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Chapter Eight

Cooperation Was an Unavoidable Evil (U)

The National Security Council's charter granted the Office of Policy Coordination considerable leeway to support anticommunist groups.¹ OPC's expansion brought it into contact with thousands of men and women throughout Europe. In particular, OPC's interest in black propaganda, paramilitary groups, and staybehind forces in the event of a third world war drove it to seek out Europeans with anticommunist credentials. If these same individuals also had military experience combined with knowledge of Eastern or Southeastern European geography, language, and culture, so much the better. Many of the people that OPC desired shared another common link: their anticommunism had led them to support the Nazis during the war. (U)

The $\subset \supset$ Study (U)

By 1948, the Russian groups in Germany, from both the "old" and "new" emigration (that is those who fled after the Bolshevik Revolution or who came out of Russia during World War II) had reorganized from the tumult of the war and the Allied

¹For an overview, see $\subset \supset$, *Hearts and Minds: Three Case Studies of the CIA's Covert Support of American Anticommunist Groups in the Cold War, 1949-1967* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), (S).

SECRET

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

repatriations. These groups and their various splinter organizations soon agitated for American support while biding their time in overcrowded DP camps. Almost all of the leaders had collaborated with the Germans during the war in one form or another. (U)

In early 1949, [redacted] [redacted], a retired Foreign Service Officer now working for the Office of Policy Coordination, began a study of Russian emigre groups and their usefulness to American intelligence. Following many of the leads initially proposed by Wisner in SANACC 395, [redacted] [redacted] in his paper, "Utilization of Russian Political Refugees in Germany and Austria," advocated the establishment of a Russian Welfare Committee. [redacted] [redacted] envisioned that this committee would broadcast messages to the Soviet Union and its allies as well as support other propaganda efforts against the communists in Eastern Europe.² (S)

[redacted] [redacted] ideas quickly found fertile soil in OPC and the State Department. By September 1949, OPC moved ahead with [redacted] [redacted] proposal although doubts remained about the overall relationships of the new group with the State Department, OPC, and OPC's newly formed National Committee for a Free Europe.³ In order to determine the extent of Russian anticommunist activity in Europe, [redacted] [redacted] went to West Germany to survey the various emigre groups. Using his cover as [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] joined by Spencer

²: [redacted] [redacted], Clandestine Services Historical Series [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted] A copy of [redacted] [redacted] paper has not been located as its most likely repositories, Project [redacted] [redacted] and [redacted] [redacted] files, in DO Records, [redacted] [redacted], Box 2, Folders 10 and 11, were destroyed in 1979. Project [redacted] [redacted] sought to establish contact with, exploit, and direct the major Russian, anti-Soviet political groups that have as their objective the overthrow of the Soviet regime. Project [redacted] [redacted] dealt with the formation of a Russian Welfare Committee. (S)

³Ibid., pp. 5-2 through 5-3. The State Department authorized OPC to establish the Russian Welfare Committee on 13 September 1949. [redacted] [redacted], in the meantime, worked with [redacted] [redacted] and [redacted] [redacted] to establish contact with Russian groups in Germany and US agencies there. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

█████ and ██████ prepared an extensive report on the Russian groups in 1950. This summary, and the recommendations offered by ██████ and ██████, formed the basis of OPC's overall dealings with these groups.⁴ (S)

In their study, "Survey of the Russian Emigration," the OPC authors examined the major and minor Russian groups as well as some of the non-Russian groups, including Cossacks, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. Drawing upon support of Army officials in Germany (but interestingly not from the Office of Special Operations), the ██████ Survey sought to "give a factual account of the origins, aims, and activities of the various political movements created, or revived, since the war [World War II] by the Russian emigration, indicating the chief personalities who have been active in the various movements and the present state of the several organizations."⁵ (S)

The Vlasov Army (U)

The report focused on Gen. Andrey Vlasov who organized Russian resistance to Stalin after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. After recounting the

