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HEADQUARTERS  
COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS REGION V  
970TH COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS DETACHMENT

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

SUBJECT: ROTE KAPELLE (Red Orchestra) : Cross Ref: ROEDER, Manfred Dr.  
(OTHELLO)

1. Reason for investigation:

a. The designation ROTE KAPELLE (Red Orchestra) was the code name for a Top Secret operation which the ABWEHR initiated in August 1941 after finding the first evidence that Russia was receiving intelligence information from certain espionage elements in Western and Central Europe. The Gestapo, who took the R/K case over from the Abwehr in July 1942, succeeded in uncovering and largely destroying a wide and well organized espionage net which was in the service of Soviet Russia. Highly placed Nazi officials considered the R/K case as the most important German counter espionage operation of the entire war. However, the R/K operation also proved its value from a positive intelligence point of view, since a considerable number of transmitters were kept operating with the aid of captured and 'turned' wireless operators, thereby enabling the Gestapo to feed false or inaccurate information to the Russian General Staff. The Gestapo was convinced that the Soviet Intelligence did not know of the true fate of their Western and Central European espionage net until August 1944 when the last communication line to MOSCOW was cut.

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b. A record check let this headquarters arrive at the conclusion, in late 1947, that the material so far gathered on the R/K case had been negligible and that a thorough study of the closed case might prove to be profitable inasmuch as a number of personalities formerly connected with the R/K made their appearance in public, supporting Soviet views and policies.

c. Since most survivors of the R/K purge lived in the BERLIN (N53/Z75) area, direct contact was established, after obtaining the approval of Higher Headquarters, with Mr. WALLACH of Region VIII. The contention of OTHELLO (OTHELLO is the code name for Dr. Manfred ROEDER) that the R/K was not 'dead' was further substantiated during a conference on 26 and 27 January 1948 in FRANKFURT (L51/M67) between Mr. KELLY, Hqs. 970th CIC Det., EUCOM, Mr. WALLACH of Region VIII and Mr. GORBY and the undersigned Agent of this office, during which it came to light that former R/K members had been under investigation by Region VIII since the middle of 1947. It was therefore decided to exploit OTHELLO's knowledge of the R/K case fully and to place special emphasis on those personalities, who, after due consideration of their background and past activities, could be used as a means of penetrating former R/K personnel.

Page 1 of 9 pages  
Copy 5 of 25 copies

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NO. *11-2080*

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d. Arrangements were made to have OTHELLO transferred to this area under this headquarters' jurisdiction, as reported by this office on 31 December 1947, SRI, Subject: Walter HUPPENKOTHEN (FIDELIO), Manfred ROEDER (OTHELLO), file V-1150, to Hqs. 970th CIC Det., EUCOM, APO 757, U.S. Army. OTHELLO arrived at this headquarters on 23 December 1947 and preparations for a thorough prolonged interrogation had been completed by 18 January 1948.

2. Synopsis of previous investigations:

a. Region VIII's attention had been attracted to several R/K survivors as a result of their leftist political activities. A series of discreet investigations and direct contact with one important former R/K member resulted in the acquisition of valuable personal data on R/K survivors. This material was made available to this office and proved of considerable value during the course of the interrogation of OTHELLO. Furthermore, it became evident to CIC BERLIN that survivors of the R/K purge made every possible effort to conceal the true nature of their former activities, i.e. participation in an espionage net in the service of Soviet Russia, and to pretend instead that they were former members of a pro-allied German resistance movement.

b. Records in FRANKFURT which were consulted prior to OTHELLO's interrogation, revealed that British authorities had taken great interest in the R/K case as early as April 1946 and that they have been conducting inquiries as to the whereabouts of former key members of the R/K ever since. It has also come to the attention of CIC BERLIN that British authorities are still conducting a special operation which concerns itself with the R/K. It is not known whether the results of that investigation have been made available to an American Intelligence Agency.

