

AIR

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Chief, BOB

16 April 1951

Chief of Station, Karlsruhe

REDBIRD/ Operational

CAUTERY/Johann DOBSE

REFERENCE: NCMA-8487

born
6 Jan. 1895 in Kuptsa, USSR

The translation of Johann DOBSE's curriculum vitae, requested in the reference, is herewith transmitted.

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I was born on 6/1/95 in the village of Kuptsa (Купца) near the city of Mogiliev where we owned a house. I attended public school in Mogiliev and then entered the Kiev Commercial Gymnasium (Киевская Коммерческая Гимназия) from which I graduated in 1913. When the war broke out in 1914, my parents moved to Riga in the Pre-Baltic Krai, while I entered the Kiev Officer's School from which I graduated in 1915. In the fall I was assigned to a reserve cavalry regiment on the south-western front. In 1916 I was wounded near the city of Galatz¹ (Галац) Rumania, and was taken as a prisoner to Turkey. I was released in 1918 and started home. When I arrived in the city of Jassy² (Яссы) Rumania, I met some Russian officers who told me that the cruiser Almas was in Odessa and that the Cheka were on board shooting every Russian officer who came along. They also told me that my parents had been killed by the Bolsheviks and their estate destroyed, so that there was no longer any reason for me to go to Russia. I entered the White Guards' (Бело-Гвардейский) Army and fought against the Bolsheviks until peace was concluded between the Bolsheviks and Poland in 1920. I was interned in Poland in the city of Kalitza (Калитца) in 1921. Under the terms of the agreement of the Polish Military Command with the General Staff of the White Guards Army concerning the sending of military divisions to the Ukraine to incite the population to revolt against the Bolsheviks, it was decided to send first 1000 men of which I was one. Our unit crossed the border near the city of Kolochisk (Колошицк) destroyed two battalions of border infantry at night and went on in order to stop the sending of Bolshevik units on the front against the rebels. The staff decided to send a demolition squad to cut off the railroad posts and highways. The main task was to blow up the school for red military students in the city of Zhitomir (Житомир). For the execution of this task it was suggested that one officer be asked to volunteer and I offered to undertake the task with the aid of 12 Cossack volunteers armed with explosives. I set out with 2 carts to do the job. On the way to Zhitomir I blew up 16 posts and went on towards Zhitomir, but we came to a woods through which there was no path the carts could travel, so the major portion of the Revolutionary unit turned off in the direction of Kiev and Kamenets-Podolsk, (Каменич-Подольск). About 60 kilometers short of Zhitomir, I stopped with my unit at the hut of a forester who was very anti-Bolshevik, and we decided to rest there. This forester obtained food from the neighboring village which the villagers gave willingly as this village was anti-Bolshevik. On the third day of our stay at the forester's, a peasant came to us and said that a Bolshevik Cavalry Squadron consisting of about 60 members was occupying the village that day. I asked the peasants if they had good horses. He answered that it was the Squadron Shtaidart (Штайдарт) which had the very best horses. At that time the idea of disarming the squadron and getting the horses occurred to me, since we were all Cossack cavalry men. I carefully thought out a plan, and decided to obtain some home-made liquor, that is home-distilled vodka, for courage for the night expedition. Having decided this, I gave the forester my own overcoat and sheepskin coat and he brought me 6 bottles of vodka. Night fell, and drinking the vodka, we went to the village,

1 - Roumanian spelling: Galatsi

2 - Roumanian spelling: Iasi

escorted by the forester. It was a dark night and a small snow-storm was blowing. We came to the village and woke up the peasant in the first hut who knew the position of the Bolsheviks very well. He undertook to lead us, but the difficulty was that according to our escort, a patrol of three horsemen rode through the streets of the village all night. I thought about what I should do and decided to put six of my people on either side of the street while I went down the street with one. We agreed that when I met the patrol we two would pretend to be very drunk and would ask for a cigarette. When the patrol lit a match they would be unable to see my men approach from under the fence. The men would take the patrol off their horses. The plan worked and we destroyed the patrol. Then our escort led us from house to house where the Bolsheviks were quartered and we disarmed them all and led them into the woods about 10 kilometers, and ordered them to return home. Then I announced in the village that I could use as many volunteers as I could mount on horse back, and so my unit grew from 12 to more than 60 members.

On the way to Zhitomir, we stopped in the woods and I sent two men with explosives to blow up the school for red military students. While it was still dark they put packages of explosives under the corners of the building and ignited them. But, because only part of the building caught fire they did not succeed in blowing up the cartridge supplies. Furthermore, there was a (military ?) post in front of the building.

