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CIA/SC/RR 73

18 June 1954

Dissemination Authorized
Assistant Director
Office of Current Intelligence

No. Pages - 14

11837

CIVIL DEFENSE IN THE USSR
AND THE EUROPEAN SATELLITES

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

Office of Research and Reports
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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CIVIL DEFENSE IN THE USSR
AND THE EUROPEAN SATELLITES*

Summary

A well-organized and extensive system of civil defense exists in the USSR. This system includes a permanent command and staff organization, supplemented by numerous local organizations and groups. Its framework is built around two agencies primarily responsible for civil defense: the DOSAAF (Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force, and Navy), a paramilitary mass organization concerned with training, and the MPVO (Local Anti-Air Defense), ** an arm of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). (See the accompanying chart. ***) Supporting organizations include the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Ministry of Health, the Komsomol and Pioneer organizations, and the school systems, all of which contribute instruction and training in those fields in which they are competent.

During the past 3 years the USSR has gradually strengthened its civil defense organizations. More recently, administrative pressure has been utilized to increase "voluntary" enlistments in the DOSAAF. Reports of returning German prisoners of war indicate that air-raid shelters are required in new construction of apartments, industrial installations, and administrative buildings.

* The estimates and conclusions contained in this report represent the best judgment of the responsible analyst as of 10 June 1954.

** MPVO as used in this report refers to a small full-time group of specialized MVD employees who provide staff personnel, planning, and inspection at all levels of political and economic administration. The great bulk of leadership and implementation in passive air defense is furnished by local government organs and civilian personnel. The latter are extensively organized into "self-defense groups" in which all able-bodied adults are liable to serve.

*** See chart, USSR: Civil Defense Training and Operation, following p. 2.

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At the same time, Soviet interest has been directed to civil defense activities in the European Satellites. In 1952 an air defense conference was held in Hungary, attended by representatives from all of the European Satellites and the USSR, at which measures were taken to establish passive air defense organizations modeled after the Soviet pattern. At this conference it was arranged that Soviet commissions would go to the various Satellite countries in order to organize their defense units and to provide and direct the necessary instruction and training.

There is at present no apparent evidence of urgency in the activities of these civil defense agencies. Steps to coordinate and integrate them, however, are obviously being intensified. In addition, training in civil defense protective measures against atomic attack has been initiated in a limited way in Bulgaria. Continuing observations of the development of these activities may be significant in that they will reflect the Soviet appraisal of the need for and the anticipated use of a civil defense system.

I. Civil Defense in the USSR.

Primary responsibility for passive air defense in the USSR has been entrusted to two agencies: the DOSAAF (Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force, and Navy), a paramilitary mass training organization, and the MPVO* (Local Anti-Air Defense), an arm of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). To these agencies should be added the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Ministry of Health, the Komsomol and Pioneer organizations, and the school systems, all of which contribute instruction and training in those fields in which they are competent. 1/**

The DOSAAF is responsible for disseminating military information to the public and preparing the public for all types of anti-aircraft and antichemical defense. Membership in this organization, while technically voluntary, has nevertheless been built up recently under considerable pressure. The first All-Union Conference by the DOSAAF

* MPVO is also used in the USSR as a generic term to apply to all civil defense measures.

** Footnote references in arabic numerals are to sources listed in the Appendix.

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was held in December 1953, a