3. Synopsis of present investigation:

a. The source of information:

(1) OTHELLO had become one of the judges at the 'Luftgaengericht III, BERLIN (Air Force Tribunal III, BERLIN) in December 1947. On 1 April 1942, OTHELLO was assigned for temporary duty as assistant prosecutor to the 'Reichskriegsgericht', BERLIN (Combined Army, Air Force and Navy Supreme Court). When the Gestapo had completed the preliminary investigation of the R/K case, which resulted in the first wave of arrests, the case was turned over to the 'Reichskriegsgericht' for prosecution. OTHELLO was assigned the R/K case on 17 October 1942 for investigation and prosecution. OTHELLO, as a Luftwaffe Officer, was considered to be especially well qualified to handle the R/K case, since the principal figure involved in the plot was a Luftwaffe officer working in the German Air Ministry.

(2) Although OTHELLO's memory is excellent, he could not give detailed information on all phases of the R/K investigation. The 'Reichskriegsgericht' handled only those cases which fell within the territorial jurisdiction of the Reich proper. In such cases where civilians were involved, and which were not deemed essential to the prosecution as a whole, the 'Reichskriegsgerichtshof' designated the 'Volksgerichtshof' (People's Court) as the competent tribunal. Furthermore, the Belgian and French counterparts of the R/K case came under the jurisdiction of the 'Luftgaengericht III', BERLIN. OTHELLO, retaining his function as a judge of 'Luftgau III', (Air Force Service

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Command III), also passed judgment on six (6) individuals of the Belgian-French groups. The prosecution and conviction in all other cases was handled by other personnel of 'Luftgau III' in cooperation with personnel from 'Luftgau Westfrankreich' (Air Service Command Western France). Nevertheless, OTHELLO has seen the files on a great number of personalities, even though he was not directly connected with their cases.

(3) Annex A of this report furnishes the names of such Gestapo personnel as were directly connected with the investigation of the R/K case and who, if located and interrogated, could furnish additional information on R/K personalities with a special emphasis on the French-Belgian groups. Annex B of this report gives the names of those judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers, who, in OTHELLO's judgment could, in numerous cases, supplement and verify the contents of this report.

b. Historical background:

(1) KENT Group: In August 1941, the 'Funkuberwachung' (wireless surveillance) of the Astl (Abwehrleitstelle) BRUSSELS picked up the first signs of illegally operated transmitters and succeeded shortly thereafter in locating one transmitter. This led to the arrest of three Russian agents: Anton DANILOFF, Konstantin JEFREMOFF, and Michael MAKAROFF. Subsequently, Fritz KENT, a Russian national, who was the leader of a Russian sponsored espionage ring in BRUSSELS, was arrested. The activities of the KENT group centered around military espionage. KENT operated approximately eight (8) sending stations which were serviced by approximately fifteen (15) wireless operators. The senders had direct contact with MOSCOW, Switzerland, the German group and the French groups. Targets for the KENT group were: the Dutch air fields, coastal defenses, railway traffic, and the German industrial output. The Gestapo took the case over from the Abwehr in June 1942 and apparently succeeded in 'turning' KENT. KENT was instrumental in unveiling additional transmitters and breaking a number of codes; he also gave leads which led to the uncovering of the French and German espionage rings. After the Gestapo succeeded in turning a number of wireless operators, the communication with MOSCOW and other European receiving stations was kept intact - in some cases as late as the middle of 1943 - thus feeding false or inaccurate information to the Russians over a considerable period of time and preventing a premature warning of the other groups, connected with the KENT ring.

(2) BORDO Group: As mentioned in paragraph 3 b (1) of this report, the information supplied by KENT led to a wave of arrests and subsequent liquidation of other espionage groups. Soon the Gestapo learned that the Russian JEFMEROFF, one of the original three (3) arrestees, was the leader of a second group which was known under the cover name 'BORDO'. JEFMEROFF operated mainly out of BRUSSELS; his immediate superior was KENT. However, JEFMEROFF acted in some cases independently since he and his group of twenty-five (25) men comprised the technical staff for the entire Western European espionage net. JEFMEROFF recruited wireless operators and supplied the various groups with needed technicians.

