

II. Group

5th interview

Subject : Petro Panomarenko

Age : 35

Date : 13 January 1952

Interviewer : AMH

The interview was conducted in German, though subject knows English well, and lasted 1 hour 20 minutes.

Fact: Subject comes from rural Western Ukrainian (Polish) environment. His parents had a small farm. He had 2 younger brothers, of whom one died during the German occupation in 1940, the other was reported to have taken an active part in the UPA (Ukrainian Liberation Army) but has disappeared completely since 1946. Subject assumes that he is dead, though cannot produce any evidence for this fact. He has no information about his parents since 1946.

Panomarenko graduated from a private Ukrainian gymnasium in 1937, since it was a self-evident matter for his parents that he should be educated in a purely Ukrainian school (in Rohatyn). During this period he took an active part in Ukrainian boy scout organization which became illegal under Polish rule in the early thirties. He entered the School of Business and Commerce in Lemberg (Lvov-Lviv) in 1937 and studied accounting, economics and related subjects until 1939. He continued his Ukrainian activities in a group of students of the school, of which he claims to have been a recognized leader. At the same time he was connected with the OUN, though he does not believe to have taken a very active part in the movement itself. When the war broke out in 1939, he was in jail with other students who had been arrested by the Polish authorities. Released from jail few days before the end of the German-Polish war, he spent only a short time in Lvov under the Soviets and crossed the demarcation line. For half a year worked in a grocery store, tried to register for studies in Vienna, but had no money to continue his studies. Found himself in Stanislaw in 1941, opened a bookstore and was arrested by the German authorities for supporting Bandera activists. He spent 8 months in jail (Sept. 1941 - May 1942). Worked then in a rural school teaching courses in agriculture. He was a youth counsellor in Ukrainian organizations. In June 1942 went to Vienna, worked in a book store, but found that the Germans would give him only manual labor. With the help of Ukrainians went to Berlin and worked in the Propaganda Section of the Ukrainian National Committee (probably under the sponsorship of the Rosenberg Kommissariat fuer das Ostgebiet). Emphasizes the fact that his work was unimportant, that he did not want to join any German sponsored Ukrainian military unit because it was "too late". In April 1945 left Berlin for Prague, where he spent only two weeks. After this went to Pilsen and then to Aschaffenburg, where he became a camp leader of a DP camp (from June 1945 - Sept. 1948). Worked then in Wuerzburg and finally almost 1 year (1950 - 1951) in Bremen with the UGAR (Ukrainian American Relief Committee). The last

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months before the recruitment he was in Munich and Ludwigsburg.

Subject's background and education have made him a convinced (but not too violent) Ukrainian nationalist. He has had a good, but not too good an education. His nationalist activities within the framework of the Polish state seem to have been rather mild: he has mostly taught in Ukrainian schools and groups, has helped organizing Ukrainian cooperatives, and, as far as his connections with the OUN are concerned, he has never been connected with the group actively.

Within the group, Panomarenko seems to have been involved comparatively little in German sponsored Ukrainian work. He claims that he was always aware of the dangers of such connections, but indicates that during the war he shared the belief of his compatriots that a) participation in the Ukrainian SS division Galicia provided a good opportunity of learning military techniques, b) was the most practical tool for nationalistic Ukrainians to fight against the Bolsheviks.

Evaluation: Subject comes from a typical Galician environment which considered Poland, Soviet Russia (identified with Russia) as their primary enemies. He has accepted this feeling, probably without much independent analysis, as a natural thing to which all Ukrainians should conform. His political work under the Polish regime has been moderate. The fact that he was arrested during the students' Convention in Lvov in 1939 was probably the most outstanding personal hardship experienced by subject for his Ukrainian activities.

The biography seems to reflect rather truthfully the course of events and seems to be keeping with the not too outstanding capacities and the little daring of the subject.

II. Present: Subject claims to know little about the present situation in both his immediate fatherland and the Great Ukraine (Soviet Ukraine). He answers in cliché phrases which seem to reflect the policy line of the whole group. He has, however, a rather detailed knowledge of economic factors, probably due to his interest in economics.

He says that in 1946 he withdrew completely from any political activity within the emigration parties, since the split of the Ukrainians into various factions seemed to him useless and unrealistic. Nevertheless, he believes that the U.S.A. has most chances for success, since they are "democratic" and also because they maintain some connections with the Ukraine.

