

7 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: SR/ACOP

SUBJECT: Michael and Katherine MARLAK

1. The background of this case is not easily reconstructed. Neither AEQUOR nor AEPRIMER files provide additional information, nor does the MIERLAK 201. Michael MARLAK's 201 contains SR/10 paperwork for a REDSKIN POA involving himself. The dates of the clearance papers run from 4 February to 14 October 1959. (The MARLAKS took their trip in July 1959.) Apparently MIERLAK spotted Michael MARLAK in late 1958 as a potential REDSKINER, and [redacted] of DOB, the AEQUOR case officer, turned the lead over to SR/10. In a memorandum for the record on 3 March 1959, [redacted] reported that MIERLAK told him MARLAK was planning his trip to the USSR already, and it would be difficult for him to change his itinerary later to coincide with our (this agency's) desires. [redacted] wrote that he relayed this information to SR/10 on 2 March 1959. This memo implies that MARLAK was making his travel plans and carrying them out quite independently, at least of this agency, if not of MIERLAK, and the operation might have originally been conceived as a pick-a-back. The fact that the MARLAKS left for the USSR without any apparent Agency direction again strongly suggests that they had their own plans, were not depending on an Agency subsidy and that the demand for reimbursement of travel expenses might have been an after-thought on their part, perhaps even with MIERLAK's collusion.

2. [redacted], then the SR/10 responsible officer, now of IO, could recollect nothing about the case. [redacted], then DC/SR/10, could not offer complete clarification, but did say that things had gotten out of joint because the PA, MIERLAK, had over-extended his authority and had made the MARLAKS commitments he had no right to make. No one can explain why the MARLAKS actually took their trip in July without any apparent Agency direction, but it is certain that either MIERLAK, the MARLAKS, or both were acting very high-handedly. Thus, it seems that the PA, MIERLAK, was far out of line and that the responsibility for the affair is primarily his, with the Agency being least culpable of the three parties. This analysis only supports what MIERLAK himself has admitted in writing.

3. In answer to Acting Chief, SR's question regarding MIERLAK's current status: MIERLAK's relationship with this agency was terminated several years ago. While he might hold some position with the BNR, that group no longer receives a regular subsidy from SR.

[redacted]
Chief, SR/3 [redacted]

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