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SPECIAL INVESTIGATION AND INTERROGATION REPORT

Subject: DURST, Joseph, alias WIENINGER
Security Threat and ex-Abwehr Agent

Case No: G-3424 (SP)

Ref. No: USDIC/SIIR22/SPL4

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George W. Landan
for: JOSEPH W. KOLISCH
Major, Infantry 1st Lt.
Commanding

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I. PREAMBLE

Subject, born at Kazanovka, Poland, is an Austrian citizen. He followed the trade of an upholsterer, later forsaking it for the more lucrative work of an Abwehr Agent and a grand-scale blackmarket operator. Although of Jewish faith, the report will show Subject's unscrupulous nature in dealings with members of his own faith, at all times taking advantage of their plight in furtherance of his own interests.

His arrest was based upon a request from the British FSS, dated 15 August 1946, in order to be interrogated on his Abwehr activities at Vienna, Budapest and Istanbul.

According to MOIC CIC Vienna, dated 7 October 1946, Subject was apprehended on 4 September 1946 in Vienna XIX, after intensive search in cooperation with the state police of the 19th District. At the time of the arrest, Subject tried to get rid of six diamonds of high value, which were in his possession, but in this he failed. (See Annex A)

Annex B gives a list of seven previous arrests and three convictions.

Subject is shrewd, apparently knowing interrogation technique and its more or less standard course of procedure. He will admit to no Abwehr activity, claiming that he never received a penny from the Abwehr and that his work was purely in connection with procurement, be it foreign currency or rare delicacies. By denying any Abwehr activity in face of all the damaging testimony against him, thorough interrogation, pressing the "good liars must also have good memories" motto, but failing in breaking Subject's story, must still, in light of his shady past, accept all the derogatory evidence against him.

II. INTERROGATION OF RUDOLPH SEDLACEK IN CONNECTION WITH SUBJECT'S ACTIVITIES IN THE ABWEHR

Rudolph ~~SEDLACEK~~, former V-man of the Abwehr, Amt III F AST Vienna in Budapest, was interrogated in Camp Marcus W. Orr, where he is interned, on Subject's activities in the Abwehr.

SEDLACEK stated that in 1943 Major Dr. ~~HORINA~~, deputy head of the III F Branch, under (Lt. Col.) (Baron von ~~MANTEUFEL-SZOEGE~~, in the presence of Karl ~~GFRORNER~~, alias Dr. ~~Gorhard ~~SCHLEDI~~~~, head of the Stadtbureau III in Budapest, ordered him to accompany DURST on a trip to Istanbul, Turkey. Subject was to contact the JOINT, a Jewish Relief Organization, as it was suspected that enemy information passes through its channels. Subject was to ascertain this and try to introduce SEDLACEK to the JOINT personnel. SEDLACEK was also to watch over Subject so that the usual blackmarket financial deals wouldn't jeopardize the real purpose of the trip.

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In spite of a week stay in Istanbul, DURST never introduced SEDIACEK to the JOINT people, only during the following trip. At this second trip, DURST boasted that through WENDER, alias ~~POPESCU~~ (another V-man), he was introduced to EARLE, an American diplomat, and claimed to have heard very interesting stories, which certainly would interest the Abwehr.

Later, GFRORNER has also told SEDIACEK that DURST possesses good enemy information contacts.

It was during SEDIACEK's third trip to Istanbul with DURST when the latter related to him that some American officer requested information from him which DURST forwarded to GFRORNER, who in turn dispatched it to Berlin for attention and reply.

According to SEDIACEK, DURST was the one who informed GFRORNER in September 1943 of WENDER's flight to Turkey. WENDER was consequently arrested two or three days later at Svilongrad, Bulgaria.

III. INTERROGATION OF HANS ~~GEFAELL~~ IN CONNECTION WITH SUBJECT'S ACTIVITIES IN THE GESTAPO

GEFAELL was an Agent of AST Vienna, Stadtbureau II, before its dissolution took place. He was interrogated on 12 November 1946 in Bad Ischl where he is now at liberty. GEFAELL claims that DURST was considered in Budapest as the man who was in a position to buy Jews free from the state police. In return, they had to pay enormous values in money and jewelry.

DURST allegedly delivered a great number of people to the Gestapo and, as it was learned later, this money was used toward the equipment of Volksdeutsche SS divisions.

DURST had, already in Summer of 1943, free entrance into the Headquarters of the Gestapo on the Svabhogy, near Budapest and was seen circulating in their circles.

