

Subject: Meeting with Soviet Ukrainian diplomats on 6 December 1969

Source: RA

Date: 6 December 1969

BATYUK []

1. Meeting was arranged by Kulyk Andriy who telephoned Batiuk, Victor at the Ukrainian Mission to the U.N. and set the date for the meeting. Batiuk told Kulyk that he would bring with him somebody from the Mission, since Source would also be present. It was decided to go to a Chinese restaurant on the 6th, and afterwards go to Kulyk's apartment for drinks.

Source met Batiuk at 6:15 P.M. on the corner of Lexington Ave. and 67th St. and went together down the block to where an embassy automobile was parked. By the automobile were OVSIUK, Alexander, who was Batiuk's partner for the evening. Also present were SHCHEVCHENKO, ^{Ivan Demitsovich} a member of the Mission and TKACHENKO, ^{Mikhail Vasiliyevich} a chauffeur. All four individuals got into the car and drove to 3rd Ave. and 8th St. where Kulyk was waiting to be picked up. With Kulyk in the car, it proceeded to Chinatown, where Kulyk, Source, Batiuk and Ovciuk got out and went to a restaurant for dinner. Shchevchenko and Tkachenko drove off.

OVSIUK []
2. OVSIUK, Alexander: Is in his middle 30's, has a slim build, sharp facial features. He smokes and enjoys drinking. When asked what his function is at the Mission, he replied that he is an attache and can be considered the public relations man at the Mission. He is married and has children, but did not specify how many. His wife and children are in New York with him. Ovciuk was born in Donbas, but lived in Cherkas'ka oblast for quite a while. He attended Moscow University and specialized in Sanskrit. Ovciuk mentioned that he will go to Kiev for a visit the 23rd of December. During conversation, Ovciuk gives the impression that he is well versed in Ukrainian emigre affairs and is particularly interested in student affairs. He is rather easy going and did not engage in open arguments with source.

3. On the question of why the Mission does not hold press conferences, or engage in public relations, Ovciuk replied that they do in fact hold press conferences but the American press does not publicize them, and writes that everything is Russian. Source argued that it was their duty to correct the news media, and make the distinction between "Russia" and the Ukrainian SSR.

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Source asked if it was possible for Ovciuk to obtain any recent movies produced in Ukraine not of a propaganda nature. Ovciuk mentioned that it would be best to write to the Association for cultural ties with Ukrainians abroad in Kiev and that they could possibly get such films. Ovciuk went on to say that the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" was once given to Mrs. Klachko and she made a copy of it. Source was then told that there were no films presently available in the Mission, but if any happened to be there, Ovciuk would let Source know about the possibilities of getting them.

4. On a discussion about ferment in Ukraine and the arrests of Ukrainian intellectuals, Ovciuk gave answers which were rather sympathetic towards the arrested intellectuals. He conceded that the arrests were illegal and were bad policy. Batiuk on the other hand took an aggressive stand towards Source and belittled the arrests of Soviet Ukrainian intellectuals. Batiuk did not like the tone of the discussion and wanted to leave as soon as possible. When Source mentioned the works which have been published in the West, and asked Ovciuk if he had read any of them, Ovciuk replied that he did read excerpts from Dzyuba in the U.S. Batiuk paid attention to this and added that he had read "Kryk z Mohyly" and said that all the poems in it were written by Mykola Kholodny, although the editors did not publish this fact. Batiuk said that Kholodny had taken those same poems to be published in Kiev, but they were rejected by the editors.

5. Source asked Ovciuk if he had any opinions on Shelest and other leaders in Kiev. Ovciuk said that he did not agree with everything that Shelest did, but regarded him as a fine leader. Batiuk did not want this topic to continue and started ~~xxx~~ talking about music.

6. Ovciuk asked ~~Source~~ about the Ukrainian student Congress which took place ~~xxx~~ the 22 and 23rd of November. He wanted to know who was elected president of SUSTA and what the tone of the discussions were.

7. The party broke up at 11:30 P.M., once outside the building, Batiuk hailed the first available taxi and he and Ovciuk jumped in without saying goodbye to Kulyk and went home. There was no talk of a future meeting.