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OSS AND THE RUSSIAN NEAR ABROAD IN WARTIME

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Summary

It is the contention of this work that origins of the engagement by the American intelligence apparatus with the Soviet Eastern Europe – Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states – should be traced not to the early Cold War, but to the Second World War. Throughout the conflict the Office of Strategic Studies built a far-reaching system of utilizing émigrés for that would prove to be foundational for the post-war operations by the CIA. Examination of the archival evidence from this era shines a new light on the attitudes of the immigrant communities throughout the war, as well as the political constraints that defined the work of the American intelligence - as it tried to balance the impetus for operations in Eastern Europe with the need to maintain the wartime alliance and avoid contretemps with the Kremlin.

Key Words: Emigres, White Russians, OUN, Baltic, Intelligence, WWII, Espionage, USSR.

Recent historiography has increasingly begun to fill in the long-neglected gaps in our assessment of the operations carried out by the American intelligence within the territory claimed by Soviet Union - Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States, and Russia itself - in the early days of the Cold War. Yet, the fundamental assumption shared by most scholarship appears to be that such activities began only after the surrender of Germany, with the region being essentially ignored for duration of the Second World War.

Certainly, the Eastern Europe presented an extremely challenging target for the OSS. The geographic remoteness of the region under the occupation of the Nazi Germany presented an obvious barrier. The descendants of the Eastern European immigrants have not yet been admitted

into the ranks of the American elite that would provide most recruits for the OSS. The most significant barrier, however, was political. Roosevelt's extreme reluctance to jeopardize his relationship with Stalin would continue throughout most of the conflict. Even as late in 1944, when OSS agents were able to purchase Soviet codes and cyphers from the contacts in Finland, the President immediately returned then to the Kremlin, shutting down the operation.

Donovan, a brilliant political tactician fighting an uphill battle to build his agency from the ground up in the face of savage competition from rivals like J. Edgar Hoover, was always very sensitive to the moods of the President. Yet the obvious strategic significance of the Eastern Europe was impossible to overlook completely – and, increasingly, the potential threat and opportunity presented by the diaspora from the region began to loom large in the OSS worldview.

The formation of the Foreign Nationalities Branch was specifically aimed to address both the paucity of intelligence from Eastern Europe, by extrapolating from the moods and politics of the immigrant communities, as well as to guard against expected attempts by the enemy governments to exploit the potential fifth column. In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the attention, understandably, focused on the looming threat of the Axis powers. The FNB was placed under the management of Dewitt Clinton Poole, Jr. Unlike many of Donovan's recruits, Poole was not a neophyte in the field of espionage, having spent several years in Russia as the Empire was collapsing and the Bolshevik regime was being born.

His experience of building and running spy networks, in cooperation with MI6, in both Russia and Ukraine saw Poole rise first to the office of the Consul General in Moscow in 1918, and eventually the Director of the State Department's Division of Russian Affairs. As Donovan searched for personnel in 1941, he could have hardly done better than Poole, whom appointed to run the Foreign Nationalities Branch of his new agency.

In parallel, the OSS also created the USSR Division of the Research and Analysis Branch, led by a doyen of the Russian studies, recruited by the OSS from Columbia University, Professor Geroid Robinson. The Division would produce hundreds of reports that would influence play a significant role in the policy formulation by the Department of State. Much of its early output would primarily concentrate on the economic assessment of the Soviet Union's capacity to stay in the fight. Later its scope of inquiry would expand, and by February 1943, the USSR Division began producing weekly reports, titled "Political Orientation and Morale of the USSR."

The dynamic between the two branches would reflect the broader debate within the US intelligence community. Although constrained by the political attitudes of the White House, the FNB would prove increasingly willing to shift its attention toward the potential threat of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the USSR's division would remain that the predominant goal should be maintaining the wartime alliance and to secure the Soviet cooperation in the post-war era. Throughout the war, the OSS would continue to walk a very fine line of addressing the potential threat of the USSR, without stepping on the toes of the White House.

Much of the early OSS efforts were mobilized toward the assessment of the Ukrainian and White Russian émigré communities. As early as 1942, a comprehensive review was produced, attempting to ascertain the morale of the population, its willingness to resist the German occupation, and its level of support for the Soviet regime.

The impressively sophisticated analysis of the 'Ukrainian problem in the USSR' examined the Soviet attempts to reconcile Lenin's promise of self-determination with the reality of the ruthless Sovietization. In what would be the hallmark of the FNB reports touching on the nature of the Soviet regime while trying to not to run afoul of Roosevelt's adamant refusal to jeopardize the uncertain alliance, the memo attempted to avoid any editorializing. Yet, under with the factual and academic

tone, it repeatedly referenced the acts of repression perpetrated by the Soviet forces.

The terror had failed to settle the issue of the Ukrainian nationalist question to the satisfaction of the Kremlin. This – combined with “tendency of Ukrainian nationalists to acquire independence with international assistance” - now presented a danger of Ukrainians cooperating with Germany. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), the premier international political entity advocating for the creation of independent Ukraine through armed struggle. The OUN had been relying on German assistance since the 1930s and was now operating freely in the territory occupied by Germany and collaborating with Berlin.

