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**“Their Need Was Great”: Émigrés and Anglo-American
Intelligence Operations in the Early Cold War
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“Their Need Was Great”:

**Émigrés and Anglo-American Intelligence
Operations in the Early Cold War**

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March 2018

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Abstract

Covert action during the Cold War has been the subject of much historiography. This research, however, is based for the most part on primary sources, specifically on the records declassified in the United States in 2007 as a consequence of the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act. The majority of the historiography on this topic either predates or neglects these records.

The study of covert operations inside the Iron Curtain during the early Cold War, sponsored by Western states using émigré agents, usually ends with the conclusion that these operations were a failure, both in operational terms and from the point of view of the intelligence gathered. I will challenge this conclusion, showing that not only the operations gathered a significant amount of intelligence, but also that the intelligence obtained was considered valuable by policymakers and had an impact in the planning and policymaking strategies of the early Cold War. The focus on primary sources also allowed a detailed description of the practical aspects of the operations, leading to a more coherent and solid analysis of their development and consequences.

This study focuses on American operations, due to the abundance of records available. British operations have also been considered and assessed in the best way the author found possible. Two case studies have been selected, based on the nationality of the émigré agents used: White Russians and Ukrainians. The intelligence outcome from these operations has been carefully analysed, and their influence on policymaking assessed in the wider context of the Cold War. The conclusion is a complete re-evaluation of the importance and value of Western Human intelligence in the late 1940s and 1950s.

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Author's declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Introduction

Context and argument

When asked about my research by people from outside the field, the words “intelligence history” usually provoke surprise and admiration. The next step usually is explaining that studying the history of intelligence has not much to do with James Bond movies or with spy craft in general. At a first glance, it may seem that the work of historians and that of intelligence are the opposite ends of the spectrum: historians work with the past, while the main purpose of intelligence is to predict or give early warning of outcomes happening in the future.

However, this is a shallow judgement that does not hold under a deeper analysis. The first historian in the modern sense of the word, the Greek Thucydides, wrote: "I shall be content if those shall pronounce my History useful who desire to give a view of events as they really happen, and as they are likely, in accordance with human nature, to repeat themselves at some future time, if not exactly the same yet very similar."¹ Almost two thousand years later, French philosopher Michel de Montaigne echoed that thought: “Tis one and the same Nature that rolls on her course, and whoever has sufficiently considered the present state of things might certainly conclude as to both the future and the past.”² Finally, a sign in front of the former site of Dachau’s concentration camp stands as a grim reminder that, in the words of Spanish philosopher George Santayana, “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

The historian’s work, thus, even if rooted in the past, has much to do with the present and the future. The same goes for the work of intelligence, even if is quite hard to give an exhaustive definition of what that “work” exactly is. An article by Dr Michael Warner of the CIA History Staff well explains the difficulties in finding an answer to that question: “Without a clear idea of what intelligence is, how can we develop a theory to explain how it

¹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2009), Book I, 2, 2.

² Michel de Montaigne, *The complete essays* (London, Penguin UK, 2004), Book II, Chapter 12: *An apology for Raymond Sebond*.

works?”³ Among the official definitions presented in the study, the one provided by the Clark Task Force of the Hoover Commission in 1955 is very interesting: “Intelligence deals with all the things which should be known in advance of initiating a course of action.”⁴ The Central Intelligence Agency in 1999 provided its own definition of the ‘craft’: “Reduced to its simplest terms, intelligence is knowledge and foreknowledge of the world around us.”⁵

The two crafts, that of the historian and that of intelligence, share this peculiar connection between the past, the present and the future: the study and interpretation of the first two serves as a bridge to the third. Historians have something else in common with a fundamental figure of the intelligence field, the analyst, for their work consist in interpreting what is already known. For historians this can be quite a task, given the constant need for novelty and the amount of literature they have to usually relate to. Luckily, History will never run out of inspirations for research, and every historical era or event offers plenty of new angles worth exploring; the more we discover, the more questions are raised. This is particularly true for what we call the Cold War, a generalising and reductive term for a period that spans forty years of our recent history.

Twenty-six years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, there is still much we can learn about the Cold War. The fact that the conflict between the two blocs was mostly a covert one means that the availability of information and primary sources is far from satisfying. The recent tensions between Russia and the Western countries could be used to prove the wisdom of maintaining a strict policy of control on the release of classified documents, no matter how old. This is obviously an obstacle for the researcher of the Cold War, but it also means that there are still a good number of grey areas, topics worth exploring and discoveries to be made. In the words of Richard Aldrich, “we do not yet know the full story of the Cold War, indeed we may never know.”⁶ His statement holds even truer for the field of intelligence history: “Secret service is fundamental to any understanding of the Cold War. At the highest level it was intelligence, especially very secret intelligence, that underpinned, even legitimated, so many policies launched in the conflict’s name.”⁷

³ Michael Warner, “Wanted: a definition of intelligence. Understanding our craft” (CSI Publications), *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 46, No 3, 2002, pp. 15-22.

⁴ Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government [the Hoover Commission], *Intelligence Activities* (Washington, DC, June 1955), p. 26.

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency (Office of Public Affairs), *A Consumer's Guide to Intelligence*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), vii.

⁶ Richard J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand, Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (Woodstock & New York, The Overlook Press, 2002), p. 7.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 5.

For the historian of intelligence, the Cold War is an always fertile land of research, where every twist and bend in the road may hide a cue leading to a whole new path. This analogy is an elegant way to describe the research technique of groping in the dark and hoping to stumble into anything of value, something that all intelligence historians have or will experience sooner or later. It also describes how I arrived, or maybe stumbled, into the topic of this thesis. My Master's degree graduation thesis was focused on the Nazi war criminals that ended up working for Western intelligence after the war using, among the other books, *Unholy Trinity*, by Mark Aarons and John Loftus. One of the most interesting claims the authors make is that the Soviet secret service during World War II started a deception programme aimed at influencing Western intelligence, taking advantage of the émigrés and the defectors.⁸ First of all, I was impressed by the potential scope of this revelation. If the Soviets had indeed been successful (and the authors assume they were) then, given the importance of intelligence during the Cold War mentioned earlier, it could be possible that for decades part of the Western policies could have been the result of a Soviet deception. Second, I was impressed by how little follow-up this potentially explosive claim had. Most of Aarons and Loftus' conclusions are based on their analysis of the wartime activities of a particular man, the White Russian General Anton Turkul, an émigré whose story will be analysed in depth in a later chapter. For the moment it suffices to say that Turkul was the head of a spy ring operating in Sofia, Budapest and Rome that was the source of an impressive amount of military intelligence on the Red Army, delivered to the Nazis on a daily basis. An Anglo-American post-war investigation concluded that the source of such highly reliable and, more important, quickly delivered intelligence could have been none other than the Soviets themselves. But why would the Russians willingly provide information with the risk of jeopardising operations and the lives of their soldiers? The answer the authors arrived at is that they were doing so in order to make the émigrés look like a reliable source of intelligence, covering the fact that their organisation had been for a long time the successful target of Soviet deception and subversion programmes. The same émigrés would then be seen as a reliable asset when the Western services would finally direct their attentions toward the Soviet Union, after the end of the War.⁹

⁸ Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1991), chapter 7. The book has been published in the UK under the title *Ratlines: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (London, William Heineman Limited, 1991).

⁹ See chapter 10 of *Unholy Trinity* for an overview of the authors' argument.

The next question was obvious: how much were the émigrés exploited, if they indeed were, and how important and consequential was the intelligence they procured? As said before, Aarons and Loftus completely failed to follow-up on these lines. Even the evidence they provided for their conclusions was incomplete. Being journalists more than historians, their research shows a lack of reliance on primary sources, or at least a very narrow selection of those. Their investigative attitude shines when they focus on Nazi hunting, but from an historian's perspective their work is far from satisfying. John Loftus' work on the Belarus émigrés received ruthless critiques, and Mark Aarons' (and his family's) lifelong affiliation with the Communist Party of Australia supports the view that his conclusions are sometimes biased.¹⁰

Keeping all that in mind, I decided that the relationship between the émigrés and the Western intelligence services deserved to be explored with an historian's approach and perspective, to fully understand its scope and consequences. After a first approach to the existing literature it was immediately clear that the émigrés were present in almost all the books dealing with Cold War covert operations, but never as the main characters. It is necessary, at this point, to make a distinction between covert operations and pure intelligence gathering. Covert action is well defined in the NSC 10/2 document, a policy directive drafted primarily by George Kennan, then director of policy planning at the State Department, and approved by President Truman on 18 June 1948. This definition specified that covert operations included all activities sponsored or conducted by the United States either in support of friendly governments or against hostile ones.¹¹ Such activities

shall include any covert activities related to: propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measure; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world.¹²

It is evident that “the only thing left out is espionage.”¹³ This distinction is fundamental. Every time that the role of the émigrés in the Cold War is approached in a study, it is always done by focusing on the covert operations aspect, leaving out or downplaying their

¹⁰ Jim Dingley, “Little Truth and No Understanding”, *The Journal of Byelorussian Studies*, Vol. V, Nos. 3-4, Years XIX-XX, 1984 pp. 58-64; Airbrushing the record - Mark Aarons's attempt to re-shape history, *National Observer: Australia and World Affairs*, No. 85, 2012.

¹¹ John Prados, *Safe for Democracy* (Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 2006), p. 41.

¹² *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment, Psychological and Political Warfare*, eds. C. Thomas Thorne, Jr., David S. Patterson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), Document 292.

¹³ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, p. 41.

contribution to intelligence gathering. I define this approach as “negative” as opposed to “positive” for the following reasons. Émigré operations have been considered the perfect example of the failure of the CIA and SIS aggressive covert action, or “liberation” policies, until the late 1950s. Operation “Valuable” in Albania and Operation “Jungle” in the Baltic States are possibly the most famous ones, proving how the Western services were wasting money and time encouraging guerrilla and resistance movements to fight a hopeless war, often delivering genuine patriots into the hands of Soviet security. However, émigrés were not always used for covert paramilitary action. Some of their groups were actually unwilling to partake in those kinds of operations, and were considered more suited for quiet intelligence gathering. Here is where the existing literature on the topic leaves a huge blind spot: espionage is left out of the picture. Considering that the impact of émigré covert operations was mainly a “negative” one, now is the time to assess if the same conclusion can be made regarding their espionage activities.

A careful study of the relevant literature, together with archival sources, has allowed the following classification, which was used as the starting point for this work. Western intelligence operations involving the émigrés can be distinguished in three different kinds: paramilitary, propaganda, and intelligence.

The first is the one that more tightly fits the description of “preventive direct action” included in the definition of covert action of NSC 10/2. “Valuable” and “Jungle” are two examples of such projects, trying to use émigrés trained in the West to infiltrate Soviet-controlled countries, in connection with local partisan forces, in order to mount, or support, a guerrilla warfare which was supposed to do serious damage to the Communist regimes. As previously said, these operations have been the subject of much study and scrutiny, and they are not the chosen topic of this research: as such, they will be mentioned but not analysed in depth.

The second kind, propaganda, is best described by its most famous example, the Radios. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were part of the large American effort to harness and utilise the talents of recent émigrés from the Soviet Union and its satellites. Part of this effort were “specific plans and programs designed to influence attitudes in foreign countries in a direction favourable to the attainment of U.S. objectives and to counter effects of anti-U.S. propaganda.”¹⁴ The Radios were staffed by émigrés, and their broadcasts are considered by

¹⁴ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 252.

some the most successful American Cold War effort: they lasted for forty years, and were able to exert that kind of “soft power” that was at the core of the concept of psychological warfare. The Radios are only one of the émigré propaganda projects, even if the most famous. They will be described, even if in brief, in this study, because of the importance that propaganda had for the émigré effort in general, once it was acknowledged as the best use that could be made of these resources. As it will be shown, even projects that started with other priorities, were at a certain point shifted towards propaganda, as this was the most successful way to utilise the émigrés.

Finally, intelligence projects are the least explored by researchers and the main subject of this study. Intelligence collection and “early warning” were two priorities in the early Cold War. Both will be analysed more in depth in the following chapters, however it is important to establish that some émigré projects started with these specific priorities: gathering information from areas of the world that were considered almost impenetrable to Western agencies, and having reliable assets “on the ground” who could give early warning of the signs of a Soviet attack to Europe, in the years when this was considered a real and – to some people – imminent, threat. The success of these projects is debatable. The recently available evidence can be a great help but, as will be shown in this work, tracking the exact sources of the intelligence received by American policy-makers is an almost impossible task. Basically, we know that the émigrés were providing *some* intelligence, and we know of what kind, but when the time comes for showing how much of that intelligence translated into actual assessments, and then policy decisions, these are much harder tasks that can not be completely satisfied with the available records. However, this research still tried to tackle that issue, recognising the historical importance that émigré intelligence projects had in the context of the early Cold War, and trying to make a contribution to that discussion.

Methodology

The present study heavily tried to make good use of a very specific set of primary sources. This is not only due to the aforementioned scarcity of satisfying secondary sources on the topic, but mostly due to a clear methodological choice. Such a choice was a way to set aside this work from the more journalistic studies that preceded it. At the same time, by focusing on sources previously unused, I also wanted to add a valuable and unique piece to the puzzle of Cold War studies. These sources came from an unexpected place. In 1998, the US

Congress authorised the creation of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group (IWG), and following that with the launch of what became the largest congressionally mandated, single-subject declassification effort in history. More than eight million pages have been opened to the public under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, which aimed at shedding some light on the Holocaust and other war crimes, and on the US government cooperation with war criminals during the Cold War. Many émigrés had been accused of cooperation with the Nazis and war crimes (and some were, indeed, guilty), especially after 1991 when Aarons and Loftus published their book *Unholy Trinity* and exposed the relationship between Mykola Lebed, a Ukrainian Nationalist and retired émigré leader, and the CIA (more details on the case will be provided in the conclusions).

As a result, the documents relating to the CIA projects involving émigré groups were also caught in the declassification storm and released to the public over the course of nine years. These projects were identified with the cryptonym “Aeacre”, which comprised all the “Redsox” operations using different émigré groups, including Ukrainians, White Russians and Baltics. Redsox involved the CIA-sponsored illegal return into the USSR of émigrés and defectors to act as undercover agents. Aeacre was an attempt to reunite all these project under one umbrella, a “Domestic Operations Base” (DOB) which provided operational and training support for Redsox operations, which were originated and planned by the five CIA Soviet Russia Division geographical branches. The basic purposes of Aeacre were the following:

1. The establishment of an agent spotting network, both in the United States and abroad.
2. The establishment of facilities for the operational assessment of agents, both in the US and abroad.
3. The establishment and maintenance of a small, specialised organisation and minimum facilities for the planning and execution of approximately four to six Redsox operations yearly.
4. The establishment, maintenance, and training of a limited cadre of action agents for “Hot War” use.¹⁵

Starting from 1956, the Domestic Operations Base was converted into a functional organisation with direct responsibility over all Redsox operations directed against the Soviet

¹⁵ CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room [henceforward CIA FOIA ERR], “Project Outline”, Aeacre Vol. 1_0027.

Union, and it undertook the initiations of its own Redsox projects. Among those were Project Aenoble and Project Aerodynamic, which exploited White Russian and Ukrainian émigrés respectively, and are the two main case studies used in the present work. Both will be analysed in detail in the following chapters. While the documents concerning the two projects mentioned in this study number about a hundred, this number encompasses only those worth of a direct mention. Many more have been read and studied, and while most of them are of a mundane administrative nature (and as such have been excluded from citation), still they have added significant scope and depth to this research project overall.

The author, however, understands the dangers of relying excessively on a single source of documents. The material from the CIA archive, while a precious and much unexplored resource, needed to be constantly cross-referenced with secondary material, to test its reliability. This proved to be a difficult process: even the most well-written studies on some of the subjects touched by this thesis, either make no references to the CIA documents or, when dealing with the émigré groups, present inaccuracies, lack of details or outright mistakes, that can only result from a lack of documentation. This was perhaps the best contribution given by the study of the CIA archives: reconstructing a history of some of these émigré groups (especially the Ukrainian ones) that had all the qualities that can be found in bureaucratic, administrative documentation of an intelligence agencies, namely neutrality, accuracy and straightforwardness.

Literature review

If literature could not be extremely helpful in regards of the history of the émigré groups, their relationship with intelligence agencies, or for analysing the operational aspects of the émigré projects, it was however fundamental for supporting all other aspects of this thesis. First of all, the research had to be framed in the context of the Cold War and, more importantly, of secret operations in the years under analysis. This was no simple task. Foreign policy, domestic policymaking and secret operations were very tightly connected. Because one of the aims of this research was to understand how émigré operations tied into that connection, it would have been impossible to do so without analysing some key points, such as American foreign policy strategies towards the Soviet Union, and how secret operations became a fundamental weapon in the Cold War. The debate on policy keywords such as “containment” and “liberation” goes hand in hand with the birth of the American

secret operations structure, and with the evolution of the intelligence establishment. As a consequence, all of these aspects have been carefully examined in the thesis, trying to define the connection between Cold War strategy, covert operations and intelligence.

The starting point for this analysis was *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, by Sarah-Jane Corke. The book provides an examination of the Truman Administration's decision to employ covert operations. The author sustains that the majority of these operations were ill-conceived and doomed to failure. Corke blames the inability of the administration to reconcile policy, strategy and operations. This same argument has also been proposed by Stephen Long in his PhD thesis, published shortly after Corke's book.¹⁶ *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy* came out in 2008, and the author herself admits that, at the time, there was not a good deal of information available on the operations themselves (the previously mentioned files in the CIA archives were not used). There is also very little on intelligence collection. The book, however, gives an excellent contribution on the study of US political strategy and how covert operations tied into this. In terms of policy and strategy, Corke maintains that the US "simply did not have a coherent foreign policy during these years, nor did it develop or maintain an integrated strategy on which covert operations could be based."¹⁷ At the time of the publishing of *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, the author's understanding was that the CIA refused to acknowledge that these campaigns even took place. This assumption no longer holds true today, after the public release of the documents in the CIA archive.

Following from Corke's book, another excellent contribution to the study of American secret operations behind the Iron Curtain is *Operation Rollback*, by Peter Grose. While maintaining the connection between policymaking and secret operation at its core, this book delves deeper in the topic of covert action in Eastern Europe, because its focus is what can be loosely defined as the strategy of rollback. Grose's work provides a very good history and analysis of political warfare, how it came to be in the second half of the 1940s, who were its forefathers, and how it developed. Considering the importance of political warfare for this thesis, Grose's study served as a solid framework. Compared to Corke's book, *Operation Rollback* deals more specifically with secret operations in Eastern Europe, and also partially

¹⁶ Stephen Long, "Disorder over design: strategy, bureaucracy and the development of U.S. political warfare in Europe, 1945-1950", PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2009.

¹⁷ Sarah-Jane Corke, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy: Truman, Secret Warfare and the CIA, 1945-53* (Routledge, 2007), p.4.

with intelligence collection. As such, it served as a solid cross-reference for the primary sources used in this thesis.¹⁸

Any study of American secret operations could not ignore *Safe for Democracy*, by John Prados. Published in 2006, the book constitutes a comprehensive anthology of what the author defines as the secret wars of the CIA. Prados' starting point is the assumption that the United States are today perceived as a global threat in many countries of the world. His hypothesis is that the CIA actions in the last half century have contributed irrevocably to this tainting of the public image of the country. The conclusion of his study is that "covert operations have been a negative factor for the American pursuit of democracy throughout the world."¹⁹ Despite the obvious difficulties in writing a comprehensive history of the CIA in the limited space of a book, the level of detail Prados provides is excellent, expanding from his previous work on the subject, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, published in 1986 and revised in 1996, using the new evidence made available during the years but also giving his work a new scope. The author always tries to relate the events detailed to specific presidential decisions and the White House and congressional control procedures. The point he tries to prove is that the President and White House control over covert operations was more effective than is usually thought, predating and often overruling congressional control mechanisms.

Regarding the émigrés, the book does not provide much detail on the operational aspect of "Valuable" or "Jungle", for example. Its main focus is on what was going on in Washington, on the planning stage and on the many struggles for power between the factions inside the CIA, such as the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) and the Office of Special Operations (OSO). Most of what Prados says on the Baltic is taken straight from Tom Bower's *The Red Web*, the only comprehensive study on Operation Jungle. The book however provides some interesting details on the Volunteer Freedom Corps, a "special warfare" unit created under the Eisenhower administration and composed of Displaced Persons or citizens of countries occupied by the Soviets, an example of a different use of the émigré forces.²⁰

Safe for Democracy by itself does not provide enough depth or detail for a study of the CIA émigré operations. What it does provide, however, is a good understanding of the

¹⁸ Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2001).

¹⁹ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, XV.

²⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 94-95.

machinery behind covert operations. There is also room for a wider assessment of the consequences of the liberation policies and of the CIA operations in the 1950s. The most important way it contributed to my research was by clarifying the difference between espionage and covert operations, and underlying how, when émigrés are involved, espionage has not received enough attention and study yet.

A more recent study on the CIA and its involvement in political warfare is *The CIA and the Soviet Bloc* by Stephen Long. This book is particularly close to the topic of my research, because it focuses specifically on Eastern Europe and on the years between 1947 and 1956. Long's work tries to answer the question if US foreign policy in the early Cold War was guided by an overarching goal, and if the US government acted with a clear strategy in mind. His answer to both questions is no; in Long's own words: "This book challenges a prevailing tendency in the scholarship to impart a sense of coherence to American actions against the Soviet Union from the late 1940s onwards."²¹ Long argues that grand policy goals such as containment, rollback and liberation, were never followed or implemented fully, due to bureaucratic disorganisation or disunity inside the US government and its agencies. Also, he establishes that what he defines as "strategic incoherence" derived by an inability to harness political warfare and to combine covert action with overt strategies.²²

The CIA and the Soviet Bloc is, mostly, a study on foreign policy, and as such is of greatest interest for political scientists and political historians. His contribution to the study of covert action and political warfare is significant, but once again intelligence collection is left out. Long came to the conclusion that non-military warfare against the Soviet Union can be defined as a failure; I decided to challenge this assumption by focusing on a different aspect of covert action, intelligence collection. This way, instead of looking at the failed attempt to harness political warfare into a coherent foreign policy, I analysed if and how intelligence collection influenced that same foreign policy.

Prados' and Long's books are understandably focused on the United States. A much wider scope of analysis can be found in *The Hidden Hand* by Richard Aldrich, a fundamental book for any study of the Cold War. The book centres on the Anglo-American intelligence relationship in its two facets: co-operation and conflict. The author's opinion is that "official history and official archives tend to emphasise the first. The purpose of this study is to redress the balance and so here emphasis is placed upon the second."²³

²¹ Stephen Long, *The CIA and the Soviet Bloc: Political Warfare, the Origins of the CIA and Countering Communism in Europe* (London, Tauris, 2014), p. 10.

²² *Ibid.* p. 9.

²³ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 10.

Professor Aldrich's work is more than a comparative history of the SIS and CIA in the Cold War. His unique contribution is understanding how and why the two services took very different paths in their approach to the Soviet danger. Britain's Cold War apparatus can be understood partly in terms of a struggle by the diplomats of the Foreign Office to control problematic figures such as Field Marshal Montgomery or the Chief of the Air Staff John Slessor, who wanted to extend their services' reach over secret operations. This meant an aggressive stance, encouraging covert action and "liberation" policies in a similar way as the Americans were doing. In Britain, however, the diplomats' efforts were successful and the SIS stayed firmly under Foreign Office direction.²⁴ This meant that the two services ended up with different Cold War policies, with the British trying to function as advisors and regulators of what they thought to be ill-conceived operations, hence the conflict that Professor Aldrich wants to stress. The SIS, however, remained involved in covert action until the mid-1950s, while the struggle between diplomats and military still had to be settled. Liberation had a strong appeal in Britain too, and the SIS involvement with the émigrés was deep, even if almost impossible to track given the strict no-declassification policy of SIS.

The central purpose of Aldrich's work is, in the author's words, "to 'say it with documents'. It seeks to provide the first well-documented and reliable account of post-war British secret services and its relations with its important American partners."²⁵ Despite that, once again the lack of primary sources emerges as a hindrance to historians trying to lift the shroud of secrecy covering Britain's secret operations during the Cold War. In terms of operations, *The Hidden Hand* is unable to provide a satisfying amount of detail. For example Aldrich reports on the use of Ukrainians, with agents being secretly dropped by the SIS in the Ukraine in a series of operations called Project I, II, III and IV.²⁶ His only source, however, is Anthony Cavendish, a SIS officer who worked on these operations and briefly recalled them in his book of memoirs, *Inside Intelligence*. Professor Aldrich's most interesting contribution to the study of émigrés relations with Allied intelligence is his support to Stuart Steven's thesis; this suggests that Western intelligence agencies used "liberation" policies as a provocation to encourage Stalin's purges in the Eastern Bloc Communist Parties.²⁷ Despite the fact that expert commentators on the history of the Eastern Bloc remain perplexed and divided by Steven's idea, Aldrich is convinced that, at the very

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 14, 74, 315-316.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 15.

²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 170-171.

²⁷ Stuart Steven, *Operation Splinter Factor: The Untold Story of America's Most Secret Cold War Intelligence Operation* (Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1974).

least, the SIS and the CIA sought to increase the ferocity of the purges as they developed, because this would lead to a further weakening of the Soviet apparatus and chain of command.²⁸

As valuable as *The Hidden Hand* is, it was published in 2000, and the study of the history of the British secret service has moved forward in the past sixteen years. It was necessary, then, for me to take into consideration more recent studies on the subject. One of these was *MI6* by Keith Jeffery, published in 2010. The book was commissioned by SIS itself as an official history, to commemorate the centenary of its foundation. Jeffery's experience and skill as a military historian, and the fact that he was relatively new to the field of intelligence studies, resulted in a compelling book, one that lays bare the history of SIS in the first forty years of its existence, despite the constraints of being an "official history". For my research, the book was particularly useful in understanding the delicate moment of the post -World War II years, when SIS had to transition into being a peacetime organisation, and how it restructured to adapt to the challenges of the Cold War. Even if this same topic is present in Aldrich's book, *MI6* expanded on it and provided further analysis.²⁹

Elaborating on Professor Aldrich's study on how "liberation" policies were connected to and motivated by a desire for military build-up, my theory is that this push for armed superiority (and thus for an increased budget for the military) was connected not only to special operations in the Eastern Bloc, but also to intelligence gathering and espionage.³⁰ The issue of the estimates of Soviet military strength and intention has been widely discussed and analysed by historians, and it is deeply connected with the process of intelligence collection. It is commonly understood that the first real breakthroughs in that process happened with the development of Imint (Imagery Intelligence) and Elint (Electronic Intelligence), starting with the overflights in the mid-1950s.³¹ However, the first decade of the Cold War also saw an active effort in intelligence gathering against the Soviet Union. This effort often took the form of a competition between supporters of Sigint (Signals intelligence) and Humint (Human intelligence). Richard Aldrich is also the author of some of the most influential studies on the development of GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) and on the importance of Sigint as a form of intelligence gathering during the

²⁸ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 177-179.

²⁹ Keith Jeffery, *MI6. The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949* (London, Bloomsbury 2010).

³⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 317-318.

³¹ One of the studies supporting this thesis is: Lawrence Freedman, *US Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1977).

Cold War.³² In *The Hidden Hand*, Aldrich further expands those studies, stressing the importance of GCHQ and defining it the most important of Britain's Cold War.³³ More studies on Signals intelligence have been published in recent years. The National Security Agency was the topic of Matthew M. Aid's *The Secret Sentry: The Untold History of the National Security Agency*, published in 2009. On the British side, Aldrich contributed once again to the history of the GCHQ with *GCHQ: The Uncensored Story of Britain's Most Secret Intelligence Agency*, published in 2010. While Sigint is not the main topic of this thesis, both studies have been used as reference for the part of this study where Signals intelligence is mentioned and briefly analysed.

The purpose of this research, however, was to look at Humint, to show how it was still a prominent form of intelligence gathering into the mid-1950s and, finally, to understand how one of the main sources of Humint on the Soviet Union, the émigrés, contributed to the assessment of Soviet capabilities and intentions.

A good entry point for the study of American and British espionage during the Cold War is *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*, by Jeffrey Richelson. This book, even if published in 1987 when the Cold War was still going on, constitutes a satisfying account of how the United States were spying on the Soviets. Starting from the last years of World War II, it shows the process by which a suspicious wartime ally was, tentatively at first, transformed into the main espionage target. Moving on, Richelson provides very good insight on what were considered the overt sources of intelligence: military attachés and air shows.³⁴ These sources are usually considered not very reliable, given the extent of control the Soviet Authorities had over them, but the author shows that their support to intelligence collection was not one to be easily discarded. Another really interesting contribution of the book is its description of "Redskin" operations. The program involved public travels to the Soviet Union from the United States, Europe and even Third World countries. The travellers "included tourists, businessmen, journalists, scientists, academics, athletes, chess players, and church leaders who were recruited to gather information during their trips".³⁵ When dealing with the émigrés, however, Richelson shows the lack of insight and significant

³² Richard J. Aldrich and Michael Coleman, "The cold war, the JIC and British signals intelligence, 1948", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1989, pp. 535-549; Richard J. Aldrich, "GCHQ and Sigint in the Early Cold War 1945-70", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2001, pp. 67-96.

³³ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 233.

³⁴ Jeffrey Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target* (New York, William Morrow, 1987) pp. 48-53.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

sources that is so common for this topic. The sister program to “Redskin”, codenamed “Redsox”, is not even mentioned in his book.

The ultimate purpose of espionage operations directed against the Soviets was to gain reliable knowledge of their strength and intentions. This information, after being elaborated by the various government, military and intelligence departments, took the form of estimates, and assessment of Soviet capabilities and a forecast of how much those would progress in the following years. Soviet estimates have been one of the prime study subjects in the field of intelligence history. The reason is that the estimates are a reflection of how uncertain and malleable intelligence on the Soviet Union could be, and of how that intelligence could sometimes be bended to the interests of the organizations responsible for its collection and analysis. The “bomber gap” and “missile gap” cases are well-known examples of that dynamic, where Soviet deception, espionage short-comings and military interests got together to produce a flawed intelligence assessment. *The Soviet Estimate* by John Prados is a comprehensive study of the subject, focused on the American efforts. Even if the book, published in 1982, may be considered outdated, it is still one of the best studies of the effectiveness of American intelligence in assessing the Soviet threat.

In the United States, the production of estimates suffered, in the early 1950s, the same general weakness of the American intelligence community: duplication and competition. The recently established CIA was more concerned in its early days with the development of capabilities for covert operations than with espionage. Until 1950 the CIA never fulfilled its estimates function, trapped in a struggle to ensure the cooperation of all the intelligence services. In 1950, however, the Korean War and the prospect of Soviet intervention in the area “broke the bottleneck that had held back the national intelligence estimates”.³⁶ The newly-appointed Director of the CIA, General Walter Bedell Smith, drafted Harvard historian William L. Langer and had him organize an Office for National Estimates, charged with the compilation of National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs). Despite that, military agencies still participated in the drafting of estimates and had the right to express their dissent. The issue here was that a civilian agency, the CIA, had to report on a matter, Soviet strength and intentions, which had a direct impact on the US military: the higher the threat posed by the Soviet Union, the bigger was the budget that the Armed Forces could request from Congress. A comparative study of the NIEs and the National Security Council directives concerned with the US military answer to Soviet policies can provide a useful

³⁶ John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate* (New York, Dial Press, 1982), p. 7.

insight on this process, and demonstrate that available information is of little use without objective analysis. For example, the Air Force behaviour in the ‘bomber gap’ case “shows that where organizational interests impinge or turn upon certain conclusions, objective analysis of intelligence is likely to suffer”.³⁷

The problem of the intelligence assessment slanted to meet certain needs can also be analysed by comparing the American case with the British one. In Britain, intelligence estimates were supervised by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). This organism and its actions were the result of strict cooperation between the various services, and that in itself was a huge difference with the ferocious competition going on in the US. Moreover, as previously stated, in Britain the military interference in matters of intelligence was always kept under firm control by the Foreign Office. All of that resulted in a more careful assessment of Soviet capabilities and, more important, in an objective analysis of their intentions. Michael Goodman’s recently published book, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*, is a fundamental tool for any study of the JIC.³⁸ For my research, I have also benefited from the great amount of documents available in the National Archives in Kew, specifically JIC memoranda and minutes of meeting, present in the Cabinet Office (CAB) series.

The production and dissemination of estimates rested on the basis that enough intelligence on the chosen target was being provided. Until recent times historians tended to underestimate the significance of Western intelligence gathering on the Soviet Union during the first ten years of the Cold War. The commonly accepted opinion was that the decisive breakthrough in intelligence collection happened with the first successes of the overflight programmes, starting in 1956. According to this view, prior to overhead reconnaissance the only hard evidence on Soviet military effort came either by the Soviet government itself or from visible observation by military attachés and diplomats, with the obvious concerns for reliability that came with this kind of sources.³⁹

However, this opinion can be overcome today. It can be shown that many attempts were made to gather intelligence on the Soviet Union during the first decade of the Cold War. They embraced all available forms of intelligence, from Sigint to Humint, and they met with various degrees of success. The study of Signals intelligence has benefitted from

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 49.

³⁸ Michael S. Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee: Volume I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis* (Routledge, 2014).

³⁹ Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*, pp. 49-55.

considerable focus by researchers. The study of Human intelligence in those crucial years, however, has not enjoyed the same popularity. An exception is Paul Maddrell who, in his book *Spying on Science*, did much to re-evaluate the role played by Germany and the Germans in the context of Humint. The author focused on “scientific and technical intelligence”, meaning information on current and future weaponry. His study demonstrates that the Western agencies “adopted a strategy of inducing defection both to obtain scientific knowledge and to hamper scientific development” in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc.⁴⁰ Scientific intelligence collection happens mostly by means of Humint (ideas or projects cannot be photographed by a plane or intercepted by phone). Maddrell further elaborates on that assumption, stating that: “Intelligence-gathering from human resources assumed disproportionate importance in the early years of the Cold War because of the difficulty of penetrating the Soviet Union by other means.”⁴¹ The Soviet armour however had a big crack: Germany. The DDR was far more vulnerable to espionage, because its border was not secure. Especially in Berlin, refugees could flee to the West and there, depending on the value of their information or on their positions, they could get recruited as spies. Until the building of the Wall, Berlin was a crucial gap in the Iron Curtain, one that the Western agencies exploited as long as they could. German scientists and POWs coming back from forced labour in the USSR provided, for the first time, the skeleton of the Soviet military and industrial apparatus, including the location of atomic plants, missile testing sites, uranium mines and airfields. This is just one example of how important Germany was for intelligence collection in the early Cold War.

Paul Maddrell’s work did much to re-evaluate the role of Humint in the study of Cold War Intelligence. The information available to the returning German refugees was, however, limited by the Soviets’ strict security measures. “Deep infiltration”, or active espionage targeted at the core of Soviet territory, could not happen in Germany and it was something that the Western agencies deemed necessary to fulfil their duty. This is where the émigrés enter the stage of Cold War intelligence. Their role in espionage has been, until now, almost completely neglected, over-shadowed by their well-known part in the disastrous covert operations such as “Valuable” or “Jungle”. Even Paul Maddrell comes to the conclusion that espionage operations involving the émigrés “produced no significant results”, blaming Kim Philby for that. My research challenges this assumption, showing how the émigrés filled an

⁴⁰ Paul Maddrell, *Spying on Science: Western Intelligence in Divided Germany 145-1961* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 11.

important gap in early Cold War intelligence, and formulates the hypothesis that the information they provided found its way to the top echelons of American policymaking.

Secret operations involving the use of émigrés were essentially of three kinds: paramilitary, intelligence gathering/espionage, propaganda. While this thesis tried to prove that the espionage aspect should not be underestimated, without a doubt the most successful use of émigré resources was propaganda. A famous example of such operations were the so-called Radios, Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, which started as an émigré project and were staffed by émigrés. Because of how important propaganda is in any discussion on the émigrés, this research has also included a brief study on the Radios, using one of the best resources available, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond*, by A. Ross Johnson.⁴² Johnson is a former director of Radio Free Europe, and is Adviser to the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Project at the Hoover Archives. Projects that started as intelligence gathering, however, such as Aenoble and Aerodynamic, also quickly evolved towards a propaganda effort, once it became clear this was the best use that the Western agencies could make of the émigrés. This process is fundamental to understand the value of émigré operations. Without properly assessing their evolution towards propaganda, it would be impossible to understand how and why they lasted so long, and it would be easy to agree with the recurring opinion that these projects were a waste of time and resources. An example that has been described in this thesis is that of Prolog, the publishing and research company founded by and associated with the Ukrainian émigré group Zp/UHVR, and financed by the CIA. Prolog lasted for forty years and was constantly active in publishing literature, secretly circulating it behind the Iron Curtain, and in general keeping alive the idea of a possible democratic Ukraine, countering Soviet efforts at russification of the country and providing an alternative to the ultra-nationalist positions of certain émigré circles. The source for most of information about Prolog has been an excellent study by Taras Kuzio, *U.S. support for Ukraine's liberation during the Cold War: A study of Prolog Research and Publishing Corporation*, published in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* in 2012.⁴³

It could come as a surprise that no history of the émigrés has been mentioned yet in this literature review. While there are some good works published on the single groups, most of the time they are in the émigrés' native language. Also, no comprehensive or satisfying

⁴² A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond* (Washington DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).

⁴³ Taras Kuzio, "U.S. support for Ukraine's liberation during the Cold War: A study of Prolog Research and Publishing Corporation", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 45, Nos. 1–2, 2012, pp. 51-64.

histories of the émigré groups have been published until now, with one notable exception: *The White Russian Army in Exile 1920-1941* by Paul Robinson, an excellent work to study and understand the history of Russian émigrés in Europe. The book traces the evolution of the White movement from the defeat of the counter-revolutionary armies at the end of the Russian Civil War to the outbreak of the Second World War, the only work of that scope in a non-Russian language. Robinson's account of the Whites' struggle to survive and find a place in Europe while keeping their traditions alive is detailed and insightful. The book provides unique information on how the émigrés got involved in espionage in the inter-war period and how they first were ensnared in the net of Soviet deception. Robinson's work doesn't go all the way to the Cold War, but it is still useful to understand where the émigrés were coming from. For example, this is the only book to provide a detailed history of the *Natsional'nyi Trudovoi Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia*, National Labour Union of the New Generation, abbreviated into NTS, and how it detached from the main body of the White Russian emigration.

Regarding the history of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, of its resistance army, and of its émigré representation, the main secondary sources used in this thesis have been the works of Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, a German-Polish historian who has published extensively on the topic. Once again, this secondary source has been used as a cross-reference for much of the information found in the CIA files, and to add scope and depth to this research. The works used or referenced here are: *The Fascist Kernel of Ukrainian Genocidal Nationalism*, published in *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies*; the most recent biography of Stepan Bandera, and the best work on subject published today, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist. Fascism, Genocide, and Cult; The "Ukrainian National Revolution" of Summer 1941*, published in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*.

While trying to avoid a sensationalist approach to history, this work looks at the discipline as a hermeneutic of the past: on the one hand, in the most authentic tradition of hermeneutics, the focus has been put on the study of the sources; on the other, the purpose of that study is the interpretation and transmission of knowledge, with a focus on the context in which that knowledge developed. As the followers of sociological hermeneutics postulated, context, intended as the mind set and world view in which a certain act originated, is fundamental to comprehension. Too often, in the study of espionage and intelligence, the wider context of the Cold War has not been properly assessed or used as a prism through which to view the actions of the characters that populated that story, from the humblest of

the field agents to the biggest intelligence agency in the world. Conversely, the history of intelligence can be used as a precious tool to understand the Cold War as a whole, and this is why accuracy, reliability and correct use of the sources were the paramount criteria for this work. My research is an attempt to rectify the oversights of some of the historiography produced on the subject, and to further expand it towards new research horizons.

Chapter I

The Early Cold War: Policymaking and Covert Action

1.1 From good friends to bitter enemies

It is safe to say that, for as long as organised forms of government and politics have existed, so has espionage. The earliest evidence of spies being employed comes from Egyptian hieroglyphs, but the masters of deception of the ancient world were without doubt the Greeks. The high development of politics and diplomacy achieved in Ancient Greece also required an equal development of subterfuge, to the point that this art was represented and immortalised in Greek mythology by the well-known episode of the Trojan horse in the epic of the *Iliad*. Ulysses, the clever man behind the idea of the wooden horse, and his daring exploits are the perfect examples of what would be defined as spycraft: he is a master of disguise (he masqueraded himself and Achilles as women to avoid taking part in Trojan war, he infiltrated his own palace dressed as a beggar), expert in the use of the “honey trap” (a goddess, a sorceress and a princess all fell prey to his charm and helped him in his adventure) and finally well versed in covert operations and subversion (besides the episode of the horse, Ulysses re-took possession of his island of Ithaca by staging a coup and slaughtering his rivals).

Despite espionage having such a long history, the Cold War is commonly considered to be the age of spies. This is not only due to the diffusion of the romantic figure of the spy through several media (books, movies, television) in those years, but also due to the peculiar situation the world found itself in the almost five decades that followed the end of the Second World War: trapped on the edge of a conflict that no-one wanted to fight. It is perhaps this dichotomy that makes the Cold War so complex and, at the same time, so fascinating. Neither of the superpowers ever wanted to start a war with the other one, but at the same time both were compelled to increase their power, influence and resources, thus keeping the tensions alive in a vicious circle that almost brought the world to catastrophe more than once. There was one weapon, however, that could give to the contestants what they wanted without risking a nuclear catastrophe: information. Knowing what the enemy could do and, more

importantly, knowing what they *wanted* to do, was the most useful resource both in case the war really broke out and if this war was to be avoided.

For such reasons, the providers of information, not just the spies but the intelligence community as a whole, rose to prominence during the Cold War. In this battlefield, however, the difference between the two sides was evident, at least at the beginning. The Soviet Union had spent more than two decades building, on the remains of the four-centuries-old Czarist secret police, the most efficient secret service the world had ever seen, and that was only the beginning. Taking advantage of the openness of the Western world, Soviet spies had long infiltrated sensible targets such as Universities and Government institutions. The United States, on the other hand, did not possess a civilian intelligence service until 1946. Even Britain, with a time-honoured history of espionage, had found it impossible to penetrate the wall of secrecy that the Soviets had built to protect their country. And yet, the Second World War proved to be a formative experience in this field: “As the alliance with the Soviet Union grew more and more troubled and eventually shattered, the techniques employed against Germany and Japan were further employed and refined against the Soviet Union.”¹

The Second World War also had the merit of putting the two future enemies together as allies, and for a certain time it genuinely looked like the prospect of future cooperation was strong. The progressive deterioration of Soviet-American relations is worth analysing because, with the emergence of a new enemy, new requirements were also established, along with the means and techniques to satisfy them. Even if the United States had recognised the Soviet Union diplomatically in 1933, suspicions had remained strong in America. The purges of 1936-1938 and Stalin’s sudden alliance with Hitler in 1939 only contributed to the opinion that there could be no common ground with the Soviets. The conflict with Germany challenged that assumption completely: the United States supplied the USSR with ten billion worth of supplies, including food, machinery, equipment, fuel and metals.²

The value of the Soviet contribution to the war, on the other hand, did not escape the American observers. The actual number of casualties on the Eastern Front is still the subject of debate, but it accounted for almost half the total number of the whole conflict. One third of the territory of the Soviet Union was heavily damaged and made uninhabitable due to the loss of infrastructures, housing and transport routes.³ The conference of Teheran, the first

¹ Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*, p. 18.

² George C. Herring, Jr., *Aid to Russia 1941-1945: Strategy, Diplomacy, the Origins of the Cold War, 1933 – 1947* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1973), xiii.

³ Alexander Werth, *Russia at War 1941 – 1945* (New York, E. P. Dutton, 1964), xi.

where the leaders of America, Russia and Britain would meet, presented for the first time one of the main points of friction between the Great Powers: the fate of Eastern Europe. Stalin was adamant that Germany would have to be divided and the countries of Eastern Europe would have to form a protective belt by being subservient to the Soviet Union. With the onslaught happening on the Eastern Front, no one could accuse him of giving too much importance to the issue of security for his country. Two years later, at Yalta, with the defeat of Hitler imminent, once again the focus was on the reconstruction of Europe after the conflict. The fate of Poland was a primary issue; Roosevelt and Churchill both made clear their desire to implement the principles of the Atlantic Charter, issued in 1941, that called for the self-determination of all people. Stalin agreed to organise free elections in Poland, but also made his priorities clear. When Churchill remarked that the fate of Poland was a question of honour for Britain, he answered that for the Soviet Union it was a question of both honour and security.⁴ Five months later, at the final conference of the “Big Three”, in Yalta, Stalin and Molotov pressed for Western recognition of the governments then in place in Eastern Europe, which were under Soviet supervision. The new American President, Harry S. Truman, answered that no such recognition could be made until American representatives and the press were allowed in those countries to monitor the situation. The issue of Eastern Europe was not solved at Yalta, and was left hanging in the air.

Despite that, it still took three more years and an escalation of crises to derail the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, and kick-start the Cold War. First, the Soviet attempt to maintain troops in Iran after the agreed withdrawal showed that Moscow was ready to exert pressure when needed. Then there was the issue of the vulnerability of a war-torn Europe to the sirens of Communism. In Italy and France, the value of covert operations was shown for the first time in the post-war world. In both countries the left-wing parties had gained considerable support due to their opposition to fascist rule during the war. To avoid an electoral victory of those parties that could have tipped the scales of balance in Europe, the Americans poured money (through the new-born CIA) into French non-Communist trade unions and the Italian Christian Democratic Party. In Italy this intervention amounted to 200 million dollars, in what would become the first modern example of political warfare.⁵

Covert action, however, was not enough. Europe had to come out of its disastrous economic situation to avoid the lure of Communism. The recovery program that took the

⁴ Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*, pp. 22-23.

⁵ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, pp. 39-40.

name of Marshall Plan was open to all countries, including the Soviet Union, but participation required openness in terms of economic information, something that the Soviets were not willing to concede. The Marshall plan infuriated Stalin more than everything else that the Americans did: it directly led to the establishment of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) and to the imposition of stricter controlling measures on the Satellites. A “separate road to socialism” was no longer contemplated, as proved by the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1947.⁶ After more tensions arising in Greece and Turkey, the final blow to Soviet-American relations happened in Berlin in 1948. Since 1946, the Soviets had hoped they could create a unified but demilitarised Germany under their firm influence. When the unification of the American, British and French occupation zones made them realise that this would never happen, they tried to force their former allies out of Western Berlin by establishing a blockade. This was the first of many crises that threatened to plunge the world into war again. It is also considered the official beginning of the Cold War. Significantly, an open conflict was avoided not just owing to the decision of President Truman to maintain a firm but unprovocative stance, but also due to the information gathered by espionage sources in Berlin and Eastern Germany (as explained later in this chapter).

The events of 1947 and 1948 only solidified the belief, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, that the other side was hopelessly hostile. George Kennan, then deputy chief of the US diplomatic mission to Moscow, wrote in his now famous “Long Telegram” that at the core of Soviet policy lay a need for external threats to legitimise domestic authority and policies. Whatever concessions the Americans made, the Soviets would not sway from their belief that “with the United States there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*”, and for the Soviet power to be secure it needed to destroy not only the international authority of its enemy, but also their society and their way of life.⁷ The higher echelons of the American government agreed with Kennan. Besides the open hostility of the Soviet Union, there was the constant threat that it would soon have the capability to build nuclear weapons and target them at American territory. One of the top requirements for the defence of the country from such threats was the acquisition of intelligence on the enemy. Many techniques and methods used against Germany and Japan were now directed against the Soviets. The intelligence collected could be used in three ways:

⁶ Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1978) p. 319.

⁷ George F. Kennan, “Moscow Embassy Telegram n. 511”. Quoted in Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*, p. 37.

by aiding day-to-day planning and policy formation concerning the USSR and avoiding hysteria; by providing early warning of any possible Soviet aggression; and by providing information to target planners – to identify critical military and economic facilities and determine their vulnerability to attack.⁸

1.2 The players in the field

1.2.1 The British SIS in the post-War era

In the words of Richard Aldrich, “secret service is fundamental to any understanding of the Cold War.”⁹ Many of the policies launched during the conflict were sustained by intelligence. On a lower level, secret services formed the frontline of the conflict. The secret war went on for decades, parallel to the open conflict that saw not just two superpowers, but two sides of the world and two antipodean ideologies put against each other. When thinking about this covert engagement, traditionally, we tend to see only two players, the CIA and the KGB. It is important to remember, however, that Britain, at the end of the Second World War, possessed the most experienced intelligence agency in the West. The country’s lack of resources in the post-war world meant that, just as Britain had to relinquish its role as a world power, so its foreign intelligence service, the SIS, was relegated to a secondary role and outshone by the CIA.

It would be a mistake, however, to easily dismiss Britain’s role in spying against the Soviets. There were many assets that the country could still provide, mostly the infrastructure of what remained of the Empire. British possessions and military bases formed an archipelago surrounding Soviet-controlled territories. Also, because Britain was not ready yet to give up its position of a Great Power, even in a world of Superpowers, some military leaders in the country advocated for covert action as a way to continue exerting a certain influence in the world. Finally, if war against the Soviet Union ever broke out, Britain was in a far more vulnerable position compared to the United States. The country needed reliable intelligence on Soviet intentions and capabilities, maybe even more than the Americans did.

⁸ Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target*, pp. 38-39.

⁹ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 5.

SIS also had a strong pre-War tradition of anti-Communist activities, a further advantage on the Americans.

The British started turning their thoughts towards the next enemy during the War already, establishing Section IX, to study past records of Soviet activity. This section would then be renamed R5 (Requirements 5) and Kim Philby became its chief in 1944.¹⁰ The “Requirements” sections were responsible for collating and distributing the intelligence collected on the field. Despite all that, during the Cold War, SIS did not consider the territory of the Soviet Union a priority, regardless of the requests of the military echelons. Its central duty and primary concern were the territories in the Middle East in which Britain still appeared to have prominent influence, despite the formal retreat of the Empire.¹¹ Covert action against the Soviet Union was a prominent activity only in the very first years of the Cold War, one that was quickly discarded once it had reached the purpose of satisfying the military leaders of the country and the “hawks” that were advocating for a more aggressive stance in the conflict. Opposed to them were the “doves”, the diplomats of the Foreign Office. Anthony Eden, during his second tenure as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, successfully put all secret operations and other operations of the SIS abroad under the control of the Foreign Office, which included a right of veto over those activities. This meant that the British and American secret services developed in two very different directions during the Cold War. British special operations were tied directly to the country’s foreign policymaking. In America, on the other hand, “these activities escaped diplomatic control and the CIA became a rival centre of American foreign policy which even its own officers feared had become a state within a state.”¹²

1.2.2 The birth of the Central Intelligence Agency

¹⁰ For general informations on Philby’s life and career, his own memoirs are one of the best sources available. See: Kim Philby, *My Silent War* (London, MacGibbon & Kee, 1968).

¹¹ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 69-72.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

The history of American espionage and secret operations during the Cold War is obviously tied with the genesis of the CIA and the circumstances that led to it. Between the two World Wars, the United States had a brief stint at intelligence activities that lasted from 1919 to 1929. In that period the Black Chamber, a forerunner of the National Security Agency, focused on code breaking and counterintelligence operations against Germany and Japan. The group was jointly funded by the State Department and the Army. In 1929, however, Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson decided to withdraw from the operation: his was the famous quote “gentlemen do not read each other’s mail”. The Army was unwilling to bear the full financial load. As a consequence, there was no centralized intelligence service until Pearl Harbor, in 1941, when President Roosevelt authorized the creation of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), led by General William “Wild Bill” Donovan. The OSS operated globally, with major commands in the Mediterranean, northern Europe, Burma and China. It was conceived to perform all sorts of tasks: operatives parachuted into France, Norway and Yugoslavia, they performed sabotage in the Balkans, worked with partisans in Italy, organised a prototype paramilitary corps using the tribesmen of Burma against the Japanese.¹³ The Army (G-2) and Navy (A-2) intelligence units continued to exist, and the Army’s Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) had a similar program to the OSS on enemy territory, although its network was much smaller. Having learned a great deal from the British, Donovan enrolled many promising men from the universities and the free professions. Among them was Allen Dulles, future first civilian director of the CIA.

At the end of the year 1944, Roosevelt asked Donovan to prepare a draft for the structure of a new, centralized intelligence agency, which would superintend over all positive espionage (counter-espionage remained a prerogative of the FBI). Donovan composed a memorandum with the aid of Dulles and submitted it to the President. The road towards the foundation of the CIA, however, would soon stumble into an obstacle. On the 9th of February 1945, three newspapers published the breaking news story of how Donovan and Roosevelt were trying to build a “super-spy system” for the post-war world.¹⁴ The memorandum had leaked, in circumstances never made clear. Public opinion had been raised against the project, comparing it to the Gestapo or the Soviet secret police. This, along with the constant hostility of military intelligence, which felt endangered by the “new wave” of intellectuals who distinguished themselves during the War, led to the abandonment of the plan. Roosevelt

¹³ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, p. 30.

¹⁴ “New Deal Plans Super Spy System. Sleuths Would Snoop on U.S. and the World”, *Chicago Tribune*, 9 February 1945.

died shortly after and his successor, Harry S. Truman, officially disbanded the OSS on 20 September 1945. Donovan and Dulles retired to private life. Under the new arrangement, the analytical intelligence section of the OSS moved to the State Department. The clandestine operations went to the War Office, as a new Strategic Services Unit (SSU). The SSU however was severely understaffed and suffering from a general lack of resources. The CIC continued its activities, under the control of the Army's G-2. Given the extensive presence of the Army in post-war Europe, the G-2 was well positioned to start operating against the Soviet Union, and the CIC took over the intelligence collection of the dismantled OSS. The G-2 was also responsible for the first links between the Americans and the anti-Soviet émigrés.¹⁵

Truman, meanwhile, soon came to regret his decision to disband the OSS; in his own words, "Conflicting intelligence reports flowing across my desk from the various departments left me confused and irritable, and monumentally uninformed".¹⁶ The issue was the lack of a centralised intelligence system, responsible for gathering and interpreting data at a national level, and military intelligence could not be solely responsible for peacetime intelligence gathering. In January 1946, Truman finally issued an order creating the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), loosely based on the concept proposed by Donovan, and led by Air Force Lt. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg. Far from being a definitive solution, this only exacerbated the issue of duplication. Vandenberg had the unforgiving job of mediating between the main purveyors of intelligence: the State, War and Navy Departments. He requested authority over all US foreign intelligence gathering, and brought back from the War department the SSU, which became the Office of Special Operations (OSO). The CIG however still had no basis in law. Truman planned a reorganisation of the entire military establishment and sent his proposal to Congress in February 1947, which included a proviso for a peacetime intelligence agency.

The times were ripe: in July 1947 Congress passed the National Security Act, which led, among the other things, to CIG turning into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and to the creation of the National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the President and with the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) as its chief adviser. The biggest new prerogative of the Agency was its ability to conduct covert operations acting outside of congressional control. The National Security Act included two elastic clauses that could be used to justify covert operations. The CIA, besides producing intelligence estimates and reports and

¹⁵ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, p. 32.

