

ALEKS KURGVEL

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CONTACT WITH COLONEL RICHARD MAASING

I used my stay in Stockholm for a courtesy visit to former Estonian Colonel K.S. diplom Richard Maasing, my old boss of long time (1934 - 1939) when he was the chief of staff and later the First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Estonian Armed Forces.

Colonel Maasing knows that I am working with the U.S. intelligence authorities ( see my reports from January and October 1952).

Aware of the restrictions laid upon persons who work in intelligence, Colonel Maasing did not ask me about my work, like I did not ask him about his doing, except his participation in editing and publication of the series of books on Estonian history from the period of WW II. However, I mentioned to Colonel Maasing that this time I am in Sweden entirely on my own, to visit my relatives, without any business assignments.

We spoke about different matters which have connection with the anti-communist struggle, the American leadership of it, and the American and Estonian parts in it.

Colonel Maasing mentioned that he has maintained quite contacts with some people whom he knew before, or whom he had to know during his work in the Estonian Army. He has seen the life of a communist teen-ager, when the communist patch was crashed in Estonia in 1924, and the man, now in the class

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circle of the communist rulers of Soviet Estonia, still remembers this, and has supplied his "saver" with good, high-level information on the situation in Soviet Estonia.

Colonel Maasing also has other persons in Estonia who know him well, and who have tried to maintain some contact with him.

Colonel Maasing has also maintained good contacts with some persons who used to work for the Estonian G 2, and who are now in different countries of the Free World.

Thank to these old contacts, and to many other, newer ones, acquired during WW II when Colonel Maasing was in good contact with Admiral Canaris and his lieutenants, Colonel Maasing has a good picture about the political, military and economic situation in today's Estonia, as well as a rich picture about the communist espionage and counter-espionage in some countries in the Free World, and about the part of the former inhabitants of Estonia in those activities.

Colonel Maasing collects this information, and hopes to use it when the time will come for action in this part of the World; when the right people will contact him and ask him to participate actively in this anti-communist struggle.

Until now such proposals have been made to him by some people whom he could not trust, whom he did not know, or whom he did not know too well, whom he had reasons to suspect in collaboration with the communists. He has worked quietly, avoiding to get lured by the provokers into foolish, hazardous operations of which but the communists would have gained.

The situation in Soviet Estonia, according to the information and understanding of Colonel Maasing, is as follows:

The life, if compared with the times prior to 1939, has changed so much that the restoration of this "old good time" is impossible and infeasible even if the communist regime would be broken. There is plenty of discontent among the Estonians, including the young people who have not lived in the free Estonia. The main spring of this discontent among the Estonians is the hatred against anything Russian. This anti-Russian hatred has gradually taken the place of the anti-communist hatred, because all the evil, including the communism, is understood being coming from the Russians.

It would not be wise to undertake any organized acts of sabotage or violence in Estonia now: nothing but heavy reprisals and sufferings for the population would be the outcome. Such acts are not necessary for creation or maintenance of the "spirit" of the Estonians.

The clandestine intelligence work in Estonia by means of sent-in agents is very difficult. The changes and the peculiarities of the life, especially of the Soviet-Estonian spoken language, are so great that even an Estonian-born agent, if he has been abroad for a few years, and if he would not be trained in the Soviet Estonian reality very thoroughly, would be recognized and detected there very quickly, as soon as he takes his first contacts. However, it is not necessary to send such agents to Estonia: there are other, less dangerous and more promising ways to get vital information

out from Estonia, about the situation there and elsewhere.

Some preparatory work for demolitions, sabotage and acts of violence in Estonia for the event of war or a period of special tension, and creation of group-nuclei for this purpose in Estonia, are quite feasible.

Soviet espionage and counter-espionage in the Free World is widely using the escapees from the Soviet Union. Some of those persons had the misfortune of being forced by the communists to sign some compromising statements before they escaped the communist-controlled countries. Others have close relatives left behind in those countries, who are like hostages in communist hands. Those escapees are under constant fear which is deepened by the communist pressures.

Class Masking divides those people into three groups:

- 1) Those who, being honest in general, but not bold enough to face the communist threats, disappeared from the scene soon after they got a possibility for re-emigration, or after the communists had renewed the contact with them in their first country of refuge. Those hide themselves from the communists as well as from their former compatriots.
- 2) Those who, being honest and bold in general, suffered under the lasting communist pressure so much that they either committed suicide or died prematurely on "heart attack".
- 3) The dangerous ones, who, because of their weakness, or their political belief, or supulosity, comply with the communist orders, stay where they are, or move where ordered to by the communists, and work clandestinely for the Soviets. From time

to time those persons are cursed by the communist radio or secret agents for their "anti-communist" attitude or for similar things, just to give them some kind of alibi in the eyes of their employers and of their unwitting friends, among whom they often play some role of national leaders. Colonel Maasing, due to his good contacts with many people from different circles, has knowledge of some such Estonians as well as of similar persons of different other nationalities.

Colonel Maasing is aware of the importance of maintaining his good contacts in the Free World as well as in Soviet Estonia. However, he admitted that he can not do this to the necessary extent, that he can not keep these vital contacts alive lastingly, because this all needs more money than he has.