The memo prophetically asserted that the expectations by the OUN leadership of enthusiastic welcome of German troops would be frustrated by the reality of the vast bulk of the Ukrainian nationalists (and the population at large) seeing Germany as the lesser evil at best, due the Soviet atrocities in Ukraine during the 1930s.^[1] Blaming this lukewarm attitude on German continuing operation of the collective farms, its commitment to the economic exploitation of Ukrainian resources, and extreme unlikelihood of Berlin to allow political organization of the country at least as long as the outcome of the war is in doubt, the author proposes that German hopes to organize a Ukrainian militia meant, with a view for it to be a functional military institution by 1943 will be unlikely to succeed.

With positively British understatement he suggests that the enthusiasm of such a fighting force “would seem more than doubtful.” More broadly he predicts continuing suspicion and wariness on the part of the population, neither eager for the return of the Communists nor trusting of the invaders who seem less than eager to fulfil their dreams of independence.^[2]

This analysis is all the more impressive since the author himself admits working with very scarce data from Ukraine proper – yet his conjecture provided the OSS with an incredibly accurate portrayal of the quickly disintegrating relationship between the OUN and the Germans. Even as the memo was being written, Stepan Bandera – one of the premiere leaders of the nationalists, having become loudly disenchanted with his previous hopes of Germany’s acquiescence to independent Ukrainian ethno-state was arrested by the Gestapo along with much of OUN’s leadership and would spend the next two years in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

It’s also notable that even at this stage the OSS was already contemplating the ‘psychological warfare,’ through concerted elucidating of the depth of cooperation between the Germans and the OUN. It was a somewhat ironic origin for the program of concerted anti-Soviet propaganda that would later be inherited by the CIA. In 1942, the goal was to temporarily play into the Soviet ideological indoctrination of the Ukrainian population, maintaining their commitment to the anti-German resistance and blunting the impact of the OUN’s pro-German nationalist propaganda.^[3]

Yet the memo concluded by confidently asserting that Ukrainian nationalism, whatever the weaknesses of its motherland was a reality. Its very weakness necessitated its search for a Great Power patron – with the choices, at present being limited to Germany and the USSR. Even in the dark days of 1942, there were elements of the OSS who were already contemplating the consequences of eventual German defeat, and proposing the utility of presenting the Ukrainian nationalists with a third choice, that would allow it to escape the orbit of resurgent Russia and instead become part of ‘a central European bloc.’

A rather different, and somewhat less nuanced, portrait of the events in occupied Ukraine was provided to the OSS by the summary of the speeches delivered In September of 1942 at a rally organized by the United Slav Committee and the International Workers’ Order. The review of the rally, however, provided a considerably more representative illustration of the vast bulk of the data

collection opportunities available to the OSS throughout the war.

In front of a crowd of 200 people, “mostly Ukrainians and Carpatho-Russians” gathered in Elizabeth, New Jersey a variety of orators assured the audience that the Soviet Union was fighting to safeguard democracy and civilization itself. This fact was clear to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill and only the hateful yet influential anti-Russian cabal was handicapping their efforts to open a Second Front.

Yet, despite this, Russia would carry on its struggle as the protector of the Slavic peoples against annihilation by Germany, the role understood and firmly supported by all Slavs. Specifically, the speakers asserted, in Ukraine, the Nazis were at a loss to find even a single collaborator, as the fight against the German invaders created an unbreakable bond between Russian and Ukrainian people. This bold claim was then somewhat weakened by a rather contradictory, if impassioned, condemnation of the Ukrainian separatists and those who were simply indifferent to the Manichean conflict playing out around them. The seeming contradiction did not appear to cool the ardor of the audience which collected \$700 in donations.

The report - once again with every appearance of maintaining neutral and dispassionate tone – nevertheless pointed out that that the Slav Committee in Moscow was clearly extremely invested in keeping an eye on the activities of Americans with Slavic roots, staying in constant contact with the leadership of the Slav Congress of the United States.^[4] The repercussions of that sort of influence was left to the reader’s imagination.

Meanwhile, in a perfect illustration of the diffuse and chaotic nature of the US intelligence structure of the time, while OSS was busy making sense of the attitudes of the Ukrainian emigres, the most comprehensive assessment of the Russian fascists and their place in the wartime kaleidoscope of loyalties was compiled by the Naval Intelligence in July of 1942.

The greatest concern of the report’s authors was the utilization of the White Russians by the Axis Powers. After all, “the fact that the White Russians are orphans of the Red storm, that many of them are men without a country, makes them suitable to Nazi purposes, for the Germans are known to like the non-Germans for their tools. A people without a government might be ideal for German purposes.”^[5] The analytical treasure trove would be inherited by OSS as vast areas of the Military and Naval intelligences services were consolidated under its aegis.

With the pious caveat that a careful distinction needed to be drawn between the Russians fascists and the White Russians who have successfully assimilated and become loyal Americans, the report proceeded to paint a picture of a globe-spanning spectrum of the Russian fascist groups and organizations, from Harbin to New York.

Their potential threat was presented as quite real, given the report’s contention that the various chapters – such as those in Sao Paolo and Cuba, Sofia and San Francisco maintained contact and cooperated with each other. The specter of this worldwide spectrum of conspiracy was carefully juxtaposed with the allegation that the substantial White Russian émigré community in China was providing a cadre of agitators and propagandists in service to the Japanese.

