainian nationalists is found in [Zsolt Aradi] to Chief of Mission, "Belladonna Project," 24 June 1946, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 168, Folder 5. (S). For a request to vet various Ukrainian clerics as SI agents, see Cable, Vienna to SSU, War Department, 13 June 1946, IN 38136, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 3, Folder 25. (S). A week earlier, SI/Austria designated the American-Ukrainian contact as Project Belladonna. Alfred C. Ulmer, Jr., to Chief, Secret Intelligence Branch, SSU/Germany, "Project Belladonna," 7 June 1946, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 168, Folder 5. (S).

² SSU disseminated what it knew about the Ukrainians, their various factions, and the extent of collaboration with the Germans in SAINT, AMZON to SAINT, "Ukrainian Nationalist Movements," 24 June 1946, LWX-485, in WASH-INT-REG-163, Record Group 226. (OSS Records), Entry 108A, Box 284, (no folder listed), National Archives and Records Administration. SSU's London station response to this report is found in SAINT, London to SAINT, AMZON, "Ukrainian Nationalist Movements," 16 July 1946, XX-12288, in WASH-REG-INT-169, Record Group 226. (OSS Records), Entry 109, Box 91, Folder 133, National Archives and Records Administration. (U)

³ Bill Holtsman served as a translator with OSS in Europe until his discharge in early 1946. He received an appointment as Intelligence Officer with SSU/X-2 in March 1946 and joined the Office of Special Operations (OSO) in October 1946. Holtsman transferred from Munich to Berlin in 1948 to work on Polish operations and returned to the United States in 1953. Personnel file, Boleslav A. Holtsman, Office of Human Resources Job [] Box 29. (S); and Boleslav A. Holtsman, interview by Kevin C. Ruffner, tape recording, Arlington, VA, 3 November 1993 (hereafter cited as Holtsman interview). Recordings, transcripts, and notes of this interview and subsequent interviews are on file in the CIA History Staff. Holtsman made preliminary contact with the Ukrainians through his Russian sources in July 1946 and reported what he had learned in "Ukrainian Groups Now in Germany (General Info)," 17 August 1946, LWX-965, in WASH-REG-INT-163, Record Group 226. OSS Records, Entry 108A, Box 285, (no folder listed), National Archives and Records Administration. (U)



Boleslav A. Holtsman, SSU's counterintelligence officer in Munich, established contact with Ukrainian nationalists in 1946. (Photo courtesy of B.A. Holtsman) (C)

Ukrainian sources gave Holtsman several reports dealing with the organization of Soviet intelligence in western Europe.⁴ (S)

Three problems prevented immediate and close collaboration between SSU and the Ukrainian emigres. Most importantly, American intelligence was woefully ignorant of the different Ukrainian groups and their aims. Col. William Quinn, Director of SSU, recommended gathering intelligence about the history, reliability, and motivation of the disparate Ukrainian emigre organizations before "major steps are taken to exploit them for intelligence purposes."⁵ (S)

A second problem was the war record of some anti-Communist Ukrainians. The struggle between the Wehrmacht and Red Army awakened and inflamed ancient rivalries and hatreds in Ukraine; many

⁴ SAINT to SAINT, Bern, "Ukrainian Nationalist Movement," 27 September 1946, X-8363, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 1, Folder 9, (s).

⁵ Strategic Services Unit, "Ukrainian Nationalist Organizations," Intelligence Brief No. 13, 15 October 1946, in Zsolt Aradi, "Ukrainian Nationalist Movement: An Interim Study," October 1946, HS/CSG-2482, History Staff Job [] Box 5 (s).

Ukrainians despised Poles and Jews as well as Soviet Communists. Ukrainians served in the German army and had been linked to Nazi atrocities on the Eastern Front. (S)

Motivation and reliability were final SSU concerns. Quinn considered the Ukrainians "adroit political intriguers and past masters in the art of propagānda" who would not hesitate to use the United States for their own ends. Moreover, emigre groups in general—and Soviet ethnic minority groups in particular—were obvious targets of Soviet penetration and manipulation.⁶ (S)

Ukrainian Personalities and Groups (U)

Zsolt Aradi, a Hungarian consultant with SSU, was instrumental in establishing American intelligence contacts with the Ukrainians. Aradi had written "The Ukrainian Nationalist Movement" for SSU in October 1946, and used his ties with Ukrainian church officials at the Vatican to meet emigre leaders in Germany. (S)

Aradi initially worked with Father Ivan Hrinioch and Yury Lopatinsky, members of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (UHVR or *Ukrainska holovna vyzvolna rada*). Hrinioch, a Greek Catholic priest and longtime Ukrainian nationalist, served as the UHVR's second vice president while Lopatinsky acted as liaison between UHVR and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, UPA (or *Ukrainska povstanska armiiia*),

⁶ American concern about using emigre groups is seen in SAINT to SAINT, AMZON, untitled memorandum, 12 August 1946, X-8014, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 1 (S); SAINT to SAINT, AMZON, "Ukrainian Nationalist Movement," 19 September 1946, X-8276, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 1 (S); and SAINT, AMZON to SAINT, "White Russians-Vetting policy," 31 August 1946, LWX-1058, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 1 (S).



