

Aleks KURGVEL

30 March 1966

FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: My Participation in the Activities of the LEGION OF ESTONIAN LIBERATION, Inc.

1. The Most Recent Event Participated in.

In my quality of a member of the New York Chapter of the Legion, I attended the annual meeting of the Chapter in New York on 27 March, 1966. Only few people were present at the scheduled time of the meeting. Therefore, the meeting was held one hour later, to which time about 25 members had registered themselves for the meeting. Later some more people joined the meeting, and some others left the meeting, to the effect that the attendance, probably, never reached over 27 to 30 people. Mr. Kärnsa and Mr. Kankar were elected to lead the meeting. Two secretaris were taking notes of the meeting, being elected for this by the meeting. Mr. Mengel taperecorded the meeting. It was not mentioned whether he did it on his personal initiative or on somebody's request. The matter was not touched by the meeting.

The main point of interest and debate was the relationship of the New York Chapter with the Legion. The meeting decided by majority vote that the decision made by the annual meeting of the Chapter in 1964, to remain outside the Legion for the time when Mr. Raus is the Chairman of the Legion, (which decision has been contested by many members because of its illegality) was valid up to this time. It was pointed out that the participation of the Chairman of the Chapter, Mr. Derrick, and of the members Mr. ~~Do~~ Karema and Kurgvel in the Assembly of the Representatives of the Chapters to the Legion in April 1965, was wrong and unauthorized.

Later two proposals were balloted: one made by Mr. Derrick, that the Chapter will stay in the Legion and will participate in Legion's work; it was killed by 13 to 11 ration of voices while two members either did not take sides or remained neutral;

the other proposal, made by Mr. Kärnsa, that the Chapter remain out of the Legion as long as Mr. Raus will remain the Chairman of the Legion, ~~was~~ won by 14 to 11 ratio of voices, with one neutral.

Thus, the New York Chapter will stay out of the Legion for the time when Mr. Raus is the Chairman, or - until a new plenary meeting of the Chapter will reverse this decision.

For the post of the Chairman for the coming year two candidates were nominated: the ~~incumbent~~ incumbent Chairman Mr. Derrick, and the incumbent Deputy Chairman Mr. Allikas. The first ballot resulted in a tie, 12 to 12 with two abstentions. The second ballot gave Mr. Derrick 13 votes against 12 for Mr. Allikas, with one abstention.

Because I was elected at the meeting of the Representatives to the Legion/^{held/}in Seabrook N.J. in April 1965, to the Presidium of the Legion, and was then nominated to the post of a Deputy Chairman of which there are two, I informed the Chairman of the Legion, Mr. Raus, of the decision of the New York Chapter, and asked the Presidium to decide whether I, while belonging to the Legion by being a member of the New York Chapter, am still qualified to participate in the work of the Legion in the quality of a Deputy Chairman.

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2. The Background.

Although a member of the New York Chapter of the Legion for long years, I rejected up to April 1965 all the offers made to me to take the Chairmanship of the Chapter and/or of the Legion. The only posts I have accepted were those of a representative of the Chapter, sometimes also of some other Chapter than New York, at the annual Assembly of the Representatives to the Legion.

On one of these Assemblies of the Legion, many years ago, when the representatives were already sick of the squables initiated and continued mainly by two people, Mr. Kärnsa and Mr. Keerd, both members of the New York Chapter, I offered Mr. Raus' candidacy to the post of the Chairman of the Legion. He was elected, and has been re-elected since then despite the noisy opposition led by the same two people whose names were mentioned before. My motives, which I presented to the Assembly when nominating Mr. Raus, were the need to get some new people to the helm of the Legion to replace the earlier squabblers, and Mr. Raus, then the Chairman of the Connecticut Chapter, seemed to be the best choice: he is young and energetic; he is a reserve officer of the American Army, and as such has better approach to different American Authorities than any of the elder Estonians has, not to speak of his correct English one needs on such occasions. I, of course, did not disclose to anybody that I knew Mr. Raus since he was a student of mine at one of our courses, and that I, therefore, was sure of his reliability.