With the shock and trauma of Pearl Harbor only six months away, the audience was not left to draw its own apocalyptic conclusions of the potential damage that could be wrought by the Russo-American saboteurs and spies directed by Tokyo. Instead, the reports flatly asserted that “New York, Seattle, and San Francisco are White Russian nests which may be a potential threat to the security of the Navy.”

Besides carefully outlining the long pedigree of the Russian emigres’ collaboration with Japan in Manchuria and Harbin, the report also raises the troubling specter of the role that the Russian Greek Orthodox Church plays in the “White Russian situation.”^[6] Once again the global

nature of the organization – in this case the Church that became autonomous since the Communist takeover of the former Russian Empire – was emphasized, pointing out the Church’s active role in Asia as well as throughout Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

The discussion of the active role of the religious institutions in organizing the émigré political activities would become a recurring theme in the OSS reports, as their engagement with the Ukrainian, Russian, and the Baltic communities would deepen.

At the center of the web, supposedly, was one Anastase A. Vonsiatsky. Vonsiatsky exemplified the bizarre and surreal nature of the White Russian experience. He was born in Poland, survived (and engaged in) the brutal slaughters of both the First World War and the Russian Civil War. Eventually he’d found himself a cliché exile in Paris, before wooing and marrying an American heiress twice his age and settling down in Connecticut. At some point in this odyssey, living out yet another cliché, he began referencing himself as a Count.

Having established himself as a fixture of New England’s high society, Vonsiatsky embarked on a political path that led him from one White Russian organization to the next, until finally culminating in his rise to the position of the *Vozhd* of the All-Russian Fascist Organization.

Following an FBI investigation, on June 1942, Vonsiatsky, along with a number of other membership of his party leadership cadre, was indicted by a federal grand jury at Hartford, Connecticut for conspiracy to violate the Espionage Act. The Count’s colorful biography and flamboyant persona ensured a conviction despite largely circumstantial and flimsy case.

The espionage case – the third such since the shock of Pearl Harbor – was clearly impetus enough for the Navy to launch its own investigation, producing the ONI report a month later.

Notably, neither the indictment, nor the Navy’s report directly raised the question of the possible connections to the Soviet Union. Either the American intelligence apparatus tasked with keeping tabs on the White Russian émigré communities was still unaware of the persistent tendency of the latter to be thoroughly infiltrated by the Soviet agents, or they learned their lessons from the Ovakimian case. Only a year previously, the FBI triumphantly arrested Gaik Ovakimian, the head of Amtorg, the Soviet trade organization in the United States, for espionage. Within weeks of Hitler’s invasion of the USSR, the State Dept ordered him released. Upon his return to Moscow. Ovakimian would become the head of Soviet intelligence operations within the United States.^[7]

Instead of trying to tackle the minefield of the US-Soviet relations, therefore, the report focused in the fascist threat, limiting its warning to the fact that much of the motivation for the White Russian fascist groups originated not in the sympathy for Axis ideologies but their hostility toward the Communist regime in Moscow. The activity of these was not limited to its foreign chapters like Harbin, but was also occurring in the US where some of the Church officials are heavily involved in the undertaking to unite disparate White Russian Fascist groups. The Russian-American National Committee that headed that effort is clearly identified as “dangerous to American security.”

Conversely, the report cautioned very diplomatically, Metropolitan Benjamin – one the highest ranking official of the Russian orthodox Church, headquartered in New York – “is said to be sympathetic to Russians in Russia in the present crisis.”^[8] Putting its concerns about the extent of Benjamin’s sympathies in perspective, they were contextualized by reference to a “less politically liberal” Metropolitan Theophilus who, despite being nominally anti-Communist slowed his sympathies toward Russians at home to lead him into cooperation with the Kremlin by participating in the Russian War Relief meetings and to have proclaimed that he understands the relationship between the church and the nation. Thus “inasmuch as these churchmen are active politically as individuals they should be watched; insofar as they offer instruction that is political and not religious,

they may be dangerous."^[9]

Nevertheless, the main focus remained on the danger presented by the White Russian affinity toward the Axis powers. Whereas during the interwar years, the White Russian organizations were harmless and could be contemptuously dismissed being “largely social organizations where world-weary emigres can gather, drink cheap liquor, recall the past, and make great plans for the future which in more sober moments they know will never materialize,” given direct management by the Japanese in Manchuria, and in the USA the inspirational direction by German successes on the Eastern Front, the Russian fascist movement has showed signs of consolidation and purposeful pro-Axis and anti-Soviet campaign, including a prioritized effort to establish its presence on the Soviet territory.^[10]

Remarkably, within less than two years the OSS would already pivot from fear of the potential exploitation of the White Russian emigres by the its enemies, to utilizing them itself. The Operation Ruppert in 1944, would inaugurate the process that would bring the American intelligence and the Russian émigré groups together in an effort to bring the Cold War to the Soviet territory, through a remarkably long-lived alliance between the CIA and the National Labor Union (the successor group of many of the White Russian émigré factions grimly cautioned against by the Navy in 1942).

