

AIR

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SECURITY INFORMATION

MEMA 05569

Chief, SR
Chief, EE
Chief of Station, Frankfurt

14 May 1952

REDSOX/LCHOMELY

Transmittal of Biographical Information.

Ref: WASH-38920, Para 3.

1. Aleksai KURGVEL's personal history statement in the original and in translation is hereby forwarded to you in answer to your request. Background information was previously forwarded as enclosure no. 2 to LIO CMGPG (dated 21 February 1951). Details on KURGVEL's war-time experiences can be found in the attachments to MEMA-09100, and MEMA-08593, (CMGWI-1008).

2. PRQ Part II, not required by DYCLUCK clearance procedures in 1951 and consequently never written, is being prepared and will be forwarded to you.

Approved:

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Attachment to MGBA

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Aleksel Kurval

Munich, 17 October 1951

Personal History Statement

1. I was born on 13 September 1904 in Kuressaare, Estonia.
2. My father, Johann (written in most documents in the Russian fashion as "Ivan" or also "Iwan") died in Kuressaare in 1926. Until the Russian Revolution, he worked for the district police administration in Kuressaare as a messenger and fireman, and later, when Estonia became independent, worked as a storekeeper for the district administration of Kuressaare. At the same time, in order to support his large family of 6 children, he worked as a gardener and in a bakery. His large strawberries, his well-cared for garden, and his particularly good rye bread were sought after by resort visitors to Kuressaare.
3. My mother Maria, nee Toompu, cared for the household and the children. She remained in Kuressaare when I left in September (or the beginning of October) 1944. I learned indirectly that she had died in Kuressaare in 1945 or 1946.
4. My sisters. Olga Kurval, born in 1898, remained with my mother in Kuressaare in October 1944. She had been secretary for the school affairs division of the district administration of Kuressaare for a long time. Kaenia Kurval, born in 1899, was inspectress in a girls high school (gymnasium) in Viljandi for a long time. In September 1944 she fled to Sweden where she now is working for an insurance company in Stockholm. Sinaida (Ida) Kurval, born in 1902, and Elisaveta (Liis) widowed as Kereman, born in 1906, died along with four of Liis' children when the ship in which they were attempting to flee from Kuressaare in October 1944, was torpedoed. Ida had been an employee of the Estonian police administration in Kuressaare, and Liis had been a teacher until her marriage. Nadesda (Lootus), born in 1909, married Maripuu, was a local school teacher. She fled with her husband and three children from Kuressaare to Sweden in September 1944. She is now a housewife and teacher in an Estonian school in Enkoping.
5. Education: In fall of 1911 I entered a private school in Kuressaare. In fall of 1912 I was transferred to a public grammar school in Kuressaare called the "Ministeeriumi Kool" (ministerial school). In summer of 1914 I passed the entrance examination for the Gymnasium in Kuressaare. As the Gymnasium was evacuated from Kuressaare to Wologda because of the war, I studied one more year in the above mentioned grammar school, and later studied at home, and two years later passed the finishing examinations for the second and third classes of high school respectively. In late summer of 1915, our family was forcefully evacuated from Kuressaare (as my father worked for the police). This lasted while my father was in St. Petrograd (or was Leningrad then called Petersburg), when we were brought back to Kuressaare as the Island of Saaremaa was not yet occupied by the Germans as the Russians had feared.

During the first German Occupation I studied in a German Gymnasium and later, when the German troops had retreated and an Estonian Gymnasium was opened again, in the same Gymnasium in which I had passed the finishing examinations in 1923.

In August 1923, I passed the official examinations and was accepted in the Technical Division of the Military School (Kriegsschule) in Tallinn. Until that time I had lived in our own house in Kuressaare. The address at first was "Puschkini Street no. 2," and later when the streets were renamed was "Kitsbergi Street no. 4."

6. Service in the Estonian Army after Completing Military School:

February-May 1926 in signal battalion in Tallinn as radio wireless operator.
June-August 1926 transferred to the staff of the 2nd Infantry Division in Tartu, September 1926 back in Tallinn.
October 1926 to April/May 1929, transferred to the staff of the first Infantry Division in Narva where I had to take command of the signal unit assigned to that Division.