Unfortunately, Mr. Raus, also, was not able to end the squables. Those two former Estonian lawyers, Mr. Keerd even having been a judge in Estonia during the first year of Communist occupation of Estonia, 1940/41, took use of any minor error Mr. Raus happened to make and blew these up to expose them as major blunders. They even accuse Mr. Raus being pro-Communist, which is ridiculous. The situation aggravated even more when Mr. Raus, acting on advice of American Authorities, cautioned some leading personalities against Mr. Erik Heine.

This was played up as denunciation and libel of a "valiant anti-Communist fighter and hero".

Mr. Raus and other people have tried many ways to settle the misunderstanding. I was asked to lead a meeting of the enlarged Presidium of the Legion and of the New York Chapter. Nothing came out of this meeting because the then Chairman of the New York Chapter, Mr. Keerd left the meeting when he saw that his own members of the Presidium of the New York Chapter were ready to settle the strife.

I did not participate in the annual meeting of the N.Y. Chapter in 1964 because I was abroad on TDY then. I prepared later a written analysis of the situation in which this meeting decided the separation of the Chapter from the Legion because Mr. Raus was the Chairman of the Legion. There was no doubt in my mind that this meeting was not authorized to take any such decision.

Since the libel suit of Erik Heine against Juri Raus is on, the agitation against Mr. Raus has been mounting all the time. The supporters of Erik Heine, whatever might be the reasons of this support; then the personal enemies of Mr. Raus; and also some more people who would like any cause of misunderstanding removed from the work and life of the Legion, have been looking for a candidate to replace Mr. Raus as the Chairman of the Legion. I was, again, offered the post but I refused and informed Mr. Raus of this.

In this situation I accepted Mr. Raus' suggestion that I join him in case that he would be re-elected by the Assembly. This was in April, 1965. I agreed be-

cause by this time I knew from Mr. Raus how far the preparations of the process between him and Heine had advanced. Although Mr. Raus has never said to me that he acted against Heine according to the instructions received by the Agency, I thought that this was the case because I myself had a similar request from one of the members of the Agency. I found that it was necessary to support Mr. Raus, to help him being re-elected as Chairman of the Legion.

Thus, I went to the meeting of the representatives of the Chapters on request of two people: To Mr. Derrick I said that I will not be an opposing candidate to the post of the Chairman of the Legion against Mr. Raus, but I would agree if Mr. Raus, when re-elected, wants me to be a member of the Presidium. Mr. Derrick still hoped that Mr. Raus will yield to his request and would not be a candidate for re-election. In this case Mr. Derrick wanted to nominate me as a candidate. To Mr. Raus I promised to come and to join him in the Presidium if he wants this and the Assembly will elect me as a member of the Presidium. To entitle me for the participation at this Assembly, Mr. Raus gave me the proxy of the Detroit Chapter which had been put to the disposal of the Presidium of the Legion. Later, after the Assembly had started, Mr. Derrick informed me that he entitles me to represent the New York Chapter also, giving me one vote of the nine the Chapter had. He retained 7 votes for himself and gave one vote to Mr. Karema.

Mr. Raus was re-elected the Chairman of the Legion, and on his proposal I was elected as a member of the Presidium, wherein I was given the post of a Deputy Chairman.

During 1965 I have spoken with Mr. Derrick on a couple of occasions about the extraordinary general meeting of the Chapter to settle the question of the relationship of the Chapter with the Legion. This question could not be solved during the regular annual meeting of the Chapter in 1965 and therefore the Presidium of the Chapter was authorized by the annual meeting to call such an extraordinary meeting. I advised Mr. Derrick to call such a meeting, explaining to the members in the invitation what ~~this~~ is all about, that the normal work of the Chapter and of the Legion is jeopardized by the existing situation. Unfortunately, Mr. Derrick is getting tired of all this and did not call the meeting, in hope that things will settle down and the question will be solved positively at the regular annual meeting.

3. The Details of the Annual Meeting of the New York Chapter on 27 March 1966.

When at the annual meeting of the N.Y. Chapter in 1965 the forces were to some extent balanced so that of the two elected leaders of the meeting one belonged to the opposition group, Mr. Mälgi, and the other to the main body of the Chapter, I, then this year the opposition was so well organized and so loud that both leaders of the meeting were nominated and elected from the opposition, Mr. Kärnsa himself, and Mr. Kankar.