IV. INTERROGATION OF MAJOR DR. HORINA IN CONNECTION WITH SUBJECT'S CONTACTS WITH THE SD

Source, who was released from Camp Marcus W. Orr recently and now lives in Enns, was interrogated on 10 November 1946. He stated that DURST was asked to go to Istanbul in the Spring of 1943 in order to establish whether or not the JOINT had any connections with the enemy intelligence service.

Returning from Istanbul, DURST expressed satisfaction over his meeting with the JOINT, through an introduction by V-man Erich ~~WENDER~~. DURST mentioned the names of WENIA, UEBERALL, SCHINDLER and others, who were present at the meeting. Also attending the meeting were some Americans and British,

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who questioned Subject closely on intelligence matters. DURST was promised preferential treatment by them, after an Allied victory, if he were to furnish them with worthwhile intelligence.

An Allied questionnaire was given to DURST, who gave it to GFRORNER, who in turn forwarded it to Berlin. Returning from his second trip to Istanbul, DURST reported that the answers were delivered to the JOINT, where they were translated into English and forwarded to interested parties. Shortly thereafter an American came, who examined the entire report with Subject, requesting elaboration on certain points which Subject supplied. The effects of the bombings on the population of Sofia was one of the points in question. The contents of the questionnaire dealt chiefly with military information, war industries and public morale.

V. MAJOR HANS VUKITS' TESTIMONY ON SUBJECT'S ACTIVITIES WITH THE SD, THE GESTAPO AND THE JOINT

(Major) Hans VUKITS, former member and Chief of III F AST VIENNA, now an inmate of Camp Marcus W. Orr, was interrogated in regard to Subject's activities while in employ of the Abwehr.

In April 1944, according to VUKITS, after the occupation of Hungary by the German troops, (Sturmabannfuhrer) KRUMEI and (Obersturmbannfuhrer) FICHLER of the SD, came to Budapest with a special mission from HIMMLER which consisted largely in taking the necessary steps for the establishment of new divisions. It seemed that the aryanization of the city was also one of their tasks.

During the many negotiations with the leading Jews of Budapest, KASTNER and BRANDT, it was advantageous to have DURST present, who kept these Jewish representatives under the strongest pressure, allegedly increasing manyfolds KRUMEI's original money demands. Through the employment of these methods, DURST succeeded in turning over to KRUMEI large sums of money, enriching himself at the same time.

After Subject's and GFRORNER's arrest by the Gestapo, one (Inspector) BUCHHEIT was entrusted to handle their case. A visit by VUKITS to BUCHHEIT in regard to their arrest was interrupted by a telephone call. From the conversation Source gathered that on the other end somebody was asking for a new assignment for DURST, who had already sent in a report on his fellow prisoners. This request was declined by BUCHHEIT because DURST was already scheduled to be transferred to a concentration camp.

As to Subject's contacts with the JOINT, Source alleges, that when Subject returned from a trip to Istanbul he brought back with him an enemy questionnaire, which was answered by III F and then dispatched to Abt. III D, Lt. Col. CARTELLIERI, for final approval. The answers in a final form were then transmitted by Subject on his following trip to Istanbul to the "American Intelligence Service".

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VI. INTERROGATION RESULTS

A. Life History

8 December 1898: Born at Kazanovka, Ukraine
Father: Herman DURST (deceased)
Mother: Bertha DURST (nee GOLDBERG, deceased)
Brother: Leo DURST, emigrated to the US in 1938. Now in Philadelphia.
Brother: Oscar DURST, emigrated to the US in 1938. Now in Philadelphia
Sisters: Regina and Sophie (both deceased)
Wife (common-law): Bertha WIENINGER, 39 years old, living in Vienna XIX, Dollingerstrasse 5
Son: Leopold 24, from Subject's previous wedlock. Served in the Wehrmacht as an Unteroffizier with the 33rd Panzer Regt. Discharged in 1946
Daughter: Trudi WIENINGER; the daughter of Subject's present wife

- 1905 His entire family moved to Vienna, where Subject attended nine years of school, at the same time learning to be an upholsterer.
- 1916 Drafted into the Austrian-Hungarian Army, he was assigned to the 55th Infantry Regiment at Bielitz-Biala, Silesia and sent to Piave, Italy. Was wounded on both legs. Discharged November 1918.
- Nov 1918 Six months in a Viennese hospital
- May 1919 Worked in his brother's business as an upholsterer
- Feb 1922 Employed by various upholstery firms
- Aug 1925 Took over a gas-appliance agency in partnership with his brother-in-law
- Jan 1929 Was arrested and sentenced to six months in jail for embezzlement
- Aug 1929 Returned to his brother's upholstery business where he remained until March 1938, during which time he was arrested and sentenced on two occasions on charges of embezzlement, receiving jail terms of six and nine months respectively.
- Jun 1938 Subject's brothers and their families emigrated to the United States, leaving him behind to care for his aged mother. They left 9000 marks for this purpose, which proved sufficient until the death of his mother in the Fall of 1938. At this time he went to live with his common-law wife, WIENINGER, keeping out of sight most of the time, but frequenting café-houses where aryan passports could be

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obtained without the "J" designation. One Karl ~~KOSIK~~ did provide Subject with such a passport for the sum of 1000 marks.

