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THE ROLE OF REFUGEES FROM COMMUNISM IN U.S. COLD WAR POLICY: INFORMATION, INTELLIGENCE, AND MILITARY DIMENSIONS (1947 – 1952)

Abstract. The purpose of the research *consists in exploring how refugees from communist regimes came to play a role in the U.S. information, intelligence, and military policy during the early stages of the Cold War (1947 – 1952). The study aims at revealing the mechanisms and motives behind the American instrumentalization of displaced people from Eastern Europe in the context of strategic confrontation with the Soviet Union.* ***The research methodology*** *is based on the principles of a concrete historical approach – historicism, objectivity, comprehensiveness, integrity, and systematicity – as well as on the methods of analysis and synthesis, historical and comparative, and problem-chronological methods.* ***The scientific novelty*** *consists in a comprehensive reinterpretation of the Cold War refugee policy as a multidimensional instrument of the U.S. foreign strategy. It identifies three key functions performed by refugee communities: intelligence resource, propaganda amplifier, and potential military asset. The study reconstructs the formation of refugee-based media institutions such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty, analyzes the emergence of émigré military units, and evaluates Truman-era legislation such as the Mutual Security Act and the United States Escapee Program (USEP). Particular focus is on anti-Soviet political mobilization among ethnic minorities and their role in shaping the U.S. narratives on the global stage.* ***Conclusions.*** *The Cold War converted displaced people into strategic leverage within U.S. policy, shaping how the West responded to Soviet expansionism. Refugees became not merely recipients of humanitarian aid but active agents in intelligence gathering, psychological operations, and public diplomacy. U.S. governmental institutions, in cooperation with émigré organizations, systematically utilized refugees’ background knowledge, ideological stance, and transnational networks to construct a counter-narrative to communist propaganda. The long-term consequences of these practices included the institutionalization of refugee participation in Western security and media architectures, the moral justification of U.S. containment policies, and the consolidation of ideological fault lines within divided Europe. By documenting this transformation, the article contributes to a more nuanced understanding of early Cold War politics and the intersection of migration, security, and ideology in U.S. global engagement.*

Key words: *refugees from communism, Cold War, United States foreign policy, Voice of America, intelligence operations, displaced persons, anti-Soviet propaganda.*

РОЛЬ БІЖЕНЦІВ ВІД КОМУНІЗМУ В ПОЛІТИЦІ США ЧАСІВ ХОЛОДНОЇ ВІЙНИ: ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИЙ, РОЗВІДУВАЛЬНИЙ ТА ВІЙСЬКОВИЙ ВИМІРИ (1947 – 1952)

Анотація. Мета дослідження. *У статті досліджено, яку роль відігравали "біженці від комунізму" у реалізації інформаційної, розвідувальної та військової політики США на ранньому етапі холодної війни (1947 – 1952 рр.). Метою роботи є виявлення механізмів і мотивів американської політики використання переміщених осіб зі Східної Європи в контексті стратегічного протистояння із Радянським Союзом.* ***Методологія дослідження.*** *Методологічну основу становлять принципи конкретно-історичного підходу – історизм, об'єктивність, комплексність, цілісність і системність, а також методи аналізу й синтезу, історико-порівняльний і проблемно-хронологічний підходи.*

Наукова новизна. *У дослідженні запропоновано комплексну інтерпретацію політики США щодо біженців у період холодної війни як багатовимірного інструменту зовнішньополітичної стратегії. Виокремлено три ключові функції, які виконували емігрантські групи: джерело розвідувальної інформації, підсилювач пропаганди та потенційний військовий ресурс. У статті реконструйовано процес створення медіаінституцій, що базувалися на участі біженців, зокрема "Голос Америки" (Voice of America), "Радіо Вільна Європа" (Radio Free Europe) та "Радіо Свобода" (Radio Liberty), проаналізовано виникнення емігрантських військових підрозділів, а також розглянуто законодавчі ініціативи адміністрації Трумена, зокрема Закон про взаємну безпеку та Програму допомоги втікачам (USEP). Особливу увагу приділено антирадянській політичній мобілізації національних меншин і її впливу на формування американських наративів у глобальному дискурсі.*

