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APPENDIX D

GREGOR KERSCHE, ALOISIA (LOUISE) SOUCEK, HILDEGARD MRAZ (MRAZ)

(FUNKSPEIL LENDWURM)

1. On 3/4 January 1944 three members of a Comintern team were arrested in Vienna by the police, Gregor KERSCHE, Aloisia SOUCEK and Hildegard MRAZ. The team had been dropped by parachute in the vicinity of Warsaw on 27 June 1943 and travelled to Vienna in July 1943. SOUCEK and MRAZ were the radio operators, KERSCHE the captain of the team. The two women had attempted to re-assemble and repair their radio apparatus but claimed that they had been unable to make contact with Moscow although they had received Moscow's call signal.
2. Gregor KERSCHE, alias Johann FIRKER, born 11 May 1892 in Sutschach, Klagenfurt district, formerly an Austrian citizen, machinist by profession, was the son of Rochus KERSCHE deceased and Margarethe, nee STANGL, living near Klagenfurt. He was one of eight children. Of his brothers and sisters he reported that Helene MODRITSCH, nee KERSCHE, lived near Klagenfurt; Theresia SCHNEIDER, nee KERSCHE, apparently was living in North Italy; Barbara GANSER, nee KERSCHE, address unknown; Josef KERSCHE, butcher, probably lived in Sutschach; Albert KERSCHE, farm laborer, probably lived in Sutschach.
3. In 1914 Gregor KERSCHE became a member of the Social-Democratic Party. During World War I, 1917, he was taken prisoner by the Russians and became a member of the Communist Party. From 1917 until 1919 he was a member of the P/W Committee and recruited for the Russian Army or Red Army among the P/Ws. He returned to Kaernten in 1919 and worked for the Communist Party in political recruitment. From 1929 until 1935 he worked on the Central Committee of the CP in Vienna as director of the Rural Section. He returned to Russia in 1935 where he worked as a reporter in the Proviintern (Trade Union International) in Moscow. From that time until he was given his agent assignment at the end of 1941 he was employed in Odessa. KERSCHE had married Katharina MESCERAK in 1921 in Austria and married for the second time, 1937, in Odessa, Anna Prokofebna DULDIER.
4. From the end of 1941 until the middle of 1943 KERSCHE attended the party school in Ufa near Moscow. On 27 June 1943 he with his radio operators, SOUCEK and MRAZ took off by plane from Moscow and landed by parachute near Warsaw. From Warsaw he traveled by train via Breslau to Vienna, using the name of Johann FIRKER. Arriving in Vienna about 10 July 1943, he established contact with Irma MACHALEK, Koppreitgasse 10, 4th Fl, Door 5, Vienna 12, and with Rosa MEKISKA, Karnstr. 17, Vienna-Rodaun, where SOUCEK and MRAZ were living. KERSCHE ordered the two women to assemble transmitting and receiving equipment in order to establish communication with Moscow. KERSCHE, himself, had orders to collect and organize Communist Party groups and build up the "Austrian Freedom Front" (Free Austria?).
5. Aloisia (Louise) SOUCEK, nee JAROSCH, alias Ernestine ANDESNER, was born 8 February 1908 in Vienna; father Johann JAROSCH, locksmith, deceased; mother Magdalena nee WAHLSCHLAGER, deceased. Parents had resided at Eduard Fischer-Gasse 239, Vienna 21. She had the following sisters and brothers:

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Anna SCHMIDGUNST, nee JAROSCH, Vienna 21, Magdeburgstr. 19/13; Ernst JAROSCH, locksmith, Vienna 21, Erzbischof Karlstr., Apt. house; Leopold JAROSCH, in the German Army in 1944; Johanne PEISMANN, nee JAROSCH, died in Russia in 1942.

