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16 August 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with QRPLUMB/2

1. On 25 July 1990, I met with QRPLUMB/2 (P/2) at his private residence in Yonkers, N.Y. P/2 requested this meeting by a cryptic telephone call to my home. The meeting lasted from 1100 to 1530.

2. At the meeting, P/2 explained that he would like to have my views on three issues relating to the QRPLUMB organization and in the light of recent political developments in the Ukraine. These are: the content and format of the QRPLUMB journal, Suchasnist' the nature of the QRPLUMB organization, Prolog Corp. Inc.; and P/2's intention to make a public statement about his relationship to the present Prolog Corporation. I told P/2 that I was not exactly prepared for this discussion, and my views will be very informal and casual. Had I known these topics will be discussed, I would have organized my thoughts better.

a. Suchasnist:

(1) P/2 stated that he was concerned about the content and purpose of the journal in view of current political developments inside the Ukraine. He felt it was not wholly responsive to the current situation; abroad, the readership in the Ukrainian community is changing, getting smaller as the Ukrainian-language readership is getting older and reads less; there are fewer contributors who can write serious articles in good literary Ukrainian, which explains why some articles in the journal are reprints from Soviet Ukrainian publications; with the expansion of "glasnost," there is growing "competition" from inside Ukraine as Soviet Ukrainian journals are publishing more and more objective articles both of historical and current topics; Suchasnist must change to be appealing to Soviet Ukrainian readers in this new situation. P/2 said he was concerned about the proposals to have Suchasnist published inside Ukraine, the agreements for joint publishing ventures between the Suchasnist editor and Soviet Ukrainian publishing houses, and the involvement of the chief editor in a growing number of projects unrelated to the journal.

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(2) I responded that, although my thoughts are not well organized because of lack of preparation, I do have some ideas on the subject matter. Given present dearth of Ukrainian contributors to the journal and financial considerations, I thought the journal should change from a monthly to a bimonthly. In subject matter, it should reduce the space allotted to humanities (literature and fine arts topics), especially since a new journal has been started by former Suchasnist editor as a joint venture with Soviet Ukrainian literati and which is wholly devoted to literature and the arts. There are two major themes which are now very much in demand in Ukraine (and elsewhere in the USSR): one is the historical past which was suppressed or deliberately ignored by pre-Gorbahchev regimes, but which is now sought after by all educated persons, especially the younger generation; and the other topic is "how-to" themes in the area of political science and economics (government, constitutionalism, political parties, dynamic of the democratic political process as developed and practiced in Western democracies, comparative economic systems, and the like). The latter is badly needed in the ongoing democratization process in Ukraine. There is a small but well-trained academic community in the West, especially in American and Canada, academics of Ukrainian descent, mostly professors at universities who can still write in Ukrainian; articles by other authors can be translated into Ukrainian. These two major themes, I opined, would a considerable audience in the Ukraine. P/2 agreed with the thrust of my views, but was skeptical as to the feasibility of implementing them. The main problem, he said, is how to get the Ukrainian academics in America and Canada to write for Suchasnist; they need to get published, but they choose for that English-language professional journals. I said this problem is real, but not insoluble with proper editorial policy and approach.

b. Prolog Corporation, Inc:

(1) P/2 said he was very perturbed about the direction taken by Prolog in recent years, especially 1989-90. He said it has steered away from its original objectives established under his own management of many years and for that reason he wanted to take a public position now (see below). As P/2 saw it, the "original" Prolog was meant to be a focus and spokesman abroad for Ukrainian democratic opposition in the Ukraine, a forum for a dialogue between the Ukrainian emigres and the nationally-conscious Ukrainians in the academia, the Soviet Ukrainian government and the Party; to assist where possible the Ukrainian liberation process; to provide help to former members of the Ukrainian liberation movement (some of whom provided a devoted service to the REDSOX program, and for which they spent at least 25 years each in Soviet labor camps and prisons), but who are still living and need our assistance; to serve as a forum for liberal thinking among Ukrainian emigres; to promote coordinated effort among Ukrainian emigres in their dealings with their counterparts in the Ukraine, especially in terms of providing