Mr. Derrick, giving a review of the activities of the past year, did not mention his own and Karema's and mine participation at the Legion's Assembly in April 1965. When asked about this, and accused of having been there against the decision of the annual meeting of 1964, and of not having called the extraordinary meeting like he was advised by the annual meeting of 1965, Mr. Derrick gave a somehow evasive account of his participation at this meeting, as if he had been there just like an observer. I understand that Mr. Derrick did so in a honorable attempt not to mix in the members of the Presidium of the Chapter

with whom he had some kind of inofficial silent agreement concerning his participation at this meeting of the Legion. I may be wrong but I think that Mr. Derrick even paid the membership fee of the Chapter to the Legion out of his own pocket because without paying, the Chapter would not have been entitled to participate at the meeting.

The alert leader of the opposition, Mr. Karsna, building upon the explanation of Mr. Derrick that he was at the meeting just like an observer, started then new accusations against Mr. Raus and all the Presidium of the Legion, saying that all the minutes of this meeting, as sent by the Legion to the Chapters, is but one big lie. From the other side he explained that all the decisions taken by this meeting and the Presidium of the Legion elected by this meeting should have no power because the members of the New York Chapter who participated there had no right to do so.

Mr. Derrick put the matter squarely; he asked that the meeting take a vote to decide whether he had acted wrongly or not. The opposition leaders, probably not sure that such a vote would result in condemnation of the generally well known figure and leader of the Chapter, did not let to come to that vote.

Mr. Karema said something in the sense that his participation at this meeting of the Legion may really have been an error.

I admitted the participation and voting at the meeting of the Legion, but I did not repent. I pointed out that the oppositionary circle of the Chapter is accusing Mr. Raus and the Presidium of the Legion in wrongdoing but at the same time they do not want to recognize their own errors, like the decision of 1964 which was made against the specifications of the Constitution of the Chapter, which defended the majority of the members of the Chapter against abuse of power by a small group which happens to have the majority on a poorly attended general meeting. Such a meeting has no right to change its agenda from that what was sent out to the membership, on the basis of which the membership decided whether to attend the meeting or not. But the meeting of 1964 did just this, and decided then to step out of the Legion, this point having not been in the original agenda.

Under the specific point of the agenda of the last meeting (27 March '66) which was foreseen for airing of the relationship of the Chapter and the Legion, old accusations against Mr. Raus were repeated, and in addition, it was said that he, being an agent of the CIA, is not acceptable on the post of the Chairman of the Legion.

Mr. Derrick spoke repeatedly and in length about the necessity for the Chapter to remain in the Legion. He pointed out that Mr. Raus has some shortcomings as the Chairman of the Legion, and he has not voted for Mr. Raus. He pointed out the bad effect which an open break of the Chapter with the Legion would produce and cause to the general anti-Communist struggle the Estonian national group is fighting here. He also pointed out that Mr. Raus can be fought and beaten out of the Chairmanship in the legal, democratic way when the delegates of the N.Y. Chapter and other dissenters would join against him.

The opposition speakers admitted that they have tried and failed many times to use this tactics and therefore, they find that now the N.Y. Chapter must stay out of the Legion. A new decision, to rejoin the Legion can be taken then on an extraordinary general meeting after Mr. Raus will have left the Chair.

The outcome of the ballot is mentioned under point 1: the opposition won, the N.Y. Chapter is out of the Legion.

Although to some extent an antagonist of Mr. Raus, Mr. Derrick can not be considered being a member of the organized strange opposition group. His candidacy to the post of the Chairman of the Chapter was a surprize to the opposition. Evidently by some tactical calculations, Mr. Kärnsna and Mr. Keerd did not accept the nomination to be a candidate. Mr. Allikas, a comparatively quiet and civil member of the opposition group was hardly pushed by the opposition to let his candidacy to stand. As known, Mr. Derrick was elected on the second ballot with the result of 13 votes against 12 votes for Mr. Allikas.

Although Mr. Karema made the suggestion that the re-elected Chairman be given the possibility to nominate the candidates to the posts of the members of the Presidium, no such chance was given to Mr. Derrick, and all the members of the Presidium were elected from the opposition group. The smaller group of the attendante even did not offer any candidates of its own.

