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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Planning Conferences with M. Abramtchik and B. Ragula of the BNR  
from 10-14 September 1956.

1. Background:

The DC/SR/7/DOB, [ ] met with the President of the BNR, M. Abramtchik, in Paris in December 1955 while on a REDSOX operational survey trip [ ] expressed the view that the U.S. Government was desirous of maintaining continued contact with the BNR. The DC of DOB further noted that the possibility of running REDSOX operations in conjunction and with the knowledge of the BNR was possible; not on the bilateral arrangement which existed during the 1950-1954 period, but rather one of unilateral action control solely by the U.S. Government, the only exception to this arrangement being the disposition of the intelligence "take." If during the course of any operational activity employing BNR assets, both internal and external, information received of value to the BNR would be relayed to them. M. Abramtchik agreed to this arrangement and further talks in Paris were terminated with the understanding that specific operational details and planning would be continued in the U.S. upon the arrival of Abramtchik later in the year.

2. 10 September:

a. Abramtchik arrived in the U.S. in August but did not meet with SR/7/DOB staff officers until 10 September 1956. The period between his actual arrival in the U.S. and the 10 September date was devoted to discussions with the American Committee in New York re the Paris Bloc of which Abramtchik is chairman and to BNR organizational activities in Toronto, Canada. Abramtchik was met at the Union Station Terminal by the undersigned case officer and taken to the Raleigh Hotel where he stayed during the entire course of the discussions.

b. In order to spare CSR/7/DOB and the DC/SR/7/DOB unnecessary exposure to the dialectics of former AEJQR operations and their somewhat unpleasant and abrupt conclusions, the undersigned case officer met with Abramtchik alone. These pre-conference discussions were most satisfactory and afforded the undersigned an opportunity to regain some of the rapport which had been lost with the suspension of joint BNR/CIA operational activities in 1954. It must be noted that Abramtchik appeared to be completely in a forgiving mood and the discussions of former AEJQR operations were satisfactorily concluded. No mention was made of the \$30,000 due to the BNR as the beneficiary on the insurance arrangement made with the members of AEJQR team 2.

c. The new operational conference began in a general fashion. Abramtchik attempted to bring the undersigned up-to-date on his political activity. He told of his subsequent reappointment as chairman of the Paris Bloc and its futile negotiations with the American Committee.

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As a matter of general interest, Abramtchik indicated that the American Committee was still dominated by Russian imperialistic thinking, and he was very sceptical that the Paris Bloc would work in conjunction with the American Committee since the latter group still insisted on a non-predetermination policy.

d. Turning to operational details, Abramtchik asked the case officer whether or not it was in his power to stop the immigration of an individual whom the Byelorussian agent immigration felt was a Soviet agent. He was told that this activity did not fall into the purview of the case officer. However, if he would be willing to relate the details, it would be possible to transmit them to the interested people. Abramtchik began by stating that an individual by the name of BELKEVICH or BELKEVICH now living in Paris was attempting to immigrate to the U.S. As far as Abramtchik knew, this person had already been granted a visa and was preparing for his trip to the U.S. The derogatory information as expressed by Abramtchik is as follows:

In 1946 BELKEVICH was a constant companion of a suspected HIS agent by the name of Alexander YATSEVICH, about 50 years of age, now residing in Cleveland, Ohio. YATSEVICH was born in Minsk and came to the U.S. about 3 months ago. Prior to World War II he had been a teacher in the Soviet Union. Immediately upon his arrival in the U.S., YATSEVICH began a violent campaign against the existing Byelorussian church in Cleveland. Abramtchik noted that the younger elements of this church group were planning to inflict physical punishment on YATSEVICH. Abramtchik dissuaded this rash move, and the desire to hurt YATSEVICH manifested itself in a social shunning. BELKEVICH, according to Abramtchik, seemed to be under the influence of YATSEVICH. He was known to be a constant companion of YATSEVICH while they were in Europe, and YATSEVICH sponsored BELKEVICH's immigration to the U.S. Abramtchik suspects that BELKEVICH may have blackmail material on YATSEVICH since BELKEVICH was known to be a student at what Abramtchik termed a "spy school" in Austria run by the Soviets in 1946.

e. Another CI possibility existed in Canada among the Byelorussian groups. There, Vladimir FINKOVSKI, an orthodox priest from France, immigrated to Canada under the auspices of the GEMARA organization which the Byelorussian immigration feels is a communist front. Abramtchik noted that in 1946 and 1947 FINKOVSKI had indicated his intentions of going to the USSR. However, he immigrated to Australia and became prominent in Byelorussian politics in Australia, prior to his arrival in Canada.