The Ruppert was proposed on Oct 14, 1944. It relied on one Yuri Skarzynski, a White Russian who grew up in Germany. He escaped to join the French Army but was recruited by OSS in Paris.^[11] The Office was very interested in exploiting his familiarity with the Eastern European émigré circles of Berlin, all of whom tend to root for the quick end to the war, had no particular sympathy for Germany, and were ardently hoping that the Americans would arrive before the Red Army. More specifically, the OSS wanted Skarzynski to make contact with Michel Kedia, a native Georgian working for the SD.^[12]

Dressed in civvies and false docs, Ruppert crossed enemy lines and infiltrated Berlin. Posing as a Nazi sympathizer he stayed behind the lines for 5 months, was arrested by the Gestapo 3 times, and yet managed to fulfill his mission and survive. The contact between the OSS and Kedia, a member of the Georgian National Committee, who'd spent most of the working with the German intelligence by recruiting saboteurs for operations behind the Soviet lines, proved to be a mixed bag. High order intelligence was obtained in a debrief – laying the groundwork for later recruitment of anti-Soviet agents among the POWs, both Soviet and German.^[13] On the other hand, Kedia himself was proved to be something of a lightning rod as some within the OSS (most prominently Eduard Watien in a memo to spoke highly of him Dulles), including his strategy of mobilizing the people of Eastern Europe against Stalin, including the non-Russian minorities within the USSR whom Kedia predicted to be eager volunteers.^[14]

However, other OSS personnel concluded that discussions with Kedia showed him to be unsuitable for current US intel objectives. They were specifically put off by “his fanatical anti-communism, amounting to desire to see an early war between US and USSR.”^[15] Instead Kedia was to be primarily used for intelligence on potential contacts with the German intelligence, who might prove useful dealing with any potential post-war German insurgency. The OSS was still dealing with a rift among its personnel as to the level of threat presented by the USSR. In the short term, the more accommodationist view toward the USSR triumphed and Kedia was kept at a distance by the OSS. Yet, just a few months later, OSS (and later CIA) would attempt strategies very similar to those outlined by Kedia.

Kedia's fate presents an interesting contrast with the approach taken by Arnold Margolin. A Ukrainian diplomat who had spent most of his life in the West, Margolin understood the delicate

politics of the OSS better than Kedia and in his memos carefully avoided the latter's wide-eyed anti-Soviet radicalism. Instead he described his clients in the Ukrainian opposition - a group led by Nikifor Hryhorev, an editor of a Ukrainian weekly in Detroit - as practical moderates, who have little interest in dreaming of a hopeless anti-Soviet Crusade. Rather they defined themselves as neither anti-Russian, not anti-Communist, but rather anti-Stalinist.^[16] Having gauged the mood of the contemporary moment in the OSS much more adroitly than Kedia, he received a much warmer reception.

If, even in 1945, the OSS analysts more concerned with the potential Nazi resistance than the rivalry with the USSR held sway, in 1942 - before Stalingrad and Kursk, the OSS was still faithfully echoing the concerns of its Naval and FBI counterparts in primarily focusing on the Eastern European immigrants as a possible danger to the American security. There was still very little to indicate the strategic and mora flexibility of its latter incarnation, and the eagerness with which - only a few short years later - the OSS would be ready to contemplate the rich potential of the self-same communities as a vehicle for the expansion of its operation into Eastern Europe and the Soviet sphere.

On April 23, 1942 a memo landed on the desk of the head of the FNB, submitted by one Joseph Jackovics. Jackovics pointed out that the Ukrainian groups have so far consistently refused to participate in the upcoming conference that was aiming to issue a proclamation, speaking for the 15 million Slavs residing in the United States and declaring their wholehearted support for the war efforts of the United Nations.

Explaining that Ukrainian political community in the United States lacked organizational hierarchy, and any motivation but national liberation and independence of Ukraine, Jackovics echoed the Naval investigators of the Russian émigré groups, in pointing toward the clergy (specifically the chancellery of the Bishop of the Ukrainian Greek Rite Catholics in Philadelphia) as "the nearest thing to a Ukrainian center, or movement, in this country," underlining their radically nationalist attitudes.^[17]

The memo identified the hatred of the Poles as the primary motivating factor of the Ukrainian nationalist expressions. This hostility would be enough to be exploited by leading them to act against the US interests, if that meant exacting revenge against the Poles. The alliance of some of the Ukrainian nationalists with the Germans is explained within this context, exemplified by Monsignor Augustine Volostin, one of the premier leaders of the nationalists in the United States who'd also collaborated with Hitler before the war.

Conversely, the faction led by one reverend Ladizinsky took the opportunity at the Pittsburgh conference to voice full-throated support for Stalin and the other "great Russian liberals and destroyers of bloody Nazis," stridently declaiming that it is the universal duty of "everyone of our race" (and specifically the clergy) to join "our cause," and any failure to do otherwise is evidence of betrayal of their blood.

Along with the strategically placed quotation marks that underlined the alarming commitment of Ladizinsky's faction to see Stalin's cause as their own, the report also invites the recipient to appreciate contrasts such views with the measured speech of Jan Masaryk who took pains to express his admiration for the United States, and the American system.^[18]

Much as had been the case with the previous OSS assessment, any foreboding about the spreading influence of the Soviet allies - unlike those of the Axis - had be kept muted and circumspect, and yet they still slipped through.