¹⁶ A. Tully, *Central Intelligence. The Inside Story* (London, Morrow, 1962), p.16.

advising the NSC on related matter, had the duty “to perform, for the benefit of the existing intelligence agencies, such additional services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more efficiently accomplished centrally” and “such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct.”¹⁷

To understand why the CIA was given so much liberty of action in such a sensitive and potentially dangerous field, it is imperative to assess the international situation when the Act was passed. The doctrine of “containment”, as an expression of President Truman’s attitude towards the Soviet Union, dominated the policy of the United States and their allies until 1953 at least. It was first expressed in 1946 by George Kennan, then Deputy Chief of Mission at the US embassy in Moscow, in the so-called “Long Telegram”, published anonymously as “Mr. X” in the *Foreign Affairs* journal in 1947.¹⁸ The doctrine was, at its core, the confirmation of Stalin’s aggressive policies inside and outside the Soviet sphere of influence, and the declaration of the US intent to contain Soviet expansion to those areas where it had already achieved dominance, as well as a commitment to “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”¹⁹ The means of achieving this policy, however, were not all specified. The Marshall Plan was the most evident, aimed at rebuilding Europe, eliminating poverty and other social conditions that could harbour the growth of Communism. It was also, for the CIA, a great device to disguise the provision of money spent for propaganda and political warfare. The first major consequence of the declaration of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan was the Soviet coup in Czechoslovakia, in February 1948. This country had seen American aid as a counterweight to Soviet influence, and this led Stalin to the decision to consolidate his control over Prague. Coming after the crises over Teheran and Turkey, Czechoslovakia was another step in the “accelerating cycle of misperception, provocation and hostility” on both sides.²⁰

It was clear that covert operations would play an increasingly larger role in that scenario. The CIA, however, still lacked the authority to engage in these. In December 1947, two important memoranda were released by the National Security Council: NSC 4, “Report by

¹⁷ National Archives and Records Administration [henceforward, NARA], Act of July 26, 1947 (“National Security Act”), General Records of the United States Government, 1778-2006, Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-2011, RG 11. Sec. 102 “Central Intelligence Agency”. Available online

¹⁸ “X”, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1947, p. 566.

¹⁹ Harry S. Truman, *Truman Doctrine: President Harry S. Truman's Address Before a Joint Session of Congress, March 12, 1947* (Avalon Project, Yale Law Library, 2008).

²⁰ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, p. 37.

the National Security Council on Coordination of Foreign Information Measures”, and NSC 4/A, “Psychological Operations”. The premise was that “none of the existing departments or agencies of the US Government is now charged with responsibility for coordinating foreign information measures in furtherance of the attainment of US national objectives.”²¹ The Soviet’s relentless propaganda machine needed to be countered with an equally coordinated effort. NSC 4/A further specified that the foreign information activities of the United States had to be supplemented by covert psychological operations. Who, however, had to be in charge of such operations? The National Security Council had no doubts: “the similarity of operational methods involved in covert psychological and intelligence activities and the need to ensure their secrecy and obviate costly duplication renders the Central Intelligence Agency the logical agency to conduct such operations.”²² The importance of this statement, for the history not only of the CIA, but of the whole Cold War, cannot be underestimated. The similarity between covert and intelligence activities was a controversial topic, and would continue to be so for decades after.

1.2.3 The Russian Secret Service

It would be incorrect to say that the Soviet Union suddenly became, after World War II, a new and unexpected enemy for the West. A “low-level Cold War” had been going on since 1917, fought on one side by the American military intelligence and by the British Empire colonial officers, and on the other by the Comintern. The weapon was not just propaganda, but espionage and subversion too. The Soviets, however, seemed to have an advantage: “twenty years ahead of their opponents in the West, the Soviets recognized that the struggle between communism and capitalism would be more than a traditional conflict between states.” In this sense they invented the Cold War in the 1930s.²³ Moreover, they possessed a fully developed civilian intelligence service, built on a czarist tradition of secret police dating back, in its earliest example, to the 16th century and Ivan the Terrible.

²¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment, Psychological and Political Warfare*, eds. C. Thomas Thorne, Jr., David S. Patterson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), Document 252.

²² *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment, Psychological and Political Warfare*, eds. C. Thomas Thorne, Jr., David S. Patterson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), Document 253.

²³ *Ibid.*

The last incarnation of the czarist secret police was the *Okhrana*, founded in 1880. Unlike the other police forces in Europe at the time, it enjoyed almost unlimited power in dealing with political crimes. The secret services of czarist Russia established a certain number of antecedents for the Soviet era. Far from limiting themselves to information gathering, they made extensive use of active measures against their targets. The *Okhrana* was also a pioneer in the development of Signals intelligence, which reached unparalleled heights in Imperial Russia, while in other countries the process was hindered by what could be defined as excessive liberalism. In Britain, for example, the “Deciphering Branch” was abolished in 1844 after a debate in the House of Commons on the interception of the private correspondence of exiled Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini. Sigint efforts reappeared in the country only with the First World War. Another tactic that the KGB borrowed from the czarist police was the use of foreign agents as means of penetration. Colonel Alfred Redl, head of the counter-intelligence branch of the Austrian intelligence bureau, was the most important secret agent in Europe before the Great War. Unknown to his friends and superiors, he was also homosexual. The Russian secret service discovered the information and used it to blackmail and recruit Redl who, until his suicide in 1913, provided an enormous amount of intelligence, including Austrian plans for mobilization against Serbia and Russia.²⁴ Redl became the prototype for many similar operations that, in the 1930s, became the principal weapon of Soviet intelligence abroad, of which the “Cambridge Five” are only the most famous example.

The strongest impact that the czarist secret police had on the Bolsheviks, however, was made when they studied, after the revolution, the secret archives of the *Okhrana*. This allowed them to discover that the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party had been extensively penetrated since the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1903. This, even more than the Redl case, convinced the Soviets of the potential of using agents to penetrate enemy organisations. The *Cheka*, the first Soviet secret police and the direct progenitor of the KGB, was founded in December 1917. Its main activity since the beginning was, as its original name implied (All-Russian Emergency Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage), to fight against the counter-revolutionary movements, using the infiltration of *agents provocateur*. In the 1920s, the main target of Russian espionage was, without a doubt, the “counter-revolution” that, after the defeat in the Civil War, had established itself abroad following the mass of the émigrés. In December 1920,

²⁴ Christopher M. Andrew, Oleg Gordievskij, *The KGB, The Inside Story of the Foreign Operations* (London, HarperCollins, 1990), pp. 30-32.

Lenin gave Feliks Dzerzinskij, the first director of the *Cheka*, a direct order to elaborate a plan to neutralise the counterrevolution abroad.²⁵ Dzerzinskij was particularly successful in penetrating the White Russians groups, especially the ROVS. Until the early 1930s, these groups continued to be the main objective of the Soviet services, before the threat of the counter-revolution was considered successfully thwarted.

After 1945, Great Britain, the principal enemy before the Second World War, was overshadowed in the eyes of the Soviets by the United States. Truman's decision to dissolve the OSS was a heavy blow to the KGB that had no less than twenty agents infiltrated in it. Similarly, the dissolution of the SOE and the general shrinking of the intelligence apparatus in Britain meant that some Soviet plants lost their influent positions: Peter Smollett from the Ministry of Information and James Klugmann from the SOE.²⁶ Even Anthony Blunt had to leave SIS in 1945, but for different reasons. Besides these losses of agents, the KGB in the first years of the Cold War, had to deal with internal disorder caused by the bitter struggles for power in the Kremlin and, more important, with the formation of the CIA. On the surface, the main purpose of the Agency was to coordinate and evaluate the information coming from all the intelligence sources available to the Americans. Even if we now know that the issue of duplication in the American intelligence community was not so easily overcome, at that time the system seemed, to the Soviets, one of rigid compartmentation, with the strict division (and competition) between the civilian and the military intelligence. However, despite these apparent disadvantages, the conflict between Eastern and Western secret services in the early Cold War was almost one-sided.²⁷ The difference was in the penetration of the opposite territories. While the Soviets had much valuable espionage activity going on in Europe and in the United States, Soviet territory was still virtually unviolated by Western spies. To build their first networks of agents, the SIS and the CIA had to resort to émigrés, partisans and other groups of opponents of the Soviet regime, in their attempts to penetrate the periphery of the USSR.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 93-94

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 367.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 383

1.3 American foreign policy in the face of the Soviet threat: containment, rollback and the lack of coordination

The subject of this study is a series of covert operations run by American intelligence (and, to a lesser extent, by the British SIS), starting from the late 1940s and lasting for more than a decade, with decreasing intensity, having their peak in the mid-1950s. There is no doubt that these operations were part of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations' foreign policy. What is, however, debatable is the degree of coordination between covert action and the official, or overt, policy of the government in terms of foreign relations. Many scholars have pointed out that the failure of these operations was in large part due to the lack of coordination with overt foreign policy or, as Sarah-Jane Corke has argued, due to the absence of a coherent foreign policy during the early Cold War years. While I mostly agree with this statement, it is also important to define what kind of "success" these operations were trying to obtain, and how to value it in terms of fulfilment of a set of realistic goals. Before getting to that stage, it is necessary to describe the evolution of American foreign policy from Truman to Eisenhower, and how covert ops tied into it.

In *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, Sarah-Jane Corke argues that most of the covert operations started under the Truman administration were ill-conceived and doomed to failure, due to the inability of the administration to reconcile policy, strategy, and operations. Policy and strategy are defined by the author as "the two most important components of a successful covert operation": Corke maintains that the US simply "did not have a coherent foreign policy during these years, nor did it develop or maintain an integrated strategy on which covert operations could be based."²⁸ This opinion is shared by other scholars, including Stephen Long, who, over the course of several decades, have alluded to the "inadequacy of integrated strategic planning" and tried to challenge the conventional characterisation of US foreign policy in those years, the so-called containment consensus, built in first instance by the theoriser of containment himself, George Kennan, and by historian John Lewis Gaddis.²⁹ Corke argues, and convincingly so, that other labels used to describe American foreign policy after containment, such as rollback or liberation, are also inadequate, little more than myths used to hide the lack of coordination of an ambiguous foreign policy that was mostly the result of the internal struggles of an

²⁸ Sarah-Jane Corke, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, p.4.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 7.

administration that did not know how to deal with the Soviet threat. On this point, Corke's opinion becomes more controversial, moving away from the traditional view (with which I also agree) that external forces, meaning the Soviet threat was the defining feature in the development of American Cold War policy. Instead, Corke states that "internal factors – ideology, partisan politics, personality and bureaucratic politics – took precedence over geopolitical considerations".³⁰ It is my opinion that the Soviet threat involved far more than simple geopolitical considerations, and was so ingrained in all the aspects of American politics that even the internal factors that Corke describes were, in one measure or another, influenced by it.

Before concepts like "containment" or "rollback" were the subject for historical debate, however, they were conceived and supported by politicians and diplomats. The idea of the strategy of containment, as formulated by George Kennan in the "Mr X" telegram, reflected the clashing of two competing strategic tendencies: stemming Soviet power and removing it. In the telegram, Kennan's analysis was at the same time simple and ambiguous: the term "containment" was picked up and elevated to the status of doctrine by the press and the public, and was then identified with the foreign policy of the Truman administration. Containment had a strong appeal, because it seemed to reflect traditional American values: the US responding to Soviet provocation, not challenging them aggressively.

In May 1948, Kennan produced a memorandum titled "The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare", in which he listed four points of action for what he described as "political warfare", a definition that appeared then for the first time in American post-war planning.³¹ The first point was the organisation, by private American citizens, of a public committee to mobilise and support some carefully selected émigré factions in the United States and Europe. The next step would be to provide this factions with printing presses and broadcasting facilities. This proposal would later result in the overt operations of the American Committee and the Radios, which we will discuss shortly. The second point advocated "preventative direct action in Free Countries": more specifically, it referred to giving support to anti-communist factions in countries where the local left-wing parties had a chance to get to power by democratic means. Actually, such operations were already under

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 8.

³¹ There is some debate regarding the authorship of the paper, because Kennan spent most of May 1948 in a hospital recovering from ulcers. John Paton Davies, a member of the Policy Planning Staff, may have drafted the document. For the text of the memorandum, see: *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 269.

way: in Italy, the election of April 1948 (one month before Kennan's memorandum was circulated), saw the victory of the Christian Democrat coalition, which had been financially supported by American intelligence. The third point encouraged the protection of vital American installations, infrastructure, and personnel against Soviet sabotage. The last point was also the boldest, because it called for outright paramilitary action, subversive operations and localised rebellions using guerrilla units and sabotage forces, to destabilise Soviet power behind the Iron Curtain.³² After being submitted to the NSC, the paper became the basis for NSC 10/2, the document recognised as the starting point for American political warfare and covert action.

The proposals in Kennan's paper looked far distant from the idea of "not challenging the Soviets aggressively", and from the doctrine of containment, and closer to its rival, the idea of "rolling back Soviet power", also known as "rollback". Even taking for good the common interpretation of containment, as popularised by John Lewis Gaddis in 1972³³, even Kennan acknowledged that there were a number of individuals within the government who held a different strategic vision from his own, and instead lobbied, for example, for the "unconditional surrender" of Eastern Europe.³⁴ While the public myth of "containment" was growing both inside and outside of the government, the broad policy statements and the lack of a coherent strategy for fighting the Cold War allowed room for manoeuvre to those interested in pursuing a more aggressive foreign policy.

The situation became more complicated in 1952, when these men turned to Republican leaders for the political support they were not getting from President Truman and his administration. This was quite ironic, because, unknown to most politicians and even to the military, covert operations and psychological warfare against the Soviet Union were already running at an impressive pace. The secretive nature of these operations, however, along with compartmentalisation, meant that this covert effort was unknown outside of the CIA or the President's inner circle. This is why, in the run-up to the election of 1952, Dwight Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, his future Secretary of State, could capitalise on the dissatisfaction with existing policy statements and the apparent lack of effort from the Truman administration for winning the Cold War. Again, this proved to be an ironic turn of events: history would then prove that Eisenhower was even less committed than his predecessor to an aggressive foreign policy.

³² Grose, *Operation Rollback*, pp. 96-98; Corke, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, pp. 50-52.

³³ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

³⁴ Corke, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy* pp. 39-40.

With the Republican administration, “liberation” and “rollback” started being pushed as alternative strategies to the apparent passivity of containment, but they were not new. Rollback briefly emerged as a strategic vision in 1950, after the detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb and the fall of China to communism. Paul Nitze had replaced Kennan as the head of the Policy Planning Staff in January 1950, and he was the primary author of NSC 68. In the document, Nitze’s view on the Soviet Union and covert operations emerged as essentially different from Kennan’s: while both agreed that the Soviet and American models were incompatible, Nitze also believed war with the Soviet Union to be imminent, and, as a result, he pushed for more aggressive covert operations. Did American strategy really change after NSC 68? Most historians today believe it did not. What is evident from the available records, however, is that the intensity of covert operations taking place in Eastern Europe escalated, but even this statement should be taken carefully: Operation Valuable, for example, was already well underway when NSC 68 appeared. Today, looking at the bigger picture, it is easy to say that American strategy did not shift significantly in 1950. This was not so apparent, perhaps, for the “Cold Warriors” who lobbied for a more aggressive, and active, policy against the Soviet Union. Their ranks included men of great power and influence such as Frank Wisner, head of the OPC, who “embraced ‘rollback’ as a rhetorical tool to help in his push to expand American covert operations.”³⁵ For half a year at least this new vision unified the US administration, but the development of the Korean War made people question the efficacy of rollback. Other perspectives re-emerged, such as containment, liberation, or Titoism, each with his own sponsor inside the government. This affected the CIA too: not only there were contrasting visions, but also different and competing organisations in charge of political warfare and psychological operations. Corke summarises very well this confusion and lack of coordination:

No one was determining strategy. As late as 1951 the Truman administration still had no position on whether covert operations should be concentrating on bringing about the defection of a satellite government or on overthrowing it. Yet operations designed to achieve both objectives took place until at least 1954.³⁶

With the advent of the Eisenhower administration, the abuse of the rhetoric of rollback and liberation for electoral and political purposes created the false impression that a more aggressive foreign policy would be also followed by a step-up in covert action. The pragmatic attitude of the new President, however, soon disappointed the expectations of the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

hardcore Cold Warriors, and this was surely one of the reasons why covert operations of the more aggressive kind (paramilitary and subversion) directed at Eastern Europe were wrapped up in the mid-1950s.

The need for covert action was thus established with NSC 10/2, and developed steadily, reaching its peak with NSC 68. Political warfare, however, was also a matter of foreign policy planning, despite the lack of coordination and strategical planning previously described. A further level of conflict emerged, regarding who should control covert operations in times of war. NSC 10/2 stated that they had to be coordinated with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but that view was not easily accepted outside of the military. The State Department and the Defence Department had conflicting and competing views on covert action. Kennan, as previously stated, did not believe war with the Soviet Union to be inevitable so, during his tenure as director of the Policy Planning Staff, he promoted operations that were more in the realms of propaganda and psychological warfare. The military, instead, believed conflict to be imminent, thus they pushed for paramilitary operations, guerrilla warfare, subversion and the construction of “stay behind networks”. The CIA, in its first years, acted mostly as an instrument to satisfy the Pentagon’s needs. Caught in this competition between the State and Defence departments, the CIA achieved a degree of independence that they should not have been able to. In the same years, a very similar conflict was going on in the United Kingdom, but with a significant difference. The equivalent of the State Department, the Foreign Office, held a strong grip over covert operations and the main intelligence agency, SIS, ensuring that these were always in line with the government’s foreign policy and strategical planning. Even in the United Kingdom, however, concessions had to be made to the militaries, which resulted in the *débaclés* known as Operation Valuable and Operation Jungle.³⁷

Having established the value of covert operations and psychological warfare for American foreign policy, the logical next step is to understand who was put in charge of executing them. As previously explained, State and Defence Department both wanted to put their hands on the prize, although, as stated in NSC 10/2:

³⁷ These two secret operations involved the use of émigré agents to infiltrate Albania and the Baltic countries. The operations and their background are explained in more detail in chapter 5.

The Central Intelligence Agency is charged by the National Security Council with conducting espionage and counter-espionage operations abroad. It therefore seems desirable, for operational reasons, not to create a new agency for covert operations, but in time of peace to place the responsibility for them within the structure of the Central Intelligence Agency and correlate them with espionage and counter-espionage operations under the over-all control of the Director of Central Intelligence.³⁸

Kennan firmly believed in the value of psychological warfare and that it should be used as a powerful tool to counter Soviet influence. This is the reason why he founded the Directorate of Plans, and successfully lobbied for his strategy, which was the founding vision of NSC 10/2. However, what Kennan did not take into account, was that the Director of Central Intelligence could have different views on covert operations, and could make good use of his authority over them. When NSC 10/2 was approved, the DCI was Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, who looked at the “contamination” between pure espionage and covert operations with a suspicious eye. He knew and respected the business of intelligence, and regarded collection and assessment as its real functions. Sabotage and paramilitary operations were naturally “overt” actions, in contrast with the secrecy, patience and deception necessary to build, for example, a reliable agents network able to penetrate enemy territory and provide intelligence.³⁹ Faced with the reluctance of the CIA’s leadership, Kennan tried to get around the obstacle. In a memorandum to the Secretary and Under Secretary of State, Kennan discussed the “expansion of covert activities and establishment of a central directorate over all such activities”, headed by a Director of Special Studies. The solution of placing this new figure under the Director of CIA was not recommended:

at the present time, the CIA set-up in respect both to personalities and organization is not favorable to such a development and it is not likely that there will be any material change in this situation in the near future. We therefore reluctantly decided to let the CIA sleeping dog lie and recommend a separate organization which might at a later date be incorporated in CIA.⁴⁰

This was the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC). A secretive organisation inside a secretive establishment, its real functions were known only to a closed circle of policymakers inside the Truman administration. During the four years of its independent existence, the

³⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 292.

³⁹ Grose, *Operation Rollback*, p. 101-102.

⁴⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 276.

OPC was not officially under the CIA and neither part of the State Department, hovering between them with little accountability. The necessity of secrecy and plausible deniability came together to ensure that neither the CIA nor the State Department wanted to get their hands dirty with covert operations. Even the military were sceptical: they knew well enough that subversion, sabotage and the building of resistance networks had worked during the Second World War because they were followed by direct military action. Without that, they were a waste of time and resources, unnecessarily putting in danger the lives of people inside the enemy's territory.

This degree of independence, however, backfired against Kennan's intentions, to the point that in just a few years' time he would regret his involvement in covert operations. The problems started already with the choice of the Director of the OPC. Kennan wanted for the job a man who shared his vision on the importance of political warfare, and his choice was Allen Dulles, a veteran of the wartime OSS who had built intelligence networks in Nazi-occupied Europe. After the war, Dulles had gone back to his successful law practice, but in February 1948, three months before Kennan's memorandum that was the basis for NSC 10/2, Dulles, together with two other outside consultants, William H. Jackson and Mathias F. Correa, was tasked by Secretary of Defence James Forrestal to provide an assessment on the CIA and the US intelligence establishment in general, and its capacity to counter the Soviet threat. The Dulles-Jackson-Correa report highlighted the main problem afflicting American intelligence at the time: duplication of effort. However, in a memorandum for the NSC, dated 13th of May 1948, the "Intelligence Survey Group" also pointed out the relations between secret operations and secret intelligence (which was also the title of the paper):

Secret operations, particularly through support of resistance groups, provide one of the most important sources of secret intelligence, and the information gained from secret intelligence must immediately be put to use in guiding and directing secret operations.⁴¹

Two things were established. One was the importance of secret operations and their connection with intelligence collection. The second was the prominent role assigned to resistance groups as a source of such intelligence (this would prove to be very important for the development of covert operations using émigrés, which will be analysed later). The paper could be interpreted as an argument against Hillenkoetter's and the CIA's refusal to dabble with covert action, and was in line with Kennan's policy, who proposed that Dulles replaced

⁴¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 275.

Hillenkoetter, or at least was made Director of the new agency responsible for covert operations. When the latter proposal was made to Dulles, he politely refused. Allen's older brother, John Foster, was the leading foreign policy spokesman for the Republican party, and the younger Dulles was too politically smart to get too involved with the Truman administration while he was ready to campaign for the Republicans. With a presidential election coming in that same year, he hoped that better things would come for him in the near future. When Kennan saw that Allen Dulles was not available for his plan of secret political warfare, the choice fell on another veteran of the OSS, Frank Wisner, who at the time was a modest deputy in the State Department's Office of Occupied Territories. Besides his wartime experience with covert operations, much more important for Wisner's appointment was the recommendation of Dulles himself, who vouched for his old comrade in arms. Kennan concluded that despite having no knowledge of his ability, Wisner's qualifications seemed "reasonably good". Thus it happened that Frank Wisner became Director of the OPC, and was at the forefront of America's political war with Communism.⁴²

Wisner was as committed to fighting Communism as Kennan's was, perhaps more, and he shared the idea that political warfare had to play a key role in that battle. What Kennan did not foresee, however, were Wisner's initiative and independence, which would foil his plan of bringing covert action under the control of the State Department. Wisner played along in the beginning, when he needed Kennan's help to ease himself out from under CIA control. Early on, Kennan expressed the view that "political warfare is essentially an instrument of foreign policy." Wisner agreed, adding that his position would require "continuing and direct access to the State Department and the various elements of the military establishment without having to proceed through the CIA administration in each case."⁴³ Events outside of both men's control, however, changed the situation drastically. After the outbreak of the Korean War, the CIA was put under scrutiny for having failed to give proper warning of the North Korean attack. Hillenkoetter gladly took the blame to leave a job he never really wanted, and was replaced by General Walter Bedell Smith, a former ambassador to the Soviet Union who had been Eisenhower's chief of staff during the Second World War. Even if he was not a veteran of the intelligence game, Smith shared Hillenkoetter's contempt for political warfare, but was much more authoritarian and willing to reel in Wisner's organisation and his ventures that, according to the general, had nothing

⁴² Grose, *Operation Rollback*, p. 108-110.

⁴³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 298.

to do with the real business of intelligence. In 1952, the OPC was officially abolished and absorbed in the CIA, and Wisner found himself under much tighter scrutiny. Kennan, meanwhile, also suffered the consequences of the Korean War, whose non-optimal management was used by the Republicans to attack the Truman administration and what was, in the public eye at least, the representation of its foreign policy: the doctrine of containment. By 1952, Kennan's name had become synonymous for containment, so he had to be the first victim of that year's elections campaign. In May, Truman named Kennan ambassador to the Soviet Union, trying to remove as far away as possible a certain target for political attacks. Even if Kennan was perhaps the most qualified man for this most difficult job, it would not prove to be the culmination of his career. Stalin took offense at his appointment and, at the first chance, the Kremlin declared Kennan *persona non grata*. After five months he returned to the United States, exposing himself and the Democratic party to the attacks that Truman had hoped to avoid.⁴⁴

After Eisenhower's victory in the presidential elections later in that year, the new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, fired Kennan from the foreign service. He would find some form of compensation when, in the summer of 1953, the president called him back to be the leader of one of the three teams of Operation Solarium, an exercise in strategy and foreign policy that served as the basis for a reassessment of American policy in the Cold War. Each team had to present a supporting case for one of the three major options of US policy towards the Soviet Union. Kennan's team, that argued for containment, a focus on Europe and avoiding military commitments, was the most convincing one according to Eisenhower, who believed that the "hard line" enshrined in NSC 68 was no longer suited to the world situation, and who had criticised unsustainable military expenditures during his campaign. So, the man (Kennan) who had been the founding father of political warfare found himself out of grace because his doctrine was considered too lenient towards Communism, and the president (Eisenhower) who had been elected using the rallying cry of "rollback" during his campaign almost immediately opted for an improved form of "containment" as the political strategy to adopt. Such was the difference between what the public perceived as policy, and the reality. Even if the author of "containment" did not survive the political squabbles of his time (but he did enjoy another tenure as ambassador, this time to Yugoslavia, under President Kennedy), his doctrine did, becoming the successful policy of both Republican and Democratic administrations for the duration of the Cold War.

⁴⁴ Grose, *Operation Rollback*, pp. 108-110.

As for Wisner, the OPC's absorption inside the CIA was shortly followed by a very fortunate turn of events for him, the appointment of Allen Dulles as Director of Central Intelligence. Dulles had supported Wisner from the outside during the Hillenkoetter and Smith years; now he could prove himself to be a DCI who was much more sympathetic towards covert operations. Things, however, would go differently from what Wisner expected. Starting from 1951, public opinion, in the wake of international events, notably the Korean war, had started to call for a much more decisive opposition to Communism. It was at this point that the idea of rollback started to be used as a political and rhetorical tool. What the Truman administration had pursued in secret, with the Republican campaign of 1952 and in the wake of Eisenhower's victory became a public policy. There was, however, a big issue: "the drive to roll back the Iron Curtain was central to the new Republican foreign policy; the methods for doing the job were not working."⁴⁵ As Deputy DCI between 1951 and 1953, Allen Dulles had seen ample evidence that the political warfare he and Kennan had championed since 1948 was not obtaining the results that they hoped, at least in its paramilitary part. Even his brother John Foster who during his testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee prior to taking office as the new Secretary of State had called for the "liberation of the captive people" under Communist rule, was soon reined in by Eisenhower. As already said, the developments of the Korean War made people question the efficacy of rollback. The truth was that, during the Republican administration, the rhetoric of "rollback" and "liberation" clashed with the reality of the operational failures of the cover projects that had been running since 1948. Reality knocked, hard, on Frank Wisner's door in November 1956, when he stood in Vienna, helplessly watching the flow of refugees coming in after the Soviet repression of the Hungarian uprising. That revolution was exactly the situation that American political warfare, covert action and Frank Wisner himself had tried to engineer for eight years; and yet, the CIA orders were not to incite any actions. "Rollback" and "liberation" were nothing more than words, used for convenience and then discarded. After slipping into depression and alcoholism and being removed from his position as head of the CIA's clandestine services, Frank Wisner took his own life in 1965. It remains to be seen whether this personal tragedy also reflected the failure of the operations he did so much to set up.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 206.

Chapter II

Western Espionage and the Émigrés: Target Eastern Europe

Intelligence collection activities against the Soviet target were going on at full force long before the first U-2 plane departed from Wiesbaden. These activities included all the available methods and techniques, many of which had been experimented with during the Second World War. The Soviet Union was a police state with iron-clad security, but the policymakers in Washington and London needed information on the Soviet target on an almost daily basis. This led to a development of new or improved forms of intelligence gathering: signals intelligence (Sigint), electronic intelligence (Elint) and imagery intelligence (Imint). However, before Elint and Imint were developed enough, in the competition with Sigint, Humint maintained a prominent role until the second half of the 1950s.

2.1 Signals intelligence

Sigint is defined by the US Army as intelligence derived from “the intercept, analysis and parametric exploitation of foreign communications and non-communications radio-electronic emission.”¹ Three intelligence collection techniques are part of this branch: Communications intelligence (Comint), Electronics intelligence (Elint) and Foreign instrumentation signals intelligence (Fisint). Comint consists in the intercept of voice, Morse code, radioteletype, facsimile, multichannel and video signals. Elint instead is concerned with the emissions from foreign electronic devices, for example radar systems. Lastly, Fisint is primarily associated with the monitoring of foreign weapons research and development activities.

Much has changed since Christopher Andrew wrote, in 1997, that “most histories of the Cold War make no reference to Sigint at all.”² The fact that that Signals intelligence grew to

¹ Department of the Army, Field Manual FM 34-2, *Collection Management*, October 1990, pp. 2-5.

² Christopher M. Andrew “Conclusion: An Agenda for Future Research”, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1997, p. 228. Quoted in: Matthew M. Aid and Cees Wiebes “Introduction on The Importance of Signals Intelligence in the Cold War”, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16 No.1, 2001, p. 1.

be the main source of information on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War is now an accepted opinion among scholars and researchers, thanks to the work of historians such as Richard Aldrich and Matthew M. Aid. It is also an opinion shared by many of the primary consumers of intelligence. For example, in 1966, Senator Milton Young of North Dakota went on record saying that the intelligence provided and developed by the National Security Agency (NSA) was more influential to American foreign policy than provided by the CIA.³ Even a stalwart believer in Humint like Allen Dulles had to admit that signals intelligence was “the best and hottest intelligence that one government can gather about one another”.⁴ This was the case in Britain too. The Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) was the most important secret service during the early Cold War, by volume of product, size of budget or numbers of personnel. The GCHQ had “the lion’s share of British intelligence resources”.⁵

Sigint offers several advantages over Humint. First of all, it involves very little physical or political risk, due to the great distance it can operate from the target, and the fact that it is a ‘passive’ form of information collection, even if recent events such as the Edward Snowden case proved that risks, especially political embarrassment, are still present. Sigint is also usually highly reliable, being exempt from the bias and personal perception that Humint sources or collectors can never completely avoid. A Humint source could be a traitor, motivated by a desire for revenge, or a defector trying to sell himself as a valuable source to ensure protection and privileges. Professional purveyors of information usually operate out of greed and personal ambition. This became especially problematic during the first decade of the Cold War, when the demand for intelligence in the West was so high that the quality of the offer was often not questioned (this issue will be examined in detail later in the chapter). Finally, Sigint was much faster to collect and analyse.

Signals intelligence, however, is far from perfect. Due to its fragmentary nature, consisting in hundreds or thousands of intercepts, Sigint does not provide comprehensive or exhaustive pictures. Humint reports, once they get disseminated, already contain the assessment and interpretation of the assigned officer, exactly because they have been composed over a longer period of time. Also, Sigint can give information on capabilities, but not on intentions. This was extremely important during the early Cold War, when knowing *what* the Soviets would do was as important as knowing *how* they would do it. As

³ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 10.

⁵ Richard J. Aldrich “GCHQ and Sigint in the Early Cold War 1945-70”, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16 No. 1, 2001, p. 67.

it became more and more clear that the war was going to be fought mostly on the battlefields of ideology and propaganda, information on the morale of the people living inside the Soviet Union became essential, and this was something Sigint could not provide. Finally, Signals intelligence has an inherent flaw, which is that the flow and nature of the information is effectively controlled by the enemy. Lyman Kirkpatrick, a former executive director of the CIA, referring to the warning of a possible Soviet attack in the late 1950s, stated that:

If the Soviets ever decided to go for broke, they wouldn't put anything on electronic communications or do anything visible by satellite. All the orders would go by officer couriers, which was what Hitler did at the Battle of the Bulge and caught us totally unprepared. We were relying too heavily on communications intelligence.⁶

Besides all that, some practical shortcomings in the late 1940s meant that Sigint was still not reliable enough to take the place of Humint in the early Cold War. Despite the fact that the development of the Soviet atomic bomb was the primary target for the GCHQ, "First Lightning", the codename for the first Soviet atomic test, still took the West by surprise on the 29th of August 1949. Even diplomatic targets were hard to intercept, as proven by the British surprise at the Stalin-Tito split in 1948. Many Soviet messages employed "onetime pads" for encryption which, if correctly used, could not be broken. Another major issue was that communications inside the Soviet Union used, instead of wireless transmission, landlines which could not be easily intercepted.⁷ However, the partnership between the NSA and the GCHQ enjoyed some successes in the late 1940s. Even if American and British cryptanalysts were unable to break high-level Soviet diplomatic cyphers, they still collected a good deal of intelligence on Soviet military strength and capabilities and on the production capacity of their industry. This was due to the fact that, after the end of the Second World War, the Soviet continued to use foreign-made cryptographic systems that they received under the Lend-Lease program, or that they had captured from the Germans.

These successes came to an abrupt end, however, on 29 October 1948, a day still known as "Black Friday" in the NSA. The Soviet executed a worldwide change of their cryptographic systems and communication procedures, prompted by the treachery of an NSA (then called Army Security Agency) employee, William W. Weisband. A Russian linguist and analyst, Weisband sold his codebreaking secrets to the Soviets.⁸ Sigint success rate built slowly during the 1950s. These uncertain first steps in dealing the Soviet target,

⁶ Aid and Wiebes, "Introduction on the Importance of Signals Intelligence", p. 15.

⁷ Aldrich, "GCHQ and Sigint in the Early Cold War 1945-70", p. 74.

⁸ Matthew M. Aid "The National Security Agency and the Cold War", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16 No. 1, 2001, pp. 33-36.

however, meant that Humint operations maintained their importance, but they still had to deal with the huge difficulty of the task of spying on the Soviets. Even the most well trained spies could not hope to operate undetected in the Soviet Union. Also, in the unstable climate of the Cold War, governments wanted to avoid the dangers of an exposé of their covert operations. The Western intelligence agencies needed agents with two qualities: a good chance of operating undetected, and no connection with their governments.

2.2 Humint

There were three main sources of Humint that the American and British agencies used to obtain information on the Soviets during the early Cold War. The first was the defectors, returnees and refugees getting out of the USSR through Berlin before the Wall was built. They provided mostly scientific and technological intelligence focused on weapons' development, and their story has been told in great detail by Paul Maddrell in recent years.⁹ Defectors from the Red Army or from the Soviet secret service actually constitute a separate category, but once again their story has been the subject of the work of prestigious historians and researchers.¹⁰

Another source of Humint were the émigrés. Many groups operated in Europe, especially in Germany, as professional intelligence providers. The émigrés claimed to possess the networks of contacts inside the Soviet Union that the Western agencies so badly needed. Both the CIA and the SIS tried to take the reins of those networks by training some émigré agents and sending them beyond the Iron Curtain to join the resistance networks that operated there. These operations will be discussed in detail in chapters II, III and IV. Finally, the CIA had another fundamental resource in Germany, one whose story has not enjoyed much popularity among scholars of the Cold War: the Gehlen Organisation. For the purpose of this study it is well worth explaining how "The Org" was born, what was its relationship with the Americans and, most important, how it was connected with the émigrés.

2.2.1 *The Gehlen Organisation*

⁹ Maddrell, *Spying on Science*.

¹⁰ Christopher Andrew's history of the KGB, for example, is based on his cooperation with Oleg Gordievskyj, a former KGB colonel who was recruited by SIS in the 1970s and then escaped to Britain in 1985.

The *Fremde Heere Ost* (FHO) was the eastern military intelligence section of the Operations Department of the Army General Staff of Nazi Germany. The FHO had to face the competition of two rivals, Admiral Canaris' *Abwehr* and the *Amt VI*, the intelligence department of Himmler's Reich Main Security Office (RSHA), led by Walter Schellenberg. During the troubled days of the Russian campaign, given his increasing mistrust for Canaris, Hitler started to rely more and more on the FHO. At the end of 1941, Reinhard Gehlen, a young member of the army General Staff, was appointed head of the FHO.

As a brilliant military analyst, Gehlen was well aware that the war was over for Germany, long before the Allies reached Berlin. In January 1945 he submitted a grim report to General Heinz Guderian, which detailed the desperate situation of the Army Group Centre. He suggested abandoning East Prussia to gain more favourable ground, lest the Soviet offensive gained "a decisive bearing on the further conduct of the war".¹¹ Guderian personally brought the report to Hitler, who by way of response suggested that Gehlen should be brought to a lunatic asylum. Guderian realized that the Fuhrer had finally gone mad, but that it was their duty to carry on until the end.¹² Gehlen remained a faithful servant of the Reich, putting the resources of the FHO at the service of the German military effort, but his pragmatic mind worked at the same time to secure a safe future for him and his staff once the war was over. He held on the belief that Communism would always be the ultimate enemy of Western society and, as soon as the war was over, the fragile alliance among the Allies would crumble. In that moment, he thought, men with his knowledge and expertise on the Soviet Union would prove extremely valuable to the West, regardless of the side they had fought for during the War. To prove his value, he needed resources: spies, informers and most importantly radio posts, who could "stay behind" after the war, and be reactivated at the right moment. This network took the name of R-Net (from the German word *Rücken*, meaning "rear"). The establishment of these resources had been going on since Gehlen first took control of the FHO.

The first, and most important, of these resources were the WALLI units. The Group III of the *Abwehr*, led by Major-General Eccard von Bentivegni, had achieved an important success, setting up three front reconnaissance groups in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. These groups, code-named WALLI, were doing good work infiltrating spies behind

¹¹ Federal German Military Archives, Freiburg, *Oberkommando des Heeres, Fremde Heere Oste, Lageberichte Ost*, Nr. 1410/45.

¹² Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader* (Boston, Da Capo Press, 2001), p. 387.

the enemy lines and establishing radio outposts operated by defectors. They were divided in three groups; WALLI I, operating east of Warsaw and led by Major Hermann Baun who would be a long-time partner of Gehlen; WALLI II, mainly concerned with sabotage operations; WALLI III, in charge of the infamous *Einsatzkommandos*, operating behind enemy lines. The second important resource were the defectors who were being enlisted in the Vlassov army (the Russian Liberation Army, made mostly by White Russians émigrés and defectors, fought under German command between 1944 and 1945) and in other similar formations, whose creation actually involved Gehlen himself.¹³ As the failure of the Vlassov army proved, the strong nationalistic feelings and the bitter animosity between the different factions and ethnicities were an obstacle to coordination of the efforts of these groups. When these units were rapidly dissolving, many of their members would end up being enlisted in the “Werewolf” commandos.¹⁴ Gehlen took interest in the Werewolf project, because he thought he could turn it towards his own goals. As he saw it, all Werewolf operations were to be directed against the Soviets, in the form of sabotage and guerrilla units operating behind enemy lines. Even when he saw his original project wasted by it being used against the Allies on the Western front, Gehlen still found something to salvage. The Werewolf groups had been able to set up several radio posts and clandestine cells in Eastern Europe, which he was eager to include in his R-Net. He was anxious to let as many as possible of the Werewolf, Vlassov units, Ukrainian nationalists and WALLI cells survive. He knew that most of them would be scattered by the relentless advance of the Red army, but if even a few could stay alive and undetected, and most importantly held on their radio receivers, after the end of the conflict he could restore contact with them. By 1946, this speculation proved to be true. Until he was able to recruit, train and infiltrate new agents, the R-Net would prove the main resource of Gehlen’s new organization.

In April 1945 Gehlen and Baun concluded a pact which would lay the foundation for the espionage organization who would later become the official intelligence agency for Federal Germany. The first thing to do was to salvage the FHO archives, which had to be moved to Bavaria, and wait there for the Allies. Baun, on his part, had to secure the survival of the WALLI networks. The groups were ordered to disengage, leaving behind men equipped with radio transmitters and, in case radio communication failed, to establish dead letter-boxes.

¹³ Reinhard Gehlen, *The Service. The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen* (New York, World Publishing, 1972), p. 85.

¹⁴ In September 1944, Hitler issued a decree for a mass conscription to defend the Fatherland. This would include every able-bodied German between the age of fifteen and sixty which, after five years of war, translated into old men and youths sent to the front.

Gehlen and Baun agreed to share command of the future organization.¹⁵ Hearing the news that on the 28th of April the Red Army had reached Berlin, Gehlen decided to surrender himself to the American army post at Fischhausen. There, he did not meet the reception he was expecting.

After spending some time in the hands of the CIC, Gehlen was then handed over to the G-2, the Army intelligence service, where he met Major-General Edwin Luther Sibert. Sibert was an intelligence professional who was to become the decisive catalyst in Gehlen's dealings with the Americans. He also knew Allen Dulles well, because they had worked together on Operation Sunrise and similar enterprises, showing a predisposition to cooperate with defeated German commanders. Sibert requested from Gehlen a report on the war activities of the FHO, which the latter was happy to provide. Together, they started developing the idea of a secret intelligence organization directed against the Soviet Union, working under American sponsorship but headed by Gehlen. After Sibert took sight of the secret FHO documents he quickly understood the importance of the matter, and reported it to the Supreme Command. This, along with the fact that the Soviets were looking for their former adversaries of the FHO, issuing pressing demands to the Americans, resulted in Gehlen and three members of his staff being put on a plane and sent to the other side of the Atlantic.¹⁶

Once in Washington, General George Strong, chief of the G-2, was the man in charge of Gehlen, and he encouraged him in going forward with his scheme for the establishment of a new intelligence agency in Germany. After several weeks of negotiations, the two parts came to a "gentlemen's agreement".¹⁷ Gehlen put forward some strong terms, such as that his organization would not be regarded as part of the American Intelligence services, would be used solely to procure intelligence on the Soviet Union and, at the establishment of a German government, the control of the organization would be transferred to it.¹⁸ The situation in Europe demanded action, with the Red Army in control of half of the continent and the first reports of Soviet spies active in Western Germany. Baun had been able to establish contact with some of the WALLI operators and had submitted to General Sibert a plan for mounting an espionage organization inside the Soviet Union. When Gehlen finally came back to Germany, in June 1946, he was asked to cooperate with Baun, working on the analysis and evaluation of the information that the former WALLI groups were gathering. Gehlen

¹⁵ Gehlen, *The Service*, pp. 107-109.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-125.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 121.

¹⁸ E.H. Cookridge, *Gehlen, Spy of the Century* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), pp. 134-135.

accepted, knowing that the situation would soon turn in his favour. Baun had claimed with the G-2 that he had established contact with some of his agents in Ukraine, Poland and East Germany, and he hoped to do the same with a group in Moscow codenamed “Flamingo” which was active during the war. However, Flamingo remained silent and the reports coming from the satellite countries were not of much interest for the Americans. They did not provide valuable intelligence, but they did prove that there was an armed struggle going on inside the Soviet Union. The Vlassov Army was finished. Most of it had moved to the Allied zone of Germany and surrendered to the Americans. Vlassov himself had stayed behind with some faithful followers, and was caught and executed by the Russians. His generals did not fare much better, because under the Yalta agreements the Americans had to hand them over to the Soviets.

There were, however, still large groups of rebels, or counter-revolutionaries in the words of the Soviet press, fighting inside the Soviet Union and its recently occupied territories. In south-west Ukraine armed bands of nationalists had set up a wide resistance network. The Baltic States were an even bigger trouble for the Russians. Even after four years of German occupation, the Russians were not welcomed as liberators, and old feelings of nationalism erupted in an armed struggle, fomented by the Soviets’ ruthless policies of repression. Baun was able to establish regular radio contacts with the rebels, thanks to the fact that several of his WALLI men had remained with the partisans after the war. These reports, however, had no intelligence value, aside from proving that the Soviets were struggling to keep control in their territories. It was at this point that Gehlen stepped in, suggesting that he should start training his own agents to send into Eastern Berlin and even deeper in the Soviet Union. He acquired more and more influence over Baun’s group until, at last, the two branches were joined to form the Organization Gehlen.¹⁹ In a few years, “The Org” would move from under the aegis of the G-2 to that of a new and powerful intelligence institution, the CIA.

The transition from Army Intelligence to the CIA, however, was not simple. Operation RUSTY (as it was codenamed, later changed to ODEUM and finally ZIPPER), was under heavy scrutiny from both sides. In the beginning, the Army’s “insatiable appetite for information on the new Soviet threat in Europe”, meant that RUSTY transformed from a small cadre of former German officials into a large group that suffered from poor cohesion and, more important, very limited supervision.²⁰ Due to this lack of control, the operation

¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 145-148.

²⁰ Kevin C. Ruffner, “American Intelligence and the Gehlen Organisation”, CIA History Staff, *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 41, 1997, p. 72. CIA FOIA ERR (Studies in Intelligence Nazi-Related Articles_0013).

turned out to be more expensive than expected. By mid-1946 the Army, suffering from lack of funds, tried to turn it over to the Strategic Services Unit, which turned the offer down due to security concerns. In the summer of 1947, Hillenkoetter, who had taken over as the new Director of Central Intelligence, also dismissed the proposal. In a memorandum for the Secretaries of State, War, Navy and the National Intelligence Authority (the predecessor to the NSC), he expressed the strong recommendation that RUSTY be liquidated and the CIG assumed no responsibility for it.²¹ Meanwhile, in Germany, the Gehlen Organisation was growing at an impressive pace. In the late fall of 1947, the operation was transferred from Oberusel to its own compound in Pullach, a village near Munich. The rapid expansion in terms of manpower and resources provided further challenges in terms of control and security. In August 1948, the chief of CIA's operation base in Karlsruhe reported in a memorandum that some of the agents employed in Pullach were SS personnel with known Nazi records. In the recruitment methods no attention was paid to the character of the agents, their political leanings or security, with the result that Soviet penetration in the operation was a recognised fact.²² Despite all the negative judgements and even Hillenkoetter's open opposition to the project, little by little the Army managed to get the CIA more involved. At the end of 1948 Major General Walsh, who had succeeded Burrell as Army's chief intelligence officer in Germany, finally persuaded Hillenkoetter to provide limited funds for the operation, while the CIA conducted yet another investigation of RUSTY. James H. Critchfield, the newly appointed chief of Munich operation base, had the duty to produce the report that ended up being the most thorough review of the growing German intelligence service. Critchfield recognised that the CIA could not ignore the presence of RUSTY. It was a *fait accompli*, regardless of whether the Agency wanted to acknowledge it or not. With 4,000 or more Germans in it, he was sure that the Organisation or its members would remain relevant in the intelligence community of the future Germany. Considering the prospective role of the country in a Western European military alliance, he noted that it was important that the CIA entered RUSTY at a point where it could still control its contacts and development.²³

An agreement was finally reached with Gehlen in June 1949. The CIA insisted that, until Germany regained its sovereignty, the Agency would remain the dominant partner in the relationship. The US would specify requests for intelligence priorities and complete details

²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 74-75.

²² *Ibid.* pp. 76-77.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 78.

for operational agreements had to be available to the CIA staff. Gehlen resented the American intrusion, which was far more significant than when he was operating under the Army. In 1950, for example, Critchfield reduced Gehlen's proposed projects from 150 to ten, due to nonproduction of any worthwhile intelligence. He went as far as telling Gehlen that

it was high time he recognised the fact that his organisation, while viewed in a most creditable light for its tactical collection and especially its military evaluation work, was considered definitively second class in any intelligence activity of a more difficult or sophisticated nature.²⁴

RUSTY proved to be one of the CIA's most controversial operations. On the one hand, it did strengthen the relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. On the other, Gehlen's group suffered devastating penetrations by the KGB that had lasting consequences for the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND), the successor of the Gehlen Organization in Western Germany. This was proved by the scandals of Hans Clemens and Heinz Felfe, both former SS officers who worked for Gehlen, the BND and, secretly, for the KGB, before being exposed in 1963. It must be recognised, however, that the CIA had the merit of acknowledging these issues since the beginning of its relationship with RUSTY, but Gehlen's intelligence on the Soviet Union, in the eyes of the Agency, outweighed these problems. In 1953, answering to criticism from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Frank Wisner said: "there is no adequate answer or correction of the assumption that we rely very largely upon ZIPPER effort for intelligence on Eastern Europe generally." However, he also added that "it should be pointed out that we have our own independent operations in addition to the ZIPPER effort."²⁵ Some of these operations will be used as case studies in the following chapters.

2.2.2 Paper Mills and Fabrication

The Gehlen Organisation was only one of the Humint sources that Western intelligence agencies were using to close the information gap on the Soviet target. American agencies,

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 79.

²⁵ Frank Wisner, Memorandum to DCI, "Communication from Under Secretary of Defense dated 4 December and Relating to (a) Military Cover for CIA Operations; and (b) Deficiencies in Intelligence Collection and Dissemination", 12 December 1953. Quoted in: Ruffner, "American Intelligence and the Gehlen Organisation", p. 79.

in particular, spared no resources in order to fulfil their intelligence requirements. This situation was recognised and exploited by groups of exiles from the “target countries”, the USSR and the Satellites, who used it for their personal and political gain. They took advantage of one of the major flaws in the American intelligence system, one that has been already mentioned: duplication. There was very little coordination between the various American agencies; not only did they uncritically accept all the information they were offered, they also often outbid one another for intelligence sources. These two features, uncompromising need for intelligence on the Soviet target and lack of coordination between agencies, resulted in a proliferation of groups that acted as professional purveyors of intelligence. The generous monetary remuneration offered for their services meant, for many émigré leaders, an opportunity to preserve their organisations and to finance further activities. Their resources consisted in networks and assets left behind the Iron Curtain. Nonetheless, as the CIA eventually recognised, “Hasty, uncoordinated and totally insecure operational use of these assets by both the émigré groups and Western intelligence agencies permitted the Communist security services to identify and destroy them, or to use them against us.”²⁶

Almost all the émigré organisations thus lacked valid intelligence assets. Despite this, for years “the unfortunate fiction has persisted that such organisations have undefined special means of obtaining intelligence.”²⁷ To such an extent did the American agencies rely on émigré assets that by 1952 it was estimated in the same paper that more than half of all the material received on “several countries of greatest intelligence interest” was generated by “paper mills” or “fabricators”. The Central Intelligence Agency defined paper mills as “intelligence sources whose chief aim is the maximum dissemination of their product.” The information they provide “consists of a mixture of valid information, overt material, propaganda and fabrication.” Fabricators are further defined as “individuals or groups who, without genuine agent resources, invent their information or inflate it on the basis of overt news for personal gain or political purpose.”²⁸

Émigré leaders considered intelligence production as a weapon to be used for their own political interests. This had the further effect of influencing the policy of the United States towards hostility against the Soviets. Such an important aspect of intelligence production during the early Cold War deserves proper attention, and it will be dealt with in detail in the

²⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, CIA staff study, February 1952, “Paper Mills and Fabrication”, p. 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 2.

conclusion of this work. For the moment it suffices to say that hostility to the Soviets was the defining aspect of most émigré groups. Exile leaders for a decade or more operated on the prospect that, some day, their countries would be liberated by the Communist oppression and they could come back to assume a prominent role. To this end, fuelling Western hostility against the Eastern bloc had the dual effect of increasing the chances of a liberation war, and of improving the personal stance, or prestige, of a specific group or individual. The fact that foreign special-interest groups had a means of influencing US policy, however, was not the only consequence of the reliance of Western agencies on émigré intelligence. A more dangerous one was the opportunity afforded to the Soviets of planting deception and provocation in American and Western intelligence channels. Due to the dictatorial nature of Communist power, the Soviet secret services never limited themselves to intelligence collection, but always had as a priority target all activities defined as “counter-revolutionary” that may have endangered the Soviet regime, including the émigré movements abroad. For this reason the KGB made every effort to penetrate and control émigré groups, as previously explained, a task made particularly easy by the émigrés’ limited regard for security: anyone who claimed to be an anti-Communist could be admitted into the groups. This meant that, beyond any reasonable doubt, the Soviets had access to the same émigré intelligence product as the Western agencies. As a consequence, they could base their deception planning on the knowledge of much of the information in, for example, American hands, against which deception was likely to be checked.

The penetration of émigré groups was further proved by two well-documented cases, that of General Anton Turkul’s White Russian group, The Russian National Union of War Veterans (RNSUV) and that of the Inner Line, the intelligence branch of the most important White Russian organisation, the Russian General Military Union (ROVS).²⁹ Even if there is plenty of proof of Soviet penetration in émigré groups, when it came to fabrication there was never any actual evidence that the originators of the fabricated material were Soviet agents, that the information was provided by Soviet intelligence, or what was ultimately the target of the deception. As the Turkul case proved, however, the Soviets were willing to sacrifice important resources and even valid information in order to make deception work at the right moment.

A further issue with fabrication and deception in the early Cold War was that, when done properly, they escaped the recognition of intelligence analysts. The analysts’ ability to

²⁹ Both cases will be analysed in detail in chapter 3.

recognise fabrication, in fact, rested on the assumption that they possessed enough verified material to use as a measuring tool. The sparse amount of such material, however, led the analysts to rely too often on their personal judgement, which in turn was hindered by their not having sufficient knowledge of the operational methods used in the field. Besides, the intelligence material received by the analysts had already been reprocessed several times: translations, revisions and summaries resulted often in the elimination of the flaws which may have allowed the analysts to detect a fraud.³⁰ By 1951, the situation was so problematic that the DCI Walter Bedell Smith requested a staff study on the paper mills and fabrication problem, following a presentation to the Intelligence Advisory Committee of a Hungarian émigré paper mill case. The study not only offers valuable insight on the methods and issues of the American intelligence collection system in those years, but also provides a long list of case studies that sheds further light on the complex intelligence relationship between Western agencies and émigrés.

In Brussels, for example, a White Russian group operated, which was headed by Basil Orekhov, a former captain of the Imperial Russian Army, who had served during the Civil War in the White Armies of Generals Denikin and Wrangel. He founded and edited an émigré periodical called *Chassovoi* (The Sentinel) and during the Second World War operated as an *Abwehr* agent in Switzerland. In 1947 he became a founding member of the *Centre National Russe* (CNR), an organisation that proposed to unite all the Russian émigré groups, and suspected of being penetrated by the Soviets. Orekhov had been claiming since the 1930s to have high level intelligence sources in the USSR, including officers of the Red Army. After the war he and other members of the CNR trafficked widely in propaganda and intelligence material, especially dealing with Soviet activities in North and Equatorial Africa and the Middle East. Their reports suggested alleged plans for a Soviet invasion of Africa and Communist subversive activities in Ethiopia and West Africa. The diffusion of this material was impressive: “duplicates of this type of report have been received by most of the intelligence services of the Western powers through Russian émigré groups everywhere.”³¹ They were all generated from Orekhov’s group in Brussels, and had been dismissed by the OSO as sensationalist claims and fabrication, motivated by a desire to obtain funding for the organisation or by possible Soviet deception.

