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DCE-1659

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Director for Special Operations DATE: 13 March 1951
 Attn:

FROM : Chief, Contact Division, O/O

SUBJECT: Information Concerning Anti-Soviet Ukrainian Resistance

REFERENCE: (a) Conversation - , 12 March 1951

1. Forwarded as enclosures are two memoranda dealing with Ukrainian resistance groups and a project for utilization of Ukrainian national aspirations in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union.

2. Attached as Enclosure (A) is a memorandum prepared by a highly reliable source providing background information on Mikha Lohov, who is presently in the United States, and is very active in Ukrainian national organizations.

3. Forwarded as a matter of possible interest to your office is a translation of a confidential memorandum submitted to Lt. General Lucius D. Clay by General Mykhailo Lemelinskiy, who is a member of the Executive Committee of the Ukrainian National Council.

Enclosures (A) and (B) As described above

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Nicola, Ukrainian Underground Leader

The name of Nicola Lebed first came into prominence in Western Ukraine in 1934, when he, as a Ukrainian political refugee, was arrested by the Nazi police in a North Sea port town in Germany and extradited to the Polish police in connection with the assassination of Col. Bronislaw Pieracki, Minister of Interior of Poland. After a trial that lasted several weeks, Lebed, together with Stepan Andera and Mykola Xlymyshyn, was convicted of planning the assassination, and was sentenced to death, while more than a dozen other Ukrainian nationalist leaders received long-term prison sentences. All three men appealed to a higher court, which appeal resulted in a new trial and a new sentence of death for the three men. Eventually, the sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. With the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany in September 1939, Lebed, along with hundreds of Ukrainian nationalist political prisoners who were kept in Polish prisons near the German border, barely escaped with his life, while many other prisoners, members of the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the UVO (Ukrainian Military Organization) were shot to death by the Poles.

The Background of His Arrest

According to one version of the story, Lebed's arrest occurred as follows:

In 1933 the Czech police made a search of the Prague quarters of Omelan Senyk-Trybivsky, one of the leading members of the supreme council of the OUN and a trusted assistant of Col. Eugene Konovalts, head of the OUN and UVO, who permanently resided in Geneva. Up to this time, the Ukrainian revolutionary organizations, such as the OUN and the UVO, conducted violent campaigns of underground revolutionary activities mainly against Poland and Soviet Russia, the two countries which occupied the principal parts of the Ukrainian ethnographic territory. Rumania, which occupied Ukrainian parts of Bukovina and Bessarabia, was also a target, but in a lesser degree than the first two countries. When the OUN began its organizational network in the early thirties in Carpatho-Ukraine, the Czech police began expelling or arresting prominent Ukrainian nationalist leaders who up to this time had had a virtual haven, if not support, from the Czechoslovak government.

It was in this way that the Czech police found very important documents and files pertaining to the Ukrainian nationalist organizations in Poland. Although Senyk-Trybivsky was released, his "archive" (known in Ukrainian nationalist circles as the "Senyk archive") was turned over to the Polish police as a measure of good-neighbor policy, or perhaps to appease the Polish government of Col. Beck who was openly leaning towards the alliance with Hitler and Mussolini.

The "Senyk archive" was said to contain hundreds of names of prominent Ukrainian nationalist leaders, their code names, addresses, and plans. As a result of this finding, the Polish police arrested hundreds of Ukrainian leaders, among them Lebed and Andera. Their participation in the assassination of Minister Pieracki was not proved (the actual assassin, Lascyko, left Lebed in broad daylight, fled through Czechoslovakia and Italy and went to the United States, where he is now said to be living in obscurity).

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While Lebed was in the Polish prison, Col. Konovaletz was killed by a time bomb planted in his trench coat by a Soviet (OP) agent by the name of Willush in Rotterdam, Holland, on May 28, 1938. The latter came from Soviet Ukraine as a liaison man of the Ukrainian underground in Soviet Ukraine. Col. Konovaletz' place as head of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists was taken over by Col. Andrew Melnyk, former officer of the Ukrainian army and a close friend and collaborator of Col. Konovaletz.

The extradition of Lebed by the Nazis to the Polish police created a deep rift among the top leadership of the OUN, both in Poland and in Western Europe. While those who actually conducted underground activities against Poland, like Lebed who played a very important part in the movement since 1939, were pressing for a continued revolutionary fight against Poland, the other nationalists, especially those residing in Germany, Italy, France and Switzerland, were for a more conciliatory policy towards Warsaw, which undoubtedly was due to German pressure after the conclusion of the German-Polish non-aggression pact in 1934.

World War II

Upon his release from the Polish prison (Lebed claims that the Poles were ready to shoot him but were dispersed by the appearance of German planes which gave him the opportunity to escape), Lebed plunged into organizational life, and together with Bandera formed a powerful opposition against Col. Melnyk and Semyk-Krybivsky in the top leadership of the OUN. It has been said that Lebed demanded that Semyk-Krybivsky be put on trial for his careless handling of the organizational archives and that Lebed even charged him with actually betraying hundreds of members of the OUN. There is very little known about Lebed's activity during 1940-41, that is, up to the date of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Some say that he was training a school of Ukrainian police officers, under German supervision, in the towns of Krynytsia and Zakopane. In the meantime, attempts were made to reconcile the two OUN factions (Col. Melnyk's and that of Bandera-Lebed) but to no avail.

On June 30, 1941, when the German troops entered Western Ukraine, the Bandera-Lebed faction seized the opportunity and proclaimed the Ukrainian independent state. The German armies were very favorably disposed towards the Ukrainian nationalists, and even organized one or two Ukrainian legions (one of which was called "Nightingale").

But the Germans soon turned against the OUN as well. A few days after the proclamation of the Ukrainian state at Lviv (at which celebration German military authorities took an official part) the arrest of the Ukrainian nationalists by the Gestapo began. Bandera was arrested and sent to a Nazi concentration camp in Sachsenhausen where he remained until the American armies released him. Lebed succeeded in escaping; the Gestapo dragnet, despite an order of the Gestapo to get him "dead or alive" issued as early as October 4, 1941.

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As a person, Lebed is intelligent, shrewd and taciturn. He speaks very little, but knows a great deal about the Ukrainian underground warfare, the organization of the Soviet state, particularly of the NKVD, the Soviet army, the administrative apparatus, etc.

Lebed, his wife and daughter came to the United States as displaced persons under the provisions of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. They arrived on the SS Gen. Howe on October 4, 1949 at the Port of New York under the names of Roman Turan, Olga Turan and Zoryann Turan, IRO Nominal Roll Nos. 788, 789 and 790 respectively. It is known that he now has his first papers under his legal name, and resides with his family at 334 Bainbridge Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Lebed is believed to have made at least one trip to Europe recently. In view of his position of leadership in the Ukrainian Liberation movement, his future may be even more interesting than his past.

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