On 25 (27 according to the church calendar) October 1928 I was married to Miss Salme EPLER, born in 12 January 1909 in Narva, who had studied in Tartu University for one year after completing Gynasium. Her parents, Karl EPLER and Ida, nee LIBLIK, were small merchants in Narva. After the evacuation of Narva in the fall of 1943 or spring of 1944, she lived with her relatives in the district of Tartu. Their whereabouts after the new Russian occupation in the fall of 1944 is unknown.

In connection with my marriage, I left the Greek-Catholic (Orthodox) faith for the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran church in Narva. My wife was the only child of her parents. I did this to comply with their wishes and to avoid any conflicts in the family in the future. The change was not difficult for me as I am a believer in God in principle, but do not make any great distinction between the sects of the Christian faith.

In February 1929 I was commissioned a first lieutenant (ober Leutnant). In Narva I lived as a youth on Posti Street no. 50 and on Moonaladu Street, and when married on Tehase Street no. 6. In Tartu I lived on Tahe Street with my sister Kaenia, who was then studying in Tartu (subletted from LIBLIK).

From April/May 1929 until April (?) 1932 I was stationed in the Military Academy in Tallinn, and went through the entire course of the academy passing the finishing examinations. I took a 4 to 6 weeks supplementary course for Intelligence officers in Tallinn. Residence: Tallinn-Bonnie, Parnu maantee 29. From summer of 1932 till fall of 1933 I was in the Operational Division of the General Staff in Tallinn.

From fall of 1933 to January 1934 I worked as assistant to the Chief of the Operational Division in Staff d.l. of the Infantry Division in Rakvere, residence Poska Str. From January 1934 to July 1940, I worked in the Second Division of the General Staff in Tallinn, first as officer on call, and later as director of Subdivision "A" (Foreign and General Questions).

On 24 February 1934 I was commissioned Hauptmann. Residences in Tallinn: Kuu Str. 3, Paikese Str., Kaupmehe Str. 4, Kopli Str (in the "Red Kaserne") and last Paldiski Str. 24. On 3 July 1940, the Russians released the order that I should be removed from the IInd Division of the General Staff. No one gave me a reason for this. I presume that it was because I had categorically refused to accept the Russians' offer to work as their agent on 24 June 1940, and had not changed my opinion during the time given me in which to think over the offer. Therefore I fled with my family to Germany. In addition to my wife, my family consisted of our two sons, Jaan, born on 23 January 1931 in Tallinn, and Rein,

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born on 4 May 1939 in Tallinn. We were assisted in our escape by Hauptmann Korner and Kapt.-Ltn. Callarius, German military assistants and Marine Attachees in Tallinn respectively, who made the offer to me themselves, and whose offer I accepted on the advice of my chief only after having learned of the Russian order.

The escape was made by sea on the freighter "Thalde" through the Kiel Canal to Hamburg, where we were received by an officer of the German Military Intelligence Office and brought to Berlin. We were quartered in a Pension on the Luzow-Ufer (near the Tirpisafer). The day I arrived I reported to Oberst FIEKNERBROCK and Oberstleutn Colonel SCHOLTE, whom I had known from my work in the Second Division, and asked them to assist me in fighting against the Russians for the liberation of my country. This assistance was promised me, but for the purposes of camouflage, my family and I had to disappear from Berlin for a certain period of time in order that the Russian Military Attache in Berlin, General TOUFINKOFF, who knew me earlier when he was an attache in Estonia, would not recognize me and so that he would not learn of my flight to Germany.

8. From July to August 1940, for approximately 30 days, I lived with my wife and children in Mich bei Karlsruhe with false documentation stating that I was an East Prussian merchant named Alexander KURBEL, living with my Estonian wife and children.

9. In August I was able to return to Berlin. I was offered German citizenship in order that I could be put on the German economy. I refused the offer. After being subjected to pressure over a long period of time by Krv. Kapitän WIECKMANN, who had tears in his eyes, but who was unable to bring me to accept the offer, I accepted his offer of a false German passport which otherwise had true data on it, in order that I could be placed in I.G. Farben.