Another, more peculiar, reason behind Orekhov’s activities was Belgian industrial and colonial interest. The White Russian was also a member of a private intelligence and security

³⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, CIA staff study, February 1952, “Paper Mills and Fabrication”, p. 8.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 25.

service, created and sponsored by the *Societe de Bruxelles pour la Finance et l'Industrie*, a powerful industrial complex with large colonial holdings. The intelligence provided by Orekhov “reflects a strong tendency to overemphasize the role of Soviet and Communist influence in the nationalist movements in Belgian- and French-controlled African territories.”³² Orekhov and his group were also closely associated to the British. In December 1948, he presented to British intelligence a report indicating that war would soon break out in Iran. The report was so precise it actually mentioned the specific date for the invasion and described the Soviet order of battle. The British contacted the chief OSO representative and requested him to transmit the report directly to the DCI. It received considerable attention until it was established that Orekhov was the source. After close scrutiny it was established that the report was false and the man himself admitted he had concocted it because he needed money. Shortly after, according to the CIA study, all but one of Orekhov’s operation with the British were terminated (which also meant they still trusted him enough for one operation).

Another White Russian émigré living in Brussels, Nicolas Svidin, approached one of the Belgian intelligence services, the *Surete de l'Etat*. He claimed to represent an NKVD chief in Belgium and offered to sell the transcript of the minutes of a meeting allegedly held by the Soviet Politburo with military chiefs in January 1947. The minutes supposedly contained information on Soviet secret weapons, including the atomic bomb, and even mentioned a high-ranking US Army officer that passed information to the Russians. The Belgian service, unable to pay the high price requested for the minutes, involved the OSO. Svidin refused to name the Soviet official that was the source of the minutes, but the Belgian believed him to be Nikolai Skobelev, First Secretary of the Soviet embassy in Brussels, and long suspected to be a KGB official. Because Svidin had asked, besides money, also for asylum in North or South America both for him and the unnamed official, the Belgian believed that Skobelev wanted to desert to the West and was trying to acquire funds and security. The OSO purchased the document in March, and very quickly its experts recognised it as a fabrication which, in their opinion, originated from the Soviet embassy in Brussels. When confronted with the facts, Svidin identified Skobelev as his source and also stated that the originator of the minutes was Skobelev’s nephew, a stenographer in the Politburo offices in Moscow. All efforts to substantiate these allegations proved fruitless.

³² *Ibid.* pp. 25-26.

In May 1948, Svidin came again to the OSO attention when he tried to sell the same document to Swedish representatives in Brussels. The Americans informed the Swedes and asked for their cooperation to trap Svidin, but they refused in order to avoid possible embarrassment. During the following years Svidin, under several aliases, tried to sell various documents to the intelligence services of Norway, Switzerland, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Due to inadequate liaison between the services, several of them are believed to have purchased Svidin's worthless material. In the case of the "Politburo minutes", due to the OSO's belief that access to information from the Soviet Embassy was needed for the preparation of the documents, the possibility that the whole operation was a Soviet fabrication was strong. The motives were unclear: the poor quality of the fabrication seemed to exclude a deception attempt. US estimates were not affected by Svidin's material, according to the OSO, but it is not known if the documents had an effect on the estimates of the other countries that purchased them.³³

A final case worth mentioning is that of the "Soviet-Austrian State Treaty". This is particularly significant due to its implications for US foreign policy. In January 1950, the OSO's station in Austria came into possession of an alleged aide-memoire from the Soviet Foreign Ministry to the Austrian Political Representative in Moscow. The document implied, beyond reasonable doubt, that the Austrian Government was secretly negotiating a state treaty with the Soviet Union. US diplomats were alerted and contacted their Austrian counterparts, who immediately assured that no such negotiations were taking place. The OSO, meanwhile, started an investigation that, after months, discovered that the document was fabricated. The author, however, was never discovered. The agent who supplied the document, known only by his codename Hans, was an employee of the Austrian Foreign Office of Czechoslovakian origins. During the Second World War, he deserted from the German Army and was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services from a prisoner of war camp. He worked for the OSS in Austria until 1946 and was then recruited again in 1948 by the OSO, when the Americans learned of his employment at the Austrian Foreign Office, which put him in the position to access the dispatches from Austrian officials in the Soviet Union and satellite countries.

Two days after Hans reported on the state treaty, G-2 military intelligence cabled to Washington very similar information, obtained from an Austrian right-wing politician considered "usually reliable". Receiving this sort of information from both civilian and

³³ *Ibid.* pp. 57-59.

military intelligence sources was a big deal, and the validity of the material was apparently substantiated. If that was not enough, soon afterwards British Intelligence reported that they had obtained similar information from one of their sources in Austria; “by the end of January 1950 similar rumours had been received through numerous official and unofficial channels of the Western Powers occupying Austria.” After one year of “interrogations, handwriting and typewriter analysis, and physical surveillance”, the OSO determined that all the reports on the state treaty came from the document originally produced by Hans.³⁴ The Americans also compared all the reports passed to them by Hans during his tenure as an OSO agent with documents actually written by the same Austrian officials who were allegedly the sources of Hans’ reports. This revealed that everything that Hans had provided was largely a fabrication made by himself, thanks to frequent errors in German syntax and vocabulary, owing to his Czech schooling. The aide-memoire that had created so much ruckus in January, however, was written in flawless German and was certainly the work of someone else. When Hans finally confessed to have fabricated almost all his intelligence material, he also claimed to have written the aide-memoire, a claim that was dismissed by the OSO. The most plausible explanation they came up with was that the document was the result of an attempt by an ambitious right-wing Austrian politician to cause a government crisis, in the hope of unseating the Foreign Minister. Vienna remained one of the hotbeds of fabricated information during those years. Thanks to the lack of coordination between the agencies of the various Western countries, people like Hans could continue to operate undisturbed even after getting exposed (as indeed Hans did): “at the latest count, 32 intelligence agencies of various nations, not counting émigré or other unofficial groups, were operating independently of one another in Vienna alone.”³⁵

The CIA study from 1952 highlights the problems caused by the over-reliance on paper mills for intelligence procurement. Some of those problems, however, derived from issues inherent to the American intelligence apparatus: “The fact that substantial funds for intelligence procurement are available to numerous agencies has actually become a handicap.”³⁶ Knowing that money was not an issue, “intelligence peddlers” could exploit the need for information on the Soviet bloc and sell it for a price that went way beyond its true value. The further issue of “competitive bidding” among the different agencies, as mentioned before, led to inflation in the intelligence market. Remedial steps were needed,

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 59.

³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 67-69.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 4.

and the 1952 study identified two specifically: coordination of operations between the agencies and source registration and control. The first solution was, in practical terms, impossible to achieve in the short term. A complete inter-agency coordination, involving operational procedures, expenditure of funds and reports evaluation, was “bound to be long and intricate.” Source control, on the other hand, was something that each agency could achieve on its own. The authors of the study quote paragraph 4 of the National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 5, which states: “When casual agents are employed or utilised by an IAC Department or Agency in other than overt capacity, the Director of Central Intelligence shall coordinate their activities with the organised covert activities.”³⁷

This was a further attempt to bring forward one of the reasons why the CIA was founded in the first place, to centralise the intelligence production and evaluation system. The fact that this is mentioned in the document means that, in 1952, the process was far from completed. Regardless it was clear that the sources of intelligence available at the time were not doing much to fill the gap between Western intelligence requirements and information on Soviet resources and activities. Even if this is not mentioned in the paper mills studies, the Western agencies, the CIA and the SIS specifically, were already trying to find a different solution. One of the major problems with émigré-based intelligence (and paper mills in general) was that “quality intelligence is seldom to be found on pieces of paper upon which a peddler has placed a price-tag.”³⁸ Political intrigue and the concept of intelligence as a weapon or a bargaining chip hopelessly tainted the émigré groups. However, there was still one resource that the émigrés had, and that the Western agencies wanted and could exploit: manpower. To make an example, a prominent Polish émigré leader was General Wladyslaw Anders, who had a strong following among former Polish army men who emigrated to Europe and the American Continent. They formed an organisation known as the Association of Polish Combatants (SKP) which, according to Anders had a total membership of 180,000, half of which residing in Great Britain. As mentioned before, to obtain first-hand intelligence from the Soviet bloc the Western agencies needed agents who had a good chance of operating undetected, and with no connections with their governments. Émigrés were exactly that: they had knowledge of the territories and the languages, and support for their activities could be kept secret.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 9

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 4.

What was needed by the CIA and the SIS, to overcome the problem of the low quality of émigré intelligence, was to take operational control of the émigré sources in their home countries, in Eastern Europe. Using the vast pool of recruits available in Western Europe and America, all motivated by a strong hatred for the Communists and a desire to take back their homes, the Western agencies could train these men as radio operators and send them behind the Iron Curtain. Such sources would be motivated mostly by patriotic feelings; they would also have a direct connection with the agencies, thus eliminating the problem of fabrication and of professional purveyors of intelligence who operated only on the basis of personal gain. This was a solution to the problems of coordination, operational control and source control. However, many of these problems still persisted and overlapped with others, such as Soviet penetration and deception.

2.3 Émigrés and Eastern Europe

In 1946, American policymakers had already discarded the principles expressed in the Atlantic Charter five years earlier, at least as far as the people of Eastern Europe were concerned. In September of that year, Clark Clifford, President Truman's special counsel, presented a report on US-Soviet relations, where he pointed out that the attainable objective at that moment was to confine Soviet influence to its present area. The implication was that Eastern Europe had irremediably slipped inside the Soviet sphere. General Walter Bedell Smith, at that time ambassador to Moscow, reported that the Soviet Union was determined to continue domination over those states, and prepare to go to any lengths and employ all means to achieve this end. Europe, thus, had to be viewed no longer as a whole, but divided essentially into two zones. As Kennan had to observe: "The fact of the matter is that we do not have power in Eastern Europe really to do anything but talk."³⁹ This *fait accompli* was not the result – or the failure – of Western diplomacy from Yalta onwards, but simply a consequence of the way that the Second World War had developed, geographically and militarily. Once the Red Army was entrenched in Eastern Europe, nothing short of the use of superior military strength could have removed it, and neither the Truman administration nor the American public yearned for this.

³⁹ Bennett Kovrig (ed.), *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States & Eastern Europe* (New York, NYU Press, 1991), p. 23.

This situation seemed to fit perfectly with the doctrine of “containment”, but it was far from a peaceful settlement. The Marshall Plan, a series of economic relief initiatives aimed at European recovery and, less ostensibly, at bolstering resistance against Communism, was theoretically open to the people of Eastern Europe too. Again in Kennan’s words, in this way “we would not ourselves draw a line of division through Europe.”⁴⁰ The Soviet reaction, when they walked out of the preparatory conference, denouncing the conditions for the Plan as interference in their internal affairs, was in line with American expectations. They followed by denouncing the “democratic road to socialism”, signalling the end for all hopes of an independent policy for the countries of Eastern Europe, and by creating the Cominform, which would coordinate the imposition of Stalinist uniformity. After the Prague coup and the Berlin crisis, containment seemed to steer quickly towards militarisation. The positive effects of the Marshall Plan and the creation of NATO made Western Europe stronger and less vulnerable, which in turn reinforced Stalin’s determination in consolidating his domain in the East.⁴¹ Containment, however, had a secret and more aggressive side too, as was discussed above. Eastern Europe was the primary target for psychological warfare in those years. The satellites appeared as targets for American action in NSC 21/1, dated 18th of August 1948, with the aim of gradual retraction of Soviet power and influence from the area. The means, however, were still limited to the use of economic power, informational activity, the attraction of a prosperous Western Europe, and generally putting as much strain as possible on the maintenance of the Iron Curtain. It was important to not act in such a way to create an unanswerable challenge to Soviet prestige, thus raising the risk of war.⁴² As time passed, however, the possibility of using psychological warfare and subversive activity to increase discontent and disaffection inside the Soviet sphere, began to look more plausible. NSC 58/2, approved on the 13th of December 1949, recommended that the United States did what it could, particularly through covert operations and propaganda, to keep alive the anti-communist sentiment in the satellite countries. Nine months later, when NSC 68 and its redefinition of American security objectives were approved, the global situation had changed drastically: China had fallen to Communism, the Soviets had detonated their first atomic bomb, and the Korean War had started. Containment, under Paul Nitze’s direction, had become a call to arms to resist Communism expansion everywhere in the world, including

⁴⁰ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), p. 342.

⁴¹ Korvig, *Of Walls and Bridges*, pp. 29-31.

⁴² For the full text of NSC 20/1 see: *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, General*; The United Nations, Volume I, Part II, Neal H. Petersen, Ralph R. Goodwin, Marvin W. Kranz, William Z. Slany, eds., (United States Government Printing Office: Washington, 1976), p.609

Eastern Europe. NSC 68 recommended “operations by covert means in the fields of economic warfare and political and psychological warfare with a view to fomenting unrest and revolt in selected strategic satellite countries.”⁴³

According to the majority of historians today, NSC 68 did not really change American strategy in the Cold War. In terms of covert operations of the more “aggressive” kind, however, this statement does not hold true. After NSC 68, the OPC operations in Eastern Europe dramatically expanded. While operations such as Valuable were already running before NSC 68, what really changed was the intensity with which these operations were developed and executed.⁴⁴

These were, however, not virgin territories for the efforts of American intelligence. During the Second World War, the OSS had run some operations there, with various degrees of intensity and success, building networks and connections that would prove to be important for the Cold War effort. More “resources” were inherited from the Nazis after the war, especially through the work of General Gehlen. Finally, unwilling to depend only on the remnants of Nazi networks, various CIC units in occupied Germany and Austria set out to build their own access to information. All of them, the Nazis, the OSS and the CIC, had relied on the willingness of the people of Eastern Europe to resist against foreign domination: the Russian/Soviets first, then the Nazis, then the Soviets again. By the end of the Second World War, the Western intelligence agencies could look with hope at a series of potential allies and resources behind the Iron Curtain.

The first of these resources, in Czechoslovakia, was not properly exploited. General František Moravec, head of the Czech Second Bureau before the war, had moved his operational headquarters in London in 1939, after the Nazi occupation of his country. In 1945 he returned home, timidly sponsored by British intelligence, to support Edvard Beneš in his futile effort to maintain democracy in his country against Soviet pressures. After the communist coup of 1948, Moravec had to flee again, turning up among other refugees in the American zone of occupation in Germany, where he was mostly ignored by the field officers who interrogated him, asking only technical details about the Soviet order of battle, and nothing about his intelligence background.⁴⁵

⁴³ Korvig, *Of Walls and Bridges*, pp. 33-34.

⁴⁴ Corke, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, p. 107. Corke also mentions, to support this point, one of the first internal histories of the OPC, drafted by Gerald Miller, accessed through a FOIA request.

⁴⁵ Moravec published a very interesting book of memoirs: Frantisek Moravec, *Master of Spies* (London: Bodley Head, 1975).

The three Baltic countries had been a target for British operations since before the war. Their coastline served as an easy point of access for motorboats launched from Scandinavia or from Britain itself. As the Red Army moved in to occupy the territories in 1944, large group of resistance fighters, who had fought the Nazis until then, turned their hostility towards the Soviets. Known as the “Forest Brothers”, their hotbed was Lithuania where, in the first years after the war, they numbered around 30,000.⁴⁶ British intelligence started recruiting refugees from the Baltic, training them for infiltration missions, with the aim of making contact with the Forest Brothers. They had little hope that these resistance fighters could overthrow Soviet control in the area, but were willing to nurture their hope of receiving Western support in order to establish a working network that could provide vital information on the Russians. This operation was codenamed Jungle, and was managed by Henri Carr, the SIS controller for the area. It is usually considered, much like Valuable in Albania, a complete failure, and an example of how the work of the Soviet security services was far ahead of their Western counterparts. The Forest Brothers had been almost completely wiped out by the time SIS started sending agents in. Their contacts were the result of Soviet deception and penetration of the British operation. The result was the death of many patriots, and no worthwhile intelligence was obtained.⁴⁷

While Czechoslovakia and the Baltic fell into the British sphere of operations, Romania was one of those territories where the OSS had managed to build an intelligence network during the war, in this case ran by Frank Wisner himself, back then a young and enthusiast lieutenant commander. Codenamed Hammerhead, the operation lasted only for a few months, before the young and brash men of the OSS left the stage to more seasoned State Department diplomats and an official American military mission. Wisner’s networks, however, survived even without him. During 1946, more than fourteen major operations were run in Romania by the “successor” service to the OSS, the SSU: both the military staff and the intelligence of the country had been penetrated. One agent in the intelligence section of the Romanian General Staff was particularly active, providing a flow of reliable data on Soviet army manoeuvres in the country. After a while, however, Romanian security forces caught up with the agents on the American payroll; after the communist takeover of 1947

⁴⁶ A significant amount of literature on resistance in the Baltic is available today. One of the most comprehensive accounts is: Mart Laar, *War in the Woods* (Washington: Compass, 1992).

⁴⁷ For operations Jungle and Valuable, see primarily Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand* and Jeffery, *MI6*. Other interesting, albeit sometimes inaccurate, accounts are present in: Tom Bower, *The Red Web: MI6 and the KGB Master Coup* (London, Aurum Press, 1989); Stephen Dorril, *MI6, Fifty Years of Special Operations* (Fourth Estate, London, 2000)

the remaining SSU networks were dismantled, some of the agents safely removed, others abandoned to their fate.⁴⁸

In Hungary, at the end of the Second World War, American intelligence access to the country was unimpressive (as in the rest of Eastern Europe) and also peculiar. Networks were not run by the OSS or by its successor the SSU, but by the Pond, a service created within the Army General Staff in 1942, separate from G-2, to provide a source of intelligence for the military independent by the civilian OSS. In Hungary, the Pond could count on James McCargar, a Foreign Service officer who ran the intelligence network built in the last months of the war, that somehow still survived in 1946. After the communists' overwhelming victory in the elections of August 1947, however, the central task for the operatives became to quietly remove from the country politicians of the opposition. McCargar concocted an ingenious operation, using a farm of 200 acres in the Hungarian countryside, right at the border with Austria. Seventy-four anticommunist Hungarians, including five scientists sought by US Naval Intelligence, had escaped the country by December 1947. They simply posed as peasants working the fields, and quietly slipped through the border. They became the nucleus of the anti-Soviet Hungarian émigré community.⁴⁹

This overview of the Anglo-American intelligence networks in Eastern Europe, while brief, is still sufficient to depict the situation clearly. Yes, there had been some working networks during and right after the war, but nothing of substance existed in 1947. The picture looked even worse inside the Soviet Union itself: there, no penetration had ever happened, even during the war, with one notable exception: General Gehlen's FHO and his "stay behind" agents. When the first nationalist partisans from Ukraine appeared in Western Germany, in late 1947, they must have looked like a gift from heavens. Few, ragged, and barely surviving their escape from Soviet territories, yet they represented the first contact with the revolutionary army operating in Western Ukraine, the UPA, and the hope to establish a communication channel deep inside the USSR. Meanwhile, another resource with the potential for "deep infiltration" inside the Soviet Union was already present inside Allied territories: the White Russian émigré communities that had coalesced in Western Europe in the decades since the end of the Russian Civil War, and now formed a plethora of political factions, the two most important ones being ROVS and NTS. The latter, especially, was very active in the DP (displaced persons) camps, working to recruit young men who could be willing to join the cause of anti-Bolshevism. The NTS also boasted that it was already able

⁴⁸ Grose, *Operation Rollback*, pp. 37-41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 42-44.

to infiltrate Soviet territory, and possessed a network of agents inside. Both cases, the Ukrainian and the White Russian one, will be analysed in detail in later chapters. For now, however, it is important to establish why the Western intelligence agencies relied on these émigrés, investing time and resources on them.

In 1948, the CIA was hard pressed on all sides, especially by the military, to obtain intelligence on the capabilities of the Soviets and, perhaps more importantly, on their intentions: early warning of an attack was a priority, and this required observation of Soviet troops and territory. On the other hand, the political warfare strategy promoted by Kennan and approved by the Truman administration, required covert action to take place in the countries that were under Soviet influence. Penetration of Eastern Europe and of the USSR, then, was not simply a requirement, it was a necessity. The means of doing it, however, were less evident. In 1947, George Kennan, at his desk at the State Department, was in a privileged position to look at the many reports on the refugees coming to the West to escape Soviet control. Defectors and stateless refugees may have been a huge problem for post-war Europe, but to Kennan they looked like weapons in his campaign for political warfare. He first proposed his pitch to the Pentagon. Two former OSS operatives, then consulting for the State Department, Franklin Lindsay and Charles Thayer, submitted a plan “to extract for US advantage disaffected foreign nationals from Soviet-dominated areas.” The Joint Chiefs of Staff were asked to establish a guerrilla warfare school to train these foreigners for proper operational use.⁵⁰ The proposal, however, did not impress the Chiefs. This was very different from the “early warning” requirement they pressed for. Starting sabotage and guerrilla action without the concrete possibility of conventional military support to follow, was judged pointless. More so, the military held defectors, refugees and émigrés in very low esteem, judging them unfit recipients for US resources.

Discouraged but not giving up, Kennan changed target, and went for the newly-established CIA instead. He did not find more enthusiasm there, however. Hillenkoetter, as already said, did not look positively on covert and paramilitary action. The CIA’s opinion on the émigrés, also, was not different from Pentagon’s. Their groups were considered highly unstable and undependable, only interested in obtaining maximum support (usually financial) for their own activities, in exchange for some unrealistic promises.⁵¹ It is at this point, however, that the NSC decided that psychological warfare had to be a major component of US’ foreign policy. Kennan’s idea had finally found fertile ground, and

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 94.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 95.

together with his Policy Planning Staff (PPC) he started drafting the “Organized Political Warfare” memorandum, previously analysed. It is important to remember that the first point for action in Kennan’s memorandum (which became the basis for NSC 10/2) was to encourage private American citizens to form a committee to mobilise and organise the émigré factions.

The PPC, then, had a prominent role, in this early stage, in highlighting the importance of the émigrés for future operations, but Kennan was not alone in this line of thought. The interim report presented by Allen Dulles in May 1948, when he was still an outside consultant for the CIA, “Relations between Secret Operations and Secret Intelligence”, while underlining the importance of secret operations to collect intelligence, specified that the best way of doing so was through the support of resistance groups behind the Iron Curtain. In February of the same year, the third man of what we could considerate the triumvirate of early covert action, Frank Wisner, then still a modest deputy assistant secretary in the State Department, formed a group to study what he called “Utilization of Refugees from USSR in US National Interest”. Wisner’s interest in the émigrés bore fruits in his years at the head of the OPC: the organisation sponsored and managed several projects that made use of Eastern European exiles. To direct the operations aimed at the territories behind the Iron Curtain, Wisner hired another OSS veteran, Franklin Lindsay, one of the two authors of the plan to extract disaffected foreign nationals from the Soviet Union, submitted to the Chiefs of Staff in 1947. Lindsay’s wartime experience made him a good fit for the job Wisner handed to him: he served for more than a year behind the lines in Yugoslavia, attaching himself to Tito’s partisans and engaging in all sorts of covert action and paramilitary activities. Lindsay’s brother-in-law, William Sloan Coffin, also came to work for the OPC after leaving divinity school in 1950. As a four-years veteran in the military government of Germany and a specialist in Russian language and society, his assignment was to establish contact with the Russian émigré communities in Europe, and probe their circles and the DP camps for able men who might be willing to return to the Soviet Union for undercover missions.⁵²

In the same years, then, both the State Department and the OPC were at work to make use of what they perceived as a pool of human resources with great potential in their war

⁵² Lindsay wrote an autobiography on his wartime experience with OSS: Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night. With the OSS and Tito’s Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993). Coffin left the secret service early on, went back to divinity school and became Reverend and chaplain of Yale University. In the 1960s and 1970s he became a symbol of the civil rights campaign and the Vietnam war protest. He also wrote an autobiography, which includes something on his years at the OPC: William Sloan Coffin Jr., *Once to Every Man* (New York: Atheneum, 1977).

against the Soviet Union. Their initiatives, however, were quite different, and so were the men they chose to utilise. Kennan's plan to mobilise and organise the émigré factions took shape in two committees: the National Committee for a Free Europe, directed at the nations of Eastern Europe that became communist after World War II, and the American Committee for the Liberation of the People of the USSR, which included the nationalities of the Soviet Union, such as Ukrainians, Belarussians and Caucasians. The work of the Committees was directed at people like intellectuals, politicians, journalists, professors, lawyers and even former cabinet ministers ousted from their countries when communism took power. Kennan, his PPC, and other policymakers who publicly espoused the cause of the émigrés were interested in their propaganda value, in their potential to rouse the "captive people" of Eastern Europe and keep anti-communism alive, together with an opposition to the Soviet regime, albeit more ideological than practical. Over the decades, this proved to be the best use of the émigrés: the two broadcasting stations founded by the two committees, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, became one of the most successful American Cold War initiatives.

In the following chapters, the focus of the study will be the Aeacre Redsox operations first mentioned in the introduction. Two émigré nationalities, White Russians and Ukrainians, were the target for the two major CIA projects, codenamed Aenoble and Aerodynamic respectively. Before analysing the operations in depth, using new evidence from the CIA files, both the émigré groups will be presented, starting from their genesis and describing their history in detail, including the different factions and the relationship they had with western secret services.

Chapter III

The White Russians and Project Aenoble

The mosaic of nationalities that comprised the Soviet Union and the satellite states of the Eastern Bloc provided a plethora of different émigré groups and factions to be exploited for intelligence purposes by Western agencies. Targeting territories on the border of the Soviet control zone, such as the Baltic States, obviously provided better chances for infiltration of agents. However, these territories were far from the centres of Soviet power in Russia, and could provide only peripheral intelligence. Besides that, the émigré had often connections with local insurgent forces, such as in the case of Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. To exploit them for intelligence, the Western agencies had also to get involved with those resistance groups. Even if promises of material support were never kept, stirring up trouble in the Eastern Bloc was a dangerous strategy. There was, however, one specific branch of émigrés that not only had no connection to any resistance groups and no intention of subverting the Moscow regime by force, but also claimed to possess a net of agents in the very heart of the Soviet empire: The White Russians.

3.1 The White Russian emigration

3.1.1 The genesis of the White movement

The White movement was born in 1917 in the valley of the river Don in southern Russia, when the Cossacks of the region refused to submit to the Bolshevik government. Two former commanders of the Russian army, General Alekseev and General Kornilov, made their way to the Don valley and took command of the Cossacks, issuing a call to all Russians who wanted to fight the Bolsheviks to join their “Volunteer Army”. In 1918 more White armies were formed throughout the Russian territory, the more important ones being the one led by

Admiral Kolchak in Siberia and the army of General Miller in the far north of Russia.¹ The White armies had a peculiar composition: almost half of the soldiers were Cossacks. The other half included a disproportionate quantity of officers, which dated back to the composition of the Russian Imperial Army. The two groups had different priorities that momentarily joined in the fight against the Bolsheviks. The Cossacks feared the Bolsheviks would take away their lands and the traditional privileges they had enjoyed under the Tsars. The Russian officers, instead, came from a variety of different backgrounds. The Army had been a good way to climb the social ladder in Imperial Russia, and even some of those who became Generals started from humble origins. Most of the officers had started their careers as young boys in cadet school and then spent their entire life in the army. Their education was very narrow and almost entirely military-centred.² This explains why, after being forced into exile, they always held a very naïve political attitude. They viewed their struggle with the Bolsheviks as “purely military and when pressed on political matters would insist that solutions to this could not be pre-determined.”³ This policy of “non-predetermination” alienated the majority of the Russian population and in the long term was detrimental to their military effort. It also reflected the divisions existing in the White armies and among the officials themselves. The ones who formed in the pre-war years were more conservatives while some young, high ranking officers believed that their noble end justified any means. Among them were some future leaders of the White Russian émigrés, such as Anton Turkul and Nikolai Skoblin.

The Russian Civil War started in 1918 when the Red Army, organised and controlled by the People's Commissar of Army and Navy Affairs and chairman of the Supreme Military Council, Leon Trotsky, invaded the Don valley. If the White armies scattered through Russia had coordinated their efforts they could perhaps have trapped the Bolsheviks in a tight grip. Instead, disagreement between the commanders and lack of communication let the Red Army deal with one threat at the time. Trotsky's insistence on discipline, conscription and his reliance on the advice of foreign military experts made the Red Army a modern, efficient and implacable military machine. In contrast, the White Armies were disorganised and unable to administer and control the areas they conquered. The Volunteer Army, under the leadership of General Anton Ivanovich Denikin, in 1919 was able to advance to within 250

¹ Paul Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile, 1920-1941* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 13-20.

² Oliver Allen Ray, “The Imperial Russian Army Officer”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 4, 1961, pp. 584, 590.

³ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 5.

miles of Moscow, but the Whites were overstretched and when the Red Army counter-attacked in November their already low morale sunk and the White Army collapsed in a hasty retreat that continued throughout the winter of 1919-1920.

One of Denikin's deputies was General Wrangel. While the first had peasant origins, the second was an aristocrat. The difference in status often translated into tactical disagreements on the conduct of the war. In March 1920, the White Army finally retreated to the last territory under its control, Crimea. Few troops made it, with almost no weapons, no organisation and no morale at all. In April, Denikin resigned as leader of the White armies and left Russia for good. Wrangel was chosen by the senior officers as his successor.⁴ He was a charismatic leader, and has the merit of being able to salvage what was possible from a hopeless situation. He restored the morale of his subjects, by enforcing the traditional military virtues of discipline and honour. He also got rid of the most problematic aspects of White ideology, the anti-Semitism and Russian imperialism that had alienated non-Russian support for the White cause. However, his position was indefensible due to the sheer superiority of the Red Army. On the 11th of November, Wrangel ordered the evacuation of his army from the port of Sevastopol in Crimea. They crossed the Black Sea, heading for Constantinople and exile. The city was then occupied by the French Army in the aftermath of the First World War. The French government, which had supported the Whites during the Civil War, understood that their cause was lost and asked for the disbandment of the White Army, seen as a potentially destabilising force. Wrangel, however, was determined to keep the Army together. His decision was motivated not only by the belief that the struggle against the Bolsheviks was not over yet, and that the Moscow government would sooner or later show such weakness as to make another armed campaign possible. He also understood that the almost 150,000 people (of which 50,000 were civilians) under his command regarded the army as the only remnant of the old Russian state. Disbanding it meant depriving them of their identity in a world that was already hostile. Of course the Army could not exist in its current form, and needed to be restructured to guarantee its survival. Numerically, it went down from 100,000 men to 65,000. The great majority had to fend for themselves and relocate to find jobs. Many military schools had accompanied the army into exile. These continued to exist thanks to the efforts of dedicated officer cadets, and they became an important establishment in the White Russian emigration. The Russian Fleet was handed to

⁴ Among the many accounts and studies of the Russian Civil War, a particularly satisfying one is: Rex A. Wade, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Russian Civil War* (Westport, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001). General Denikin's life is described in: D. Lehovich, *White against Red: The Life of General Anton Denikin* (New York, Norton, 1974).

the French as security for the expense of providing aid to the exiles. The reorganised Russian Army was distributed among various camps, the most important being the ones in Gallipoli and Yugoslavia, which had agreed to accept a number of refugees.

The Cossack troops were moved to specific camps near Constantinople and on the island of Lemnos. Conditions in the camps were very harsh, and almost entirely dependent on the generosity of the French Army, which was never great. Rations were barely sufficient and discipline was hard to maintain, except in the Gallipoli camp where the commander, General Aleksandr Kutepov, was determined to restore the standards of the Imperial army. He ruled with an iron fist, but his focus on discipline meant that the troops could be organised for work such as building shelters, facilities and sanitary commission. As a result, the conditions of their life improved, and so did their morale. Gallipoli demonstrated what a difference good discipline could make, especially when compared to the unruly Cossacks, whose behaviour contributed to the deterioration of relations between the French and the White Russians. The first were determined to disband the army, and tried to enforce their will with various means, from encouraging repatriations to the Soviet Union to momentarily stopping the distribution of rations. In the end, Wrangel was forced to admit that it was not possible to maintain the army as a standing force. They had to move out of the camps in order for its members to start supporting themselves. However, to his credit, he also understood that a complete dissolution was against his men's interest. Some sort of structure had to be kept alive, mostly to provide an identity to which they could cling during the exile. In the end, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary agreed to accept the Russian refugees. In 1922, the army of 100,000 which had fled from Crimea had been reduced to 45,000 men, divided among four countries. The fact that the Army had survived, even if in a completely different form, against what seemed overwhelming odds was regarded as a miracle. The "Gallipoli miracle" became a myth in the Russian emigration, according to which the men of the Russian Army underwent a spiritual and moral resurrection, renewing their determination to fight against the Bolsheviks and rallying around their leaders.⁵

3.1.2 Treason and Betrayal: The Russian Emigration in Europe

⁵ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, pp. 47-50.

The veterans of the White Army were not the only Russian émigrés in Europe. Many remnants of the Provisional Government still existed abroad, such as the Ambassadors, and they did not share Wrangel's claim to be the official head of the Russian state. Bitter infighting erupted soon, especially for the control of the Russian assets and monetary resources that survived in Europe. The emigration wasted great amounts of time and energy and was left hopelessly divided. Wrangel believed that their existence depended on the continuation of the struggle against the Bolsheviks, but he was never recognised as the rightful leader of that struggle by the majority of the Russian émigrés. He didn't even have full control over the military elements of the emigration. Other White armies had followed into exile, and he hoped to unite all of them into a large organisation under his command. Wrangel understood that it was impossible to unite the civilian and army émigrés, and decided to focus on the latter. In 1924, he succeeded in founding the Russian General Military Union, ROVS (*Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz*). It resulted from the many Russian veterans' associations that appeared in Europe in the early 1920s. Wrangel had encouraged the formation of those groups as a way to preserve the army, even if in a different form. ROVS was the federation of these unions and became the largest Russian émigré organisation, military and civilian, during the inter-war period.⁶

ROVS was divided into administrative departments and sub-departments that stretched from Europe to the American continent. Such a decentralised structure created an overlap in the command structure. Besides the role of the President (appointed by the predecessor) and of a Central Directorate in Paris, the command chain was not very clear. Despite that, ROVS provided real help to its members, through both the local associations and the departmental offices. Funds were provided to help members who could not find jobs or to sustain them in times of sickness or distress. The associations also held important social functions. They were rallying points for the émigrés dispersed throughout the world, and provided them with libraries, reading and conference rooms, besides organising social events. However, the members of ROVS were not often fully committed to the cause. Most often they were just nominal members, rarely showing up at meetings and events: "Many members did indeed retain a sense of themselves as soldiers, even after twenty years of exile, but as time went on this became harder and harder."⁷

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 97-98.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 106.

This meant that the leaders of the organisation had to devote their resources not just to the material aid of the members, but also to uphold their moral status and devotion. This purpose was realised particularly in two ways: preserving and spreading Russian culture and keeping the fight against Bolshevism alive. However, the ever-growing divisions caused by the political disputes among the émigrés made the last intention seem unachievable. Some believed that the Soviet regime would naturally ‘evolve’ towards a more democratic form of representation. Others, including the majority of the White officers, argued that it was their responsibility to overthrow the Bolsheviks with violence, otherwise the whole purpose of preserving the White Army in the first place would cease to exist. However, it was also obvious that there were no real prospect for a conventional military campaign against the Soviets. With that in mind the Army’s leaders, including Wrangel, started to contemplate new and different kinds of warfare: revolutionary and covert action.⁸

The first step was to establish contact with members of the Red Army to persuade them to defect. To that purpose, the newspaper *Russkaia Pravda* (Russian Truth) was founded in Berlin in 1922. It was circulated in Russia through the Polish and Baltic borders and through Soviet sailors calling in German ports.⁹ The responsibility for running underground operations inside the Soviet Union was given to General Kutepov. He was a stubborn, strong-willed man with an old-fashioned sense of military honour that, at first sight, would have made him the less suited for covert operations. In reality, his fierce hatred for the Bolsheviks made him one of their most unrelenting enemies. His strategy was to keep away from open acts of terrorism and to focus on espionage and penetration. He believed that the best course of action was to establish contact with anti-Bolshevik movements in Russia, which could be encouraged and supported by the emigration. What Kutepov did not understand was that there was one party in the world that viewed the Russian emigration as a serious threat to the Soviet regime: the Bolsheviks themselves. They decided to counter that threat with a similar strategies to that devised by the Whites: using deception, provocation and infiltrating the emigration. As soon as the Army arrived in Constantinople, the Soviet secret services were at work recruiting double agents among the émigrés.¹⁰

The KGB still enumerates among its greatest triumphs its operations against the Whites, including *Trest* (The Trust). This was the codename of a fictional underground monarchic organisation that for six years managed to deceive ROVS and other émigré groups. The

⁸ Vladimir Antonovich Zolotarev, *Russkaia Voennaia Emigratsiia 20-Kh--40-Kh Godov: Dokumenty I Materialy*. Ed. И. И. Басик. Vol. 1. Izd-Vo" Geia", 1998.

⁹ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 132.

¹⁰ *Russkaia Voennaia Emigratsiia*, Vol. II. Referenced in: Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*.

operation started when Aleksandr Iakushev, presenting himself as a member of The Trust, opened a channel to Kutepov in Paris, in 1922. Soon many fellow members travelled to Western Europe to establish contact with the White Russians. The purpose was not just to infiltrate the emigration, but to channel its efforts into activities controlled by the Soviet secret services. Some were suspicious of Iakushev and his associates, including Wrangel himself. In 1923, he met another supposed *Trest* member, General Nikolaj Potapov, a former Imperial Army officer who defected to the Bolsheviks immediately after the revolution, and became convinced that the whole operation was a provocation. He tried to convince Kutepov, but to no avail, even if the latter was usually very careful of Soviet deception. He sent one of his most trusted agents to Moscow to liaise with The Trust and to test the group. This was Maria Zakharachenko-Shult'z, the widow of two czarist officers who enlisted in the White Army during the Civil War and followed it into exile. Her role in the success of the operation was so important that there are those who think she had been a Soviet agent from the start. KGB defector Oleg Gordievskij, however, claims that she was an unwilling pawn, manipulated and seduced by a real Soviet spy, Eduard Opperput (the alias for Pavel Ivanovic Seljaninov), who was also involved in another deception operation against the Whites, codenamed *Sindakat*.¹¹

Maria lived in Moscow for many years, providing Kutepov with a steady flow of intelligence and also making several trips out of the country. The Trust was also used to lure and capture the famous, and eccentric, British spy Sidney Reilly. Reilly met Kutepov in 1925 and arranged to enter Russia with the help of the Trust, despite the General's attempts to dissuade him.¹² He was arrested in Moscow and shot. In the spring of 1927 Reilly's wife, Pepita, received a letter from Maria Zakharachenko-Shult'z, revealing the truth about the death of his husband (the official story was that he was killed while trying to cross the border). Maria's lover, Opperput/Seljaninov, had revealed her the truth about The Trust, supposingly repenting for his actions. In reality this was the final stage of the KGB plan. Once the couple reached Finland, Opperput made a statement to the press, revealing all the truth. The Soviets had decided to terminate the operation, because by then it was under excessive suspicion, after Reilly's and other similar cases. They were also finding it more and more difficult to provide inaccurate but plausible intelligence to be transmitted to the West through The Trust.

¹¹ Andrew and Gordievskij, *The KGB*, pp. 93-95. The chapter also contains an account of the *Sindakat* operation. For alternative studies on The Trust see: G. Bailey, *The Conspirators* (New York, 1960).

¹² Sidney Reilly, *Britain's Master Spy, The Adventures of Sidney Reilly* (New York, Carroll & Graf, 1986).

Opperput's revelations nonetheless dealt a fatal blow to the émigrés' confidence. They already believed that they were surrounded by enemies, now their worst fears proved to be true. This paranoia would only grow deeper from then on, making a rational analysis of errors impossible: "when things went wrong the failures were invariably laid at the door of Soviet *provocateurs*."¹³ Maria followed Opperput to Russia in May 1927. Maybe she still trusted him, or maybe she wanted revenge on the people who had deceived her. She killed herself soon after.¹⁴ Despite the fact that operation *Trest* had been publicly unveiled, its consequences would be far-reaching: it would become the model of many similar operations, which used the émigrés as tools to deceive the Western intelligence services in the early Cold War years.

Kutepov's reputation had suffered a heavy blow from the Trust disaster. He reacted by abandoning his cautious approach, starting a terrorist campaign against the Soviet Union. At first, he obtained some minor successes: a team of three men, led by a young captain of the White Army named Viktor Larionov, was sent to Leningrad where they threw several bombs into a meeting at the Leningrad Party Club. They were also able to escape and cross the border into Finland. This success encouraged Kutepov to set up more operations, sending three more groups in 1927. However, of the seven men sent, two were killed and the other five captured and put on public trial by the Soviets.¹⁵ Every effort was made by the prosecutors to link those men to British intelligence which, they claimed, was behind Kutepov's organisation. Once again this was a prelude of things to come. The émigré agents captured by the Soviets in the 1950s would also be often publicly tried and used to discredit Western countries and their intelligence agencies. Kutepov's terrorist campaign, despite the failure to cause any serious harm to the Soviets, had a lasting effect on the White Russian emigration, splitting it in two. Some émigrés saw it as the final confirmation that active struggle against the Bolshevik regime was pointless. Others, especially the younger generation and those who had experienced his authority in the Gallipoli camp (the *Gallipoliitsy*), saw Kutepov as an inspiration for his unrelenting determination to keep the fight alive.

The General's stance would improve even further when he was appointed head of ROVS after the death of Wrangel in April 1928. The Soviets also had a high consideration of Kutepov. They knew that, as long as he lived, the Russian emigration would never be

¹³ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 140.

¹⁴ Reilly, *Britain's Master Spy*.

¹⁵ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 141-142.

pacified. The whole unveiling of the Trust operation had been staged only to discredit him, but that did not work, so the Soviets decided he had to be dealt with in a more definitive manner. According to Andrews and Gordievskij, it was Stalin himself who issued the order. The leader's paranoia towards the counter-revolutionary forces both home and abroad is well known, and it is also a reason why the KGB spent so many resources in fighting and subverting the Whites, perhaps overestimating their threat to Soviet security. Starting from 1933, Lev Trotskij replaced ROVS as the primary target of the KGB operations abroad, but before that happened, the White Russians had to endure some heavy blows.¹⁶ Kutepov could not be persuaded to travel to the USSR, so he had to be abducted. The operation was organised with the help of General Steifon, Kutepov's former Chief of Staff during the Civil War and one of the KGB's top spies in the emigration. On the morning of the 26th of January 1930 Kutepov disappeared after leaving his office in Paris. Steifon told him that two representatives of a clandestine anti-Bolshevik movement wanted to meet him and were waiting in a taxi. The lesson of the Trust apparently was not clear enough for the General, who fell in the trap quite easily. He was drugged and brought to a Soviet ship waiting on the Manche coast, but an adverse reaction to the anaesthetic proved to be fatal due to his weak heart. He died before reaching Moscow, spoiling the KGB's plan of extracting information from him, defiant until his very last breath.¹⁷ He became a martyr for the "activist" branch of the emigration, because his abduction was considered proof that the Soviets saw ROVS as a real threat.

Shortly after Kutepov's kidnapping, the KGB recruited another White émigré, General Nikolai Skoblin. He was married to a famous singer, Nadezda Plevitskaja, also a KGB agent who was very popular in the emigration circles due to her unmatched skill in singing the more nostalgic, patriotic Russian songs. This popularity helped the couple to gain the trust of many émigrés and made them an important asset for Soviet espionage. Skoblin especially played a fundamental role in another abduction that happened in 1936. General Miller had replaced Kutepov as head of ROVS. Despite not being a wise administrator (he entrusted many of the organisation's funds to a conman named Ivan Kreuger) the KGB decided to liquidate him.¹⁸ As with Kutepov seven years before, Miller also was kidnapped in broad daylight in the streets of Paris. Skoblin summoned him to an appointment with two German military attachés who supposedly worked in embassies in Paris. Miller, however, took the

¹⁶ Andrew and Gordievskij, *The KGB*, p. 150.

¹⁷ Marina Grey, *Le général meurt à minuit*, (Paris, Plon, 1981) ; Andrew and Gordievskij, *The KGB*, pp. 151-152.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 154

precaution of leaving a note to his secretary, General Kusonskij, to open in case he would not come back, explaining where he went and with who. The evening after the kidnapping, Skoblin was summoned at ROVS headquarters by Kusonskij and Vice-president General Kedrov. When questioned on Miller's whereabouts, Skoblin answered that he had not seen him all day, thus revealing, after ten years, his allegiance to the KGB but he managed to escape from the building and outrun his pursuers. He then escaped to Spain, where he was probably killed by his Soviet masters, having outlived his utility. His wife Nadezda was tried for her role in the kidnapping, and condemned to twenty years of forced labour. She died in prison in 1940. Miller, unlike Kutepov, survived his trip to Moscow, where he was brutally interrogated and then shot. The KGB admitted its role in his death only in 1990.¹⁹

3.1.3 *The New Blood*

In the 1930s, one of the main preoccupations of the ROVS leaders was the need for generational turnover in their organisation. For the White ideal to survive, the energy and enthusiasm of young émigrés was needed. Nevertheless, attempts at recruiting this “second generation” mostly met with failure. The main obstacle was that ROVS activities had, by statute, to be absolutely apolitical. There was not much to do for young men then, except listening to old men recalling the past. Lt. General Abramov, commander of ROVS in Bulgaria, came up with a different idea: instead of recruiting young émigrés, ROVS should instead have focused on sponsoring and helping the many émigré youth groups that were being founded in those years. This idea was much more successful; many young nationalists were joining youth groups, the most important being the National Union of the New Generation, NSNP (*Natsional'nyi Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia*), which later became known as the NTSNP (*Natsional'nyi Trudovoi Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia*), National Labour Union of the New Generation, simply referred to as the NTS.²⁰ It was founded in 1928 after a meeting of young Russian émigrés held in Belgrade in the same year. The structure of the NTS was planned to include representatives of all countries meeting once a year in an advisory council. Before the outbreak of the war, the organisation had established branches in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, United States,

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 164.

²⁰ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 157.

Britain, South Africa, China and Australia, although some consisted only in isolated groups of few members.²¹

The main difference between ROVS and NTS was that the latter had a more definite focus on political activities and theories. The young émigrés felt that the White struggle had failed because it lacked an ideology, thus they began to create one. Starting from 1933, both old members and new recruits of the NTS were required to attend a uniform program of lectures in all countries, with emphasis on political theories, systems and ideologies, plus Russian history, economy and geography.²² The leaders of the old emigration were aware that it was time for the young to take the lead: “By 1932, as ROVS faced up to its failure to attract youth into its own ranks, a desire to use the NSNP and to bring it firmly into ROVS’ orbit [...] was becoming more and more pronounced.”²³ At the beginning ROVS provided basic support, such as allowing the use of its buildings for NTS meetings, but as time went by some forms of official cooperation were established. Specifically, the NTS asked for financial and organisational support in carrying out active work against the Soviets. It should be remembered that one of the main grievances of the young émigrés was that, after the failures of the Kutepov era, some of the veterans seemed to have abandoned the struggle for the liberation of the Fatherland. Another important request was that ROVS members could be allowed to join the NTS, thus lifting the ban on joining political organisations that had been imposed with Order no. 82 issued by General Wrangel in September 1923. The NTS was now ROVS’ greatest hope, but it also proved to be its undoing. Members who joined the NTS found themselves under dual authority, and ROVS quickly lost its prominent position.

The split between the two groups happened in 1936, as a consequence of a scandal involving a mysterious underground organisation known as the Inner Line. This was secretly established in Bulgaria by ROVS in the late 1920s, with the purpose of penetrating émigré social and political organisations to gain control from within. The Inner Line represented “a more sinister aspect of ROVS’ efforts to promote and control émigré youth organisations.”²⁴ The head of the Inner Line was the secretary of the ROVS 3d Department, Captain Klavdij Foss, who built it into a formidable underground organisation during the 1930s. From Bulgaria it quickly spread to France and General Miller gave his personal approval to its

²¹ Report n. R-G16-50, “NTS (National Labour Union)”, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Aenoble Vol. 1_001.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 158.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 161.

activities, even if he was not personally supervising them. The Inner Line, in fact, started to act independently from ROVS' official chain of command, trying to gain control of both ROVS and the NTS. These efforts, however, were discovered by the members of the NTS after a congress of émigré groups held in Paris in March 1934, where members of the Inner Line tried to elect one of their men as president of a permanent committee with the purpose of coordinating (and controlling) all Russian émigré activities.²⁵ The real scandal however happened in December 1935 when three members of the Society of Gallipolians in Belgrade were arrested by the Yugoslav police in connection with a break-in at the house of the NTS' president, Viktor Baydalakov, and charged with being Soviet agents. The police also discovered that they were in possession of a list of fourteen names of people who had supposedly entered the USSR with ROVS' help, handed to them by the secretary of the ROVS 4th Department, who was also arrested. Even if the secretary was not a Soviet agent, he had carelessly handed over information to people who were.

The NTS blamed everything on the Inner Line, claimed they had warned ROVS of the three spies in Belgrade. They decided to expose it, thus creating a decisive split between the two groups. Their conviction that the Inner Line was a Soviet provocation, however, was almost certainly wrong, according to Paul Robinson who mentions a correspondence between Skoblin and his Soviet handlers, in which Captain Foss, the head of the Inner Line, was regarded as a dangerous enemy.²⁶ The NTS insisted that Komorovskii was a Soviet agent and that ROVS was the victim of a Bolshevick provocation. Miller answered issuing a circular in April 1936, forbidding members of ROVS from joining the NTS unless with his personal permission and in exceptional circumstances. The following year, after Miller's kidnapping and the exposure of Skoblin's treachery, the NTS blamed those happenings on the Inner Line too. In October 1937, they publicly exposed not only the existence of the organisation, but also their allegations against it. Needless to say, these revelations had an explosive impact on the emigration, with many people assuming that the NTS accusations were correct and that the Inner Line was a Soviet provocation, thus making ROVS tainted too. The last scandal hit in October 1938. The son of Lt. General Abramov, Nikolai, was arrested by the Bulgarian police and expelled from the country with the accusation of being a Soviet agent. ROVS was now firmly established in the public opinion as being fatally penetrated by Soviet *agent provocateurs*, its credibility irreparably destroyed, leaving the field open to the NTS as an independent group.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 163.

²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 203-204.

The Second World War had a great impact on the Russian emigration. With the growing threat of Hitler in Europe, many countries started looking at the Soviet Union as a potential ally in the event of war, even giving diplomatic recognition to the Bolshevik regime. This meant that support for the Whites, never impressive from the start, was at its minimum. As a consequence, the only hope for the émigrés was that Hitler's goal of conquering Russia and erasing Communism from the face of the earth would come into fruition. As the War approached, the émigré community was once again split by an internal debate. Some, the "defencists" believed that the sanctity of Russian territory had to be defended at all costs against foreign invaders, even if it meant helping the Soviets. Others, the "defeatists", believed that supporting the Nazis was the only option, and that after the fall of the Bolsheviks, Hitler would have been happy to have a new Russian government, created by the émigrés, as an ally, and a strong, prosperous Russia as a market for German goods. Hitler's plans to exterminate Russian population to turn the territories into German "living space" were clearly laid out in *Mein Kampf* but the supporters of the defeatist position, including some leaders of ROVS, chose to ignore or dismiss them. They were not, however, completely naïve. It seemed plausible that Hitler and the German generals would seek to exploit any anti-Soviet movement that could exist in Europe or in Russia. In 1934, General Miller issued a circular outlining ROVS' position on the issue of collaboration. The Soviet government, he wrote, should not be identified with Russia. The Soviets were actually Russia's main enemy, and their overthrow had to be the primary task of the émigrés.²⁷ Miller started seeking contacts not only with Germany but with Japan too, but he met with no success. The Axis powers either did not consider the Whites a valuable asset or they did not want to get involved with a group that, despite its collaborationist stance, insisted on remaining independent. Things changed in 1942, as the impetus of the Nazi invasion of Russia started winding down, and the German High Command began to reconsider its attitude towards the émigrés. Thousands of members of ROVS went to Yugoslavia to join the Russian Corps, a self-defence unit formed in 1941 to protect Russian émigrés from attacks by communist partisans. The Russian Corps, however, was never sent to the front to fight the Red Army.²⁸ Members of the NTS, instead, got involved with the Vlassov Army, the unit formed by former Red Army officers and soldiers who defected to the Germans, where they acted as political advisers.

²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 220-221.

²⁸ The history of the Russian Corps is told in: D. P. Vertepov (ed.), *Russian Corps in the Balkans at the Time of the Second Great War* (New York, 1963).

Among the NTS members involved with the Vlassov Army there was General Anton Turkul. His story is particularly significant, not only because it reflects the division between defencist and defeatist émigrés, but also because he represents the first case of a White Russian being seriously involved with a Western intelligence service. Turkul's contribution to the War had a much greater impact than the efforts of the Russian Corps and the Vlassov Army combined. Turkul was one of the youngest Generals in the White Army, having been only 25 years old in 1918 when the Civil War broke out. He was an officer in the Czarist Army before joining the counter-revolutionary forces. After Gallipoli he went to live in Bulgaria. He was very popular among the men of his own unit, the Drozdovskii Regiment, but not with his superiors who considered him a disruptive element. He was an exponent of the ideology of "activism", a prelude to defeatism that became very popular in the Russian emigration in the 1930s, which emphasised the need to carry out direct action against the Soviets by all means, overt and covert. However, Kutepov's failure to achieve significant results with his terrorist campaign, along with a dramatic lack of funds (the Great Depression had a terrible effect on the émigré finances) convinced Miller that this was not the best course of action. He decided to abandon direct activities against the Soviets and terrorism in favour of intelligence-gathering.²⁹ This did not bode well with the "activist" fringes of ROVS and Miller started receiving reports that the lack of successful active work was the prime cause of loss of members and failing morale in the organisation. The Soviet *provocateurs* were ready to exploit the situation: Skoblin became an outspoken supporter of the need for direct action, knowing that this would create more dissent. Instead of exposing himself, he decided to act through Turkul, a member of the younger generation of émigrés like Skoblin himself, and a man whose ambition and arrogance made him the perfect candidate to disrupt ROVS. First of all, Skoblin arranged for Turkul to move from Bulgaria to Paris, the centre of Russian émigré activities, by procuring him a job at a garage. At this point the question arises if Turkul was aware of Skoblin being a Soviet agent, and if Turkul himself was working for the Moscow regime. According to Paul Robinson, "Turkul was completely duped into playing the role expected of him while being totally unaware he was being used by the Soviets."³⁰ According to Mark Aaron and John Loftus, Turkul was "the greatest Communist agent of them all", who single-handedly penetrated the Holy See, splintered the émigré groups, helped crush the Nazi effort on the Western Front, turned the Vatican Ratlines into a vehicle for Soviet intelligence and culminated his career by prematurely instigating the

²⁹ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 189.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 197.

Hungarian revolution of 1956.³¹ Before analysing these claims in detail, it suffices to say that the author stands by the conclusion reached by an SIS-CIC joint investigation on Turkul's activities during the Second World War (that will be discussed shortly), which concluded that Turkul was not a *bona fide* Soviet agent, but allowed himself to be played by others he recognised as such, in order to achieve his personal goals.