When I expressed my disbelief that he has no contact with "the Americans," he denied such a contact. Colonel Maasing added that the American authorities probably have some persons Estonians and others, working with them who do not want that he, Colonel Maasing, would get into real working touch with the Americans. He mentioned that some of such people have tried to get into confidence and collaboration with him, but he, however, has politely refused this, because he fears that such an indirect contact with the American authorities, through persons whom he has some reasons not to trust, would be in the interest of the U.S.A, nor in the interest of Estonia, nor in his personal interest.

Writer's comment:

I believe that the Agency and other American authorities have good channels which supply them with information about Soviet Estonia, and which help adequately and securely in preparation of future activities there. I also believe that the Agency has good channels of information about the reliability of those Estonian-related persons who are now employed or used by the American authorities, and thus, is aware of the risks connected with the use of some of those people.

Nevertheless, aware of the high capacities of Colonel Maasing and of the need of duplication of the intelligence channels, I dare to draw with this my report a special attention upon Colonel Maasing, and I dare to advise not to neglect Colonel Maasing as one of such rich and reliable channel.

Colonel Maasing has not asked me to report about our meeting and what he had told me. Nor have I mentioned to him that I will write this report. Colonel Maasing has not mentioned to me that he would like to get in close touch with the American authorities. However, I understood from his expressions that he would be willing to cooperate with the American authorities if the contact and the conditions of cooperation would be safe and solid; and would not go through persons whom he, because of his knowledge of facts and his information, can not trust in such matters. I got the impression that Colonel Maasing trusts me fully, or he would not have told me things which I have reported here, and others more, which I do not find proper

to report without having received his consent for this and without knowing to whose hands this report would go.

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The Soviets certainly know that Colonel Maasing is one of their potential enemies. Therefore, it is probable that they have arranged dissemination of some derogatory information on Colonel Maasing. Another source for such information could be the persons belonging to the groups "one" or "three" of the escapees mentioned before, who are aware of the danger to themselves of the information Colonel Maasing has or might have on them, and who, therefore, in an attempt to save themselves, would give false or slanted information about Colonel Maasing. A third group of sources for such information could be composed of those motivated by jealousy: many people like to get into trustful contact with the American authorities and would see a formidable concurrence in Colonel Maasing.

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A few lines for characterization of Colonel Maasing. His efficiency and integrity was such that General Johan Laidoner, when still a Lt. Colonel and commander of an infantry division in the Russian Tsarist Army during WW I, chose Lieutenant Maasing for his aid-de camp. Later, in 1918, when General Laidoner was himself called to the post of the Commander-in-Chief of the Estonian Forces, he made Maasing his aid-de-camp. In 1924, when General Laidoner was recalled from the

Reserves and re-appointed the Commander in Chief during the communist putsch in Estonia, Major Maasing was again called by General Laidoner to his side, and the general retained him there in different assignments. In 1939, during the Soviet - Estonian forced "negotiations" concerning the Soviet military bases in Estonia, Colonel Maasing, in his quality of the First Deputy Chief of Staff, defended the Estonian cause so efficiently and skillfully that the Soviets turned their animosity against him personally. Unable to do anything more in this situation in Estonia, he left the country and continued to work against the communists from abroad. This his independent step and decision was silently acknowledged by General Laidoner as the only right decision Colonel Maasing could take in those circumstances.

During W. II, although in close contact with the German intelligence service of Admiral Canaris, Colonel Maasing knew to stay apart from the German National-Socialist-sponsored General Directorate of Estonia. He also knew, and knows, to stay apart from the internal political struggles of the exile-Estonians in Sweden, and in the global, worldwide dimensions, although the majority of the active Estonians in all countries of the Free World look upon him as one of the "clearest heads", and the best, balanced leader among the free Estonians, when such a leader will once be needed. Colonel Maasing is cautious in his dealings. He does not deal with his connections, not with his successes. Nor is he active in the Estonian national public enterprises; he

knows the "right measure". Knowing this measure, and standing with "both feet on the ground", he has managed to work silently without giving his enemies any possibility to compromise him in the eyes of the Swedish authorities. He knows that the Swedish authorities are on vigil against everybody and anything that could be aimed against the mighty neighbor, the Soviet Union. Despite of this Colonel Maasing finds that the best place for him to stay and work quietly on this field is just Sweden, in the close neighborhood of Estonia. He did not mention the word "cover", but I find that his working at the Estonian Mission gives him a good cover for continuation of his intelligence activity, be it on his own, small, private scale, or even on a larger, however prudently and most securely conducted, American-sponsored scale.

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I am sure that Colonel Maasing, with his long time experience in leading roles of practical intelligence and counter intelligence work against the communists in all branches of these activities, and with his abundant knowledge of persons and circumstances with his realistic, solid and calm personality, could be a great asset for the Agency in matters of practical work in Soviet Estonia, and over Soviet Estonia in other parts of the Soviet Union, and also in the field of general security of work with the Baltic emigres.

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