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129

October 23, 1959

DATE

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

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SUBJECT: Death of Stefan BANDERA

Numerous news articles have appeared in many of the Germany newspapers over the mysterious death of Stefan BANDERA (aka Stephan Popel) leader of the International Ukrainian Underground party in Munich. There is reason to believe that he was murdered. Below are quoted two typical news articles relating to this incident.

BERLIN: U. Journalist of October 16, 1959

The mysterious death of the chief of the International Ukrainian Underground-party in Munich.

Stefan BANDERA (50), was found on the stairs of the apartment house, Munich, Kreittmayrstrasse 7, yesterday. He was always accompanied by several members of his party and as usual yesterday his body guard accompanied him to his room. Shortly afterwards a woman heard a shrill cry in the house.

Bandera (10) aged 6, found Bandera lying on the stairs with his face downwards. Bandera died on the way to the hospital. The police have undertaken preliminary proceedings, since it was assumed that Bandera was killed by some agents.

Bandera resided in Munich under the name of POPPE and first became known to the police about a year ago when a Russian agent was arrested while trying to kidnap Bandera. Bandera has a wife and three children aged 11, 12 and 17.

Stefan Bandera was born in 1909 in Hrymiv-Staryj. He graduated from the Polytechnical University and joined the underground-party in 1927. The underground-party has the aim to rule the Ukraine in a democratic way. In 1933 he was the leader of the Underground-party of the west Ukraine.

In January 1935 Bandera was arrested by the Poles and sentenced to death. This sentence was changed to life imprisonment. In 1937 he was set free by his party members and in 1940 he was the chief of the Ukrainian Underground-party. However, in 1941 the Gestapo requested that he give up his independence and as Bandera did not agree, he was brought to the KZ-Sachsenhausen. In 1945 Bandera took over again the guidance and the command of the Underground-party.

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Bandera's death alarmed all the Ukrainians living in Munich. Everybody still remembers the "Sprengstoff-Attentat" of the leader of the Slovak Underground Party, Matus CERNAK, in April 1958, which resulted in his death too.

FRANKFURTER BUNDSCHAU : October 20, 1959

BANDERA DIED OF CYANIDE OF POTASSIUM

MURDER? SUICIDE? EMIGRANT'S SUSPECT POLITICAL MURDER

Munich, Oct. 19 (AP). The Ukrainian emigrant leader died of cyanide of potassium. After releasing the post mortem information on Monday, the Munich homicide squad stated that investigations are under way to determine whether murder or suicide led to Bandera's death. While the police hinted that Bandera might have taken the quickly acting poison himself, the Ukrainian Information Agency declared its firm conviction that this was a murder.

Thursday last week the emigrant leader entered in his car the courtyard of the Munich apartment house where he lived under the alias of KOPEL. Contrary to his usual practice, he dismissed his body guard when entering the staircase. Shortly thereafter he was found lying on the stairs and was brought to a hospital.

The police are of the opinion that Bandera must have taken the poison which works in five or at the most ten seconds, either in the car or on the staircase. It was found in his stomach and there are no other ways of transmitting it. He was declared dead when admitted to the hospital.

The Ukrainian Information Agency suspects that Bandera was attacked in the staircase by several men who might have put the cyanide of potassium in his mouth.

Chief editor of "The Way To Victory", LENNIK, Bandera's deputy, voiced the opinion that the murderer might be sought among the hundred members of a Ukrainian dance and song ensemble which is presently touring the Federal Republic. Lennik pointed out that an advance group of the artist ensemble was in Munich on the day of Bandera's death. Lennik further stated that the emigrant organization had been warned two weeks ago that an attempt at Bandera's life was planned. Thereupon the body guard of the emigrant leader was increased. "We are sure they were Bolsheviks", Lennik said. Bandera was never inclined to commit suicide. On Thursday he was in high spirits and would have preferred to "die fighting".

A search of the APS/G files reflect no information on Bandera under either name. A book written by John Alexander Armstrong, entitled "Ukrainian Nationalism 1939 - 1945" and published by the Columbia University Press in 1955 contains many references to Bandera and the Bandera Movement. For additional information see Despatch No. 130, Oct. 23, 1959.

FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

Ed. Blake Cox