From 1 September 1940 to June 1941, I worked as a "Scientific CO-worker" in the National Scientific Division of I.G. Farben in Berlin, Brunnenstrasse. My work consisted of studies of Russian technical literature and newspapers in order to obtain information on Russian industry and to put together reports from that information. At the same time that I was working with I.G. Farben, I located in many camps "Volkdeutschen" "Resettled" from the Baltic countries in January/February 1941, who for the most part were really Estonians or Latvians. I was trying to locate through these people Estonians who were voluntarily willing to work for the liberation of Estonia in the war which had begun shortly before. On these trips I saw how badly the Estonians influenced by the German Nazi-propaganda which aimed at making them "100 per cent German." In order to fortify the attitude of these Estonians, I obtained in April a confidential pamphlet which I disseminated in these camps to the Estonians needing help. My former Estonian Chief, Oberst SAARSEN, who was then also living in Berlin as a refugee, gave me permission to use his name also in this summons.

10. In June 1941, I obtained a release from I.G. Farben and traveled under my own name, but with the false German travel document with a legal Finnish visa to Helsinki, Finland in order to work actively for the liberation of Estonia from there. My work consisted of the instruction of Estonian volunteers who were willing to go to Estonia as agents and contact people, and also the direction of the radio communications with such persons. I, as well as my people, was given clothing from the Finnish Communications Division of the General Staff, which later also provided the technical equipment. I lived at first in various hotels in Helsinki, later living with the team in Soko about 30 kilometers from Helsinki.

11. In the beginning of September, 1941, immediately after the liberation of Tallinn, I flew to Tallinn. My work remained the same as before. Later the following tasks were added to my work: the instruction of new men, the communications with Estonians exiled from Estonia to Russia, and, the very last, the instruction of volunteer Russian agents, who were sent deep behind the Russian front lines. This work lasted until July 1944.

In Tallinn I lived in various places, a longer time in Koidula Street and lastly in Parvu Street no. 27, to which I also was able to bring back my family from Berlin in summer of 1942. In connection with the instruction of the people I was for the short interval of time on the Syvari Front in Karelia and on the Leningrad Front and near Rovaniemi in Finland.

Conclusion to Para 9:

{ After returning from Karlsbad, I lived in various furnished rooms in Berlin, in a Hotel on Mollendorfpfatz, on Bahmbergerstreet, Berantesgardener Street no. 5, and lastly, because we had taken a refugee child to live with us, we obtained a place to live in Kaiseralle no. 78.

12. Throughout the entire period of time my support was double: (from June 1941) on the one side the German Intelligence Office with whose help I was able to leave Berlin, and on the other side the Finnish units to which I was assigned. These units were: the German, "KOF" (Kriegs or Kampf Organization Finland), later the auxiliary unit in Tallinn, then "Abwehrstelle I" in Tallinn, and at the last the "Aufklarungskommando 102" in Tallinn. The Finnish units were the Communications Division of the General Staff, and later, when I was already in Tallinn and had a position as a Finnish officer and, in consideration of the great "Interest" of the German Sicherheits Dienst in all Finnish Officers vis à vis Estonia the position was renewed and legalized officially, "the Office of Foreign Volunteers in the Finnish Army."

13. In the middle of July Aufklarungskommando 102 left Estonia. As I wanted to fight only in Estonia or Finland, I left this kommando and reported to a Finnish liaison officer in Tallinn, Oberstleutnant INGBLIUS. Through him I obtained an order of the Finnish General Staff releasing me from the Finnish Army. I followed this order and was released in the middle of August.

14. On 15 August 1944, after I had lost the protection of the Finnish uniform, I was forcibly mobilized as an Estonian officer in Tallinn by the Germans in Tallinn. I was made liaison officer on the Estonian border, and made responsible to the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army Division "Narva" and was later also responsible to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army Corps operating in Southern Estonia, and sent to the front. My work consisted of clarifying the various misunderstandings between the Estonian units and the German Staff, which were usually falsely informed by the German liaison officers.

15. On 19 September 1944, my family left Tallinn. As I did not want to be a deserter in the eyes of the Estonian troops which were still at the front and whose liaison officer I had been, I refused to take the trip and remained behind alone. Because of this delay, my family was no longer able to escape to Sweden, although we had already sent a portion of our trunks to Finland. Therefore my family had to escape to Germany again.