⁴The ██████ study, "Survey of Russian Emigration," is found in the Project QKACTIVE (Radio Liberation) files as DO Records, ██████, Box 3, Folder 3, CIA ARC. Another copy is also available in DO Records, ██████, Box 2, Folder 14, CIA ARC. ██████ prepared this report for ██████, the mobilization of Soviet refugees as an anticommunist force. Two other reports, "Survey of the Russian Emigration: ██████ Report Based on Observations, Contacts, and Interviews in Germany and Austria in March-April 1950," and "Recommendations with Regard to the Utilization of the Russian Emigration," from 17 April 1950, have not been located. Another paper, "Supplement (Covering 1950-1951) to Survey of the Russian Emigration," dated December 1951, (S), is found in DO Records, ██████ Box 3, Folder 4, CIA ARC. (S)

⁵Foreword to "Survey of the Russian Emigration." The study examined such Russian groups as the NTS, ODNR, ATSODNR, SAF, SVOD, SBONR, ROSS, RONDD, and VAZO as well as non-Russian groups composed of Cossacks, Byelorussians, Ukrainians (both Eastern and Western), and smaller nationalities. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

lukewarm assistance that Vlasov received from the Nazis and the overall history of the Russian Liberation Army (ROA) and the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (KONR), formed in Prague in 1944, the American study offered several conclusions about the Vlasov movement. Despite Hitler's opposition to using Vlasov, [redacted] and his group were impressed by the fact that thousands of Russians voluntarily joined his "army" in the last months of the war. Likewise, the Americans realized that Vlasov's presence on the battlefield spurred unrest within Soviet ranks until the final battle of Berlin in 1945. Lastly, [redacted] noted the overwhelming anticommunist sentiment among the Vlasov supporters, many of whom had been fully indoctrinated in the Bolshevik teachings. "The transformation, in a short period of time and under extremely adverse conditions, of trusted Soviet workers into staunch anticommunists is a phenomenon of great significance," [redacted] wrote.⁶ (S)

OPC justified its support for Russian and other Eastern European groups on the basis of their anticommunist record during World War II. This record, of course, included varying degrees of collaboration with the Nazis and participation in the roundup and murder of the Jews on the part of some of the nationality groups. [redacted] summarized OPC's view about the Russian liberation movement, with many of its leaders now in the American zone in Germany:

The Vlasov movement never espoused German aims and objectives or Nazi ideology and consequently was never completely trusted by the Nazi leadership. The Vlasovites took up arms as political refugees with the aim of serving the Russian National cause and the intention of receiving German help without directly serving German purposes in so doing. They did not consider the formation of an anti-Soviet army under the Germans as collaboration. They had to resort to German

⁶Ibid., pp. 22-24. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

assistance not because they loved the Germans or approved of their political system, but because it was to them the only possible means of achieving their objective—the overthrow of the communist dictatorship in Russia. Cooperation with the German Army was an unavoidable evil.⁷ (S)

An Almost Instinctive Urge (U)

The [] study hailed the “almost instinctive urge on the part of the Russian emigrants to consolidate their forces and establish an anticommunist center which would unite all emigrant groups.” The Americans, [] reported, had stymied this effort because US intelligence agencies in Germany had provided insufficient funds and only lukewarm support to the Russian emigre groups to date. Consequently, the Russian emigres in Germany had made only piecemeal and uncoordinated efforts against the Soviet Union. Likewise, the Russian emigration movement lacked any leader comparable to Vlasov (whom the Soviets executed in 1946) to unite the different factions.⁸ To overcome these problems, [] called for a Directing Center of the United Front, supported by American intelligence, to rally the Russians, who could then conduct covert propaganda work in addition to acting as a military reserve in the event of war.⁹ (S)

[] recommendations resulted in the establishment of an OPC front group, the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, in 1951.¹⁰ This

⁷Ibid., p. 22. The Agency has a collection of primary material from World War II on the Vlasov Army obtained from the Berlin Documents Center in 1948. A brief description of this material in English and the documents themselves (in Russian) are found in Chief of Station, Karlsruhe to Chief, FBM, “Vlasov Documents,” 23 April 1948, MGB-A-1669, (S), in DO Records, []

[] Box 1, Folder 8, CIA ARC. (S)

⁸[] p. 6-2. (S)

⁹Ibid., pp. 6-2 through 6-3. (S)