(3) TINO (HILDA) Group: This group had its seat in AMSTERDAM and was led by Anton WINTERLING, a Dutch national who, in turn, received his instructions from KENT. This group was uncovered through the information JEFMEROFF had furnished; however, the action had not been entirely successful

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as WINTERING was never arrested and out of a total of thirty-five (35) persons only from six to eight (6 to 8) were apprehended. The TINO group concerned itself with industrial espionage, industrial sabotage and surveillance of German military strength and troop movements on Dutch territory. This group worked very effectively and stood in direct wireless communication with MOSCOW since 1939. At the time of their discovery, the group had six to seven (6 to 7) transmitters in operation. The wireless operators were, in the majority, former Dutch seamen.

(4) GILBERT Group: Several coded messages which were intercepted by the Abwehr referred to the name of 'Grand-Chef' and 'Otto', aliases for GILBERT. At a later date KENT furnished the key to those aliases which resulted in the arrest of GILBERT, a Russian national, who had a long record with the Soviet Intelligence. GILBERT was the head of an espionage net, working out of PARIS; in addition he controlled the entire Soviet-sponsored espionage net in Western Europe. GILBERT was in touch with Arvid HARNACK, an outstanding member of the German R/K net. Shortly after his arrest in December 1942, GILBERT cooperated with the Gestapo until he escaped in February 1943. The GILBERT group operated approximately ten (10) senders, which were in touch with MOSCOW. In addition to industrial espionage and sabotage, agents successfully penetrated German Military Government offices in PARIS. GILBERT had contact with groups in the unoccupied zone of France and Portugal. The KENT, BORDO, TINO and SWISS groups worked under direct supervision of GILBERT. As a result of GILBERT's successful escape, the Gestapo probably merely skimmed the surface of the vast Soviet espionage net to which GILBERT had access.

(5) LYONS and MARSEILLES Groups: These two (2) groups operated under the supervision of GILBERT; they were only curtailed in their activities after Germany occupied Southern France in September 1943. KATZ, fnu, presumably the leader of the LYONS group, was never arrested. OTHELLO's knowledge of the activities of the groups operating in Southern France is limited, due to the fact that OTHELLO had been relieved of his duties in connection with the R/K case prior to the completion of the Gestapo investigation. It can be assumed, however, that the aforementioned groups operated on similar principles as the groups referred to in paragraphs 3 b (1), (2), (3) and (4) of this report.

(6) SWISS Group: The SWISS group concerned itself mainly with financing the Western European and German groups; in addition they supplied these groups with sabotage material. The Gestapo had collected evidence that the SWISS group maintained wireless communication with the LYONS and MARSEILLES groups. All further attempts the Gestapo made to gather information on the activities of the SWISS group remained fruitless, because of the SWISS neutrality. The R/K investigation merely established the fact that Frau Greta KUCKHOFF was in communication with LANGHOFF, a refugee who left Germany in 1934. LANGHOFF was probably the leader of the SWISS group.

(7) CHORO Group: Successful deciphering in July 1942 of one of the messages intercepted by the 'Funkabwehrstelle' in August 1941, originating from MOSCOW and destined for KENT in BRUSSELS, furnished the leads which led to the discovery of the CHORO group (cover name of the SCHULZE-BOYSEN, Arvid HARNACK espionage net), German component of the R/K espionage net. Due to the lack of trained personnel and technical facilities during the initial stages of their intelligence activities, the CHORO group, in some instances, utilized the transmitters of the GILBERT and KENT groups to forward intelligence data to MOSCOW. The discovery of the link between BERLIN and BRUSSELS finally led to the apprehension of Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN, Arvid HARNACK, and the majority of the