Висновки. *Холодна війна перетворила переміщених осіб на інструмент стратегічного впливу в американській політиці, визначаючи реакцію Заходу на радянську експансію. Біженці виступали не лише як об'єкти гуманітарної допомоги, але і як активні учасники розвідувальної діяльності, психологічних операцій та публічної дипломатії. Американські урядові структури у співпраці з емігрантськими організаціями системно залучали біженців, використовуючи їхню обізнаність, ідеологічну налаштованість та транснаціональні зв'язки для конструювання контрнаративу проти комуністичної пропаганди. Довгостроковими наслідками цього процесу стали інституціоналізація участі біженців у безпековій і медійній архітектурі Заходу, моральне виправдання політики стримування СРСР та формування стійких ідеологічних розломів у післявоєнній Європі. З'ясування цих факторів, уможливлює глибше зрозуміти ранній етап холодної війни, зокрем,а в перетині міграції, безпеки та ідеології у глобальній політиці США.*

Ключові слова: *біженці від комунізму, холодна війна, зовнішня політика США, Голос Америки, розвідувальні операції, переміщені особи, антирадянська пропаганда.*

Problem Statement. The early stages of the Cold War coincided with the transformation of refugees from Eastern Europe into valuable political, ideological, and strategic assets for the United States. As communist regimes consolidated across the region, thousands of displaced people – often with experience in military, academic, or governmental fields – found themselves in the American zone of postwar Europe. This population, initially recepted as a humanitarian burden, quickly assumed a new role within the emerging U.S. strategy of containment. Yet, in much of the historiography, the role of these refugees as active participants in intelligence operations, psychological warfare, and military planning has received a limited systematic research focus. The problem consists in the insufficient scholarly focus on how émigrés were not merely resettled but purposefully mobilized by American institutions as instruments in the confrontation with the Soviet bloc.

Review of Recent Research and Publications. In recent studies there has been done the analysis of the U.S. refugee policy during the early Cold War through the lens of ideological conflict, strategic planning, and public diplomacy. Carafano (1999) did the

research on American efforts to integrate stateless Europeans into military units, highlighting the securitization of refugee flows. Bethell (2016), Cull (2008), and Zawodny (1986) analyzed the role of émigré broadcasters in the development of Radio Free Europe and other instruments of psychological warfare. Kodin (2003, 2013) and Dubnitskii (2014), using data from the Harvard Refugee Interview Project, elucidated how refugee testimony contributed to U.S. Sovietology and intelligence analysis.

Recent historiographical studies by Ballinger (2025), Banerjee and Lingen (2025), and Nilsson (2023, 2024) reassess the role of refugees in the Cold War as political actors embedded in systems of surveillance, propaganda, and postwar reconstruction. These studies emphasize the agency of displaced people and their participation in shaping Western responses to the Soviet expansionism. A broader theoretical grounding for these perspectives is provided by Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo (1989).

This article also draws on earlier studies by Yushkevych (2024, 2025), which analyzed U.S. responses to the Soviet repatriation missions and illegal Jewish migration from Poland. These works contribute a diplomatic and institutional context to the present study and serve as a conceptual foundation for understanding the operational role of refugees in the American Cold War strategy.

The purpose of the research consists in exploring how refugees from communist regimes came to play a role in the U.S. information, intelligence, and military policy during the early stages of the Cold War (1947 – 1952). The study aims at revealing the mechanisms and motives behind the American instrumentalization of displaced people from Eastern Europe in the context of strategic confrontation with the Soviet Union. It analyzes the formation of refugee-run media initiatives (such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty), émigré military efforts, and legislative frameworks like the Mutual Security Act and the United States Escapee Program (USEP). By tracing these developments, the article seeks to demonstrate that refugees became not only symbols of anti-communist resistance, but also functional actors within the broader framework of the U.S.-Soviet geopolitical confrontation.

Research Results. At the outset of the Cold War, the U.S. military and political leadership found itself insufficiently prepared for a global confrontation with the Soviet Union, largely due to a lack of detailed knowledge about its adversary. As of 1948, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employed only 38 Soviet experts (Sovietologists), most of whom had never visited the USSR. Among them, only twelve could speak Russian, and just one held an academic degree. To address this gap, the U.S. authorities began to recruit refugees and defectors – especially those with academic, technical, or military backgrounds – for participation in various projects. These engagements ranged from full-time positions in research institutions to short-term consultations and lectures on diverse aspects of the Soviet life, including governance, society, the armed forces, economy, industry, science, education, and culture.