Showing the FNB's still uneven proficiency in dealing with the tangled skein of Eastern European politics, both of the OSS agents who had perused Jackovics's memo before passing it on to

Poole, found it disjointed and badly organized, as well as prone to sensationalism – specifically his characterization of the Ukrainian hostility toward Poles. Yet overall, he was seen a useful enough asset that they recommended his continued cultivation.

The information he provided was collated with a more professional report from one Colonel L. Sadowski. The conclusion of that report, and the one that appears to have been accepted as the mainstream point of view of the OSS was that the Ukrainians residing in the United States are mostly apolitical, primarily interested in assimilating and building a life. The minority that are politically active are described as belonging two broad categories: agents in the pay of the foreign governments (primarily Germany) and committed Ukrainian nationalists.

That binary classification is immediately caveated by the warning that even the nationalists have, almost universally, been bought by various foreign powers. It would be further complicated by repeated reports and émigré media assessments that would seldom fail to point out the active role of the pro-Soviet newspapers, although the OSS would never accuse the latter of being in the pay of the Kremlin.

Sadowski's report provided independent confirmation of the picture painted by the much-maligned Jackovics's memo – pointing out that despite significant effort and outreach by the Polish governments, the Ukrainian nationalists refused their offers of cooperation and, in several cases, responded to the overtures by assassinating the Polish officials.

Notably the report singles out the murder of Yevhen Konovalets that had occurred four years later, in 1938. Konovalets, a veteran of the First World War, Russian Civil War, and the Ukrainian-Soviet war, had organized one of the first underground militant organizations of the Ukrainian nationalists. Throughout the early 1920s the Ukrainian Military Organization) had carried out a series of terrorist attacks against the Polish government before being crushed.

Konovalets, having gone into exile, re-emerged as a founding father and the first titular leader of the OUN when it was formally established in 1929. As Colonel Sadowski explained, his contacts among the Ukrainian emigres were convinced that Konovalets's assassination was carried out by the Soviet agents, due to his success in building OUN's influence on the territory of Soviet Ukraine. "The Soviet government could not tolerate the prospect of mounting agitation."^[19]

As would become known much later, the supposition of Sadowski's contacts were entirely correct. Konovalets was killed in Rotterdam when he opened a box of chocolate rigged with an explosive device. The attack was carried out following the direct order by Stalin to Pavel Sudoplatov, the almost mythical Soviet operative and assassin. In his autobiography, published in 1994, Sudoplatov maintained that the twin reasons for his mission were to exact revenge for an assassination carried out by the OUN a few years earlier, as well as to decapitate the Ukrainian nationalist movement on the eve of war.^[20]

Despite the obvious implications the successful murder of a veteran militant like Konovalets, the memo articulated no conclusions about the presumed level of infiltration by the Soviet intelligence of the Ukrainian nationalist movement. The audience, once again, is left to draw its own inferences – as opposed to the previously open and frank warning of the pervasive German influence over the politically active members of the same community.

The shift in the FNB's approach to the assessment of USSR is perceptible in its ongoing review of the Ukrainian émigré press, where the changing priorities were made evident less by presence than by absence. Starting in 1943, as the growing strength of the USSR would become inescapably evident, there would be increasingly fewer references to the dangers of Nazi sympathizers within the immigrant communities, even as the fact of the Soviet influence (still cast in neutral terms of dispassionate reportage) would become a permanent fixture of the reports.

Thus, in the wake of General Sikorski's death, the attention was focused on the significance of the fact that several Ukrainian émigré dailies, previously seen as steadily moving toward the orbit of the pro-Soviet faction, had suddenly shifted their rhetoric by vocally disagreeing with the Moscow's party line expressed in the communist "Ukrainski Shoedienni Visti." Detroit organizing Committee announced plans for an all Ukrainian Congress in the USA, renewing the work of the organization established in 1940, following the lead of the Congress of the Ukrainian Committee of Canada and attempting to unify Ukrainians residing in the US.^[21]

Contemporaneously, the OSS noted a tangible shift toward consolidation of the seemingly intractably fractious collection of the émigré groups. The changing fortunes of war provided a new impetus to create a more tangible presence within the American political framework that would allow them to have a real voice in the post-war settlement. The tone was set by the Ukrainian Committee of Canada, which was emulated by its American equivalent based in Detroit, announcing plans for an all-Ukrainian Congress in the USA, with the aim to unify Ukrainians residing in the US.^[22]

The the Canadian template had received warm reviews from the OSS analysts, who had found its general tone calm and reasonable and the two resolutions were worthy of attention: "In defense of democratic ideals" and "regarding the problems of future peace." The first resolution denounced all forms of totalitarianism, blandly equating Communism with Hitlerism and Fascism, as well as committing the Ukrainian community to safeguarding Canadian politics during or after the war from infiltration of totalitarian philosophy. The second resolutions cautiously rooted the expectation for post-war Ukraine in the Atlantic Charter, expecting it to be treated as an equal member in the family of nations. As the OSS report, once again, allowed the datum that the pro-Soviet factions tried very diligently to sabotage the Congress stand without comment.