From Zhitomir, I also went towards Kiev and came on a Cavalry Division of Kotovskachi (КОТОВСКИ), and this Bolshevik Division followed me all the way to the Polish border. There was no way out but to return to Poland. One time at night on the way to the city of Ostrov (Острів) we blew up a train called the Captain Schildt (КАПИТАН ШИЛДТ). We returned to Ostrov, Poland where we gave away the horses. The Poles sent us back to a camp in the city of Kalinin. In the fall of 1922, through the Latvian Consulate, I went to Latvia where I established myself in commerce. In 1926 I opened a bakeshop, a candy shop and a sausage factory and lived happily until 1940 when the Bolsheviks occupied Latvia. I left for registration in Germany and settled in the city of Weimar where I worked for a firm which imported fruit and vegetables. I worked there until 1945, after the capitulation of Germany and the arrival in Thuringia of the Bolsheviks. Since I spoke Russian, they sent me to the Labor Bureau as a driver for the Soviet Military Administration. I worked there until July 1947. Then they sent me, as a businessman, to the O.T.B.P., that is the Division of Procurement of General Merchandise (ОТДЕЛ ПРОСБИРКИ И ОБЩЕГОХ ПРОСБИРКИ) as the official in charge of state purchases (ГОСКОМПРОСБИРКА). My job was to order and obtain for the people from S.B.A. as many products as possible for the stores called Gastronomes (ГАСТРОНОМЫ). The Soviets considered me one of them, and didn't know that I was their avowed enemy. In the course of my work in the S.B.A., I helped many officers of the Soviet Army who were not satisfied with the Soviet regime and who, on seeing Germany, were convinced that they had lived better before the war and that all that the politruk had told them to the effect that in capitalist countries the people were slaves did not correspond to the truth, while at the same time, in Soviet countries they were enslaved and worked for a State capitalism, that is for a small handful of Communists. They did not agree

with this and decided to break away from their slavery and see the world and the real democratic culture of the West. The last one I sent was an officer from Leipzig who was an automobile specialist named Peter D. After that in October 1948, I was arrested by the NKVD and I was in prison in Weimar for three months and the rest of the time in Leipzig at Hindishche (Сундшхше) Street no. 42 in the central NKVD in a cellar without light and air. Below I describe the methods of arrest, the type of question asked under arrest, the promises, and so forth.

I was arrested in the following way. In one evening on about the 20th of October the Director of the store Gastronomie asked me to hand over all the advance money taken by me to buy goods, as on the following day there was going to be a commission from Berlin which would examine the affairs of the store in great detail. I wrote a reply and brought the cashier the remaining money and informed the head of the store. Then two Russian officers came in to my workroom and asked me to go with them to talk in the street and I understood at once that I was being arrested. I could make no preparations as they would not leave me alone. When we went into the street a car was standing there. We went into the car and drove to the NKVD and when I went into the room they peremptorily ordered me to sit in the corner. I sat down and then they turned 2 large projector lights on me which pierced me with their sharp, concentrated rays. The interrogator began acting as though a bird had fallen into his hands. He said we all know, you can be sure, that you sent Peter D. to the West, and we also know that you have done this before. You worked as our enemy and now we are considering threatening you with the lowest form of forced labor. But if you confess you will receive a litigation of your sentence because of your confession and will receive a lesser punishment and furthermore, if you refuse to talk and will not confess, we will use other methods and then you will confess. We will put you in a prison cell and will whip you and will screw your legs slowly in all directions and then you will confess. During all these threats I acted very indifferent and said nothing about Peter D. The interrogation lasted until morning and then they prepared to put me in the cell. It so happened that they led me to the cell but did not inflict the threatened punishment on me. I was so tired that I lay down on the shelf in the wall (as there was no bed) but about half an hour after I had fallen asleep they woke me again and led me back to an interrogation with questions and threats of various tortures which lasted for about 4 hours. Then they again led me to the cell. This ceremony of endless interrogations lasted three days and three nights and not once did they offer me food or drink. When they led me to the next to the last interrogation I categorically refused to answer the questions stating that I was extremely tired from lack of sleep, as I had hardly slept for three days and three nights, and had had nothing to eat. They laughed and said that now we have come to the end and because now I think that you will tell everything. If, however, you won't tell, then we shall treat you differently. I called their other methods of interrogation inhuman, barbaric and beastly, adding that such an attenuation of the nerves was torturing a sleepless man and that a man so treated might say things that he himself didn't know. I said that thanks to my health I had withheld until that time, and was afraid that my nerves could not

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undergo such a strain and I said that I would answer yes to all questions and then I said that from that minute I would not answer, and I did not answer any of the questions asked me. They then led me back to the cell, and no sooner had I fallen asleep than they again came to take me to the interrogation, and when they could not arouse me, they poured cold water on me. This woke me and they took me back to the interrogation. I didn't answer the questions and leaned my head on my chest and kept silent. They continued for several hours and then threw me back in the cell. I fell, and fell asleep and how long I slept I have no idea - I only remember that I awoke because I was hungry and felt that I had a high fever. I didn't know whether it was night or day because there was no window in the cell through which daylight could come.