One of the first structured initiatives was launched on 22 May 1947 with the establishment of "Team R" at the European Command Intelligence School (ECAI) in Oberammergau, Germany. This unit was tasked with providing linguistic and area studies training on the USSR to staff officers and military attaché personnel. The four-year program included coursework at Columbia University and was led by the U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Hoffman. Teaching staff were recruited among displaced people (DPs) from the Soviet Union residing in Bavarian refugee camps, as well as émigrés from Eastern Europe. Among them there was Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, who conducted lectures on the Russian political

history of the 19th and 20th centuries, the structure and ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Soviet communist doctrine. Over time, this initiative evolved into the U.S. Army Russian Institute in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Additional intelligence-related efforts were launched by individuals such as Arnold Margolin, a prominent figure in the Ukrainian revolutionary movement and head of an officer intelligence school within the U.S. European Command. Margolin submitted a memorandum to the State Department analyzing the ideological leanings of Ukrainian and Russian DPs residing in the American occupation zone in Germany. He categorized the Ukrainians by regional origin – Great Ukraine (under Russian rule), Eastern Galicia, Bukovyna, and Carpathian Ukraine – and observed that roughly half leaned toward democratic ideas, one-third supported Stepan Bandera, and approximately 15% followed Andriy Melnyk. Notably, many émigrés from Soviet Ukraine expressed strong sympathies for the Hetmanate movement (National Archives and Records Administration NARA, National Archives at College Park NACP RG 59, M 1284, R. 70, imgs. 106–107).

Given the nascent state of the U.S. foreign intelligence, refugees from communism served as an invaluable source of firsthand information about life in the Soviet Union and the so-called "people's democracies". To fill the informational void regarding the everyday realities and internal decision-making processes of the USSR, American agencies also employed sociologists. A notable result of these efforts was the Harvard Refugee Interview Project (1948 – 1951) (Kodin, 2003, p. 85), which surveyed 12,500 individuals across 67 DP camps. One of the project's key findings was that rejection of the Soviet regime among displaced people was not significantly correlated with ethnic background, professional qualifications, social status, or specific experiences under Soviet rule (Dubnitskii, 2014, p. 93).

It can be stated with confidence that the Cold War played a pivotal role in shaping American Sovietology. In 1946, with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Russian Institute was established at Columbia University. That same year, a similar program was launched at Stanford University, and in 1948, the Russian Research Center opened at Harvard University. In March 1948, John Davis authored a memorandum outlining the strategic use of refugees in the national interest of the United States, emphasizing the need to gather information to fill gaps in intelligence and in political-psychological operations (O'Conell, 1990, p. 200). Earlier, in July 1947, John Gardner, a senior official at the Carnegie Foundation, had submitted a report advocating for the systematic collection of open-source intelligence to better understand the functioning of the Soviet system. One of his key recommendations was the implementation of an extensive refugee interview program.

In 1948, George Fischer, a scholar affiliated with Harvard University, initiated a sociological study of postwar migrants from the Soviet Union. His objectives closely aligned with the prevailing political climate in the United States. Fischer proposed a mass survey aimed at exploring the structure of the Soviet army and the influence of military commanders and political officers, as well as assessing life in Soviet cities and the moral condition of Soviet society in the aftermath of World War II.

Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Air Force Intelligence showed strong interest in this project. Under a contract signed on 23 June 1950 between Harvard University and the U.S. government, totaling $160,000, fieldwork was conducted in displaced persons camps across Germany between 1950 and 1952 – at a time when many such camps were on the verge of closure. One of the project's subcontractors was the Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR, founded on 8 July

1950 in Munich with funding from the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia and U.S. intelligence services. Scholars and specialists of the Soviet origin were actively involved in the project, including Kostiantyn Shtepa, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov (alias Aleksandr Kunta), and Oleksandr Neryanin (alias Mykhailo Aldan). Institutional support was provided by Leo Fischer, a representative of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Germany and Austria.

In addition to participating in the Harvard Project, members of the institute pursued broader research on the theory and practice of the Soviet state and society. Their investigations encompassed historical, cultural, social, economic, national, and political issues of the Soviet peoples. They also sought to maintain academic contacts with German and international scholars and to foster mutual understanding between anti-communist émigrés from the USSR and the democratic world (Kodin, Troitskii, 2013, p. 157).

In September 1950, a team of 25 project members led by Raymond Bauer arrived in Munich. Eight additional employees from the Munich Institute also joined the effort. By May 1951, the interviews had been completed and data processing had begun. The results of the Harvard Refugee Interview Project included the publication of four monographs, thirty-five scholarly articles, and fifty-three reports (Kodin, 2003, p. 94).

In retrospect, George Fischer reassessed the underlying goals of the project. He came to believe that the U.S. government's true interest lay in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system, pinpointing topics that could capture public attention for propaganda purposes, and collecting intelligence that would help determine potential targets for strategic bombing in the event of war with the USSR (Fisher, 1997, p. 202).

