

18 January 1965

SUBJECT: Elmar KEERD

1. The information in paragraph 2 is that which was received by the undersigned after a perusal of the INS, Intelligence Section, files located in Room 547, 119 D Street NE, Washington, D.C. The undersigned used the identity of [after] Office of Security, had laid on the meeting between the undersigned and Mr. Braden, Mr. McCartney, and Mrs. Byard of the INS. INS has two large volumes on Subject.

2. The following is pertinent:

a. The INS file on Subject is File #C-7433531.

b. Subject was born on 23 March 1912 in Tartu, Estonia. He indicated that he was once married to Valve KEERD. His father is August KEERD while his mother is Alma NIGUL. From 1917 to 1924 he lived at Aleksandria 43, Tartu; from 1924 to 1942 at Kastain 183, 1 Tartu; and from 1942 to 1944 at Voru, Estonia. According to the information he provided to one INS examiner under oath, Subject stated that he was in the Estonian Army until March 1947 at which time he then found work in a factory in Uddevalla, Norrtullsgatan 8, Sweden. Also under oath to an INS examiner, Subject stated that from 1936 to 1944 he had worked as a procurator in the Tartu District Court; to the same examiner he indicated that in 1945 he was in the Estonian Army on the Russian Front both in Germany and in Czechoslovakia. He further indicated that in June 1945 he made his way to the American Zone in Germany and that from June 1945 to June 1947 he was a DP and that in 1947 he was employed by the Kampenhof factory in Uddavalla, Sweden. Subject denied that he had ever been convicted of any crime.

c. He indicated that he left Estonia in late August 1944 or early September 1945, that he then served in the Estonian army under German control and was sent to Germany where he stayed from January

to May 1945. He stated that he was then interned by the Czechs to 3 June 1945 when he was sent from Czechoslovakia to Zittau in the Soviet Zone of Germany from whence he then succeeded in escaping to the American Zone on 10 June 1945. He then lived in Kemnitz, then Wurtemberg, and finally Hamburg. On 7 March 1947 he went to Sweden.

d. KEERD indicated that he had served in the Estonian Army from June 1931 to July 1932. He was then mobilized again, in the capacity of a reserve officer, on 1 March 1944.

e. KEERD is one of 69 Estonians who arrived in the USA on the vessel "Prolific" which they had purchased. They left Sweden without receiving authorization to proceed to the USA, thereby entering the USA illegally. They arrived in Wilmington, North Carolina on 20 September 1948, and were then all detained at Ellis Island on 22 September 1948 at the expense of the Government. Exclusion proceedings were initiated and a hearing was held on 30 September 1948. The finding was that KEERD, as well as others (not indicated whether all were heard at the same time), should be excluded from admission. A petition for appeal was filed and on 8 December 1948 the Commissioner of the INS affirmed the exclusion finding. However, on 10 December 1948 bond was posted for KEERD (not indicated by whom) and he was released. On 26 April 1949 KEERD was reheard and the conclusion of the INS was that he was "Inadmissible".

f. To one INS examiner, while under oath, KEERD indicated in 1948 that he had received two letters from his wife in the summer of 1947 which letters had been passed on to him from his wife through someone who had arrived in the West. In 1952, to another examiner and again while under oath, KEERD affirmed that his wife had died in August 1944. (NOTE: McCartney of INS noted these discrepancies and obvious contradictions in KEERD's statements under oath.) There likewise exists in the KEERD file a written application, bearing his signature, wherein he states that his wife had been killed in 1944.

g. KEERD indicated to an INS examiner that he considers himself "divorced" for the following reason:

At the conclusion of World War II, after the Soviets reoccupied Estonia, the Soviets reportedly "forced" all women who were husbandless or whose husbands had disappeared during WW II to "get a divorce". It is for this reason that he indicated that he was "divorced". In 1952 he indicated to an INS examiner that on 5 October 1951 he had married Lydia nee KOPWILLEM. The INS file indicates that some witnesses, who were interviewed concerning KEERD, stated that KEERD's wife had presumably died, others indicated that he divorced her, others indicated there was no proof he divorced her, while others opined that his wife was still alive.

h. The INS file indicated that in 1949 KEERD was working as a house painter with the Manhattan Water Proofing Company, 390 Pearl Street, NYC. He had worked, prior thereto, as a shipping clerk for the Charles and Co, Madison Avenue, and then for Steinway and Company, Astoria, NY.

i. As late as 28 April 1952, KEERD continued to be under parole and continued to be considered ineligible for adjustment of his immigration status under the DP Act of 1948.

j. At various times KEERD, as well as other Estonians, were the subjects of Private Bills, HR 1812, 1593, and 5177 (15 August 1951).

k. KEERD indicated that he has two brothers, Richard and Edward, both of whom were still living in Tartu.

l. To various INS examiners, KEERD, who himself is an attorney, adroitly avoided speaking about his activities from 1940 through 1944. He generalized by saying that he worked as a lawyer in Estonia. However, one INS examiner did ask him whether he had held any appointive office under Communist dominated Estonia to which KEERD replied, under oath, that he had not. (NOTE: Among the Estonians KEERD is known as the "Red Judge". It is common knowledge, and probably several hundred witnesses could be found to so state, that KEERD had been appointed by the Soviets in 1940 to be a judge, that he served during the entire period of Soviet occupation, and that in 1941 he went into hiding when the Germans arrived as he feared German

punishment at the hands of the Germans if they were to learn that he had served in the official position and had been appointed by the Soviets.)

m. Of some significance is the fact that of some 25 witnesses interviewed by the INS concerning KEERD, only 2 were Estonians; all others were Americans for whom he had worked or who knew him from his social contacts. As a result, none of these Americans knew anything about his background and all indicated that they knew nothing derogatory about him. The two Estonians indicated that they had made his acquaintance only upon his arrival in 1948 and therefore likewise knew nothing derogatory about him.

n. KEERD finally received his US citizenship in NYC on 10 May 1955. The two witnesses who appeared in his behalf were H. RAUDSEPP and A. ANDERSON.

[ SR/CI/I ]