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financial or commodity assistance (e.g., equipment); (I do not recall additional points made by P/2). P/2 said that as he sees it, current changes in the Ukraine and the USSR in general are not as radical as they may seem to some. In terms of "glasnost" the situation has improved, but the communists still rule in the Ukraine and the situation has not changed in terms of the locus of political power. This notwithstanding, P/2 said, Prolog has reduced its activity somewhat, is engaging in "questionable agreements" with certain groups in the Ukraine (e.g., joint venture in publishing), and planning to undertake strictly business-like activity to make money. In P/2's words, "Prolog is not what it used to be and I, as its founder and still one of its directors perhaps should not be identified with it today any longer."

(2) In my response to P/2, I said that I fully recognize the value and direction Prolog has had over the years, especially under P/2's leadership. However, needless to say, times have changed and are changing now very rapidly; some of the old formulas no longer work; previous objectives have ceased to have primacy; and like any other organization trying to survive in the milieu of new events and trends, Prolog has to change and adapt itself to new conditions and requirements. There are now in the Ukrainian diaspora in the West many organizations and separate individuals who are responding to the new situation in the Ukraine separately and in their own way by engaging themselves actively in a variety of activities previously performed almost exclusively by Prolog; under Brezhnev, for example, other Ukrainian emigre organizations were too conservative or too cautious to have any sort of contact with Soviet Ukrainians, official or unofficial (e.g, even with dissidents whom they suspected). That is why Prolog was so successful in developing multifaceted operations in the 'fifties and especially the 'sixties; it was the envy of many and a target of scorn for some, but of respect to all. Today, Prolog does not have a monopoly in this field; there are many other players over whom there is no control or even influence; the best Prolog can do is try to coordinate its activities with sympathetic organizations and individuals to reduce the duplication of effort. But this is difficult to do given the present almost euphoric atmosphere in the Ukrainian diaspora abroad about the ongoing liberalization process in the Ukraine and their natural desire to get on the moving train, so-to-speak, to have a part of the action. Prolog needs to be selective in what it does, and given current financial crunch, it should not shy away even from purely business activity if that will reinforce it financially. Given the current situation and competing activities, the best Prolog can do is to concentrate on selected few but productive initiatives.

c. For reasons stated in para 2b(1) above, P/2 stated that since Prolog no longer reflects the character of what it was as originally established and does not fulfill many of its earlier objectives, he is seriously thinking of issuing a public statement

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to the Ukrainian emigre community and sympathetic Ukrainians inside the Ukraine that he no longer is associated with the Prolog organization as it is presently constituted and cannot be held morally responsible for its present activities or programs.

This was a bit of shocker to me, since I have known P/2 since 1949, and was for many years his close confidant and adviser in the 'sixties (during my graduate student days). While recognizing that I understand how and why P/2 feels about this matter, I strongly advised him not take this step, definitely not during this transitional period at least. Any statement of this sort will send a wrong signal not only in the Ukrainian community abroad, but to many democratic groups inside Ukraine, and of course, to the KGB. Each of these protagonists will interpret it in its own way and speculations will abound. It will have demoralizing influence on the collaborators and sympathizers of Prolog and Suchasnist readership abroad; it may hurt the Prolog's image among the Ukrainian democratic groups in the Ukraine who still have solid respect for Prolog and hold P/2 in high esteem; and finally, the KGB may pick up on the theme and open up a propaganda barrage which no one needs now. In other words, except for possible P/2's personal satisfaction, there is nothing to be gained by such a public statement, but there is much to lose as a result of it. P/2 said he will think about what I said to him, but he did not withdraw the "threat" of making a public statement. As for Suchasnist, P/2 said there was an editorial meeting scheduled for that week, which he will attend and pass my ideas to the board.

Since our meeting, I have not heard anything more about it from P/2 except for a personal call on 3 August in which P/2 told me he received some videos taken in his home town, showing scenes of his house and old pictures of his family and himself. The videos contain interviews with older town folks and former underground members who still remember their "leader", - P/2. I got the impression from this call that these videos and the news uplifted P/2's spirits.

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