Zsolt Aradi (on right) used his Vatican ties to expand US intelligence's awareness of the Ukrainian resistance movement. (Photo courtesy of *Arist Kohrin*) (C)

still in Ukraine fighting the Soviets.⁷ UHVR's claims that the UPA was engaged in a fierce struggle against Soviet troops in Ukraine attracted American interest and eventual support. (S)

Aradi also met Mykola Lebed, a fierce nationalist and key figure in the Ukrainian liberation movement. Lebed, one of the founders of the *Organizacya Ukrainskykh Nationaltiv*, or Organization of Ukrainian

⁷ Hrinioch (his name is spelled numerous ways) was the most important Ukrainian contact with the Americans during this time period. Born in 1907, Hrinioch grew up in western Ukraine where he was ordained in the Church and became an active Ukrainian nationalist. While one American case officer noted that "subject was in contact with the GIS [German Intelligence Service] during the early stages of the German campaign in Galicia," American intelligence officers found Hrinioch to be "very well informed and highly intelligent" as well as "incorruptibly honest." Hrinioch, in fact, served as the chaplain of the infamous Ukrainian Nachtigall Legion of Ukrainian Nationalists, which collaborated with the Nazis and played a major role in the 1941 proclamation of Ukrainian statehood. Hrinioch had the operational cryptonym of CAPARISON. Hrinioch served after the war in his clerical role and by 1982 he had been elevated to the rank of Patriarchal Archimandrite. Ibid; and Acting Chief, Munich Operations Base, Memorandum to Richard M. Helms, Chief, Foreign Branch M, "Personal Record of CAPARISON," 6 May 1949, MGM-A-1148, (S), in Ivan Hrinioch, File C [redacted] Information Management Staff files. (S) See also Ivan Hrynokh [sic] entry, Volodymyr Kubijovyc, editor, *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). Lopatinsky was born in 1906 and served as an officer in the Polish Army. He also joined the Nachtigall Legion and immigrated to the United States in 1953. Yuri Lopatynsky [sic] entry, Kubijovyc, ed., *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. (U)



Ivan Hrinioch, UHVR's second vice president in Germany, was a leading point of contact between the Ukrainian resistance movement and US intelligence. (C)



Yury Lopatinsky, one of the first Ukrainian contacts (C)



Mykola Lebed, a fervent Ukrainian nationalist, served as the UHVR's foreign minister. (C)

Nationalists (OUN), served as the foreign minister of *Zakordonne Predstavnytstvo UHVR* or Foreign Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council. Lebed fervently believed in Ukrainian independence, but was controversial. Poland sentenced him to death (later commuted to life in prison) for his involvement in the assassination of the Polish Minister of the Interior in 1934.⁹ (S)

Aradi dubbed this group of Ukrainians as Referat-33 (or R-33) and discussed its members' personalities in an operational report of 27 December 1946.¹⁰ Hrinioch, Lebed, and Lopatinsky, he wrote, were "determined and able men, but with the psychology of the hunted. They are ready to sacrifice their lives or to commit suicide at any time to further their cause or to prevent security violations, and they are equally ready to kill if they must." "It is always necessary to remember," Aradi added, "that they have an almost religious worship of their nation and distrust anything foreign: first and foremost, Polish; then Russian; then German." Nonetheless, Aradi thought them useful if the Americans treated them properly.¹¹ (S)

Stefan Bandera was not a member of R-33, but was another personality—perhaps *the* personality of the Ukrainian emigre community—that had to be recognized. According to an OSS report of September 1945, Bandera had earned a fierce reputation for conducting a "reign of terror" during World War II. He led the largest faction of OUN (which split when the war broke out), and Andrey Melnik led the smaller. Both factions participated in terrorist activities against Polish officials before the war, and Ukrainian nationalists allied themselves with their Nazi "liberators" during the first days of Operation Barbarossa in 1941. Even though OUN's enthusiasm diminished after the Nazis failed to support Ukrainian statehood, many Ukrainians continued to fight alongside the Germans until the end of the war. At the same time,

⁹ Lebed was born in 1909 and organized the youth wing of the OUN in the early 1930s. For more information on Lebed, see Mykola Lebed, File [] Information Management Staff files (S), and Mykola Lebed entry, Kubijovyc, ed., *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. (U)

¹⁰ KILKENNY, Operational Memorandum, MGH-391, "Operation Belladonna." 27 December 1946, 25 pp., Political and Psychological Staff records, Job [] Box 1 (hereafter cited as "Operation Belladonna," 27 December 1946) (S). Referat-33 (R-33) included the following members: Hrinioch, Lebed, Lopatinsky as chiefs; Myron Matvieyko (chief of the OUN's security branch); and Yaroslav Stetsko (head of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations). (S)

¹¹ "Operation Belladonna," 27 December 1946, p. 17. (S)



Myron Matveyko, chief of the OUN's security branch, later defected to the Soviets. (C)

Nazis rounded up OUN members and placed them in concentration camps." (U)

Which groups had the best claim to legitimacy and popular support? Aradi drew on his contacts and reported in December 1946 that "after a thorough study of the Ukrainian problem and a comparison of information from several sources in Germany, Austria, and Rome, source [Aradi] believes that UHVR, UPA, and OUN-Bandera are the only large and efficient organizations among Ukrainians." Based on intelligence that leaders of the UHVR had provided, Aradi decided that this group "is recognized as having the support of the younger generation and of Ukrainians at home." He theorized that opposition to UHVR in Ukrainian circles arose "because the organization is independent and forceful and has always refused to collaborate with Germans, Poles or Russians."¹² (S)

The First Projects (U)

In mid-1946, Aradi and Holtsman launched two separate espionage and counterespionage projects for SSU/X-2 using Ukrainians still in Germany. BELLADONNA drew upon Aradi's contact with Hrinioch to collect information on the Soviet military. LYNX, under Holtsman's direction, focused on identifying Soviet agents in western Germany. Project TRIDENT replaced LYNX in early 1947; TRIDENT promised

¹² Ukrainian collaboration with the Nazis is discussed in Boshyk, ed., *Ukraine during World War II*, pp. 61-88. The historical backdrop to Ukrainian political activities is found in John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 2d ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963). For further information on Bandera, see Stefan Bandera, File [redacted] Information Management Staff files (S).

