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20 June 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with SR/DOB Contract Employee, Aleksei KURGVEL for Possible Transfer to Project AEJAMMER

1. At my request [] Chief, SR/DOB/Admin (x-8331), arranged a meeting for me to interview Mr. KURGVEL for employment on the AEJAMMER Project. The meeting took place from 1400 to 1500 hours at KURGVEL's private office on the first floor of the building occupied by DOB. [] introduced me as [] the alias which I use for the AEJAMMER Project, told him that I wanted to discuss a job possibility in which he might be interested, and then left the room.
2. I gave Mr. KURGVEL my condolences on the death of his colleague, Mr. ROSS, who passed away two days before of a heart attack. After exchanging general remarks, I outlined the requirements of the job, explained that the duties would encompass short-term special projects from time to time, but that the bulk of the work would be translation and extraction of specific types of information from foreign language documents. I also explained to him that he would share an office with seven other persons of diverse national backgrounds, that the office would be located downtown, and that he would use military cover. He inquired whether this was the same project for which he had done some Estonian translation work in 1957, and I replied that it was. Several hundred intercept letters were taken to him in late 1957, and he prepared very high-quality reports on them for us.
3. I asked him how he would like a job of this type which would not involve travel or contact work. He indicated that this would not bother him at all and that he would be quite content with pure desk work. Apparently his job with DOB (instruction in clandestine techniques and research on Estonian reality) does not keep him particularly busy and DOB often "farms out" its contract employees including KURGVEL to OTR, TSS, and other components of the Agency. KURGVEL said that he would be very glad for an assignment which would occupy his time fully and that he would like to work on this Project if he can be released from his present job.
4. He mentioned also that since he has had to travel a good deal with his present job, he has therefore not thought it advisable to move his family to Washington from New York. His wife, Salme, has a good job there, and his younger son, Rein, is a senior at Hunter College Studying International Relations. (He has an older son, Jaan, who is stationed in the United States Army in the New York area). At any rate, he would like to bring his wife to Washington rather than having to travel to New York to see her on weekends.
5. KURGVEL appears to me to be a modest person, rather quiet, co-operative, and should fit in very well to the AEJAMMER office. He is, however, somewhat of an independent thinker and may be apt to be somewhat critical of any given project if he does not see the value in it. For example, I asked him if he would be willing to undertake the study of a new language if it were necessary for his job, and he replied that he would if there were "some sense" in this undertaking, i.e., a real need to acquire the capability and adequate time to do so. He seems to be convinced, however, of the importance of intercept work, and it seems unlikely that he should prove to be discontented with the work if he is kept busy.

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6. KURGVEL is an Estonian National, 55 years old, a naturalized United States citizen, and has been employed by the Agency since 1951. According to his file he graduated first in his class at the Estonian Military College in 1926 and served on the Estonian General Staff prior to his escape to Germany in 1940. He claims to be fluent in Estonian, Russian, German, Polish, Finnish, and French, but is a bit apologetic about his English. However, judging from his spoken English, he should be able to express himself adequately on paper for our purposes. He mentioned that he writes most of his reports in English on his present job. I was also glad to find out that he is a fair typist since we do not have a stenographer on the AEJAMMER Project. His knowledge of Estonian should prove to be valuable to the Project since we have only a very marginal capability in that language. He would appear to be an ideal person for the new slot on AEJAMMER.

7. When I left KURGVEL, I told him that I would like very much to have him in our office, and that I would recommend the transfer. No other commitments were made to him, however.

8. Afterward, I talked again with [] in the DOB/Admin office. He reiterated that they were very happy with KURGVEL's services but that they frankly did not have enough work for him to do. They will release him any time after about 1 August provided the new assignment would be a suitable one for him and we would pay him the same salary that he receives now, \$7,100 per year. I told him that I thought that the salary would be agreeable, but would have to check out this point with my superior officers.

9. As another condition to our hiring KURGVEL, DOB would like to request that he be made available to them half-time for four weeks beginning around 15 September and for a similar period in March next year (also for half-days). Apparently they need him at these times to teach a course in recruitment, for which no one else at DOB is qualified. I told [] that we would advise him if this should prove to be an obstacle.

10. In view of Mr. KURGVEL's excellent background and apparent suitability for this assignment we would like to recommend that he be hired for this Project.

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