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MGM-A-4939

7 February 1951

Chief, Foreign Division M

Chief of Station, Karlsruhe

REDBIRD/Operational

- A. Belorussian Emigre Organizations
- B. Major Boris RAGULA [ ]

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REMARKS: The information contained in the following paragraphs was received orally from Major Boris RAGULA in Brussels and Louvain on 27-28 January 1951. It served as the background for operational talks which are reported in MGM-A-4900. The authenticity of the information has not yet been checked or confirmed. The spelling of names is in most cases phonetic. Since the disseminations mentioned in MGE-W-4892, para 2, 1 May 1950, should contain much basic information about Belorussian organizations, we request to know under what registry number these disseminations were forwarded to us. Up to this point, we have not been able to locate them.

A. A listing of Belorussian Emigre Organizations

1. The central organ of the Belorussian emigration is the Belorussian National Council under the leadership of Nikolai ABRAMTSHIK, who directs Council activities from Paris. The Council, or "Rada", considered by its followers to be an embryonic government-in-exile, consists of about 150 members who reside in the chief countries of Western Europe and the Americas. The Council is intended to function along the lines of a parliament, but this has not actually been the case because of the distances separating the members. A member of the Council has been appointed in each country to represent the interests of the Council and to coordinate the activities of the various Belorussian groups in the area. (Major RAGULA is the Council representative in Belgium and, as such, has received a letter of credence from the Council, which, it is interesting to note, has been useful in his dealings with Belgian officialdom. Major RAGULA has had occasion to confer with government authorities regarding the welfare of Belorussian students now present in Belgium, since he heads the Belorussian student organization mentioned below).
2. The International Union of Belorussians, with branches in Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere, has the purpose of holding together the scattered members of the emigration and thus preserving the numerical strength of the group. In the United States, the Union has had the particular task of weening old emigrants away from Communist-led

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organizations which they joined in the war years. The Union's activities are largely cultural and benevolent: choirs have been organized, news bulletins published, and so on. The chairmen of the various branches of the Union are listed below. It is possible that a few of them may have been replaced by new men since the Union elections recently held in several countries.

- a. Union de Belorussiens en France: Engineer NELYEVSKI. (Central for the entire organization).
  - b. Union de Belorussiens en Belgique: Engineer ZHITKO.
  - c. Union of Belorussians in England: Father SIPOVICH.
  - d. Union der Belorussen in Deutschland: Magister KUSEVICH. (This group is practically defunct because most Belorussians have left Germany.)
  - e. Union of Belorussians in America: Mr. HOROSHKO.
  - f. Union of Belorussians in Canada: Mr. AKULA.
  - g. Union de Belorusses in Argentina: Engineer MERLAK.
3. The Union de Combattants Belorussiens is a more or less dormant group. It was organized for the purpose of putting on record the names of all officers and non-commissioned officers available for service in case of war. The leader of the group is Col. Francis KUSHAL, who is presently in New York City, working as a furnace stoker.
4. The membership of the Belorussian University Organizations in Foreign Countries is comprised of students attending universities in Western Europe. The group is headed by Major Boris RAGULA, who has been instrumental in securing financial aid for Belorussian students who have no means of support. The two main sources of revenue are the Roman Catholic Church, which is supporting students who are for the most part Orthodox, and the Belgian government, which is diverting funds earmarked for IRO into this channel. RAGULA spent three weeks in Rome personally negotiating Catholic aid. He was assisted by Father TATARINOVICH, who heads a Belorussian University Organization of about 40 in Italy. A photograph of the stationery used by the Central of this organization is included as an attachment.
5. A youth organization along Boy Scout lines is under the direction of Dr. Yanka STANKYEVICH, who has emigrated to the United States. At one time the membership of this group amounted to about 900, but present figures are not known.