¹³ "Operation Belladonna," 27 December 1946, pp. 16-17. This report also enumerates the Ukrainian proposals for cooperation. A supplement to this report is found in KILKENNY, Operational Memorandum, "Belladonna Operations - 2," 27 December 1946, FSRO-985, MGH-430, 3 pp., Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 510, (S). Both reports were written by Aradi, but according to Gordon M. Stewart, "they are the work of Zsolt Aradi and [redacted]." Gordon M. Stewart, Chief, Intelligence Branch, to Helms, "Belladonna Operation," 2 January 1946 [1947], FSRO-1111, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 511, (S).

better control of Ukrainian affairs and security.¹³ Project UKULELE, under Bill Holtsman's direction and an offshoot of LYNX/TRIDENT, drew upon the services of a double agent known only as SLAVKO.¹⁴ (S)

In all three projects, Holtsman and Aradi used Myron Matvieyko, chief of OUN's security branch, *Sluzba Bezpeka*, as their primary contact in Munich. Using Matvieyko proved a mistake. He was an Abwehr agent during the war and later exchanged information gained from OUN's "bunkers" in Germany "for protection in the American Zone and some minor operational supplies."¹⁵ His reports soon became unreliable and his actions questionable, so CIA dropped him in 1950 for "inaptitude." In 1951 Matvieyko defected to the Soviets and denounced the entire Ukrainian emigre leadership as Nazi collaborators and tools of the "capitalist intelligence services."¹⁶ Matvieyko's defection confirmed some American and Ukrainian suspicions that he had been a Soviet double agent throughout his work with US intelligence. (S)

Matvieyko's illegal activities during the late 1940s (including murder and counterfeiting) strained American willingness to work with the Ukrainians in Germany.¹⁷ By the spring of 1947, Headquarters reported that "Washington does not feel that intelligence derived from such Ukrainian groups is worth the time and effort which would necessarily have to be expended on such a project. Experience has

¹³ For details on these early SC Munich operations, see SCO, Memorandum for [redacted] Deputy Chief of Operations, "CE Operational Progress Report No. 5," 17 February 1947, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 513, (S); "Operation Trident: Progress Report I," 21 January 1947, HSC/OPS/9, MGH-642, (S); "Developments in the TRIDENT Project," 21 February 1947, HSC/OPS/026, MGH-900, (S); and SC Munich, "Operation TRIDENT," 15 June 1947, (S), in "Trident Project," European Division Job [redacted] Box 4, Folder 20, (S) (hereafter cited as "Trident Project."). See also SC, AMZON to Foreign Branch M, "Progress of Munich Operations," 15 May 1947, HSC/OPS/53, FSRO-1796, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 516, Folder 5, (S). The identity of various US intelligence officers referred to by "AB" call numbers can be found in SC, AMZON to SC Washington, "AB Numbers and Location of SC Personnel," 12 March 1947, FSRO 1436, 1457, 1458, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 514, Folder 1, (S).
¹⁴ SC, AMZON to Helms for SC, "Organization of Project UKULELE," 28 March 1947, HSC/OPS/35, FSRO-1547, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 514, Folder 4, (S).

¹⁵ Quotation cited in SC Munich, "CAPANEUS," 15 June 1947, (S), in "Trident Project" (S).

¹⁶ English translation of Radio Kiev broadcast, "Broadcast for Ukrainians in the Emigration," 24 November 1960, in Matvieyko, [redacted] Information Management Staff files. (S) For further information on Matvieyko's defection, see Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks: The Memories of an Unwanted Witness—A Soviet Spymaster* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1994), pp. 257-259. (U)

¹⁷ "Liquidation of Lt. Andrei Pechara," 3 June 1947, MGH-1399, (S), in "Trident Project." A description of other murders committed by Matvieyko and the SB/OUN is found in [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

January 1971, Clandestine Services Historical Program [CSHP] no [redacted] retained in CIA History Staff files, pp. 148-160, (S), hereafter cited as CSHP [redacted] For description of Matvieyko's counterfeiting activities, see numerous reports in his 201 file. (S)

shown that information derived from such organizations has been both low-grade and ideologically biased."¹⁸ (S)

Holtzman, in fact, dropped arrangements with the LYNX group in late 1946 and focused on more limited contact under Operation TRIDENT. In doing so, he severed relations with Hrinioch (who had been Aradi's source) while still maintaining contact with Matvieyko. In the meantime, OUN's ongoing internal dissension further tested American patience with the Ukrainians. After a stormy meeting in Germany in August 1948, the leaders of the ZPUHVR in Germany (principally Lebed and Hrinioch) broke with Bandera's OUN. The increasingly totalitarian attitude taken by Bandera and his stubbornness towards the West constituted the main reasons behind this break."¹⁹ (S)

Hiding Bandera (U)

The Soviet Union's demand for repatriating all its citizens suspected of war crimes and collaboration with the Nazis complicated Aradi's and Holtzman's work with the Ukrainians while they established initial contacts with OUN and ZPUHVR.²⁰ American acquiescence in the Soviet demand would damage relations with the Ukrainians. American refusal, on the other hand, would damage relations with the USSR in Germany. Citizenship issues further complicated the problem. The redrawn borders of Poland and the USSR put portions of Ukraine in both countries; hence, many Ukrainians claimed to be Polish citizens exempt from repatriation to the USSR. (S)

The Soviets wanted Stefan Bandera. American intelligence officials recognized that his arrest would have quick and adverse effects on the future of US operations with the Ukrainians. According to Aradi, Bandera's arrest:

... would imply to the Ukrainians that we as an organization are unable to protect them, i.e., we have no authority. In such a case, there is not any reason or sense for them to cooperate with us.

¹⁸ SCO to Thurston, "CE Operational Progress Report No. 5," 17 February 1947, FSRO-1306, Information Management Staff Job [] Box 513, (S).