16. On 21 September 1944, I worked with the Commander-in-Chief of the army division "Narva" on the instructions of the new Estonian regime which had been organized

in the mean-time to delay the departure of the German troops so that we Estonians would be able to organize our own strength. The work was without result as the general (BRASSER) had strict orders to retreat from Estonia immediately. The only thing that I was able to achieve was an order to the German Kommandant in Tallinn not to spring the electric water works supply as the Germans had originally planned to do.

17. My political activities in Estonia during the War:

In April/May 1943 I gave an extensive military-political report on the camp in Estonia to my former Captain GRILLARIUS, then my German chief. In this report I condemned the tremendous political mistakes the Germans had made in Estonia and demanded the restoration of Estonian independence and the organization of Estonian troops under real Estonian leadership. In order that this memorandum would have the desired effect, I gave a new memorandum to the Finnish General Staff and to the "German General of the Finnish Oberkommando." In February 1944, in connection with this step, I was relieved from my former work and given leave to go to the higher Intelligence officer (Ic) of the German Heeresgruppe Nord in order to obtain an answer for my step. The result was, that the leaders of the Heeresgruppe understood the needs of the Baltic countries, but were unable to carry through. In July 1944 I again sought the understanding and assistance of the Heeresgruppe Nord, although also without result. This time in consequence a revolt which failed was attempted and we naturally were not recognized on the grounds of this revolt.

18. On 22 September 1944, I left Tallinn along with the last convoy of German ships. However, I went only as far as Liepaja, where I again sought the assistance of the Heeresgruppe Nord.

19. On 30 September 1944, I returned to Estonia, to Kuressaare, and from there tried to help the Estonians who had gathered on the western coast of Estonia.

20. On 3 October 1944 I flew from Kuressaare again in the direction of the Heeresgruppe Nord, with the fixed idea of returning with help. However, I was not allowed to return, as in the meantime the Baltic islands had already been occupied by the Communist troops.

21. October 1944--4 May 1945 I worked with the "Frontaufklarungs Kommando 166 (M). In order not to come under the control of the Kommandos of the Waffen SS, which was responsible for Baltic soldiers delivered from Estonia and Latvia, and in order not to lose my homeland entirely, I sought out my old friends on my return trip and used them in order to get into Kommando 166 (M). This Kommando worked for the Marine (Navy-M) in the Baltic Sea, and still had some contacts with Estonia. I myself took on the task, secretly, of sending back to Estonia such people who would be ready and in a position at the end of the war to work with the western powers for the liberation of Estonia. The preparations went well, and well-chosen and well-prepared people were sent. However the attempt to make contact with the American authorities in Elbebogen bei Wendemark in April 1945 failed.

22. On 4 May 1945, I came through the front and reported to the British troops I met in Hamburg. I reported my entire work to two British intelligence officers and asked for them to undertake to make contact with the people who had been sent. Probably this was too risky for the English. I went through various prisons, internment camps, and a rehabilitation camp until I was released in August 1946.

23. In August 1946 I rejoined my family in Oxford Camp bei Dragahn/Dannenberg. I do not have any knowledge of any use that was made of the work I had prepared, and I do not believe it was used.

24. Until spring, 1947, when all my men had been released by the British and had been rehabilitated by the German authorities, I still had certain contact with the British Intelligence Service. I then broke this connection.

24. 16 September 1947 to 20 October 1948 in DP Camp "Kungla" in Stolzenau/Weser, as interpreter, and later as director of the camp offices, at which time I was elected chairman of the camp committee.

25. October 1946—15 September 1947 I lived and worked in the office of DP Camp Oxford in Dragahn bei Dannenberg/Elbe.

27. 21 October 1948—15 September 1949 in DP Camp "Essex" in Lingen/Ems, as office director and deputy camp director, at which time I was elected a member of the camp committee.

28. From 15 September 1949 I was in the emigration camp Wentorf, with the aim of emigrating to America; however I was held back first by the DP commission as a former soldier, and later by the INS.