In May 1932, together with Skoblin, Turkul wrote to Miller demanding a renewal of active work inside the Soviet Union. Over the next two years Turkul continued to stir up the dissatisfaction of the *Gallipoliitsy* in France, complaining about the lack of action. In early 1935, Miller announced large cuts in the ROVS budget, which consisted mostly in the revenues coming from the administration of the European holdings of exiled Russian nobles. This led to more open manifestations of dissent. Fourteen unit commanders, including Turkul and Skoblin, presented to Miller a list of requests to restructure the organisation, specifically intensifying its political and underground work, only to see these requests rejected by the senior ROVS officers. Turkul then started moving to gain financial and practical assistance from Germany, Italy and Japan. This meant abandoning ROVS's non-political stance and shifting towards fascist, totalitarian positions. He founded a new political organisation called the Russian National Union of War Veterans (*Russkii Natsional'nyo Soiuz Uchastinov Voiny*), often referred to as the "Turkul organisation".³² Speaking at its inauguration speech, he launched into open, strong criticism of the leadership of ROVS. This was enough for Miller, who summoned Turkul to ask for explanations and to remind him that according to Order n. 82 he could not be a member of ROVS and of a political organisation (excluding the NTS) at the same time. Turkul answered by presenting his resignation from ROVS. However, Turkul's new group did not gain much support in the emigration: few joined, and the prominent opinion was that Turkul had lost the most by his rupture with ROVS, because his reputation was badly damaged.³³ It seemed like Skoblin's manipulation had obtained the best effect, inflicting damage both to the activist side and to the senior ROVS leadership. However, Turkul's role was far from over: his work and influence would long outlast Skoblin's.

3.2 General Turkul and the Max/Moritz messages

³¹ Aarons and Loftus, *Ratlines*. Their version of Turkul's story is told in chapter 11.

³² This is often mistaken for the NTS by Aarons, Loftus and others who researched Turkul's history and activities.

³³ Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile*, p. 200.

The information that follows is based on the joint Anglo-American investigation on the activities of Turkul, started by the CIC in Germany, conducted between 1946 and 1947, and on the interrogations of the principal suspects and of people connected to them (including former German intelligence officers). As part of the investigation, Turkul and two of his accomplices, Ira Longin and Richard Kauder were arrested and brought to England for being questioned at length.

According to the available records, Turkul first got involved in intelligence work in 1929, when he was living in Sofia with his wife and daughter. In the Bulgarian capital, he met for the first time Klavdij Foss, a Ukrainian-born veteran of the White Army who had served first under General Kutepov and then had been adjutant to Lt. General Abramov in Bulgaria. He started working for ROVS counter-intelligence service in 1923 and around 1927, following orders from Kutepov, he established contact with the Romanian General Staff and with the British Intelligence Service. The contact with the latter lasted until 1932 when, according to Foss, the British visibly lost interest in activities against the Soviet Union and started to avoid him, supposedly because he was surrounded by Soviet spies. This is confirmed by a letter present in Foss's folder, dated 3 October 1946 and signed by Kim Philby himself. As head of Section V (counter-intelligence) of SIS, Philby answered a request for information about Foss, forwarded by MI5 officer Joan Chenhalls. Philby confirmed that the SIS' traces of Foss ended in 1932, and related only to his activities on behalf of General Kutepov.³⁴ By 1939, Foss was the head of the Inner Line for all Slavonic Europe, despite the fact that some White Russians suspected him of being a KGB agent due to his connections with Skoblin and Abramov, himself under suspicion for having exchanged information with Skoblin's wife and for the scandal involving his son, mentioned earlier. In 1949, Foss came to the attention of the British again, specifically of the No.2 Document Research Team, the unit in charge of collating German intelligence on the Soviets. They were in contact with Foss who, despite not being used as an agent, continued his private intelligence work and claimed to be in touch with a number of Soviet defectors hiding in the American zone of Germany.³⁵ At the same time, the investigation going on regarding Turkul brought to light his connection with Foss. The two first came in contact in 1929, even living under the same roof for a period

³⁴ The National Archives [henceforward TNA], letter from H. A. R. Philby to Miss Joan Chenhalls, 3 October 1946, in KV 2/3644, "VOSS Claudius Alexandrovich".

³⁵ TNA, letter from SIS to Miss J. Chenhalls of MI5, 12 December 1949, in KV 2/3644, "VOSS Claudius Alexandrovich".

of time, and their collaboration lasted at least until 1934. If Foss was really a Soviet agent, then he probably approached Turkul, who was enduring a difficult financial situation in Sofia, to goad him into moving to Paris to become an active émigré leader and an open opposer of the ROVS leadership.³⁶

In Paris, Turkul ran a petrol station and a restaurant, where he also held his political meetings. His economic conditions were not much different from when he was in Sofia. However, from 1935 Turkul started enjoying some prosperity. His own explanation for his new-found wealth, deemed “implausible” by the investigators, is that a group of Japanese officers approached him and offered many handsome payments to select, train and dispatch volunteers to Russia as “apostles of anti-Bolshevism”, who were to find work in the country and propagate anti-Communist ideology.³⁷ This operation also involved the cooperation of the German *Abwehr*, which produced the fake documents required. Turkul first maintained that he had dispatched several hundred of such “apostles” and also kept contact with them, but he later admitted he only sent five or six, and never heard from them again. The Japanese money kept coming until at least 1939, at the rate of 100 or 200 British pounds per month that Turkul used to finance his Union of War Veterans and its periodical, *Signal*. A check on Turkul’s American accounts confirmed that those payments actually came from a Japanese intermediary, but the investigators did not believe his description of the source and motives of the salary: “the connection between the increase in his income and the creation and conduct of his new organisation must have been a causal connection.”³⁸ As said before, Turkul’s National Union of War Veterans was created in 1935/1936, at a time when the Skoblin-Miller affair and the Abramov scandal had exposed the Inner Line and the extent of Soviet penetration that ROVS had suffered. The honest, genuine anti-Communist émigrés needed an alternative, a new organisation that was not tainted or corrupted, and Turkul provided just that, jumping to the position of leader and spokesman of all the White Russian community. Whether Turkul was willingly working for the Soviets or not, he was doing the job they wanted, disrupting the émigré community and reaching his prominent position thanks to their manipulations. On the other hand, if he was a Soviet agent, then his early

³⁶ The investigators’ hypothesis is that Foss was indeed working for the KGB. However there is no definite evidence or confession to confirm it.

³⁷ TNA, “The Turkul Organisation and the Max/Moritz Messages”, in KV 2/3644, “VOSS Claudius Alexandrovich”.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

dispatch operations may have been a “probationary exercise” or a way to send wanted persons into the waiting arms of the KGB.³⁹

In 1939, Turkul met another of the subjects of the post-war Anglo-American joint investigation, Ira Longin. He was a mysterious figure who claimed to be a veteran of General Denikin’s White Army who then settled in Czechoslovakia to work as a lawyer. In 1938, the French police required Turkul to leave the country. There may have been many reasons for that, chiefly because he was suspected of having a role in the kidnapping of Miller, or because he was already engaged in pro-German activities. Turkul then moved to Berlin and in 1939 he received a phone call from Ira Longin, who had just arrived from Czechoslovakia, carrying an introduction letter from a member of Turkul’s organisation in Prague. After their meeting, Turkul was so impressed that he not only accepted Longin in his organisation, but he also appointed him as chief representative for the zone Ruthenia-Hungary. Their next meeting allegedly happened in Rome, where Turkul had moved in 1940. The reason for him moving to Italy could be that he fell out of grace with the *Abwehr* in November 1939, after which date the organisation was forbidden from contacting Turkul. According to Turkul he “led a lazy life in Rome as the nominal head of his White Russian Organisation and took little or no part in the war”.⁴⁰ The truth was very different. When Longin visited Turkul in Rome, he asked for permission to start a collaboration with the *Abwehr* which, again according to Turkul, he refused, leaving Longin to carry on with his plan supposedly on his own. The investigators, however, discovered that starting from 1940 at least, Longin was actually in charge of all the “special work” of Turkul’s organisation. Even before their first meeting they were well prepared to work with each other, probably due to “instructions from a superior authority whose existence they both deny.”⁴¹ Even if both men never broke under interrogation, the investigators concluded with almost no doubt that Longin was a genuine Soviet agent. This is also confirmed by a letter written by Roger Hollis (MI5 director from 1956 to 1965), to Winston Scott, attaché to the American embassy, on 6 August 1947. Hollis asserted that, while they had been unable to make a case against Turkul, Longin was believed to be “a dangerous Soviet agent, whose release from custody will constitute a potential danger to security.”⁴²

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ TNA, KV 2/1593 (1), “Turkul Gen. Anton”.

⁴¹ TNA, “The Turkul Organisation and the Max/Moritz Messages”, in KV 2/3644, “VOSS Claudius Alexandrovich”.

⁴² TNA, letter from R. H. Hollis to Winston M. Scott, 6 August 1947, in KV 2/1593 (1), “Turkul Gen. Anton”.

What was, exactly, the “special work” Ira Longin was in charge of? The answer lies in the activities that brought the Turkul organisation to the attention of the American and British intelligence at the end of the War. In the fall of 1940, a Jewish man of Austrian origins named Klatt (real name Richard Kauder) appeared in Sofia coming to the attention of Otto Wagner, the *Abwehr* officer in charge of Bulgaria. Klatt had been previously recruited by the *Abwehr* in Austria and, in 1941, he claimed that he had, with the help of a White Russian organisation, established a wireless radio link (known in jargon as W/T, from “wireless telegraphist”, the agent operating the radio) between the USSR and Sofia. This link kept working until 1945, providing the Germans with what they considered high-ranked intelligence reports. These messages were of two kinds: one, codenamed Max, concerned the Red Army order of battle and Soviet troops’ dispositions and movements; the other, codenamed Moritz, dealt with the North African theatre of war. While the Moritz messages were considered unreliable and mostly made up of information collated from open sources (such as newspapers or official bulletins), the Max messages were taken in high regard by the German Army Command. They repeatedly proved to be reliable, being confirmed by German sources in the field, and were used more than once as the basis for successful operations on the Eastern Front.

The source of these messages, however, was always a mystery. It was not just their accuracy that raised suspicions, but also their volume and their promptness in reaching Sofia: Klatt’s station in Sofia supposedly received and translated a good number of reports every day (the Max messages amounted to more than five thousand in the end), that were then promptly delivered to the *Abwehr*. Wagner questioned Klatt many times on the source of the messages and he received three different answers, which he always investigated and always found implausible. The first version claimed that the White Russian organisation had established W/T stations in the USSR before the War, and those were now transmitting to a receiving station that Klatt had successfully placed with the Bulgarian State Police in Sofia. Wagner soon found out that there was no such receiving station and after questioning Klatt he obtained the second version: the W/T messages from the USSR were actually transmitted to Samsun in Turkey, from where they were telephoned to Istanbul and then handed to couriers who travelled by train to the Bulgarian border. This version was even more blatantly false: telephone communications between Samsun and Istanbul were too unreliable for such a constant flow of reports and the international railroad could not reach the Bulgarian border due to a bridge in Greece that had been destroyed. Wagner was now convinced that the entire Klatt network was controlled either by the Soviets or the British. However, when he

approached Admiral Canaris with the proposal of an investigation on the matter, this was rejected. The final version on Klatt's supposed sources in the USSR was presented during a conference of *Abwehr* officers in 1943. This time the source was a Russian Major, chief of a W/T school in Southern Russia, who was sending the messages to Sofia in the form of exercises practiced by his students. Wagner at this point launched his own investigation, that included a check of all W/T stations operating on Bulgarian soil, and found out that none of these was servicing Klatt's organisation. The only station which could not be checked was the one operating in the Soviet embassy in Sofia. The results of the investigation were forwarded to Canaris, but once again with no results. In 1944, Wagner was transferred to Budapest and lost contact with Klatt.⁴³

The real source of the Max/Moritz messages was discovered a few years later: it was Ira Longin. The White Russian group Klatt was in contact with was really only one man, Longin, working as the representative of Turkul's organisation. The whole affair, however, had not escaped the attention of the Allies, who had stumbled upon the Max/Moritz traffic during the War. The hypothesis that the Soviets had mounted such a massive deception operation, involving the sacrifice of their troops on the field in order to penetrate the *Abwehr* and the German High Command, surely needed confirmation, and an investigation was mounted. The main suspects, Turkul, Longin and Klatt, were easily rounded up in the British Occupation Zone of Germany and sent to London for interrogation. There were two investigators in charge of the operation. One was Professor Gilbert Ryle, a renowned linguist and philosopher who taught at Oxford and served in the Welsh Guards during the War, being also briefly recruited by SIS for his linguistic skills.⁴⁴ Ryle was the first to interrogate Klatt and to reconstruct a story of his organisation that took the form of a report. After the Americans got involved, and Turkul and Longin were brought in, the CIC also dispatched a representative to act as second investigator, a certain Mr Johnson, on whom we lack any further biographical information. It is worth noting that, in *Ratlines*, Aarons and Loftus mix up their facts and state that Ryle was the American and Johnson the Briton, despite the fact that Ryle was, and still is today, a world-renown philosopher and linguist. This invalidates their whole conclusion on the Turkul affair, stating that he had "his past sanitised by British intelligence".⁴⁵

⁴³ TNA, "CI Special Interrogation Report No 39, Source: Wagner, Otto"; in KV 2/1593 (1), "Turkul Gen. Anton".

⁴⁴ Julia Tanney, "Gilbert Ryle", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/ryle/>, accessed on 24/03/2016.

⁴⁵ Aarons and Loftus, *Ratlines*, pp. 231-232.

The main purpose of the interrogation of the three men was to solve the mystery of the source of the Max/Moritz messages, and to find out for what purpose these messages were provided. As the investigation proceeded, the main focus became to decide if the messages had been really provided by a Soviet organisation in order to enable some of its agents to freely operate inside the Axis-occupied Europe with the support of the *Abwehr*. Neither Klatt, Turkul nor Longin were actually broken under interrogation, but they were all “bent” enough to confirm, directly or indirectly, the hypothesis:

there is no room for doubt that the NKVD supplied Ira with military intelligence of as high veracity as could be achieved in order that he might secure from the *Abwehr* in return for these golden eggs the funds, the immunity from surveillance, the communications and the travel-permits necessary for the prosecution of the covert-pro-Soviet operations of Turkul’s organisation.⁴⁶

The nature of such activities is revealing of the Soviet intentions in mounting this deception. To repeal the charges that Turkul’s organisation had been pro-German (a dangerous accusation in 1946), Ira revealed that they had been actively engaged in penetrating and sabotaging pro-German White Russian groups all over Europe. It also became clear that these activities were directed to anti-Communist groups in general, regardless of their pro-German stance. For example, the above-mentioned Russian Free Corps in Yugoslavia and other similar units were closely watched by Turkul, who did all he could to hamper their recruitment process. Meanwhile, as the Axis armies came to use more and more Russians, their need for interpreters increased. This allowed Longin and Turkul to plant informants among these interpreters that provided them with regular reports on the attitude of Russians (including but not limited to German POW camps). In 1944, with Walter Schellenberg’s (head of the Nazi foreign intelligence after the abolition of the *Abwehr*) support, Turkul obtained one of his greatest achievements: planting himself in the staff of General Vlassov. His criticism of Vlassov’s policies and his disruptive activities contributed to the failure of the whole Vlassov initiative. Finally, there was good evidence that Turkul convinced a number of Russian aristocrats in Rome to sign a strongly pro-Hitler document right after the start of Operation Barbarossa. Many signatories soon regretted that commitment, even more after the end of the War, when that meant they had given up every future chance of holding a relevant role in politics.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ TNA, “The Turkul Organisation and the Max/Moritz Messages”, in KV 2/3644, “VOSS Claudius Alexandrovich”.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

While Klatt was no more than an intermediary, who got into intelligence work only for personal gain in the first place, the evaluation of Turkul and Longin was a more complicated matter. They both maintained that all their activities had not been ordered by the Soviets but motivated by a personal ideal, that of the sanctity of the Russian territory and the necessity to defend it against all enemies, even if that meant that the Whites had to temporarily align with the Bolsheviks of Moscow. It was the old debate between defeatists and defencists émigrés, only brought to a much wider scale. This justification failed to appear convincing. During the first sessions of interrogation, Turkul maintained that his organisation had been almost completely inert during the War due to their financial difficulties. He failed to mention all the sabotaging and penetrating of pro-German White Russian groups, and when confronted with the fact (revealed by Ira), he pretended to have merely forgotten to mention it. In the end, Ryle and Johnson agreed on the overall evaluation, quoted earlier, with one major point of difference: Turkul. While Professor Ryle believed him to be a bona fide Soviet agent, Johnson came to a different conclusion. He believed Ira to be the key-figure in the operation and Turkul only a figure-head. He was aware of, or at least suspected, the real source of Longin's intelligence reports but that did not bother him at all. He was "one of those generals who die in bed", concerned with his safety first and foremost. Regardless of who won the war, he had the perfect alibi: apparently working for the Germans but ready to disclose his secret sabotage in favour of Russia (and, consequently, the Allies) if, as it happened, he or Ira had to fall in Americans or British hands; "during the war Turkul did not nail his colours to any definite mast. He nailed them on the fence on which he was sitting."⁴⁸

Johnson's judgement was that Turkul had let his organisation to be exploited by Longin and the KGB without lending an active hand. In the end, Turkul admitted that Longin could have been a Soviet agent, but he also maintained he had no idea of that before the interrogators disclosed the hypothesis to him. Longin, instead, always sustained not only his innocence, but that of "his general" too. However, there was no hard evidence to decide between the two interpretations. It was clear that Longin and his employers had trusted Turkul to be safe to work with since 1940 at least, but if the reason was that he was also a bona fide Soviet agent or that they held some other sort of hold on him remains unclear. Due to the lack of hard evidence, and satisfied with the solution of the Max/Moritz traffic, the Americans and the British let Turkul, Longin and Klatt walk free in mid-1947. There is no trace in the records available of the intention of ever using them or their networks as possible

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

intelligence resources. Possibly they were all too compromised to even think of that. Despite the latter consideration, however, while there were doubts on Turkul's bona fide, letting "a dangerous Soviet agent" like Longin go was a danger for security, as argued by Roger Hollis in 1947. What is more surprising, however, is that Turkul's treachery against his fellow White Russians was never disclosed, and in the post-war years he assumed an even more prominent role in the emigration.

In 1951, Turkul came again to the attention of the Allies. A White Russian refugee in Trieste named Mironovich approached the Allied Authorities for aid in distributing anti-Communist propaganda on behalf of the Vlassov organisation. Mironovich produced a letter in which he was appointed representative of the Committee of United Vlassovites (KOV) by the leader of the group, General Turkul.⁴⁹ These "Vlassovites" were former Soviet citizens who left the USSR after 1941 and found themselves either employed as voluntary workers (forced labourers) in Germany or were recruited from POW camps into the Vlassov Army. From one reason or another (most would have been considered traitors by the Soviet authorities), they did not return to the USSR after the War. In August 1949, a meeting was held in Munich, attended by former members of the Vlassov army, and as a result a new émigré group, the KOV, was founded. General Turkul, whose reputation was clearly still untarnished, agreed to become the leader and also managed to obtain the support of ROVS. Once again Turkul's work proved to be disruptive for the Russian emigration: critics and attacks started pouring in from all sides. The old emigration accused Turkul of having betrayed them for the Vlassovites, while others accused the group of being composed by fascists, traitors and collaborators.⁵⁰ In 1956 Turkul applied for a visa for the United States, where his wife and sister-in-law were already living, and was able to obtain it thanks to the Refugee Relief Act. He died there three years later, in 1959.⁵¹ His connection with the Americans in those last years is not clear. The British believed that the KOV was financed by the American Army, but when it came to intelligence work, the Americans decided to back another émigré group, the NTS.

3.3 The NTS and the CIA: Project Aenoble

⁴⁹ TNA, "Turkul Gen. Anton", KV 2/1593 (1).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Aarons and Loftus, *Ratlines*, p. 261.

During the Second World War, the NTS had been targeted by the Gestapo as a subversive organisation, with many members arrested. Wartime NTS efforts to hamper German recruitment efforts among the White Russians are therefore unsurprising. Their ideological position was that Hitler was the same as Stalin: an enemy to the Russian people and not a potential saviour. In 1941, the group moved its headquarters from Belgrade to Berlin, due to the large influx of refugees, POW and slave labourers from Russia to Germany, who were all potential targets for NTS propaganda. Members of the group also took advantage of the Russo-German war to go into the Russian territories where, apparently, their ideology was well received and they were able to set up a Central Committee with cells and groups scattered in the country. When the German retreat appeared inevitable, however, almost all members were evacuated, except for a few that remained to form a stay behind network for the future. The existence of such a network was one of the main bargaining chips that the NTS used to obtain the sponsorship of the CIA after the War. Between May and June 1944, most of the NTS members known to the Gestapo in Berlin were arrested, “reportedly for the political independence of the group and its contacts with foreign countries, especially Great Britain.”⁵² Those who avoided the arrest moved to Berg in Austria where, in July 1944, they founded a firm called Erbauer with the intent of providing a means of livelihood and also a cover for the members of the organisation. In November of the same year, the firm was transferred to Nordhausen in Germany and then, when the Russians were about to take over the area, all its personnel moved to the Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Monchhof. There they were joined by the other NTS members who had been arrested by the Gestapo and now had been released by the Allies. Members of the group ran the camp administration until it was closed in 1949. Starting from 1945 they printed, with the permission of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, a newspaper named *Possev* that sold 6,500 copies per week, 800 of which were distributed secretly in the Soviet zone of Germany. *Possev* was a propaganda vehicle specifically designed to appeal to Soviet officers and soldiers. The Erbauer firm meanwhile reopened, under a different name, in Frankfurt, where it provided employment for many Russian DPs. The leaders of the NTS decided that the headquarters of the organisation had to be relocated outside of Germany to avoid complications with the occupying authorities. Many who were in camp Monchhof applied for immigration to the United States and Victor Baydalakov, president of the NTS, succeeded in obtaining a visa. However, the other applications were not so successful and in

⁵²CIA FOIA ERR, Report n. R-G16-50, “NTS (National Labour Union)”, Aenoble Vol. 1_001.

March 1947 a screening of the camp found most of the NTS members not to fall into the Displaced Persons category. Two hundred and fifty families were evicted and were then sent to different parts of the American occupation zone. Many went to the firm in Frankfurt that provided them with employment.⁵³

The initial contact between the CIA and the NTS took place in May 1950 through support for the anti-Soviet newspaper *Possev*. Initially the NTS was not aware that funding for the paper was coming from a United States governmental source but, after further appraisal of the group's operational potential, the CIA decided to open a channel of communication. A case officer contacted the NTS leaders in Germany and, after being convinced of the security of the organisation, revealed to them his affiliation to American intelligence. They welcomed the idea of cooperating with the Americans and almost immediately presented an operational plan, known as Petya-8. The man behind the plan was Vladimir Poremski, president of the NTS for France from 1941 to 1946, then resident in the district of Limburg in Germany. Together with Baydalakov, who was living in Long Island, Poremski was the prominent contact for the CIA in the organisation. Petya-8 was an ambitious project that consisted of three different operational plans: "Spain", "Radio" and "Karkas". "Spain" was an operation aimed at expanding and intensifying the covert distribution of anti-Soviet literature in the Eastern zones of Germany and Austria. The goal was to use tools such as *Possev* to induce Soviet military personnel to defect, with the hope of creating a network of agents capable of penetrating the territory of the USSR. "Radio" was a program to support a radio station that the NTS was using to broadcast propaganda in Soviet territories and to create another two similar stations. The most ambitious operation was "Karkas" (or "Caccola 1"), an agent penetration program which envisioned the use of NTS members supported and controlled joined by the NTS and the CIA.⁵⁴ The agent candidates would be drafted from the NTS "Cadre School", operating in Frankfurt. The CIA-NTS joint operations ran under the codename Aesaurus and later Aenoble. The codename for the NTS was Capable 1.

Plan Karkas consisted in three stages: legalization, procurement and transmittal of operational intelligence, and revolutionary (overt) activity. The Americans were particularly concerned about the last stage, judging it counterproductive and unrealistic. The aim of the NTS was:

to overthrow the present regime of the USSR. It hopes that this can be done through a 'national revolution' based on the 'molecular theory'; that if enough people consciously

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, "Summary and Evaluation of the Relationship of the NTS to CIA", Aenoble Vol.1_0027.

share this ideal, even though they are not in direct contact with each other, they will be capable one day of mass action.⁵⁵

The CIA's interest in these operations, however, was more complex. First and foremost, the Agency was responsible for the collection of intelligence in the USSR, because failure or success to do that could be "directly linked with the question of national survival."⁵⁶ Second, the CIA was responsible of conducting such activities that would "weaken the war potential of the USSR and in the event of war, hasten its defeat."⁵⁷ The difficulty in the dealings between the CIA and the NTS was exactly in that difference: the first wanted to weaken, the second to destroy. Despite that, the need for a support structure was a common purpose. American intelligence needed such a structure to fulfil its duties, even if it was difficult to use NTS operators as real collectors of intelligence: they lacked the training, the attitude and their aims were different. For these reasons, the Aenoble agents had to be CIA-trained NTS men, using wireless transfer (WT) radio sets and dead letter drops to provide operational intelligence from inside the Soviet Union. The NTS was genuinely considered as a reliable asset. Also, the CIA did not know of another organization which was capable of providing candidates for operations inside the USSR who were motivated to the extent of being willing to enter the country and remain there indefinitely in the interest of the struggle against the common enemy.⁵⁸ Finally, the NTS was willing to accept the imposed conditions on security and control.

A first group of three agents was trained and dispatched in the early months of 1952. The CIA regarded this trial run as a positive experience, with two agents successfully able to legalize themselves and keep contact, even if sporadically. However, it was clear that the NTS men recruited from the Cadre School needed more training and preparation before dispatch. A memorandum from the Chief of the Soviet Russia Division branch three (SR/3), dated 30 April 1953, encouraged a reassessment of the Aenoble plan. The intelligence take gathered from the first cycle was meagre compared to the resources spent. Also, the security of NTS operations was known to be weak.⁵⁹ For these reasons, the CIA conceived and financed a school, codenamed Caccola, located 30 miles south of Munich. The cover was an Army language detachment experimenting with new methods of teaching English to recently

⁵⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 2_0005.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 1_0031.

⁵⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 2_0015.

recruited aliens.⁶⁰ The instructors were both CIA and NTS members, while the recruits were all graduated from the Cadre School, who passed the assessment of the Combined Soviet Operation Base (CSOB) in Munich.⁶¹ As said before, the original NTS draft for plan Karkas contemplated a “Second Period”, where operatives would engage in overt propaganda action. The CIA saw this as a striking contradiction to the creation of a reliable support structure in the USSR. Such overt activities would have no chance of avoiding the attentions of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Also, training for propaganda in the Caccola school would take away precious time from training for covert actions (which consisted mostly in handling WT radio set). The CIA found a solution in the creation of an Aktivist school. Aktivist was conceived as a minor adjunct to the Caccola program, directed only at individuals who showed an aptitude for propaganda work. With an eventual escalation of the Cold War into a hot one, Aktivist would also be expanded. The purpose of Aktivist agents would be to use information from regular Caccola agents to carry out propaganda work and to establish a “black base”, a support point for the reception of material and exfiltration purposes.⁶² The Aktivist program depended on the success of the first three cycles of Caccola operations. By showing a solid and unwavering support for the NTS, the CIA thought it would later be able to use their resources inside the USSR for specific intelligence gathering. This was an overestimate of the NTS resources, and this view was supported, consciously or not, by the Soviets. Many defectors had all confirmed independently that the Soviet Government considered the NTS to be one of the most dangerous émigré organisations, “and this largely because of their belief that NTS has the capacity to operate within the USSR, and that the US is supporting NTS.”⁶³

The second cycle was operative in April 1953. It contemplated five dispatch operations for eight agents, who had just completed their training: three doubleton and two singleton teams. The agents’ codenames were Caccola 10, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27 and 28. The first two doubleton teams would travel on the same plane from Germany into the West Ukraine. Caccola 10, Aleksandr Nikolaevitch Makov, and 28, Aleksandr Vasil’evich Lakhno, were to be dropped in the area around Vinnitsa. They then had to proceed to Nikolaev, a town well known to Makov, where they could reconnoitre the possibilities of establishing themselves in Odessa. All the agents were equipped with RS-6 radio, signal plans and code pads. Makov also had a Minox camera with a binocular attachment. He was the only agent

⁶⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0023.

⁶¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 1_0035.

⁶² CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0014.

⁶³ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 3_0035.

with an exfiltration plan, so he was charged with the task of document collection and photography. Cacula 20, Sergei Izosimovich Gorbunov, and 21, Dmitri Nikolaevitch Remiga, had to drop in the area around Novograd-Volynsky. After landing, they would proceed together to Zhitomir, before splitting up. Using that town as a springboard, they were to attempt to establish themselves in Kiev and to obtain work and residence there. Being both native Ukrainians who also spoke Russian fluently, they had to report on the Ukrainian political situation. The last doubleton team, made by Cacula 24 and 26, whose real names were Nikolai Ivanovic Yakuta and Michail Petrovich Kudryatsev, would infiltrate by air from Cyprus into the North Caucasus. Their mission was to attempt to legalize themselves in Moscow, and establish and maintain WT contact with Headquarters from there. The two single agents, Cacula 22 and 27, Adam Mefodevich Novikov and Konstantin Il'ich Khmel'nitskiy, were both to enter the Baltic Republics by air from Germany, and to be dropped between Vilnius and Molodechno. Cacula 22 had to establish himself in Bryansk and 27 in Minsk. Their mission was to resupply the first two Cacula agents, 5 and 6, and to keep an eye for any signs of wartime mobilization, given that their target towns were good positions to provide early warnings of such activities.⁶⁴

All the agents landed successfully on the 26th of April 1953. Lakhno and Makov were arrested after just twenty-four hours. According to the MVD, they both admitted that two other agents had dropped from the same plane. Gorbunov and Remiga were arrested on the same day. All four were judged as traitors, spies and diversionists, and sentenced to death by shooting. On the 27th of May the Soviet press released the information.⁶⁵ Following this debacle, the CIA launched an investigation involving a review of the operations reports, including those of the air crew on the planes, and a questioning both of their personal in Frankfurt and Munich and of the NTS personnel directly involved in the Cacula project. The interrogation of the NTS members also involved the use of lie detectors. The conclusion was that

the MVD was able to capture Caccolas 10, 20, 21 and 28 within 48 hours of their drops primarily because of its ability rapidly to interpret and exploit data gained from electronic and visual/aural observation of the mission aircraft's course.⁶⁶

The capture of the agents was considered a technical debacle, probably caused by inadequate security precautions at the dispatch field in Athens. Air infiltration was known to be

⁶⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0002.

⁶⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0012.

⁶⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0021.

dangerous and casualties were to be expected, even if half of the dispatched agents represented a heavy toll. Suggestions for future operations mostly consisted in more careful choosing of the drop zones and increased security at the dispatch fields. A better assessment of Soviet Air Warning System was also needed: if the Soviets were able to plot the line of the flight through both radar and ground observers, it was easy for the MVD to coordinate its militias to patrol the expected drop zones.⁶⁷ However, despite the fact that the interrogations did not turn up any evidence of internal betrayal, this option was not completely excluded.⁶⁸

The third cycle of Caccola was postponed from the expected period of fall 1953 – early 1954, for several reasons. The quick capture of half of the cycle two agents was influential and called for caution and careful reassessment of the operation. Internal security issues also emerged with the discovery of a breach in the NTS Cadre School. A Russian Intelligence Service (RIS) infiltrate, codenamed Capable 50, was unmasked. This case had wide ramifications, and prompted the CIA to halt the third cycle until the extent of compromise of the agent personnel could be determined. In a conference held in Frankfurt on the 24th and 25th of September 1953 between the CIA and the leaders of the NTS, including Poremski, plans were discussed for reorganizing the recruitment, training and the operations phases of the Caccola project. According to the CIA, the major security issue was the Cadre School. Even if the structure was seen as useful in giving the trainees a “sense of belonging and a degree of motivation which is otherwise extremely difficult to instil”, it was also a funnel that the RIS could easily monitor, either by planting an infiltrate such as Capable 50 among the instructors or by penetrating the student body itself.⁶⁹ The CIA understood the necessity of coming up with a plan to protect the candidates from the Cadre School from penetrations of the Capable 50 type. It is interesting, however, to notice that the Americans believed that one of the most useful aspects of the Cadre School was that it represented a mechanism for the pre-screening of the Caccola candidates, operated by the NTS, who also gathered biographical data on the cadets. At the same time, however, the CIA recognised that “Counter Intelligence measures with regard to the Cadre School (as to Aesaurus generally) must be thoroughly reviewed and tightened.”⁷⁰ This could look like a contradiction: admitting that the Cadre School had security issues, and then relying on it for the initial screening of the agent candidates. At the end of the conference, both parts agreed that one

⁶⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0024.

⁶⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0021.

⁶⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0026.

⁷⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenable VOL. 2_0026.

of the solutions for their problems was to give CIA training to top NTS representatives. However, after an assessment trip in July 1954, the Soviet Russia division decided to postpone the third cycle again. The reason was the outbreak of another security breach, the Aesmite case, which involved the discovery of a new source of information on Soviet attempts to penetrate the NTS.⁷¹

On the 15th of June 1954, the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* published an article exposing Caccola 24 and 26, agents Yakuta and Kudryatsev, the members of the third doubleton team who were supposed to legalize themselves in Moscow. The newspaper alleged that the two agents had turned themselves in after wandering around the Soviet Union without making radio contact with their patrons in the West. The last letter they sent to the Headquarters was dated two months before their exposure. The CIA believed that the RIS had decided to not take the risk of using them as double agents, but used the publicity of the case to encourage other agents to turn themselves in, and to discourage further CIA support to the émigrés.⁷² This was another heavy blow to the Aenoble operation. Of the eight agents dispatched in the second cycle, only two remained active and possibly undetected, plus the two from cycle one. Surprisingly enough, the CIA decided to react by expanding the operation. In July 1954 a CIA/SIS joint conference was held in London, where it was agreed to set up a Joint Centre in Frankfurt to coordinate NTS operations in the USSR. The British had also been using the émigrés, and at that moment they had eight NTS agents operating in the Soviet Union.⁷³ Another conference was held in Frankfurt in October, where all the operations were reviewed.⁷⁴ As a result of that, SIS gave the CIA access to the development of their eight agents. The assumption was that both agencies would continue to infiltrate NTS agents into the USSR on a joint basis, with the training base to be located in the United Kingdom.⁷⁵ This may have looked like a sweet deal to the CIA. However the reality was very different: in February 1956 the SIS withdrew from the Joint Centre and all aspects of NTS operations in general.⁷⁶ In this regard, it is interesting to remember a claim made by Kim Philby. According to his memoirs, when he was the chief SIS representative in Washington, in 1949, the British were trying to sell the émigré networks to the Americans.⁷⁷ This process, it seems,

⁷¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 2_008.

⁷² CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0020.

⁷³ There is no further information available on the British NTS agents. The little that is known about them comes from the references in the CIA documents.

⁷⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0042.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0055.

⁷⁷ H.A.R. Philby, *My Silent War* (London, Macgibbon & Kee, 1968), pp. 120-121. See also : John Costello, *Mask of Treachery. Spies, Lies, and Betrayal* (London, HarperCollins, 1988), p. 591.

was completed in 1956, by pulling out of a venture that SIS judged unproductive and not worth pursuing, though the Americans did not share the same opinion yet. When reviewing the NTS operations in December 1954, two months after establishing the Joint Centre, they concluded that “despite losses sustained, previous NTS infiltration operations run by both CIA and SIS have been of substantial PP (*propaganda*), CE (*counter espionage*) and FI (*foreign intelligence*) value”.⁷⁸ The NTS was still considered the best pool of Redsox agent material available in the Russian emigration at the time. This view was supported by the belief that the improved operational control and security provided by the Joint Centre would lead to an improvement in the operations’ efficiency and to minimize the losses.

In reality, the SIS withdrawal sounded the death knell for the NTS operations. From 1956 onwards no new agents were trained or dispatched. In 1957, the final blow was dealt to project Aenoble. On February 6, in a three-hour broadcast and televised press conference, L. L. Ilyichev, head of the USSR Foreign Ministry’s press department, presented detailed charges of American subversive and espionage activities against the Soviet Union. The conference was staged as a response to the arrest of three persons in the United States as Soviet spies and after a number of Soviet diplomatic personnel had been expelled from the country. The highlight of the conference was the presence of four American spies. They were Yakuta, Kudryatsev and, surfaced for the first time, the last two members of Caccola cycle two: Adam Mefodevich Novikov and Konstantin Il’ich Khmelnitzkiy, Caccola 22 and 27.⁷⁹ The CIA knew that Novikov had been captured immediately, because in his communications he had been using the code signalling he was operating under control. Khmelnitzkiy had always caused suspicion. He was the only one who had established radio contact with Pullach, the base of the Gehlen Organisation in Germany, but Gehlen, who considered his intelligence too good to be true, stopped including Khmelnitzky reports in his weekly summaries to the CIA starting from 1955.⁸⁰ During the conference Khmelnitzky proudly declared that he had been a Soviet counter-espionage agent since 1945, mixing among the Displaced Persons to let himself be recruited. He also revealed he had been conducting a radio game with Pullach for four years, transmitting material carefully prepared by Soviet security, called “chicken feed” in espionage jargon.

The press conference was the nail in the coffin for NTS operations. In July 1957 only four agents were left, who were considered active and not turned, and they were all from the

⁷⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0035.

⁷⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0070.

⁸⁰ Cookridge, *Gehlen*, p.250.

Caccola school. The SIS agents had been dropped due to their inability to produce intelligence and for the lack of information on their background and activities.⁸¹ In the summer of 1958, only three agents remained, gathered under a new codename, project Aegideon.⁸² The project expired in August 1958 and was not renewed. The three remaining agents were all determined to be under RIS control.⁸³ Aenoble was officially terminated in October 1959.

3.3.1 Assessment of Project Aenoble

Project Aenoble was reviewed and assessed several times, especially in its late years. Given that all the agents infiltrated were captured, turned or working for the Soviets since the beginning, it is easy to judge this venture as a complete failure. It is also interesting, however, to consider how the CIA assessed the actual intelligence income from the project. For the period from the 1st of July 1955 to the 1st of July 1956, Aenoble produced 24 reports, 14 of which were used in 13 intelligence disseminations. From that point onwards, the CIA pressed the agents for a shift from operational to positive intelligence, given that the prospect of a hot war was getting less realistic. In the period from the 1st of July 1956 to the 30th of June 1957, the project produced 21 positive information disseminations. The reports produced by Aenoble were evaluated as “of value or higher”, and “possibly true or higher”. The most significant items produced were:

- a series of three observations on Aircraft Plant no.64 at Voronezh, which confirmed the suspected production at the plant of Badger type aircraft, along with the production rate and the total amount of aircrafts produced;
- a report on local USSR agitators’ treatment of the Khrushchev secret speech, which contributed directly to the assessment of the version of the speech obtained by the CIA.⁸⁴

One of the most important contributions Aenoble gave to American intelligence was of counter espionage value. Many of the infiltrated agents were able to signal they were operating under control, using a secret code embedded in the transmissions. Many others were suspected of doing so even without giving any warning. In several documents related

⁸¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0072.

⁸² CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0081.

⁸³ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0084.

⁸⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0055/0072.

to the operation, it is stated that controlled agents do have an effective intelligence value: they can be used to study the enemy's technique for counter espionage purpose. Also, even if they were providing "chicken feed", information concocted by the Soviets, proper intelligence still had to be present among their reports, to avoid arousing too much suspicion.

This doesn't mean that the émigré intelligence operations, including Aenoble, and Humint in general, had no impact on policymaking in America in the early Cold War. From the Aenoble case and the numbers provided before (34 disseminations over the course of two years), it is clear that the intelligence provided by the project was considered good enough to be transmitted and circulated among the decision makers (*dissemination* is the penultimate stage of intelligence production). This is a striking contradiction when compared to the several negative assessments the operation received, but one that can be explained. The events of Black Friday in 1948, mentioned in chapter 2, temporarily halted Sigint success in gathering intelligence on the Soviet Union. Shortly after, Sigint failed to provide early warning on the Soviet development of the atomic bomb, or on the outbreak of the Korean War. This, in the context of the competition between the CIA and the NSA, led to a brief focus on Humint operations. Finally, it must be remembered that Sigint can provide information on capabilities, but not on intentions. In the early 1950s, the prospect of the Cold War degenerating into a hot one was real. Knowing *what* the Soviets could do and *why* was as important as knowing *how* they would do it. The same fear of a quick escalation of the hostilities meant that one of the duties of the intelligence agencies was to build support structures in hostile territory, which could allow an extensive use of the covert operations that proved to be so successful during World War II with the SOE. The CIA was responsible of conducting such activities which would "weaken the war potential of the USSR and in the event of war, hasten its defeat."⁸⁵ The several references in the Aenoble files to the value of the NTS as a provider of a support structure in the USSR are proof of this point.⁸⁶

In the next chapters, analysing another group of émigrés who were used for intelligence gathering purpose, the Ukrainians, evidence will be provided that the infiltration of agents in the Soviet Union during the Fifties should not be considered completely unsuccessful. At a time when Signals intelligence was experiencing its lowest level of success, they were the best form of Human intelligence available to the Western countries. They were able to provide insight, if not into the effective potential of the Soviets, at least on their intentions. Just by being positioned with a radio in Soviet territory, they provided an effective early

⁸⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 2_0005.

⁸⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 1_0031.

warning system for the mobilisation of troops that would prelude an attack to the West. If the émigrés did not have much to transmit, it was also because such an attack never occurred.

Chapter IV

Project Aerodynamic: the CIA Espionage Networks in the Ukraine

In the early hours of the 22nd of June 1941, the Axis armies invaded the border territories of the Soviet Union, starting Operation Barbarossa, a military enterprise that would change the outcome of the War and the shape of the world we live in. On that fated day, Germany opened a second front in the conflict, mirroring her actions in the previous World War. Barbarossa was the largest operation in military history, and the Eastern Front was the largest theatre of conflict in the War. The casualties, more than 26 million (the precise count is still the subject of historical debate), outnumbered the war victims in all the rest of the world. Even more than the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, or than Operation Overlord, the war against Soviet Russia would prove to be the undoing of Hitler's Reich: on the 2nd of May 1945 Berlin surrendered to the Red Army; the day after the Soviet flag waved over the Reichstag.

The Nazi invasion of 1941 also had important consequences for the people of Eastern Europe. The Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine were all occupied by the German army, and bore the brunt of the war. The way the populations reacted, however, depended much on their relationship with the Soviet rule. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had been forcefully annexed by the USSR in 1940, their people subject to mass deportations under "sovietisation" policies. Similarly, the Ukrainians had plenty of reasons for resentment. The short-lived Ukrainian Republic, founded in 1918, had been split between Poland and the Soviet Union in 1921. Twenty years later, in 1932-1933, the *Holodomor* famine, caused by forced collectivization of the agriculture, struck the country, killing millions of citizens in what is today recognised as a genocide carried out by the Soviet Union.¹ Underground

¹ Andrea Graziosi, "Les Famines Soviétiques Des 1931–1933 Et Le Holodomor Ukrainien", *Cahier du Monde Russe*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 2005, p. 464.

The *Holodomor* is still not acknowledged by Russia, see: Taras Kuzio, "The Holodomor: Why the West must push back against Putin's version of history", *The Globe and Mail*, 24 November 2015.

resistance movements were present in all those countries, and in the wake of the Nazi invasion some patriots saw cooperation with the Germans as a chance to reclaim their lands from the Russian oppressors. The *Wehrmacht*, on the other hand, recognised that oppressed populations could be a useful tool in the conquest and, more importantly, in the administration of foreign territories.

4.1 Partisans and émigrés: anti-Soviet Ukrainians home and abroad

4.1.1 The Ukrainian Resistance

In the Western Ukrainian territories assigned to Poland in 1921, harsh Polish rule meant that the Ukrainian resistance was born with a definite anti-Polish character. In the 1920s, veterans of the Soviet – Ukrainian War founded the *Ukraïns'ka Viis'kova Orhanizatsiia*, Ukrainian Military Organisation (UWO), whose goal was to fight the occupation both with military and propaganda action. UWO's first leader was Simon Petliura, former Head of State and Army in the Ukrainian Republic. Petliura was assassinated in 1926 in Paris by the Jew anarchist Sholom Schwartzbard, allegedly for his role in the pogroms in Ukraine in 1919-1920. His killing was actually the result of a Soviet operation, as testified by defector and ex – KGB agent Peter Deriabin in front of the US senate in 1959.² This shows that, since the beginning, the Soviets held the Ukrainian resistance high on the list of targets.

Meanwhile, nationalistic youth groups began to emerge in Western Ukraine, and merged with the UWO in 1928, forming the *Orhanizatsiia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv*, Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The OUN was officially founded in Prague by émigrés, but it soon established itself as a political platform in the Ukraine too. The head of the OUN was Colonel Yevhen Konovalets, until he also was killed by a bomb disguised as a box of chocolates. The assassination was carried by famous KGB agent Pavel Sudoplatov, who, in his memoirs, said that the order came from Stalin himself, wanting to “behead the movement of Ukrainian fascism on the eve of the war and force these gangsters to annihilate each other in a struggle for power.”³ Sudoplatov, Ukrainian by birth, joined the *Cheka* at the early age

² Peter Deriabin, with Frank Gibney, *The Secret World* (New York, Doubleday, 1959).

³ Pavel Sudoplatov, with Anatoliï Pavlovich Sudoplatov, Jerrold L. Schecter, and Leona Schecter, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness, a Soviet Spymaster* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1994), pp. 24-29.

of fourteen. At the age of twenty-six he was transferred to Moscow and worked in the Foreign Department of what had then become the NKVD. Given his origins, Sudoplatov soon became the case officer supervising surveillance and action against the Ukrainian exiles in the West. According to him, the NKVD penetrated the inner Ukrainian resistance circle in 1920, when Konovalets' deputy, Vassili Lebed, was sent to the Ukraine to organise the underground network of the resistance, but was captured and turned by the Soviets. It was Lebed who introduced Sudoplatov, posing as his nephew, to Konovalets in 1935. The NKVD agent's main task was to convince the leaders of the resistance that terrorist activities in the Ukraine had no chances of success due to the efficiency of Soviet security forces. Sudoplatov then joined the Nazi training school in Leipzig, before moving to Berlin with Konovalets where the two became close friends. Sudoplatov acted as a courier between Western Europe and Ukraine for the next years, and even had a fateful (and emotional) meeting with Stalin in 1937 to report on the Ukrainian nationalists. As a result of their meeting, his plan of penetrating the Abwehr through its Ukrainian connections was momentarily put aside: war with Germany was expected to break out in 1938, and Konovalets was considered a threat. Sudoplatov handed him the deadly chocolate box in Rotterdam in May 1938.⁴

During the 1930s, the OUN had become the leading political force among Western Ukrainians, thanks to the efforts of the young nationalists who quickly took over from the old veterans. Stepan Bandera, Yaroslav Stetsko and Mykola Lebed, all men who would become leaders of the post-war Ukrainian emigration, came to the fore during those violent years. Their most infamous exploit was the assassination of Polish interior minister Bronisław Pieracki, but the OUN carried out several similar acts of terrorism, targeting Ukrainian Communists, Polish authorities and even the moderate parties. In 1939, following the Molotov – Ribbentrop pact, Galicia (in Western Ukraine) went back under Bolshevik rule. The NKVD quickly moved to pacify the territories, having the OUN as a primary target. In the following two years the organisation suffered heavy casualties; between 16,000 and 35,000 members were arrested and executed.⁵

The OUN, however, was not defeated. The leaders of the nationalist movement, both in the Ukraine and abroad, had been busy looking for allies. Konovalets and one of his deputies, Andrei Melnyk, had been developing close ties with the Germans, and particularly the

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Many histories of the OUN and the UPA have been written over the years, not all of them exempt from apologetic attempts. For an essential reading see: John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism, 1939-1945* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1955); Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist: Fascism, Genocide and Cult* (Stuttgart, Ibidem, 2014).

Abwehr, throughout the 1930s. Konovalets had twice met with Hitler himself, who offered to train Ukrainian nationalists in the Nazi school in Leipzig. The OUN was used as a terrorist force by the *Abwehr*, along with other nationalist groups such as the Croatians. Thanks to their German sponsors, in 1935 the OUN already had two armed brigades, with a total of two thousand men. In 1941 those military formation, codenamed *Nachtigall* and *Roland*, followed the Nazi army in its invasion of Ukraine. Meanwhile Bandera, along with Lebed, was in Warsaw's Swiety Kroyc prison for his role in the assassination of Pieracki. This operation had not been ordered by Konovalets, whose German sponsors were, for the moment, on good terms with the Poles and wanted no activities against them. Bandera acted on his own, following his urge to climb the ranks of the OUN, as part of the struggle between the traditional faction, led by Konovalets and Andrei Melnyk, and Bandera's "new blood". The Nazis were so displeased with the killing of Pieracki that they turned over Bandera and Lebed to the Poles.⁶ Despite the fact that their leader was in prison, Bandera's followers managed to open a channel to Britain through the SIS' head of station in Finland, Harry Carr. A fierce anti-Communist, Carr hoped to use the Ukrainians to build an intelligence network inside the Soviet Union. This relationship however blossomed only after the end of the War.⁷

At the outbreak of World War II, the OUN split in two. Most of the members followed Bandera, who had been freed after the Nazi invasion of Poland, while some sided with Melnyk. The two groups would take the names of OUN/B and OUN/M. Following Operation Barbarossa, the Ukrainian nationalists went back to Galicia. This was possibly the most controversial time for the movement due to its affiliation with the Nazis, and accounts (and judgements) vary greatly depending on the sources. According to an OSS report, seeing the chance of his lifetime Bandera immediately went to Lvov and

proclaimed himself head of a Ukrainian state, supposedly with the approval of the German General Staff. This caused the Germans great embarrassment, and he was instructed to desist from further political activities unless given official approval. However, he and his followers began a campaign of terrorization, directed mainly against the followers of Melnik, which resulted in his [Bandera's] arrest and confinement at Klein-Sachsenhausen. Melnik was also arrested. Both were later released, however, when the Wehrmacht and Ostministerium attempted to build up a strong Ukraine.⁸

⁶ Sudoplatov and Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks*, pp. 15-16.

⁷ Dorril, *MI6*, p. 224.

⁸ OSS Intelligence Report, A-61154-a, "Activities of Bandera", 21 September 1945, quoted in: Secret Draft Working Paper on CIA and Nazi War Criminals and Collaborators, Chapter 5, CIA FOIA ERR.

According to Ukrainian scholars, however, the National Assembly proclaimed the renewal of “Ukrainian statehood” in Lvov on the 30th of June 1941, but the OUN’s “state-building policy clashed with the intentions of the German occupying authority, which demanded that the Act be annulled”.⁹ While support for the Nazis definitely dimmed after they failed to support Ukrainian statehood, thousands of Ukrainians still fought for the Wehrmacht until the end of the War. The fact that many nationalist leaders, including Bandera, were also imprisoned in concentration camps and many more (such as Lebed) were on the Gestapo wanted list, made and still makes it difficult to understand the full extent of their collaboration with the Nazis. What should be considered at this stage, though overlooked in most works on this subject, is that an increasing rift was opening between the OUN forces “on the ground”, meaning the veterans of the UWO and of the anti-Soviet struggle in the inter-war years, and the OUN émigré leadership, which had been absent from the Ukraine for many years and only returned in 1941. The inner fighting and factional rivalries that characterised the Ukrainian emigration for all its history were starting to alienate the people of the homeland, who had been through unimaginable hardships under the Soviet rule and thus saw the struggle for power between the nationalist leaders with increasing distrust.

When the Germans proved to be no better than the Soviets, the OUN started to fight a war on two fronts. In 1942 the organisation started forming detachments to better fight a guerrilla war, and to protect the population from German abuse. Later in that year those detachments coalesced into a single structure, called *Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*, Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The aim of the OUN and the UPA could be best described as a secessionist insurgency, because the groups rejected all the political communities of which it was formally a part throughout the years: the Second Polish Republic, the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine and the Soviet Union. Their aim was to withdraw and form an independent political community.¹⁰ The actions of the nationalist front in the War years show the peculiar characteristic of a secessionist insurgency, and the significant success initially achieved by the OUN/UPA front is somewhat overshadowed by the excessive focus scholars put on their relationship with the Nazis, which was brief and indeed most often conflictual. The German occupation of the country, with all the abuses and violence, actually gave to the nationalist movement the momentum needed to refocus and direct its efforts against the Bolsheviks. The role of the UPA in the fight against the Nazis is often downplayed. A secret

⁹ Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, “The ‘Ukrainian National Revolution’ of Summer 1941”, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 12 No.1, 2011, p. 83.

¹⁰ Yuri Zukhov, “Examining the Authoritarian Model of Counter-insurgency: The Soviet Campaign Against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army”, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2007, pp. 439–466.

CIA report on the Ukrainian Resistance, dated 1953, recognises that the military group “played a vital part in the destruction of the German forces in the East.” The UPA contributed to the destruction of German communication networks and supplies, and engaged in large-scale sabotage of the German occupation authority and administration.¹¹ By the autumn of 1944, in the wake of the retreating German forces, Ukrainian nationalism was a formidable force fighting against Soviet stabilisation and reconstruction efforts, trying to prevent the transition of their country under Moscow’s control. The UPA troops could freely move in a territory comprising one quarter of the Ukrainian territory, and 10 million of its inhabitants. Starting from the Volyn region due to its favourable terrain constituted mostly of thick forests, the armed insurgency quickly spread to Galicia and the regions of the Sian River and Kholn. At their apogee the UPA fighters had a presence in what today are the Volyn, Rivne, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytsky, Vinnytsia, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, and Transcarpathia regional districts, as well as the eastern parts of Subcarpathia and Lublin in Poland.¹²

The UPA considered itself to be the armed forces of the Ukrainian independent and sovereign state, so its structure was modelled on that of a regular army. That military structure was finalised in 1943 when Roman Shukhevych became UPA Supreme Commander and the Supreme Military Headquarters was created. The UPA’s field of operations was then subdivided into three General Military Districts: UPA-North (the original UPA, based in the northwestern Ukrainian regions Polissia and Volyn), UPA-South (insurgent units in Podillia), and UPA-West (the former Ukrainian Peoples Self-Defence [UNS] in Galicia). Each General Military District had its own regional commander with a Regional Military Headquarters, and was divided into smaller territorial units called Military Districts. The Supreme Military Headquarters and the Regional Military Headquarters were strategic coordinating centres, but direct control over combat operations took place at the level of the Military Districts. The UPA tactical units, the largest of which was equivalent to a battalion in a regular army and the smallest equivalent to a squad, trained using a modified version of the Red Army infantry field manual. At the same time, there was complete coordination with the OUN structure, which took care of the administration of the territories through its shadow government, divided in six main departments: military recruitment, security service, supply, political, mobilisation and the Ukrainian Red Cross.¹³ There was much overlap between the OUN and the UPA structures, and often the same officials

¹¹ CIA FOIA ERR, “Ukrainian Resistance”, April 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0007.

¹² Zukhov, “Examining the Authoritarian Model of Counter-insurgency”, pp.446-447.