¹⁹ The background of this conference and the dissension between the OUN and ZPUHVR and other Ukrainian groups is discussed in Chief of Station, Karlsruhe (signed by James Critchfield and [] to Helms, "Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe," 30 pages, 20 October 1948, MGM-A-793, Political and Psychological Staff Job [], Box 1, Folder 5, (S). This report is hereafter cited as Project ICON Report. (S)

²⁰ AB-51, AMZON to AB-43, Munich, "Stefan Bandera," 28 October 1946, FSRO-656 (S) in Bandera, [] (S)

One of the reasons why full cooperation between the UHVR and our organization has not developed yet is the suspicion of these leaders that we will ultimately "betray" them. From the very beginning they complained that Americans have no real interest in them and that Communist-penetrated USA officers or officials will trade them to Russia. This belief was shared by both the Bandera people and the conservative Ukrainians. (S)

Aradi concluded that, "if it should be decided not to use these people and their organization for intelligence purposes, it would be better to arrest not only Bandera, but all the leaders whose names and whereabouts are known to us."²¹ (S)

Headquarters disagreed with Aradi's assessment, and indeed had never put much credence in the "intelligence" the Ukrainians were providing. The Central Intelligence Group recognized that Bandera's extradition to the Soviet Union would be a blow to the underground movement, but noted that his organization "is, as the field agrees, primarily [original emphasis] a terrorist organization." Harry Rositzke, the acting chief of Special Projects Division-Soviet (SPD-S), wrote on 7 January 1947 that:

The case of Bandera's extradition and our part in it brings to the fore the whole Ukrainian problem. If the *sine qua non* of Ukrainian cooperation is political, then we should cease all *direct contact* [original emphasis] immediately. We are not in a position to give it, and if we attempt to create the impression that we can, we can expect only bad results, for it will become obvious sooner or later that the protection we offer is extremely fragile as factors beyond our control are brought into play. If we accept the premise that political support is out, we must also face the fact that in the long run operations using the Ukrainians as an organized group will probably turn out to be worthless—simply because without political support the Ukrainian nationalist groups will be decimated by Soviet pressure and demoralization. It is therefore difficult to see the Bandera problem as really significant. The effects of Bandera's arrest will only be to precipitate an inevitable development.²² (S)

²¹ SC AMZON to SC Washington, "Search for Bandera, Leader of the OUN," 20 November 1946, FSRO-766, and Attachment 1 (KILKENNY) (S), in Bandera, ☐ ☐ (S)

²² SC FBM to SC AMZON, "Munich Contacts," 9 January 1947, X-9126, enclosing SPD-S, "AB-51 and KILKENNY's Views on the Effects of Bandera's Extradition," 7 January 1947, Information Management Staff Job ☐ ☐ Box 6. (S)

The day before he wrote this memorandum, Rositzke criticized CIG for failing to develop Soviet strategic "Lambda targets" and protested that American intelligence was overinvolved in tactical operations in Europe. He was concerned about CIG's "hasty exploitation of sources of opportunity, especially anti-Soviet emigres from the USSR and satellite countries, to the exclusion of actual penetration operations." He called for a concentrated American effort against the Soviet Union and a reduction of CIG's "exploitation of such organized anti-Soviet groups as the Ukrainians, Georgians, and Balts for penetrating the USSR [which] involves dangerous security and political hazards."²³

(C)

Rositzke's arguments apparently were persuasive, for by the spring of 1947 Munich base had orders to stop its work with the various emigre groups, especially the Ukrainians, and concentrate on other targets. The new chief of the Munich Operations Base, [redacted]

[redacted] ceased contact with the Ukrainians and CIG turned over Ivan Hrynioch and Mykola Lebed to the US Army as sources.²⁴ (C)

SANACC 395 (U)

In December 1947 the National Security Council issued NSC 4-A, which had important consequences for CIA in general and the emigre programs in particular. NSC 4-A gave the DCI responsibility for conducting covert psychological operations. This meant that CIA could now take the offensive in ways not possible previously. (U)

Before NSC 4-A the Central Intelligence Group tried unsuccessfully to use emigres to collect intelligence. With the NSC's directive, the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency could move toward active cooperation with them in other areas of activity. The change resulted in part from CIA's first attempts to penetrate the Iron Curtain and linked the fate of the Ukrainians (and other Eastern European emigre groups) with the CIA's efforts. (C)

²³ Harry A. Rositzke, Acting Chief, SPD-S, to Donald H. Galloway, Assistant Director for Special Operations, "Recommended Policy for Lambda Strategic Operations Program," 8 January 1947, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] [redacted], Box 4. (C)

²⁴ Lt. Col. Ellington D. Golden, Region IV, 970th CIC Detachment, to Commanding Officer, 970th CIC Detachment, "Hrynioch, Ivan," 18 November 1947, (C), enclosing Special Agent Camille S. Hajdu, Memorandum for the Officer in Charge, "Hrynioch, Ivan," 17 November 1947, (C), in Ivan Hrynioch, Dossier XE-20-19-66, Investigative Records Repository, US Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland (hereafter cited by dossier number, IRR, INSCOM). (C)

DCI Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter initially opposed the employment of emigre groups despite the pressure from other federal agencies, including the State Department and the Army. In early March 1948, Frank Wisner, a former OSS officer and a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, proposed that the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee (SANACC) form an ad hoc committee to explore the use of Soviet exiles. Under the authority of NSC 4-A, SANACC took up Wisner's proposal and circulated his paper, "Utilization of Refugees from the Soviet Union in U.S. National Interest," as SANACC 395 on 17 March 1948. Shortly afterwards, SANACC's ad hoc committee, comprising members from State, Army, CIA, and other agencies, began considering the paper and its recommendations.²⁵ (U)

Wisner proposed in SANACC 395 to "increase defections among the elite of the Soviet World and to utilize refugees from the Soviet World in the national interests of the U.S." The paper noted the great dissatisfaction of many Russians since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the growth of Russian anti-Communism during the German occupation in World War II. Wisner believed that at least 700,000 Russians were scattered in European DP camps and elsewhere. This figure, Wisner claimed, represented "the potential nucleus of possible Freedom Committees encouraging resistance movements into the Soviet World and providing contacts with an underground." According to Wisner, the United States remained "ill-equipped to engage in the political and psychological conflict with the Soviet World," and the "Soviet satellite areas like the USSR are tending to become a terra incognita." American ignorance of the Soviet Union in all fields and at all levels, he lamented, was profound and growing.²⁶ (U)