The meeting of the Ukrainian emigres in Detroit, having established a Ukrainian American Council, echoed its northern compatriots. After solemnly pledging full cooperation with the US war effort, it announced its goal to prepare the strategy for achieving Ukrainian nationhood. It reaffirmed the resolutions of the 1940 Congress that the American Ukrainians regard themselves as integral part of the western democracies, struggling with oppression by other nations. As the OSS report documented, the American Ukrainians feel "in accord with American spirit, Ukrainian nation deserves independence and US Ukrainians as free citizens of a free country have a right and a duty to aid that cause since it is the only way to preserve peace and serve the US interests."^[23]

Just as the Ukrainians were showing their dexterity at utilizing American discourse in pursuit of its dreams of independence, so were the other actors demonstrating capacity for manipulating the emigres. No longer quite as skeptical as used to be of the strength of the emotions involved, the OSS reports now showed extreme awareness of the ongoing tensions and hostility between Poles and the Ukrainians in the US, as well as to the Communist attempts to exploit it, such as the PR campaign by the communist "Ukrainski Shoedienni Visti" against the Uke nationalists by insinuating a conspiracy against Polish emigres and Uke nationalists "to aid Hitler and his Polish partners to tear Ukraine from the Soviet Union."^[24]

The reviewers again tracing the shifts in Soviet influences over other newspapers by watching how much they agree with Pro-Soviet flagship daily. Great interest was shown by the Ukrainian press in the rumors that Germans formed "Galician divisions. The opinions, according to the OSS watchers, were split - with some doubting the news, in the light of the now wide awareness of the empty nature of German promises to the Ukrainian nationalists. The pro-German orientation was thus now confined to the dustbin of history. With healthy skepticism, the OSS reports gave more credence to what they considered a more practical assessment - that such units might have been

formed but with the ultimate purpose of winning independence and expelling the occupants (carefully not specifying which occupant).^[25]

With less circumspection, the report pointed out as notable an article about the US labor movement that it described as “the consequence of the Soviet propaganda, which through the medium of several articles published in the Soviet press was putting pressure on the internal problems of the countries of the American continent.” Similarly, it noted as significant the increasing attention paid by the USSR to the Canadian Ukrainians – in the process showing thorough familiarity by the OSS of the relative role and importance of the main Soviet Ukrainian politicians. And their relative influence among their Western countrymen.^[26]

Over the summer of 1943 OSS compiled a comprehensive analysis of situation in Ukraine. Assessing the Nazi situation there as deteriorating, with crumbling support among the local population, and their attempts to organize volunteer Ukrainian militia as unlikely to succeed despite the belated attempts by Berlin to improve its treatment of the population (including the desultory campaign to finally destroy the heated collected farms). Citing a Swedish sources, OSS remarks that Germans consider Ukrainians to be the most dangerous element of foreign workers.^[27]

Yet that assessment did not change the fact that Ukraine, of course, was still a very notional entity throughout this era. Having been partitioned and occupied by its neighbors, from the perspective of the American intelligence services, it also had the geographic misfortune to be located deeply within the occupied Europe, offering few opportunities for contact and infiltration. Until the end of the war, the OSS contacts with the Ukrainian emigres would prove to be the high point of their engagement with the region.

Conversely, the recently independent Baltic states (conveniently located close to the still neutral and unoccupied Sweden) offered a much more attractive field of potential operations. For much of the war, the OSS archives present a picture of the organization that was much more focused on the developing assets among Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians than they were among the Ukrainians. Not simply for accessing the attitudes of the emigres, but increasingly for active intelligence collection in Europe. Although here too, the general attitude of the White House was felt – given that the request by the Lithuanians for the American recognition of their government in exile was cordially ignored.^[28]

On April 20th, 1942 a “most secret source” reported on the activity of the Lithuanian legation in Buenos Aires led by one Dr. K. Grauzinis who was energetically pursuing independence of his country, equally opposed to both German and Soviet occupation. The legation was reported to have almost no relations with the Lithuanian newspapers based in South America, due to their universal subservience to Moscow.^[29] The Church (Catholic, in this case) is once again identified as an important actor in bringing the activity of local nationalists under a single umbrella of the “Centre for Lithuanian Liberation in Argentine.”

In contrast to the reports dealing with the White Russians and the Ukrainians, the memo explicitly warns the Lithuanian nationalists are firmly opposed by the Lithuanian Communists who are allied both with the communists from other countries and various sympathetic leftist organizations. The observation, however, is presented in purely neutral terms.

By 1943, the OSS efforts were bearing tangible fruit in terms of recruitment of increasingly productive assets – such as the former Foreign Minister of Estonia. Drawing both on his knowledge and connections, this source produced both the comprehensive assessment of the situation in Estonia, as well as an intercepted and smuggled communique by Dr. A. Vendt, the German Director of Economics and Transport, about the difficulties in the economic situation in the country.^[30] Both were found by no less eminence than J. Edgar to be of “particular value.”^[31]

Former Social Democratic Reichstag deputy Toni Ender headed the Office of European Labor Research that was cooperating with the OSS, as the conduit into the recruitment and utilization of labor organizations that might have been reluctant to deal with the US gov't directly.^[32] In June of 1943 Sender doggedly engaged in a persistent search for information on the situation in Lithuania. Her exchange with Anicetas Simutis, the Lithuanian attaché sent to the United States in 1936, made for a depressing reading. In response to her query of the fate of the Lithuanian Labor leaders, vast majority were classified as 'fate unknown' following the Russian occupation of the country, with a small minority confirmed to have been arrested before disappearing into the fog of the Soviet prison system. Simutis also provided Sender with an overview of the labor conditions in Lithuania under the German occupation, remarking that it was essentially identical to the policies carried out in the other Baltic countries, making sure to underline that the German mobilization of labor bore significant similarities to the predations of the Soviet occupation.^[33]