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active members of the CHORO group in September 1942. SCHULZE-BOYSEN, the principal figure of the CHORO group was a convinced radical of long standing, who made his first contact with a representative of the Soviet Intelligence in the person of Alexander ERDBERG, an employee of the Soviet Trade Delegation in BERLIN. ERDBERG left BERLIN in May 1941 for Russia and maintained his contact with SCHULZE-BOYSEN by wireless; however, the R/K investigation did not find any evidence indicating espionage activities of the CHORO group prior to the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Russia in June 1941. The espionage nets, though, when activated, were well established and ready to operate once called upon, since many of SCHULZE-BOYSEN's and Arvid HARNACK's communist friends held key positions within the Army and Air Force or had leading positions in civilian life. As a result, when communication lines between MOSCOW and BERLIN were completed, valuable and accurate information was immediately obtainable. The following is an example of the caliber and scope of the penetrations affected by the CHORO group: The Ministry of Trade and Commerce through Arvid HARNACK; the Air Force Ministry through Harro SCHULZE-BOYSEN; the Department of Labor through Countess Erika von BROCKDORF; Radar Research through Hans-Heinrich KUMEROW; Army and Air Force Ordnance through Johannes GRAUDENZ, who represented an aircraft company; ABWEHR through Lt. Herbert GOLLNOW and Sgt. Horst HEILMANN; Central Registry of Top Secret material for the Air Force through Col. Erwin GEHRTS; movie industry and theater through Adam KUCKHOFF, Libertas SCHULZE-BOYSEN and Guenther WEISSENBORN; RIBBENTROP's Foreign Office through Rudolf von SCHELIHA, Dr. Karl HELFERICH and Ilse STOEBE. The original members of the CHORO group were gradually reinforced by MOSCOW with Agents parachuted into Germany, who had received extensive training in Russia as wireless operators. Seven (7) of these Agents arrived shortly before the liquidation of the CHORO net and had only begun their activities. These Russian-sent Agents were all former KPD members, who had left Germany in 1933. Approximately nine (9) transmitters were found operating when SCHULZE-BOYSEN was arrested in September 1942. The execution of approximately thirty (30) key individuals out of a total of one hundred and fifty (150) arrestees broke the backbone of the CHORO espionage organization. Due to the Gestapo's success in keeping a number of wireless communication lines to MOSCOW open, later arrivals of parachute agents, who were to support the CHORO net, were apprehended before they could establish themselves.

c. Present Activities of R/K Survivors

(1) Details on the present activities of the R/K survivors, as far as they are known to this headquarters, were compiled in the form of personality reports, which are attached to this report as Annex C. Due to the fact that the survivors of the CHORO group are residing today in different parts of Germany, all outside Region V's area, no direct investigation, except that initiated by Region VIII, has been conducted as yet in this Region. However, OTHELLO was able to offer certain details with reference to the activities of R/K survivors by carefully following notices which have appeared since 1945 in German newspapers, and which make reference to surviving members of the former R/K espionage ring. The R/K members who have been executed are listed in Annex D, simply indicating their former connection to other R/K personnel.

(2) Judging by their present activities it becomes apparent that the R/K survivors can generally be grouped into the following categories:

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(a) Substantial information is available on those former R/K members who have made themselves known in public. Such personalities have held, or are still holding, positions of importance in public life and their leftist affiliations are well known. The following examples are cited: Leo SKRZYPCZYNSKI was president of the Central Administration for Industry (Zentralverwaltung fuer Industrie) for the entire Soviet Zone of Germany until the beginning of March 1948; Jan Bontjes van BEEK, president of the Art Academy in BERLIN, wrote a number of articles about art with an outspoken communistic tendency; Heinz Wolfgang LANGHOFF, once an unsuccessful actor, became director of the 'Deutsches Theater' in BERLIN in 1945; Guenther WEISSENBORN, writer and author, publishes pro-Soviet articles in all Zones; Dr. Elfriede PAUL, KPD Health Minister for Lower Saxony (British Zone) during 1946; Dr. Adolf GRIMME, Minister of Education for Lower Saxony since 1946; Prof. Werner KRAUSS, Dean of Marburg University 1945/46; SILONE, Communist Minister of Labor in Italy; Frau Greta KUCKHOFF, President of VVN for BERLIN (Association of the Persecuted Persons under the Nazi Regime), committee member of the Democratic Women's Club, member of the 'Volksrat' of the second German People's Congress. The beforementioned personalities have been referred to in the Soviet Press as anti-fascists and democrats; any mentioning of their connections with the R/K organization has been carefully avoided, especially after 1946.