With SANACC's approval, Wisner planned to "remove present deterrents and establish inducements" to spur defectors among the Soviet elite, as well as to increase the utilization of these refugees "to fill the gaps in our current official intelligence, in public information, and in our politico-psychological operations." The State Department requested that CIA conduct the study in accordance with Paragraph 6 of the SANACC 395's recommendations and report its findings to the committee.²⁷ (U)

²⁵ State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee 395, *Utilization of Refugees from the Soviet Union in U.S. National Interest*, 17 March 1948, located in Scholarly Resources, Inc., National Security Policy of the United States, LM-54, Roll 32, SWNCC Case Files Nos. 382-402 March 1947-June 1949, National Archives and Records Administration. (U)

²⁶ *Ibid.* (U)

²⁷ W.A. Schulgen, Acting Secretary, SANACC, to Members, 18 March 1948, SANA-5983, LM-54, Roll 32, National Archives and Records Administration. (U)

Captain Alan McCracken (USN), CIA's Deputy Assistant Director for Special Operations (DADSO), served as the Agency's point of contact for SANACC 395. He expressed reservations about the overall value of Soviet defectors and rejected most of Wisner's proposals. McCracken criticized the State Department for advocating a "social science institute composed of refugee and American scholars for the purpose of doing basic research studies on the Soviet World." McCracken considered "this proposal nothing but expensive hot air," just as he rejected bringing Russians to the United States. "I do not think *any* 'social science scholars' will do us a particle of good—we have too damned many of this type of faker in the U.S. already."²⁸ (C)

DCI Hillenkoetter provided his own comments on SANACC 395 to the National Security Council on 19 April 1948. The NSC had asked "whether the mass of refugees from the Soviet world, now in free Europe and Asia, can be effectively utilized to further U.S. interests in the current struggle with the USSR and whatever may eventuate therefrom." The DCI judged the exiles practically useless in peacetime, but potentially valuable in a war. Hillenkoetter noted that, in the event of a conflict with the USSR, the United States would "have a critical need for thousands of these emigres as propaganda personnel, interrogation teams, and sabotage and espionage operations and administrative personnel."²⁹ (S)

The DCI recommended "no organized utilization by the U.S. Government of large groups or the mass of Soviet emigres," but proposed that the State Department screen all refugees from the Soviet orbit and prepare a master index of names, residences, and occupations. This screening, Hillenkoetter noted, "must include the object of isolating persons who are suitable for direct use in intelligence purposes, as distinct from merely furnishing miscellaneous information."³⁰ (S)

²⁸ Alan R. McCracken, Deputy Assistant Director Special Operations, to [redacted] Chief, Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff (ICAPS), "Utilization of Soviet Refugees," 29 March 1948, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 1, Folder 13, (C). McCracken's memo responded to [redacted] request for comments; see [redacted] to Galloway, "Utilization of Refugees from the Soviet Union in US National Interest," 23 March 1948, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 1, Folder 13, (C)

²⁹ Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, Director of Central Intelligence, to Sidney W. Souers, Executive Secretary, National Security Council, "Utilization of the Mass of Soviet Refugees," 19 April 1948, ER-428, Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 498, Folder 9, (S)

³⁰ Ibid. (S)

CIA and ZPUHVR (S)

As a result of Frank Wisner's SANACC 395, CIA undertook another study of the various emigre groups in Europe. Zsolt Aradi and Boleslav Holtsman had moved on to new assignments, and [redacted]

[redacted] with CIA's Office of Special Operations in Germany, now had the responsibility of assessing the Ukrainians.³¹ [redacted] completed his report, known as Project ICON, in October 1948. The report drew from and updated Aradi's earlier December 1946 work on Ukrainian nationalism.³² Like Aradi, [redacted] evaluated the Bandera and Melnik factions of the OUN, the UHVR/ZPUHVR, and the Ukrainian National Republic (an older emigre group in western Europe) to determine which organizations—if any—deserved CIA support. He based his conclusions on the files of the Army Counter Intelligence Corps in Munich and CIA records.³³(S)

[redacted] thought ZPUHVR the best group for CIA's purposes, because it ostensibly had the support of both Ukrainians at home and in western Germany. ZPUHVR leaders "have demonstrated that they are not interested in personal gain or profit," the group practiced good security measures, and "ZPUHVR has kept itself morally and politically uncommitted and uncompromised over a period of three years." [redacted] recognized that it was particularly difficult for any emigre group to avoid the ever-present Ukrainian fractional strife.³⁴ (S)

[redacted] support for the ZPUHVR signaled a major change in US intelligence activities directed against the Soviet Union. With the authority of NSC 4-A, and the impetus of SANACC 395, CIA officers in Munich now eagerly sought to work with the Ukrainians. Richard Helms, chief of Foreign Branch M, cabled Munich on 3 December 1948 to ask if Hrinioch and ZPUHVR could provide volunteers for courier missions under American control. "Best approach these groups..." Helms advised, "stating our aim as rendering assistance to dissidents rather than purely intelligence purposes."³⁵ (S)