The similar refrain equating the German policies and atrocities to those carried out by the USSR would become a recurring pattern of reports, steadily increasing as the Red Army once again occupied the Baltic countries. Echoing the report on the fascist organizations of the White Russian emigres, one memo remarked that the "The only thing that ties the Lithuanians in some degree to the Nazis is the fear of Bolshevism..."^[34]

Not all recruitment efforts proved quite as dispiriting as those of Sender. From 1943 till the end of the war, an agent codenamed 'Vir,' aka A-347, established a presence in Stockholm. With the geographic proximity to the Baltic states, a consistent flow of information was collected, and several agents inserted in the occupied territory – for example one Johannes Neumann, an Estonian. Recruited by "Vir" as an asset, he provided the Office the data on the situation in Estonia, as well as the frontline. Arrested by the Germans in 1944, he was released to absence of evidence and escaped to Sweden. Two years later he would be enrolled in OSS as an agent designated as TX-475. His recruitment assessment described him as "anti-Russian, pro-Allied with string nationalist sentiments." Which made him a perfect compliment to a operations now carried out from Sweden: debriefing Estonian refugees and Swedish sailors, subversion of Estonians visiting Sweden from the USSR, as well as the insertion agents into Estonia – Operation Appendicitis.^[35] The CIA's cold war activities in the Baltics would be seamlessly built on the foundation of the OSS wartime activities.^[36]

By 1944 the data coming from Estonia (and the rest of the Baltic States) focused with increasing regularity on the impact of the Soviet presence in the territories they occupied – arrests of Estonian political personalities, (along with normal citizens), tortures and atrocities carried out by the Red Army and the GPU. It was via its Estonia sources that the OSS received some its earliest warnings that despite the difficulty presented by the ongoing Nazi presence, anti-Soviet resistance is already being formed – with Brotherhood of the Forest being specifically mentioned. Along with the UPA, the Forest Brothers would prove to be the longest-lasting post-war insurgency against the USSR.

The confirmation of the intelligence collected in Europe, would be provided in July 1945, at conference of Lithuanian American Council, where an appeal was read openly for funds to keep in contact with Lithuanian underground. Existence of resistance was supposedly evidenced by a secret 20-page document authored by V. Sdzikauskas a former Lithuanian diplomat, now the leader of the resistance.^[37] Shotly before the conference, the FNB's contacts among the radical Lithuanian nationalists openly expressed to the OSS their view that they consider the future of independent Lithuania to be extremely bleak, but the fight would continue and, since the Western intervention is now unlikely they will fight from within Lithuania.^[38]

In winter of 1943, the FNB commissioned a study of "Ostland" – German occupied territory

of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. One of the authors was Kazys Grinius, a former Lithuanian military attaché in Berlin and son of a former Prime Minister. His remarks underlined that (as in Ukraine) the Germans are currying favor by returning land expropriated by the Soviets – an issue very close to the hearts of the locals.^[39] With little care for the sensibilities of the State Department, the report constantly alluded to the savagery of the Soviet policies and the popular fear of their return, while describing the Lithuanian Communist movement is defined as “seditious foreign organization, entirely directed by Moscow.”^[40] Unhesitatingly blamed the barbarity of the Communist occupation for the ease with which Germany was able to wrap itself in the mantle of liberators and dupe some of the nationalists.^[41]

The FNB endorsed its approval of the commentary by recruiting the author as the linchpin of the unspecified project involving a number of Lithuanian military officers residing in the US. Later he was also utilized in compiling a list of 1700 Lithuanian officers (a copy of the country’s *Annals of Military Officer*, the only one such outside the Axis states) – presumably with the idea of subversion and cooptation in mind.^[42]

By 1944, the OSS reports began to increasingly reflect the horrors of the Soviet return to the Baltics. Thus a letter from an Estonian naval officer is sent up the chain. The consequences of the ‘red wave’ engulfing the country are allowed to be expressed by the letter without commentary – mundane evil of friends starving to death on the wave of Siberia, inability to trust anyone for fear of informants, disappearance of friends.^[43]o:p>

In the summer of that year, a comprehensive review of the Baltic emigres (with the special emphasis on Lithuanians) within the US was put together by the FNB. Noting that Lithuanians are split into three factions of moderate nationalists, the radicals, anti-communist socialists, and the Soviet sympathizers. The danger of subversion by the Axis powers was now entirely absent from the analysis, which was now easily familiar with the problems of disunity among the emigres and the outsized role of the Church as a potential force for unity. The growing strength of the pro-Soviet faction among the community was noted with studied the traditional studied neutrality.^[44]