(b) The never publicly mentioned nor heard of R/K members belong to the more interesting group of R/K survivors from a counter-intelligence point of view. These individuals have played in the R/K an equally important role as the beforementioned personalities, but they were not rewarded openly for their past activities. The following fall under the second category: Paul SCHOLZ, Max HUEBNER, Count Kay von BROCKDORF, Ruthild HANE, Dr. Karl HELFRICH, fnu KUPFERBERG, Hellmuth MARQUART, Victor SCHABBEL, fnu SCHLOESINGER and Heinz STREHLOW. Some of these personalities are well trained agents and it can be assumed that they are again secretly active as agents for the Soviet intelligence.

(c) The third group falls under the category of 'turned' R/K members. The following individuals are known to have become agents for the Gestapo: Fritz KENT, Helmuth FELLENDORF, Isidor SPRENGER, Albert KOENEN and Margarete BARCZA and a number of former wireless operators whose names as far as they are known, are listed in Annex C.

#### 4. Undeveloped Leads:

a. The personality reports as listed under Annex C, in many instances, lack the information as to the exact location of each individual R/K survivor. However, it is known that R/K survivors have approached their former defense lawyers making inquiries as to the fate of their former associates. Defense lawyers, judges and prosecutors, as listed in Annex B, could, in all probability, give additional information on these R/K personalities whose cases they handled.

b. Information so far available on personalities formerly connected with the GILBERT, KENT, BORDO and TIMO organization, especially needs to be supplemented. As mentioned in paragraph 3 a (3) of this report, the interrogation of former Gestapo officials (Annex A) who were connected with the investigation of the Soviet espionage net, might produce leads which are needed to locate any survivors of the Western espionage net.

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c. As is evident from the personality reports (Annex C), no leads are available on 'turned' former R/K members, except one on Helmut FELLENDORF. The location of former Gestapo personnel who handled these 'turned' agents would be of primary importance in forming the basis for any future plans in regard to the 'turned' Gestapo agents.

d. The following seems to indicate that R/K members had, as early as 1938, connections in the United States. In August 1942, Ilse STOEBE (executed) received from HERRNSTADT, fnu, in MOSCOW, through the parachute agent Heinrich KOENEN, a copy of a money transfer dated February 1938 from the CHASE NATIONAL BANK in NEW YORK to the CREDIT LYONNAIS in LYON (France) accrediting Rudolph v. SCHELIHA's account over \$6,500.00 at the BANKHAUS BAER & Co. in ZUERICH. Von SCHELIHA had not produced any information for some time and Ilse STOEBE pressed von SCHELIHA into further activity by producing a copy of the notification, by which she could prove to von SCHELIHA that he had received the beforementioned amount. As a consequence, von SCHELIHA, who was under pressure, produced several reports shortly before his arrest on 29 October 1942. These reports were transmitted through KOENEN to MOSCOW.

e. Recently, two incidents may show that there is some connection between former R/K members and the United States inasmuch as the WISCONSIN University has been mentioned twice in connection with Communist elements:

(1) In the "Stars & Stripes" edition of 3 December 1947, an article appeared entitled "Magazine reports HITLER sent U.S. girl to Death". The "Stars & Stripes" article refers to a story glorifying Mildred FISH-HARNACK as an American woman who had died as a member of a German underground movement which was published in the WISCONSIN Alumni magazine. The recipient of the report at the University of WISCONSIN might offer a lead to further investigate pro-Soviet activities in the United States of former R/K members. Frau KUCKHOFF possibly could have supplied the material for the aforementioned article, since she is a former student of the University of WISCONSIN.

(2) On 20 April 1948 the article "ITALY may be asked to cust U.S. girl who backed Reds", was published in the "Stars & Stripes". The beforementioned article reports on the pro-communist activities of Hanna ALEXANDER during the Italian election campaign. Miss ALEXANDER is a former WISCONSIN University student.