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B. Biographical Sketch of Major Boris RAGULA

1. Boris RAGULA was born on 1 January 1920, in Turec, Western Belorussia, which at that time comprised a part of Poland. He attended primary and secondary school in Nowogrodek, and in 1938 started to study medicine in Vilno, but was soon called up for military service in the Polish army. He attended a reserve officers training school in Sambrow from fall, 1938, until the outbreak of hostilities between Poland and Germany in September 1939. He went into action as a second lieutenant and on 17 September was taken prisoner by the Germans. He was sent to a work-camp near Königsberg, and after an escape attempt, he was transferred to Bocholt, and later to Thorn. About 15 August 1940, he was released and went home to Nowogrodek which was then occupied by the Russians. He moved on to Lwow to continue his medical studies, but soon gave this up and accepted a job as an instructor in German and physical education at a school in Lubcs in Russian-occupied territory. In January 1941, he was arrested by the Soviets for remarks of a political nature which he made to his class, and was sent to Minsk for questioning. He was held until the outbreak of the Russo-German war in June 1941, when he made use of the confusion to escape and get behind the German lines. By mid-July, he landed a job as an interpreter in the German military government administration for the Nowogrodek rayon. In December 1941, he organized a "Volkshaus", an establishment which was supposed to foster Belorussian culture but which in fact served as cover for the first attempts to organize Belorussian resistance which was to be directed against all hostile outsiders. (In the Belorussian resistance movement, the matter of political views was subordinate to the main idea of establishing an independent Belorussian state.) Early in 1942, the Germans had RAGULA set up a six-month course to train school teachers. RAGULA made use of course time to spread the idea of Belorussian independence. In July 1942, he participated in the founding of an illegal party in Minsk, the Belorussian Independence Party. At about the same time, he helped to organize and circulate an illegal Belorussian bulletin which hit at the Germans for only pretending to create an independent Belorussia. The Germans got wind of RAGULA's activities, and although they did not imprison him, managed to neutralize his efforts. Early in 1943, he succeeded in organizing an illegal teachers seminar in which the idea of Belorussian independence was again given the main stress. This seminar group gradually developed into a military cadre around which national, as opposed to Communist, partisan bands were later formed. In September 1943, the Germans sanctioned the formation of a Belorussian military unit. RAGULA organized a squadron of cavalry which the Germans thought was to be directed against marauding Communist partisans but which RAGULA and his Belorussians intended to use in helping to prevent the shooting of their compatriots by the Germans. In March 1944, the squadron was enlarged to a battalion which was sent to the front near Glubokoye, again under RAGULA's command. At the time of the retreat from Belorussia in July 1944, ammunition and other provisions were

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left with the members of the battalion who stayed behind (most did), and the rest, about 50 or 60, went west to reform under HOCHKO's command. Towards the end of 1944, RAGULA was sent to Berlin where he became an aide to OSTROWSKI, the Germans' puppet president of Belorussia. OSTROWSKI sent RAGULA as an emissary to General SIBOLING of 30th Infantry Division, under whose command most Belorussian troops had been concentrated. RAGULA was to convince the general that Belorussian officers and NCO's should command Belorussian troops and that the division in effect should become a Belorussian unit. The general scorned the idea. RAGULA reported this to OSTROWSKI, who then settled on taking over one battalion. RAGULA was chosen commanding officer of the battalion, but as soon as he reported to SIBOLING for duty, the general sent him off to an officers training center near Stettin for a one-month course. RAGULA was held incommunicado while in training. Before the end of training, the Eastern Front collapsed and RAGULA made his way to Flensburg, and from there to Salfeld in Thuringia, which the Americans were then occupying. In Salfeld, RAGULA helped to found a Belorussian committee which endeavored to send as many compatriots as possible to the west in order to save them from repatriation. Before the Russians moved into Thuringia, RAGULA moved to Hünfeld in Hessa, where he continued his work with the Belorussian committee. He also established contact with Belorussians in Regensburg where a Belorussian Central Committee was formed in late 1945. In the fall of 1945, RAGULA took up his medical studies once again at the University of Marburg. In 1946, he helped to organize the Belorussian students into a group which has expanded into the present student organization under his leadership. In 1947, the Belorussian National Council in Paris came to the surface after fears of repatriation had subsided, and in 1948, RAGULA became a member of the Council. In the same year, he received permission to move to Belgium, where he continued his medical studies at the University of Louvain. He has just now completed medical school and will be engaged in taking the required state examinations until June 1951.

2. Characterization of RAGULA. RAGULA is mature, intelligent, straightforward, and endowed with a good sense of humor. He is completely Western in manner. He thinks rapidly and expresses himself well. He speaks directly with no attempt to be secretive or to sound important. He speaks Belorussian, Russian, Polish, German, French, and a smattering of Flemish, and Italian. His German is completely grammatical and as good as the case officer has ever heard a Slav speak, in spite of the accent. All in all, he seems like a very good choice on ABRAMTSHIK's part to do liaison work with us.

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