29. In Spring 1950, the British Intelligence Service sought further contact with me, and on the basis of their offer I flew to London where I remained one week. I immediately reported this affair to the "Senior Investigator" Mr. D.W. Gibson in the US DPC in Wentorf. Nothing came of this contact because the English openly stated that they could not guarantee the safety of my family (in the case of any particular mishaps) and that they could not help my family emigrate. I did not dare and will not leave my family in the lurch, and therefore must be concerned about the possibilities of emigration.

30. On 1 September 1950 my son Jaan emigrated from Wentorf to the USA as a student with a scholarship in the Agriculture College, Clemson, S.C. He is still studying in the same college.

31. At the end of 1950, I was elected the chairman of the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church group in Wentorf and charged with the leadership of the Estonians in Camp Wentorf.

32. In December 1950 I was offered work with the American authorities by the Estonians, and gave my approval in principle to this offer.

33. In February 1951 contact was made with me by the Americans, and I reaffirmed my willingness to work together, if my family could emigrate to the USA and I could later follow them. The prospect of certain help was held out to me in case my employment should be taken on for a longer time.

34. In the beginning of April 1951 I learned from the US DP Commission in Wentorf that I had no prospects of emigration to America. It was recommended to me that I use the opportunity that I then had of emigrating to Canada.

35. In April, only a few days later, when I was preparing to go to the Canadian emigration camp, I was informed by the US DP Commission that I could not emigrate to America and therefore I should not go to the Canadian emigration camp.

- a. Military attache Major, Cav. Gen. Staff William E. SHIPP
- b. Military attache Major G.S. Gustav B. GUENTHER
- c. Consul, or Consul General, CARLSON

The third and last Military attache, Herr Major HUTHSTEINER (?), was only with us for a very short time, and I could hardly remember him, therefore I did not name him. After the war, when I was a DP, I also tried to meet Herr SHIPP and Herr GUENTHER (around July 1947).

I learned from a trusted source, Herr TATTAR, a former Estonian diplomat, now in South America, that Herr GUENTHER, who became a Major General had been killed by a bomb burst in London during the war. I reestablished contact with Herr SHIPP through the same Herr TATTAR, while Colonel SHIPP was Military and later Army attache in Baghdad (1949).

On the advice of Colonel SHIPP I sent a letter to Colonel Robert A. SCHOW, Deputy Director of Intelligence, EUCOM, but received no answer from it; probably the Colonel was no longer in Germany, as I heard later from Colonel SHIPP. A second letter written to the same office address also remained unanswered.

My former Estonian chiefs, Colonel Richard MAASING, the first deputy of the General Staff Chief until 1939, and Colonel Wilhelm SAARSEN, Chief of the Second Division of the General Staff until July 1940, are now living in Stockholm, Sweden.

44. In 1948, I tried to send a confidential memorandum on the fighting of Communism to the higher American authorities (two copies, addressed to the "Secretary of State of the USA" and the "Chief of the General Headquarters of the USA Army." In connection with this I visited the US General Consulate in Bremen. The visit did not bring any results, but one of the copies of the memorandum was lost in the process.

45. Associations: From fall 1933 to January 1934, I was a member of the Union of Estonian Freedom fighters. Since 1947/48 I have been a member of the World YMCA.

Additions to certain paragraphs:

- 25 and 26, about my "eligibility."
- also 27 and 28.

Before I was permitted to go to my family in the DP Camp Oxford, I was instructed by the British "Intelligence" not to speak about my secret work during the war to the UNRRA, which was managing the camp. They feared that the Russians would seek me out when they heard that such a man was there. During the first UNRRA "screening" in Camp Oxford in 1946 or 1947, I wrote in my personal history questionnaire, that in 1944 I was mobilized as an officer in the German army. The eligibility officer, an American named Miss WHITKOR (or WHITEHORE) gave me back the questionnaire and advised me that this "was badly written." Unfortunately I could not use this good advice, as I had come as a "prisoner of war" and therefore had to give my military service.

26. In December 1947, I had to submit a written request in support (CM/1 Form) of the P.C. I.R.O. On the basis of this request in Spring of 1948, I underwent an oral "screening" interview and was found eligible except that I gave false data or I would have had to reveal my secret employment.