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 7-1 through 7-5. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

group of prominent Americans, formed by Frank Wisner, ostensibly promoted the ideals of democracy among refugees and exiles from the USSR. In reality, the group served as cover for OPC's relationship with the Russian emigre groups under Project QKACTIVE. This project, approved by OPC in September 1950, called for "the political organization and activation of the Russian emigration with a view to securing the cooperation of the peoples of Russia in the struggle of the Western democracies against the present rulers of Russia."¹¹ (S)

With [redacted] serving as political adviser and [redacted] as its acting principal agent, Project QKACTIVE sought to rally the Russians into a "United Front" organization. OPC, in turn, planned to use this group to funnel funds and resources to the various organizations within the front. In addition, Project QKACTIVE sought to establish an institute for Russian studies in Germany as well as to develop newspapers, radio broadcasts, and other propaganda tools. After many discussions and arguments over the formation, ideals, and membership of this "United Front," ten Russian and other nationality groups finally convened in Munich in October 1952 to form a Coordinating Center of Anti-Bolshevist Struggle (KTAB).¹² (S)

Veterans of the Vlasov movement and various minority groups that had previously been allied with the Nazis, such as the Georgians and North Caucasians, formed the core of the Coordinating Center.¹³ While QKACTIVE failed in most of its

¹¹Project QKACTIVE (initially known as CINDERELLA) Project Outline Clearance Sheet, Project Number EE-53, approved 28 September 1950, (S), in DO Records, [redacted] [redacted], Box 12, OPC Project Outlines microfilm, Reel 94, CIA ARC. (S)

¹²"History of Project QKACTIVE," 15 March 1953, pp. 1-19, (S), in DO Records, [redacted] [redacted], Box 3, Folder 2, CIA ARC. (S)

¹³For membership of the Coordinating Center, see *ibid.*, pp. 18-19; for a review of other nationality groups with German affiliations, see "Caucasian and Turkestani Émigré Activities 1945-1952," (S), in DO Records, [redacted] [redacted], Box 3, Folder 3, CIA ARC. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

objectives, the project's radio work proved the most successful aspect of the entire plan.¹⁴ Radio Liberation went on the air in March 1953 and quickly drew attention in the Soviet Union when it broke the news of Stalin's death.¹⁵ The CIA continued to support the radio program (later renamed Radio Liberty) until 1974. (S)

NTS (U)

The Coordinating Center, however, failed to attract support from any of the major Ukrainian groups or the Russian solidarists, or groups that believed in a greater Russia. The lack of unity among all of the anticommunist groups proved to be fatal for the Coordinating Committee. OPC's work to bring the *Narodno-Trudovoy-Soyuz*, the National Labor Union or NTS, into the Center's fold, for example, is significant and illustrative in this regard. NTS represented the best organized Russian resistance movement in Western Europe, and, like virtually every Eastern European anticommunist group, had a long history of rightwing tendencies and was tainted by collaboration with the Third Reich.¹⁶ (S)

¹⁴The radio aspect of Project QKACTIVE grew more important because the political effort failed to unify the various groups. The British also undercut the Coordinating Center by supporting their own groups, which increased rivalry among the Russians and other nationalities for money and prestige. By August 1952, the CIA began to emphasize radio broadcasts and downplaying the emigre aspect of the project—a move confirmed by the President's Committee on International Information Activities (headed by William H. Jackson) in 1953. By this time, the Coordinating Committee had dissolved. ☐

¹⁵☐ ☐ *The Central Intelligence Agency*, p. 123. (S)

¹⁶Like many pro-Nazi groups in Europe, the NTS tried to spread its own message while supporting the general principles of the Germans. Although the Germans had mixed feelings about groups such as the NTS and OUN, they still tolerated them and even promoted them as the Soviets pushed the Nazis out of Russia. See Steenberg, *Vlasov*, pp. 42-44 and 163-164. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