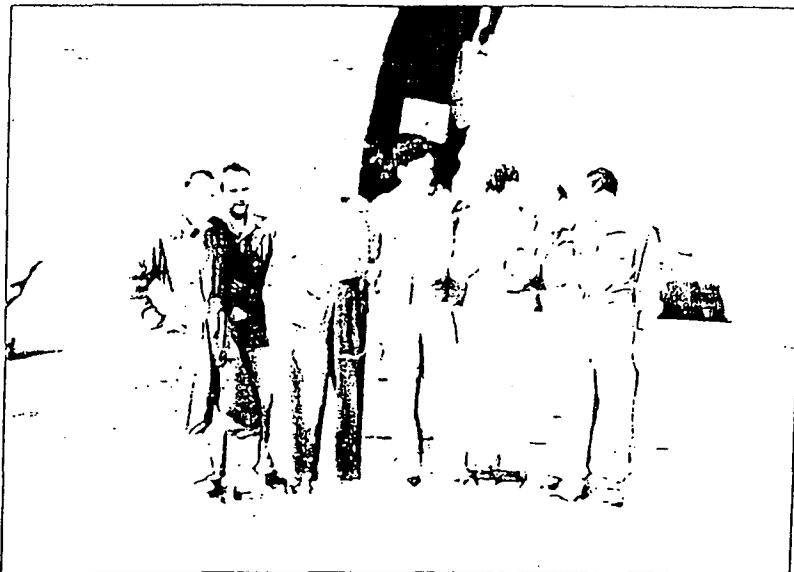
³¹ [redacted] joined CIC in March 1947. An Army veteran of the Mediterranean Theater, [redacted] served briefly in CIC in mid-1945 along the Austrian-German border. He served with OSO in Vienna, Heidelberg, and Munich from 1947 until 1950 when he returned to Washington. Personnel file, [redacted] Office of Human Resources Job [redacted], Box 60, (S). A copy of [redacted] memoir of his service in Europe is located in the History Staff. (S)

³² Project ICON Report. (S)

³³ Ibid., p. 2. (S)

³⁴ Project ICON Report, pp. 14-15. (S)

³⁵ Cable, SO to Munich, Karlsruhe, OUT 72439, 3 December 1948, Political and Psychological Staff Job [redacted] Box 4, Folder 23. (S)



The first US-sponsored airdrop in the Ukraine. [redacted] (center, in uniform) with aircrew members and Ukrainian personnel. September 1949 (c)

[redacted] managed to convince both Hrinioch and Lebed in January 1949 that the United States now planned to cooperate with the ZPUHVR to send couriers (the so-called APOSTLES) to Ukraine. By early February [redacted] cabled Washington with the news that "our relations with ZPUHVR have greatly accelerated at our initiative. Both Havas and CAPARISON [Hrinioch] agree to turn complete operational allegiance of ZPUHVR over to MOB [Munich Operations Base]." [redacted] discussed Ukrainian requests for support and other details concerning the commencement of operations.¹⁶ After reviewing previous missions (only one courier had arrived in Ukraine from Germany since 1946), [redacted] admitted, "transporting the APOSTLES and several radios by

¹⁶ Cable, Munich to SO, Karlsruhe, IN 22867, 2 February 1949, Political and Psychological Staff Job [redacted] Box 4, Folder 23. (S)

air to be dropped by parachute offers the only solution with good possibilities of success."¹⁷ (S)

Nevertheless, the challenge ahead of OSO was daunting. [] made good progress at first, gaining control of the ZPUHVR courier missions from Army intelligence and incorporating the Ukrainians into CIA's collection efforts behind the Iron Curtain.¹⁸ By late March 1949, [] submitted the developmental plan for Project ANDROGEN, which called for the:

accumulation of information on the status of the Ukrainian underground movement for use as a frame of reference in ascertaining the various ways in which the existence of this movement could have bearing on the course of an open conflict between the United States and the USSR. (S)

[] noted that the ZPUHVR activities were not only illegal under US military government regulations, but that its key figures also had no legal status in Germany. "If the courier operation fails and the personnel is simply dropped," [] warned, "no disposal costs are envisaged." He added, however, that the "evacuation of CAPARISON [Hrinioch], ANTLER [Lebed], and ACROBAT [Lopatinsky] and their four dependents from Western Germany may be deemed advisable at a later date whether the initial attempt to develop this project as a whole is successful or not."¹⁹ (S)

¹⁷ COS Karlsruhe to Helms, "Project ANDROGEN Memo No. 1: The Genesis through 20 January 1949," 16 March 1949, MGM-A-1023, Political and Psychological Staff Job [] Box 4, Folder 22, (S). Donald G. Huefner at Foreign Branch M in Washington replied to [] memorandum that "your progress report on Project ANDROGEN is regarded here as excellent and exactly the type of report we like to receive on such operations. Prior to the receipt of this memorandum communications on this project have been almost entirely confined to cable traffic, and although we have been informed of developments as they occurred, cables do not indicate the time and effort in such negotiations." Huefner also noted the difficulties in working with ZPUHVR and said, "it is obvious that in order to obtain the maximum amount of cooperation from such groups as the UHVR and to minimize the delays such as encountered in your dealings with CAPARISON, we must be prepared to grant assistance to them which is not primarily associated with intelligence." Helms to COS, Karlsruhe, "Project ANDROGEN," 11 April 1949, MGK-W-1879, Political and Psychological Staff Job [] Box 4, Folder 22. (S)

¹⁸ A report concerning the arrival of the APOSTLES is found in COS, Karlsruhe to Helms, "Project ANDROGEN Memo No. 2: How the APOSTLES Came to Germany," 16 March 1949, MGM-A-1024, Political and Psychological Staff Job [] Box 4, Folder 22, (S). See also Acting Chief, MOB to Helms, "Personal Record of APOSTLES 1 and 2 (Ops)," 3 May 1949, MGM-A-1136, European Division Job [] Box 1, Folder 5. (S)

¹⁹ COS, Karlsruhe to Helms, "ANDROGEN Project," 31 March 1949, MGM-A-1059, Political and Psychological Staff Job [] Box 4, Folder 22, (S). Approval of this project with stipulations by headquarters is found in Helms to Chief of Station, Karlsruhe "Project ANDROGEN," 25 April 1949, MGK-W-1952, Political and Psychological Staff Job [] Box 4, Folder 22. (S)

☐ ☐ agreed that CIA's base in Munich would provide a number of services for the Ukrainians, including housing and training for the APOSTLES. The Agency likewise would replace ZPUHVR's funds that German border police had confiscated from the couriers when they entered the country. Perhaps most importantly, ☐ ☐ agreed that "our organization will endeavor to shorten the distance to be traversed on foot by the APOSTLES between Munich and their destination." In the first of many demands, the ZPUHVR wanted the CIA to publicize the resistance efforts as well as to permit a number of its leaders, including Hrinioch and Lebed, to address Ukrainian immigrant groups in the United States and Canada. The Ukrainian organization even asked that CIA assist the organization in promoting its leadership activities in other nations outside of Germany.⁴⁰ (S)