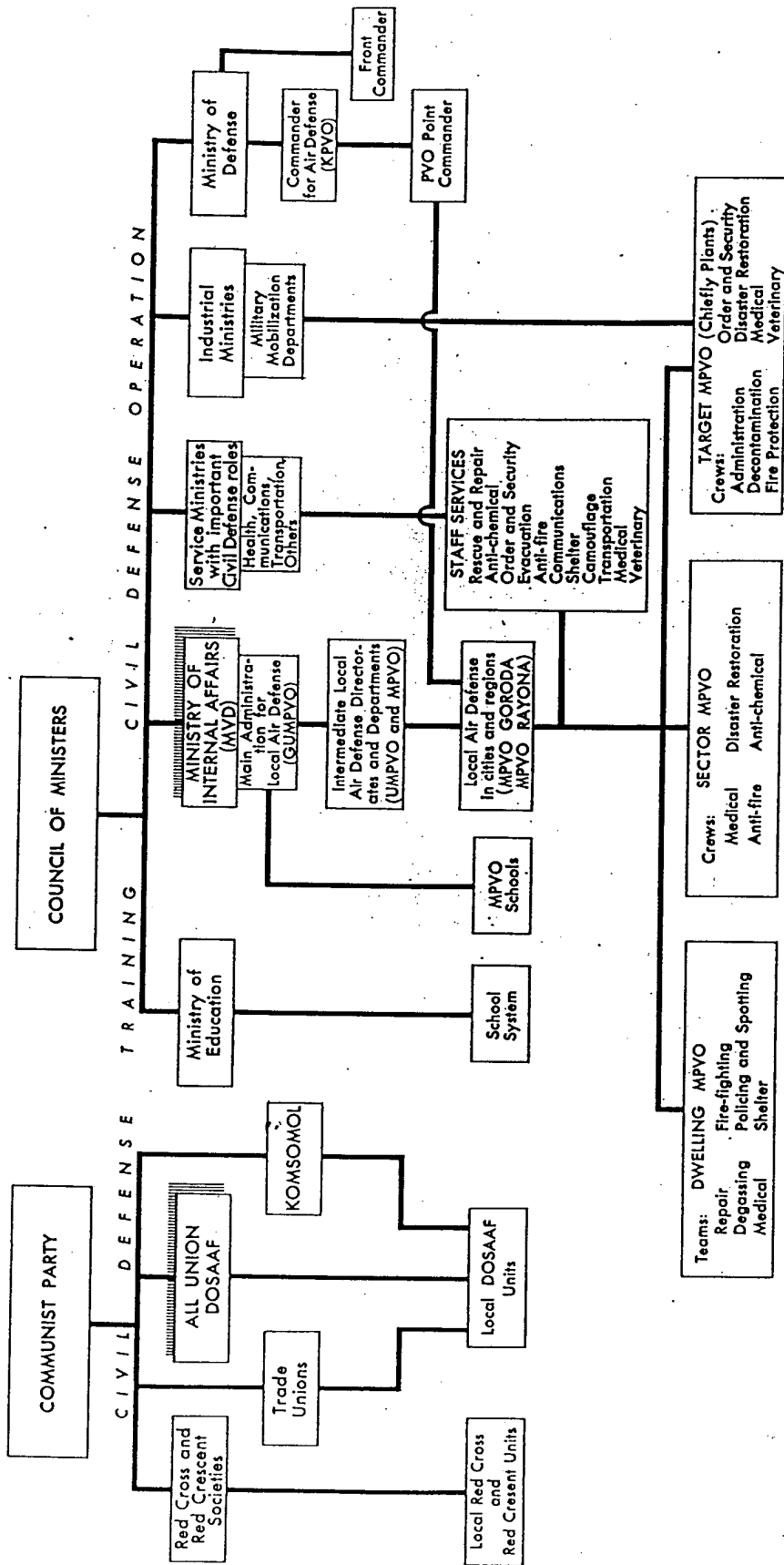
2/ In January 1954, further evidence of pressure on non-Communist organizations appeared in a Kray conference decision which directed an improvement in mass defense work in cooperation with the DOSAAF organizations. 3/ Also, trade unions have been warned sharply by Trud that they "are obliged to set up primary organizations of DOSAAF in every enterprise, in every institution and establishment of learning, in every state farm and machine tractor station." 4/ Total membership in the DOSAAF, according to Soviet reports, has increased an "unsatisfactory" 48.3 percent since 1951. 5/ The estimated membership at that time was believed to be approximately 16 million. 6/