A report summarized the history and philosophies of the NTS. According to the NTS traced its roots back to a youth organization in the early 1930s. By 1933, the group took up its identity as the National Labor Union and molded its political program based on authoritarianism coupled with Russian expansionist ideals. The Germans drew from NTS members scattered throughout Europe, to act as interpreters and propagandists in their campaign against the Soviets during World War II. The NTS also supported the Vlasov movement and formed a cadre for German-sponsored Russian military units. Relations between the Nazis and the NTS nevertheless were unstable because of differences in political agendas and disagreements about defeating communism. While the Gestapo cracked down on the NTS in mid-1944 and arrested most of the leaders, the organization nevertheless survived the war. Indeed, the Germans continued to support the NTS in a limited manner until 1945.¹⁷ (S)

The NTS thrived in the disarray of postwar Germany and soon controlled many of the Russian DP camps. By 1947, the NTS had established Russian-language schools and published three newspapers in the western zones of Germany. The organization actually increased its membership by providing false documentation for Vlasov Army veterans to protect them from forced repatriation. While the NTS suffered from internal divisions as well as from the worldwide dispersal of Russians from the DP camps after 1948, it still formed the largest single Russian anticommunist group in Western Europe.¹⁸ (S)

The NTS attracted the CIA's attention because both the US Army and British intelligence had already provided some support to the group. While OPC could not persuade the NTS to join the Coordinating Center, it did launch a joint project, AESAURUS, with the Russians in early 1953. This project sought to promote and

¹⁷"Survey of the Russian Emigration," pp. 31-34. (S)

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 34-36. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

coordinate the training and dispatch of NTS agents into the Soviet Union, the dissemination of propaganda material to Soviet forces in East Germany, and NTS radio broadcasts to the homeland.¹⁹ (S)

OPC's efforts with the NTS met with mixed results. The anticommunist group put some pressure on the Soviet regime, both internally and externally. NTS members also served as a hot war reserve in the event of a Soviet invasion. In retrospect, however, inadequate operational planning and poor security marred the CIA's relationship with the NTS.²⁰ (S)

The Will to Fight and the Will to Lead (U)

Not only did OPC organize emigre groups for both propaganda tools and operational purposes, Frank Wisner also launched a program to train Eastern Europeans for clandestine operations against the Soviet Union. Wisner approved ZRELOPE in late July 1950 because "the acceleration of extensive OPC operations in the Soviet Union and its satellites, and further pursuance of resistance activities elsewhere abroad require the utilization of strong numbers of specially-trained personnel native to the area concerned." OPC estimated that it needed to train some 2,000 personnel over the next year in such fields as political warfare operations, resistance operations, escape and evasion

¹⁹The CIA's first contact with NTS, for example, started in 1950 when OPC supported a NTS anticommunist paper in Germany under Project QKDROOP. OPC expanded its contact with NTS in 1951 with airdrops in Soviet Union under Projects CACCOLA and AENOBLE. Project AESAURUS was formalized in January 1953. For further information, see "Transmittal of AESAURUS Report," 19 August 1953, EGMA-7379, (S), in DCI/HS Records, HS/CSG-2326, [] . Box 2. CIA ARC, and []

Historical Series []

²⁰[] [] , pp. 170-194. (S)

[] Clandestine Service

[]

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

operations, communications, and “the will to fight and will to lead.”²¹ OPC’s use of emigres coincided with mounting interest among the US government agencies to organize displaced persons into paramilitary formations.²² (C)

Given the poor security environment in Germany (the Russian Intelligence Services had targeted virtually every emigre group there), OPC proposed to train these personnel in the United States. Prior to launching ZRELOPE, OPC formed a special task group to contact both Federal agencies and private individuals about the feasibility of this project. By November 1950, this group presented its report and recommended that OPC train a “diverse group” of foreigners in the United States for covert operations and establish a civilian cover committee “in order to sponsor trainees and disburse funds.” The group also recommended that the DCI approve ZRELOPE and obtain similar approbation from the National Security Council (neither level of approval was mandatory for OPC projects at the time). In December 1950, OPC decided to initiate a pilot program with 100 trainees at a budgeted cost of [redacted] [redacted].²³ (C)

While OPC sought a suitable facility for ZRELOPE (it selected Grand Bahama Island in Florida after examining 70 sites), a number of unforeseen problems arose.²⁴ ZRELOPE, for example, suffered from splintered command and control within OPC. Whereas [redacted] [redacted] headed up Task Group BOULDER (which formulated overall planning and delivery of the candidates to the United States), OPC’s Eastern