The scholarly culmination of these efforts was George Fischer's doctoral dissertation, defended in 1952, which focused on opposition to Stalin within the Soviet Union during World War II (Fischer, 1952, p. 230). As a result of the sociologists' fieldwork, beyond the expected findings concerning the pervasiveness of ideology and citizen compliance, a significant rift between society and the Soviet regime was revealed – characterized by a psychological division of "us versus them." This alienation was exacerbated by low living standards, invasive state interference in private life, and widespread political repression. The regime's stability, according to the research, rested primarily on the absence of viable alternatives, combined with public apathy and passive adaptation. Another identified factor behind the endurance of the Soviet system was its capacity to "absorb" dissent through a combination of information control and repressive enforcement. The researchers concluded that the population had largely reconciled itself to its condition, and that the prospects for any armed resistance to the regime were highly unlikely.

In parallel with these research and intelligence initiatives, the United States increasingly turned to refugees from communism in the development of its foreign broadcasting system. On 27 January 1948, President Harry Truman signed Public Law 80-402, known as the Smith-Mundt Act. This legislation redefined U.S. efforts to promote its image abroad, particularly behind the Iron Curtain, and explicitly aimed to counter communist propaganda. The expansion of American public diplomacy under this act envisioned the involvement of refugees from the Eastern Bloc as key participants.

For a time, restrictions were imposed on including refugee narratives in Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts. On 16 July 1948, Secretary of State George C. Marshall sent a directive to the heads of seven U.S. diplomatic missions in Eastern Europe, instructing them not to feature defectors on air. He argued that doing so might anger those who had remained in their

home countries and foster resentment toward political émigrés (Churchill, 1974, p. 425). At the same time, the State Department encouraged embassies to recommend suitable refugees for propaganda purposes. U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Walter Bedell Smith initially opposed broadcasting the voices of Soviet refugees, asserting that after the death of Leon Trotsky, no prominent opposition leaders remained among the Soviet émigré community (Churchill, 1974, p. 426). However, he would later reconsider this position.

On 12 August 1948, VOA aired a segment on Oksana Kasenkina, which, according to intelligence sources, received highly favorable reactions from listeners behind the Iron Curtain. Just over a month later, on 9 October 1948, two Soviet Air Force lieutenants, Anatoly Barsov and Petro Pyrohiv, landed their aircraft in the American occupation zone near Linz, Austria. They cited a VOA broadcast about life in the state of Virginia as a key influence in their decision to defect (Barrett, 1953, pp. 116–117). This incident helped shift State Department policy: officials increasingly embraced storytelling focused on the American way of life and the integration of refugees into the Western world.

On 1 September 1948, following a directive from the U.S. National Security Council, the Office of Special Projects (OSP) was established under the authority of the CIA, working closely with the State Department. The OSP was tasked with propaganda, economic subversion, and preventive measures such as sabotage, psychological warfare, and support for resistance movements. The first head of the office, Frank Wisner, advocated for expanding radio broadcasting by increasing funding and actively involving refugee organizations (Cull, 2008, p. 42).

After the Soviet Union and its allies implemented efforts to jam VOA broadcasts during the spring and summer of 1949, the State Department reassessed its information policy. On 21 June 1949, Acting Secretary of State James Webb issued an informal directive calling for the engagement of refugees as on-air commentators for programming aimed at Eastern Bloc countries (Slany, 1976, p. 289). These broadcasts featured refugees who exposed the realities of Stalinist terror, including the horrors of the Leningrad blockade, the operations of the NKVD and SMERSH, the risk of deportation to Siberia upon repatriation, renewed waves of repression under the guise of "anti-cosmopolitan" campaigns, and the falsehoods propagated by the Soviet press regarding Western life (Matthews, 1950, p. 5).

The first such media center was the Voice of America (VOA) radio station, originally established in 1942 under the authority of the U.S. Department of State. In 1947, based on a proposal by former U.S. Ambassador to the USSR William Averell Harriman, VOA began broadcasting in Russian to audiences in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries. Alexander Barmine, a former Soviet diplomat and intelligence officer, was recruited to help build the Russian-language service. The restructuring of the station's programming was prompted by the need to conduct counter-propaganda in response to Soviet attempts to discredit American leaders (Whitton, 1951, p. 151). The U.S. strategists expected that the USSR would be unable to effectively counter such actions – its own broadcasting efforts toward the United States being weak – and that any repressive responses (such as radio jamming or confiscating receivers) would only underscore Soviet weakness and inadvertently boost VOA's popularity.

Gradually, the Voice of America became a key instrument of American information policy. As a result, VOA began broadcasting in Ukrainian in 1949, followed by Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani in 1951.