Echoing the actions of the Ukrainian emigres, the Baltic communities were taking tentative and often halting steps toward creating a unified organization to represent their concerns and were also legitimizing their calls for the post-war independence by the rhetoric of the Atlantic Charter. The impetus was the same – the growing force of the Soviet Union, and the desperation to impact the US policy in the direction of containment. As the OSS reports reveal, increasingly the various factions would immediately unite against the pro-Soviet rivals, forgetting the internal squabbles - such as when the Soviet puppet leader of Lithuania promised to improve ties with the US. The need to convince the White House to deny legitimacy to Soviet government of Lithuania and its proposed legation required a unified, coordinated response.^[45]

By the fall of 1944 such coordination was in full effect as the Lithuanian American Council –sent a telegram to FDR protesting that Baltic peoples were victims of both Russians and Germans, that Russians were engaged in wholesale extermination in Lithuania. Simultaneously an article on the same theme was distributed by the Lithuanian American Info Center to all senators, congressmen, and plenty of other influencers.^[46]In March of 1945, the OSS report warned that the anti-Soviet American Lithuanian Mission was planning to hold a conference in Washington. A newsreel has been created to showcase the Lithuanian story, later to be screened across the country.^[47] The FNB was becoming an invaluable resource, allowing the politicians to navigate the unfamiliar waters of these increasingly effective constituencies.^[48]

[1] Memorandum on the Ukrainian Question, 1942, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, box 104, folder 14, NND 877092.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Foreign Groups: Carpatho-Russians in America, September 14, 1942, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD142, Box 3, Folder 20, NND 867142.

[5] A Study of White Russian Fascism: J. B. W. Waller, July 28, 1942, in NARA RG 226, Entry 171-A, Box 64, Folder 767, NND 917171,

[6] Ibid.

[7] Tim Weiner, *Enemies: A History of the FBI* (New York: Random House, 2012), 125.

[8] A Study of White Russian Fascism: J. B. W. Waller, July 28, 1942, in NARA, RG 226, Entry 171-A, Box 64, Folder 767, NND 917171 .

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Mission Ruppert: Lt. A.E. Jolis, October 14, 1944, in NARA RG 226, Entry A1-210, Box 243, WN9387-WN9400, NND 974345.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Summary of Mission Ruppert And Results Obtained, 14 July 1945, in NARA, RG 226, Entry A1-210, Box 8, WN00253, NND974345.

[14] Jeffrey Burds, "The Soviet War against Fifth Columnists The Case of Chechnya 1942-4," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42, no. 2, (2007): 313., Ibid., Translation of Aide Memoire Prepared by Kedia

[15] Summary of Mission Ruppert and Results Obtained, 14 July 1945, in NARA, RG 226, Entry A1-210, Box 8, WN00253, NND974345.

[16] Memorandum of Conversation: A . Margolin, 4 May 1945, in NARA, RG 226, Entry A1-210, Box 60, WN 1068-10170, 1072-1083, NND 974345.

[17] From Joseph A. Jackovics to Weston Howland, April 23, 1942 In NARA, RG 226, Entry A1-210, Box 64, WN 751, NND 979345.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., Sadowski Memorandum.

[20] Pavel Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company: 1994), 23-24.

[21] Review of the Ukrainian press for the week ending July 12, July 12, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 128, WN11044-11096, NND 877092.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Review of the Ukrainian press for the week ending July 19, July 19, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 128, WN11044-11096, NND 877092.

[24] Review of the Ukrainian press for the week ending July 28, July 28, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 128, WN11044-11096, NND 877092.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Review of the Ukrainian press for the week ending June 6, June 6, 1943, in NARA RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 128, WN11044-11096, NND 877092.

[27] Ukraine: Economic and Labor Conditions, November 20, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 458, WN27840-WN27949, NND 877092.

[28] Anušauskas Arvydas ed., *Lithuania in 1940-1991: The History of Occupied Lithuania* (The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2015), 222.

[29] April 20, 1942, In NARA, RG 226, Entry A1-210, Box 400, WN 14876, NND 974345.

[30] Estonia Under German Occupation, March 10, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry 92, Box 252, Folder 53, NND 877092

[31] Ibid.

[32] Christof Mauch. *The Shadow War Against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service* (New York: Columbia University Press) 17.

[33] July 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry A1-168, Box 67, Folder 17, NND 857168.

[34] Lithuania Under German Occupation, March 11, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 458, WN27840-WN27949, NND 877092.

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] The Lithuanian Complex Part I, February 2, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 219, Folder 9, NND 877092.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] SI File #15930, March 27, 1943, in NARA, RG 226, Entry UD92, Box 239, Folder 63, NND 877092.

[43] From Ensign Frederick G. Kilgour, USNR to William Langer, 3 April 1944, in NARA, RG 226, Entry NM-54 1, Box 6, Folder 5, NND 750140.

[44] Foreign Nationalities Branch Memorandum #200, 6 July 1944, in NARA, RG 226, Entry 200, Box 15, Folder 139, NND 943085.

[45] Foreign Nationalities Branch Memorandum #N-33, 20 September 1944, in NARA, RG 226, Entry 200, Box 15, Folder 141, NND 943085.

[46] Foreign Nationalities Branch Memorandum #N-44, 20 September 1944, in NARA, RG 226, Entry 200, Box 15, Folder 141, NND 943085.

[47] Foreign Nationalities Branch Memorandum #N-232, 20 September 1944, in NARA, RG 226, Entry 200, Box 15, Folder 141, NND 943085.

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