¹³ Tys-Krokhmaluk, *UPA Warfare in Ukraine*, p.79. Referenced in Zukhov, Yuri Zukhov, “Examining the Authoritarian Model of Counter-insurgency”.

occupied parallel posts in the two organisations. The whole structure was flexible enough to adapt to the evolving circumstances of resistance warfare. Its guiding principle was to maintain unity of effort and the idea of a strong leadership, while allowing for a maximum geographical dispersal of forces.¹⁴

The liberation movement understood it needed a form of political representation that went beyond the single-party expression of the OUN. The *Ukrains' ka Holovna Vyzvol' na Rada*, Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (UHVR) was established in July 1944 as the highest political authority of the Ukrainian insurrection, a clandestine government complete with its own parliament. When the UHVR was founded the Soviets had already started to push the Germans out of the Ukraine. There was “urgent need for an organ which would give spiritual and actual unity of purpose and allegiance to the scattered resistance forces before the returning Soviets had the opportunity to [...] isolate the various geographically separated partisan units.”¹⁵ The UHVR also wanted to consolidate the different political forces involved in the struggle for liberation.

It is important, at this point, to understand how much of the OUN/UPA consisted of affiliates of Bandera's OUN/B. It is true that Bandera was at that stage, and would still be for many more years, a charismatic leader capable of attracting huge popular support, a master of propaganda, and considered by many the sole leader of the liberation movement. The Soviets commonly referred to the OUN/UPA as *Banderovtsy* or “followers of Bandera”, and continued to do so long after the end of the War. However, it should be remembered that, when the UHVR was established, Bandera was in a German prison camp. He would be released two months later, in September 1944, and moved straight to Berlin where the Nazis tried to use him to organise anti-Soviet resistance in Ukraine for their purposes. Bandera never returned to his homeland again. His influence in the OUN and UPA steadily diminished from 1944 onwards, and neither he nor his closest associates were ever part of the UHVR, unlike Mykola Lebed, who was appointed foreign minister. Lebed's close ties with the UHVR, meanwhile, proved be fundamental for his post-war career as an émigré leader – and as a CIA employee.

After June 1944, the UHVR-OUN-UPA structure carried out frequent attacks on all types of Soviet governmental establishments: abduction and assassination of Soviet officials,

¹⁴ Zukhov, “Examining the Authoritarian Model of Counter-insurgency”, p. 442.

¹⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, ‘Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe’, 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

destruction of bridges and railroads, raids on *kolkhoz* (collective farms). During the latter, the partisans redistributed the produce, tools and real estates among the Ukrainian peasants.¹⁶ Among the victims of the UPA were some high-ranking Soviet officers: Marshall Vatutin in 1944, Lt. General Karol Swierczewski, Vice Minister of Defence of Poland and veteran of the Spanish Civil War, in 1947, and General Moskolenko of the MVD in 1948. The UHVR claimed that the number of MVD and MGB officers and non-commissioned officers killed by the UPA was 35,000. There is no hard evidence to support this number, however, and it should be remembered that the Ukrainians were pressed to provide good results on their anti-Soviet struggle to obtain support in the West. Despite that, the resistance was undeniably successful in thwarting Moscow's efforts at sovietisation in Western Ukraine until 1947 at least. The most important UPA operation in this period was the anti-election campaign. The elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, aimed at legalizing the Soviet occupation, were slated to take place in February 1946. The Ukrainian freedom fighters circulated thousands of leaflets and other propaganda materials. They sought out and destroyed the data collected by enumeration commissions, as well as Soviet agitation material, carried out raids on electoral districts, and liquidated Communist Party activists. Thus, it cost the Soviet authorities a great deal of effort to complete the election campaign in Western Ukrainian territory, having to resort to force to coerce the population to vote.¹⁷

Starting from the spring of 1947, the Soviets encouraged and obtained closer collaboration of the Polish and Czech security forces to liquidate the Ukrainian resistance. The UHVR reacted by ordering resistance units to conserve their fighting strength by avoiding all unnecessary open combat with Soviet forces. Raids became less frequent and were made by smaller groups. The Ukrainian struggle had changed from an insurgent war to a covert one. UPA members started spending the long winter months in the forests, hidden in underground bunkers, called *kryivka* (hideouts). Initially used for the storage of clandestine goods, they were built under hostile conditions, often without the necessary tools and in a few days for fear of a Soviet attack. Sometimes they were so small they could contain no more than two persons. When the partisan emerged, after four or five months, their bodies and minds needed time to re-adapt to life in the open air. They became neurotic and even more paranoid than usual. However, the resistance's excellent connections with

¹⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, 'Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe', 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

¹⁷ An interesting, even if considerably biased, account of the UPA's anti-Soviet activities in those years is present in: Volodymyr Viatrovych, *The Ukrainian Insurgent Army: A History of Ukraine's Unvanquished Freedom Fighters* (Lviv, Center for Research on the Liberation Movement, 2008).

the population allowed it to remain effective despite Soviet efforts. Many Ukrainians who lived legally and overtly could have been considered secret members of the underground, the most important ones being farmers. According to the CIA's sources, there was practically no rural family in the Western Ukraine which did not have a relative or close friend who was or had been in the underground. Farmers provided food and shelter for the partisans, so the UPA depended on that sector of the population more than any other, to the point that "if the peasants were not sympathetic to the partisans, the latter could not exist."¹⁸ The resistance had legal members in the cities too. Western Ukrainian youths were often sent to work in the eastern part of the country, particularly in the coal mines. City dwellers played different roles than farmers: they had easier contact with small government officials and could thus provide services such as the printing of documents or propaganda material.

Besides the occasional raid and reconnaissance of Soviet armed forces, the activity of the UHVR-OUN-UPA front from 1948 onward was limited to propaganda and mobilisation, especially the distribution of printed materials urging the population to boycott all attempts to russify and bolshevize the Ukraine. The Soviets retaliated by intensifying their suppression efforts. The practice of the *oblava* (raid, in Russian), in which forests, mountains and known resistance hideouts, including villages, were swept and partisans were rounded-up and deported along with known or suspected collaborators, weakened the underground greatly. Along with the mass deportations of 1947, they undermined the resistance's connections with the population. By 1953 the number of UPA active armed members had gone down to 1,000 from the tens of thousands (or 100,000 according to some Ukrainian figures) at the end of World War II. However, a decade of constant Soviet efforts for propaganda, indoctrination and ruthless use of security forces to eliminate the underground shows that, even if the "freedom fighters" were not able to oppose the Soviet rule anymore, Ukrainian nationalism was not eradicated. By 1957 the members of the UPA were scattered throughout the USSR, living legally as workers, students or even members of the Communist party.¹⁹

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, however, things were different. Fighting an open battle against the Soviet oppressors and surrounded on all fronts, the UHVR-OUN-

¹⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, "Ukrainian Resistance", April 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0007.

¹⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, Information coming from the records of a meeting between Mykola Lebed, Ivan Hrinioch and a group of CIA case officers, 20th of September 1957, AERODYNAMIC VOL. 43 CONTACT REPORTS_0116.

For Soviet counter-insurgency tactics and results, see: Ustina Markus, "Soviet counterinsurgency: a case study of the guerrilla wars in Lithuania and Western Ukraine, 1944-1953", PhD Thesis, University of London, 1992.

UPA members could only look in one direction: West. They believed that the Allies would unite again, this time to fight Bolshevik oppression, and they trusted their foreign representation to sustain the struggle for Ukrainian freedom in the Western world.

4.1.2 The Ukrainian Emigration

The OUN started as an émigré organisation in 1928, but by the end of World War II it existed only in the Ukraine. The pre-War emigration, the followers of Petliura and Konovalts, had an inherent military nature and converged into the UPA once that was founded. The situation changed in 1945. Millions of refugees swarmed over Western Europe, with an estimated three million Ukrainians Displaced Persons.²⁰ Their situation was even more problematic: according to the Repatriation Agreement signed at the Yalta Conference, all Soviet citizens had to be repatriated regardless of their wishes. The territories of Western Ukraine, however, had been part of Poland following the 1921 Treaty of Riga, until the Soviet invasion of 1939. This was enough of a loophole to allow many Galician Ukrainians not to return to the territories of the Soviet Union, though in the end only 200,000 people avoided repatriation, half of whom were resettled by the International Refugee Organization (IRO) in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.²¹

Most of the leaders of the nationalist movement had found their way out of the Ukraine, avoiding Soviet detection and repatriation. A conspicuous *émigré* community was thus born, but it would soon be plagued by conflict and division. Stepan Bandera and Yaroslav Stetsko had left Vienna and were living in the US zone of occupied Germany. In January 1946 a congress of the OUN held in the Ukraine elected a triumvirate of leaders of the *Provid* (council), formed of Bandera, Stetsko and General Chuprynka, then commander of the UPA. However, the legality of this election was contested by factions in the nationalist movement opposing Bandera, including Melnyk and the members of the UHVR “foreign mission”. This was a group of representatives sent to the West in 1944 to act as delegates of the UHVR, including Mikola Lebed, Father Ivan Hrinioch, Vasyl Okhrymowych and Daria Rebet. The official name of the organisation was *Zakordonne Predstavnytvo Ukrainoskoyi Holovnovi Vyzvolnoyi Rady*, Foreign Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Council of Liberation

²⁰ Figures taken from: Marta Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

²¹ *Ibid.*

(ZP/UHVR). The Melnyk group quickly lost importance in the Ukrainian emigration, due to the fact that its leader had remained faithful to the Germans until the very end of the War. This made the label of ‘collaborators’ very easy to attach to the OUN/M, making it vulnerable to attacks from all sides (both by the Soviets and by their fellow émigrés). It also meant that they had no hope of finding sponsorship among the Allies. The ZP/UHVR, on the other side, was a respectable group that could boast a direct mandate from the homeland, adding to their status in the emigration. The last Ukrainian émigré organisation worth mentioning was the *Ukrainska Narodna Respublika*, Ukrainian National Republic (UNR), a self-styled government-in-exile, composed by old Ukrainian politicians and generals, forced out of the Ukraine after the Soviet-Polish war in 1921. It was “a residual organ of the older emigration which has not yet recognised that in their absence almost three decades of development and changes [...] have nullified their authority to speak on behalf of the Ukrainian people.”²²

Bandera’s own organisation took the name of *Zakordonni Chastyny* OUN, Foreign Section of OUN (ZCh/OUN). The choice of the name was not casual: it gave the impression that OUN/Bandera was following the same political program as the OUN in the Ukraine. In truth, Bandera’s tendency to authoritarianism led him to advocate a mono-party government for the Ukraine, with Bandera as the only leader. This right-wing ultranationalist policy was not shared by the rest of the emigration, nor by the resistance in the Homeland, fighting a bloody war against another mono-party, authoritarian government. Not everyone, however, was able to discern the difference between OUN/B and the OUN in the homeland (also thanks to Soviet propaganda which referred to all the resistance fighters as *Banderovtsy*) and Bandera retained a strong popular following both in the emigration and in the Ukraine. Many researchers subsequently made the same mistake, magnifying the figure of Bandera to the point of overshadowing the political complexity and fragmentation of the Ukrainian emigration.²³

In the spring of 1948, the UNR invited all the émigré parties and groups to send delegates to a General Assembly (one of many unsuccessful attempts to unite the Ukrainian emigration in a single front). Bandera vehemently opposed the application of the parity of representation principle advocated by the UNR that insisted that no party could send more than six delegates and all parties had to be represented. Bandera openly opposed all political organisations

²² CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, ‘Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe’, 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

²³ See for example the imprecise accounts presented in: Dorril, *MI6*, pp. 223-229; Aarons and Loftus, *Ratlines*, pp. 174-188.

which favoured a representative form of government in the Ukraine. As a consequence, in April-May 1948, the leading members of the ZP/UHVR resigned from the OUN/B. Another point of divergence was Bandera's hostile attitude towards cooperation with Britain and the United States. Together with his aversion for democracy as the future political reality for Ukraine, this attitude alienated the liberal elements in his own party. As a result, Lebed briefly became the nominal leader of approximately half of the members of the OUN/B. However, his leadership only lasted until the summer of 1948, when Stetsko published a fake article which purported to be written by the ZP/UHVR leaders. Once they found out about it, they took it as a deliberate attack, making the split between the two groups definitive.²⁴

Noticing that he was losing power and popularity, Bandera decided on a strategy of frontal attack against the émigré leaders opposing him. An extraordinary conference of the members of the OUN abroad was summoned, meeting on the 29th of August 1948 in Mittenwald. Bandera had taken the precaution of inviting almost exclusively his supporters, and instructed them to vote for the dissolution of the ZP/UHVR, after presenting "fantastic charges" against Lebed and Hrinioch. The Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), the U.S. Army intelligence agency, had an informant at the meeting who reported everything to the Americans, who were looking for the right Ukrainian émigré group to support.²⁵ The ZP/UHVR leaders answered affirming that their group was not sanctioned by Bandera or his group, but by the liberation effort in the homeland. They formally resigned from the OUN/B in September 1948. The CIA also had informants inside the Ukrainian emigration. Michael Korzhan, codenamed "Capelin", was a professor of theology with very good connection in all the Ukrainian émigré scene. He was a member of OUN/B and later of ZP/UHVR, whose vice-president, Ivan Hrinioch, was also a CIA informant.

4.3 The CIA and the Ukrainians

²⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, 'Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe', 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

4.3.1 First contact

American support for Ukrainian organisations in 1948 took the shape of project ICON, a review and scrutiny of the émigré groups, looking for the right one to bring under the CIA protectorate. After careful assessment and thanks to inside sources such as “Capelin” and Hrinioch, the choice fell on the ZP/UHVR for several reasons. First of all, the group was confirmed to be the only one directly delegated by the UHVR, the highest representation of the resistance forces in the Ukraine, to liaise with foreign powers on their behalf. Their leaders were also assessed, and considered not interested in personal gain or profit, as opposed to Bandera, who was described as “using his party as a vehicle of his ambition”. The security aspect was also considered, not just for the obvious operational concerns but also because plausible deniability was a key requirement for this sort of project. The security of the ZP/UHVR was “demonstrably better” than any other Ukrainian exile organisation. Finally, the group had kept itself “morally and politically uncommitted and uncompromised” and had tried to stay out of the inner fighting of the Ukrainian emigration, except for when its position as official representative of the UHVR had been openly attacked.²⁶ The Americans thus chose to support the more moderate and legitimate émigré group. Bandera’s extremism, however, did not leave him without supporters. His hostile attitude towards the West was soon reconsidered when his old contacts in the British intelligence showed interest in his group (Bandera’s relationship with the British SIS is the subject of the following chapter). From 1948 onwards the two main Ukrainian émigré organisation had found their collocation under the wing of the two most important intelligence agencies in the West. The other two groups in the Ukrainian emigration, the UNR and the OUN/Melnyk were not considered worth supporting. While the CIA’s support for ZP/UHVR steadily continued until the late 1970s, decades after operations inside the Soviet Union were discontinued, the SIS withdrew its support for Bandera in 1954, deterred by his “inflexible insistence on his political prerogatives and right to leadership”.²⁷ A good part of the OUN/B was later absorbed by the Lebed group.

Between 1946 and 1948, the prospect of establishing contact with the Ukrainian émigrés in Germany was evaluated with apprehension in Washington. The émigré groups appeared

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, GMTS 32, “Our Relations with the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Crisis over Bandera”, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0045.

fractured, and weak against Soviet provocation attempts. Moreover, the brief sponsorship they had enjoyed by the Nazis during the War was an indelible stain. However, as the relationship with the Soviet Union became more and more strained, the American interest in anti-communist groups became stronger. This interest was also encouraged by wartime experience with resistance groups operating behind German lines, and the success of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) in espionage and sabotage missions. The Americans hoped that, if World War III broke out, Eastern and Southern European men would become the equivalent of the French *Maquis*.²⁸ The necessity of collecting information on the enemy by any means possible was also a determinant factor in Western intelligence's interest for the émigrés.

The first American agency to establish contact with the Ukrainians in April 1946 was the Strategic Services Unit (SSU), the successor of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the precursor to the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and the CIA. The SSU learned about the continuing struggle of the Ukrainian resistance and established a liaison with Ukrainian émigré leaders in the American zone of Germany through its X-2 (Counterintelligence) representative in Munich, Boleslav A. Holtzman. This resulted in many reports on the organisation of Soviet intelligence in Western Europe, produced by the Ukrainians, but this collaboration proved to be problematic from its early stages. The fragmentation of the Ukrainian emigration made it difficult to get a clear picture of each group and its aims. Constant slandering and public attacks between them did nothing to help. The war record of some prominent leaders was also an issue: the fact that Ukrainians had served in the German army on the Eastern front was well known.

The following contacts were established by Zsolt Aradi, a Hungarian consultant for the SSU, who used his connections with the Ukrainian church in the Vatican to reach Father Hrinioch, an Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest and the vice-president of ZP/UHVR (during the war he had served as chaplain to the *Nachtigall* unit). Aradi also met Yury Lopatinsky, the liaison man between the UHVR and the UPA, and Mykola Lebed. He dubbed this group "Referat-33" (R-33) and produced an operational report on their personalities and prospects dated 27th of December 1946.²⁹ Stepan Bandera and the OUN/B were not included. The first projects of the X-2 division using Ukrainians were launched by Aradi and Holtzman in mid-1946. BELLADONNA aimed at collecting information on the Soviet military, and LYNX

²⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, Kevin C. Ruffner, "Cold War Allies: The Origins of CIA's Relationship with Ukrainian Nationalists", secret study paper, 1998.

²⁹ Ibid.

(renamed TRIDENT in 1947) focused on identifying Soviet agents in Western Germany. Both projects had a fatal flaw: the primary contact in Munich was Myron Matvieyko, the chief of OUN's security branch. Matvieyko was "an intellectually dishonest and incompetent person."³⁰ He had been an *Abwehr* agent during the War, and afterwards kept his contacts with Herman Baun's former FHO group that later merged into the Gehlen Organisation (as explained in chapter 2). Matvieyko was known for his unreliability and for re-selling old reports to different agencies. The CIA definitively dropped him in 1950 but he kept working for Bandera, and thus for the British SIS. His questionable actions (including murder and counterfeiting) contributed to the temporary deterioration of the relationship between the Ukrainians and American intelligence. By 1947 Washington didn't think that the intelligence derived from the Ukrainian groups was worth the effort expended on the project. Relations with the R-33 group were severed, but not for long. The United States policy towards émigrés and covert action changed quickly, following the quick escalation of tensions with the Soviet Union.

4.3.2 *The development of covert action*

Support for resistance movements and refugee liberation groups was clearly stated in NSC 10/2 as one of the new responsibilities of American intelligence. Despite that, DCI Hillenkoetter was reluctant to involve the CIA with émigré groups in Europe. According to British diplomats, the pressure in this case came from the Department of State and George Kennan himself.³¹ Frank Wisner, in his paper, "Utilization of Refugees from the Soviet Union in U.S. National Interest", pointed out that the United States were still "ill equipped to engage in the political and psychological conflict with the Soviet World", and that American ignorance of the Soviet Union in all fields was an obstacle to be quickly overcome. His solution was to use the refugees "to fill the gaps in our current official intelligence, in public information, and in our politico-psychological operations."³² Hillenkoetter commented on the paper to the NSC in April 1948. His opinion was that in the event of war

³⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, 'Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe', 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

³¹ TNA, FO 1093/375, "Covert Propaganda", Minute from J.E.D. Street to Aubrey Halford, 2 October 1948.

³² National Archives and Records Administration [henceforward NARA], LM-54, Scholarly Resources, Inc., National Security Policy of the United States, State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee 395, *Utilization of Refugees from the Soviet Union in U.S. National Interest*.

with the Soviet Union, the United States would have a critical need for the émigrés as “propaganda personnel, interrogation teams, and sabotage and espionage operations and administrative personnel.” In peacetime, however, he judged them useless. Based on the experience of the first post-war years, the assessment was that Soviet emigres had been completely unable to provide intelligence of real value, given their lack of useful sources within the USSR and the fact that they were mostly interested in gaining support for their own propaganda activities instead than producing objective intelligence.³³ As explained in chapter 1, the DCI mistrust for émigrés and covert operations in general was not enough to overcome the pressure coming from many sides, including eager cold warriors such as Kennan and Wisner, and the Pentagon, always pressing for active measures against the forecast Soviet attack on Europe. Hillenkoetter, then authorised the Office of Special Operations to investigate the émigrés operational utilization. The Ukrainians were back in the game.

A fresh CIA case officer newly assigned to Munich was charged with the job of assessing the Ukrainians under Project ICON. His name is still classified in the Agency’s documents; he was only known to the Ukrainians as “Mister H”. He was an Army veteran who fought in the Mediterranean Theatre, served briefly in the Counter Intelligence Corps and joined the Central Intelligence Group in 1947. He was in the OSO in Vienna, Heidelberg and Munich until 1950 when he returned to Washington. He retired in 1970 at the age of 47. Mr. H’s report drew from Aradi’s previous one, and expanded it by examining all the émigré factions to determine which one, if any, deserved the CIA’s support. The criteria were the following:

- a. The political platform and the political or military leaders of the organization were demonstrably acceptable to a sizable section of anti-Soviet Ukrainians at home and in the emigration.
- b. The political and ideological program of the group was one which the United States would not be embarrassed to support.
- c. The group had the recognition or approval of some resistance leaders in the Ukraine and a communication channel to those leaders.

³³ Ruffner, *Cold War Allies*.

- d. The support of the groups by the United States could feasibly remain clandestine and work to the detriment of the Russian government and its military potential.³⁴

Mr. H needed inside sources for his report, so he re-established contact with Father Hrinioch. He also reached out to, Michael Korzan “CAPELIN”. Korzan would become a long-term CIA asset inside the Ukrainian emigration, secretly reporting to the Americans for years. Mirroring Aradi’s assessment two years before, Mr. H favoured the ZP/UHVR. The only real alternative, Bandera, clearly did not satisfy the second criterion of the list. Also, given the negative experience with Matvieyko, one of Bandera’s closest men, in the previous years, there were concerns for security and efficiency. On the other hand, according to Mr. H, the ZP/UHVR leaders practiced good security measures, and they also “demonstrated that they are not interested in personal gain or profit.”³⁵ From a political and moral point of view, the ZP/UHVR was the most sensible choice.

In January 1949 Mr. H convinced both Father Hrinioch and Mykola Lebed that the United States planned to cooperate with the ZP/UHVR to send agents (codenamed APOSTLES) to the Ukraine. The group had maintained direct contact with the UHVR and UPA forces since the second half of 1944. This contact was maintained in common with Bandera’s ZCh/OUN until 1947, when it was jeopardised by the infiltration of two NKVD agents. ZP/UHVR re-established contact independently in 1948, through two couriers dispatched directly by Genral Taras Chuprynka, leader of the UPA.³⁶ Until that moment most of the couriers arriving to the American Zone of Germany had come through Czechoslovakia, with an armed escort of at least five other partisans, without which they had very little chances of making it through. The ZP/UHVR had recorded several courier routes through Czechoslovakia and Poland laid out in 1944, however this option was considered less safe than parachute drops directly in the Ukraine.³⁷ Four new couriers came out of the country in 1949, while two fell fighting in Czechoslovakia. They brought material from the UHVR and from Chuprynka’s deputy, Colonel Vasyl Koval. In 1950 two of those men returned to the Ukraine, and later in the same year one of them came back to Germany, bringing documents, mail and the announcement of Chuprynka’s death, killed in a shootout with MVD forces in

³⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, ‘Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe’, 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, Questionnaire on Ukrainian emigration, 30 June 1957, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 15 (Operations)_008.

³⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, ‘Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe’, 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

a village near Lvov. Chuprynka's real name was Roman Shukhevych, veteran of the OUN and one of the commanders of the Ukrainian military formations in the German Army during the War. He was one of the founders of the UPA, appointed Supreme Commander in 1943, and succeeded in this role by Colonel Koval.

The ZP/UHVR leadership claimed it was prepared to train and send more couriers from Germany into the Ukraine. They acknowledged the risk that such operations could lead the Soviets to the hideouts of the resistance movement, but the danger was outweighed by the importance of the courier's mission. This was, essentially, to establish a channel between the UHVR/UPA front and the West, to be used both ways. The resistance had to collect positive and counter-intelligence information in the Ukraine, to be forwarded out by courier or by radio. On the other hand, supplies would be sent with the couriers or by parachute drop, including currency, ammunition, food, medicine and other equipment. The volunteers for these missions would be supplied by the ZP/UHVR, recruiting them from the DP camps or from the existing Ukrainian émigré community.

Direct support from the CIA to the ZP/UHVR would take the form of financing various propaganda and relief activities directed at the Ukrainian emigration in Western Europe and North America. One of these initiatives was lecture tours made by the ZP/UHVR's most literate members, such as Hrinioch and Lebed, throughout the United States and Canada. These provided a chance to speak to the North American Ukrainian émigré community, presenting eyewitness accounts of the fight for liberation in the homeland and countering Soviet propaganda efforts. Radio broadcasts directed to the Ukraine were also considered, and developed steadily in the following years. Finally, the financing of the academy for Ukrainian cadets training for dispatch to the homeland was also a duty of the CIA.³⁸

At this stage, the Americans were considering a wide range of options. Propaganda and covert action were developing on parallel lines. The prospect of using the Ukrainian resistance as an ally in case of the outbreak of war against the Soviet Union was present in their planning. This required establishing a contact through the dispatch of agents, who would also double as intelligence collectors. The advantages clearly outweighed the risks in this project. Fuelling Soviet anti-American propaganda by exposing the United States' support to the partisans was a small danger, because the Soviets had already been claiming for some years that the resistance was financed by foreign capital. Exposing the truth about conditions in the homeland to the Ukrainian community in the United States could serve to

³⁸ Ibid.

reduce the influence of left-wing elements among it. Regarding the émigré groups, they did not have much choice. They needed a source of funds to finance their activities in the West. They also understood that the only hope for the liberation struggle in the homeland to continue was the support of the Americans or the British. Many shared the belief that the apparently peaceful coexistence of the Soviet Union with the Western democracies could not last, and the next great war was forthcoming. In that scenario the events of 1941, with the short-lived proclamation of the independence of Ukraine, could repeat but only if the support of the Ukrainians for the Western powers was solid and meaningful. In the 1950s, the more the “hot war” hypothesis became implausible, the more divergences would start to appear between the Ukrainian émigrés and their Western paymasters. In 1948, however, project ICON moved onto its operational phase. Harry Rositzke, the first chief of the CIA Soviet Division and the man responsible for agent operations inside the USSR until 1954, and Richard Helms, member of the CIA’s Foreign Section M and future DCI, submitted a proposal to exploit the Ukrainian resistance to the Assistant Director for Special Operations, Col. Robert A. Schow, on the 26th of July 1949. The proposal was approved on the same day. The project was renamed as CARTEL. It contemplated the training of the Ukrainian agents and their dispatch through American aircrafts, besides the financing of many ZP/UHVR activities, including their newspaper *Suchasna Ukraine* (Contemporary Ukraine).

4.4 Project AERODYNAMIC

The first air drop of agents into the Ukraine happened in May 1949. Two agents were dropped in the area near Lvov, subsequently reporting in a brief radio message that “all is well”. These were the same two men dispatched from the Ukraine by General Chuprynka the year before. However, they were never able to establish contact with the resistance. In September, Moscow Radio announced the capture of two “imperialist” agents who had confessed being on a sabotage mission. They broke under interrogation and revealed all the details of the operation, including the name of their case officers. Harry recalls that despite the frustration resulting from that first failed attempt “no agent dropped out”. The American officers, on the other hand, “spent hours speculating on when and how they had been picked up” and on what mistakes were made, if any, in the operational planning.³⁹ In 1950 four

³⁹Harry Rositzke, *The CIA’s Secret Operations* (New York, Reader’s Digest Press, 1977) , p. 28.

other resistance members were able to exfiltrate and reach the American zone of Germany. Two of them, along with other two agents, were dispatched in the second air drop later in 1950. There is not much detail available on this operation, and the little information I could find is contradictory. In one document, an evaluation of the Ukrainian project from 1955, this operation is described as successful, with contact established with the headquarters of the UPA. In a similar document from 1957, it is said that “this mission did not complete its task”.⁴⁰ What is agreed is that later in that same year one of the agents dispatched, “Bohdan”, returned to Germany with two members of the UPA using an overland route, bringing messages from the resistance “which contained intelligence of value for the CIA.” He also brought the announcement of the death of General Chupryinka.

Despite the initial setbacks, the project had aroused enough interest at the CIA Headquarters and it moved into the next stage, being renamed project Aerodynamic. The mission was:

To organise, develop and execute operations in and directed at the Ukrainian SSR for the purpose of undermining and weakening the influence of the Soviet Union. These operations will initially include activities in the fields of intelligence procurement, political and psychological warfare, and the organization and development of specially trained unconventional warfare cadres as partial fulfilment of guerrilla warfare requirements.⁴¹

In terms of intelligence procurement, the aim was to use the ZP/UHVR to spot and recruit agent personnel to be trained for infiltration in the Ukraine to join and reinforce the UPA ranks. The second stage was then to exploit the resistance for the procurement of operational and strategic intelligence and information on recent events in the Soviet Union. Political warfare was to take place in the emigration mostly, with the purpose of uniting it into one political body that could take a united stand against the Soviet Union, coherent with American foreign policy. Subsiding *Suchasna Ukraine* played an important role in this.

Finally, plans for guerrilla warfare required the formation of a paramilitary cadre corps. The Landsberg Project, from the name of the town in Southern Bavaria where the training facility was located, started on the 19th of July 1951 but it was terminated only one year later. The plan followed the impetus for the creation of paramilitary units that was going on in America on the eve of the Korean War. A few years later President Dwight Eisenhower

⁴⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, Memorandum for Chief of Foreign Intelligence, “An Evaluation of the Aerodynamic Project”, 22 June 1955, AERODYNAMIC VOL. 2_0030; CIA FOIA ERR, Questionnaire on Ukrainian emigration, 30 June 1957, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 15 (Operations)_008.

⁴¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Ukrainian SSR – Operational Program, 8 August 1952, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 10 (Operations)_0072.

showed interest in these projects and a bill was even passed by Congress, to set aside funds to form units made of Eastern European emigres or to recruit them into the Army.⁴² However, this idea never really got off the ground; Special Forces became a regular asset of the American Army, but they lost their initial connection with the liberation policies for Eastern Europe. Landsberg also failed to impress, both in terms of numbers of recruits and results, and it was cancelled in the summer of 1952. The trainees were transferred to air dispatch operations.

The third air drop operation took place in 1951. Vasyl Okhrymovych from the ZP/UHVR, codenamed AECASSOWARY 5, was sent to the Ukraine with three other agents and successfully established contact with the UHVR and with the UPA headquarters.⁴³ This was the first radio link established with the Ukraine and the people at Munich Base and at the headquarters in Washington could not be happier. Okhrymovych was a reliable operator, who joined the UHVR executive and kept a steady flow of information going out of the country: between August 1952 and August 1953 he sent sixteen messages, an impressive number considering that from December to April it was impossible to operate and he spent those winter months locked in an underground bunker like the rest of the resistance fighters.

Meanwhile training for the other agents, codenamed AECARTHAGES, was going on. Two more were dispatched on the 12th of August 1952 in the Gorgan Lemski area, Carthage 12 and 13, “Ivan” and “Orest”. Ivan was 26 years old, a mountaineer born and raised around Kolomiya. He had spent three years in the UPA, from 1944 to 1947, obtaining the rank of Sergeant. Orest was 25, born in the Tarnopol area. He was also a Sergeant in the UPA, having spent five years in the resistance until 1950, when he exfiltrated along with Bohdan. Both had advanced wireless radio training.⁴⁴ The official report on the dispatch provides many useful details on how those operations were carried out. On the 30th of July a briefing session was held in the training facility in Bad Woerishofen, near Munich, between the two agents and the two ZP/UHVR representatives, Lebed and Hrinioch, who handed over the materials to be transmitted to the resistance headquarters. A dinner party followed, attended also by the other trainees waiting for dispatch and by another ZP member, Yaroslav Fedyk, who had to accompany Ivan and Orest on the plane. After a postponement of the take-off date, on the 2nd of August farewells were said: “a round of drinks was served, toasts were made to

⁴² Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, pp. 94-95.

⁴³ CIA FOIA ERR, Questionnaire on Ukrainian emigration, 30 June 1957, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 15 (Operations)_008.

⁴⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, “Information on Carthages 12 and 13 and The Two Other Agent Recruits Proposed for March-April Mission”, 25 February 1952, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 1_0062.

Carthage 12 and 13, hands were shaken, tears were shed”.⁴⁵ Fedyk, Ivan and Orest departed for Bad Schwalbach, the town where they had to spend a period waiting for the “all clear” signal for the mission, depending on the weather conditions. On the 6th of August they were moved to Bad Homburg, both for security reasons and to keep the morale high in the face of the constant postponing of the mission. Time was spent relaxing, sightseeing, but also studying the selected primary drop zone (DZ) and the two alternative ones. The group moved again on the 8th of August to Offenbach. Finally, on the morning of August 12 the mission received the green light. The group went to the Wiesbaden Air Base, from where the operation had to be mounted (the three were not aware of the location before for security reasons). After purchasing food and beverage the three reached a wooded area outside the town, where they changed into GI uniforms. They were then picked up by an Air Section representative who escorted them into the base. Waiting at the hangar that housed the C-54 used for the mission was, besides the flight crew, a host of American Air Force officers, including several colonels. Fedyk, Ivan and Orest immediately boarded the plane. There they were handed the cypher and code pads needed to transmit encrypted messages, and also “L” (cyanide) pills to use in case of capture. Finally they changed into partisan uniforms and a briefing was held with the plane crew and the Air officers where the drop zones and the flight plan were reviewed.

The airplane took off at 18:55. Its route went through Austria, Czechoslovakia and finally Ukraine. It reached the primary drop zone at 22:45 and circled the area several times looking for a reception light. Carthage 5, “Mak”, the W/T operator of Okhrymovych’s group, was supposed to be waiting for Orest and Ivan. However, when the plane was parallel with the town of Korostow, located in the vicinity of the drop zone, all lights went out in the town. The pilot thus decided to move towards the alternative DZs. En route to there, several rocket flares were either shot from the ground or dropped from another plane flying in the same course as the C-54. Finally the flight reached Gorgan Lemski and the pilot noticed no activity. The terrain was very rugged but a meadow suitable for jumping was spotted. The chief jumpmaster and Fedyk attached the two A-6 bags containing all the equipment to Ivan and Orest, and then two bundles containing supplies were pushed out, followed by the two men who jumped at 23:05 from an altitude of 900 feet. Both landed successfully.⁴⁶ Orest,

⁴⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, EGMA-577, “August 1952 Dispatch of Carthage 12 and 13 to the West Ukraine”, 23 September 1952, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 10 (Operations)_0079.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

however, was killed at some point between the winter of 1952 and the spring of 1953, before being able to recover the wireless set he hid after landing.

The next mission was supposed to take place in August 1953. Five agents were left in Bad Woerishofen: Carthage 3, 7, 10, 15 and 16. The first two were considered “disposal cases”. They had both decided to marry their German girlfriends and emigrate to the United States, abandoning the partisan struggle in the homeland. Carthage 3 was particularly troublesome. He was the same Bohdan who had been dispatched in 1950 and then returned to Germany in the same year. While training with the other recruits he had developed a hostile attitude towards the members of the ZP/UHVR, some of whom “he had come to dislike violently”. He believed that the main interest behind the operations was to gather intelligence for their American paymasters and not to aid the resistance fight in the Ukraine, which he believed to be hopeless. To avoid influencing the rest of the recruits he had been separated from them and lived in a separate house. In August 1953, shortly before the dispatch operation had to take place, Carthages 10, 15 and 16 refused to go on the mission. After more than a year of constant training this came as a shock to the CIA case officers and the ZP/UHVR representatives.

The reasons for the agents’ refusal were revealed by Lebed, who took on himself the responsibility to investigate the matter and conduct a “personal CE (*Counter Espionage*) operation.” After arriving in Munich, Lebed spoke with Hrinioch and Fedyk, who revealed that the team lacked proper ideological motivation, and the ringleader behind the defection was Carthage 10, “Semenko”, who had “recently become interested in world politics”, and had expressed opinions regarding “the futility of the Ukrainian struggle” in light of the developments in the global situation, meaning he was aware that the prospect of a Hot War breaking out had become very unlikely. Semenko had been instrumental in influencing the other two recruits in their attitude so Lebed had a private discussion with him. He wanted to find out if he had been meeting with Bohdan, and after a first denial Semenko admitted the fact. Assuming that was the origin of Semenko’s new attitude, Lebed told him to arrange a meeting with Bohdan, to pass him the false information that he was going to leave for the Ukraine in three days and to ask whether he had any message he wanted to be delivered to the homeland. The plan worked as expected and Bohdan produced a message to be passed to colonel Koval, leader of the UPA, in which he conveyed all his negative opinions on the ZP/UHVR and their American sponsors. Lebed then proceeded to confront Bohdan, but he admitted only to meeting Semenko, not to passing him the message. Lebed did not investigate the matter further. He believed that explanation “afforded ample material as proof

of the unworthiness of the team” and (although he did not admit so to his case officer) that he could use it to justify a rejection of the team for the mission, for the benefit of the Americans and the homeland.⁴⁷

Three months later, in November 1953, Ivan was surprised by MVD forces while transmitting a message with his radio set, and was forced to abandon it. He survived, and kept in touch for the following two years via dead letter drops (S/W). This system, however, was lengthy and less secure. Delivering a new radio set with an aerial drop was deemed impossible. The Soviets were in almost complete control of Western Ukraine by then, and the resistance was winding down. Along with the dismissal of the 1953 Carthage team, this meant the end for the CIA network in Ukraine. There were no more recruits to be trained; the ZP/UHVR had always relied on UPA men coming out of the Ukraine for their candidates. These were hardened men, committed to the cause and ready to give their lives for the cause, but since 1950 there had been no more exfiltrations. The curtain fell for agent operations inside the Ukraine in 1954. Vasyl Okhrymovych, the principal representative of the ZP/UHVR in the Ukraine and Project Aerodynamic chief contact with the resistance headquarters, was reported killed in May 1954. His wireless operator, Mak, was established to be under Russian control thanks to a careful analysis of his messages. The only one left was Ivan, who kept S/W contact until early 1955. The CIA wanted to bring him out of the country but he refused and stated he intended to legalise and move to the eastern regions of the Soviet Union.

After the dispatch mission in the summer of 1953 was aborted, the resistance headquarters proposed a change of plans. Given that the prospect of sending more agents into the Ukraine was unlikely, they thought it would be better to use land routes to extract important members of the UHVR and the UPA from the country. This shows that the resistance leaders were aware at the time that they could not expect any real help from the West in their fight. Liberation policies were beginning to show the contradiction that would become evident in Hungary in 1956: America was not willing to start a war with the Soviet Union for the sake of the people of Eastern Europe. The “exfiltration” plan, however, suited the CIA expectations. Bringing more Ukrainian revolutionaries out of the country could serve to replenish the ranks of their agents candidates and, more important, to reinforce the propaganda effort. With its intelligence networks in the USSR collapsing, the Agency understood the best they could do with the émigrés was use them as a “propaganda corps”.

⁴⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, “Report on meetings with CASSOWARY 2 and 15”, 9 November 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 43_0012.

With the prospect of an armed conflict getting less and less likely, winning the psychological war was becoming the primary objective. The exfiltration had to be postponed due to bad weather to the spring of 1954. Okhrymovych was in charge of the dispatch on the Ukrainian side, while the Americans had to prepare aid points in Czechoslovakia.⁴⁸ Two couriers came out in 1954, Carthage 19, “Marichka” and Carthage 20, “Taras”. Marichka, however, broke under interrogation and confirmed they were both RIS plants, sent to infiltrate the emigration. Despite that, in December 1954 there was still hope that “legalized and bona fide exfiltrates of the Ukrainian underground can be debriefed, quickly trained and infiltrated as agents.”⁴⁹ That hope proved to be short-lived, and no more members of the resistance came out of the Ukraine.

4.4.1 Change of Perspective

By 1955 Project Aerodynamic needed to be reassessed. The international climate was completely different from 1948: it was clear in the United States and in the Soviet Union that a Hot War was not going to happen. For the CIA Soviet Russia division (SR) this meant that the relationship between the Agency and the émigré groups had to change. The approach that had been valid in 1948 for the evaluation of objectives had lost its relevance, the focus being now moved to long term needs. The people in the SR division were worried about independence of action and freedom of choice: “Of necessity, to an extent we made ourselves prisoners of ZPUHVR and of other similar groups.”⁵⁰ Being committed to those parties meant an unavoidable associations with their views. It should be stressed that the evaluation of the project, however, was not negative. According to the CIA, not undertaking it in 1948 would have been a serious error. The challenge in 1955 was adapting the project to the present times. Intelligence collection and propaganda coverage of the Ukraine had to continue, with the difference that the choice of objectives, means and pace would be made by the CIA independently. The Agency was not regretting its cooperation with the ZP/UHVR, which was still considered “the only prudent and effective operational

⁴⁸ EGMA-8955, “AERODYNAMIC Operational Progress Report”, 7 December 1953, CIA FOIA ERR, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0033.

⁴⁹ Memorandum for Chief, Foreign Intelligence, “Project AERODYNAMIC (Renewal), 14 December 1954, CIA FOIA ERR, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 2_0022.

⁵⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, Memorandum for Chief, Soviet Russia Division, “Evaluation of the AERODYNAMIC Project”, 21 July 1954, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0010.

instrument suitable for use.” However, overdependence on such a body was dangerous: if the group shrank to a dimension where its only mean of support was the CIA, then it would cling desperately to the Agency for survival. Also, in a cold war situation, a group possessing primarily hot war potential would become a “simple sterile holding”, the same as other émigré groups which seemed useful in an “imminent hot war” situation but were then struggling to find their dimension in the changed international situation.⁵¹

The best prospective was for the ZP/UHVR to focus its efforts on an “augmented cold war political propaganda program”. In that field the group definitively seemed to have potentialities. Radio broadcasts to the Ukraine prepared by the ZP/UHVR were scheduled to begin in 1955, following the Radio Free Europe and Voice of America models. The scripts for the broadcasts were provided by the Soviet Study Group, whose original idea came from Mykola Lebed. The Group was staffed by prominent Ukrainian scholars and produced several studies on the Ukraine, and materials such as leaflets and woodcuts to be dropped by balloon over the country. The ZP/UHVR newspaper *Suchasna Ukraine* too was “an effective instrument in presenting anti – Communist views and in uniting, although not always politically, the Ukrainians in emigration in their anti-Communist, anti-Soviet attitudes.”⁵² Besides all that, by “simply being alive and articulate” the organisation was a harassment to the Soviets, a symbol of dissidence in the Ukraine: “Actual or alleged rumblings of trouble in Ukraine could have an immense effect as a spur to dissidence in other Iron Curtain areas”.⁵³ This shift of the project towards propaganda proved to be extremely successful: the CIA partnership with the ZP/UHVR as a group lasted until 1963, while individuals such as Lebed continued being sponsored by the Agency until the 1970s.

Project Aerodynamic was surely successful in terms of propaganda, but to give an assessment of the intelligence derived from the project is not as easy. It is important to understand that intelligence collection was not presented as a primary requirement to the Ukrainians involved, even if it clearly was from the United States perspective. At first the Americans stressed that, with the prospect of a future armed conflict with the Soviet Union, it was important to establish contact and support resistance forces such as the UPA, following the positive example of France and other conflict zones during World War II. This was followed by the “rollback” policies so vehemently advocated in the first years of the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² CIA FOIA ERR, Memorandum for Chief, Soviet Russia Division, “An Evaluation of the AERODYNAMIC Project”, 22 June 1955, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 2_0030.

⁵³ CIA FOIA ERR, Memorandum for Chief, Soviet Russia Division, “Evaluation of the AERODYNAMIC Project”, 21 July 1954, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0010.

Eisenhower administration. On the 15th of January 1953, John Foster Dulles, speaking in front of the Senate after his appointment as Secretary of State, called for the “liberation of the captive peoples” in the USSR as one of the objectives of American foreign policy. He never explained how that liberation was going to take place, and his “call to arms” only really impacted covert action. His words, however, had an enormous impact for part of the émigré community. They generated expectations that could not be satisfied, and also contrasted with America’s overt policies.

In August 1953, a meeting was held between Lebed, Rositzke and another senior CIA representative whose name is still classified. The reason was to brief and prepare Lebed for his upcoming trip to Europe where he would meet other leaders of the emigration. The discussion quickly focused on American foreign policy. The problem was that the United States could not openly recognise any states that were part of the USSR (with the exception of the Baltic), including the Ukraine. However, Lebed was reassured of the fact that covert support for both the ZP/UHVR and the UPA was guaranteed. Lebed acknowledged that support, and recognised that it showed the sympathy of the United States for the Ukrainian struggle, but he also objected: “We don’t have any guarantee that in the future the principle of self – determination will be correctly applied.” He said he understood the nature of the covert relationship, “but felt that on the other hand the overt relationship was not aiding the Ukrainian cause; if anything, he added, it was doing it harm.” He was right: in 1956 the tragic results of the Hungarian revolt would show to the world how little the United States were willing to do to support the people of Eastern Europe. Three years before, however, the CIA was ready to reassure its Ukrainian assets that they had the full American support, even if they had to pay a price for it: intelligence. During the meeting Lebed was told that “some tangible supporting material of an intelligence nature would enhance the prestige” of the ZP/UHVR in the eyes of the American government. It was imperative that more strategic intelligence was transmitted by the resistance headquarters: “We know of the contact, but it has not shown any positive results.”⁵⁴

4.4.2 Assessment of Project Aerodynamic

⁵⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, “Contact and Briefing CASSOWARY 2 Prior to European Trip”, 21 August 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0016.

The negative opinion on the intelligence transmitted from the Ukraine derived from the evaluation of the messages sent by Vasyl Okhrymovych and his wireless operator, Mak. These mostly concerned the situation of the resistance with very little in terms of operational intelligence. For example, a message transmitted on the 20th of September 1952 reported the death of Commander Poltava of the UPA, who was handling contacts with the West. A few days later Mak met with the *Providnik* (leader) of the Kaluzhny Okruchny region, who related to him the heavy losses suffered by the resistance in the winter and spring of 1951-1952. Many partisans were killed, including several high-ranked leaders, disrupting the communication channels with the headquarters. Carthage 5 transmitted this information on the 29th of September. The same message contained a reference to an airfield located in Stryj where military planes were stationed, but without any further details. After a long break in the winter months, contacts resumed in April 1953. The main topic then was the reaction in the homeland to the split in the émigré community caused by the dissension between the ZP/UHVR and Bandera's faction. This had repercussions in the Ukraine too: Bandera had dispatched one of his own men, Myron Matvieyko, to act as liaison with the resistance, in order to keep his British paymasters satisfied. In a message transmitted on the 23rd of April 1953, Okhrymovych reported how Myron, after establishing himself in the Lvov area, "using the name of his chief as the symbol of the struggle, was able here also to carry on his dirty business and disorient the ranks of the underground." His goal was to replace Koval as the leader of the UPA. Once word of his intentions reached the resistance headquarters, they isolated the Lvov area, which then became more or less independent: "This is sad to write, but it is a fact." As a way to bring this situation to an end, an official statement from the UPA was transmitted from the Ukraine on the 20th of July 1953. The liberation movement confirmed its mandate to the ZP/UHVR as its sole representative abroad. Following shortly was another statement from the OUN *provid* that condemned the actions of Bandera, specifying that "he neither formally nor in fact is the leader of the OUN." He had to cease his schismatic activities and call Myron to order. Those messages were widely circulated by the ZP/UHVR, but while the CIA was surely aware that this split in the emigration was a hindrance to operational efforts, it is also true that what they wanted to obtain from the wireless traffic was intelligence on the Soviets. The only remotely useful message of that kind they received from Mak in a whole year was one dated 25th of August 1953, containing more details on the Stryj air base, noting the plane routes and presence of jet-propelled

fighters, and the information that the MVD had large garrisons in the towns of Dolina and Skole.⁵⁵

It was clear that the agents in the field needed to be instructed in order to gather intelligence that was of effective value for the CIA. For this reason, in August 1953, a list of intelligence requirements was prepared to be transmitted to the Ukraine. It included seven categories: agricultural, current intelligence, military, operational intelligence, transportation, air defence and graphics of Soviet equipment. The requests varied: they went from “the amount of rainfall from May to July” to the order of battle of the Soviet forces in Ukraine. Included was also a list of Party Secretaries and “persons prominent in the administration of agriculture” on whom the partisans had to collect information regarding their careers and personal connections (for more details see the Appendix).⁵⁶ This attempt to improve the intelligence flow from the Ukraine came too late. The 1953 Carthage team refused to be dispatched. Okhrymovych was killed in May, Mak fell under Russian control and Ivan lost his radio set. In 1954, however, unexpected help came from the British. A courier, “Skob”, exfiltrated from the Ukraine and, after spending some time in Poland, he reached Western Germany. The more interesting reports he produced were shared with the Americans. They did not contain any military or logistic intelligence, but focused first on the “repercussions and reactions in the Western Ukraine to the main developments in the USSR during late 1952 and 1953”, and then on the reception of Western radio broadcasts among the population. It is not clear if the absence of items of military interest was due to the fact that the British operations were also shifting towards propaganda activities, or if Skob was another Soviet plant sent to infiltrate the emigration.⁵⁷

Skob was not a unique case. The CIA had in its hands Marichka and Taras, Carthage 19 and 20, and was in radio contact with Carthage 5, who had been confirmed to be under RIS control after extensive debriefing and interrogation by the Americans. The foreign intelligence collection (FI) aspect of Project Aerodynamic had turned into a counter espionage (CE) effort and this change was formally recognised in 1955.⁵⁸ Given that

⁵⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, transcripts of messages received in the period between 31 August 1952 and 25 August 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0018.

⁵⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, dispatch from Chief, Soviet Russia Division to Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, “Requirements in the Western Ukraine”, 31 August 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0020 and Vol. 11 (Operations)_0042.

⁵⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, “Reports from JAVELIN courier from the Ukraine”, 13 April 1954, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0004.

For more details on Skob see Chapter IV.

⁵⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, memorandum from Chief, Soviet Russia Division, “AERODYNAMIC CE Activities”, 6 July 1955, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0039.

Marichka and Taras had been kept separated, and only the first had broken under interrogation, the plan was to play along with Taras, train him and send him back to the Ukraine as if he had not been discovered. This was an ambitious counter infiltration operation but it was hindered by two blunders. First, during Marichka's debriefing she had mentioned an individual named Skob who was a Soviet plant in the resistance. To check if this was the same Skob in the hands of the British, a meeting between the two was arranged, but before that the British revealed to Skob that Marichka was an infiltrate. Shortly after Skob disappeared during a trip to Munich and he was never found again. If he really was working for the Soviets, the chance is that he went back to report to his masters were high, thus compromising Taras' operation: if Marichka had been exposed as a spy by the Americans, then her companion had probably been too. The Americans and the British blamed each other for the blunder, to no avail.⁵⁹ The second mistake was letting Taras meet Marichka before his dispatch. The woman broke out in tears and from some signals Taras gave he may have understood she had been exposed. Despite that, Taras was sent back in the Ukraine anyway, and kept contact via letter until at least 1957.⁶⁰

The final CE source was Carthage 5, "Mak". The traffic exchange between him and the Munich base reveals a good deal about what the CIA was expecting to obtain by a controlled agent. First, it was an opportunity to study Soviet intelligence techniques in their handling of assets. Second, the requests sent by the agent disclosed something on Soviet interests and objectives. Finally, by playing along the Americans could mount a counter-deception, feeding false information to the enemy. For example, in a message sent to Carthage 5 on the 21st of August 1954, they expressed the "necessity of strengthening other methods for the entire movement", such as "sending documented people there where under legal cover they could carry out necessary work and be a reserve for the future." It was a deceptive message but the Soviets fell for it. In a message sent on the 13th of September, Mak tried to discourage that strategy due to the strict security policy of the Soviets in the Ukraine. He instead suggested sending more illegal agents by air, and to the same drop zone where he had landed (where the Russians could have easily collected and then either turn or kill them). Mak then requested the names of civilian supporters of the resistance he could contact to avoid spending the winter alone. The CIA sent him a list of people who had already been deported

⁵⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, message from Director, CIA, to London, Munich and Frankfurt stations, 20 January 1956, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 13 (Operations)_0014.

⁶⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, EGMA-26347, From Chief of Base, Munich, to Chief, Soviet Russia Division, "Progress Report for April 1957", 7 May 1957, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 15 (Operations)_0001.

or were Communist Party officials, to avoid exposing genuine sympathisers of the underground to the Soviet security forces.⁶¹

Despite some valuable results in the field of Counter Espionage, deriving from the debriefing of the double agents (Marichka, Taras) and from the playbacks (Mak), the production of positive intelligence from Project Aerodynamic was not large enough, compared to the effort spent. However, this was the only intelligence gathering operation aimed at that area of the USSR. Between May 1953 and November 1954 the project produced 25 positive intelligence disseminations. The customers, mainly the Pentagon and the State Department, considered them useful and requested continued coverage.⁶²

Chapter V

British Covert Operations in the Ukraine

The British secret services' involvement in covert operations behind the Iron Curtain shows significant differences with the American model. The target was the same, to penetrate the Soviet Union in order to obtain intelligence on its military capabilities and intentions. The requirements were also similar, but, apparently, the urgency was even greater: way before the development of a Soviet atomic bomb or intercontinental ballistic missiles, Britain was considered a primary target in the event of a Communist attack to Western Europe. The likelihood of such an attack, however, was a point where British and American opinions diverged. The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), the cross-government committee responsible for co-ordination between inter-departmental intelligence assessments, in 1947 had reached this conclusion: "that the Soviet Union is unlikely deliberately to start a war before the end of 1956."¹ The opinion on the other side of the Atlantic was very different. In 1951 the American equivalent of the JIC, the National Security Council, asserted in NSC

⁶¹ CIA FOIA ERR, dispatch from Chief of Mission, Frankfurt, to Chief, Soviet Russia Division, 19 October 1954, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0021.

⁶² Memorandum for Chief, Foreign Intelligence, "Project AERODYNAMIC (Renewal), 14 December 1954, CIA FOIA ERR, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 2_0022.

¹ TNA, CAB 158/2, "JISC Memoranda, Sep-Dec 1947", memorandum 76.

100 that Western Europe faced the possibility of Soviet invasion by the summer of that year.² Between the JIC assessment and NSC 100, many things happened that seemed to support the American position: the Berlin Blockade in 1948, the detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb in 1949, and finally the Korean War in 1950. However, none of this changed the overall predictions of British intelligence, which always kept a more cautious stance regarding the intentions of the Soviet Union and its effective capabilities for war. This divergence of attitudes also influenced the approach of the two Allies towards covert operations, as well as resulting in substantial differences in the organisation of their secret services after the War.

The British post-war economy did not allow for lavish expenditure on the intelligence system, thus avoiding the danger of duplication that plagued the Americans. Nevertheless, a struggle over resources still took place in the United Kingdom. The diplomats in the Foreign Office and the military, represented by the Chiefs of Staff, were fighting for control over the secret services, with the military often “wishing to accelerate the clandestine Cold War and indulge in Cold War fighting.”³ Headed by some prominent Foreign Secretaries, the Foreign Office did not believe that subversion and covert warfare against the Soviets would pay dividends. The diplomats resisted the military attempt to capitalise on the Cold War by taking over secret operations against Moscow, and they succeeded in ensuring that all aspects of the British Secret Intelligence Service stayed firmly under the control of the Foreign Office.⁴ This partly explains the reason why British and American assessments of the Soviets were so different in the early stages of the Cold War, and why the conduct of covert action differed on the two sides of the Atlantic. However, the struggle between the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff in Britain was not resolved quickly. In the beginning, when the diplomats’ grip over special operations was not secured yet, the United States and Great Britain ended up involved in the same kind of covert action. Some operations, such as “Valuable” in Albania, are well known and have been the subject of much study. The British involvement in the Ukraine, on the other hand, has not been the subject of much proper study yet, mostly due to the inavailability of records. Traces of these SIS operations, however, can be found in the CIA archives. Because the two agencies were working on similar projects, involving the same territories and sometimes the same individuals, there was a good degree

² *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, National Security Affairs, Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I, eds. Neal H. Petersen, Harriet D. Schwar, Carl N. Raether, John A. Bernbaum, Ralph R. Goodwin (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972), Document 4.

³ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of coordination and a flowing exchange of information. Thanks to that, it was possible to reconstruct, even if in a partial way, British covert operations involving Ukrainian émigrés, which will be analysed later in this chapter, after a brief overview on the development of covert action in the United Kingdom.

5.1 British secret operations in the early Cold War

5.1.1 Post-war restructuring

Secret services and intelligence activities witnessed the greatest revolution of their history after the Second World War. Changes were not limited to the impact of new technologies and the need to monitor new sources of information, such as Signals intelligence. The quantity of information to be processed grew to an unprecedented, industrial scale that needed a thorough reorganisation of the whole system. Intelligence services had to become managerial in nature, developing complex bureaucratic structures. Besides that, new forms of secret activity developed during the War, involving secret, clandestine armies with sabotage duties such as the Special Operation Executive or propaganda organisations like the Political Warfare Executive (PWE). After 1945 these bodies, born from war-time necessities, had to be theoretically disbanded, but their exceptional results and the menacing shadow of the Soviet Union meant otherwise. The question was subordinated to the future intentions of Stalin: a peaceful world would have no need for covert warfare.

The concept of a future Cold War was already accepted by the Western military as early as 1943, but less so by the diplomats. Soviet behaviour in their Occupied Zone of Germany was the first alarm trigger, reaching a crescendo with the Berlin airlift in 1948-49, and constantly posing the question: to what extent the West should fight Soviet domination in Eastern Europe? In the United Kingdom, the question of the extent of commitment necessary against the Soviet Union relied much on the intelligence forecasts of future Soviet policy and capabilities. Even the most fervent advocates of cooperation with the Soviets in the Foreign Office had to recognise the need for strategic planning. The Chiefs of Staff, instead, had a clear idea of where the world situation was heading to: a “nuclear Pearl Harbor” on British soil.⁵ The JIC was the arbiter of that dispute. Success by the diplomats in using

⁵ Julian Lewis, *Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post-War Strategic Defence, 1942-7* (London, Routledge, 2004).

intelligence forecasts as a tool to put the brakes on the military was fundamental in shaping British policies in the early Cold War. Covert action was also a key element. Anthony Eden, three times Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, during his stint in the Foreign Office in 1940-45 wanted to take over the SOE and PWE. His Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Alexander Cadogan, was of the opposite opinion, considering those activities too “murky” and “undiplomatic”. Eden got his way, and from that moment special operations were “tied directly into the core of British foreign policymaking.”⁶ The alternative would have been similar to the American model, where the CIA activities escaped all diplomatic control, often creating embarrassing disagreements in foreign policy objectives.

As the Second World War drew to a close, SIS began worrying about post-war restructuring. The Foreign Office acted quickly in this regard, commissioning a review of post-war intelligence needs and organisation in 1943-1944. This formed the basis for the future development of SIS and, consequently, of British secret operations.⁷ One of the first men to take interest in the matter was Peter Loxley, a promising young official of the Foreign Office. As the private secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Alexander Cadogan, he provided one of the main links between SIS and the Foreign Office. In April 1943, Loxley wrote to Sir Stewart Menzies, the chief of SIS, that it was time to start doing some serious future planning for SIS. In October, Cadogan appointed a three-man committee, under the supervision of Sir Neville Bland, to report on the future organisation of SIS. Bland, at the time ambassador to the Netherlands government-in-exile, had good experience with intelligence matters: in the 1920s he had been private secretary to five permanent under-secretaries, and also secretary to the Secret Service Committee. The other two members of the committee were Loxley and Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, chairman of the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee. The Bland committee worked in close cooperation with Menzies, and the report, “Future Organisation of the SIS”, was completed in October 1944. The document was a crucial step in the history of the Service. It pointed out the necessity of the continued and autonomous existence of SIS, and it was also “a pre-emptive strike, seeking to establish the Foreign Office vision of SIS’s future role and relationship with the rest of the government.” Summarising the report for Cadogan, Bland stressed first that SIS and the GCHQ should always remain under the direction of the Foreign Office. Second, no

⁶ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 75.

⁷ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 596.

secret organisation was allowed to operate abroad, except under the direction of SIS. Thus, the future of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) was decided.⁸

The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was first created from sabotage units set up by the Military Intelligence and SIS in the first years of the War, and both resented losing control over what they considered their own creature. Towards the end of the conflict, SOE had become a tempting prize, being involved in operations throughout the globe, with its personnel being ten times that of SIS. Some believed that after the war SOE would take over foreign intelligence completely, but they were wrong. Much as with its American counterpart, the Office of Strategic Services, success during the War was not a guarantee of survival. Many in Washington and London saw the young services with envy or open hostility. In Whitehall both SIS and the Foreign Office accused SOE of overstepping into their respective areas of expertise. The result was that SOE was broken up, and its resources divided among the competitors, which played in favour of the diplomats, who had been working to take control of SIS activities since the inter-war years. This process was completed by 1948, when the Foreign Office had authority over all the activities of SIS and MI5 abroad. Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary between 1946 and 1951, followed the policies laid out by his predecessor Anthony Eden who, in 1945, convinced Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee to put what was left of the SOE under the control of SIS: “Eden was thus the architect of the post-war system for controlling special operations, and so the diplomats came out on top.”⁹ The Foreign Office had the right to veto over these activities, and was ready to use it.

The Bland Report also addressed the topic of special operations even if, when it was completed, they were still a prerogative of SOE. Nonetheless, the report came to the conclusion that, during peacetime, it was inconceivable that a secret organisation operated in foreign countries without being responsible to the Foreign Secretary. All special operations should then be a prerogative of SIS.¹⁰ The Foreign Office’s concern over special operations continued after the end of the conflict. On the 12th of April 1946, a meeting was held between the Deputy Directors of Intelligence and Bevin, where they discussed a paper concerning planning for post-war special operations. As a result, special operations, together with Secret Intelligence, were unified into a single Service, controlled and administered by the Chief of the SIS (‘C’). The first requirement for the new Service was to be capable of

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 597-601.

⁹ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 79.

¹⁰ Jeffery, *MI6*, pp. 605-606.

rapid expansion in the event of war, to carry out special operations such as “the raising and control of clandestine resistance groups for operating against the common enemy in time of war”.¹¹ This was still clearly modelled on the SOE blueprint, but the second requirement was more subtle: to give covert support to British national interests where threatened. The means of doing that ranged from influencing prominent individuals and disbursing subsidies, to countering hostile propaganda and finally para-military activities. There was one important specification, however: that the implementation of all those plans was subject to the express approval of the Foreign Office. Without that, the only activity the Secret Service could undertake abroad was the collection of intelligence. In particular, clandestine recruitment for resistance movements was banned. It may look contradictory that the Service was supposed to quickly build up resistance groups in times of war, but was forbidden to recruit for those same groups in advance.¹² However, this was exactly the kind of activities that the Foreign Office wanted to avoid at all costs. The main issue, in terms of foreign policy, was that the British government could not guarantee support to the oppositions in the Iron Curtain countries. Encouraging subversive activities, thus, would have only raised false hopes and any open opposition to the Soviets would end in ruthless repression. The tragic events of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 proved that these British concerns were indeed justified. Hector McNeil, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, had expressed these views to Ernest Bevin already in 1948. McNeil was aware of the Chiefs of Staff’s thoughts about the desirability of delaying the consolidation of the satellites regimes as essential for British security.¹³ He also knew that the Chiefs of Staff would not be satisfied with propaganda only, but wanted to resort to sabotage and incite passive and even active resistance, “just in order to throw sand in the works.” McNeil, however, did not advise against building a “propaganda machinery” to put under Menzies’ authority. He considered stirring troubles on the other side of the Iron Curtain a good strategy to distract Soviet attention from Western Europe, but at the same time he reported the view of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Christopher Mayhew, who advised for caution. He thought that the rise of international tensions that would result from such operations would

¹¹ TNA, FO 1093/347, “‘C’, Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS): Special Operations”, 24 Jan – 8 Jul 1946.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ TNA, FO 1093/375, “Covert Propaganda”, Minute from the Minister of State to the Secretary of State to Foreign Affairs, 21 April 1948.

outweigh any gains coming from the weakening of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe.¹⁴

The Americans were less concerned. Unofficial reports warned the diplomats in Whitehall that the US authorities were preparing for underground activities in the Iron Curtain countries “in a big way.”¹⁵ William G. Hayter, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State (and later British ambassador to Moscow) was in contact with George V. Allen, the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs in the US State Department. Allen revealed that the satellite countries were the first objective for American anti-Communist propaganda. Bevin and the Foreign Office, on the other hand, thought that those efforts were better directed at countries where the struggle with Communism was still in the balance, such as Germany, Austria, Italy and France. It was pointless to incite active opposition in Eastern Europe “when we and the Americans can give them no effective armed support.” While Allen agreed with this view, he could not guarantee that others at the State Department or other US authorities would share that opinion. Bevin was also against using political refugees for covert operations, including propaganda, or to contact underground movements in the Iron Curtain countries. He considered them difficult to control, out of date in their views, without real influence and also often leaky.¹⁶ The Americans, on the other hand, were ready to use the émigrés for underground work in those countries. In August 1948 Hayter and Frederick Warner, McNeil’s private secretary, met with Maynard Barnes of the State Department, who had been recently appointed head of the Office of Policy Co-Ordination (the OPC directors included representatives from both the State Department and the CIA). In their talks, Barnes “came out strongly for the policy, in which he claims to have the support of George Kennan, of giving full support to émigré groups in the United States.”¹⁷ Warner had visited Kennan personally at his farm in the country, and discussed the United States’ plans for underground propaganda in the Soviet Bloc countries. The British diplomat left with the clear impression that Kennan did not make any distinction between propaganda and subversive activities, but considered all these activities as “political warfare”, and for this purpose he was inclined to make as much use as possible of political refugees.¹⁸ These talks confirmed Bevin’s fears that the Americans would get involved with the wrong type of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ TNA, FO 1093/375, “Covert Propaganda”, Telegram to William Hayter, 13 May 1948.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ TNA, FO 1093/375, “Covert Propaganda”, Minute from J.E.D. Street to Aubrey Halford, 2 October 1948.

¹⁸ TNA, FO 1093/375, “Covert Propaganda”, Telegram from Frederick Warner to William Hayter, 25 May 1948.

émigrés: out-of-date and embittered reactionaries, whose advice would not prove useful. He thought that the US policies in this regard could be “wild” and “ill-advised”, and that it was important to get into their confidence during the early planning stage, in order to attempt to influence their plans.¹⁹ It was a forlorn hope. In those years the Foreign Office did not have the resources to exert a moderating influence in Washington, especially when it was still struggling to keep covert action under control at home.

5.1.2 Hawks and Doves

The authority that the Foreign Office had over special operations did not always mean full control, or at least not in 1948. In that same year, SIS representatives made contact with Stepan Bandera’s group in the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, OUN/B, exactly the “wrong type of émigrés” that Bevin was so worried about. Shortly after, the British were involved in running covert operation in Ukraine. In 1949 British-trained paramilitary troops landed in Albania during operation “Valuable”. Similar exploits followed in Poland. From these examples it may seem that the Foreign Office quickly lost control over the covert action machinery it had so carefully brought under its supervision. The truth is substantially different, and once again relates to the struggle with the military over Britain’s approach to the Cold War.

The military leaders of the country wanted to assume a more aggressive stance towards the Soviet Union. Witnessing day after day the dissolution of their nation’s role as a Great Power, they believed that the best course of action was to fully support the Americans in an all-out effort to win the Cold War. At the frontline were the Chiefs of Staff, especially Bernard Montgomery, Chief of the Imperial Army Staff from 1946 to 1948, and the Marshall of the Royal Air Force, Arthur Tedder. Another very vocal supporter was Air Marshall John Slessor, Tedder’s assistant and Commandant of the Imperial Defence College. His wartime experience in the Middle East, one of the areas where SIS had been more active, convinced him of the value of secret operations. He tried to convince his superiors, the Chiefs of Staff, of the necessity of a coordinated strategy of covert warfare to win the Cold War, and they in turn started discussions with the Foreign Office. In 1947 Stressor decided to meet with Stewart Menzies directly. Menzies’ response was ambivalent: he stressed that everything

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

depended on government funding. Every year Parliament allocated a sum for clandestine activities, and Slessor thought that Menzies should lobby for the grant of a large fund that could be used to finance covert action. However, the figures the two men had in mind were very different: Slessor wanted ten million pounds, while Menzies, more realistically, was thinking in terms of half a million. This attempt to use SIS to bypass the Foreign Office's control over covert action resulted in failure.²⁰ The Chiefs of Staff had to face Bevin directly. The situation was not unfavourable; propaganda activities had already been revamped in January 1948 under the new Information Research Department (IRD), motivated by the step-up in Soviet propaganda activities after the creation of the Cominform in 1947. Bevin backed the creation of the IRD because he strongly believed that the Cold War would be won on the ideological battlefield. He thought that promoting the values of Western and British democracy was the best way to fight Communism in the world without increasing international tensions.

Political warfare was one area where the interests of the Army and the Foreign Office could converge in the crucial years between 1946 and 1949. For the military, propaganda was a sort of stepping stone for covert operations. The definition of 'political warfare' was not clear yet, and it could have been easy to adapt it to all sorts of covert action. If the Chiefs of Staff could ensure their involvement, they would be one step closer to influencing Britain's attitude in the Cold War. For the diplomats, however, political warfare was a way to give in to the military's pressure without actually conceding too much. Bevin was ready to invest in the IRD and believed in the importance of propaganda, and so allowing some Chiefs of Staff involvement in this endeavour was not a real problem. On the 23rd of December 1947, the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Group Captain Stapleton, sent a letter to Sir Orme Sargent, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office. The Chiefs stressed out that the Soviets were spreading their influence over Europe, and it was of the outmost importance "to unleash political warfare" of the same type the Communists employed. They recognised that such operations would be largely political, but at the same time that they should be "very much concerned about it": once political warfare was undertaken, all weapons should be used. The authority of the Foreign Office was not questioned; however any plan should "include both Special Operations and Deception for which the Chiefs of Staff have certain responsibilities. Special Operations can be an effective

²⁰ For more details see: Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 146 ff.

weapon if used as an accessory”.²¹ In his answer, Sargent was careful to point out immediately that political warfare and secret operations were two very different things, to be treated separately. Regarding the first, Bevin had already forwarded some proposals to the Cabinet, and if they were accepted the full potential of the IRD would be devoted to anti-Communist activities. Secret operations, however, were not “in any way covered by the ministerial approval” that they were hoping to obtain for propaganda.²²

The whole issue was to be deferred until Menzies came up with a clear indication of the kind of activities that could be undertaken in peace-time, and their cost. In a letter from Frederick Warner to Sargent, however, Menzies’ proposal is defined as “rather confused and repetitive, and he gives us no idea of the size of organisation or expenditure which would be required”.²³ Clearly the SIS’s chief was playing on the Foreign Office side, either because of a genuine disinterest in secret operations in the Iron Curtain countries or because he was painfully aware of the financial restrictions of his organisation. He did, however, put forward many proposals for clandestine propaganda activities. These included the control of news agencies and newspapers or the setting up of new ones, the dissemination of rumours and untrue reports, attempts to subvert Russian and satellites’ armed forces using literature and pamphlets, and finally the use of émigré organisations to disseminate British propaganda material in their countries of origin. Special operations “other than clandestine propaganda”, of a violent and subversive nature, required extreme caution to avoid any possible implication with the British government.²⁴ They were dependent on the organisation of an underground opposition network in the target countries, a basic task which would have to be undertaken before any special operation of the sort could be attempted. Possible activities included the framing of diplomats and other officials by planted evidence, penetration of factories and trade unions to encourage strikes and sabotage, bribing and blackmail of Soviet officials, and other more violent activities to be undertaken by the underground network.²⁵

The Chiefs of Staff kept exerting pressure to remove control of Britain’s Cold War direction from the Foreign Office and Ernest Bevin’s hands. They advocated the creation of a new organisation devoted to plan and direct an anti-Soviet offensive. On the 9th of September 1948 they submitted their proposal to the Minister of Defence, A. V. Alexander,

²¹ TNA, CAB 158/2, letter from the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, to Sir Orme Sargent, 23 December 1947, reference C.O.S. 1551/29/12/7.

²² TNA, CAB 158/3, letter from Sir Orme Sargent to Group Captain Stapleton, Cabinet Office, 9 January 1948.

²³ TNA, CAB 158/3, “The Capabilities of S.S. in Peace in Support of an Overall Political Plan”, Memorandum from “C”, 20 January 1948.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

who in turn passed it to Bevin. The Foreign Secretary, however, had a hidden card to play. He responded by sending Ivone Kirkpatrick, one of the leading figures in the Foreign Office and future Permanent Under-Secretary, as his delegate to treat with the Chiefs. Kirkpatrick also held a proactive stance regarding the attitude to assume towards the Soviets, so he could more easily relate to the military. He revealed to them that there was already a body responsible for the planning of anti-Soviet measures: the Russia Committee. The existence of the Committee was still completely unknown to the Chiefs of Staff, two years after its establishment in 1946. A creation of the Foreign Office, it was conceived to counter the Moscow-coordinated Communist activities throughout the world with an equally coordinated effort. Its objective was to seize every opportunity to discredit the Soviet regime or weaken its position. One of the ways to achieve this was to loosen the Soviet hold on the Soviet satellites, by promoting civil discontent, internal confusion and strife “so that they will be a source not of strength but of weakness to Russia and a drain of her resources”.²⁶

Kirkpatrick believed it was finally time for one of the Chiefs of Staff to join the Committee, and the choice fell on Arthur Tedder. This played in favour of Bevin: Tedder proved to be cautious. The first meeting he attended, on the 24th of November 1948, dealt with the troublesome issue of special operations. With the Berlin Blockade fully under way and the shock of Tito’s sudden break with Moscow, the hypothesis of starting to stir up troubles in the Eastern bloc was taken into serious consideration. Tedder, however, proved to be sceptical of the value of SOE-type operations, unless followed by military action. He compared such operations “to a barrage laid down before attack by troops; if it was laid down too far ahead your friends were simply annihilated.”²⁷

Despite that, the Russia Committee sanctioned a limited-scale operation in Albania. This decision may seem unanticipated. The Committee was an offspring of the Foreign Office, and the diplomats always held a distrustful attitude towards special operations, and even the Chiefs of Staff representative agreed with that. The practical problems of encouraging resistance in the satellites, along with the drastic shortage of money to support the operations, were also recognised by everybody. The global situation, however, called for a shift towards more aggressive action. The Czech coup and the Berlin crisis were major factors, but the Communists seemed to be gaining the upper hand in other countries also. The April 1948 elections in Italy saw the Italian Communist Party coming out as the second political force,

²⁶ TNA, FO 371/71686, “Russia Committee: minutes of meetings.” Terms of Reference for “Cold War” Sub-Committee, 24 November 1948.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

with 30% of the votes, even after the CIA had devoted considerable resources to guarantee the victory of the Christian Democrats. A Socialist President of the Republic was elected in France in 1947, after the Communists became the second party in the legislative elections in the previous year, with 26% of the votes against the 28% of the Popular Republican Party. In the same years in Greece the Communist insurgents were fighting a civil war against a government backed by America and Britain. The idea that the Soviets were slowly pushing the West into a corner was not without foundation.

It looked like a victory for the Chiefs of Staff. Britain now seemed to be following the American example and fully embracing “liberation”, giving a full steering to its Cold War policies. The truth, however, was different. In military jargon, the Chiefs had won a battle but lost the war. Bevin and his men in the Foreign Office were aware that they had to make some concessions, to give in to the pressure exerted by the military. They knew that these concessions would ultimately play in their favour, because some impassable obstacles would soon get in the way of special operations. The first one was the lack of resources. The quick dismantling of the SOE structure at the end of the war meant that Britain did not have a proper special operations asset. The transfer of this responsibility to SIS did not mean that a solution was at hand; quite the opposite in fact. As Menzies had made clear to Stressor in 1947, funds for clandestine activities were pretty tight, even more so if they had to be split between “regular” intelligence collection and covert action. SIS was also subject to conflicting demands: many among the military leaders (Montgomery was one of them) believed that the Hot War was only months away, and preparing for that contingency was one of the organisation’s tasks. Also, as stated earlier, the Foreign Office had imposed a veto on any advanced preparations for special operations, meaning that even if these were an SIS responsibility, the agency had almost no capacity for them. Finally, Menzies himself was fully on the Foreign Office’s side in trying to put the brakes on the military’s ambitions.²⁸ The foundations that the diplomats, and especially Bevin, had built to ensure their control over special operations were too solid, and the Foreign Secretary was not willing to surrender the Foreign Office’s role as the main body responsible for Britain’s foreign policymaking. In 1949 he created the Permanent Under-Secretary’s Department, which was given responsibility for intelligence and special operations. Shortly after the Chiefs of Staff were allowed into the Russia Committee, its role as the planning organ for Britain’s conduct in the Cold War began to lose importance. In the same year Montgomery, whose term as Chief

²⁸ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 150-156.

of the Imperial General Staff had already expired in 1948, was sent to Paris as Chairman of the Western European Union's commanders-in-chief committee.

With the departure of his most vocal adversary, Bevin could be sure that the Chiefs of Staff were out of the special operations game, and even the resignation of the Foreign Secretary in 1951, on grounds of ill health, would not change the situation.²⁹ This, however, did not mean that special operations were completely discarded. By late 1947, Bevin had put aside his initial hopes of a peaceful coexistence with the Soviets and acknowledged the conclusion of both the JIC and the Russia Committee, that the military capabilities and intentions of the Soviet Union should be the first priority of British intelligence efforts. However, the position of SIS in those territories, regarding intelligence collection, was similar to that in Europe following the German victories of 1940: whatever intelligence sources had been available were swept away and, at the same time, the demands put on SIS for information on those countries escalated. The successes of British intelligence during the war, both in terms of Sigint and of the development of agent networks, created dangerous expectations. The armed forces, in particular, had "quite unrealistic expectations of what SIS could be expected to provide in these new circumstances."³⁰ The absorption of SOE into the Service also meant that SIS suddenly possessed an amount of wartime experience in infiltrating hostile countries that could be put to use in special operations. Although, as said before, Foreign Office approval was required for such operations, the intermittent pressure put on SIS from the armed services meant that during the late 1940s SIS ran special operations not only in the Eastern Bloc countries, such as Poland, but inside the Soviet Union territory, reaching into Ukraine and even Russia itself. By early 1949 an "S.O. Handbook" had been produced, which, among other things, provided details for "Clandestine Air Operations". One of the things emphasised in the book, ironically, was that the use of émigré groups was banned.³¹

The Foreign Office had put a veto on running special operations inside the Soviet Union. This caused increasing frustration inside SIS in the late 1940s, because of the increased request for intelligence on the Soviet Bloc. In view of the scarcity of information on the target, there were those in SIS who believed that greater risks should be taken. All the Regional Controllers, for example, in a meeting held in September 1946, agreed on exploring the possibilities of penetrating Russia and the Satellites through the use of wireless radio

²⁹ Bevin died just one month after his resignation. He was replaced as Foreign Secretary by Herbert Morrison.

³⁰ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 656.

³¹ *Ibid.* pp. 660-661.

operators.³² Delivering these agents, however, required the cooperation of the RAF, which was unlikely to agree to any long-distance flights over Soviet controlled territory. The air force, however, could agree with shorter flights, designed to drop agents and material just within the frontiers of peripheral territories such as Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, or even Russia itself. The only obstacle left was the Foreign Office veto on operations inside the USSR. This ban, however, “was understood to refer to operations run within the country itself, for example by the Moscow station. There was a less stringent restriction on operations aimed at penetrating the USSR and the Soviet bloc from neighbouring countries”, including operations employing “members of disaffected national minorities.”³³ To bypass the veto on operating inside the Soviet Union, then, the reticence on working with émigré groups, expressed by Bevin and Hayter among others, and present in the “S.O. Handbook”, had to be ignored.

This was a turning point in the history of British secret operations. The Foreign Office was willing to give ground for a while, to comply with the requests of the armed forces. Several operations were run in the late 1940s and early 1950s: “Valuable” in Albania is perhaps the most famous, while “Jungle” targeted the Baltic and “Broadway” Poland. All these operations have received a reasonable amount of attention from researchers; SIS operations in the Ukraine, however, remained relatively unknown and under-studied.

5.2 Target: Ukraine

The release of a great quantity of CIA formerly-classified files relating to American special operations involving émigré groups has somehow bypassed the ruthless non-disclosure policy of SIS. British-American liaison was excellent in that field, and they tried to coordinate their operations, even if not at all times, and with various results. Thanks to the CIA files we can finally analyse SIS operations in the Ukraine, and this also presents a chance to analyse the similarities and differences between the American and the British approach. SIS, in fact, despite running a similar operation and in the same area as the CIA, chose to support and exploit a different émigré group, Stepan Bandera’s ZCh/OUN.

³² *Ibid.* p. 706.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 708.

5.2.1 First approach

The first contacts between British intelligence and Ukrainian nationalists dated back to the late 1920s in Romania, when the latter group was led by Symon Petliura first, and then Yevhen Konovalets. In the 1930s contact was established again in Czechoslovakia, but a formal relationship never developed. It was only after the end of World War II that a decision was made to use the nationalists operationally. Contact was made in 1948 in Germany with Bandera's Foreign Representation of the OUN through Major Bohdan Pidhajnyj, the chief of their operational section. At that time the group could claim to be the direct representative of the OUN and the UPA outside of the Ukraine. Bandera, who escaped to Vienna in 1945 and then moved to the American Zone of Germany, had been elected to the triumvirate of the *Provid* (council) of the OUN in 1946, along with Jaroslav Stetsko and General Chuprinka. Shortly after, the split between the ZCh/OUN and Mykola Lebed's group, the ZP/UHVR, became definite, but the British had already committed to Bandera's faction, for reasons that will be discussed later in this chapter. Operations were already developing, and in a satisfying manner, mostly thanks to the "competent and loyal" work of Major Pidhajnyj, a very different character from Bandera and Stetsko. With the leader of the group living semi-clandestinely in Germany, Pidhajnyj handled the recruitment of agents in the émigré community and quickly set up infiltration missions to the homeland. Initial operations were cautious and the crossings only happened via land, with many losses and setbacks; sadly, no more information on those first dispatches could be found in the available records.³⁴ Finally, between the 15th and 16th of May 1951, three groups were dispatched via air drop. One was liquidated in the Carpathians but the other two were successful. One of these two groups was led by Myron Matvievko, the chief of OUN's security branch, who arrived safely in the Lvov district and successfully established W/T contact with Britain in August 1951.³⁵ Matvievko was "an intellectually dishonest and incompetent person", who had been an Abwehr agent during the war.³⁶ He was known for his unreliability and for re-selling old

³⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, "Our relations with the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Crisis over Bandera", attachment to EGQA-37253, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11_0045.

³⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, "Traffic Exchange Between SMYOPIA and AECAVATINA 11 (MIRON), attachment B to EGMW-613, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0021.

³⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, MGM-A-793, "Project ICON: Postwar Ukrainian Exile Organizations in Western Europe", 20 October 1948, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0002.

reports to different agencies. The CIA definitively dropped him in 1950 but he kept working for Bandera, and thus for the British MI6.

Meanwhile, quarrels among the Ukrainian émigrés were beginning to affect the situation in the Homeland too. The fact that the British and the Americans were backing two different (and competing) émigré groups became known after the first successful infiltrations, and it generated fears in the insurgent army. Couriers arriving in Germany from the Ukraine in 1950 had brought an appeal for unity from the leaders of the UPA, and the CIA and SIS answered by sending a joint message that was delivered by agents infiltrating overland in June 1951. The message assured the resistance that the two western countries were “united in our endeavours to assist you in maintaining communication links between the homeland and abroad and are providing the technical help necessary to assure these communications.” The flow of “accurate, reliable and up-to-date information” was described as an invaluable factor in the “fight for freedom”, with no mention being made of effective material aid that was going to be provided for that fight.³⁷ Both services were primarily interested in the procurement of intelligence and only secondarily in providing moral and technical support to the Ukrainian underground. The Americans, however, had tried to tone down this insistence on the intelligence output in order to establish a trustworthy relationship with both the ZP/UHVR and the UPA. SIS, on the other hand, was very clear on the fact that its only interest in the resistance was to exploit its intelligence procurement potential as soon as possible.³⁸ This partially explains why the British got involved with the more ‘questionable’ of the two groups, one that was irremediably tainted by the reputation and attitude of its leader. Bandera emerged from his concealment in the summer of 1951, and met with an SIS representative in London, who then reported the following judgement:

We have to accept him for what he is; a professional underground worker with a terrorist background and ruthless notions about the rules of the game, acquired by hard experience, along with a thorough knowledge of the Ukrainian people [...] A bandit type if you like, with a burning patriotism which provides an ethical background and a justification for his banditry. No better and no worse of others of his kind I have had dealings with in the past.³⁹

³⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, “Our relations with the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Crisis over Bandera”, Attachment to EGQA-37253, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11_0045.

³⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, “AERODYNAMIC Ops. Vs. BANDERA-JAVELIN”, 25 September 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0024.

³⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, “Our relations with the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Crisis over Bandera”, Attachment to EGQA-37253, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11_0045

The necessity of dealing with the British made Bandera slightly less ruthless and uncompromising, but despite that he remained a “dictatorial type” and a “difficult customer” both to his sponsors and to his political opponents.⁴⁰ He believed in the notion that he was by right the leader of the Ukrainian people. Such insistence on his political prerogative did not bode well for the attempts the CIA and SIS were making at unifying the Ukrainian émigrés, and the situation started to have an impact on operations too. Myron started to assume an attitude of independence and intolerance towards the UPA and the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (UHVR), the highest political authority of the Ukrainian insurrection. The agents dispatched in June 1951 did not carry only the CIA/SIS joint letter, but a personal message from Bandera to Myron, with instructions to forward it to the leadership of the resistance. It was a personal attack against the ZP/UHVR; Bandera blamed them for the divisions in the emigration, accusing the group of refusing his proposal for amalgamation with the ZCh/OUN. The underground answered with a brief message, reminding the émigré leaders that they had no right to be quarrelling among themselves while in the homeland the members of the UPA were being killed every day.⁴¹

Being pressured by their SIS patrons, Bandera and Stetsko agreed to engage in talks with the ZP/UHVR. The two parties met in Germany in January 1952. The ZCh/OUN, however, put forward two requests that were clearly unacceptable to their counterpart: parity representation in the UHVR and a monopoly on communications with the homeland. The first condition meant that Bandera’s men would become effectively members of the ZP, as the group was the official foreign representative of the UHVR abroad. They would have thus gained a measure of control in Lebed’s group, without disbanding the ZCh/OUN or relinquishing their fealty to its leader and his authoritarian tendencies. The second condition was simply not compatible with the ZP/UHVR’s obligations towards the CIA. Negotiations thus quickly broke down. Bandera made another attempt at pleasing his British sponsor and stalling them at the same time, when in August 1952 he suddenly resigned from the leadership of the ZCh/OUN. The move, however, did not bring any effective changes or improvements in the situation because he was replaced by the “equally implacable” Stetsko.

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Meanwhile, Myron continued transmitting from the Ukraine. His messages were mostly reports on his situation and the conditions of other members of the underground he was in

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

contact with. He was able to send a courier to deliver a pouch to Colonel Koval, the commander of the UPA, in July 1952. He gave up meeting with the Colonel in person because of the relentless “opposition work” against him by the chief ZP/UHVR representative in the Ukraine, Vasyl Okhrimovich.⁴³ Myron’s splinter position in the resistance became evident again in the last months of 1952, when news of Bandera’s resignation reached him. Not only did he refuse to convey the information to Koval, but he reported that the Lvov district still recognised Bandera as the leader of the OUN and would demand a conference to be called in the Ukraine to make this recognition official.⁴⁴ In June 1953 Bandera was re-elected leader of the ZCh/OUN during a congress held in London. Myron was informed of this in September, and dispatched a courier to relay the information to Koval, but he was too late. In August, Okhrimovich, who had already reached the resistance headquarters, transmitted a message through the CIA channels in which the leadership in the homeland confirmed Lebed and his group’s mandate as the official foreign representative of the UHVR. Another message from the OUN Council affirmed that Bandera, having departed from the decisions of the party, was “neither formally nor in fact” the leader of the OUN. He was expected to “end his schismatic activities” and “call Myron to order.”⁴⁵ A triumvirate, or Committee of Three, made by Lev Rebet, Zinoviy Matla, and Bandera himself had to take over control of the ZCh/OUN and align it to the positions of the OUN Council in the Ukraine. The reason why Bandera was included in the triumvirate and not dismissed entirely was that he still retained a huge following in the homeland, and the influence of his figure among the people of the Ukraine was recognised even by his enemies. Despite that, with the diffusion of this message among the emigration, Bandera had no other choice but to align with the homeland directives. He accepted to meet Lebed and other members of the ZP/UHVR for another attempt at conciliation and the meetings started in September 1953.

In the same month, Myron announced that two couriers had been dispatched to the West, bringing much requested intelligence. One of them was Skob, a native Western Ukrainian, born in the Drohobych district. During the Second World War he worked as a teacher in a primary school and, at the same time, was a member of the OUN youth section. In 1945 he was transferred to the UPA, where he served as propaganda chief of a “mega district” or

⁴³ CIA FOIA ERR, “Traffic Exchange Between SMYOPIA and AECAVATINA 11 (MIRON)”, attachment B to EGMW-613, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0021.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, “Our relations with the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Crisis over Bandera”, attachment to EGQA-37253, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0045.

nadraion, one of the many territorial divisions of the underground, and then became *nadraionovi* (chief of a *nadraion*) of Yavoriv, which was part of the Lvov *krai*.⁴⁶ In that capacity, Skob did not know any members of the UHVR *provid* or of the UPA High Command; his direct superiors were the chief of the *krai*, a man called Chernetz, and Myron, who he met for the first time in 1952. In August 1953 Skob found, in a dead drop location, instructions to attend a meeting in one of the nearby villages. At the meeting he found, among the others, Myron and Orlyk, another courier from Poland who had accompanied him on a previous mission. The purpose of the meeting was to ask Skob to embark on a courier mission to the West. He had to deliver two packages of mail to Bandera himself in Munich. The pouch was sealed, and Skob had instruction to deliver it to Bandera and no one else, to complete the mission in secrecy and immediately return to the Ukraine. He was to seek aid from the British, but in the event he fell into American hands he had to maintain silence and insist on being turned to the British. Orlyk would accompany him at least as far as Poland. According to Skob, the reason why he was chosen for this mission was because Chernetz knew and trusted him, and also because he was familiar with the Polish-Soviet border and had already successfully crossed it in the past. The mission began on the 7th of September, when the two couriers crossed the border in civilian clothes. Thanks to Orlyk's contacts they reached a safehouse and then boarded a train to the town of Jelenia Gora, where they met the chief of contacts between Germany, Poland and the Ukraine, a man named Don. They spent the next two months moving between various safehouses and hiding, until the 4th of December, when Skob successfully crossed into Western Germany. Orlyk remained behind and was probably arrested along with Don shortly after, in a round-up operation by the Polish Security Services.⁴⁷ Skob was soon put under British custody. At the same time the Americans were questioning one of their Ukrainian agents, Marichka, who they suspected of being a Russian plant. The woman mentioned a man called Skob as working for the Soviets, and the British representative noted that it could be the same man in their custody.⁴⁸

Skob was thus questioned at length, and an agreement was reached between the American and British services to hold him until the CIA was sure of the success of the

⁴⁶ The structure of the Ukrainian underground was built on the following lines, from biggest to smallest territorial district: *Provid, Krai, Okrug, Nadraion, Raion, Kusch*.

⁴⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, "Biographical Sketch of SKOB (the Courier)", attachment A to EGMW-613, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0021.

⁴⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, "Transmittal of Kubark-Smyopia Meeting Minutes", 2 February 1955, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0028.

success of the counter-infiltration operation involving Taras, Marichka's husband. However, despite the good level of cooperation between the two services, this time a blunder was made: the British revealed to Skob details of the American operation.⁴⁹ Shortly after, despite reassurances that he would be resettled in Canada, Skob insisted in traveling to Munich to complete his mission. Despite the Americans' insistence on holding him, SIS stated that they "exercised no further control over Skob's movements and activities." They knew of his planned trip to Munich, but did not sanction it. The CIA's opinion was that "if it was not sanctioned it should have been prohibited."⁵⁰ Skob disappeared after leaving for Munich, to resurface in 1955 as a legal resident in Britain, possibly after making contact with Bandera. At least SIS had been able to obtain the content of his pouch, which included a good amount of intelligence on the repercussions and reactions in the Western Ukraine to the main developments in the USSR during late 1952 and 1953.

5.2.2 *Severing ties*

Shortly after Skob's departure from the Ukraine, the leaders of the Zch/OUN and ZP/UHVR met in Munich to discuss the message received from the homeland, which appointed Lebed as the supreme representative of the resistance abroad, and to try to mend the split in the emigration. At first, Bandera rejected the validity of the document and demanded to see it. When shown it, "he lost his equilibrium, flung the document to the table and questioned its legitimacy." A few days later, Bandera, after putting forward impossible requests, angered Lebed so much that he resorted to personal attack, calling Bandera "bandit", "Cain" and "evil-doer".⁵¹ The Zch/OUN leaders, however, did not share a unanimous position. Bandera and Stetsko felt that accepting the Committee of Three suggested by the Homeland meant giving up their freedom of action, while more moderate members, including Pidhajnyj and Matla, saw cooperation with the ZP/UHVR as the only viable option. Meanwhile, Bandera paid a visit to London and met with SIS officers who tried to persuade him to accept the triumvirate solution. This pressure, and the threat from his British sponsors to end their collaboration, convinced Bandera to agree with Lebed on the text of a message to be sent to

⁴⁹ See Chapter III.

⁵⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, "SKOB-MARICHKA Confrontation", 31 January 1956, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 15 (Operations)_0014.

⁵¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Zch/OUN – ZP/UHVR Talks, 22 September 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0023.

Myron, instructing him to subordinate to the leadership of the UHVR headquarters, and to end any schismatic activities. The talks ended without a definite solution to the conflict, but it was evident that a good part of the Zch/OUN leadership was being alienated by Bandera's uncompromising attitude. Pidhajnyj especially, from his strong position as operational chief of the Zch/OUN, got more and more close to Lebed, taking advantage of the latter's visit to London after the end of the talks. SIS wanted to reassure Lebed that they had "personally seen the message sent by Bandera to the groups in the Ukraine", and that they would do everything possible to find a solution to the present difficulties which were a serious threat to their interests and to the operational value of the groups in the field: "intelligence results were expected from these groups and if they were not obtained soon our support of them would cease."⁵² Myron acknowledged the receipt of the message in October 1953.

In November 1953, it seemed like the Committee of Three would finally be established. Bandera had apparently submitted to the will of the majority of his followers, and on 23rd of December he, Rebet and Matla signed an agreement outlining the Committee's functions and prerogatives. The quarrel between the Zch/OUN and the ZP/UHVR seemed to have been at least settled, but the hope was short-lived. Bandera, supported by a few fanatical followers, immediately tried to gain dominance over the Committee. In January 1954 he announced his withdrawal, accusing Rebet and Matla of "exceeding their mandates" and "trying to deprive the Zch/OUN of his prerogatives".⁵³ His actions, however, caused the final split among his followers. Bandera was publicly attacked by Pidajyj, and also lost the support of the Zch/OUN's most prominent journal, *Ukrainskij Samostijnik*. He retaliated by trying to seize the journal's editorial offices by force, and to deprive Pidhajnyj of his functions as Chief of Operations, but it was to no avail. The British, "having wasted so much time over dealing with Bandera", made another attempt to bring him to reason. At this meeting, held in London on the 24th and 25th of February, it was proposed to him to meet Matla for a final attempt to reach a compromise, but "Bandera refused this suggestion with arrogant finality."⁵⁴ The break between him and the British was now complete.

This had serious consequences for the Ukrainian operations. The majority of the agent candidates undergoing training in the UK declared their loyalty for Bandera, and thus had to be excluded from the operational plans. The new Zch/OUN, now fully aligned with the ZP/UHVR, suddenly found itself completely lacking any recruitment potential. There were

⁵² CIA FOIA ERR, "Our relations with the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Crisis over Bandera", attachment to EGQA-37253, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0045.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

two links still active in the Ukraine. One was Myron, and he was far from reliable. He kept transmitting at least until July 1954, but many of his messages were actually slander directed against Vasily Okhrimovich, the ZP/UHVR main operative in the Ukraine, who had been recently captured by the Bolsheviks and presented by them as a traitor of the resistance, an accuse that Myron was eager to transmit to the West. He also reported heavy losses in the Lvov *krai*, but he never made contact with the UHVR headquarters.⁵⁵ The other link was active in the Drohobych area and consisted of two operators dispatched in 1952, who subordinated themselves to a local commander called Vsevelod. No one in the emigration knew who this man was, his transmissions were very infrequent, and the operators never signed off their messages, instead Vsevelod did it every time. His most significant message was transmitted on the 2nd of July 1954, and reported information on a propaganda campaign by the Bolsheviks who were trying to resettle people from Western to Eastern Ukraine, with the promise of virgin lands, support, supplies and free transport.⁵⁶

By the summer of 1954, the British were ready to get rid of their Ukrainian connections. The subordination of the Zch/OUN to the ZP/UHVR provided the perfect opportunity. If what was left of SIS operations in the Ukraine could be transferred under the authority of the ZP/UHVR, then the CIA had to take responsibility for it. In June, Lebed departed for a six weeks' visit to Europe and England, to discuss operational matters with Pidhajnyj and British intelligence representatives. At the same time, the CIA and SIS held talks to decide the future of their Ukrainian operations. In the end, the British reassured Lebed that they recognised him as the Foreign Representative of the UHVR and the person in charge for contacts with the homeland, and that they would never resume a relationship with Bandera. They agreed to pass him all the political material they had received through their W/T links, and to pass through them any message that Lebed wanted to send, but only if these were handled by the CIA first. SIS, however, would cut off all financial support for the Zch/OUN, including the subsidy they were providing for *Ukrainskij Samostijnik*, previously handed to Bandera. Lebed also met personally with Pidhajnyj, who informed him of all the W/T links he handled, and showed him most of the outgoing and incoming traffic. Finally, Pidhajnyj revealed that SIS believed all of their operations into Poland and the Ukraine were penetrated and he feared the British were ready to get rid of them.

⁵⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, "Traffic Exchange Between SMYOPIA and AECAVATINA 11 (MIRON)", Attachment B to EGMW-613, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0021.

⁵⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, "Contacts with Vsevolod", attachment C to EGMW-613, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0021.

The Americans, however, were not willing to take over the operational side of the SIS' Ukrainian venture. When SIS hinted they were going to withdraw support for the Zch/OUN, Lebed agreed with the other members of the ZP/UHVR that in that case they would withdraw completely from operational cooperation with the British, "Myron and his link with the British be damned".⁵⁷ He presented a plan, drawn by members of both the émigré groups, for the creation of an English language bulletin to be called "Eastern European Affairs and Ukrainian Review". At the same time, he asked the help of the CIA to buy a printing press for the two Ukrainian language journals, *Suchasna* and *Samostijnik*, so that they could print their own papers and create employment for several members of the Zch/OUN, now left without the patronage of the British.⁵⁸ The CIA officially undertook support of the Zch/OUN, including their newspaper, in October 1955.⁵⁹ At that stage it was clear that the only positive aspect of émigré operations was their propaganda value, and this was the only thing worth salvaging. The last tie of SIS operations in the Ukraine was Myron. In 1955 doubts started to surface regarding his status. His messages were signed by "Marko", a W/T operator sent to Myron in 1953, but the experts were able to ascertain that the author of the messages was not Marko, but someone trying to duplicate his style. On the 9th of October Myron dispatched a group of couriers to the West, led by a man called Bohun. According to Pidhajnyj, no one in the Ukrainian emigration knew Bohun, except for Skob, who was now living in Britain. Pidhajnyj, uncertain on how to deal with that man, asked advice to father Ivan Hrinioch of the ZP/UHVR, who passed the information to the CIA. The Agency's Ukrainian contacts were interrogated on the matter and they believed that Bohun was yet another attempt by the Soviet intelligence to deceive the emigration and their sponsors into thinking the Ukrainian resistance was not controlled. Finally, an informant revealed to Pidhajnyj that even Bandera believed Myron to be either dead or under Soviet control.⁶⁰

5.2.3 Assessment

⁵⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, "Report of meeting with AECASSOWARY 2", 27 July 1954, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0012.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, message from the DCI, 28 December 1955, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0070.

⁶⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, message from Munich station to the DCI, 28 October 1955, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0050.

Assessing British operations with Ukrainian émigrés, it is hard not to draw a comparison with their American counterparts. Without considering operational issues, the careful selection process undertaken by the CIA before deciding which émigré group to support clearly seems to have held its advantages. If not more effective, the ZP/UHVR and Lebed proved to be definitively easier to deal with, and more reliable, than Bandera and his group. If in the future more sources become available, it will be interesting to understand the reasons behind the choice made by SIS. There are, however, two indirect sources that could shed some light on the issue. One is a CIA memorandum dated approximately March 1951, regarding specific arrangements for coordinated US – British operations with émigré groups. The other is the record of the talks held in London in April 1951 between representatives of the CIA and the State Department on one side, and SIS and the Foreign Office on the other.

The first document contains an analysis of the British relationship with émigrés, and the CIA’s opinion is that “the British feel that the UNR is a truer expression of Eastern Ukrainian politics than either the ZP/UHVR or OUN/B, which at least in background have a decidedly Galician tinge”.⁶¹ The UNR (Ukrainian National Republic) traditionally got on well with the Poles, contrary to the other two groups whose nationalist feelings dated back to the Polish occupation of Galicia (Lebed, Bandera and Stetsko were all involved in the assassination of Polish interior minister Pieracki in 1934). The British had an excellent relation with the Polish emigration: “the Poles are the cutouts at least for the exploratory stages of several Eastern European operations.”⁶²

For what reasons, then, did SIS get involved with Bandera? The answer is not clear. According to the CIA, the British may have been “toying with OUN/B for bargaining purposes”.⁶³ Another explanation could have been that the UNR was just a residual organ of the older emigration, and did not possess considerable recruiting power, especially compared to the unparalleled appeal that the charismatic figure of Bandera held among the Ukrainian people. SIS had made it clear that its only interest in the Ukrainian resistance was to exploit its intelligence procurement potential as soon as possible. The CIA, on the other hand, had tried to tone down this insistence on intelligence to establish good faith with the émigrés and “create the best possible atmosphere for a serious business discussion.”⁶⁴ The British, thus,

⁶¹ CIA FOIA ERR, office memorandum, “Specific arrangements suggested for inclusion in operational framework for coordinated U.S. – British operations with Russian émigré groups”, possibly March 1951, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9 (Development and Plans)_0031.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, “AERODYNAMIC Ops. Vs. BANDERA-JAVELIN”, 25 September 1953, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 11 (Operations)_0024.

in their rush to exploit the Ukrainian intelligence potential, did not care enough about Bandera's credentials or attitude, and ended up relying on a troublesome individual. It must be pointed out, however, that this seemingly careless approach also depended on the small amount of support they were committing to give since the beginning. In financial terms, this amounted to a meagre 6,000 marks per month to subsidize Zch/OUN activities, including their newspaper *Samostyynik*.

The second document is perhaps even more interesting, because it clearly presents the different views that the British and Americans had on the émigrés. The talks were held primarily to discuss the Ukrainian operations and to try to coordinate the respective efforts. More specifically, the Americans were trying to convince the British to drop Bandera and to align with their support for the ZP/UHVR. They did fail in this regard and the British defended their support for the OUN/B. This defence, however, can help us understand the reasons for that support, and thus answer the question presented earlier. SIS repeated that their approach to any émigré group since 1946 “had been designed solely to procure intelligence”, and their support was limited to what was strictly necessary to secure this cooperation. A British representative, whose name has been withheld in the document, “stated that the Foreign Office for their part were opposed to any policy involving political commitments towards USSR émigré groups of whatever complexion.”⁶⁵ The result was that, since the first contact between SIS and the émigré groups in 1946, this relationship had not involved British intelligence in any embarrassing political commitments, contrary to what had been originally feared. A “Mr Stevens” from the US State Department (possibly Leslie C. Stevens, Director of the Psychological Strategy Board from 1949), answered that support for intelligence operations implied some measure of political support, and that the American support for the Ukrainians “was considered by the State Department in the wider framework of American views on post-war Soviet Russia.”⁶⁶ The main difference between the American and the British approach, thus, was that the CIA considered the groups they were exploiting not only from an intelligence standpoint but also politically. The tendency of SIS to regard the émigrés opportunistically for intelligence purposes was consistent with the general negative British attitude towards émigré groups. In conclusion, support for the Zch/OUN was motivated by the fact that the British did not want to get politically involved in any way, and always strived to confine themselves to operational issues. This fact was understood by

⁶⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, “CIA/State Department - SIS/Foreign Office Talks on Operations Against the USSR”, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 9_0042.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the Zch/OUN leaders, who never asked for political support.⁶⁷ Bandera was confident enough in his position that he did not feel he needed any help in that regard. As a staunch nationalist, he grudgingly accepted any help from foreign powers, including the little material support that SIS gave to his group. He was, then, the best candidate for the British and their strategy of limited involvement, which was surely prompted by the Foreign Office due to its distrust for covert action. The Americans, on the other hand, “were also concerned with Special Operations which automatically brought in the resistance movement and raised the question of political support.”⁶⁸ By choosing the more moderate ZP/UHVR, the CIA also committed to a political support of the group, because this position was consistent with the State Department’s view.

The difference in the long term was evident: while the CIA’s relationship with the Ukrainians lasted until the 1980s, SIS got rid of his émigrés in 1954. Stepan Bandera continued dispatching agents to the Ukraine on his own, at least until the spring of 1956.⁶⁹ The CIA and SIS kept an eye on him but without getting involved. His dealings, however, did not go unnoticed by the Bavarian government that did not look favourably at intelligence activities made by Ukrainian émigrés on Bavarian soil, and wanted to check if the Americans were involved before acting.⁷⁰ Bandera continued living in relative anonymity in Munich until 15 October 1959, when he collapsed in front of his house and died for no apparent reason. Further investigation revealed that he was poisoned with cyanide gas by a KGB agent. In 2010 Bandera was awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine by the Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko. The award was declared illegal by the following president Viktor Yanukovich. On the 1st of January 2014, on the occasion of Bandera’s 105th birthday, thousands of people rallied in the streets of Kiev and in Lvov, as proof of the controversial but undeniable legacy that he left among the Ukrainian people.

Chapter VI

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, message from Munich station to the DCI, 28 October 1955, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 12 (Operations)_0050.

⁷⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, message from Munich station to the DCI, 27 September 1956, AERODYNAMIC Vol. 14 (Operations)_0017.

Why the Émigrés

In this work, I have endeavoured to demonstrate how the émigrés played a key role as providers of Human intelligence on the Soviet target in the 1950s. The process of how and why the émigrés were assigned this role has been presented both in general and through the single case studies, focusing on the historical contingencies, such as the high priority assigned to early warning, the pressing need to obtain information on the Soviets, and the scarcity of means of doing so. One of the main objections, however, that can be moved against the CIA and the SIS' choice to utilise the émigrés is that the knowledge that both agencies possessed regarding the émigré groups depicted them as unreliable and difficult to control. It is thus worth, at this point, to take a deeper look at the assessment that Western intelligence gave on the émigrés in the early stages of their cooperation, to better understand why, and to what extent, those objections were discarded.

A document in the Project Aenoble files, dated 14th of September 1950, presents two very different views, inside the CIA, on the émigré matter. The document is particularly interesting because it reports a conversation with James Jesus Angleton, at that time head of the Office of Special Operations. The name of his interlocutor remains classified. His purpose, however, was to discuss the exploitation of the NTS by the Agency, first with Angleton as representative of the OSO, and then with a representative of the Office of Policy Coordination. While the OPC was already exploiting the NTS, Angleton believed that the OSO should get involved too. His personal judgement was that the NTS possessed “excellent potential”. He also had “the utmost confidence in Mr Boldyreff” (a prominent member of the group, then residing in Washington). Angleton’s project for exploitation included assigning a full-time case officer to Boldyreff and then to send both to Germany “to begin clandestine operations into the USSR”.¹

The author of the document raised some objections during the conversation. The NTS was a large and unwieldy organisation, with poor security and indications of Soviet, French and British penetration. Controlling it would have been difficult, because the objectives of the NTS could conflict with those of the CIA and, finally, any operation involving such a large organisation would have been extremely costly. Angleton’s answer was exemplar of the trend of “imminent danger” that lay at the core of American policymaking in those years:

¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble Vol.1_002.

“Mr Angleton, considering war imminent, felt that these objections were unrealistic and that energetic exploitation of the NTS was necessary.”² Years later, as Head of the Counterintelligence Staff of the CIA, Angleton came to regret his lax approach to security. In the 1960s he became convinced of Soviet penetration not only inside the Agency, but also in many foreign governments.³ Regardless, the OSO entered the émigré operation, but only as a partner. The OPC project of exploitation was already in full swing in 1950, and duplication had to be avoided, so a joint project was drawn up.

The OPC’s judgement of the NTS, however, was also not very flattering. Another document from the Aenoble files, outlining the OPC project in December 1950, contains the following assessment:

NTS has not had any post war penetration of the Soviet Union, nor do they have many contacts within the Soviet Union who are actively sending out information. During WWII their penetration was through Poland and their contacts are very nebulous today. They are reported to have some Red Army defectors in their organization however.⁴

Was the appeal of these alleged Red Army defectors so great as to lead the Americans to disregarding all the other negative aspects of the organisation? The truth is probably different. It is evident from the available records that American intelligence (in this case the OPC) was hoping to control and steer the émigré groups in order to limit their flaws, such as poor security, and exploit at best their resources, chiefly manpower. The document from December 1950 also contains a list of the terms that the OPC could dictate to the NTS, using its “power of the purse”. These terms included free access to all NTS resources, techniques and contacts. Also, the CIA (with which the OPC was about to merge at the time) would “train, dispatch and debrief agents for all missions with any security measures we might require for these missions”. This meant that, regardless of their loyalty to their fellow émigrés, once they became agents, the NTS recruits had to prioritise their relationship with the CIA and to follow strict security measures. Finally, the OPC set out not to deal “with the infamous Boldyreff nor with any branch NTS organizations, some of which have been penetrated.” The case officers would instead deal with Okolovitch, described as “the most competent intelligence person in NTS”.⁵ This last specification is particularly interesting when compared to Angleton’s opposite judgement on Boldyreff, reported earlier. It shows

² *Ibid.*

³ For more details see: Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior: James Jesus Angleton: The CIA’s Master Spy Hunter* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1991). In more recent years, Angleton’s story has inspired a box office movie (*The Good Sheperd*, 2006) and a television mini-series (*The Company*, 2007).