My cell was $1\frac{1}{2}$ meters wide and about 5 meters long, and contained only one wooden bench without a mattress. I was dressed only in a summer outfit without an overcoat, and besides my underwear I was wearing only one sleeveless shirt. They gave me only two thin, worn out blankets. One I wore and the other I concealed in the cell. There was no light except that over the doorway there was a hole in which there was a very weak electric light, colored red, which half illuminated the hermetically-sealed box which was my cell. Outside of this I had no possessions. After the last questioning, they had given me a piece of bread weighing approximately 200 grams and a jug of warm water. As I had a fever I could not eat anything, although I felt completely famished. Some time passed, perhaps 10, 15, or 20 hours. Then they came and took me to the door, into the car, and I knew then that it was night. They took me to the city of Leipzig. There they began again, using the same methods. When I said that I had already been through the same interrogations in Weimar, they answered me that Weimar does it its way and we do it our way. And they asked me if I knew where I was now and although I knew that I was in Leipzig, I said that I didn't know. Then they said it is better that you don't know, you dog, where you are buried, as you will never come out alive. At that I answered them by asking if I had fallen into the hands of brigands in the form of Soviet officers. They explained that they were successful with people like me because they stood on the side of Socialism, and Comrade Stalin said that no mercy must be shown to the enemies of socialism, but that they must be destroyed and Communism built up. I pretended to be a complete dope and asked for permission to express myself freely and they gave me permission! I stated that even in socialism there were laws which completely eliminated the rights of man. For example, this Peter didn't agree with such socialism and decided to finish his life by committing suicide or by going to the other world, perhaps not the socialist, but the democratic where a man has human rights and freedom, that freedom he which he wanted. However, Peter ended by committing suicide somewhere and it now is impossible to find him. Because of this a completely innocent man is being subjected to a severe trial, perhaps to his death and then they will find Peter's corpse. I asked if a law such as one's which made me responsible was just? They didn't answer, only said that it was all very well to philosophize, and began the interrogation. They wrote down the proceedings and they also began the process of questions without sleep and in addition

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included one new feature. After each interrogation they locked me in one of the rooms with a guard standing at the door and forced me to give a written account of all the questions put to me in the interrogation. During 10 days I gave written accounts of 14 interrogations and each time before beginning a new interrogation they would ask me the questions I had written and if my answer differed from my former one, even in one word, they would reproach me and say that meant I was guilty. After such repeated mockeries I refused to write any more, stating that I had already written accounts 14 times and that I wouldn't write any more. They called me out a few more times, but I wouldn't answer and wouldn't write, and finally they left me in peace. I sat in that cell until October 1950. Then one wonderful day they opened the door to me and said now you can go home and there you will see. I myself could not believe my eyes, that I was already on the streets of Leipzig, free. I was so excited that I couldn't stand and sat down on the steps as though at home. A post soldier drove me off and told me to go away as soon as possible and as far as possible from there, and I went away and returned home to Weimar thinking that I would rest and then leave the Zone as soon as possible.

About 3 weeks later they arrested me again. This time it was not the Bolsheviks, but the German organs of the State Sicherheitsdienst. They put me back in the Weimar Kurtstrasse prison, in the same cell in which the NKVD had put me. Just as the NKVD officers had interrogated me before, the Germans interrogated me on the second day using the very same methods of questioning. Then the NKVD questioned me again and the Germans again and I understood from these interrogations that they were comparing the processes, to find out what an arrested man would say to the Russians and what he would say to the Germans. If there were any differences they would at once conclude that I was guilty and that I had worked under-cover for the western zone.

But they could not prove me guilty and kept me until 15 December and then freed me. On 22 January they arrested me again and accused me of working for the underground and when the NKVD again interrogated me I said that they had come to an incorrect conclusion. They decided to destroy my strength and after the interrogation handed me over to the Stats Sicherheits Dienst. I stated that a deadlock had been reached and that in protest I would say nothing until they released me as not guilty, and that while under arrest I would not eat or write. Seven days and nights later they released me, but the police watched me and my apartment constantly. On 25 February, at approximately 10 pm, the police rang, evidently wanting to arrest me again. I decided to escape through the window into the courtyard. I jumped into the yard and ran to the station and went to Berlin. There I reported to the Political Emigration. I do not know what happened to my wife up to this time and still don't know. If she was not arrested on my account, she must also come here to Berlin to me. I don't know yet how I shall build my life from now on. I hope that the just, Democratic world will help me.