Middle of KOSIK also gave him the job of papering the walls of an office at 1939 until No. 9 Bauernmarkt, Vienna. Later he learned that it was an Abwehr May 1944 office headed by Arthur ~~MAHR~~ (alias Dr. ~~MEHAR~~). KOSIK, who was the administrative clerk there, employed Subject to handle financial transactions for him and MAHR and paid Subject a weekly wage of 50 marks. Subject remained with this office as a V-man even after the departure of MAHR and the arrival of the new chief, GFRORNER, alias Dr. SCHMIEDT. Subject's activities were transferred to Budapest when a sub-station was established there in 1942.

10 May 44 Was arrested in the home of BRANDT by SD Hauptsturmfuehrer KLAGES on charges of treason. Taken to the Rossauerlaende jail in Vienna from which he was released at the liberation of Vienna. Up to his arrest by CIC on 4 September 1946, Subject engaged in blackmarket and foreign currency deals in addition to his role as an informant to the Vienna State Police on matters pertaining to the Abwehr.

B. Excerpts Taken from the Report LSX-32 on Lt. Col. Baron von MANNTEUFEL

Lt. Col. Baron von MANNTEUFEL-SZOEGE, Abwehr officer from 1937 until 1945 and Subject's superior, states in Report LSX-32, dated 18 July 1945, the following:

1. Subject "was a clever but unscrupulous and unreliable agent".

2. The Col. further stated that all he knows of the JOINT organization is from hearsay. WIENINGER (DURST) reported to him that this organization was Jewish, split into two definite parts. Quoting from the report:

The JOINT was an "organization whose aim was to help all Jews in trouble or destitute in the Balkans, Poland, Germany, as well as the rest of Europe." It was also "an intelligence pooling service sponsored by the Anglo-American Intelligence services in the Middle East. The object of this service was to sift all people who came to them and, after careful vetting, to bring the possible candidates into contact with the Allied Intelligence Services. WIENINGER told Subject (in this case the Col.) that he himself had also come in contact with the latter and had brought back with him verbal inquiries and instructions from them which he was to answer by word of mouth on his next trip to Istanbul. These questions, with already prepared answers, were sent to III F Abwehr Hauptamt Berlin by III F AST Vienna, with the demand that WIENINGER be allowed to carry through this play. After Lt. Col. ~~FREUND~~,

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III F Abwehr Hauptamt Berlin, and III D (Lt. Col. CARTELLIERI) had rearranged the answers, Berlin accepted the proposal and returned the answers to WIENINGER to pass on to the Allied Intelligence services. This, WIENINGER did through JOINT, and later also held W/T communications with the Allies. At the very point where the whole play was reaching its most interesting stage everything was ruined by the arrest of WIENINGER and GFRORNER by the Gestapo."

According to the Colonel, after his arrest in May 1944 in Budapest, Subject was to have worked for the Gestapo as an informer in the Vienna jail.

C. Excerpts Taken from the Top Secret Report ISC/CSDIC/ON3

Subject was also confronted with the information compiled in above mentioned report dated 9 January 1946, regarding his activities in Vienna immediately after the liberation of that city by Russian troops.

D. Prisoner's Explanations to all Charges

DURST claims that he knows Erich WENDER for many years, having been engaged with him in various business deals ranging from blackmarket money exchanges to diamonds and silver fox transactions, as early as 1938.

WENDER approached DURST in March 1943 with the proposition that the latter take 17,000 Hungarian pengoes to the JOINT at Bratislava. DURST took the matter up with GFRORNER, his superior, and received from him the necessary papers for clearing the border. In May of the same year another sum of \$8000 was to be taken to Bratislava at which time DURST learned that these JOINT monies were to be transported from Istanbul to points north on a more or less permanent basis. He immediately saw good possibilities of additional income for him and for GFRORNER, whose own income was not in proportion with the grandiose needs and desires of his mistress. GFRORNER agreed to supply the essential papers for DURST and in return shared in the percentage DURST received from the JOINT. Altogether DURST alleges, there were about five trips to Istanbul. The sums thus received by GFRORNER were sufficiently high for him to complete the building of a villa in Budapest together with luxurious furnishings.