##### 5. Agent's Comments and Conclusions:

a. The undersigned Agent feels that OTHELLO, as one principal source of information in the R/K case, has been exploited to the fullest extent. Further use of OTHELLO in any operation, if initiated on the basis of this report, and reports from Region VIII is not recommended due to the fact that OTHELLO is a major target for former R/K members and their Soviet sponsors. OTHELLO's moves and activities would, in all probability, be watched closely and it can be assumed that, if OTHELLO was ever hardpressed, he might reveal his relationship to CIC in order to protect himself.

b. In spite of the fact that no concrete evidence has been obtained through OTHELLO's interrogation that any one of the survivors of the R/K is presently engaged in espionage work for Soviet-Russia, the past record of a number of R. K members would indicate that no change of their status as Soviet Agents has taken place. Furthermore, this Agent came to the conclusion that in

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several cases where the Gestapo investigation and subsequent trial could not establish any definite proof of espionage, the individuals concerned were nevertheless involved in the R/K case, as has become evident through Frau KUCKHOFF's correspondence to which this headquarters has had access.

6. Recommendations:

a. Study this report and any other present and past reports on the Subject matter thoroughly at higher headquarters to determine whether there is sufficient grounds for reopening the R/K case - this time by United States Intelligence agencies - and whether the opening of an operation designed at investigation and, finally, breaking up a possibly revived R/K net, appears justified.

b. If it is decided to start a special operation or, at least, such preliminaries as are deemed advisable to either initiate a full-size operation or eliminate the necessity for an operation, assign individual cases as listed under Annex C, wherever the individual resides in the U.S. Zone, to the respective Region for a discreet check and/or investigation, using the personality report as a basis (Annex C). Personality reports to be completed and corrected, where necessary, using utmost secrecy so that CIC's interest in the R/K is not revealed.

c. Check Annex C for R/K members who, in all probability, are not presently in the U.S. Zone. Contact British, French, Dutch and Belgian agencies if feasible and where the individual to be investigated is of sufficient importance to warrant such action.

d. Check Annex C for R/K members residing in the Soviet Zone of Germany and forward the information available on any such individual(s) to any agency which can follow leads into the Russian Zone.

e. Inquire at American and British internment camps as to the location of former Gestapo officials (Annex A) who were connected with the R/K investigation. Reinterrogate such Gestapo officials with regard to the R/K, using personality reports (Annex C) as a basis. Question Gestapo officials specifically as to the fate of former R/K personnel who were 'turned'. Consider the possibility of using a Gestapo official for the purpose of locating 'turned' R/K members. If a 'turned' R/K member can be located, such an individual may possibly be used to advantage of CIC.

f. Where possible, contact lawyers, judges and prosecutors under cover to gather additional information on R/K survivors and to find out about their present activities.

g. The leads offered by the publication of the article on Mildred FISH-HARNACK in the ALUMNI magazine of the WISCONSIN University which may have received its information from Frau KUCKHOFF, should be made the subject of thorough investigation in the United States by the FBI. It should also be called to the attention of the Agency investigating Miss ALEXANDER that the present R/K investigation seems to indicate that the University of WISCONSIN falls within the scope of any future investigation which tends to uncover illegal pro-Soviet activities in the U.S. Information regarding the activities of former University of WISCONSIN students should be exchanged with the Agency investigating Miss ALEXANDER in the light of the R/K investigation.

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h. As to OTHELLO, it is recommended that he be returned to his original custodian for reasons elaborated in paragraph 5a of this report. It is further suggested that, if and when he is released, his release be arranged in such manner that he will not come under the control of Soviet or Soviet-sponsored authorities.

i. This Agent further recommends that, if possible, close liaison be established with the British agency now handling the R/K case from the British end. This Agent feels that an eventual pooling of the results of the British R/K investigation and the contents of this report, and reports from other CIC Offices (Regions) might prove advantageous.

It is hoped that the contents of this report will contribute to the understanding of the ways and means by which Soviet Russia made all necessary preparations for the establishment of a very effective espionage net and it should, therefore, be possible with the knowledge of names and addresses of former R/K personnel, to find evidence that a similar organization has been established today in countries not under Soviet control.

*Bruno C. Richter*  
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Special Agent, CIC  
Regional Special Squad

By Officer Courier only

APPROVED: *B. J. M. Gorby*

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