According to István Deák, the most significant decision made by the U.S. authorities in supporting Eastern European political émigrés was the establishment of the Free Europe

Committee in New York on 1 June 1949. Its primary project was to launch non-governmental radio broadcasting to the countries of the Eastern Bloc, free from bureaucratic constraints. With the support of General Dwight D. Eisenhower and General Lucius D. Clay – commanders of the U.S. occupation forces in Europe – Radio Free Europe began transmissions from the Federal Republic of Germany on 4 July 1950. The broadcast studio was located in Munich, with a relay station in Lampertheim. Radio Free Europe targeted Soviet satellite countries and broadcast in Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, and Polish.

Political refugees were actively recruited for work in national editorial offices. For instance, the Hungarian service, launched in Munich in October 1951, included an exiled writer Gyula Borbándi; Margit Slachta, the first woman elected to Hungary's parliament, who had taken refuge in a Dominican monastery and fled the country in 1949; and a novelist and journalist Sándor Márai (Deák, 2002, p. 330). The Polish service, established in December 1951, was headed by Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, a veteran of the Warsaw Uprising (Zawodny, 1986, p. 317). The Romanian service was led by Mihai Fărcășanu, who had been sentenced to death in absentia by the Romanian communist regime and who had founded the Council of Romanian Democratic Parties in New York in 1948. Several defectors worked for multiple radio stations at once – for example, political émigré Ion Rațiu was employed by both the BBC and Radio Free Europe's Romanian sections, while former Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister Jaroslav Stránský collaborated with the Czechoslovak editorial teams at both stations.

For broadcasting specifically to the Soviet Union, the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia established Radio Liberty in 1951. The station operated continuously, with the Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Georgian, North Caucasian, Tatar-Bashkir, and Turkestan language services (Qualter, 1962, p. 130). It was funded by the U.S. Congress. Political refugees from the USSR and the Eastern Bloc were also employed at the station. For example, the North Caucasian section was organized by Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, a former displaced person of Chechen origin.

When the USSR began jamming VOA signals, the U.S. Department of State commissioned American scholars in October 1950 to study the realities of psychological warfare and recommend new methods of propaganda. The result was Project Troy, a three-month collaboration involving 21 scientists – including historians, physicists, and psychologists – from Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the RAND Corporation. On 1 February 1951, project leader Lloyd Berkner submitted a final report to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, outlining various aspects of psychological warfare. Among the recommendations were the use of balloons to transmit radio signals over long distances and intensified engagement with defectors, whose numbers were estimated at approximately 1,500 per year (Needell, 1993, p. 419).

The State Department endorsed these recommendations and advised the Policy Planning Staff to use refugees in forecasting future developments in the USSR (Keane, 2007, p. 120). In response, President Truman created the Psychological Strategy Board on 4 April 1951.

With the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. Department of Defense approved the mobilization of 100,000 Americans. Official discussions began about forming volunteer units within the U.S. Army composed of Eastern European political émigrés, prompting numerous proposals and appeals.

Earlier, the idea of creating a "refugee army" had been voiced by Abo Fatalibey Dudanginski, head of the Azerbaijani Liberation Committee, during a conversation with U.S. Embassy officials in Cairo. A former major in the Red Army and active participant in

the German-backed Azerbaijani Legion, Dudanginski was residing in Egypt as the guest of the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husseini. As a representative of Muslim refugees from the USSR, he advocated for the creation of a unified organization for stateless persons and exiles from Soviet territories, arguing that the organizational disunity of émigrés "benefited Stalin." He proposed founding the "Union for the Liberation of Peoples Enslaved by Bolshevism," to be inaugurated at a Refugee Congress organized by the Western powers in line with the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

According to Dudanginski's plan, the Union would act as a counterbalance to Cominform and would include several structural divisions: a Department of Propaganda, a Department of Information, and a Liberation Army. He believed that refugees could become the most effective anti-Soviet propagandists for radio operations behind the Iron Curtain (NARA NACP, RG 59, M 1284, R. 70, imgs. 111–112). The political foundation of this movement, he argued, should be the principle of national self-determination. Dudanginski also condemned the actions of Alexander Kerensky, who, based on ideas of an "indivisible Russia," had attempted to create a refugee organization in the United States. He criticized the State Department's support for Kerensky, arguing that many refugees were ready to fight the USSR, provided the West guaranteed independence for non-Russian peoples – Ukrainians, Balts, Caucasians, and Tatars.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, General Władysław Anders arrived in the United States and proposed creating the Polish or broader East European exile army. His idea was supported by Republican Congressman Orland Armstrong from Missouri (Wandycz, 2002, p. 321). Meanwhile, on 4 July 1950, a group of Baltic refugees in Copenhagen petitioned the U.S. embassy, requesting to enlist as volunteers to fight communism in Korea (Baltic Refugees Seek to Join Korea Fighting, 1950, p. 1). Embassy officials replied that they had not yet received clear instructions on the matter.