²¹Project Outline, “Project ZRELOPE,” (C), DO Records, [redacted] [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

²²James Jay Carafano, “Mobilizing Europe’s Stateless: America’s Plan for a Cold War Army,” in *Journal of Cold War Studies* (Spring 1999), pp. 61-85. (U)

²³“Program to Train Foreign Agents in US,” undated, (C), in DO Records, [redacted] [redacted] Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

²⁴[redacted] [redacted] Chief, Plans Division/Paramilitary Branch, to Chief, Plans Division, “ZRELOPE—Current Negotiations for Training Facilities,” 24 May 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted] [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

Europe Division (EE) ran the selection, recruitment, and clearing of ZRELOPE trainees. The Training Division (TRD), a joint OSO/OPC element, trained the candidates and provided for cover and security of the project and its personnel.²⁵ (C)

Project ZRELOPE had a grueling schedule. [redacted] chief of EE, told [redacted] in March 1951 that the Department of Defense required 1,000 graduates by June 1952.²⁶ To facilitate the selection of candidates, Frank Wisner informed the ADSO that same month that OPC needed to interview some four to five thousand candidates in Europe in order to fill the required 2,000 training slots. Wisner added, "as each candidate will require a field security investigation prior to final screening, a heavy burden will fall upon your field organizations, especially in Germany and Austria."²⁷ The project's haste naturally raised questions about the thoroughness of the background investigations of the selected recruits. (C)

[redacted] of EE traveled to Germany in May 1951 to review the progress of ZRELOPE and its subprojects, JBPLEDGE (recruitment of trainees) and KMKIMONO (recruitment of instructors).²⁸ OPC planned to draw from some 60 "guard companies," with approximately 200 men each, performing various housekeeping tasks at US Army garrisons throughout Germany. By May of 1951, [redacted] estimated that some 60 percent of the guard company members had already been canvassed and that

²⁵ [redacted] to ADPC, "ZRELOPE," 1 March 1951, (C), and [redacted] to ADPC, "ZRELOPE," 15 March 1951, (C), both in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

²⁶; [redacted], Chief, EE, to Chief, TGBoulder/SP, "Time Schedule for ZRELOPE Operation," 22 March 1951, (C); see also [redacted] to ADPC, "Time Schedule - ZRELOPE Operation," 26 March 1951, (C), both in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

²⁷ Wisner to ADSO, "Field Security Investigation in Connection with Project ZRELOPE," 19 March 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

²⁸ [redacted] "Task Group Boulder-Informational Memorandum #4," 15 March 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

OPC had selected nearly 800 candidates. OPC had five case officers to do the screening, although a native Russian speaker handled the initial interviews and conducted the records checks. Candidates then traveled to Munich for psychological assessments. The actual recruitment occurred after the psychological assessment.²⁹ (C)

ZRELOPE's Problems (U)

²⁹Minutes of Meeting in "Field Situation re ZRELOPE and Estimate of Capabilities," 23 May 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted] Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. The CIA's use of European guard companies as holding areas for trained personnel in the event of war is discussed in a 6 February 1952 study, "Examination and Appreciation of Current CIA Systems and Mechanisms for the Promotion, Exploitation and Employment of Indigenous Europeans (USSR and/or USSR-Dominated) for CIA Purposes." See CIA History Staff Records, HS/CSG-1244, [redacted] Box 8, CIA ARC. In addition, the US Government planned to recruit escapees from "abandoned" areas of Eastern or Southern Europe under Public Law 165, the Mutual Security Act, or the so-called "Kersten Amendment." See US Congress., House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Staff Memorandum on Manpower Provisions of Mutual Security Act of 1951*, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 29 February 1952 in DO Records, [redacted] Box 2, Folder 3, CIA ARC. The US Government also had a number of other plans in mind, including a German Volunteer Freedom Corps, composed of former officers and enlisted men from the Wehrmacht, and Projects LCPROWL and KMHITHER. The latter project sought the recruitment of former German military personnel for various resistance activities. Project LCPROWL, authorized by Wisner in August 1950, used the German *Bund der Deutschen Jugend* as a source for a clandestine paramilitary resistance organization. The BDJ later became a source of embarrassment to the CIA when the West German Government uncovered its arms caches, training sites, and plans to eliminate political rivals in the event of war. Christopher Simpson considers that the BDJ affair "is a clear indication of just how little control US intelligence had over many of its farflung paramilitary operations and how carelessly it was willing to spend money." For further details on the German Volunteer Freedom Corps, see miscellaneous documents in CIA History Staff Records, HS/CSG-1075, [redacted] Box 7, CIA ARC. Project outlines, monthly project status reports, and other correspondence for KMHITHER and LCPROWL are found in DO Records, [redacted] Box 5, Folders 22 and 38, respectively, in CIA ARC. Another item of interest regarding the CIA's overall thinking about paramilitary units can be seen in [redacted] Memorandum 34, "Reflections on the Possibilities of Organizing Anticommunist Military Units from Defector Ranks," 29 March 1954, (S), in DO Records, [redacted] Box 2, Folder 23, CIA ARC. Quote about US paramilitary operations in Germany, see Simpson, *Blowback*, pp. 146-148. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