⁴ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble Vol. 1_003.

⁵ *Ibid.*

how the fragmentation of the émigré groups made them very difficult to assess: different intelligence officers may have dealt with different émigré leaders or factions, resulting in completely different judgements. This also fuelled the idea, perhaps naïve, that only some branches of the organisation had been penetrated, which then led to the hope of salvaging the parts that could prove useful for the long term goals of the Western agencies: early warning and collecting whatever intelligence they could on the Soviets.

6.1 Intelligence collection and early warning

Early warning and intelligence collection were tightly connected. To understand how and why, it is important to analyse the intelligence estimates, the point in which the information collected through intelligence work is used to predict future events and developments. In the specific case of the present study, the threat of an imminent Soviet attack had a major influence on the intelligence requirements, and is well reflected in the estimates. The analysis of a few documents can be very helpful in understanding this concept and its concrete ramifications.

On the 2nd of April 1948, the Central Intelligence Agency disseminated a paper called ORE 22-48, “Possibility of Soviet Direct Military Action during 1948”. The study was reviewed six months later by a joint ad hoc committee, representing the CIA and the intelligence agencies of the Department of State, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.⁶ The conclusions of both the first study and of the review was, apparently, ambivalent. On the one hand, “the preponderance of available evidence and of considerations derived from the ‘logic of the situation’ supports the conclusion that the USSR will not resort to direct military action during 1948.”⁷ The review committee agreed that this conclusion could be extended to 1949. On the other hand, the first study agreed that: “the possibility must be recognised that the USSR may resort to direct military action in 1948”, in view of the strategic advantage that the Soviets imputed to the occupation of Western Europe and the Near East, and of “the combat readiness and disposition of the Soviet Armed forces”.⁸ The ad hoc committee also pointed out that the events of the past six months (March to August

⁶ NARA, RG 263, Intelligence Publication Files, 1945-1950, ORE 22-48 (Addendum), “Possibility of Direct Soviet Military Action during 1948-49”.

⁷ NARA, RG 263, Intelligence Publication Files, 1945-1950, ORE 22-48, “Possibility of Direct Soviet Military Action during 1948”.

⁸ NARA, RG 263, Intelligence Publication Files, 1945-1950, ORE 22-48 (Addendum).

1948) which constituted setbacks to the Soviet international position, added pressure to the USSR, thus increasing the possibility of Soviet “diplomatic ventures”. These ventures, while not constituting an act of war, could nonetheless lead to a war caused by “miscalculations”. This ostensible contradiction is best explained in the section of the study called “Basis for Estimate”: “Available intelligence bearing on the stated problem is too meagre to support a conclusion that the USSR either will or will not resort to deliberate military action during 1948-49.”⁹ There was not enough information available to reach a conclusion regarding Soviet intentions for the immediate future, and yet such a conclusion was needed to support, and direct, US planning. The comments made by the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) on the study are worth reporting here, as they best explain the situation. The ONI, while agreeing generally with the discussion, felt that the “Basis for Estimate” as presented was not valid: “If the position is taken that the intelligence available cannot support conclusions one way or another, any conclusions drawn from such a basis for estimate are of doubtful value for US planning.”¹⁰

Two main themes emerge from the analysis of this paper. One is that the main concern of the US intelligence establishment in those years was to predict when and if “the combat readiness and disposition of the Soviet armed forces” would translate into direct military action. The influence that an immediate threat of war held over the whole intelligence process cannot be overemphasized. The first three points of the discussion in ORE 22-48 are clear in that regard:

1. The Soviet military forces are estimated to have the current capability of overturning all of Western Europe and the Near East to Cairo within a short period of time.
2. Soviet military forces along the frontiers of Western Europe and the Near East are estimated to be combat ready and generally so disposed that they could launch an immediate offensive.
3. Since the end of the war Soviet Ground Forces have been reorganised to provide a substantial increase in mobility, more effective firepower, and improved leadership on all levels. The mobilization system permits tripling of strength within 30 days.¹¹

⁹ NARA, RG 263, Intelligence Publication Files, 1945-1950, ORE 22-48.

¹⁰ NARA, RG 263, Intelligence Publication Files, 1945-1950, ORE 22-48 (Addendum).

¹¹ NARA, RG 263, Intelligence Publication Files, 1945-1950, ORE 22-48.

Today, it is safe to say that Soviet military capabilities in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War were overestimated. Before the famous bomber gap in the late 1950s and the missile gap in the 1960s, something that we could define as the ground gap happened in the late 1940s. The National Security Council Report NSC 100, “Recommended Policies and Actions in Light of the Grave World Situation”, dated 11th of January 1951, presented Soviet ground forces as overwhelming in terms of manpower and tanks:

about 7 million Russian men are either in the military or have had military service and are considered to be available on mobilization. By 1954 it is estimated that some 15 million more will be suitable and available for the formation of divisions. These figures do not include European Russian satellite ground troops, or Chinese Communist ground forces.¹²

At this point, it should be remembered that Soviet casualties during World War II amounted to 26.6 million of men, according to a study by the Russian Academy of Sciences.¹³ Military losses alone accounted to 8.7 million, according to the Russian Ministry of Defence, out of the circa 20 million men of the Red Army in 1941.¹⁴ These numbers have been subject to a long-lived debate for years, due to the difficulty of estimating the real number of losses on the Eastern front. Civilian loss estimates fluctuate between 7 and 26 million, and military ones between 8 and 14 million.¹⁵ Even taking minimum estimates as true, it still looks puzzling how the Russians alone could bring to the field 22 million soldiers by 1954, without having to recruit 9 years old children. In comparison, a memorandum of the UK Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee from the end of 1947, states that the overall estimate at the time for Russian troops outside the USSR, excluding the Far East, is 700,000 (compared to the 820,000 of a previous report).¹⁶ The benefit of hindsight, however, should not influence our judgement of the priorities of the Western intelligence community in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The threat of an imminent Soviet attack was perceived as real, and this was the core belief around which all aspects of intelligence gathering, analysis and interpretation revolved.

The slow but steady growth of tensions in the post-War years, marked by the Turkey and Iran crises in 1946, suddenly escalated in 1948 with two episodes: in February, the Soviet-

¹² NARA, RG 59, S/S-NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 63 D 351, 1, NSC 100 series.

¹³ Evgeny Andreev et al., *Naselenie Sovetskogo Soiuza, 1922–1991* (Moscow, Nauka, 1993).

¹⁴ Grigori F. Krivosheev (ed.), *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (London, Greenhill 1997).

¹⁵ For a non-Russian study on these numbers, see John Ellis, *World War II, A Statistical Survey* (New York, Facts on File, 1993).

¹⁶ TNA, CAB 158/2, JISC Memoranda, Sep-Dec 1947, file n. 62.

inspired coup helped the Communist party of Czechoslovakia to take over the government, this bringing into the Soviet orbit the last independent country of Eastern Europe, and the Berlin blockade that started in June, and seemedly brought the world on the edge of another global conflict. This sequence of crises made the prospect of a Soviet attack more than plausible. However, before the 29th of August 1949, when the first Soviet atomic bomb was detonated, the idea of a direct attack to America was still not contemplated. The immediate military threat was an attack to Europe, and the White House and the Pentagon wanted an estimate of the capabilities and intentions of the Soviet forces. The war scare became even worse in 1949, when it was estimated that Soviet bombers were capable of dropping atomic bombs on American soil. “Early warning” became an imperative requirement. The only hope to obtain that was using radio-equipped agents stationed at strategic locations within the Soviet Union. Harry Rositzke recalls in his memoirs “one heated session in a Pentagon conference room” where an Army colonel banged his fist on the table and shouted: “I want an agent with a radio on every goddamn airfield between Berlin and the Urals.” It wasn’t a matter of whether the Soviet attacked, but of when. The pressure was on the CIA, as the newly-established intelligence hub, to procure the information the Pentagon and Washington required. From 1948 to 1954 “the CIA operated almost solely as an instrument for the Department of Defense and its theatre commanders. Their need was great.”¹⁷The émigrés were the least expensive and dangerous means to comply with that request.

The second theme that emerges from ORE 22-48 and its addendum, is the lack of intelligence on the Soviet target. As the Office of Naval Intelligence pointed out, if there was no support for any conclusions on Soviet intentions, then it was pointless to make these conclusions in the first place. To base policy-planning on such shaky foundations would have been ill-advised. Putting together the two themes, then, the necessities of Western intelligence in those years were clear. One was to build an effective early warning system, which could spot the signs of a military aggression at the earliest time possible. The other was to gather more information on the Soviet target. The intelligence gap had to be filled to proceed with effective planning. After collection and before planning, however, intelligence needs to be processed, interpreted and disseminated. First Britain, and then the United States, created two organism to sit in the delicate position crossing the intelligence producer/consumer divide. Because of the importance that both bodies, the Joint Intelligence

¹⁷ Rositzke, *The CIA's Secret Operations*, pp.20-21.

Committee and the National Security Council, had in the development of the Cold War, it is worth assessing their role in influencing intelligence requirements and strategies.

6.1.1 The JIC and the NSC

The Joint Intelligence Committee was established in Britain in 1936, as a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. During the Second World War, recognising the fundamental role played by intelligence collection in the war effort, especially thanks to the successes of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the JIC saw its functions, and importance, expand quickly, to become the highest authority on intelligence in the United Kingdom. The Committee was composed of the heads of the various intelligence agencies and of senior representatives from the customer departments such as the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the Home Office. The beginning of the Cold War caused the JIC to reaffirm its role at the centre of British intelligence production. The years 1947-48 saw accelerating tensions between the Soviet Union and the West. The introduction of the Marshall Plan, the formation of the Cominform as a response, the Czechoslovakian coup and finally the Berlin blockade were some of the events that led to a reassessment of the JIC's priorities. In February 1948, the JIC charter was re-drafted and its duties redefined, including "higher direction to operations of defence intelligence and security."¹⁸ The JIC gave top priority to Signals intelligence, especially related with four areas of Soviet activity: the development of atomic, chemical or biological weapons, other new Soviet weapons, the Air Force and guided weapons. The high priority given by the JIC to Signals intelligence on Soviet strategic weapons, however, did not achieve great success in the late 1940s. A report from July 1948, titled "Soviet Intentions, Interests and Capabilities", estimating the date by which the Soviets would develop an atomic bomb, put forward January 1951 as a worst-case analysis, and January 1954 as a more realistic one. Thirteen months after the report, the first Soviet nuclear device (code-named "First Lightning") was successfully detonated.¹⁹

The previously listed target priorities emerged from the concerns that the Chiefs of Staff had held since the end of the war, regarding the superiority of Soviet military forces over

¹⁸ JIC (48) 21, "Charter for the Joint Intelligence Committee", 27 February 1948, L/WS/1/1051, India Office Library and Record. Quoted in: Richard J. Aldrich and Michael Coleman, "The cold war, the JIC and British signals intelligence, 1948", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 4 No. 3, 1989, pp. 535-549.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

those of the Western European countries. The quick technological advancements of the following years exacerbated the fear that Great Britain, with its densely populated territory, could be an easy target for the new weapons of mass destruction that were being developed.²⁰ Given these concerns, it was clear that the JIC, as the highest authority for intelligence in the United Kingdom, should have been primarily preoccupied with the warning of a possible Soviet aggression. Several times, however, the Committee failed in this duty. In the late 1970s a report to assess the performance of the JIC in warning about foreign acts of aggression was assigned to Doug Nicoll, a veteran intelligence officer who had been Deputy-Director of GCHQ. The “Nicoll Report” covered seven case studies: from the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968) to the intervention in Poland (1980-81). While all these events, and the report itself, are subsequent to the period that is the focus of this research, the general lesson identified by Nicoll is still relevant. While conceding that “the provision of warning of possible aggressive action by the USSR against the West must be the highest priority requirement laid upon the JIC”, Nicoll pointed out that since its creation in 1936, the Committee had been a body designed to assess strategic intelligence. During the Cold War, its major preoccupation was to identify trends in Soviet behaviour and monitoring their advances in research and development of weapons; a ‘long term role’ that fitted badly with that of warning of an imminent attack.²¹ To properly fulfil this second role, the JIC and British intelligence in general tried to rely on Sigint to replicate the extraordinary achievements of Ultra during the Second World War but, as explained previously, with little success.

The American equivalent of the JIC was the National Security Council, established by President Truman in 1947 with the National Security Act that, among the other things, also established the formation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Truman wanted a reorganisation of the military establishment, and the NSC was created to advise the President on defence and foreign affairs. Intelligence was a crucial part of the NSC’s work from the beginning: the DCI sat in the Council as the intelligence advisor and, according to the National Security Act, the CIA was directly answerable to the NSC. According to the Act, the Agency had to advise the NSC on intelligence and make recommendations on related matters, produce intelligence estimates and reports, and finally perform “additional services”

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Michael S. Goodman, “The Dog That Didn’t Bark: The Joint Intelligence Committee and Warning of Aggression”, *Cold War History*, Vol. 7 No. 4, 2007, pp. 529-551.

and “other functions and duties related to intelligence” as the National Security Council may direct.²²

The National Security Council directives helped shape the process and the requirements of intelligence collection, especially during the CIA’s early years. One of the most important directives is NSC 10/2, dated June 1948. It recognised the need for covert operations to respond to “the vicious covert activities of the USSR”, and put these under the responsibility of the CIA or, more specifically, of the Office of Special Projects, a new body created within the Agency.²³ More importantly, NSC 10/2 established a mechanism for presidential control over covert operations that endures to this day.²⁴ The Director of Central Intelligence, along with representatives of the Secretary of State and of the Secretary of Defense, formed a committee that had to ensure that “covert operations were planned and conducted in a manner consistent with US foreign and military policies and with overt activities.”²⁵ Analysing NSC 10/2 makes evident that, at least in 1948, the requirements of the United States were quite different from those of the United Kingdom. Covert activities were given a higher priority than intelligence collection or early warning systems against a Soviet attack. Much would change, however, after “First Lightning” exploded on the 29th of August 1949. The National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 1311 (NSCID 13), approved on the 19th of January 1950, was particularly significant because it showed the concerns of the NSC regarding the collection of information on the Soviet target. The Directive, titled “Exploitation of Soviet and Satellite Defectors outside the United States”, began by stating that: “The best sources of information and intelligence on the Soviet world, necessary in the interests of national security, are defectors from Soviet control.” The Central Intelligence Agency was thus made responsible for the covert exploitation of defectors, for intelligence purposes or operational uses. The nature and identity of these defectors was clearly defined in the directive:

The term ‘defectors’ is here employed to denote individuals who escape from the control of the USSR or countries in the Soviet orbit, or who, being outside such jurisdiction or control, are unwilling to return to it, and who are of special interest to the US Government (a) because they are able to add valuable new or confirmatory information to existing US knowledge of the Soviet world, (b) because they are of operational value

²² Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, p. 35.

²³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment, Psychological and Political Warfare*, eds. C. Thomas Thorne, Jr., David S. Patterson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), Document 292.

²⁴ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, p. 41.

²⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment, Psychological and Political Warfare*, eds. C. Thomas Thorne, Jr., David S. Patterson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), Document 292.

to a US agency, or (c) because their defection can be exploited in the psychological field.²⁶

The NSCID 13 shows that, in 1950, the National Security Council, representing both the consumers and the main provider of intelligence in the United States, recognised that Humint had a primary role in spying on the Soviet target. This contrasted with the position of the British JIC that, as explained before, relied more on Sigint. The United States, however, shared with Britain the same preoccupation over a sudden act of aggression by the Soviets and the same need for an early warning system, especially after the development of the Soviet atomic bomb. The British themselves did not completely discard Humint, as shown by their Ukrainian venture presented in this study.

It is important, at this point, to understand why Human intelligence retained such an importance during the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s. This will also help in answering the question presented at the beginning of this chapter: why the émigrés? The answer, in brief, is that the shortcomings of Sigint in those years contributed to a focus on Humint operations to gather intelligence on the Soviets, and the émigrés were an essential part of that.

6.1.2 Sigint and Humint in the Early Cold War

Signals intelligence did not have a good record in the early 1950s. The American equivalent of GCHQ, the National Security Agency, was formed in 1952 to manage and direct all US government Sigint. Previously, that activity had been the prerogative of military intelligence, with the Signal Security Agency (SSA) of the Army and the Naval Communications Intelligence Organisation (OP-20-G) being particularly active, and successful, during the Second World War, mostly in the Pacific theatre against Japan. Both the Army and the Navy Communications Intelligence (Comint) structures were hit by post-war demobilisation, resulting in a sharp reduction of their manpower and resources. In May 1949, with a directive issued by the Secretary of Defense, the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA) was created, which had direction and control over all US Comint, and was the direct predecessor of the

²⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950-1955, The Intelligence Community, 1950-1955*, eds. Douglas Keane, Michael Warner (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2007), document 252

NSA. The Army, Navy and Air Force retained control only over their own tactical cryptologic activities.²⁷

The NSA's most important target during the Cold War was the Soviet Union: "as of June 1949, 71 per cent of all American Comint intercept personnel and 60 per cent of all American Comint processing personnel were working on the 'Soviet Problem'".²⁸ Spying on the Soviets, however, proved to be much more difficult than intercepting German and Japanese communications during the war, if only for geographical reasons: the USSR was the largest country of the world, spanning over an area that was three times the size of the United States. Such difficulties called for the United States and Britain to reformulate their intelligence exchange agreements, to better coordinate their efforts and to make a more effective use of their resources. The British-United States Communication Intelligence Agreement (BRUSA) in 1946 and then the UK-USA Communications Intelligence Agreement (UKUSA) represented, according to many historians, the apex of cooperation between the two countries during the Cold War. Thanks to the agreements, scarce Sigint resources could be allocated to targets carefully selected by the partner countries (that also included Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as members of the Commonwealth). These efforts were initially quite successful. Even if British and American cryptanalysts could not apparently break the high level Soviet diplomatic cyphers, they were still getting good intelligence on the capabilities of the Soviet armed forces and industry.

There were two main reasons behind these early successes. The first was that, after the war, the Soviets were still using a number of foreign-made cryptographic systems that they had either acquired from Britain or the US under the lend-lease program, or captured from the Germans. The second was the Soviet blunder in the use of the one-time pad system, which became more or less famous after the disclosure of the Venona project.²⁹ The system worked by using a complicated code that was then "superenciphered" by adding a numeric key stream from a one-time pad to the code. If used correctly, it was virtually unbreakable. The team of analysts working on the Venona intercepts, however, found clues that the additive key employed to superencipher the code may have been used more than once, creating the condition known as a "depth". As it turned out, the Soviet company that

²⁷ Matthew M. Aid, "The National Security Agency and the Cold War", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16 No. 1, 2001, pp. 27-66.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 29.

²⁹ The Venona Project ran from 1943 to 1980. Its purpose was the decryption and translation of messages sent by the Soviet intelligence agencies. For more information see: David Alvarez, "Behind Venona: American Signals Intelligence in the Early Cold War", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 14 No. 2, 1999, pp. 179-186.

generated the KGB's one-time pads produced about 35,000 pages of duplicate key, as a result of pressures brought by the German advance on Moscow during World War II. The duplicate pages were sent to distant entities in an attempt to lessen the impact of this weakness. Although it was believed at that time that the existence of two of the same “depths” was not exploitable, new techniques were invented by the cryptanalysts for this application.³⁰ Breaking the communications of the KGB and the GRU led, among other things, to identification of some Soviet spies in the United States and other allied countries. As stated in chapter I, much of this success would come to an end on 29 October 1948, “Black Friday”, due to the treachery of AFSA cryptanalyst William Weisband that prompted a worldwide change of Soviet cryptographic systems and communication procedures.

Two years later, in 1950, American and British Sigint efforts failed to warn of the outbreak of the Korean War. That same conflict, however, signed the beginning of a rejuvenation effort for American Signals intelligence. The situation had become critical by 1951, with both civilian and military intelligence officers, including DCI Walter Bedell Smith, complaining about the poor performance of the AFSA. On the 24th of October 1952 President Truman signed a secret directive entitled “Communications Intelligence Activities”, which abolished AFSA and transferred its responsibilities to the newly created NSA, with the purpose “to exploit to the maximum the available resources of all participating departments and agencies and to satisfy the legitimate intelligence requirements of all such departments and agencies.” Ten years after its foundation, the NSA had doubled its personnel and built a network of seventy strategic intercept stations around the world.³¹

Throughout the 1950s, the quality and quantity of intelligence on the Soviet target produced by Human Intelligence sources kept declining. This situation culminated in the 1960s: in 1962, for example, the CIA’s Humint assets, including Colonel Oleg Pentovski, failed to provide warning of the movement of men and weaponry to Cuba that preceded the Missile Crisis. The early warning system had completely failed, bringing the world on the edge of nuclear war. As a consequence, intelligence agencies and analysts started relying more and more on Sigint and, with the development of photo reconnaissance and satellites, on Imagery Intelligence (Imint). It was a slow process, however, and throughout all the 1950s Human intelligence maintained a relevant, if not prominent, value in spying on the

³⁰ Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series, Venona: an Overview. Document ID 3575728. Available online at www.nsa.gov.

³¹ Matthew M. Aid, “The National Security Agency and the Cold War”, pp. 35-36.

Soviet target. The main providers of intelligence from behind the Iron Curtain, and an essential part of the early warning system, were the émigrés.

6.2 Propaganda

The question presented at the beginning of this chapter has been answered with two main points: the émigrés were one of the most important sources of Humint on the Soviet Union, and an essential part of the early warning system. There is, however, another reason that explains the importance of the émigrés in the Cold War: their propaganda value. This can be used to explain not only why the émigrés were given such relevance by the secret warriors of the West, but also why and how this relationship lasted for many years after covert operations on the field, such as infiltration, were disbanded. In fact, several times in this study the fact has been mentioned that the operations here analysed started as paramilitary or intelligence collection ventures, to then evolve and being steered towards propaganda.

Project Aerodynamic provides a great example of how the émigré projects evolved throughout the years, and how propaganda activities were quickly recognised as the best use of the émigrés potential. Among these activities, the funding, by the US Government, of the Prolog Research and Publishing Corporation, was perhaps the most successful. Prolog was established by the Zp/UHVR in 1952. Lebed was its first president, and other influential members of the Zp group, such as Daria Rebet and Vasyl Okhrymovych, were also involved in Prolog at some point or another.

In the early 1950s, the strategy of supporting nationalist and partisan forces inside the Soviet Republic of Ukraine was showing all of its shortcomings. After the capture of Okhrymovych in October 1952, and the following fallout of what little reliable communication existed between the Ukrainian resistance and the West, a change in the Ukrainian émigré strategy became necessary. In Washington, it became clear that the struggle behind the Iron Curtain, to be supported, needed not “revolutionary” but “evolutionary” methods. Prolog’s aim was to promote Ukrainian national identity and culture against the threat of Soviet nationality policies and russification. Founded in Philadelphia and soon moved to New York City, Prolog was since its creation a subsidiary company of the CIA, even if the overt source of funding was the State Department, as long-

time president Roman Kupchinsky candidly admitted..³² This relatively stable financial relationship meant that Prolog had no need to collect funds from the émigré community, thus remaining outside the tangle of émigré politics and the constant conflicts between rival factions.³³

Prolog activities were very different from those of other émigré organisations. Influenced by the democratic outlook of the Zp/UHVR group, Prolog did not try to export émigré politics to Soviet Ukraine or to re-build a nationalist underground in the USSR. Its activities were overt, and it could publish a wide ideological variety of books, from national communist, liberal democratic, nationalist and dissident authors, thus expressing a real political academic pluralism. Prolog staffers and supporters met visitors from Soviet Ukraine, including high level academics and writers and members of the Soviet establishment, but also members of dance and choir groups. These meetings developed contacts and unofficial networks that served to a variety of purposes: they facilitated smuggling anti-Soviet literature to the USSR, and could also provide some basic intelligence or information otherwise unavailable in the West. Such activities fell perfectly in line with the CIA “Redskin” project, the evolution of “Redsox”; the new strategy abandoned infiltration attempts inside the Soviet bloc in favour of activities targeting Soviet travellers to the West or using people who visited the USSR overtly.

Over its forty years of activity, Prolog published more than 200 books and monographs, along with magazines. The primary one was the monthly *Suchasnist* (published bi-weekly in the 1950s with the name *Suchasna Ukrayina*). There was also an English-language magazine, called Prologue. All of these publications circulated beyond the Iron Curtain, in the Soviet Ukrainian Republic, among dissidents and cultural activists. Prolog’s books and magazines were re-printed in miniature format for easier smuggling. These copies of *Suchasnist* were also printed on special paper that would dissolve if dropped into water, in the event of a raid by Soviet security forces. Some of Prolog’s books were disguised as Soviet books: a prominent example was Lebed’s history of the UPA, concealed as a history of Soviet partisans. Other publications were mailed as letters to Soviet Ukraine from around the world. Finally, gas balloons were also used for dropping subversive literature.³⁴

The story of Prolog is without a doubt a success story of American support for Ukrainian émigrés. The establishment of the group signified a movement from a “revolutionary” to an

³² Roman Kupchinsky, “Ukraine during the Cold War: the role of Prolog Research Corp”, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 30 November 2008.

³³ Kuzio “U.S. support for Ukraine’s liberation during the Cold War”, p. 53.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

“evolutionary” method for struggle against Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe, from military or para-military methods to exclusively political propaganda work. In supporting Prolog and the Zp/UHVR, the US government provided a democratic alternative to Soviet totalitarian rule in Ukraine for the democratically minded Ukrainian émigrés, who would have been otherwise dominated by the nationalist groups and factions, meaning that the only alternative to Soviet rule would have been nationalism of the Bandera kind. Prolog “was an excellent example, for little money, of an organisation able to serve as a mouthpiece for the dissident movement and help keep it known and to a certain extent alive.”

6.2.1 The Radios

It would be impossible to fully explain the value of propaganda for émigré operations without mentioning the Radios. According to A. Ross Johnson, former director of Radio Free Europe and of the RFE/RL Research Institute,

The Radios were not the beginning but the culmination of efforts in the late 1940s and early 1950s to harness the talents of recent émigrés from the Soviet Union and Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe to promote the United States’ national interest in the aftermath of World War II. This process focused initially on supporting émigrés financially and preparing them for a role in restoring freedom in their homelands in peace or war, rather than putting them to work as communicators.³⁵

This statement is helpful to understand how, in what could be defined as the exploitation of the émigré community in the early years of the Cold War, two trends can be distinguished. One is that of their use in covert operations, including the role of intelligence collectors. The other, which includes the Radio, is that of propaganda. These two strands crossed paths quite often, and it is important, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of those events, to understand how and when. Also, propaganda efforts using the émigrés were by most definitions successful, surely more than their use for covert action. Hence, by considering the “émigré effort” in its entirety, as a more or less coherent Cold War weapon, propaganda can help us reevaluate the success of that effort as a whole. It should be useful, then, to provide clear definitions of the terms “propaganda”, “political warfare” and “covert operations”, the way they were understood in the years under analysis.

³⁵ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p.7.

Political warfare is what was envisaged by George Kennan and some of his contemporaries, as previously discussed. It was an alternative to military conflict, something that today is often defined as “soft power”. Psychological warfare is intended as the use of information in this context. Covert operations, or covert action, are foreign programs (i.e. taking place in foreign countries) that are judged by policymakers or analysts to be in the national interest of the country conducting them, but that cannot be conducted openly, either because of practical reason (hard to sabotage, collect intelligence or build a resistance movement if the enemy knows you are going to do it) or because of concerns about the domestic or international public opinion. Propaganda, finally, is an organised or concerted effort to spread particular doctrines or information. The term has taken on a negative connotation as disinformation or biased opinion, but in the early Cold War this meaning applied only when referring to the work of the “other side”. For Americans in those years, propaganda programs were meant to counter Communism disinformation, and to win the minds and loyalties of men through the propagation of the democratic creed and the unmasking of the Soviet regime for what it truly was.³⁶

Planning for the Radios began in 1947, when Soviet and Eastern European émigrés began being considered, in some influential American circles, as a useful resource in the fight against the Soviet Union. All the powerful and influential figures in the history of political warfare and covert operations that were mentioned before, George Kennan, Frank Wisner and Allen Dulles, were in some way or the other involved in the creation of several émigré projects, and the Radios are no exception. Wisner’s paper on the utilization of refugees from the Soviet Union was drafted after a tour of the Displaced Persons camp in Germany. Dulles’ memorandum from May 1948 pointed out the importance of the support of resistance groups for intelligence purposes. Most importantly, George Kennan, in his paper to the NSC “The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare”, suggested the formation of an American public organization to give émigré leaders access to printing and broadcasting facilities. When the NSC made these suggestion an official (albeit covert) policy of the government, with the directives 4/A and then 10/2, it included a recommendation to initiate and develop “specific plans and programs designed to influence attitudes in foreign countries in a direction favourable to the attainment of U.S. objectives and to counter effects of anti-U.S. propaganda.” This was made a responsibility of the State Department and, more specifically,

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4.

of the Assistant Secretary and a qualified, full-time staff “detailed from each appropriate department or agency.”³⁷

The Department of State, however, soon grew tired of having to deal daily with émigrés, more specifically, with the leaders or the representatives of the many groups active in Washington. The problem was that the job of officers at the department was to deal with the official representatives of the countries of Eastern Europe, and of the same regimes that the émigré leaders wanted to overthrow. The OPC then moved to put the émigré support plan into operation, organising the various US-based organisations into national councils. Soviet émigrés were, for the moment, excluded from the project. Wisner and Kennan agreed on the plan, and recommended it to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who approved it on the 1st of March 1949. Funded by the US government, the Free Europe Committee was launched exactly three months later. Influential and prominent Americans were included and invited to join the committee, including Allen Dulles and General Eisenhower. Seven of the thirteen FEC directors between 1949 and 1950 had a background in intelligence or covert operations, either as former OSS members or in military intelligence units.³⁸ The official mission of the FEC was to find occupation for the “democratic exiles” from Eastern Europe, and to make it possible for their leaders to reach their people in the homelands, through broadcasting or in print. The only covert aspect of the operation was the source of funding: the US government through the OPC first, and the CIA later. To provide cover for that, private contributions were encouraged and advertised, such as the Crusade for Freedom, that was launched in April 1950 and endorsed by Eisenhower in a nationwide radio address.

The Free Europe Committee started its work by finding valuable émigrés suitable occupations: by the end of 1949, it was supporting more than a hundred of them in various study projects. The main interest of the OPC, however, were radio communications to be directed to Eastern Europe and broadcast from Western Germany, but the FEC seemed to have problems starting this project. Inevitably, the committee had become too involved in the endless squabbles of émigré politics; too much energies were being dedicated to the various national councils rather than to the Radio Free Europe project. Despite that, the operations moved along and on the 4th of July 1950, RFE first broadcasts were aired, in Czech/Slovak and Romanian, followed by Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian and finally Albanian. The broadcasts were taped in New York and aired on a shortwave transmitter near

³⁷ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, C. Thomas Thorne, Jr. and David S. Patterson, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), document 252.

³⁸ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, pp. 12-13.

Frankfurt, provided by the OPC. The original plan was to give full control and management of RFE broadcasting to the émigrés, through their national councils. The reality of the infeasibility of this strategy, however, soon became clear, to the OPC first and to the State Department then. The original conception of presenting the broadcasts as the expression of a unified front of national emigrations was shattered by the reality of émigré infighting, rivalry and disarray, much to the incredulity of the American observers. The OPC thus decided that the best course of action was to move the production of RFE programs to Europe, to distance them as much as possible, physically and ideologically, from American émigré politics. This would also allow to recruit personnel from the larger émigré communities in Europe, and to broadcast from a base in the same time zone of the target countries. This was Wisner's view on the matter, also endorsed by then FEC director Allen Dulles.³⁹ By 1953, the view that FEC should devote primary attention to Radio Free Europe was fully established, and confirmed in the Jackson Committee Report: "The activities of NCFE have been and are being reviewed by CIA and greater emphasis has been placed on the development of Radio Free Europe. This has come about as the result of direction and the effect of budgetary limitations."⁴⁰ After authorization for moving operations to Europe was obtained, a studio facility was built in Munich, and was fully operational by November 1951. Four shortwave transmitters worked from near Frankfurt, with an additional one placed in Portugal.

With the Free Europe Committee focused on Eastern Europe, the question remained open of how to utilise Soviet refugees, exiles and defectors. A dedicated project was first discussed in a meeting between the State Department and the OPC in July 1949, and was officially authorised in a memorandum from Kennan to Wisner in September of the same year. The first step was a survey of Soviet émigrés in Western Europe, conducted by Robert F. Kelley, a former director of the State Department's Division of Eastern European Affairs and Kennan's mentor, who had joined the OPC in 1949. His conclusion was that Russian émigrés were inclined towards a common anti-communist front, and as such all the different organisations had to be united by the OPC under one umbrella structure.⁴¹ This became the American Committee for the Liberation from Bolshevism (AMCOMLIB), launched in February 1951. A cover committee was set up, with the official aim of encouraging the

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954*, National Security Affairs, Lisle A. Rose, Neal H. Petersen, and William Z. Slany, eds., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984), Volume II, Part 2 Document 374.

⁴¹ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, pp. 26-27.

establishment of a central organisation uniting all the Soviet émigrés under democratic principles. The covert priorities were first the financial support of an émigré newspaper, second, broadcasting programs, using RFE transmitters, to Soviet occupation forces in Germany, and only last broadcasts to the USSR itself. Most of the OPC and AMCOMLIB efforts, however, were devoted to attempting to unify the Soviet emigration. Kelley's assessment, in fact, had been too optimistic. The original plan was to delegate responsibility for program content and broadcasting to the émigrés, with AMCOMLIB limiting itself to overall supervision and financial and technical support. Over the course of 1952, the CIA (which had by then absorbed the OPC) realised the impossibility of uniting different Russian émigré groups, and even more Russians and non-Russians. Contrary to the case of the FEC, whose directors had realised before the CIA that émigrés could not effectively carry out broadcasting by themselves, AMCOMLIB continued to affirm the importance of programming produced by and in the name of a united emigration, that did not in fact exist. Despite these difficulties, on the 1st of March 1953 Radio Liberty (RL) aired its first official broadcast, a half-hour Russian program and several fifteen-minute programs in non-Russian languages, repeated daily, aired to European Russia on shortwave transmitters taken over from RFE, and to the Maritime Provinces from transmitters leased on Taiwan. The émigré organisations in AMCOMLIB were now split in two: the all-Russian "Coordinating Center for the Liberation of the People of Russia", and the "Paris Bloc" of non-Russians. Controversy about the role of émigré politics in RL broadcasting continued, but by 1954 it became clear that émigré sponsorship was incompatible with effective radio broadcasting.⁴² The Coordinating Center was dissolved, and, five years later than RFE, Radio Liberation was freed from interference and control of émigré politics and politicians. The programming staff was composed largely of recent Soviet escapes, which enabled the radio to speak in a voice that was mostly understandable to the peoples within the USSR.

The OPC/CIA were "present at the creation", borrowing an expression used by Johnson in his book, of the FEC and AMCOMLIB, along with their broadcasting stations, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty,. It is true that the State Department was also involved, and George Kennan claimed the merit for the initial impulse for the project. Surely, it is hard to imagine that the Radios, that can be considered one of the most successful American initiatives in the Cold War, would have existed without the impulse of the father of American political warfare. Kennan, however, left the State Department in 1952: he played no role in the start-

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

up of Radio Liberty or the operations of either Radio. These were the responsibility of Frank Wisner and his OPC. The question is, then, what was the exact relationship between the CIA and the Radios; both FEC and AMCOMLIB were, officially, private bodies, but supported and financed by a branch of a public government, the CIA. The exact dynamics of this public-private partnership have been the subject of debate, and different interpretations have emerged. Usually, histories of the CIA tend to depict the Radios as tools of the Agency, at least in the first two decades of their existences. Books about RFE and RL say nothing about the CIA role if written before the 1970s, when the projects became public knowledge. After the 1970s, the covert funding was recognised, but the role of the CIA and the US government in the Radios operations was generally downplayed.⁴³

Because this is a study on the émigrés, the more in-depth nuances of the question will be left aside. Both RFE and RL started as émigré projects, conceived within the US government, as part of the political warfare program of George Kennan and his Policy Planning Staff. They were carried on by Frank Wisner, as head of the OPC, and by Allen Dulles, who served as director of the Free Europe Committee and remained a strong supporter of the Radios during his years as DCI. The success of the project, however, depended in great part on its autonomy from the US government. This autonomy was motivated by three factors. First, a round-the-clock radio produced in Europe and dealing with developments in distant lands required up-to-date information and quick editorial decisions, which would be hampered by constant control and approval from Washington. Second, the Free Europe Committee was directed and staffed by strong personalities, veterans of foreign affairs with World War II experience in political warfare, and with no intention of simply “fronting” a government operation where all the decisions were taken elsewhere.⁴⁴ AMCOMLIB lacked a similar board, but by the late 1950s its president Howland Sargeant, a former assistant secretary of state for public affair, established a similar degree of autonomy. Third, the CIA willingly limited its interference. The division responsible for the Radios was the International Organizations Divisions (IOD), and later the Covert Action Staff. Overseeing the work of the FEC and the AMCOMLIB, it acted on their behalf within the US government, especially

⁴³ For the perspective in CIA histories see: Ray S. Cline, *The CIA under Reagan, Bush & Casey: The Evolution of the Agency from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1981); Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Random House, 2007).

For histories of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, see: Richard H. Cummings, *Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice: The story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (New York: Praeger, 1983).

⁴⁴ Larry Collins, “The Free Europe Committee: An American Weapon of the Cold War”, PhD Thesis, Carleton University, 1973.

at critical moments in the 1950s, when the Radios were accused of inciting the revolts in Poland and Hungary. The CIA also acted as intermediary with the State Department on policy issues. More importantly, the IOD protected these assets from interference from the US government and from other CIA departments, that could have used the Radios for espionage or disinformation. On this point, Allen Dulles' work was fundamental. As DCI, he insisted from the outset that the Radios, being overt project (albeit with a covert source of funding) should not be involved in espionage and covert action projects. Surely, pressure to distort the purpose of the Radios, especially to use them in disinformation campaigns, sometimes came from within the Agency, but was always kept under check by the IOD. Compromising the reputation for reliable and accurate information that the broadcasts had come to enjoy was not worth the dubious advantage that may be gained by spreading false information. Autonomy, however, did not mean independence. The CIA still held certain powers, such as drawing administrative plans and, more importantly, controlling financial budgets. Having to deal with the Bureau of the Budget and with key congressional committee chairmen, the CIA could impose fiscal constraints, and also held veto power on the hiring of personnel. However, "reviewing the history as documented in both FEC/RLC and CIA archives, it is remarkable how little the CIA interfered in FEC and AMCOMLIB/RLC operations".⁴⁵ Even in the case of the 1956 revolts, RFE did not adhere to the CIA views on the content of broadcasts to Hungary. The result was that we are still discussing today what role the radio had in fomenting that hopeless and bloody revolution.

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are generally acknowledged to have played an important role in bringing the Cold War to an end. As such, they can be considered one of the most, if not *the* most, successful American propaganda and political warfare efforts. Being an émigré projects in their origins, it can be concluded then that the Radios were the most successful use of the émigrés in the Cold War. RFE and RL, however, were overt organisations with overt broadcasts, and as such their success relied on their credibility and public image. Intelligence and espionage activities would have damaged that image, in the same way as spreading misinformation would. The Radios, however, also needed to obtain up-to-date information from within the target countries to which they broadcasted. The line between information and intelligence gathering is very thin, but the Radios did a commendable job of avoiding initiatives that could be perceived as the latter. Instead, they monitored regime media, talked with Western journalists, academics and other people who

⁴⁵ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, pp. 229-232.

travelled to the regions, and gathered information from Eastern European and Soviet travellers to the West. This last method, in particular, was echoed by another émigré project, “Redskin”. In general, the Radios proved that the émigrés were best put at work for propaganda: in this field, their potential could be really exploited. For the sake of this study, then, the Radios provide a significant example of the reason why other émigré projects, the ones devoted to intelligence collection, were soon channelled towards propaganda efforts.

Chapter VII

Émigré Intelligence Production

Understanding the process by which the émigrés were chosen as Human intelligence sources on the Soviet Union is only the first step to provide a fair and satisfying judgement on these operations. The logical and necessary second step is assessing what were their results. Once again, writers and researchers who have tackled this issue have stopped, most of the times, at a superficial analysis, being over-concerned by the fact, unconfutable, that the operations suffered from heavy levels of penetration by the Soviets. However, this work tried to demonstrate that, in terms of intelligence production, the assessment made of émigré operations at the time these happened, was, if not enthusiastic, at least not negative as one would expect. Looking at the project reviews produced periodically by the CIA, both for Aenoble and Aerodynamic, the operations are often praised for their contribution not just to propaganda and counterintelligence, but also for positive intelligence production. In these reports there is also evidence that intelligence coming from the émigrés made it all the way to the top level of policymaking in the American establishment.

This was, without a doubt, the most difficult and controversial point of this study. The only source available to prove the effectiveness of the émigré operations in terms of intelligence are the CIA documents: this created the problem of overreliance on a single source, one that could also be prone to bias (having commissioned and controlled the operations, the CIA was, in fact, partly giving a judgement on its own work). Due to the scarcity of other primary sources to use as support and countercheck, I have instead endeavoured to find what other studies and works from researchers have come to similar conclusions. Most of these have already been mentioned in the previous chapters, and they will be brought forward again in the conclusions.

Regarding the émigrés' intelligence impact on policymaking, instead, some measure of support can be found in the National Intelligence Estimates of the period, which will be analysed later in this chapter. However, because the exact sources for the estimates are never

mentioned some conclusions had to be drawn thanks to comparisons and hypotheses. For the sake of clarity, then, it is best to start from the analysis of the CIA reports.

7.1 Project Aenoble

Starting from the NTS operations, at the end of 1954 a review was made necessary by the recently approved strategy of running joint operations between the CIA and SIS. A Joint Centre was established in Frankfurt which, in a short time, already resulted in improved operational security and firmer control over the NTS project as a whole. One of the first statements in the review is: “Despite losses sustained, previous NTS infiltration operations run by both CIA and SIS have been of substantial PP (*propaganda*), CE (*counter espionage*), and FI (*foreign intelligence*) value.”¹ This sentence is very important to understand the value of émigré operations. It recognises that the operations were not perfect but, despite losses sustained in terms of agents, their outcome were still positive because they implemented the immediate goals of the agency. This judgement would change very little in subsequent reviews of the project. Out of the eleven agents dispatched after the two “Caccola” training cycles of 1952 and 1953, only three were still operative in 1954, in regular contact via radio and dead letter drops, and believed to be uncontrolled. Despite the heavy losses, the surviving men were “regular producers of positive and operational intelligence”. Another two agents operated successfully for a year, providing a good deal of valuable intelligence, before being captured. One agent was known to be under Soviet control, but because he gave clear warning of that in his messages, his case was considered of Counter Espionage value, and he also managed to provide some operational intelligence. Finally, another four agents, all British cases, were all presumed to be under control, and had not produced any worthwhile intelligence.²

One major point of interest that emerges from the 1954 review is that a judgement on the value of NTS operations was often provided by the Soviet themselves. One example presented was that of the attempted assassination of Georgi Okolovich. The KGB agent assigned to the operation, Nikolai Khokhlov, refused to carry out the assassination and defected. The event resulted in Khokhlov’s witness in front of the International Security Subcommittee Investigating Soviet Assassination and Terrorism, chaired by Senator

¹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble Vol.3_0035.

² *Ibid.*

William Jenner. The CIA attributed Khokhlov's mission "to the Soviet desire to hamstring NTS operations in the USSR by removing the chief of NTS internal ops."³ The idea that the Soviet government considered the NTS one of the most dangerous émigré groups was also supported by defectors of the MVD (the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs and its annexed police force), who "all confirmed independently" that the main reason for the Soviets' concern was the NTS' capacity to operate inside the USSR. It was that concern that drove the Soviet Government "to such drastic and unusual measures as diplomatic protests, blasts against the NTS in the Soviet press, and, in the Kudratsev-Yakuta case, to what amounted to an amnesty offer to outstanding NTS agents in the Soviet Union."⁴

In August 1956, a further review of Project Aenoble was presented, to accompany the request to renew the project for the fiscal year of 1957. In the two years that had passed since the review previously analysed, a very interesting development had happened. In February 1956, the British had officially withdrawn from the Joint Centre and all aspects of NTS operations, leaving exclusive control to the CIA. The former SIS cases, five in total, were seen with suspicion by the Americans and generally disregarded as unable to provide any intelligence. They were also believed to be all under Soviet control. The other five agents, all American cases, were active, with four of them providing all of the disseminated positive intelligence produced by the project during 1956 (one was unable to report for operational reasons). The overall assessment of the project was still positive, despite the British withdrawal. The information produced by Aenoble during 1956 was:

considered without exception to be of interest to customers because of the general meagreness of information on those aspects of the USSR covered by these reporting agents. In addition, two of these agents are medium level technicians who can report on subjects not generally available through other sources.⁵

This was a very important statement: in August 1956, two months after the first U-2 overflight had occurred, Human intelligence provided by émigré agents was still considered not just relevant, but fundamental to gather information on specific areas of interest. Furthermore, in addition to positive intelligence, the project also produced what was defined as "a considerable amount" of operational information, "primarily on USSR internal documentation, and information on RIS techniques of running double agent cases."⁶

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, "Renewal of Project AESAURUS/AENOBLE", Aenoble Vol.3_0055.

⁶ *Ibid.*

The major advantage in keeping Project Aenoble alive was its financial convenience. The agents, living independently and undercover in the USSR, needed very few resources and support. The total expenses for 1956 amounted to just 7,200 dollars, which were deposited into holding accounts in the event that the agents would exfiltrate at some point, a possibility that was ruled out for the following year, meaning that the budget for 1957 was reduced to 4,800 dollars. On top of that, the full-time personnel involved with the project amounted to just two persons, “one in the field and one at Headquarters. No expenditures for equipment and supplies are contemplated.”⁷ Considering how little effort and commitment the project required to the CIA, and how useful the intelligence produced was considered, there were no reasons to not go along with it.

Something else of great interest can be spotted in the 1956 review of Project Aenoble. Along with the three infiltrees from the “Caccola” school, two other agents were present, labelled as “Aesaurus Berlin recruited agents”.⁸ More details can be found in a full list of the agents involved in the project, undated but produced between 1957 and 1959. The list presented, along with the three infiltrees previously mentioned and the former SIS cases, two new categories: one labelled as “independents” and one as “NTS Berlin Redcap recruits” (The Aesaurus Berlin agents mentioned in the 1956 review).⁹ Not much is known about the independents. They were probably agents with no connections to the NTS; one was a militia representative (of which militia is not specified), one a Captain of the Soviet Army and, finally, a “group of young people” operating in Leningrad, codenamed operation “Sea”. “Redcap”, on the other hand, was a codename for Soviet defectors. The four men listed had thus been induced to defect by the efforts of the NTS. They were a Captain and an (unspecified) officer of the Soviet Army, a Senior Lieutenant of the Navy, and one of unknown occupation.

Leaving aside the “independents”, due to lack of details, the “Redcap” agents are particularly interesting because, judging from the documents, they proved to be more effective than the infiltrees. First of all, the status for three of them was “probably clean” (the unknown one has “very little data” listed under this category). For the “Caccola” agents, instead, one was listed as “possibly clean”, one as “probably controlled” and one as “most probably controlled”. The occupations of the Redcap agents also made them stand out, all being military officers, while the infiltrees are all listed as “factory workers”. The level of

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble Vol. 3_0071.

access to positive intelligence was also very different between the two categories: the former having “good to classified” (same as the independents), the latter only “poor to fair”. The same went for their cover and mobility; the “Caccola” agents had “poor” listed in both categories, while the “Redcap” ones had “natural” and “good within cover”. The final category in the list is “worth the effort?”. The answers were again very different: “Redcap” agents have a clear “yes”, while the infiltrees “barely”.¹⁰ The conclusion that can be drawn is that the potential for ‘evolving’ Aenoble into a defection-inducing operation, mentioned in the 1954 review, had clearly been implemented by 1956, and these defectors were apparently much more reliable than the original agents infiltrated via air drop. As will be demonstrated shortly, this assessment was proved wrong a few years later.

The final review of Project Aenoble worth examining here was dated 14th of October 1959 and was, in fact, a recommendation for the termination of the project. Aenoble had originally expired on the 31st of August 1958, and the decision to not renew it had been taken due to a “realignment of CIA’s posture toward the NTS” and, more importantly, due to the fact that, of the last four agents remaining in the USSR, all had been lost or compromised.¹¹ Two of them were the last surviving infiltrees from the 1952 air dispatch. They were both determined to be under Soviet control and of no further use, even for counter espionage. In one case the Russians themselves decided to break contact, maybe because they determined that the CIA was getting more out of that game than they were. The other two agents were “Redcap” recruits. The Captain of the Soviet Army was ‘surfaced’ (meaning he was revealed as a controlled agent) by the Soviets during one of their operations directed against the NTS.¹² It is not clear if this was aimed at publicly embarrass the NTS, presenting the Captain as a Soviet agent from the beginning, or if he was used as an ‘exemplar punishment’ to discourage other Soviet citizens from cooperating with the émigré group. The first thesis seems to be confirmed by the fate of the last agent, the other “Redcap” recruit (the officer of the Soviet Army). His original recruitment had been facilitated by an (unnamed) “East German” who had later been arrested and confessed to have “fed” the agent to the NTS on the instructions of the Russian Intelligence.¹³

The amount of penetration suffered by the NTS operation, however, must have not come as a surprise to the Americans in 1959. Instead, it is evident that by that stage of the project they were mostly relying on the Soviet “playback” for the intelligence outcome of the

¹⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble Vol. 3_0071.

¹¹ CIA FOIA ERR, “Termination of Project AENOBLE”, Aenoble Vol. 3_0084.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

project. To better understand this concept one must keep in mind that, in order to play the agents back, the Soviet controllers had to insert reliable intelligence in their messages, to not immediately alert the American recipients. By being aware that the NTS agents were under control (and they were since the beginning, thanks to the use of hidden codes in the messages or to careful analysis of the style used in the communications), the Americans could then filter the useful intelligence that the Soviets had to provide them from the ‘chickenfeed’, or misinformation. Looking back at the Max/Moritz case, it was not unusual for the Soviets to give away reliable intelligence in order to build or maintain covert assets in the West. By 1959, however, this game came to an end, because the amount of “chickenfeed” by then outweighed the useful information gathered from Aenoble sources, as is evident from a paragraph in the termination notice:

Continued intelligence production on the foregoing level by Aenoble sources cannot be realistically expected. Indeed recent operational developments indicate that the traffic from these agents is falling off and in the messages we are receiving, the RIS is employing stalling tactics, i.e., poor S/W development, etc., to evade answering specific requirements. And if the RIS does answer any of our requirements, it is logical to assume that they may supply deceptive data to contaminate our intelligence channels.¹⁴

The keywords here are “foregoing level” and “recent developments”, because they indicate that, up until those developments happened, Aenoble did indeed have a positive intelligence production. This is supported by a previous paragraph in the text, which lists all of the project intelligence production in terms of reports and disseminations:

For the period 1 July 1955 to 1 July 1956 Aenoble produced 24 reports of which 14 were used in 13 disseminations. For the period 1 July 1956 through 30 June 1957, Aenoble produced 21 positive information disseminations. For the period 1 July 1957 through 30 June 1958, Aenoble sources produced 15 reports, 14 of which were used in 14 disseminations.¹⁵

Dissemination is the penultimate stage of intelligence production. For a report to be disseminated, it means that the agency in charge has deemed it worthwhile to be submitted to the customers (the Army, the Department of State, the President, etc.). Seen in these terms, Aenoble intelligence production over the three years in question was impressive, with its peak in 1956-1957. It is important to remember that this intelligence collection effort was directed at ‘solid’ targets such as aircraft production, location and capabilities of air fields and movement of troops.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

7.2 Project Aerodynamic

Assessing the intelligence production of the operations using Ukrainian émigrés proved to be a more difficult task than with their White Russian counterparts. First, there is no available record of these operations on the British side, so we need to make do with those few references available in the CIA documents. Second, speaking of Project Aerodynamic, the operation went through some highs and lows which forced it to assume a very different character starting from 1959. On the other hand, because of this change the project survived until the 1970s, much longer than Aenoble did.

In its beginnings, Aerodynamic was a joint propaganda-foreign intelligence project. The CIA's support for the ZP/UHVR had the primary purpose of obtaining intelligence on the USSR through the exploitation of the Ukrainian resistance. This approach was encouraged by the first success of the operation, the exfiltration from the Ukraine of members of the resistance in 1950. The information they brought out was described as an "enormous amount", of great operational value, that was still being disseminated in 1952.¹⁶ This early success encouraged the CIA to train and dispatch more agents recruited by the ZP/UHVR. Meanwhile, the propaganda part of the project continued developing successfully. The CIA financed the newspaper *Suchasna Ukraina*, published by the ZP/UHVR, distributed among the Ukrainian emigration as a cover, but actually directed at the Soviet citizens and secretly mailed to the USSR. The newspaper "continues to present to its readers news considered as effective anti-Communist copy and has been instrumental in maintaining, much to the regret of the Soviets, cohesion within a large segment of the Ukrainian emigration".¹⁷

Positive intelligence collection, meanwhile, was not proceeding exactly as expected. The project renewal proposal for the fiscal year of 1955, dated October 1954, stated that "The positive intelligence procured, limited but of value, could have been in greater quantity than received to date."¹⁸ Although a number of reports had been disseminated, based on the information received from Aerodynamic agents in the field, the case officer stated that the value of that information to the customer agency was not known to him, but it could also be assumed "from the nature of the follow-up request for more information of the type procured

¹⁶ CIA FOIA ERR, "Project Aerodynamic (Renewal)", Aerodynamic Vol. 1_0079.

¹⁷ CIA FOIA ERR, "Project AERODYNAMIC (PP), Amendment #1", Aerodynamic Vol. 2_0040.

¹⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, "Project Aerodynamic (FI) Renewal FY 1955", Aerodynamic Vol. 2_0012.

by the Aerodynamic agents that the information has been received favourably and was considered important.”¹⁹ By that time, however, cracks in the project were beginning to show. Of the two teams dispatched since 1951, only two agents survived, and both were considered to be under Soviet control. The main difficulty at that point regarded the recruitment of new agents, but the emigration was becoming “less and less fruitful” as a source. An important consideration was made for the first time, that “for an operation requiring the use of legalised agents these agents must be recruited from within the target country itself.”²⁰

Eight months later, in June 1955, a memorandum was submitted to the Chief of Foreign Intelligence, presenting an evaluation of the Aerodynamic project. The difference in performance and results between the propaganda and the foreign intelligence portions of the program was evident by then: none of the agents dispatched (the surviving ones) had been in contact with the resistance headquarters since the late summer of 1953; Vasyl Okhrymowych, the principal ZP/UHVR representative sent to the Ukraine and the chief contact with the resistance, had been captured and killed in the spring of 1954; finally, there were no new agents in training and no prospect of recruiting others soon. In view of the situation, it was apparent that “Redsox type operations into the Ukraine as planned in the Project have reached a point where it is questionable whether or not it is considered advisable to continue in force the FI portion of Aerodynamic.”²¹ All the activity resulted from the original foreign intelligence project had become “almost entirely a counter espionage action”, because of the controlled status of all the surviving agents and of the two alleged members of the resistance who exfiltrated in 1955 (see chapter III). For those reasons, the foreign intelligence portion of the project was terminated in November 1955, while a counter espionage project was submitted for approval to handle the remaining agent cases. Propaganda, on the other hand, remained in force as a separate project.²²

In the following years, the status of the project remained more or less the same. Propaganda activities continued, with the distribution of the ZP/UHVR’s publications and with the group’s relentless action in trying to unite the Ukrainian emigration, directing its public opinion towards an anti-Communist stance. Foreign intelligence collection, however, was not completely discarded. “Redsox” operations (the infiltration of illegal agents inside the Soviet Union) had been disbanded but a new kind of operations, codenamed “Redskin”,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ CIA FOIA ERR, “An Evaluation of the Aerodynamic Project”, Aerodynamic Vol. 2_0030.