In response to the war in Korea and the growing threat of renewed conflict in Europe (especially in Germany and Austria), Theodor Daniliw, Secretary-General of the Ukrainian American Displaced Persons Committee (ZUADK), appealed to the U.S. Ambassador in London. He requested assistance in relocating remaining Ukrainian DPs to Australia and South America (NARA NACP, Letter Sep. 27, 1950, RG 59, S. IRO and DPC, I. DPC, B. 1.).

The idea of forming military units composed of refugees and displaced people from Eastern Europe was also discussed during a meeting between Robert McClintock, First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Belgium, and Count Mihály Andrássy, a prominent figure in the Hungarian émigré community. Andrássy proposed assembling a 100,000-strong force drawn from nationals of countries behind the Iron Curtain. He estimated that of the 6,000 Hungarian refugees then residing in Belgium, approximately 2,000 would be suitable for military service (NARA NACP, Letter Jan. 17, 1951, RG. 59, S. IRO and DPC, I. DPC, B. 1). He suggested appointing General András Szákó – who maintained contact with the local leader of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), Mulkiewicz – as commander of the proposed force. This initiative likely reflected the growing momentum behind France's proposal for a European Defense Community and the anticipated defense conference scheduled to take place in Paris in early 1951.

Soon thereafter, American diplomats were approached by representatives of the Russian Anti-Communist Special Group and the Group of Russian Anti-Communists, both based in the British occupation zone in Klagenfurt. These organizations represented the interests of some 700 former soldiers of Colonel Rogozhin's Russian Protective Corps (a White émigré

military unit formed in Yugoslavia) and segments of the Russian Liberation Army (ROA), who had surrendered in 1945. Leaders of the Russian émigré movement requested that former "Vlasovites" and "Rogozhinites" be incorporated into the U.S. Army, with those unfit for combat assigned to propaganda units (NARA NACP, Letter May 28, 1951, RG 59, S. IRO and DPC, I. DPC, B. 1). The Soviet propaganda quickly exploited these appeals to circulate familiar ideological tropes, accusing the Western powers of arming Waffen-SS veterans and "former Nazi collaborators".

Given the leadership role of the United States in the Korean conflict, the exiled leaders of the Carpatho-Rusyn Council, Vasyl Decha and Hryhoriy Korytko, appealed to the U.S. on 10 August 1950. They requested that 2,000 Rusyns housed in a displaced persons camp in Ludwigsburg, Germany, not be repatriated. Furthermore, the émigré leaders sought official recognition of their organization as a government-in-exile. In return for being welcomed into "the family of democratic nations," they pledged to join the fight against communism in Korea (NARA NACP, Letter Sep. 19, 1950, RG 59, S. IRO and DPC, I. DPC, B. 1).

Later, on 31 October 1951, Jan Papánek, a representative of the American Relief Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, wrote to U.S. High Commissioner for Germany John McCloy. In the context of what he described as a "clash between Western democracies and Moscow's communist imperialism," Papánek called for increased attention to the plight of Czechoslovak refugees, many of whom had fled after being inspired by Radio Free Europe broadcasts. A former diplomat, Papánek urged the U.S. to develop employment programs for young refugees and even proposed the formation of military units, as many of these individuals were eager to serve in uniform (NARA NACP, Memo Oct. 31, 1951, RG 59, S. IRO and DPC, I. DPC, B. 1).

Notably, on 16 October 1951, Philip Ryan, head of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) mission in the American occupation zone of Germany, proposed utilizing non-German refugees from Eastern Europe in military roles under NATO authority (NARA NACP, Proposal Oct. 16, 1951, RG 59, S. IRO and DPC, I. DPC, B. 1). Citing migration statistics – approximately 650 individuals entering the American zone monthly, out of 1,500-2,000 across Europe – he warned that after the IRO ceased operations, these individuals might be imprisoned for illegal border crossings rather than granted political asylum. In his assessment, the three main drivers of this wave of escapees were the success of the Marshall Plan, broadcasts from Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, and the creation of NATO. Consequently, Ryan proposed the establishment of national military units under NATO command and advocated recruiting family members of potential servicemen for support roles, such as medical staff or language specialists with regional expertise.