Despite morale problems (the candidates did not want to leave their families in Germany), [redacted] presented an optimistic appraisal. "I believe," he noted, "they will turn up in time a sufficient number of likely candidates to produce 100 willing candidates that can be started moving to the states between September 1st and September 15th [1951]. In saying that, I believe that we will be able to procure the minimum number of personnel which they require, that the field security will be able to speed up the results of their security checks and that home security will do the same."³⁰ (C)

The security issue posed a serious problem, as [redacted] of TRD discovered in early 1951.³¹ OPC, in looking for ZRELOPE candidates, sought individuals with experience in political and paramilitary action as well as with general knowledge of resistance and partisan warfare activities.³² [redacted] responsible for TRD's security review of potential candidates, discovered two cases in which OPC had selected individuals with suspicious credentials to work as instructors. One had served as an

³⁰Minutes of Meeting in "Field Situation re ZRELOPE and Estimate of Capabilities," 23 May 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (S)

³¹[redacted] was born in East Prussia in 1907 and immigrated to the United States with his family in 1923. He joined the US Army in 1942 and upon his commissioning as an officer, he transferred to OSS in 1944. He served as an officer with SI in London, Paris, and Wiesbaden until March 1946. In July of that year, [redacted] became the chief the Heidelberg Field Base until July 1947. He served as the head of the Karlsruhe Operations Base until his return to the US in August 1948. He was medically retired from the Army as a captain after contracting tuberculosis, but he remained as a civilian employee with the CIA until his retirement in 1968.

[redacted]

]

³²The CIA maintained an extensive collection of records on Project ZRELOPE in DO Records, [redacted] and [redacted], including lists of ZRELOPE candidates. These records were destroyed in March 1979 and February 1981, respectively. Some ZRELOPE records remain in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. Fortunately, microfiche index sheets to the destroyed files, including the names of ZRELOPE candidates, survive as [redacted] in DO/IMS, Central Files Branch. Using these names on the index sheets, one is able to review individual 201 files for information on the ZRELOPE candidates. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

intelligence officer with the Germans during the "malodorous Tamara Operation" in the Caucasus, but had not undergone any significant investigation into his World War II background. According to [redacted], he also apparently worked with the Gehlen Organization.³³ (C)

Lt. Col. William R. Peers, an OSS veteran and Army officer serving as TRD's chief, found OPC's selection of ZRELOPE candidates to be less than adequate.³⁴ Peers told Wisner that "although the foreign division concerned will be responsible for the selection of the students, including the checking of their security and political affiliations, it is readily apparent that if these matters are not given full consideration and properly handled initially, the Training Division later may be faced with the situation of having numerous security problems on its hands which by that time it will be powerless to correct."³⁵ (C)

After great discussion and even greater expense, ZRELOPE proved to be a short-lived program.³⁶ It failed because OPC could not recruit and vet candidates to meet its goal of 2,000 trained resistance fighters. The paramilitary aspect of ZRELOPE (known as