DURST himself fared very well, but after the third trip, in order to safeguard his future comings and goings to and from Istanbul, he concocted a story to the effect that the JOINT people in Istanbul were trying to obtain some intelligence information from him and also prepared a list of fictitious questions presumably coming from the JOINT. This list then he gave to GFRORNER for preparation.

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DURST claims that on his next trip to Istanbul, around July 1943, he had to remain overnight in Sofia Bulgaria, waiting for train connection to Istanbul. During the night an Allied air-attack on Sofia took place which delayed his departure for a day. Reaching Istanbul and the JOINT, Subject found a number of English speaking gentlemen in the offices, all trying to find out the extent of the damage inflicted upon Sofia. One of the men produced a map and asked DURST to point out the bomb damages, which he claimed he did.

Subject maintains that except for this one occasion nobody in Istanbul ever solicited his help on matters of intelligence and any information received from GFRORNER for transmittal to the JOINT was never given to them as nobody had requested them.

Subject categorically denies anything linking him to the SD and that he obtained large sums from the wealthy Jews of Budapest under duress. He denies that he ever acted as an informer for the Gestapo while imprisoned by them. He also denies that he helped GFRORNER prepare a report on Abwehr activities for the Soviet.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is contended by this Headquarters, in full agreement with the MOIC 430th CIC Detachment, dated 7 October 1946, that Subject constitutes a serious threat to our security. His explanations to the charges were given by Subject in a manner clearly indicative that he himself disbelieved every word he uttered.

It is likely that Subject as a former Abwehr agent was still in contact with many other former agents, who are in the employ of foreign governments and who exchange intelligence information with each other.

There is no reason to doubt the veracity of all the individuals who were interrogated and who gave incriminating information about the prisoner. DURST admits that he was never a popular man, having always more enemies than friends, but none of these sources have anything to settle with prisoner and have no ulterior motives in making their accusations.

Possessing a long criminal record, Subject gives the impression of a man who for money will undertake almost anything and it is reasonable to assume that at the time of his arrest by CIC he was busily engaged widening his former contacts. Be it blackmarket or more serious form of threat to our occupation, the fact remains that internment will eliminate or forestall any dangerous actions on the part of the prisoner.

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VIII. ANNEXES

A. Diamonds in Subject's Possession

According to a statement signed by Leopold ~~RECHTHALER~~, executive official, Stapo District Office Vienna XIX, Subject was arrested at the corner of Pyrkergasse and Vermosergasse when he was about to enter his car. Acting on orders from the arresting official, the chauffeur proceeded in the direction of Gatterburggasse. When the car entered Gatterburggasse from Doeblinger Hauptstrasse, Subject tried to jump out of the car. Subject broke away from the official, did jump out of the car and escaped. The official followed and caught him in a house on Doeblinger Hauptstrasse where Subject had entered a lavatory in order to get rid of a valuable set of jewelry, consisting of six diamond rings. After a severe struggle, in which some passers-by joined, Subject was prevented from doing so and was delivered to the Stapo District Office. Subject was in possession of the following items:

- 2 diamond rings, gold mounted, with a stone of 7 mm each in diameter
- 1 diamond ring platinum-mounted, with a stone of 13 mm in diameter
- 1 diamond ring platinum-mounted, with a stone of 10 mm in diameter
- 1 diamond ring narrow platinum band, with a stone of 8 mm in diameter
- 1 diamond ring with one pearl and a stone of 5 mm in diameter and small lozenge-shaped diamonds

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B. Prisoner's Arrest Record

1. Landesgericht Wien 9 October 1919, Vr XII E 4230/19, theft # 460 St. G. gen 460, 266 St. G. Three (3) days arrest (Peace amnesty)
2. Bezirksgericht Wien I 8 November 1922, U II 1635/22, # 477 St.G. 10,000 Kronen fine or four (4) days arrest (Suspicious purchase)
3. Landesgericht Wien I 7 January 1929, 1Vr 7422/28, # 183 St. G. (embezzlement) six (6) months prison
4. Landesgericht Wien I 29 November 1930, 3a Vr 6426/30, # 171, 173 461/197, 183 St.G. (theft, fraud and embezzlement), six (6) months prison
5. Bezirksgericht Wien I 25 January 1935, 13 U 1574/34, # 461/197 St.G. (fraud) three (3) weeks arrest
6. Bezirksgericht Wien I 9 March 1935, 3 U 366/35, # 314 St.G. (Interference with an official act) two (2) days arrest
7. Landesgericht Wien I 15 January 1937, 1b Vr 6452/35, # 183 St.G. (embezzlement) nine (9) months prison

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