3. 11 September 1956:

a. While in Munich, Abramtchik had contact with [ ] He asked [ ] if the latter could arrange for the transfer of the BNR archives to a safe holding area preferably the U.S. This information was relayed to the undersigned via cable. The only stipulations set down by Abramtchik were that in the event of Byelorussian independence these archives would be returned to the legal owners since they contained treaties, political negotiations and other historical documents from the period 1917 to 21. Abramtchik inherited these files from President Zakharczuk upon the President's death in 1944 in Germany. Abramtchik smuggled the more valuable

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papers of the archives among his personal belongings to France and kept them hidden in Paris until the end of the German occupation. The second stipulation was for the microfilming of the original documents by the U.S. and having them catalogued under the supervision of a BNR historian, preferably Dr. Vitsut Tumash. However, Abramtchik said this matter was not urgent.

b. At this point of the conference, Abramtchik asked the undersigned case officer for a "friend to friend" discussion. The case officer stated that he was honored to be so considered. Abramtchik began by asking whether or not he should arrange for the immigration to the U.S. of his wife and son. The case officer indicated that although this was Abramtchik's personal affair and no attempt was being made to prejudice him in favor of an American immigration, the fact that his family would be in the U.S. would ensure the safety of his family and give Abramtchik peace of mind. Abramtchik agreed. It was the opinion of the undersigned that Abramtchik's mind was already made up, and he was seeking nothing more than a confirmation of his views. The benefits of American education for his son, who is now 3 years old, and the companionship offered among the Byelorussian immigration in New York for his wife were offered as additional incentives in favor of the proposed immigration. Abramtchik then asked whether or not the case officer could assist in the proposed immigration. He was told to contact [ ] whom Abramtchik knows as [ ] at the [ ] embassy and have [ ] begin the action. If it becomes necessary to assist in the move, the undersigned would be more than glad in helping from this end. Abramtchik expressed some concern about an attempt on his life by the KIS which he felt was possible at any moment. He further expressed some anxiety about the welfare of his wife and child living in a Paris suburb. He then began to extoll the advantages of living in the U.S. and stated that he would contact [ ] upon his return to Paris by the middle of November.

c. One of the first items on the agenda was the discussion of a reserve group of Byelorussian emigres who could be used in a "hot" war situation. The proposed cadre group, Abramtchik was told, would be used only in the event of a "hot" war and in support of U.S. military objectives. The plan, as outlined to Abramtchik, visualized a group of 10 to 15 Byelorussians under the leadership of a PA, whether they be of the BER membership or not, who could be spotted, recruited, assessed, and placed into nationality groups which would be organized under project AERREADY. Basically, the plan would take these persons from their permanent geographic locations to a previously designated site, i.e., Ft. Bragg, and give them two weeks training. Under this arrangement, it would be possible for the cadre group to be contained as a trained unit to develop an *Esprit de corps*. The two week training would be given during the normal vacation period and would provide excellent cover. The only obligation on the part of the cadre members would be to write to a letter drop and apprise the case officer of any changes in their personal status.

d. Abramtchik was asked to submit a list of persons in the Byelorussian immigration in the U.S. whom he felt would be an asset to this activity. Abramtchik expressed his intense desire to foster this activity and deemed it one of the most essential activities that can be undertaken during the cold war phase of world politics. He injected, somewhat bitterly, the fiasco of earlier attempts at the formation of a

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He felt that Ragula's operational talents would have best been utilized in Europe. However, he noted that he had no control over the situation and since Byelorussian REDSOX operations were at their lowest ebb, there was no logical reason for Ragula to remain. He felt that the only reason Ragula had immigrated to Canada was because of unsatisfactory case officer/principal agent relationship. He hastily added that Ragula's move was somewhat impulsive.