CIA's plans to use the Ukrainians received official sanction in Washington in the summer of 1949. Foreign Branch M's Richard Helms and Harry Rositzke, chief of Foreign Branch S, submitted a proposal to the Assistant Director for Special Operations, Robert A. Schow, on 26 July to exploit the Ukrainian resistance movement within the Soviet Union. Schow approved the project that same day.⁴¹ At the same time ☐ ☐ redesignated the ANDROGEN project as Project CARTEL, utilizing the same personnel. He provided radio and cipher training to the Ukrainians, and confirmed that mission personnel and equipment would travel to Ukraine in unmarked American aircraft. The American case officer, known simply as ☐ ☐ to the Ukrainians, also began providing funds to the ZPUHVR because the organization had no money.⁴² (S)

The first CIA-sponsored airdrop into the USSR occurred in September 1949 when two Ukrainians landed near Lvov. This mission, which ☐ ☐ coordinated and handled, sought to establish contact with the UHVR/UPA in Ukraine.⁴³ While the Soviets quickly eliminated the agents, ☐ ☐ operation sparked considerable interest at Headquarters

⁴⁰ Ibid. (S)

⁴¹ Helms and Rositzke, Chief, Foreign Branch S, to Galloway, "Proposed Air Dispatch of Androgen Agents into the USSR," 26 July 1949, Political and Psychological Staff Job ☐ ☐ Box 4, Folder 22. (S)

⁴² COS, Karlsruhe to Helms, "CARTEL," 24 June 1949, MGM-A-1312, Political and Psychological Staff Job ☐ ☐ Box 4, Folder 22. (S)

⁴³ Chief of Station, Karlsruhe (signed by ☐ ☐ to Helms, "Project CARTEL: Operational Memorandum No. 8. A Synopsis of the HIDER-CARTEL Plane Flight," 16 September 1949, MGM-A-1584, Political and Psychological Staff Job ☐ ☐ Box 4, Folder 22. (S) Headquarters response to ☐ ☐ report is found in Chief, FDM to Chief of Station, "CARTEL Project," 10 October 1949, MGK-W-3164, Political and Psychological Staff Job ☐ ☐ Box 4, Folder 22, (S). The history of the CIA-Ukrainian missions is covered extensively in CSHF ☐ ☐ (S)

and resulted in expanded CIA exploitation of the ZPUHVR.⁴⁴ By 1950, CIA entered joint discussions with the British to launch operations into Ukraine; the United States, however, supported the ZPUHVR while the British advocated the use of Bandera's OUN.⁴⁵ (S)

The Ukrainian airdrops also formed the basis for expanded CIA illegal border crossings into the Soviet Union by Foreign Division S, which had assumed responsibility for all operations behind the Iron Curtain. The bulk of the missions were launched from Munich in an operation that eventually became known as REDSOX.⁴⁶ After a number of abortive missions, CIA discontinued this approach into Ukraine

⁴⁴ The growth in CIA's interest in Ukrainian operations can be seen in the following documents: Robert A. Schow, Assistant Director for Special Operations, to Assistant Director for Policy Coordination (ADPC), Frank G. Wisner, "Exploitation of Ukrainian Nationalist Resistance Organization," 22 December 1949, Political and Psychological Staff Job Box 4, Folder 22, (S); Chief, Programs and Planning Division, "Use of Ukrainian Partisan [sic] Movement Against USSR," 25 January 1950; undated, signed, "Agreement for Joint OSO/OPC Exploitation of ZPUHVR/UHVR;" undated, unsigned, "Memorandum of Understanding between OPC and OSO Concerning the Joint Exploitation of the Foreign Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Council of Liberation (ZPUHVR) and the Supreme Council (UHVR);" Project Outline Clearance Sheet, AERODYNAMIC-PBCRUET, 15 December 1950; and "Summary Joint OSO/OPC Report on the Ukrainian Resistance Movement, 12 December 1950" with cover sheet, Schow, Galloway, and Wisner, AD-PC, Memorandum to DCI, "Joint OSO/OPC Report on the Ukrainian Resistance Movement, 4 January 1951, all documents located in Political and Psychological Staff Job Box 1, Folder 1. (S)

⁴⁵ For an example of US-British discussions and agreements about Ukrainian operations, see William G. Wyman, Assistant Director for Special Operations, to Allen W. Dulles, Deputy Director for Plans, "Ukrainian Position Paper," 23 April 1951, (S); and Chief of Station, to Winston M. Scott, Chief, Foreign Division W, "CIA/State Department Talks with SIS/Foreign Office in London Beginning Monday, April 23, 1951," 4 May 1951, WELA-5084 (S), both documents in Political and Psychological Staff Job Box 1, Folder 1, (S). Further account of the US-British discussions regarding support for Ukrainian and other Eastern European groups is found in CSHF pp. 56-72. (S)

⁴⁶ For a more complete history of CIA's REDSOX operations, see

Clandestine Service Historical Series (CSHP) no. () CIA History Staff files, 1971, (S), (hereafter cited as CSHP-98). REDSOX operations took place in Belorussia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and other areas of the Soviet Union. According to one CIA official in 1957, "the path of experience in attempts at the legalization of black infiltrated bodies into the USSR has been strewn with disaster." At least 75 percent of the 85 CIA agents dispatched under REDSOX disappeared from sight and failed in their missions. CSHP-098, p. 142 and Attachment B, "List of REDSOX Operations." For another perspective, see "Survey of Illegal Border Operations into Czechoslovakia and Poland from 1948 through 1955," European Division Job Box 1, Folder 2, (S). For open source discussions of CIA operations behind the Iron Curtain, see Peer de Silva, *Sub Rosa: The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence* (New York: Times Books, 1978), pp. 55-57; John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations Since World War II* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), pp. 30-60; and Harry Rositzke, *The CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage, and Covert Action* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1977), pp. 18-38. (U)

after 1953. The Agency, however, maintained an operational relationship with the Ukrainians that proved to be not only its first, but also among its most resilient projects with anti-Communist emigre groups. Under Mykola Lebed, whom the CIA brought to the United States in 1949, the ZPUHVR turned to other forms of resistance activity. With Agency funding, the Ukrainians established a research institute in New York and published a number of anti-Soviet publications, including *Suchasnist*. From this base in the United States, the Ukrainians continued their struggle against Soviet oppression until the collapse of the USSR. (S)