Planning and supervision of measures for passive air defense is assigned to the Main Administration for Local Air Defense (GUMPVO). 7/ This responsibility is discharged through an extensive corps of full-time MVD career workers who are active at all levels of government, particularly in cities where the major portion of the work has been concentrated. The local MPVO offices, under the over-all direction of GUMPVO, provide staff leadership at the community level. MPVO officials have also been assigned to key industrial plants in order to supervise their defense preparations. In the field of construction the MPVO plays a major role in monitoring plans, presumably to insure that proper defense regulations are followed. 8/ For example, in December 1949

instructions of the Chita Oblast Directorate of Local Air Defense required that cellars be built for all buildings then under construction. 9/ Since the Oblast Directorate itself could not have ordered this costly modification in construction, the directive must have come from Moscow, and it probably indicates that air-raid shelters are required in major urban areas. This assumption has recently been supported by the statements of former German prisoners of war who have returned during the past few months from the vicinity of Sverdlovsk and Stalingrad. Their reports, all in substantial agreement, indicate that air-raid shelters are provided in new apartments, in one- and two-family dwelling units, in schools, and in factories built since 1952. 10/ These air-raid shelters are constructed of reinforced concrete, are provided with double hermetically sealed doors, contain toilet facilities, and have multiple entrances and an antigas ventilating system. The type of construction conforms to a category of shelter construction, detected during World War II, which is supposed to withstand a complete collapse of the building.

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USSR
CIVIL DEFENSE TRAINING AND OPERATION



II. Civil Defense in the European Satellites.

In 1952 the USSR began actively to develop civil defense organizations in the European Satellites. An air defense conference was held in Hungary from 2 April to 7 April of that year. Delegates attended from each of the Satellites and the USSR. Soviet commissions were established to go to the various Satellites to organize and standardize air defense operations. 11/ These commissions were assigned responsibility for the following:

1. A 10-week course of instruction to teach local authorities the Soviet system of air defense.
2. The supervision of the publication of a 300-page instruction manual.
3. The permanent supervision of air defense measures undertaken by each Satellite.

Currently, the following organizations patterned after the Soviet DOSAAF model have been identified:

Albania	ShNUM	Society for Aid to the Army and Defense <u>12/</u>
Bulgaria	DOSO	Voluntary Organization for Assistance to Defense <u>13/</u>
Czechoslovakia	SVAZARM	Union for Cooperation with the Army <u>14/</u>
East Germany	GST	Athletic and Technical Association <u>15/</u>
Hungary	MSzHSz	Freedom Fighters' Association <u>16/</u>
Poland	LPZ	League of Soldiers' Friends <u>17/</u>
Rumania	AVPTCF	Volunteer Association for Technical Propaganda and Physical Culture <u>18/</u>

Up to the present time, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary have led in known preparations for air defense, including training courses, fire-prevention activities, safety measures, and shelter construction. Intelligence gaps rather than the absence of defense preparations may be the explanation for the seemingly lesser activity in the other Satellites. Generally, known defense operations follow a definite Soviet pattern which emphasizes shelter construction and defense training in industrial plants, institutions, and schools. Support of the responsible organizations is usually provided through the Party, the Komsomols, and the trade unions.

1. Albania.

Civil defense measures have only recently been inaugurated in Albania. The existence of the ShNUM (Society for Aid to the Army and Defense) has been confirmed, and reports of civilian instruction in fire-fighting and in first-aid practices have been received. 19/

on 26 February 1954 the Albanian Red Cross acknowledged its close relationship with the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent. Claims were made that substantial progress had been achieved during 1953, particularly in the acquisition of new members. 20/

2. Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria, reports attest to the size and activity of the DOSO (Voluntary Organization for Assistance to Defense), which was created in January 1951. 21/ Its organization, aims, and responsibilities are revealed to be closely modeled after the DOSAAF in the USSR. 22/ The first president of the Central Committee of the DOSO was General Ivan Kinov, a major general in the Soviet Army, although a Bulgarian by birth. In 1952 the responsibility for the direction of DOSO was given to Major General Dobri Terpeshev. However, General Kinov has maintained an active interest in the organization, having addressed the Plenum of the Central Committee of the DOSO on 14 November 1953. 23/ The Bulgarian publication, Otshestven Front, reported that the main objective of the DOSO was to teach Bulgarian youth to be "boundlessly loyal to the USSR, and trained in revolutionary vigilance and preparedness for war in accordance with the heroic tradition of the Soviet organization DOSAAF." 24/ In addition, training sections such as PVKhO (Ready for Air and Chemical Defense), GTO (Ready for Labor and Defense), and GSO (Ready for Medical Defense) have been identified in Bulgaria. 25/ These are similar to Soviet groups. The Red Cross is also active in this training. The organization MVPO (the Bulgarian term for Local Anti-Air Defense) has been designated as the organization charged with the responsibility for home defense. 26/

