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8 February 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: C. EM/P

SUBJECT: BYELORUSSIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

1. Byelorussia at present is one of the Soviet Union Republics. It covers an area of 88,000 square miles and has a population of approximately 10 million people. The capital city of Byelorussia is Minsk. Eighty per cent of the population are Byelorussians. The rest are Jews, Russians, and others. It borders on Poland in the West (length of borderline approximately 400 miles); on Ukraine in the South (length of borderline approximately 500 miles); on Lithuania and Latvia in the northwest (length of borderline approximately 180 miles); and on the USSR in the northeast and east.

2. Byelorussia as such does not have state tradition. It never was an organized independent state. The Byelorussian national consciousness began to develop among the masses only after 1918 under the Soviet system. The region of present Byelorussian SSR was divided in Medieval times between Poland and Lithuania. The eastern part of it came under Russia in the first partition of Poland in 1772, and the rest in the second partition in 1795. It had always been and still is one of the poorest and backward areas in Russia. The economic and cultural level of the Byelorussian people has always been low. The average Byelorussian, as a rule, is rather apathetic and lacks energy and initiative; in that respect he differs considerably from his cousin in the south—the Ukrainians.

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3. In 1917 in the wake of the Russian Revolution the Byelorussians called their first National Congress in the city of Minsk. The Congress proclaimed the creation of an independent Byelorussian Peoples Republic and elected a Byelorussian National Council "RADA" and later a president. In December 1917 the Red Army occupied Minsk and the Byelorussian National Congress was dispersed. The newly elected National Council and the president fled to Lithuania where they remained until 1923. During this period the Byelorussian SSR was created by the Soviets who offered the members of the exiled National Council to return to Byelorussia under Soviet rule and join the Soviets. Approximately 30 members went back to Byelorussia; the rest--approximately 170--and the President remained in exile. In 1923 the so-called Byelorussian National Government-in-exile moved to Prague and later when the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia, to Paris, where it maintains its headquarters at present. While the Byelorussian National Government-in-exile was in Prague, NIKOLA ABRANCHIK, then Secretary of the Byelorussian Council, became a close collaborator of the third President of the Byelorussian Government-in-exile, VASIL ZACHARKA, elected in 1929. When ZACHARKA died in 1943, NIKOLA ABRANCHIK became president by virtue of ZACHARKA's will in which ZACHARKA allegedly appointed ABRANCHIK his successor.

4. There are at present two political groups this side of the Iron Curtain, the Belorussian National Independence Movement and "Zarubashniki", each claiming to be the true representative of the Belorussian National Cause.

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a. The Byelorussian National Independence Movement is built around the Paris Byelorussian Democratic Government-in-exile headed by President NIKOLA ABRAMCHIK. The Byelorussian Government-in-exile claims to be the continuation of the Byelorussian National Government elected by the people of Byelorussia in 1917. It consists of the Byelorussian National Council (BNC) with approximately 170-180 members and a cabinet of ministers created by ABRAMCHIK in 1947. The cabinet is headed by Premier KORNASHOVSKI, a recent emigrant from Byelorussia and a former Soviet official in the USSR.

In 1948 there was created in Paris a world Union of Byelorussian Emigres with over 200 members scattered around the world. The Union is headed by LEON SYLIVSKI and is subordinate to the Byelorussian Government-in-exile.

The official press organ of the Byelorussian World Union is "BAYELAVSHCHINA", a weekly newspaper edited in Germany.

The Byelorussian National Independence group also called "BRIVICHY", is extremely nationalistic and decisively anti-Russian. It stands for independent Byelorussian state not dominated by or under the influence of Russia. It is not in sympathy with the Russian language and culture and wants the Byelorussian culture to be of a western orientation. It is supported by the majority of the Byelorussian intelligentsia, many of whom were raised and educated in countries other than Russia. Members of the Byelorussian National Independence movement are active in Federal clubs of central and eastern Europe and cooperate with the anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) and the Prometheus, and maintain contact with Bandera and Melnik of

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the Ukrainian movement. The most important centers of Byelorussian separatist movement are in Germany, France, England, Belgium, Canada, and Argentina.

The Byelorussian National Council (BNC) is considered the executive organ of the Byelorussian National Liberation Movement; it controls, through the leaders of various Byelorussian organizations and political parties, a large number of Byelorussians in exile--members of these organizations. It had three sessions--one in 1947 and two in 1948--and came up with a program which may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Fight for independence of a democratic and a united Byelorussian Republic;
- (2) Establishment of frontiers of the Republic based on ethnographic principles;
- (3) Assurance of access to the Baltic Sea by incorporation of part of East Prussia into the Republic;
- (4) Collaboration with the nations of central and eastern Europe in the fight against the USSR and against the influence of Russian emigration.

The BNC is strongly opposed to any liaison with Russian organizations. Any Byelorussian group that dares to make contact or cooperate with any Russian organization would be expelled from the BNC.

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b. The "Iarubashniki" group is in opposition to the Belorussian National independence movement. It came into being originally as a result of the creation by the German occupation authorities in 1942 of a Byelorussian Autocephalic Orthodox Church similar to that created in the Ukraine. This Church was headed by three high priests. After the defeat of Germany in 1945, these high priests went to Germany, abolished the Byelorussian Autocephalic Orthodox Church, and created an autonomous Byelorussian Orthodox Church within the framework of the Russian Orthodox Church abroad. They are considered to be thoroughly pro-Russian and are opposed vehemently to the Byelorussian National Independence Movement. They have the support of Russian emigres from Byelorussia who, after the German defeat, failed to be extradited to the Soviet authorities and declared themselves to be Polish citizens of Byelorussian origin. They are fighting vigorously against the activities of the Byelorussian Catholic Mission (Eastern rites).