27. In summer of 1949, a new "CM/1 Form" was filled out by me by the IRO in Hannover, in which the clerk who was occupied with this, was implicit in wanting

to change the data about our present whereabouts (I had put earlier "without permanent residence"). This was then also done, and I signed the formula and certified that all the data it contained was correct. I did this with the best intentions, as I had already been in contact with Colonel SHIPP and was looking for the correct way to state the real truth to the American authorities. I had not been called to the eligibility officer, and the eligibility stamp had already been routinely stamped on the blank and the document had been signed by the Eligibility officer.

28. In October 1949, when I was called for the first time to the Investigator of the US DP Commission in Wentorf, Mr. BRÄGER, I gave him the same data as that I had written and earlier sent to Colonel SHIPP, and which was only for American offices and was written for their confidential use. Mr. BRÄGER, however, without having warned me, brought me right to the IRO Eligibility officer, gave him my written report, and spoke about controlling my emigration by denying it officially. It was only chance and my good fortune that this Eligibility officer from the IRO was a more honest and courageous man; on my request he agreed "not to have seen" my report, and gave it back to the Senior Investigator of the US DPC Mr. GIBSON. On my request Mr. GIBSON marked my affair "confidential" (I do not know to what degree) and treated it accordingly.

5. In the winter of 1918/1919, during the Communist revolt on the Island Saaremaa, as a 14 year old boy I made a "service on the front" and during this froze my big toes. When my father heard about this "service," he wanted to beat me soundly, but somehow my "heroism" remained unpunished.

43 & 44. In fall of 1947 I made a trip to the American Zone on the occasion of the Estonian song festival in Augsburg. There I sought out several of my friends who were then working in American Labor companies. I was also in Frankfurt/M. I went in civilian clothes, and showed my Estonian army pass in the EUCOM district. I wanted to find an organization which could give me the address for Herr GUENTHER or for Herr SHIPP, or which could send a letter to Herr GUENTHER through the American military postal service, as I did not want to trust this letter to the German postal service. There an interesting thing happened; the sentry in the entrance hall by the main entrance did not want to recognize my Estonian pass, and let me wait and called the subofficer of the watch. Then we three studied geography, politics and history. The result was, that the subofficer wanted to let me through, while the sentry, who was however cunning, and appeared to me to be red politically, remained stubborn and would not let me through. The sub-officer brought me to the night watch officer, to whom I presented my request and showed pictures of Major GUENTHER and Major SHIPP. The Lieutenant also thought that I should be allowed to enter as the United States had not recognized the annexation of the Baltic states. However, in order that I would have no troubles with the post, he personally brought me through to the correct office. There they informed me with regret that they could not accept such writings, and that only the Consulate General could. I also received the general address of the "Adjutant General, War Department" through which office the letter would be forwarded without fail if the addressee were in the service of the US Army.

I was in the consulate in Frankfurt on two occasions and spoke with one officer. Although he let me return, he also could not help me, to undertake to forward the letter. Then I visited once more the American defense or intelligence office, unfortunately I can no longer remember in what city this was, I must have destroyed the address. As I had received assurances that this was a completely reliable office I permitted the letter to be read through. The official even filled out a card and took a photograph of me (in my Estonian uniform), but this office

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also refused to take the writing. Then I burned the writing and sent a short letter through the German post to Major General G.S. Gustav B. GUENTHER, c/o Adjutant General, etc. After two months this letter came back to me with many stamps stating "unable to identify as an officer." The first letter, which was not accepted, had the same theme about which I wrote later as I reported in paragraph 44.

I have made no copy of this "Lebenslauf" nor have I kept notes. Sorry that the writing has become so long, and that working with it will be correspondingly long and tiresome, but I was asked to write down everything I could.
Concluded on 18 October 1951.

(Signed)
A. Kargval

My Documents:

1. Estonian passport, no. 527286, issued by Police District No. 1 in Narva, Estonia, on 11 January 1927 under registration no. 678.
2. Estonian passport issued by the Chief of the Second Division of the General Staff ("sojavagede stasp") on 19 June 1937, no. 375.
3. Estonian "temporary Passport" issued by the Estonian Legation in London on 30 April 1948, no. 007127/349.
4. German Kennkarte (British Zone) no. AQ 111053, issued by official "TLI" in the district of Wentorf; has no date of issue.

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