

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The Tsingtao Russian Emigres' Association (REA) has been subjected to a change of policy since the recall of N. N. Merkulov and the election of V. P. Kamkin on 25 January 1948 to replace him as President of the REA. Since that time Kamkin has ruled the REA with an iron hand. 25X1A
2. Kamkin's first move was to close the Club for a period of three days without resorting to the so-called Control Committee, through which all such action should be taken. During this period he investigated the books of the REA and the Club and found discrepancies for which Merkulov and other former officers of the REA were responsible. 8/2.22-N
3. Although Kamkin's manner in handling REA affairs has been dictatorial, the organization has shown renewed vigor since his election. The REA has for the first time lavishly entertained the foreign population and Chinese officials of Tsingtao. Recently the REA acquired and redecorated the former ABC clubhouse on Nan Hai Road, thus establishing for themselves a meeting place and a place where foreign friends may be invited. They have also thrown open the club facilities to all U.S. Naval officer personnel. 8/2.22-631L
4. Recently the Russian emigres have been criticizing Kamkin for his dictatorial manner and for certain specific actions which he has taken while under influence of liquor and/or other outside forces. The situation has finally come to a head over the question of the status of former Soviet citizens who are now members of the REA. On the one side is Kamkin, supported by G. A. Koshut, chairman of the Emigres' Club; V. V. Yakovlev, secretary of both the REA and the Club, and Club manager; I. S. Markelov, treasurer of the REA; and N. I. Efimov, member of the Board of Directors of the Club. The opposing faction includes: Teneshev, J. Shishkin, V. M. Ivanov, N. N. Merkulov and S. P. Belov.
5. During the period since World War II, a large number of Tsingtao Russian emigres who had accepted Soviet citizenship returned their Soviet "passports" and again assumed emigre status. The chief reason most of them gave for this action was that, whereas they had given in to lavish Soviet propaganda in which the Soviet authorities had asserted that all rights in law and society were to be returned to the emigres, they had since found that this was not so. As a result, approximately twenty-five per cent of the members of the Tsingtao REA are former Soviet citizenship-applicants. Two former Soviet citizenship-applicants, N. P. Ribalko and Dr. Chochlachkin are members of the present Executive Committee of the REA.

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Of nine members of the Board of Directors of the Emigres' Club, four are former Soviet citizenship-applicants.

6. This situation has raised the point then of whether or not these former Soviet citizenship-applicants should be given full rights and privileges, as if they had never agreed to the terms of "Sovietism". The opposing faction argues that at the time the REA was formed, no clause was included in the REA Constitution regarding the status of former Soviet citizenship-applicants within the emigre ranks because there was then no such category. However, since the creation of such a group, S. P. Belov, Teneshev and N. Konov, all former Club officers, feel that some action should be taken. They maintain that when an emigre, who is an adult and properly educated, voluntarily accepts Soviet citizenship, he accepts all Communist and Soviet philosophies and ideologies, and thereby abrogates all for which the Russian emigres have sacrificed twenty-five years of their lives. For this there is no excuse because the large portion of these people are not young, impulsive or unreasonable, but mature and capable of acting on basic principles. Now that they have returned to the emigre ranks, should they be considered sincere in their desire to regain emigre status or were they more sincere two years ago when they became Soviet citizenship-applicants? Those who have remained Russian emigres view this action with suspicion and they requested by petition the convocation of the General Assembly of the Tsingtao REA for the purpose of forming a specific clause regarding former Soviet citizenship-applicants.
7. This petition was presented to Mr. Kamkin, but as of 10 April 1948 no action had been taken. Kamkin has stated that local police officials feel that this is strictly a political issue and as they have banned meetings for political purposes, the President of the REA is unable to convoke a General Assembly for this purpose. Whether or not the leftist group within the REA will accept this or will take more positive action remains to be seen. If their purpose is to create conflict within the Emigres' Club, and it does appear to be that, they are succeeding.

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