Asked about the possibilities of the URA at present, stated that they hardly can develop much activity.

On a whole subject's evaluation of the present situation in his native country is very reserved. He believes that the Russians are occupying Ukraine and that the Ukrainians are thoroughly anti-Soviet, but that under the tight police and control system no nationalist movement in the Ukraine has much chance.

Evaluation: Subject's thinking does not indicate much originality and intellectual daring. He might, however, conceal some thoughts and judgements, because being a rather cautious type who does not want to commit himself to anything that may be prejudicial to his situation. His political affiliations are not quite clear; though he seems to be opposed to a violent nationalistic organization, his evaluations of the future seem to indicate that the totalitarian type of thought offers some attraction to him.

III. Future: As far as the political future of the Ukraine is concerned subject repeats the same idea that seems to be the "policy line" of other members of the group. He does not believe that Ukraine can become independent without war or intervention. He also rejects the idea of a federation with Russia. Ukraine will be probably occupied by Allied forces and must be gradually prepared for democracy, since, as it was with Germany, democracy would not work.

His own participation in Ukrainian national efforts is viewed by the subject with great caution. He definitely rejects any personal participation in clandestine activities behind the Iron Curtain, since he considers them "useless" and a "loss in human life". But he is perfectly willing to ride into the liberated Ukraine with the occupation forces, where he would be mostly interested in administration and economic work on some higher level.

In emigration he would like to take part in propaganda work.

Evaluation : Subject's nationalism is strong, but not so strong as to make him an aggressive fighter for the national cause. His political ideas are rather clear as far as the overall goals are concerned, but his understanding of how to achieve these goals is limited and essentially of a passive nature. He is somewhat suspicious of the American effort, believes that as long as the democracy (identical with America) cannot present a clear-cut program to the Ukrainians, they will view the US with great misgivings.

IV. - Total evaluation: Ponamarenko has a higher opinion of himself than this interviewer. He seems to be a man of an average intelligence (a typical accountant) and not capable of independent or profound thinking. He possesses shrewdness, but not to such a degree as to recognize the implications of some questions. He is very smooth in his conversation, can gain - but hardly hold for a long time - the confidence and loyalty of other people. The strength of his nationalistic feelings and convictions is somewhat problematic. They are hardly stronger than his desire to have a secure and socially recognized position. Essentially he is an opportunist and, though his background has provided him with some streaks of idealism, he is now guided by egotistic reasons.

The interviewer believes that he is lacking courage and strong moral fibre. He uses his heart ailment as an excuse rather frequently.

He is definitely not fit for a P/A program. His usefulness in the P/A program cannot be gauged at this time, but since he lacks daring and imagination, some semi-executive type of work is

Ponomarenko

-4-

probably more adapted to his capacities than propaganda .
He might be a liaison man, an organizer, but is definitely not
of leadership caliber.

his
V. Adjustment: Subject has no complaint about his present situation.
Since he has come "to learn the ways of American democracy",
he would expect at some future time to be able to see more
of America than the site of our school, but he is satisfied
with the food, the treatment, and the organization.

He knows some of the members of the Ukrainian group rather
intimately since a long time, does not anticipate any frictions
with them or with other nationalities. In this he may be more
right than his own - or not his own - anti-Russian attitudes
would indicate.

He does not anticipate a large volume of correspondence,
understands the character of the school, and accepts the
necessary restrictive regulations. (*)

His cover story (as told by himself) would indicate that
he has gone to Frankfurt to work for some American Army unit.
He was promised to be able to write and communicate with his
uncle and cousin, who live in the United States.

CONTENTS

1. TEMPORARY TRAVEL DOCUMENT (S/c)
2. ASSESSMENT REPORT
3. MEDICAL REPORT
4. OATH OF SERVICE
5. RECOMMENDATION REPORT
6. SUMMARY REPORT
7. ASSESSMENT NUMBER
8. FORM FIB-731 (LIR) (S/c) AP-117
9. HOLDING AREA REPORT
10. 2 COMPLETE FINGER PRINT SETS
11. EXTRA PHOTOGRAPHS
12. CARRIAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

SECRET