3. Czechoslovakia.

The organization of civil defense activities appears to be progressing very rapidly in Czechoslovakia. The SVAZARM (Union for Cooperation with the Army) is engaged in civil defense training and paramilitary operations. 27/ It has several hundred thousand members and is headed

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by Lieutenant General Hruska. 28

MPVO officials in the USSR have been addressed by military title and mention is made of a local air defense battalion. 29/ Moreover, competitions for "defense ability" similar to those held in the USSR have been staged. Finally, the Red Cross has conducted first-aid courses for the general public which reportedly are compulsory for at least one member of each household. 30/

4. East Germany.

In East Germany, the GST (Athletic and Technical Association) is similar in structure to the DOSAAF and may be under its direction. 31/ It has not yet been associated with actual civilian defense training, but this delay may have been caused by the unstable situation in East Germany. Key personnel of the GST, including First Secretary Berthold, Second Secretary Kreutzburg, and Third Secretary Gnauk, have been trained in the USSR, by the DOSAAF. 32/ Of these functionaries, Berthold is reported to have Soviet citizenship. Very probably all directives for the organization and training of the GST are issued by the DOSAAF, a branch of which is reportedly located in Soviet Headquarters at Karlshorst, Berlin. The East German Ministry of Interior is apparently preparing plans for the protection of military targets and defense plants in the Soviet Zone. 33/

5. Hungary.

Because of the scarcity of information it cannot be established at the present time that the MSzHSz (Freedom Fighters' Association) in Hungary is fully comparable to similar organizations in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia and that its members are as thoroughly trained as those of the latter groups. The level of air-raid preparation is considered to be excellent, however, and the kind of instruction given to the population is very similar to that disseminated by the DOSAAF in the USSR. 34/ It has been established that the Minister of the Interior has been charged with the responsibility for passive air defense. 35/ A civil defense manual for general distribution has appeared in Hungary. 36/ Air-raid shelters, according to these instructions, are to be provided with watertight and gas-proof doors, similar to those in the USSR. In addition, instruction in civil defense activities is included in the school programs. 37/

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6. Poland.

In Poland the LPZ (League of Soldiers' Friends) is headed by an officer with the rank of general. It is responsible for the dissemination of defense information to the general public and has reported that it will be guided in its work by the "rich experience of DOSAAF." 38/ The Polish Red Cross is active and claims to have completed 300,000 first-aid courses. 39/

7. Rumania.

On 5 October 1952 a decree was passed in Rumania authorizing the formation and expansion of the AVPTCF (Volunteer Association for Technical Propaganda and Physical Culture). In the spring of 1953 the decree was implemented by calling into active service approximately 3,000 reserve officers who were assigned for an indefinite tour of duty to the AVPTCF. The reported purpose of this action was to compensate for the reduction in the over-all strength of the Army due to the release of the Class of 1931. 40/ Little is known about the activities of the AVPTCF other than that its success was greater than anticipated by the Rumanian government. It participated reportedly in the May Day parade and in the Liberation Day parade of 23 August 1953. Apart from that, women have been enlisted in communal work applicable to civil defense. In Bucharest, more than 2,000 are helping in hospitals, and over 4,000 have attended the "Ready for Health Defense" courses. 41/

8. Training against Atomic Bombing.

Generally, civil defense training in the European Satellites has been largely directed against the effects of conventional bombing, such as fragmentation, fire, and gas. Discussion in the European Satellites of the effects of atomic bombing has apparently had the purpose of disseminating propaganda on the "barbaric methods" of modern warfare rather than of informing the civil population about protective measures. However, some training on "anti-atomic defense" has been started in Bulgaria, apparently the first of the Satellites to be selected for this type of instruction. 42/ These courses are reportedly given by selected members of the Communist Party.

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APPENDIX

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