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24 JUL 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : The Narodno-Trudovoy Soyuz (National Labor Alliance), NTS

REFERENCE : Letter From The Committee on Foreign Relations Regarding NTS, dated 10 July 1973

1. Referenced letter signed by Senator J. W. Fulbright asked the Agency to corroborate information which the Committee on Foreign Relations had received concerning an anti-Soviet organization called the Narodno-Trudovoy Soyuz (NTS) and inquired about any connection, financial or otherwise, between the NTS and the Agency. The NTS is a Russian emigre organization which procures, publishes and distributes dissident Soviet literature, in order to stimulate and sustain pressures for liberalization and socio-political change in the Soviet Union. Since its founding, 42 years ago in Belgrade, NTS has become the best known Russian refugee group and the most frequently attacked by the Soviet press.

2. Agency interest in NTS activities began in 1950. Our relationship can be characterized as a liaison association which places the major burden of operational planning, allocation of funds and personnel upon the leaders of the organization. In the period up until 1958 there was a gradual growth of NTS operational activities and of Agency staff personnel commitments in support of these activities. Concurrently, the Agency's financial support increased annually. In 1958, as the result of a reassessment of our relationship, the annual financial support was reduced.

[REDACTED]

A briefing paper is attached for discussing the relationship between the Agency and NTS with Senator Symington.

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3. In view of the implications of Senator Fulbright's query to other 40 Committee projects, we suggest that the 40 Committee (perhaps Dr. Kissinger himself) be informed before answering Senator Fulbright's query. Also, follow-up questions from the Senator might seek to determine by what policy authority the Agency conducts this activity as well as to try to determine if there are other activities in this category. The answers to such questions might then eventually involve the multi-project Special Activities targeted against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe - in which the NTS project is [redacted] - revalidated by the 40 Committee on 18 June 1973. (b)(1)  
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4. It should be noted that Soviet Bloc Division only recently was given responsibility for the NTS project. We intend to take a hard look at the various aspects of NTS activities to assess their value and contribution to the Division's overall effort against the Soviet Bloc target.

[redacted]

Chief  
Soviet Bloc Division

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~~SENSITIVE~~Briefing Paper on CIA/NTS Relationship

1. NSC Approval: National Security Council Directive 40, signed on 17 February 1970 by President Nixon, established an Interagency Committee to conduct an annual review of all USG covert activities directed at the Soviet Union. On 18 June 1973, this Committee, chaired by Mr. Henry Kissinger, approved the continuing, unattributed financial support by CIA of the Narodno-Trudovoy Soyuz (NTS--National Labor Alliance), a Russian emigre organization which procures, publishes and distributes dissident Soviet literature in order to stimulate and sustain pressures for liberalization and socio-political change from within the Soviet Union.

2. CIA Support: CIA has been providing financial support to the NTS since 1951.

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a. Historical View of CIA Relationship: CIA's initial objective was to help the NTS expand its clandestine activities against the Soviet regime and its operations against Soviet occupation forces in Germany and Austria. CIA decided as early as 1957 to reorient its relationship with NTS (and reduce the level of support) by discontinuing attempts at close control and monitoring of NTS activities in favor of a subsidy, giving NTS greater flexibility in allocation of funds and in the assignment of priorities to their activities. This change in the operational relationship coincided with a new direction in the NTS program: encouraging and supporting existing Soviet dissidence aimed at evolutionary change, rather than the overthrow of the Soviet regime.

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b. Current CIA Objectives: CIA's current interest in the NTS is to aid and abet intellectual ferment which could facilitate political liberalization in the Soviet Union. Direct involvement prior to the execution of NTS operations has been intentionally avoided and NTS media are not supervised prior to publication. As a result, NTS is in a position to take sole responsibility for responding to any complaints by a government on whose soil its activities take place. CIA attempts to influence the NTS through operational suggestions and proposals. NTS is fully aware that CIA could terminate its support at any time the NTS committed an act which was seriously counter-productive to the Agency's general strategy against the USSR.

3. NTS History and Activity: The NTS remains, as it has been since it was founded 42 years ago in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, the best-known of all Russian refugee groups and the most frequently attacked by the Soviet press. NTS headquarters and its publication activities are located in Frankfurt and Mainz, West Germany; its members reside world-wide. The dozen or so top NTS leaders are veterans of the organization who exercise tight discipline over its activities. The NTS fosters opposition to the Soviet regime by a variety of means:

a. The NTS has made publicized appeals to high Soviet officials and international organizations; helped in the formation of Western committees to garner support for Soviet intellectual dissenters; stimulated occasional open demonstrations in the USSR; and supplied materials to internal dissenters designed to strengthen their position. Many emigres who have left the USSR have praised the propaganda messages contained in NTS books and journals. Much of the material in these publications is samizdat (political, economic, social writings produced and distributed by individuals in the Soviet Union without the permission of the authorities). NTS propaganda also includes news items and political commentary which are not found in the Soviet press.

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c. The NTS publishing house, Possev-Verlag, Frankfurt, produces two journals; Posev, a monthly devoted mainly to commentary on developments in the USSR, and Grani, a literary quarterly. About 15 books per year are also published. Soviet writers who are seeking foreign outlets for the publication of their work are displaying an increasing willingness to deal on a discreet basis with representatives of NTS publications. Samizdat now constitutes a major source of material in all NTS publications. Members of the new wave of emigrants, who have praised NTS for the work it is doing, have also started to contribute to Posev.

d. A secondary activity of the publishing house is a press service which maintains contact with a group of journalists and also sends out press releases. In 1971, this service placed articles or provided the materials for articles in more than 50 outlets located in 13 countries. Among these outlets were the London Times, London Daily Telegraph, Le Figaro (Paris), and the Neue Zuercher Zeitung. NTS publications are frequently cited in serious academic and governmental studies on the USSR.

4. Charges of Nazi Collaboration: The Soviet press has frequently charged the NTS with collaboration with the Nazis against the Soviet Union during World War II. There is no doubt some NTS members worked for the Germans as a means of combating the Soviet regime; however, in July 1944, 100 officers of the NTS were arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo on charges of underground publishing activity, conducting covert border crossings, obtaining revenue illegally and clandestine collection of materials and information.

5. Summary: The NTS is a useful operational vehicle for exfiltrating samizdat written by Soviet dissident authors. In addition, it plays an important role by publishing these pieces in regular NTS journals and NTS-produced books; and, finally by infiltrating the product into the USSR. These undertakings help to sustain and strengthen the morale of

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the dissidents in the face of increasing KGB pressure and serve to make their ideas more available to liberal elements within the USSR. The publications have had a marked and wholesome effect on the Soviet officials abroad, as well.

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