These proposals may have had some practical influence. On 20 January 1949, Ghemeto Dimitrov established the Bulgarian National Committee "Free and Independent Bulgaria" in the United States. In early 1951, he responded favourably to the U.S. initiative to establish a military unit composed of Bulgarian political émigrés. After a three-week recruitment campaign in refugee and displaced persons camps in France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Trieste, representatives of the BNC, in cooperation with American recruiters, succeeded in selecting 200 candidates for enlistment (Bulgaria for NATO, vol. 3, p. 375).

The Bulgarian National Volunteer Company No. 4093 was established by Order No. 53 of the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Forces in Western Germany on 20 October 1951. The unit was subordinated to the U.S. Seventh Army and stationed in the town of Zeilsheim, near Frankfurt am Main. Lieutenant Stefan Boidev was appointed as the company's first commander. Non-

commissioned officer positions in the four platoons were filled by military personnel who had fled communist Bulgaria. This unit represented the first Bulgarian military formation within NATO, long before Bulgaria's formal accession to the Alliance.

The U.S. intelligence agencies also sought to use refugees in covert operations. Political émigrés played a central role in strategic plans for regime change in Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania. The most ambitious of these projects was Operation "Valuable Fiend," the CIA's first paramilitary operation, conducted jointly with British intelligence. The mission's objective was to organize an uprising in Albania – the least developed of the Eastern Bloc states (Lulushi, 2014, p. 12). In March 1949, intelligence officers from both nations convened in Washington, D.C., to discuss operational details. Although CIA analysts soon concluded that toppling Enver Hoxha's 85,000-strong armed forces was unlikely, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson endorsed British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's proposal to prepare for an "Albanian counter-revolution," especially amid reports that the USSR planned to construct a naval base near the port of Vlora.

The plan involved parachuting trained agents into central Albania, where royalist sentiment remained strong. Organizers anticipated that this would spark a broader popular revolt leading to civil war and the eventual overthrow of Hoxha's regime. To provide political cover, the National Committee for a Free Albania was formed in Paris on 7 July 1949. The committee served as a coordinating body for monarchist and republican elements of the Albanian diaspora. On 19 September 1949, during a special meeting at the U.S. State Department's Office of Southern European Affairs, the committee's first chairman, Mid'hat Frashëri, authorized the organization's headquarters to be established in New York (Slany, 1976, p. 318). CIA recruiters scouted Albanian refugees with military experience in camps across Italy, Greece, and Turkey (Noble, 2008, p. 58). The British trained some agents at Fort Binemma in Malta, while the Americans used a military base in Hohenbrunn, Germany ("Company 4000"). Royalist leader Abaz Kupi participated as an interpreter in the project.

Despite the infiltration of several teams between 1950 and 1952, all attempts to initiate an armed uprising in Albania ultimately failed, largely due to intelligence leaks via the British (Bethel, 2016, p. 64). Had the project succeeded, similar refugee-based subversive actions might have been launched in other Eastern Bloc countries. Parallel projects, including QKSTAIR-BGCONVOY (Bulgaria, April 1950) and QKBROIL (Romania, August 1951), remained in the planning stage and were never implemented.

On 8 December 1949, the U.S. National Security Council submitted recommendations to President Truman regarding American policy toward the Soviet Union's Eastern European satellite states, specifically Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Recommendation No. 43 called for the long-term establishment of non-totalitarian regimes in the region (Slany, 1976, pp. 53-54). Tactically, the aim was to encourage divisions within the communist world and promote "heretical communism" to destabilize ruling parties from within. Experts acknowledged that replacing pro-Soviet regimes with more Western-tolerant authoritarian governments would require political guarantees to potential national leaders. As such, it was recommended that the U.S. provide political asylum, increase financial assistance, and prepare a pool of trained political émigrés in the West.

In the early 1950s, the intensifying U.S.-Soviet rivalry elevated the importance of national security considerations, which were also leveraged to facilitate the admission of migrants into the United States. On 30 June 1950, Congress passed the Lodge–Philbin Act, authorizing the enlistment of 2,500 foreign nationals into the U.S. Armed Forces, with eligibility for U.S.

citizenship after five years of service. The program targeted individuals from Eastern Bloc countries and excluded citizens of NATO member states, the Federal Republic of Germany, and nations participating in the Marshall Plan (Carafano, 1991, pp. 65–66). Within a year, the first group of volunteers was sworn in as part of the 7720th Replacement Depot in Sonthofen, Germany.