At the present time this group is headed by NADOSLAW OSTROWSKI. His services were won by the group for its line of policy at the break of 1947-1948. OSTROWSKI openly collaborated with the Germans. In 1948 he became chairman of the Byelorussian Central Council (BER) created during the German occupation and supported by the Germans. The BER was dissolved in September 1945 after the defeat of Germany and then resurrected in March 1948 in Western Germany. It considers itself the chief representative of all Byelorussian political emigres.

OSTROWSKI has also formed a cabinet (KOLEGIYA BELARUSKOI CENTRALNOI RAJN) which consists of 8 ministers. The chairman of the Kolegia is

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J. BABALNWSIK. ASTROWSKI lives in the British Zone of Western Germany. BABALNWSIK has been in the U.S. since July 1950.

BZR has not joined the ANB (Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations). It stands for independent Byelorussia but in federation with Russia. Its official press organ is a newspaper called BYELORUSSKOYE SLOVO.

8. The two groups are strongly opposed to each other and do not recognize each other as true representatives of the Belorussian people. They clash constantly and throw accusations at each other. ABRALCHIK is considered by the ZARUBZHINI to be an impostor because he was never elected president. Some of the leaders of the Byelorussian National Independence movement are accused by the ZARUBZHINI of being paid by the Soviets. (KOCHANOVSKI--Prime Minister; ADA-CHIK and JANVA STANEVICH--members of cabinet) or by the Poles (ABRALCHIK, Col. KUBAL the War Minister, and others). KOCHANOVSKI, ADACHIK and STANEVICH have actually come out of the Soviet Union after the German occupation in 1942-1944, where they played various roles as government officials of the Byelorussian SSR. Col. KUBAL is a former officer of the Polish Army. ABRALCHIK is reported to be financed by the Polish London Government.

The ZARUBZHINI on the other hand are accused of having collaborated with the Germans during the war, of being pro-Orthodox and pro-Russian. OSTROVSKI and SOBOLNWSKI are accused of having been involved in pro-Soviet activities in Poland in 1924-27. ASTROWSKI's close associate in collaboration with the Germans, Dr. JERACHENKO, who joined the ZARUBZHINI together with ASTROWSKI is accused of having been a Gestapo agent and the

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head of the so-called Byelorussian self-relief organization which in 1945-1946 was operating under the WHITERUSSIAN general Commissariat. Recent reports state that Dr. JAKACHENKO had been connected in emigration with the Russian newspaper, "DELLO TRUDA", an organ of the anarcho-communist Trade Unions, and that Bishop ATANAZI, one of the leaders of ZARUBZHENI, was arrested by the American occupational authorities on the suspicion of being a Soviet spy.

Each group accuses the other of being penetrated by Soviet Agents.

6. The picture of Byelorussian resistance behind the Iron Curtain is quite obscure. When the Germans occupied Byelorussia, they organized a number of Byelorussian battalions which fought against the Soviet Army. On the other hand when the Soviet Army began to drive the German out of the USSR, some guerrilla groups were organized in Byelorussia by the Soviets. These guerrillas fought against the Germans. ABRANCHIK, who claims that his government-in-exile had directed resistance activities in Soviet Byelorussia even prior to the II World War, states with pride that during the way his partisans never collaborated with the Germans and fought against the Nazis as well as the Bolsheviks.

In 1945, after the withdrawal of the German troops from Byelorussia, the Germans para-dropped a group of Byelorussian partisans behind the Soviet Army lines in Byelorussia. The group was headed by "General" VITSEKA who was to become the commander of guerrilla forces fighting against the Soviets in Byelorussia. The group took along 9 radio sets.

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VITUSHKA succeeded in establishing radio contact with his wife who remained in Germany. This contact, however, was short lived; it soon broke off and was never reestablished. The fate of VITUSHKA, his colleagues, and the nine radio sets is unknown. The Byelorussians in exile claim that there still are guerrilla activities in the northwest as well as in the southwest in the Pripet Marshes. Some German PW, who returned to Germany, from PW camps located in Byelorussia, reported hearing of some acts of sabotage and resistance allegedly carried out by partisans hiding in the woods. Some of them heard people mention the name "Black Cat" supposedly being that of a guerrilla group. ABRACHIK claims that, although no contact exists between his group in exile and the Byelorussian resistance behind the Iron Curtain, he is certain that there exists at the present time some guerrilla activities against the Soviets in Byelorussia. However, when requested by CGIVE people to produce some evidence of the existence of guerrilla activities, neither he nor anyone else in his group was able to do so. Furthermore, it was learned that the Lithuanian partisans, with whom FJDAPE is in contact have tried to establish contact with partisans in Byelorussia. Although they succeeded in penetrating deep into Byelorussia from the northwest, they were unable to find anyone except some outlaws and similar types of individuals hiding in the woods.

7. Conclusion

At present the Byelorussian emigration is divided into two principle factions--the Byelorussian National Independence Movement and the "Zarus-bezhniki". The participants in these two groups appear to be engaged

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mainly in a struggle for power. Each individual group claims that it has the support of the people behind the Iron Curtain. Actually, however, there is no proof that either group has the popular support of the Byelorussians in the USSR. Moreover there is no concrete evidence of any organized resistance movement in the Soviet Byelorussia, claimed by both groups.

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