A Curious Anomaly (U)

CIA's reluctance to use East European and Soviet ethnic minorities as intelligence sources and operatives had waned considerably as the 1940s grew to a close. NSC 4A was one reason; another was the growing fear in Washington that World War III was imminent. Although initial attempts to use emigres as sources of foreign intelligence failed, NSC 4A made it clear that CIA could use—and the NSC expected CIA to use—emigres as agents for covert psychological warfare behind the Iron Curtain. CIA reestablished and expanded its contacts with the Ukrainians and others for covert action against the Communists and as wartime assets to be used behind Red Army lines as guerrillas, saboteurs, and resistance leaders. CIA continued to cling to these groups long after their immediate utility expired out of the mistaken belief that they were a valuable wartime reserve. (S)

The sometimes brutal war record of many emigre groups became blurred as they became more critical to the CIA. DCI Hillenkoetter, for example, gave the chairman of the Displaced Persons Commission an ambiguous answer when the latter asked for a status report on some of the ethnic groups CIA used. Hillenkoetter did not deny that many emigres had sided with the Nazis, but did so, he said, less out of "a pro-German or pro-Fascist orientation, but from a strong anti-Soviet bias. In many cases their motivation was primarily nationalistic and patriotic with their espousal of the German cause determined by the national interests."⁴⁷ (S)

⁴⁷ Hillenkoetter to Ugo Carusi, Chairman, Displaced Persons Commission, 7 April 1949, Executive Registry Job Box 13, Folder 538. (C)

CIA later informed the Immigration and Naturalization Service that it had concealed Stefan Bandera and other Ukrainians from the Soviets. "Luckily the [Soviet] attempt to locate these anti-Soviet Ukrainians was sabotaged by a few farsighted Americans who warned the persons concerned to go into hiding." The Agency cited the Ukrainian resistance movement's struggle against the Soviets and believed that "the main activities of the OUN in Ukraine cannot be considered detrimental to the United States." By 1951, the Agency excused the illegal activities of OUN's security branch in the name of Cold War necessity.⁴⁸ (C)

The Agency's relationship with the Ukrainians and other Eastern and Southern European emigre groups during the Cold War was long lived and remains controversial. At the time, CIA had few methods of collecting intelligence on the Soviet Union and felt compelled to exploit every opportunity, however slim the possibility of success or unsavory the agent. Emigre groups, even those with dubious pasts, were often the only alternative to doing nothing. CIA did its best to form relationships only with the best of a questionable lot. Much research and thought went into deciding which groups to support.⁴⁹ (U)

⁴⁸ Wyman to Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service, "Vasyl GOG-OSHA and the OUN/Bandera," 23 May 1951 (signed by [redacted] Assistant Commissioner Enforcement Division on CIA letterhead), Information Management Staff Job [redacted] Box 1, Folder 5, (S). Author John Loftus claims that Frank Wisner had this memorandum written. See *The Belarus Secret*, ed. Nathan Miller (New York: Paragon House, 1989, rev. ed. 1982), pp. 106-107. (U)

⁴⁹ In 1971 [redacted] author of the CIA's official history of its relationship with the Ukrainians, reached several conclusions:

The relationship was initially born of undeniable and urgent national security needs, which demanded exploration of every possible means of collecting information on the USSR.

Despite the goodwill, sacrifice, and heroism of many of the individuals involved, the initial efforts satisfied only the question of feasibility; at a tragic cost in life, the lesson was learned that the Ukrainian underground as an organization could not be sustained or exploited by clandestine CIA efforts alone, in the absence of any parallel official and overt US policy to support it.

Notwithstanding the early heavy loss, and intensive KGB penetration and disruptive efforts targeted on the emigration, cooperation continued through the years, becoming more profitable as sophistication grew and more realistic goals were established.

Very powerful nationalist emotions lie at the root of Ukrainian willingness to fight on against hopeless odds in the early years, while CIA realization of these emotions has sustained its willingness to continue the association with the emigration despite heavy KGB attention.

No matter what the operational climate at any given time, minority nationalism in the USSR has had and will continue to have operational potential for CIA as long as non-Russian areas are administered from Moscow.

CSHP- [redacted] pp. 12-13. (S)

CIA's experience with Ukrainian emigres in the late 1940s illustrates the uncertainties of the Cold War. On the one hand, the Agency was reluctant to utilize these groups because of their own ideological goals and ensuing internal divisiveness. On the other hand, CIA was rightly concerned about Soviet ambitions in western Europe and the Agency expected the imminent outbreak of war. The Ukrainians, despite their disadvantages, offered a tool to combat Soviet expansionism. (U)

In the long run, the Agency's efforts to penetrate the Iron Curtain using Ukrainian agents was ill-fated and tragic. The air drop operations did, indeed, prove the law of gravity. Nonetheless, they were a necessary step in the evolutionary growth of America's first peacetime intelligence organization. One CIA official, **Gordon M. Stewart**, the chief of the German Mission during this period, recalled his impressions of the Ukrainian operations years later. "The need to be informed on conditions in Russia at the height of the cold war," Stewart wrote, "justified a costly program and those responsible for it did their best in weighing humane considerations against those of national security."³⁰ The sacrifices the Ukrainian agents and their American case officers made contributed to the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union. (U)

³⁰ Gordon M. Stewart, □ (unpublished memoirs in CIA History Staff files, 1996 edition), p. 100. (U) □