d. The conversation returned to the matter of a principal agent to take the place of Ragula. Abrantchik stated that Ragula should remain knowledgeable of all activities; however, the suggestion made by the case officer that a principal agent be nominated in the U.S. with whom periodic contact would be maintained was acceptable to Abrantchik. His first suggestion was an individual named (Fnu) MARLIAK. Abrantchik said that this person was a devoted nationalist, unmarried, well-educated, and had an inclination to want clandestine work. He had never been exposed to operations and would require training. A second person named by Abrantchik as a possible PA was Dr. Stanislas HRYNKIEWICZ, now residing in Philadelphia. According to Abrantchik, HRYNKIEWICZ is about 40 years old and a man who had shown extreme courage during the Nazi occupation of Byelorussia. Abrantchik reflected that it was upon Dr. HRYNKIEWICZ's testimony before a Nazi military tribunal that he, Abrantchik, received house arrest as punishment rather than being executed. Dr. HRYNKIEWICZ had indicated that he would be willing to do anything in the way of aiding in the struggle against the Soviets. He told Abrantchik that he would be willing to accept a commission in the U.S. Army as a Major in the Medical Corps if Abrantchik felt that this would aid in the struggle, his logic being that he could be stationed at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. The undersigned advised against such an action since it was felt that if Dr. HRYNKIEWICZ had any potential, his primary duties to the Army would preclude his value to other activities which may necessitate travel. Abrantchik agreed and the matter was ended.

e. In the general discussion following the selection of PA's and while awaiting the arrival of Ragula, Abrantchik asked whether or not it would be possible for the undersigned case officer to relate to the interested area Branch or desk the name of Said Bey SAMIL, Feysullah Efendi Sokak 1513, Fatih, Istanbul, Turkey. According to Abrantchik, this man is a civilian and is the grandson of the famous SAMIL who fought in the struggle against the Russians and the Turks. He is a Circassian. Said Bey has been in contact with Abrantchik through Paris Bloc activities and indicated in a rather general fashion that while Abrantchik was in the U.S., if he had any contact with the American intelligence officials, to pass the word that "we could do anti-Bolshevik work." Abrantchik stated that Said Bey said earlier that he had been in contact with American Intelligence in Turkey. However, the people were young and immature and were not definite in their proposals. He stated that he had indigenous contacts within the Caucasus and had people available in Iran and Afghanistan for infiltration. He said that the NIS was doing some work in this field, but that would ruin the potential. Said Bey further said that this work must be done without the knowledge of the Turks. This information was passed to CSR/1/DOB an: [ ]

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f. Dr. Boris Ragula arrived at approximately 1630 hours. The case officer, at first, found him to be a fairly opinionated person. Since his last contact with any American Intelligence officer was rather strained, it was anticipated that the meeting would be a continuation of the relationship experienced in Munich. However, during general introductory discussions with Ragula, the case officer found him to be receptive to suggestions although he still maintained a slight air of superiority. The case officer and the two principal agents went to an early dinner to insure adequate time to prepare the ground work for concrete operational proposals upon the arrival of DC/SR/7/DOB. During the dinner, the problems of past operations were recounted and both parties agreed that many mistakes had been made. Ragula again was critical of the way he had been handled by [ ] and [ ]

[ ] In fact, he stated, the reason for his immigration to Canada rather than the U.S. was prompted by this unpleasant association. He indicated that these men did not understand his problems and they told him they were merely acting upon the orders of Headquarters. Ragula's attitude was somewhat tempered when he was told that the undersigned case officer was the Headquarters man of whom he had been so critical. It was explained to Ragula that the insecure method of assessment, recruiting, and general "sloppy" handling of Byelorussians at Louvain prompted the curtailment of Byelorussian REDSOX activities. The undersigned stated that he hoped both parties had learned a lesson. At this point, Ragula added, "What is past is past. Millions of people have been lost in wars and we must carry on our activity regardless of temporary setbacks." He would welcome the opportunity to work with the undersigned case officer. [ ] joined the group at 2100 hours. The information which had been relayed to Abramtchik was repeated for the sake of Ragula, i.e., hot war planning, recruiting, and setting up of a PA spotting system among the Byelorussians, and the need for finding acceptable candidates for REDSOX missions. [ ] revised some of the new technical methods available at the present time for in/exfiltration and the higher degree of success which could be assured. The undersigned told Ragula that the earlier operational planning which envisioned a two or three year stay within the Soviet Union was not practical and anyone undertaking a REDSOX mission now would be in the Soviet Union for a period of no more than three or four weeks. This meeting lasted until 2330 hours and resulted in the following:

(1) The BNR representatives agreed to engage in clandestine work subject to restrictions. However, knowledge of any REDSOX activity would be limited to Abramtchik, Ragula, and possibly the principal agent nominated in the U.S. for contact with the case officer. Dr. Vitant TUNASH, with whom the undersigned had been in contact, would no longer be considered for anything in the FI field since Abramtchik personally felt that this man would not have the capabilities or interest in the intelligence-gathering activity.

(2) The BNR organization president and Ragula would look over the cadre potential for hot war activities in the U.S. and abroad. Abramtchik felt that once this activity began and the younger element involved in the hot war cadre was psychologically motivated, there existed an excellent opportunity of locating an action type candidate from among these elements for work now.

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(3) Regarding the matter of PAs, it had been originally suggested that only one such individual be named in the U.S. However, Abramtchik felt that this activity could be expanded to include England, France, Belgium, Argentina, and Australia. These men would not receive any remuneration from the U.S. except, possibly, travel expenses.

(4) Upon the suggestion from the undersigned, Abramtchik may nominate a secretary who would act as a spotter after hours. This secretary would have natural cover. As a secretary, he would be able to travel with Abramtchik, execute secretarial responsibilities and maintain a list of potential candidates. Abramtchik indicated that he must think this over since it was fairly common knowledge that his finances were extremely limited and that he could not afford a private secretary. Therefore, he continued, it would be advisable, in his opinion, to maintain several unpaid spotters in the countries mentioned previously. However, among the persons he has indicated he would consider for the secretarial position was an individual named Theodore CIMAFIEJOUK, a graduate of Louvain University in Belgium and now residing in California. He was a graduate of German Officers School in Munich during World War II.

(5) Regarding Australia and Argentina, Abramtchik stated he would do all in his power to accumulate the names of potential candidates in those areas. He held that Argentina holds much promise because those Byelorussian emigres who have settled in that country have not assimilated into the economic or the culture of Argentina. As far as Australia is concerned, Abramtchik held high hopes for this area noting that the finest of the Byelorussian intellectual emigres were now located in Australia and as their Argentinian counterparts were having a hard time blending into the Australian way of life.

(6) Abramtchik originally intended to return to Paris by the middle of October. However, it was quite obvious that the prospect of an organizational trip to Argentina intrigued him. Prompted by the case officer, Mr. Abramtchik said he would apply to the American Committee for financial assistance to make the Argentinian trip. His reason for the trip would be ostensibly to attempt to neutralize the extensive "Return to the Homeland" propaganda of the Mikhailov Committee. (Note: Following this discussion, the president of BNR contacted the American Committee and outlined his proposal. This was tentatively agreed to by the American Committee, and Miss Jill Holton of the IO/5 office called up the undersigned case officer to inform him of the Abramtchik move, asking whether or not we were aware of the action.) At the present time, Abramtchik is in Canada for a minor operation under the medical care of Dr. Ragula. Abramtchik made one interesting observation which merits a notation at this time. He felt that those persons returning to Byelorussia from the Argentine held tremendous promise as potential internal contacts. When asked for the reason behind the statement, Abramtchik said that once they had returned to the Soviet Union and had experienced the conditions he would describe to them on his trip, patriotism and discontent will increase.

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DC/SR/7/DOB told Abramchik that the undersigned case officer would make the trip to South America to coordinate his activities with our offices and offer guidance.

(7) Regarding a trip to Australia, Abramchik was not too inclined to undertake the journey at this time. He said, however, that he would obtain the information to pass on to any representative whom we may send to facilitate rapport with Byelorussian contacts in Australia.

5. The next contact with Abramchik was set for the middle of October and in all probability will be held in Detroit. The undersigned will be contacted by telephone and the final arrangements of time, date, and place will be made.

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