³³ [redacted] to Chief, TRD, "C.E. and Security Aspects, KMKIMONO - ZRELOPE," 21 February 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

³⁴William R. Peers was born in 1914 and attended the University of California at Los Angeles. Commissioned in the US Army in 1938, Peers joined the Coordinator of Information in 1941 and was assigned to OSS's Detachment 101 in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations as its commander from December 1943 until its disbandment in July 1945. He transferred to the China Theater as the commanding officer of the OSS Southern Area until September 1945 and then became the Deputy Strategic Services Officer in the China Theater. Peers returned to the United States in December 1945 and returned to normal staff duties with the Army and later was an instructor at the Command and General Staff College. In July 1949, Peers was assigned to the CIA as the chief of the Training Division. He later held numerous command and staff assignments with the Army and commanded the 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam. (U)

³⁵Peers to ADPC, "ZRELOPE," 1 March 1951, (C), in DO Records, [redacted] Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

³⁶For a review of the project, see the Monthly Project Status Reports for ZRELOPE and various subprojects in DO Records, [redacted], Box 5, Folder 35, CIA ARC. (C)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

ZRCORSET) was the first subproject to be discontinued because of a lack of recruits. In turn, CIA soon abandoned efforts to procure a "suitable" training area in the United States for the project. The political action element of ZRELOPE, or ZRDAMSEL, conducted a class in 1952 for a dozen-odd students at a hotel near Winchester, Virginia, utilizing the cover of the Franklin Development Foundation of Philadelphia. Despite plans to bring a new class to the training site, CIA canceled the entire program in November 1952. TRD estimated that the political action portion of ZRELOPE alone cost \$30,000 per student—an incredible expense for little gain.³⁷ (S)

Hot War Cadre Programs (U)

Despite the disappointing results of ZRELOPE, CIA continued to believe it could fashion the emigres into a potent fighting force in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Several CIA projects concentrated on the recruitment of foreigners for paramilitary or insertion training in the United States. Even as OPC dropped ZRELOPE, it expanded an earlier project, WSBAKERY. In January 1952, OPC (with OSO's consent) organized Project AEACRE, which called for the establishment of a Domestic

37. c

components is also discussed in c
Office of Training Series c
(S); and c
Services Historical Series c

- ☐ Office of Training Series c
- ☐ The history of the project and its various c
- ☐ Clandestine c

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

Operations Base (DOB) near Washington, DC, that would allow the Agency to interrogate, assess, and prepare agents for dispatch into the Soviet Union.³⁸ (C)

Like ZRELOPE, AEACRE encountered problems in recruiting knowledgeable instructors as well as in finding suitable agent candidates.³⁹ This project, however, had no difficulties in the "black" entry and exit processing of agents thanks to the cooperation of the US Air Force and the INS. This aspect of CIA's covert training seems to have rarely posed a problem.⁴⁰ The majority of personnel trained at DOB participated in REDSOX missions.⁴¹ These operations declined after the mid-1950s as CIA realized their futility, but the Soviet suppression of Hungary in 1956, however, rejuvenated DOB because the Joint Chiefs of Staff assigned new unconventional warfare tasks to the CIA.⁴² (S)

AEACRE spawned a new project in 1956 as the CIA upgraded its "hot war" plans in anticipation of the need for a reserve body of trained agents. In late 1956, Project

³⁸"AEACRE Basic Plan," 10 December 1951, (C), and Joint Memorandum to DD/P, "Project AEACRE, Amendment No. 1," 25 March 1952, (C), in DO Records, [] Box 3, Folder 13, CIA ARC. Monthly Project Status Reports for AEACRE, WSBKERY, and other subprojects are also included. (C)

³⁹A description of the problems encountered with Project AEACRE can be found in [] Clandestine Services

Historical Series []
(S)

⁴⁰ZRELOPE had a subproject, [] [], to handle the covert air transportation of its candidates. Responsibility for airlift was transferred from ZRELOPE to EE/AM on 30 September 1952. []

⁴¹See Winston M. Scott, Chief, Inspection and Review to DD/P, "Inspection of AEACRE in 1953," 2 October 1953, (S), in DO Records, [] [], Box 14, Folder 1, CIA ARC. (S)