The Korean crisis underscored the risk of direct military conflict with the USSR, prompting the U.S. government to increase funding for anti-Soviet initiatives. On 24 May 1951, President Truman addressed Congress to propose a large-scale foreign aid program to prevent the spread of communism in economically vulnerable countries. On 14 August 1951, Representative James "Dick" Richards of South Carolina introduced bill HR 5113. The House passed it on 18 August (238 votes in favor, 122 against), followed by Senate approval on 22 September (55 in favor, 24 against). The Mutual Security Act, signed by Truman on 10 October 1951, established the Mutual Security Agency, replacing the Economic Cooperation Administration. Section 1, Article 101 of the Act allocated up to $100 million to support persons residing in, or fleeing from, the USSR or other communist-controlled countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia), as well as Soviet-occupied zones in Germany and Austria.

This provision drew sharp criticism from the USSR. On 10 January 1952, the Soviet delegation to the United Nations denounced it as an act of interference in Soviet internal affairs and a provocation intended to fuel anti-communist sentiment. The Americans were accused of violating the Roosevelt-Litvinov agreements of 1933 (Report by POTUS, 1952, p. 57). In response, Congressman Michael Mansfield accused the USSR of subversive activities worldwide and defended the law as a guarantee of rights for political refugees.

In the final year of his presidency, Truman introduced several initiatives aimed at assisting "Cold War refugees". On 24 March 1952, he launched the United States Escapee Program (USEP), set to begin in April 1952 (Truman, 1966, pp. 209–215). The program aimed to resettle 10,000 individuals who had fled the Eastern Bloc after 1 January 1948 and were still living in camps across Germany. Eligibility extended to ethnic Germans and Eastern European expellees (Volksdeutsche), ethnic Turks from Bulgaria, Greek Romanians, and Yugoslav nationals. The program was administered by the State Department and the Office of Refugee Affairs. At the time of its launch, an estimated 250,000 escapees were residing in over 200 camps in the Western zones of Austria and Germany (Stoessinger, 1956, pp. 176–177).

Earlier, the issue of "refugees from communist pressure" had been raised at the Brussels Conference of 1951, where the U.S. representatives advocated for their classification as a distinct group within the framework of the International Migration Plan. Countries willing to accept such individuals on a transit basis were to receive specific benefits as "first asylum states" (O'Connor, 1952, p. 402). The draft Mutual Security Act included a provision for allocating ten million U.S. dollars to finance International Refugee Organization (IRO) operations. Utilizing Article 101 of the 1951 Mutual Security Act, $4.3 million was earmarked specifically for the United States Escapee Program (USEP). This initiative was fully supported by W. Averell Harriman, Director of the Mutual Security Agency, who viewed U.S. assistance to NATO allies in alleviating demographic pressure and structural unemployment as a peaceful effort to promote political and economic stability.

The plight of refugees from the Eastern Bloc drew considerable attention from the American public. Their most vocal advocate was the International Rescue Committee (IRC), officially registered with the U.S. State Department. The committee included such prominent

figures as Richard Byrd, Sumner Welles, Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Taft, and other American politicians and public figures (NARA NACP, Letter Jul. 19, 1949, RG 59, M. 1284, R. 70). In 1949, the IRC launched a campaign to support refugees from behind the Iron Curtain, raising funds and distributing CARE packages with essential supplies.

On 3 November 1950, retired U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff General Carl Spaatz appealed to the American people to raise one million dollars for "refugees from the Iron Curtain" (Million to Finance 'Iron Curtain Refugee' Aid Urged by Spaatz, 1950, p. 25). The funds were managed by IRC Director David Martin. According to General Spaatz, the U.S. military lacked the resources to assist these individuals, but aiding "Cold War refugees" served not only humanitarian goals but also contributed to national security. He also revealed that the IRC had enlisted the assistance of an unnamed Soviet defector – an expert in physics who was subsequently involved in the American nuclear program.

Conclusions. In the early Cold War years, refugees from communism became important contributors to the U.S. foreign and security policy. Beyond their humanitarian status, they served as sources of intelligence, participants in psychological operations, and communicators of American ideals. Their knowledge and ideological stance helped U.S. institutions counter Soviet influence both at home and abroad.

Government agencies, in cooperation with émigré organizations and academic centres, developed programs such as the Harvard Refugee Interview Project and Radio Free Europe. These initiatives institutionalized the role of refugees in gathering information and promoting democratic narratives.

Policy-makers also considered military uses of refugee manpower, leading to efforts like the creation of the Bulgarian National Volunteer Company and proposals for exile armies. Legislation such as the Mutual Security Act and the USEP reflected an integrated approach to aid and strategy.

The U.S. experience with "refugees from communism" illustrates the intersection of humanitarian policy and national interest during the Cold War. It highlights how migration became a tool of soft power and strategic communication in the broader geopolitical confrontation with the Soviet bloc.

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