4. The Future Steps.

I want to help Mr. Raus as much as possible, and I want to do what I can to help the New York Chapter and the Legion out of the stupid situation which has developed.

Mr. Raus has informed me of his intention not to be a candidate for re-election to the post of the Chairman of the Legion, his attorneys having informed him that this is not necessary in light of the turn his Court process has taken. However, he wants that this be not disclosed ~~later~~ prior to the next meeting of the Chapters' representatives, which the Presidium of the Legion has called for Saturday, 16 April. I advised Mr. Raus to announce this his decision prior to the annual meeting of the New York Chapter (27 March), to avoid by this step the loss of face through the impression as if stepping down because of the New York Chapter's hostile decision if such one would be made. The possibility of such a decision, in light of the decisions N.Y Chapter had made in 1964 and 1965, was evident. Mr. Raus stuck by his decision not to disclose his intention at such an early date.

When I, after the N.Y. Chapter's meeting, informed Mr. Raus of the outcome, he offered me the possibility to become a member of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the Legion of which he was recently elected the Chairman. By this step I would remain a member of the Legion; I would be entitled to represent any other Chapter at the meeting of the Representatives if asked to do this; I would also be qualified to be elected to any of the Legion's functional posts, either Chairman or member of the Presidium.

I have nothing against joining the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the Estonian Legion. But I don't like to leave the New York Chapter because this would mean surrendering to the small opposition group of this Chapter which was temporarily able to take control of the Chapter's general meeting. Up to now I have been one of the few active members of this Chapter who have been willing to face the opposition and to support the sound views of the majority, which, unfortunately is getting more and more disgusted and passive in fighting the loud opposition. The opposition would be glad if I would leave the Chapter. Of course, I am aware of the possibility that the newly elected Presidium of the N.Y. Chapter may throw me out of the Chapter. The opposition group having a clear majority in the Presidium, it may easily do this.

I am not ambitious to have a leading role in the Legion or in any Chapter of it. But in case that it will be felt necessary in the frame of the general

anti-Communist struggle and the small part the Estonian Legion might contribute therein, I would consider this being one of my duties to accept the offer if made, and if then elected.

I personally still think that Mr. Raus is the man on the East Coast best qualified to the post of the Chairman or National Commander of the Estonian Legion. However, it is true that the disclosure of the fact that Mr. Raus is in close contact with the CIA, added some oil to the opposition's furnaces. The word "agent" having an ominous smack in Estonian, it would take rather long time to explain to the people that it is a honor to serve the CIA in the anti-Communist struggle. I certainly would support his re-election if he would agree to be a candidate, and would do my best to fight the smear now being dumped upon him.

Whether changing from the New York Chapter to some other one or not, I intend to attend the meeting of the Representatives in Lakewood, N. Jersey on 16 April in my quality of Deputy Chairman of the Legion up to the new elections on the same date. I will have to account there for my work as Deputy Chairman, and also to inform the Assembly of the details of the New York Chapter's decision because I will, probably, be the only member of the New York Chapter entitled to attend this meeting, due to my post in the Presidium of the Legion.

5. Conclusions.

The troubles in the Legion of Estonian Liberation, Inc. are not caused by Mr. Raus, nor by his steps against Erik Heine. These troubles started before he was elected to the post of the Commander (Chairman) of the Legion.

It seems that these troubles are one part of similar well organized Moscov led troubles plaguing most of the anti-Communist national groups and the anti-Communist struggle in general.

The steps taken by Mr. Raus against Heine, and the tactics used, have added to the troubles Mr. Raus has been in since the limelight fell on him when elected to this post. I was instrumental in his election because I nominated him as a candidate. I did so because I was impressed of his work; I knew about his connections with my Employer; I thought that since he was allowed by my Employer to be the Chairman of the Connecticut Chapter of the Legion, then his advancement to the post of the National Commander of the Legion would be in the line of thought which had been followed.

Since then I have supported him, and I shall support him, like I will continue to work in the frame of the anti-Communist struggle of the Estonian national group. As a former Estonian professional officer I must do this. My full withdrawal would be another little victory for the Communists from whom I escaped in 1940.

Of course, I shall continue this activity as far as my employment allows, because to be able to do any work in this field, one has to earn something to leave on.