⁴²[] [] pp. 16-20. (S)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

AEReady came into existence to build up a force of personnel, native to various target areas of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Middle East, who possessed area knowledge, language skills, and paramilitary training. Following basic training under CIA auspices, these agents returned home to their civilian jobs and held themselves ready for emergency callup and annual refresher training. Unlike either ZRELOPE or AEACRE, AEReady did not require overseas recruitment or transportation to the United States. Rather, the new project identified these specialized individuals from INS rosters of immigrants and displaced persons already in America. AEReady, however, also suffered from a lack of suitable personnel. After extensive nationwide searches, CIA ended up assessing 27 candidates for each successful agent that completed training. Members of the US armed forces with foreign language skills provided the initial cadre of AEReady trainees.⁴³ (S)

The Army provided cover for Project AEReady at Fort Meade, Maryland, where it established Material Testing Unit No. 1. Similar units were also organized for specialized training at Army posts in North Carolina, Virginia, and New York.⁴⁴ By 1961, AEReady (known as AEDEPOT after 1958) had produced a pool of 63 reserve agents from 13 ethnic groups. Ukrainians formed the largest single body of agents with 17 personnel, followed by Russians, Latvians, and Lithuanians.⁴⁵ CIA integrated teams

43

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44 ☐ ☐. Yury Lopatinsky, one of the main ZPUHVR leaders in the American zone in Germany, later trained at AEACRE and served as a "spotter" for Project AEReady. In addition to his service as an officer in the Ukrainian Nachtigall Legion, the Germans dispatched Lopatinsky by aircraft into the Ukraine to establish contact with the OUN in December 1944. He made his way back to the American Zone of Western Germany one year later and claimed to be a lieutenant colonel in the UPA. Yury Lopatinsky, ☐ ☐, DO Records. (S)

4: ☐ ☐ pp. 32-33. (U)

DRAFT WORKING PAPER

of AEDEPOT personnel into various military training exercises, both in the United States and in Europe. (S)

The need to maintain a reserve cadre of European agents, however, diminished in the 1960s as the threat of Soviet invasion of Europe receded. In its place, communist insurgencies in Latin America and Southeast Asia posed new challenges that prompted CIA to reconsider its reserve hot war program. In 1966, the Agency deactivated WUDEPOT (as AEACRE and AEDEPOT had been redesignated two years earlier). While a handful of the reserve agents served in Latin America and Vietnam, the cancellation of WUDEPOT effectively ended the CIA's paramilitary training of Eastern Europe emigres.⁴⁶ (S)

In the sixteen years that followed OPC's Project ZRELOPE, the Central Intelligence Agency had contacts with thousands of Europeans from all backgrounds concerning paramilitary training. While a number of these individuals had proven both their anti-Nazi and anticommunist ideals (such as the Polish and Czech contract employees who flew air missions behind the Iron Curtain), the bulk of the CIA's resistance candidates and trained agents came from other areas of Eastern Europe where collaboration with the Nazis tended to be regarded as a positive sign of anticommunism.⁴⁷ (S)

Altogether, OPC's efforts to use emigre groups and to organize "secret armies" failed. None of these efforts had much impact on the Cold War, at least, in terms of

⁴⁶Ibid, pp. 34-46. (U)

⁴⁷For a review of the Polish pilots and crewmen of the 1045th Operational Evaluation and Training Group (OETG) who flew missions in Europe and later in Central America, see "Personal Characteristics, Motivation, and Reliability, of the [deleted] Group," 1 June 1960, (S), and 11 April 1961 Supplement in CIA History Staff Records, HS/CSG-818, [redacted], Box 5, CIA ARC. (S)

SECRET

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defeating Soviet communism. The Agency's operations resulted from the belief in the likelihood of war in Europe and the need to be prepared for a Soviet invasion of western Germany and other states. Consequently, the CIA approached these projects with a "can do" attitude where time was of the essence. As it turned out, war did not break out in Europe and, after a more reflective examination, the Agency dropped most of its "hot war" projects and reduced its levels of involvement with the various emigre organizations. But the impact caused by the Agency's almost overnight entry into covert action and paramilitary affairs lingered for decades. (C)