

DISPATCH

SECRET

ECMA-11876

TO: Chief of Station, Vienna
FROM: Chief, SR Chief, EE
Chief of Station, Germany Chief of Base, Frankfurt

Unknown
FF 01/1181

Chief, Munich Base *M. S. L.*

17 September 1959

LCIMPROVE/CARSTINA, Operations
Ernst KERNMAIER

RE: "4-3" - (CHECK "X" ONLY)
 MARKED FOR INDEXING
 NO INDEXING REQUIRED
INDEXING CAN BE JUDGED BY QUALIFIED HQ DESK OFFICER

See paragraph 4

REFERENCES:

ECMA-11876, 1 April 1959

1. Reference requested traces on

Ernst KERNMAIER (or KERNMAYER, KERNHEILER)
DOB ca. 1923
POB Austria
Residence: Oberaltaich, Austria

CARSTINA has now reported fully on RE: "4-3". Sources previously had known only that he was one of CARSTINA's cover agents. Ernst KERNMAIER was the principal agent in the RSHA Amt IV radio play-back operation entitled "Sinnspiegel Alpentone", which the Amt IV SW specialist Johann SANITZER was running against the Soviet IS from Vienna during World War II. SANITZER and CARSTINA were engaged in the same type of radio play-back operations against the Soviet services under the auspices of the Gestapo, Amt IV of the RSHA, during the war.

2. Munich Base files contain only the original SANITZER interrogation, LSX-33, dated July 1945 and performed by the KUTNER SJJ in Salzburg, and EAVA-11814 of 9 October 1956 which forwarded the Austrian police debriefing of SANITZER when the latter returned from Soviet imprisonment. [] wrote in 1950 a fairly extensive study of all the SANITZER-directed radio play-backs against the Soviet services which is on file in Vienna but not available in Munich. Our traces on KERNMAIER are:

a. LSX-33 of July 1945 quotes SANITZER as saying that KERNMAYER or KERNMAIER SCHWEGGER was the first of the Austrian Schutzbundkinder returned to Austria by the Soviets as an agent. He was apprehended by SANITZER's Gestapo officers in April 1943 and SANITZER mounted a radio play-back operation against the "NKVD" using him as the principal agent. The operation was one of SANITZER's more successful ones. In 1944 when the Red Army was advancing on Vienna, SANITZER was ordered by the RSHA to use his double agents as penetrations of the Russian lines. The double agents were to send messages (by radio) to the German Frontaufklarungsgruppen. This plan was never carried out and KERNMAIER was released in order to turn himself over to the Red Army.

b. EAVA-11814 of 9 October 1956 adds little to the original SANITZER interrogation. SANITZER told the Austrian police that KERNMAIER was originally from Steiermark, was a Schutzbundkind and after his release by the Germans in April 1945 he went over to the Russians.

3. CARSTINA has provided the following information on Subject:

a. KERNMAIER, Ernst: DOB circa 1923; POB Austria. I became acquainted with him in prison (USIA) and he has been a good friend. At present he is living in Hallein and is working in a business. His father was a Socialist and later a Communist. When the Socialist revolution started during 1934 in Wien-Hofburg, his father was imprisoned because of his participation in the revolution. His father turned over the eleven-year-old Ernst KERNMAIER to be taken to Moscow to be educated (Communist). These children became known as the Schutzbundkinder. The boy Ernst was placed in the home for the Austrian Schutzbundkinder upon reaching Moscow. He attended school with Wolfgang LEONHARD, author of "Child of the Revolution". LEONHARD gives a detailed description of the

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Schutzbundkinder home in his book. KERNMAIER was educated there and when World War II started he was trained for agent work in Austria. He was dropped into Austria by parachute, but his agent career was very short because he was captured shortly after reaching Vienna (Comment: April 1943, according to LSI-33). His parents, both Communists, were in a German concentration camp. His parents are both still living.

b. The German Staatspolizei, specifically the chief Kriminalrat SANITZER, released KERNMAIER during the last days of the war. KERNMAIER was picked up by the Red Army and received a ten year prison sentence in the USSR, the minimum sentence for a Soviet agent who allowed himself to be captured and did not commit suicide.

c. I met KERNMAIER in Camp No. 5 of Inta during December 1951. Inta No. 5 was the medical camp and KERNMAIER was working as nurse there. He was released from that job which was, relatively speaking, a good job in the Soviet labor camps about the same time that I was released from quarantine in No. 5. We were both assigned to Inta Work Camp No. 3. He worked in the mines, one of the worst jobs, without being able to ameliorate his situation, until September or October 1954. Quite unexpectedly he was moved to a staging area. His ten-year sentence would have been completed in 1955. He would have been released earlier in any case because he had earned extra time through his good behavior and maximum work quota (Comment: Source is referring to the Soviet system in the labor camps whereby prisoners could reduce their sentences through full-filling work quotas).

d. KERNMAIER is a very modest and introspective man and had a very small circle of good friends in the camp. He had a good reputation among the Germans and other nationals in the labor camp. In spite of his "dialectical materialism" education, he loved music and the arts and is well informed in these fields. I was told by a person who had talked to him when he returned from the Soviet Union that he was astonished that the Russians had not approached (i.e., for an intelligence mission) before he left the Soviet Union. He had been very afraid that they would. He was reportedly offered a well paid position by the Austrian Communist Party upon his return if he would work with the Party. He refused this, according to what I have heard, and I do not doubt that he did refuse the offer. At present he has no interest whatsoever in intelligence or Communist Party work. He is a very worthwhile person who suffers even today from his past which was due to events beyond his control and to inexperience.

4. We believe most of the above information was given to UPSWING during the period UPSWING was talking to CARETINA (For Headquarters: Part of the above is contained in the material attached to EGFA-19090, of 26 November 1957.). We have no information as to whether UPSWING passed it to their Austrian liaison. We would be interested in learning whether Austrian liaison sources have ever passed any type of returnee debriefing on KERNMAIER to VOB. Reference requested the same information on Hermann STLUKA and, as yet, we have received no reply to Reference from VOB.

5. CARETINA does not mention KERNMAIER's double-agent role under Amt IV control. He will be questioned about this because he knew SANITZER and was familiar, at least in outline, with some of the SANITZER play-backs. From CARETINA's report, it would appear that KERNMAIER did not talk about his double-agent career. CARETINA is still in contact with KERNMAIER whom he regards as a good friend.

Approved: _____

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