

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM No. 584h

October 26, 1953

Memorandum

For: Admiral Stevens

From: BEK

Subject: Abramchik

A. called on me today at his request to discuss matters within the Byelorussian emigration.

A. tells me that he has had great difficulties with his followers, and that there is now a definite possibility that the Byelorussian Rada will suffer its first split in many years. He states that a group of dissidents, in very strong words, has attacked him during the past two weeks and rendered his position very difficult.

A. states that the opposition to him is centered in a group of emigres which takes strong issue with him on the matter of collaboration with the American Committee. This group is angered by what it terms "capitulation" to the American Committee in connection with the plans for the formation of a Byelorussian Section of Radio Liberation. The group looks upon this as a renunciation of the 30 odd years of struggle of the Byelorussians for the reconstitution of the Byelorussian State, and particularly considers it to be due to the pressure of those who do not believe that the Byelorussians have any right to an independent status. A. states that about one-fourth of the members of the Byelorussian Rada will desert with its followers. About three-fourths will remain with A., and will be prepared to collaborate on Radio Liberation.

In view of the present difficulties within the Byelorussian emigration, A. states that it will be impossible for him to continue his control of the Byelorussian Rada, and to do any productive work of help to us, unless he receives some help from us for the ensuing month and a half of his stay in the United States. He asks specifically that he be granted a thousand dollars for necessary travel to centers of the Byelorussian emigration in the USA, and for certain of his followers to come to him here in New York. Among the men whom he would like to bring here is Dr. Zak-Hryskivic of the University of Toronto, whom he recommends for the job of Chief Editor of the proposed Byelorussian Desk of Radio Liberation.

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As to the Byelorussian Desk, A. is very disturbed at the limitation of this Section to four people. He believes that a minimum of six is required: a director, a chief editor, an assistant editor, two speakers, and a secretary. He says that the Byelorussians will insist on the same number of people as the Ukrainians, and will insist on the same amount of time for any program that the Ukrainians might have. If, therefore, the Ukrainian broadcast is to be extended to a half hour, the Byelorussians will expect the same for themselves.

The two men whom A. proposes for Director and Chief Editor are Professor Zuk-Hryskievic of the University of Toronto and Professor Linanowsky of the Byelorussian Institute in the USA. He states that there are two able speakers at Munich, one of whom has already been interviewed and tested, he believes by either Radio Liberation of the Voice. Since there are no secretaries at Munich who know English, he says, an English-speaking secretary would have to be sent either from the US or from England. I gave A. sets of forms for such personnel as he might wish us to interview in New York. I already have forms from Dr. Hryskievic, and hope to have those for Dr. Linanowsky prepared this week.

A. was very bitter in his denunciation of the activities of Admiral Mentz. He states that Admiral Mentz is working closely with A.'s opponent Ostrowsky, attends any and all meetings of extremist groups in which he can get up and make a speech, and, in general, is guilty of very harmful activity. He says that you should speak severely with Admiral Mentz and try to prevail upon him to cease his present intrigues and speech-making.

A. asks if he can see you at your convenience some time within the next few days. I tried to discourage him in this, stating that you had a very, very busy schedule these days, but he insists upon seeing you.