²² *Ibid.*

was taking place. As mentioned before, the CIA had become aware that the best way of gathering intelligence from the Soviet Union was to use legal residents. “Redskin” operations involved either people travelling from the West to the USSR (in this case, second generation Ukrainian émigrés visiting their parents or traveling as tourists), or Soviet citizens visiting the West, including delegations, tourists and members of scientific or cultural groups. The ZP/UHVR, having a very sound reputation in the emigration and even in the homeland, was in the perfect position to exploit the opportunities offered by this sort of operation: “Experience to date in this field demonstrates that of the Soviet Ukrainians travelling abroad there is a higher percentage who are approachable, and presumably recruitable, than among Great Russians.”²³

Additionally, the British were still active in the Ukrainian field. The SIS was still dealing with the Bandera group, and “allegedly getting some good foreign intelligence reports on the Soviet Ukraine.”²⁴ For four years, however, the foreign intelligence portion of Project Aerodynamic had been discontinued, thus there were not enough adequate case officers assigned to it to exploit these opportunities. In 1959, then, the CIA decided to expand again the intelligence collection aspect of Aerodynamic, focusing on “Redskin” type operations, which involved:

selected Ukrainian émigrés in Western Europe visiting their relatives inside the USSR or going there as tourists. In this connection, they are in a position to collect positive intelligence data, determine the vulnerability and recruitment possibilities of contacts inside, and possibly perform some operational tasks.²⁵

A new plan was drafted and presented in October 1959 which proposed, besides the “Redskin” operations, also contacts with Ukrainians visiting the West and the exploitation of the Ukrainian émigré group in Poland, the representatives of which travelled often to the West. A first examination of the activities proposed, however, exposed the concern that the intelligence potential of the project was “rather limited in scope”.²⁶ Only a few Ukrainians travelled to the West, given the small number of events that attracted delegations and groups. Tourists usually travelled together with other Soviet nationals, and the tours were closely watched by representatives of the authorities to ensure there were as little independent contacts as possible. Regarding the Ukrainian émigrés visiting relatives and friends in the USSR, instead, the main problem was that many of these émigrés had not become citizens

²³ CIA FOIA ERR, “Aerodynamic/FI Opportunities in 1959”, Aerodynamic Vol. 17_0063.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, “Aecassowary Project – Suggested Plan for FI Exploitation”, Aerodynamic Vol. 18_0015.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

of the respective Western countries, but had maintained their stateless status, so they lacked valid passports.²⁷ Despite these concerns, the project proved to be a reliable source of intelligence in the following years. In a “Review of Positive Intelligence Production” from August 1961, it is stated that over that year the project had produced nineteen reports, fifteen of which were used in seventeen disseminations. Five of the reports dealt with possible missile indicators, five reported on airfields and aircrafts, and four on “living condition and industrial and town information.”²⁸ The information providers were approximately eleven sources or informants, “seven of whom were former residents of the Ukraine, two travellers to the Ukraine (one briefed), and three unwitting Soviets outside the USSR.”²⁹ The reports were positively assessed, especially the ones on missiles deployment, which was considered a high intelligence target.

The following year, the quantity of intelligence produced by the project dropped to six disseminated reports. This was attributed to the resignation, in the fall of 1961, of “Aecassowary 15”, a member of the ZP/UHVR residing in Washington, who had been trained by the CIA and had been, since 1959, the operations chief for the United States and Western Hemisphere. Despite the low number of reports, the project was still productive in other terms. A unilateral (meaning that it was pursued without the knowledge of the ZP/UHVR) “Redskin” operation mounted by the CIA produced positive intelligence on “a Soviet industrial establishment of interest to the intelligence community”. Through the contact with members of “a visiting Soviet dance ensemble” (possibly the *Bolshoi*) in the United States, “at least three KGB operators were identified and biographical information on them and other Soviets supplied for CIA files.” Finally, through a collaborator in Canada (the country had a great number of Ukrainian émigrés), about fifty Canadians were identified who were trained in clandestine activities in the Soviet Union, and their names were passed to Canadian intelligence, which was able to verify that a number of them were presently engaged in activities for the Soviets.³⁰

In 1963, intelligence production picked up again, with thirteen reports disseminated. Analysing the subjects of the reports, however, it is evident that operational intelligence has been all but abandoned. Most of the reports were concerned with expressions of discontent or dissatisfaction in the Ukrainian Republic, and with the resulting protests, uprisings and

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, “Review of Positive Intelligence Production from Project AECASSOWARY for the Period 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961”, Aerodynamic Vol. 4_0001.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ CIA FOIA ERR, “Request for Project Aerodynamic Renewal. FY 1963”, Aerodynamic Vol. 4_006.

civil disorders. Two reports specifically dealt with “the political implications of the release from prison and arrival in Rome of the Uniate Metropolitan Slipyy following the first session of the Ecumenical Council.”³¹ One year after the Cuban Missile Crisis, with negotiations for limiting the testing of atomic weapons going on, the world seemed set up, at least temporarily, on the way to *détente*. This explains why operational intelligence was given a lower priority. At the same time, however, the Americans wanted to keep an eye on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Republics. Towards the end of the 1960s it seemed that, if Soviet power were to someday fall, it would all start in Eastern Europe. Keeping contact with, and financing, an émigré group that represented the second biggest nationality group in the Soviet Union was a sound strategy.

It was not just about the distribution of propaganda; many Ukrainians were travelling to the West by then, thanks to the relaxation of Soviet control. The political philosophy of the ZP/UHVR was sufficiently liberal so that these Soviet Ukrainians were quite willing to talk with its representatives. For these contact operations the group had “a pool of young, second generation Ukrainians in all areas of the Free World from which they can draw upon as appropriate and necessary.”³² These were mostly students or professionals and their backgrounds made them peculiarly suitable to carry on discussions with Soviets with similar backgrounds. The 1967 renewal for Project Aerodynamic made this policy particularly clear:

Recent nationalist flare-ups in widely scattered areas of the Soviet Union, and particularly those in the Ukraine, give evidence that the complete cohesion of the Soviet peoples toward which the Soviet have striven is far from accomplished. It is considered opportune and important to continue to encourage divisive manifestations among Ukrainians to exert maximum pressure on the Soviet regime.³³

By that time, positive intelligence collection from the project had declined: only three positive intelligence disseminations were produced in 1966. The focus, however, was in continuing the ZP/UHVR efforts to contribute to “Ukrainian nationalist ferment and to intellectual resistance to Soviet repression.”³⁴ The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 must have confirmed, in the eyes of the CIA, the importance of Eastern Europe and of the non-Russian nationalities as a weak point in the Soviet armour.

What judgement should be given, then, of Project Aerodynamic and of the CIA’s relationship with Ukrainian émigrés? First of all, it lasted more than a decade longer than

³¹ CIA FOIA ERR, “FY 1964 Project Aerodynamic Renewal”, Aerodynamic Vol. 4_0008.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ CIA FOIA ERR, “Project Aerodynamic Renewal – FY 1967”, Aerodynamic Vol. 5_003.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Aenoble, its corresponding project with the White Russians. The reason is that Aerodynamic constantly produced in terms of propaganda, which made it an enterprise worth sustaining, regardless of its intelligence production, keeping in mind how cheap it was in terms of Agency funds expended. Another motive for the CIA's long cooperation with the ZP/UHVR was that the group was considered clean, not just for its political philosophy, as stated earlier, but also in terms of Soviet penetration. Looking back at the history of the NTS and of the ZP/UHVR, presented in chapter II and III respectively, it appears clearly that the former was an "awkward customer" for the CIA. Not only were its right-wing political disposition and Russian imperialist views hard to hide, but it suffered from poor security and penetration at all levels. This is without even taking into account the terrible reputation of the White Russian émigrés in general. The ZP/UHVR, on the other hand, after emerging victorious from the struggle against the extremist Bandera group of the OUN/B, could easily present itself as a liberal and moderate group, and indeed this attitude was the reason why the CIA had chosen to support it in the first place. Also, the penetration that the Ukrainian operations suffered, always happened in the field and through the resistance army, meaning that the ZP/UHVR, operating in Europe and in the United States, was always considered clean.

If we were to compare projects Aenoble and Aerodynamic, in terms of intelligence production, the differences between the two operations are striking. While Aenoble produced the most in the mid-1950s, in those same years the foreign intelligence portion of Project Aerodynamic was shut down. The reasons are many, some clearly stated while others can only be inferred from the reports. First of all, operating from the Ukraine was apparently more difficult. What should have been the strong point of the operation, the existence of the Ukrainian resistance, instead proved to be a weakness. The UPA had already been almost dismantled by Soviet efforts by 1953, so the agents infiltrated had either to spend most of their time hiding, or immediately fell into the hands of the enemy. The NTS agents, on the other hand, were able to operate longer, and with more freedom, thus producing a greater quantity of intelligence. The fact that almost all of them turned out to be controlled should not influence a judgement on the outcome of the project negatively. As stated earlier, counterespionage was also considered a very useful intelligence source. The success of the CIA in exploiting these controlled agents for so long led the Soviets to expose them for propaganda purposes, or to cut contacts completely. After Aenoble was terminated, however, the Ukrainian operations proved their worth. "Redskin" activities produced a good deal of intelligence and proved to be, in general, a more effective and less dangerous use of Humint resources, one that could easily support the other forms of intelligence collection, such as

Sigint, Elint, and Imint, which proved to be more suitable for operative intelligence targets. “Redskin” undoubtedly went hand in hand with propaganda, and the ZP/UHVR proved over the years to be a reliable endeavour in that field.

7.3 Planning and policymaking

In his recent study on CIA operations in the Soviet Bloc in the early Cold War, Stephen Long, coming to similar conclusions as Sarah-Jane Corke, points out that the lack of coordination between policymaking and covert action caused what he describes as disastrous results. Long blames not only operational incompetence, but also strategical infeasibility: Soviet control in Eastern Europe was too strong to be challenged by small covert operations. The only way of doing it would have been a full-scale war, a war that the United States were not willing to fight. Long’s conclusion is that America’s covert action strategy in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1956 actually contributed to the downfall of the same resistance movement that it hoped to support.³⁵ This conclusion, however, while hardly disputable and well supported, is in line with all the previous judgements and analysis on the topic. Long’s definition of political warfare is limited to covert action, while propaganda is left out of the picture. In this chapter, instead, I have tried to prove that operations with Eastern European émigrés bore their best fruits when they devoted most of their resources to propaganda activities. Also, while Long correctly points out the lack of control exerted by overt policymaking over covert action, he does not take into account that the relationship between the two could have been reversed, meaning that covert action could have had an influence on policymaking. This could happen only through intelligence gathering. Thus, to provide a complete assessment of émigré operations, it is important to understand if and how the intelligence gained from them had an influence on policymaking decision.

The term “dissemination” has been mentioned several times in this study. As stated, it is the penultimate step of the intelligence cycle, coming after planning, collection, processing, analysis and production. In the dissemination phase, an agency provides a final written analysis to a policymaker. This would be the same policymaker who started the cycle in the planning phase, assigning to the agency a specific task. It is thus said that the intelligence cycle is a closed loop. Policymaking is an essential component of the intelligence process,

³⁵ Stephen Long, *The CIA and the Soviet Bloc: Political Warfare, the Origins of the CIA and Countering Communism in Europe* (London, Tauris, 2014).

because it dictates the targets and also acts as the final recipient. It is only natural, then, to understand the value of the intelligence gathered by the émigrés, that a researcher shall focus on the impact it had, if any, on planning and policymaking. The best way of doing this is to analyse the intelligence estimates produced in the years in which the émigré agents were more active. Sources, however, are not mentioned in the estimates, so it is necessary to compare the latter with the operation reports analysed previously, and try to draw some connections. Regarding the British operations, because there are no available records of these (while there are plenty of estimates available), such comparison is impossible, so the focus will be on the American ones.

The possible influence of intelligence deriving from émigré sources on policymaking can be measured in three categories of assessment: potential of anti-Communist resistance in the Soviet Union, warning of a Soviet attack on the United States and their allies, trends and developments in Soviet capabilities and policies.

The potential to build anti-Communist resistance was assessed in two different scenarios: the continuation of a Cold War situation or the outbreak of open war. The value of resistance forces operating behind enemy lines or helping an invader maintain control of a disputed territory was without a doubt inspired by the experience of the Second World War. In that conflict, both sides made successful use of underground nationalist forces in occupied countries; the Nazis for example successfully exploited the nationalist movements in the Soviet Union, only to quickly lose their support due to ruthless occupation tactics. The National Intelligence Estimate 10-55, “Anti Communist Resistance Potential in the Sino – Soviet Bloc”, distributed in April 1955, aimed at appraising the intensity and scope of dissidence in the target area, and to estimate the resistance potential under both cold and hot war conditions. It acknowledged the existence of widespread dissidence, defined as “a state of mind involving discontent or disaffection with the regime”, in all the Communist countries, especially among the peasantry. Despite that, however, active and organised resistance, “dissidence translated into action”, was practically non-existent and unlikely to develop under continued cold war conditions.³⁶ This was due, first of all, to the effectiveness of security controls and police methods in the Soviet countries. Even in the eventuality of the outbreak of open warfare, patriotic feelings of opposition to a foreign aggressor would probably germinate in the populations of the countries attacked. In the case of the countries of latest acquisition by the USSR, such as the Baltic States and Western Ukraine, hopes of

³⁶ NARA, RG 263, National Intelligence Estimates and Related Reports and Correspondence, 1950-1985, NIE 10-55, 12 Apr 55, “Anti-Communist Resistance in the Sino-Soviet Bloc”.

liberation could possibly intensify the resistance potential on the outbreak of an invasion. These resistance movements, however, would not be comparable to those of World War II, and they could not develop until the local security organisation had been severely weakened. Another obstacle to the development of meaningful resistance movements were the Russification and Sovietisation policies that had been enforced upon the national minorities after the war, as a result of the poor display of loyalty to the Soviet state that these minorities had showed during the Nazi invasion. Forced removal of population and other social and cultural policies had, in the first instance, caused disaffection to the regime to grow but, in the long term, had been successful, especially after the resistance armies in the Ukraine and in Lithuania had been eradicated by the Soviet troops.³⁷

The potential role of the émigré organisations to influence and build anti-Communist resistance was also assessed. The NTS already had a record, having been active not only in German-occupied territories of the Soviet Union, but also among the Russians deported to Germany for forced labour. The short-lived Ukrainian nationalist government set up by Bandera and other members of the OUN during the war was also well known. There was, however, “little or no awareness among the Soviet people of the present activities of émigré groups”.³⁸ When defectors admitted familiarity with these groups, they had acquired such knowledge in Germany or Austria. The ZP/UHVR’s close ties with the UPA were an exception, of course, but in this case too it was not the émigré group that was known among the population, but the resistance army itself, or what remained of it in the 1950s. The émigré organisation, generally, had no hopes to gain the sympathy of the Great Russians. In the recently incorporated territories of Western Ukraine and the Baltic the people may have been, for a while, inclined to look positively at the émigrés, but that would not change the overall conclusion:

Although some dissidence exists at nearly every level of Soviet society, the regime has succeeded in establishing such pervasive authority that the people are forced to devote their energies to coping with the system rather than to conceiving an alternative solution or taking steps to achieve such a solution. Extensive resistance, such as occurred in the newly acquired territories after the end of World War II, had virtually ceased to exist by 1950.³⁹

The policy of “liberation” consisted of encouraging, more or less openly, the “captive people” of the USSR and the satellites to rebel against the Soviet regime, as stated by Allen

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Dulles in 1953. No material help, however, was ever given to these people or to the underground resistance movements operating in their countries, and the controversial aspect of “liberation” policies became clear with the Hungarian revolt of 1956 when the rebels, expecting from the West a support that never came, were suppressed by the Soviet forces. Regardless of the fact that “liberation” was purely a propaganda effort, tied into American domestic policy, it is entirely possible that the intelligence coming from the émigrés, which depicted the resistance potential of the target countries as hopeless, was used by the “doves” in the American government as evidence against the “hawks” who might have lobbied for a stronger commitment in Eastern Europe.

The second category in which émigré intelligence may have influenced American policymaking is the warning of a Soviet attack. “Early warning” was an imperative requirement during the CIA’s first years. Harry Rositzke’s memory of an Army colonel banging his fist on a table and shouting his request for a radio-equipped agent “on every goddamn airfield between Berlin and Urals” depicts an excellent image of what were the priorities of intelligence collection in those years. It is only natural, then, that operations involving the dispatch of émigré agents behind the Iron Curtain must have had an influence on the assessment of the possibility of a Soviet attack. Once again, intelligence sources not being directly mentioned in the estimates means that making direct connections is not easy. The analysis of two of these estimates, NIE 11-8-54 and NIE 11-3-57, however, allows for some interesting conclusions to be made.

First of all, the premise of both documents was the same, despite the three years separating them: that without a high-level penetration of the Soviet command it was impossible to give a warning of a clear intent to attack, or of the time such an attack would take place. Increasing military build-up and readiness of the Soviet forces may have been possible to spot, but understanding if that denoted a firm intent to attack, the anticipation of an expected American attack, a deception manoeuvre or just a contingency preparation, was much more difficult. For these reasons, warning depended “first of all on maximum alertness and a maximum scale of continuous effort by intelligence”⁴⁰; the outburst of the Army colonel recorded by Rositzke makes sense if considered in this context. Going back to military build-up, if the USSR really wanted to start a full-scale conflict, American intelligence could provide a “generalised degree of warning” between four and six months before, with the minimum warning period being no less than thirty days. More specifically,

⁴⁰ NARA, RG 263, National Intelligence Estimates and Related Reports and Correspondence, 1950-1985, SNIE 11-8-54, 14 Sept 54, “Probable Warning of Soviet Attack on the US through Mid-1957”.

preparations for a maximum-scale air attack, employing the 850 long-range aircrafts that were estimated to be available to the Soviets, would require a long time. The main bases being kept under surveillance were in the Kola, Chukotski and Kamchatka areas and an attack launched from there in 1954 was unlikely to take the United States by surprise: “Intelligence might be able to discover the movement of aircraft to the staging bases,” and if this happened “warning could be given at least 12 hours before the attacking aircraft reached the early warning radar screen.”⁴¹ If the movement of aircrafts was not discovered, however, “warning of the attack could be given only if continuous reconnaissance of the staging areas was being carried out.” In this case the period of warning could be reduced to a few hours, “because of probable difficulties and delays in processing and interpreting the results of the reconnaissance.”⁴²

Warning of an air attack is particularly meaningful for our analysis. The full mobilisation for war of a global superpower and a highly industrialised state like the USSR had to be so extensive that it would have been impossible to not give away any non-military indicators, such as economic and political measures, all of which could be spotted by Western intelligence without using agents on the field. Preparing for an air attack, however, required surveillance and reconnaissance of the airfields and military bases, as stated in NIE 11-8-54. Even when presenting the problems with this form of intelligence collection, the estimate mentions delays in processing and interpreting, not in collecting. All these factors lead to the sensible conclusion that the United States had agents keeping an eye on those bases; considering the target areas and the year of the estimate in question (1954), it is also sensible to assume that at least some of these agents were part of the émigré operations being carried out by the CIA.

The second estimate under analysis, NIE 11-3-57, does not differ much in terms of premises and general conclusions. It does shed some light, however, on the sources of warning information, starting with a footnote in the very beginning of the estimate:

The Intelligence Advisory Committee has undertaken a survey of sources of warning information to determine how fully and promptly present and potential collection methods, sources and transmission channels can provide information essential to advance warning of Sino-Soviet Bloc hostile action.⁴³

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ NARA, RG 263, National Intelligence Estimates and Related Reports and Correspondence, 1950-1985, SNIE 11-3-57, 18 Jun 57, “Probable Intelligence Warning of Soviet Attack on the US”.

Even if these sources are not specifically disclosed, more clues are given when the estimate mentions “the varied collection methods available to intelligence” that are able to bypass “the considerable effort by the USSR to limit the collection of information concerning its plans and activities”. These varied methods are further described as “emergency collection procedures under conditions of crisis”, which could be employed to improve the quantity and quality of intelligence available: photographic and electronic reconnaissance over Soviet territory, and “agents held in reserve for such a situation and equipped with special means of communication”.⁴⁴ This mention is an undisputable proof of infiltrated agents as an intelligence source. The fact that they were mentioned in 1957, along with Elint, Imint and overflights, is a testament to the enduring value of Humint as a collection method, particularly effective as an emergency warning in case of Soviet attack. The fact that the possibility of such an attack deliberately taking place was judged to be minimal, as the estimates testify, should not be considered as detrimental to the value of those agents and the operations that led to their recruitment or infiltration.

Finally, émigré-derived intelligence may have had an influence on the main reason why intelligence estimates were created in the first place: estimating Soviet intentions and capabilities. Much of the discussion that the estimates generated among scholars and experts over the years revolved around the question of how accurate the evaluation was: the “missile gap”, the “bomber gap” and the overestimate of Soviet military strength and intent of aggression contained in NSC 100, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, are the more prominent examples of a debate that is still far from being settled. The missile gap was debunked in the 1960s mostly thanks to aerial and satellite photography, but regarding Soviet long range aviation production there is now enough evidence to connect the relative estimates with émigré intelligence. One of the most significant items of intelligence produced by Project Aenoble was “a series of three observations on Aircraft Plant no.64 at Voronezh, which confirmed the suspected production at the plant of Badger type aircraft, along with the production rate and the total amount of aircrafts produced”.⁴⁵ This report was produced in 1957. In the same year, the National Intelligence Estimate Number 11-4-57 assessed that the Soviet long-range bomber force, while having grown to an approximate number of 1,500 planes, included a larger number of jet medium bombers (the Badger type aircraft) and fewer heavy bombers than previously estimated. More specifically, the estimate stated that:

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0055/0072.

Recent evidence indicates that Soviet production of BADGERS, and the number in operational units, are considerably in excess of our previous expectations. We now estimate that there were about 850 BADGERS in Long Range Aviation units as of mid-1957, and on the basis of current evidence we believe BADGER strength will continue to increase during the next year or two.⁴⁶

Given that the Aenoble report was disseminated in the same year as the estimate was produced, and that the report specifically mentions production rates and total amount of aircrafts produced, it would be very unlikely that the intelligence produced by the Aenoble agents was not used as a source for the estimate.

In all the three examples presented, Human intelligence was cooperating, and sometimes competing, with Sigint and Elint as an information collection method. There is, however, one aspect of Soviet behaviour on which Humint, by means of agents operating inside the USSR, was better positioned and better suited to provide the information needed: domestic policy. Keeping track of internal developments in the Soviet Union was as important as keeping track of air fields and missile bases. Not only did it allow the CIA to spot an eventual weakness of the enemy, which could then be exploited, for example, in the Western propaganda effort, but also, as previously mentioned, the first signs of a total mobilisation for war would be spotted inside the USSR itself. The disposition of the Soviet people towards the regime, the effects of social and economic policies, all these could not be spotted by an U-2 nor could they be easily found in intercepted communications, but could be gathered by agents in the field.

Especially after the ascension of Khrushchev as Premier and leader of the Communist Party, the United States were interested in the challenges faced by the Soviet leadership after the bitter, and bloody, struggle for power in the aftermath of Stalin's death. Stalin's policies had undermined the popularity of the regime and inhibited economic growth, so it was obligatory to understand the reaction of the Soviet people to Khrushchev's new trend. In NIE 11-4-57, a lot of space is devoted to internal political developments. The new attitudes, such as the lessening of terror and a reorganisation of the economic and industrial complex, had a positive impact on the people and on the image of the regime, making it unlikely that widespread civil violence would erupt, or that broader sectors of the population would become involved in politics.⁴⁷ Again, the sources are not mentioned but if, as we established, intelligence from Aenoble agents was already used in that same report regarding aircraft

⁴⁶ NARA, RG 263, National Intelligence Estimates and Related Reports and Correspondence, 1950-1985, NIE 11-4-57, 12 Nov 57, "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies 1957-1962".

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

production, it is not unlikely that those same agents were also used as sources on the development of the domestic situation in the USSR, on which they often reported. It is not a coincidence that, together with the observations on the Voronezh aircraft plant, the other item of great significance produced by Aenoble was “a report on local USSR agitators’ treatment of the Khrushchev secret speech, which contributed directly to the assessment of the version of the speech obtained by the CIA.”⁴⁸

In this chapter, the analysis of the CIA reports on the Aenoble and Aerodynamic operations, and some selected intelligence estimates, have been analysed and compared, trying to establish a link between the two that could support the idea that the intelligence gathered from émigré operations was influential for American policymaking in those years. As seen, connections can indeed be made between émigré intelligence and estimates, even if with various degrees of clarity, and lacking the definitive, hard evidence that could only come by knowing the exact sources for each estimate. However, while this is surely a limit, it does not hinder the overall scope of this research project, namely to re-evaluate, in positive terms, émigré intelligence operations. We do know, in fact, and with the support of documentary evidence, that the émigré agents produced a significant amount of intelligence, and that this was used in disseminations, the penultimate step of the intelligence cycle. We also know, again with hard evidence, that the information provided dealt with prominent issues, such as Soviet aircraft production in 1957, at the height of the “bomber gap” paranoia.

What is missing, in terms of documentary evidence, is the next step, what follows after dissemination, the proof those operations and the intelligence they provided did have an impact on American policymaking in the early Cold War, besides the conclusions drawn using the estimates. However, considering what the common view on émigré operations was (a waste of time and resources and the target for Soviet deception), proving that they provided significant and meaningful intelligence, and that this made it all the way to the dissemination stage, can already be considered a success for the purpose of this research.

⁴⁸ CIA FOIA ERR, Aenoble VOL. 3_0055/0072.

Conclusions

Sources and support

This research work rests on the delicate balance between primary and secondary sources. As said before, some of the issues addressed in this thesis were analysed thanks to one main source of documents: the operations reports in the CIA archives. When it was time to moving from a mere analysis of the operations towards a judgement on their reach, impact and overall consequences, over-reliance on a single source was quickly spotted as a potential danger for the veridicity of this work. Thus, it was important to carefully study the other relevant publications and research in the field, and find references and other analyses on émigré intelligence operations, in order to find support, or disproof, for the hypotheses that emerged from my study of the documents.

This, however, once again led back to the importance of the documents in the CIA archives. Even the most recent studies, such as Sarah-Jane Corke *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, ignored the Aeacre files. At the time of the publishing of her book, Corke's understanding was that the CIA refused to acknowledge that the émigré operations even took place. The book was published in 2008, just one year after the end of the de-classification effort from the Interagency Working Group¹, so it is perfectly understandable that the majority of Corke's work happened before the documents were available. This, however, means that some of the information provided is inaccurate. For example, there is very little on the Ukrainian operations, and, perhaps more importantly, the NTS is presented as "another Ukrainian resistance army", while it was a White Russian émigré group.² Corke's overall judgement that the majority of the operations were ill conceived, unrealistic and ultimately doomed to failure, then, could be, if not completely overturned, at least re-elaborated thanks to what the Aeacre files tell us regarding what were the CIA's realistic expectations, and what did the émigré actually produced in terms of intelligence.

¹ More details on that will follow in this chapter.

² Corke, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy*, p. 108.

In *Operation Rollback*, Peter Grose, while refraining from expressing such a harsh judgement on American covert operations in Europe (perhaps because, he is less focused than Corke on the strict political strategy aspect), still agrees with the overall conclusion that what he calls “Rollback campaigns” were, in the long run, detrimental for the public position of the United States. However, what emerges clearly from the book is the relevant position that the émigré had in the minds of the “forefathers” of political warfare, especially during the planning stage of the covert operations establishment. In 1947, George Kennan started circulating his plan on the utilisation of defectors, émigrés and refugees from Eastern Europe. In early 1948, Allen Dulles (back then still an outside consultant), submitted to the NSC an interim report, where he highlighted the importance of resistance groups to gather intelligence on the Soviet Union. Almost at the same time, Frank Wisner, then at the State Department, formed a group to study the “Utilization of Refugees from the USSR in US National Interests”. It is surely not a new concept, that the émigrés were seen, and used, by the “cold warriors” as tools to further their goal of making psychological warfare and covert operations the primary weapons against the Soviet enemy. That they had been so central, however, in that fundamental early stage of covert action planning, is a concept that has not been highlighted enough. Still, focusing on covert action of the paramilitary kind for the most part, Grose leaves out intelligence gathering almost completely. He also falls in the same factual mistakes of other researchers in the field, such as when he affirms that Mykola Lebed, under postwar interrogation, admitted that he “had served the Nazis”, or that he had been dispatched to the West by “the revolutionary Stepen Bandera”.³ Lebed, in fact, never admitted cooperation with the Nazis (as will be shown later in this chapter), and he arrived in Europe in 1944 as part of the “foreign mission” of the UHVR, with which Bandera had no ties (see chapter IV). This kind of mistake is far too common in studies that deal indirectly with the émigrés, and it is understandable, due to the lack of proper historiography on the topic, with few exceptions, such as *The White Russian Army in Exile*, but here once again the files in the CIA archives show their value. Most of the history of the émigré groups, in fact, is told in those documents with great accuracy, as a result of the careful information-gathering process that the agency undertook during the first years of its relationship with the émigrés. That history has been used in this research to provide a clear picture of who were these people, what were their roots, their status and their motivations, something that is almost constantly missing in other accounts. One notable exception is *The White Russian*

³ Grose, *Operation Rollback*, p. 46.

Army in Exile, by Paul Robinson. Despite not dealing directly with intelligence or covert operations, the book, providing a clear and detailed account of the White emigration in Europe, helped in understanding the history of how and why those émigrés got involved in the secret Cold War. It also helped in clarifying and reconstructing issues and events relating to single figures whose history was hard to track.

A point that emerges from Grose's book is that émigrés and defectors were part of a large array of projects envisioned by the forefathers of covert operations: these projects included infiltration, sabotage, paramilitary action, intelligence gathering, and, most important of all, propaganda. In this work, the importance of the émigrés for propaganda during the Cold War has been highlighted several times. What emerges clearly from the study of the covert operations is that even in the case of projects such as Aerodynamic and Aenoble, that started with a more "aggressive" stance, aimed at penetrating the Soviet Union physically with agents, the propaganda value of the émigrés soon emerged as their best asset. This was what could be salvaged from the operations, once infiltration, paramilitary efforts and even intelligence gathering showed their unfeasibility. This, propaganda, is what allowed some émigré groups, such as the Ukrainians, to stay on the CIA paybook for so many decades.

These conclusions find support in the many studies available on the Radios, the most successful émigré propaganda project. The one that has been singled out for this research was *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, by A. Ross Johnson, not only because of the inherent quality of the work, but because the author highlights a fundamental concept. Johnson explains that the Radios were the culmination of efforts made to harness the talents of émigrés and defectors from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. These efforts started in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and were initially focused on supporting the émigrés in other endeavors.⁴ Besides the Radios, proof of the support of the US government for émigré propaganda can be found in the history of the Prolog Research and Publishing Corporation. This is particularly significant for this research, because Prolog was an offshoot of the Zp/UHVR, the Ukrainian émigré group that the CIA was working with. The fact that Prolog was financed until the late 1980s, decades after that the infiltration missions in the Ukraine were dismissed, shows the enduring aspect of émigré operations and how successful this could be once they evolved towards a pure propaganda aspect.⁵ This is crucial, because it shows that émigré operations should not be considered a "dead branch" in the history of

⁴ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 7.

⁵ Kuzio, "U.S. support for Ukraine's liberation during the Cold War".

Cold War covert operations, a “speed bump” to be dismissed as a complete failure. They were an organic, central part of the development of covert action, and as such they evolved and morphed during the years. Thinking that operations Jungle and Valuable, or the air drops in Ukraine, are representative of émigré covert operations as a whole, and can thus be used to give a fair judgement on them, is a very limited perspective.

Many of these conclusions are echoed in Harry Rositzke’s book, *The CIA’s Secret Operations*, which is half a biography and half a critical account of American covert action until the 1970s. Rositzke was the man in charge of CIA operations inside Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and as such his point of view is a privileged one. After his retirement, he became very critical of the American effort against the USSR in the first two decades of the Cold War, to the point of talking of the “conspicuous failures of America’s past covert actions”, and, regarding the strategy of containment, saying that “there is little else on the record but failure.”⁶ It would be unlikely, then, that he wanted to justify or sugarcoat in any way the operations that he directed in the 1950s. His judgement is harsh, clinical but at the same time takes into consideration the whole picture. He outlines how, in the first years of its existence, the CIA had to primarily fulfil the requests of the Pentagon, which was setting the targets. When the danger of a Soviet military attack was perceived as real, the priority was to have agents on the field who could provide early warning on the mobilization of Soviet forces, and at the same time intelligence on specific targets.

Rositzke admits that most of the infiltration operations were a failure, because the agents were quickly picked up by Soviet security forces. He, however, also specifies that a “steady source of satisfaction” came from the intelligence reports received from the agents who had been able to avoid detection and reach their target areas. In terms of early warning, the results were a “total failure”, for one simple reason:

There were no early warnings to be reported. No Soviet divisions moved west for an offensive into Western Europe. No strategic bombers took off for the United States. Had there been radio-equipped agents sitting near every TU-4 runway and major rail hub, none would have had occasion to transmit a message.⁷

This, however, should not discredit the value of the operations, on those few cases they were successful, and of the work of the émigré agents and the intelligence they transmitted.

⁶ Rositzke, *The CIA’s Secret Operations*, pp. 252, 264.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

Rositzke reports the example of one North Ukrainian, who he fictitiously calls Ivan Petrovich, assigned to spy on one of the Pentagon's high priority early warning targets, the bomber base at Orsha. This one of the three key bases to be put under observation by a radio-equipped agent, and Ivan's origin from that same area helped single him out in one of the displaced persons camp in Europe (Rositzke does not specify this, but usually the spotters were members of the émigré groups). After ten months of training, Ivan took off in the middle of the night on a C-47 plane, and successfully landed in the target area. He was able to avoid detection, and announced his safe arrival on the radio. During the following thirteen months, Ivan found work first as a labourer on a street-repair team, and then as an electrician in a canning factory (all proof that the forged documents and life record provided by the CIA were effective). After burying his radio in a wood two miles from the target airfield, he made a point of walking by the base once or twice a week. He transmitted a total of five radio messages and three letters with secret writing, to addresses in West Germany. Over the course of the year, Ivan reported his observations but there was no unusual traffic from the airfield. In his last message, he reported he had legalised himself with documents bought on the black market, and had decided to sign off forever, because he felt that using the radio was becoming dangerous, and there was nothing to report anyway. According to Rositzke, Ivan had carried out his primary mission, to report on activities at the Orsha air field. This was the major contribution that the early warning agents were able to make to the analysts in Washington. There were, however, "other items of military information (aircraft identifications, airfield and army installations, etc.) and of security and living conditions, but early warning was the main task."⁸

Rositzke's final assessment on the émigré operations is well worth reporting:

It is easy in retrospect to sum up this crash program: The results were not worth the effort. At the time, however, when a Soviet military offensive was considered imminent, it was a wartime investment whose cost was not measured by the Pentagon. In my own view there was some profit. The mere existence of radio-equipped agents on Soviet terrain with no early warnings to report had some cautionary value in tempering the war scare among the military estimators at the height of the Cold War."⁹

Another, often underplayed or outright ignored, positive outcome of émigré operations was their value for counterespionage. Rositzke recalls how the East Berlin KGB branch took a special interest in émigrés; way before the first American airdrops, "the KGB was working

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

hard to monitor and neutralize them.” This work included not only sending in “fake” émigrés from the East, but also recruiting the genuine ones who were already in West Germany, especially those working for Radio Liberty the Munich area. They were usually approached by a KGB agent who showed them a picture of their relatives in the USSR (an implied threat), and then offered the prospect to rehabilitate themselves by working for the Soviet service. Sometimes, it was the émigré himself who reported the fact to an American officer, others it was the CIA to found out firsthand, thanks to its agents in the émigré community. Regardless, those who were willing and able were encouraged to accept their Soviet assignment and report back to a CIA case officer. One the Americans had a number of KGB agents working for them, they were able to feed their own plants in the KGB net. According to Rositzke, “these double agent operations uncovered scores of Soviet couriers, contact points, and agents in the American zone and gave us a detailed picture of KGB personnel and facilities in East Berlin.” And additional value was to produce reassurance that the KGB had not penetrated the training bases or air dispatches teams.¹⁰

Rositzke’s perspective as a first-hand witness is incredibly useful to assess the positive value of émigré intelligence operations, even more so because his overall judgement is still negative: the losses were too high and the expenditure of effort too great for the results achieved. Deprived of the nuance you could expect from the man in charge of those operations, it is then possible to extract from his account the genuine outcomes of the whole business. At a time when the Pentagon was frantically requesting to “do something, do anything”, the émigré agents on the field acted as the much needed early warning system. The fact that the warning never came is not detrimental for the value of the system itself. Meanwhile, the agents were also providing items of military information (aircraft production is an example provided in the previous chapter), and of living and security conditions. Meanwhile, in Germany, thanks to the émigrés the CIA was able to obtain a certain degree of penetration of the KGB, a task that, as many intelligence historians will agree, should not be underestimated.

Epilogue: reinterpret and revise a previously accepted narrative

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.5

As previously stated, the CIA's relationship with the ZP/UHVR proved to be a long-term successful engagement. Three decades after émigré operations inside the Soviet Union had been discontinued, however, the most "clean" of the CIA émigré ventures backlashed into a storm of negative publicity for the Agency.

It all started in 1979, when New York Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman successfully campaigned for the creation of a special investigative unit, the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), attached to the Department of Justice, with the purpose of prosecuting war criminals residing in the United States. This action followed from the discovery, during the 1960s and 1970s, of a number of alleged World War II criminals living in the country; consequently, the OSI's work focused on former Nazis or collaborators. In June 1985, after a two years' review of United States government files (including CIA ones), the General Accounting Office (today called Government Accountability Office, GAO), the agency that provides auditing and investigation for the US Congress, published a report on alleged Nazis and Axis collaborators who were assisted by US intelligence agencies in settling in the country after World War II. Twelve individuals were described (but not named) in the report. The only one who had a continuing relationship with the Agency was Mykola Lebed, who was by then 76 years old and had retired from his position of leader of the ZP/UHVR in 1979.¹¹ As a consequence, the OSI decided to open an investigation and, on the 15th of October 1985, Lebed was interrogated by two representatives of the Department of Justice, in the presence of two CIA officers. He was accused of being implicated in the assassination of Bronislav Pieracki in 1934 (see chapter III) and of cooperating with the Germans during World War II.

The Agency had good reason to be concerned. The ZP/UHVR was still active with propaganda activities aimed at keeping the spirit of Ukrainian nationalism alive to destabilise the Soviet Union, and its cooperation with the CIA had been successful for four decades. A public accusation of Lebed as a war criminal would destroy his personal reputation, damage the cause of Ukrainian nationalism and expose and destroy the covert work of the ZP/UHVR, to the general delight of the Soviets. The interrogation was under oath, and Lebed admitted that he was indirectly involved in the assassination of Pieracki, for which he had been already convicted (see chapter III). However, he categorically denied all allegations of collaboration

¹¹ CIA FOIA ERR, "OSI Investigation with Potential for Compromise of QKPLUMB Operation", Lebed, Mykola_0050.

with the Nazis, mentioning the fact that his family was in a concentration camp and that he was on the Gestapo wanted list for organising the anti-Nazi resistance in Ukraine from 1941 to 1944. The OSI investigators had to admit that there were no grounds for prosecuting Lebed for the assassination of Pieracki, due to expired statute of limitations. They did not, however, exclude the possibility of denaturalisation and ultimately deportation if additional evidence was uncovered against him. Even worse, they also gave the CIA grounds to believe that the OSI could request Soviet authorities, as they had done many times in the past, for any documentary or testimonial evidence on Lebed.¹² One of the main criticisms moved against the work of the OSI during the years was, in fact, their reliance on Soviet evidence.

Lebed, however, was not pursued further by the Department of Justice and his past was not exposed until 1991, when John Loftus, a former lawyer and member of the OSI, published his book *Unholy Trinity*, which disclosed, according to the author, the CIA-sponsored intelligence operations using Nazi war criminals. Loftus and Elizabeth Holtzman (who later became a member of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group), both submitted to the CIA a request to access the records of the 1985 investigation on Lebed, along with his personal history statement provided to the Agency when he entered the United States in 1949, and other materials concerning his alleged collaboration with the Nazis. After reviewing the information requested, the CIA assessment was that: “there is no information contained therein to support the allegations that Mr Lebed was involved in Nazi war crimes.”¹³ It should be noted that this is not the ‘official’ answer the Agency provided to the public; it comes from a document that was only circulated internally, so it should be considered reliable. The damage, however, had been done already. Lebed had been exposed and Loftus publicly claimed that the CIA was retaining files concerning his war crimes record.¹⁴ The image of the Agency’s operations involving the émigrés had been tarnished irremediably. Publications such as *Unholy Trinity* and others that followed, despite having little reliability as historical studies, resulted in the label of Nazi collaborators being attached to all the émigrés without distinction. Ironically enough, the CIA’s careful screening and selection of the individuals and groups to cooperate with, did not account for much in the end. Four decades of successful Aerodynamic operations have been, until now, completely disregarded by scholars and historians, mostly

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ CIA FOIA ERR, “Information Available in Directorate of Operations Operational Records on Mikola Lebed”, Lebed, Mykola_0074”.

¹⁴ “Nazi Hunter Says CIA Has Files on Man Accused of War Crimes”, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1992.

due to the baseless accusations against Lebed who, it should be noted, died peacefully in his own home in Pittsburgh without ever facing the risk of deportation. What is worse is that, as a consequence, all the émigré operations of the 1950s have been discarded as failures, simply because no historians until now considered them worth of an in-depth study.

In 1998, the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act created the Interagency Working Group (IWG), tasked with identifying and declassifying United States records related to Nazi and Japanese war crimes. It was a monumental effort that lasted for eight years, costed approximately 30 million dollars and required the screening of over one hundred million pages.¹⁵ According to Steven Garfunkel, Acting Chair of the IWG from 2002 to 2007, one of the legacies of that work is that the public has now access to hundreds of thousands of records from the Office of Strategic Services, the CIA, the FBI and the Army Counterintelligence Corps:

Historians, political scientists, journalists, novelists, students, and other researchers will use the records the IWG has brought to light for many decades to come. As researchers pore over this extraordinary collection of important and interesting documents, will they rewrite the history of World War II, the Holocaust, or the Cold War? Probably not. But [...] the details of major and lesser-known events will now be far richer, and as nuances of these events comes to light, historians will reinterpret and revise our previously accepted narratives.¹⁶

Now that I have reached the end of this study, I would like to think that this is exactly what has happened. The accepted narrative on the émigré operations was superficial and it led to a misinterpretation and understatement of Human intelligence operations during the 1950s. This was such an important facet, not only of the history of intelligence, but of the Cold War in general, that it should not be ignored or left uncorrected any longer. My purpose in “cleaning up” the history of émigré intelligence operations was not to rehabilitate the émigrés themselves or the agencies that exploited them; if I had set out to do that, I would have fallen into the same bias of many of the researchers that have approached the issue before me. The purpose of my work was to take this important chapter of the Cold War, bring it out from the realm of journalism and speculation, and move it into that of history, using a verifiable and scientific approach. History, however, cannot be understood by compartmentalisation; it must be looked at as a whole, organic process of cause and effect. For this reason, I tried to never lose sight of the bigger picture, which was that complex

¹⁵ Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group, Final Report to the United States Congress, April 2007. Accessible online at <http://www.archives.gov/iwg/reports/final-report-2007.pdf>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

period of the modern age that we call, simplifying, the Cold War. Understanding how the Cold War shaped intelligence policies, and how the results of intelligence operations influenced the trends of the Cold War was a key aim of this research, one that I hope I have accomplished. There are, however, still many questions left unanswered. There are no operational records of the SIS' exploitation of the émigrés. If some material will become available in the future (if it still exists), it will be interesting to understand how émigré-derived intelligence influenced British estimates and that country's attitude in the Cold War. Other issues have been left out due to the limit in length that the present kind of work requires. A very interesting topic, for example, is the Soviet reaction to the émigrés and their activities. Besides the covert activities, such as penetration and assassination attempts that were mentioned in the previous chapters, the overt response also deserves attention. Constant attacks in the Soviet press and attempts at slander and discrediting the émigré groups and their leaders have been well documented and recorded by the CIA and are easily accessible through the CREST database. I hope to expand on these issues in future works.

Glossary

Due to the great number of abbreviations and names of people and organisations present in the text, the following glossary is provided for quick reference.

Aeacre

The CIA cryptonym for projects involving émigré groups.

Aenoble (Aesaurus)

The CIA cryptonym for operations involving the NTS.

Aerodynamic

The CIA cryptonym for operations involving the ZP/UHVR.

Aradi, Zsolt

A Hungarian consultant for SSU who established the first contacts between the Ukrainians and American intelligence.

Bandera, Stepan

The prominent Ukrainian nationalist leader. Bandera engaged in terrorist activities before the Second World War, then cooperated with the Germans but was arrested by the Gestapo. After the war he moved to Germany where he became one of the most influential Ukrainian émigré leaders, and engaged in espionage and subversive activities. Killed by a KGB agent in 1959.

Bevin, Ernest

British politician, served as Foreign Secretary from 1945 to 1951.

Carr, Harry

The SIS' head of station in Finland, he was responsible for the British attempts at penetrating the Soviet Union through the Baltic using émigré agents.

CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America. The successor of the OSS, the SSU and the CIG.

CIC

Counter Intelligence Corps, the intelligence agency of the United States Army. Active from 1917 to 1961.

CIG

The Central Intelligence Group. American civilian intelligence agency formed in 1946 by President Truman to centralise the intelligence process in the United States. Later replaced by the CIA.

Dulles, Allen

American diplomat and lawyer, first civilian director of the CIA, from 1953 to 1961.

FHO

Fremde Heere Ost. The eastern military intelligence section of the Operations Department of the Army General Staff of Nazi Germany. Headed by Reinhard Gehlen from 1941 until the end of the war.

Foss, Klavdij (Claudius Voss)

Ukrainian-born veteran of the White Army and head of the Inner Line for Slavonic Europe. Strongly suspected of being a Soviet agent, he had close ties with Anton Turkul.

G-2

Refers to the military intelligence section of a unit in the United States Army. Played an important role during the Second World War. The Navy and the Air Force have similar designations (N-2, A-2).

GCHQ

The Government Communications Headquarters. The British intelligence agency responsible for Signals intelligence.

Gehlen, Reinhard

Military and intelligence office of Nazi Germany, head of the FHO during the Second World War. After the war he set up an intelligence group in Western Germany with the help of the Americans.

Gehlen Organisation

An intelligence agency based in Western Germany, set up by Reinhard Gehlen with the support of American military intelligence first, and of the CIA later. In 1956 it became the official intelligence service of the Federal Republic of Germany. It was codenamed RUSTY by the CIA.

Hrinioch, Ivan

An Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest and the vice-president of ZP/UHVR, he was also the CIA informant inside the organisation.

Inner Line

The intelligence branch of ROVS, secretly established in the late 1920s, with the purpose of penetrating émigré social and political organisations to gain control from within.

IRD

The Information Research Department. Founded in 1948, it was a department of the British Foreign Office responsible for propaganda activities during the Cold War.

JIC

The Joint Intelligence Committee. Founded on 7 July 1936 as an advisory peacetime defence planning agency. During World War II, it became the senior intelligence assessment body in the UK. In 1957 the JIC moved to the Cabinet Office.

KARKAS (Caccola)

The CIA cryptonym for the plan to infiltrate inside the Soviet Union CIA-trained NTS men.

Kauder, Richard (Max or Klatt)

A Jew of Austrian origins, he was recruited by the *Abwehr* during the Second World War, and sold to the Germans the Max/Moritz messages. After the war he was arrested and questioned along with Turkul and Longin on the charge of being a Soviet agent.

KGB

Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security), the main security agency of the Soviet Union from 1954 to 1991. It was the successor of the *Cheka*, the NKGB and MGB.

Korzhan, Michael

Ukrainian émigré, professor of theology and member of both the OUN/B and the ZP/UHVR. He was also a CIA informant, codenamed “Capelin”.

Kutepov, Aleksandr

General of the White Army in the Russian Civil War, leader of ROVS from 1926. He was responsible for running underground operations inside the Soviet Union. Kidnapped and killed by the Soviets in Paris.

Lebed, Mykola

Ukrainian émigré leader and one of the founders of the ZP/UHVR. Lebed was the main CIA contact inside the group and he cooperated with agency for almost two decades.

Longin, Ira

A Soviet plant in the White Russian emigration. He worked closely with Turkul and Klatt, and was the real source of the Max/Moritz messages.

Matvieyko, Myron

Chief of the OUN security branch, *Abwehr* agent during the Second World War, then member of the OUN/B. In 1953 he went back into Ukraine to act as Bandera’s representative to the resistance.

Menzies, Sir Stuart Graham

The chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) from 1939 to 1952. Referred to as “C” in secret documents and correspondence.

MI5

Military Intelligence, Section 5. The Security Service of the United Kingdom, dealing with domestic counter-intelligence and security.

MI6

See entry for SIS.

Miller, Yevgeny

One of the Generals of the White Army in the Russian Civil War, later leader of ROVS. Kidnapped by the KGB in Paris and then killed in Moscow.

NSA

The National Security Agency. The American intelligence organisation responsible for Signals intelligence.

NSC

The National Security Council. Created in 1947, it is the principal forum for American national security and foreign policy matters. It is chaired by the President and includes the Director of Central Intelligence, the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

NTSNP (NTS)

Natsional'nyi Trudovoi Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia (National Labour Union of the New Generation). Commonly known as the NTS, it was a White Russian émigré group founded by young nationalists in 1926.

Okhrymovych, Vasyl

One of the founding members of ZP/UHVR, he was sent back to the Ukraine in 1951 to act as liaison between the émigré group (and the CIA) and the resistance army.

OPC

The Office of Policy Coordination. Established by the NSC in 1948 with the purpose of coordinating both psychological warfare and paramilitary operations. Merged with the CIA in 1950 but remained a powerful body within the Agency. Frank Wisner was its director until 1956.

Orekhov, Basil

White Russian émigré operating in Brussels. In 1947 he became a founding member of the *Centre National Russe* (CNR), an organisation that proposed to unite all the Russian émigré groups, and suspected of being penetrated by the Soviets.

OSO

The Office of Special Operations. Part of the CIA, responsible for the collection and distribution of foreign espionage and counterespionage intelligence information.

OSS

The Office of Strategic Services, a wartime American intelligence agency. Formed in 1942 to carry out covert operations during the Second World War. Disbanded by President Truman in 1945.

OUN

Orhanizatsiia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists). The prominent nationalist organisation of the Ukraine.

Pidhajnyj, Bohdan

Chief of the ZCh/OUN operational section, he liaised with SIS regarding agent operations. Critical of Bandera's leadership, he supported his ousting.

Poremski, Vladimir

One of the leaders of the NTS and the prominent contact for the CIA inside the organisation.

Redskin

The CIA cryptonym for intelligence-gathering operations involving either people travelling from the West to the USSR or Soviet citizens visiting the West, including delegations, tourists and members of scientific or cultural groups.

Redsox

The CIA cryptonym for operations involving the illegal return into the USSR of émigrés and defectors to act as undercover agents.

RNSUV

Russkii Natsional'nyo Soiuz Uchastinov Voiny (Russian National Union of War Veterans), often referred to as the Turkul organisation. The White Russian émigré group founded by Anton Turkul.

Rositzke, Harry

First chief of the CIA Soviet Division and the man responsible for agent operations inside the USSR until 1954.

ROVS

Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz (Russian General Military Union). A White Russian émigré group, founded by General Wrangel in 1924, resulting from the many Russian veterans' associations that appeared in Europe in the early 1920s.

SIS

The Secret Intelligence Service, the foreign intelligence service of the United Kingdom. Also known as MI6 (Military Intelligence, Section 6).

Skoblin, Nikolai

General of the White Army and one of the most important Soviet spies in the White émigré community. Played a fundamental role in the abduction of General Miller in 1936.

SOE

The Special Operations Executive, wartime British intelligence agency. Founded in 1940 to conduct covert operations during the Second World War. Disbanded in 1946 (absorbed by the SIS).

SSU

The Strategic Services Unit. American civilian intelligence agency founded in 1945 to succeed the OSS, later replaced by the CIG.

Stetsko, Yaroslav

Ukrainian nationalist and émigré leader, member of the ZCh/OUN and Bandera second-in-command for a long time.

Trest (The Trust)

Codename for a deception operation run by the KGB against the White Russians and ROVS in particular.

Turkul, Anton

Prominent White Russian émigré, founder and leader of the RNSUV group. Turkul was involved, during the Second World War, with the controversial espionage network responsible for the Max/Moritz messages. After the war he was questioned by CIA and SIS representatives on the charge of being a Soviet agent, but no conclusive evidence was found.

UHVR

Ukrains' ka Holovna Vyzvol' na Rada (Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council). A clandestine government established in 1944 as the highest political authority of the Ukrainian insurrection.

UNR

Ukrainska Narodna Respublika (Ukrainian National Republic). A self-styled government-in-exile, composed by old Ukrainian politicians and generals, forced out of the Ukraine after the Soviet-Polish war in 1921.

UPA

Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia (Ukrainian Insurgent Army). The Ukrainian resistance army, fighting against the Germans during the Second World War and then the Soviets during the early years of the Cold War.

Vlassov, Andrej

General of the Russian Red Army, then Nazi collaborationist. Head of the Russian Liberation Army, known as Vlassov Army, made by Russian prisoners of war and Red Army defectors.

Wisner, Frank

American lawyer and intelligence officer. Worked in the OSS during the Second World. Director of the OPC from 1948 to 1956.

Wrangel, Pyotr

Commanding general of the White Army in Southern Russia during the Russian civil war, and then of the White forces during and after their retreat to Constantinople. Founder of ROVS and *de facto* leader of the Russian emigration until his death in 1928.

ZCh/OUN

Zakordonni Chastyny OUN (Foreign Section of OUN). Ukrainian émigré group founded by Stepan Bandera. Also known as OUN/B. Tied with the British and the SIS until 1954.

ZP/UHVR

Zakordonne Predstavnytvo Ukrainoskoyi Holovnovi Vyzvolnoyi Rady (Foreign Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Council of Liberation). Ukrainian émigré group founded by the representatives of the UHVR sent to Western Europe in 1944. Tied with the Americans and the CIA until the 1970s.

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