6. Aloisia SOUCEK was trained in business school in Vienna and in 1929 married Josef SOUCEK, an electrician, residing at Vienna 21, Wurmbrandgasse 19. She went to Russia alone in 1932 through DITTOURIST and her husband followed her in three months. In Russia she worked as a typist and secretary in the Marx-Engel Institute and in the Austrian Section of the Lenin School. In October 1941 she attended the radio school in Nagornoj, near Moscow, until March 1942 when she was transferred to the radio school in Ufa. Her training continued there and in Moscow until she departed for the mission in Austria on 27 June 1943. Her assignment to Austria had been given her by FUERNBERG, the representative of the Austrian Section in the Comintern. All three, KEESCHNE, SOUCEK, and MRAZ were given their orders by FUERNBERG and KOPLERIG. SOUCEK was trained in radio operations and cipher and told to remain in the house in Vienna to transmit the information collected by KEESCHNE. She took part of her set with her to Vienna and then attempted to assemble the missing parts through Irma MACHALEK, Rosa MEXISKA and the latter's husband Rudolf MEXISKA, a bus driver for the ROB (sic).

7. The radio courses taken by SOUCEK were arranged by the COMINTERN and the head of the radio school was a Russian named GELFANT. Technical instruction was given by two Russians, Sasha PETROV and Viktor SOLOVIOV. Morse was taught by LAPTEV and NOVOSELSKI. Among SOUCEK's fellow students were seven Austrians whom she knew by code names: Petya ANDRE whose real first name was "Ferdl"; VANYA nicknamed "Negro"; TOSHIA, real name Anton SCHLOEGL; Willi; PAULA, real name was KLAPPER; Hildegard MRAZ. In addition there were five Poles: STASJA (female), HERNMANN, WAZEK, KARSKI, FRIEDMANN, KATJA (female); three Spaniards: PEDRO, CARMEN, KONTSCHA (female); five Frenchmen: MAURICE, JEAN, ROGER, DEJEAN, BENJARD; three Czechs: FEDJA, VOLODJA, NIKITIN; one Slovak: BORZOF; one Greek: KOSKJA; three Rumanians: KOWROW, WASSILEWA (wife of KOWROW), RAJA KISSELEWA (female); one Hungarian: ANJA; four Finns: WOLKOW, PETROWA (female), ANJA (female), one, name unknown; three Bulgarians: ANDREYEV, PAVLOV, PETSHEV. (The above names appear to be all code names with the exception of SCHLOEGL, KLAPPER and MRAZ. However, there is no way of distinguishing).

8. Hildegard MRAZ, nee REINTINGER, alias Margarethe EUCHGRABER, was born 5 September 1911 in Siebenhirten near Vienna. She was the daughter of Johann REINTINGER, mechanic, deceased, and Johanna, nee BETECHY, residing at Breitenfurterstr. 153, Vienna 12. Her sisters were: Friederike REINTINGER, and Johanna REINTINGER, both living with the mother at Breitenfurterstr. 153. Hildegard MRAZ was educated in Vienna at the business academy in Hanerlingplatz and the University. On 1 March 1934 she went with her fiance Lorenz MRAZ to Czechoslovakia. In April 1934 she and MRAZ went to Russia where they were married in August 1934. Lorenz MRAZ worked in the Seventh Printing House in Moscow, attended the University of the West and went to Spain as a "volunteer" in the Red Spanish Army in 1936. He returned in 1939 and while he was away Hildegard MRAZ worked in the Marx-Engel Institute in Moscow. They both remained in Moscow until 1941.

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9. The middle of September 1941 Hildegard MRAZ started radio training in Nogornye (presumably identical with Nogomoy) near Moscow. October 1941 she, with the rest of the school, was evacuated to Ufa and returned to Moscow in April 1942. During this time she received radio training. She trained until the time she departed for the mission in Austria. FUEFNBERG and KOPLINIG, members of the Section (sic) of the Communist Party, gave MRAZ and her partner SOUCEK their assignment, i.e. to establish radio contact with Moscow from Austria and transmit intelligence collected by KERSCHE. Hildegard MRAZ stated that KERSCH's assignment was to establish connections, not only with Communists, but also with Social Democrats and anti-Hitler elements, in order to carry out sabotage in factories, railway and military installations.

10. MRAZ claimed to have made a trial jump once before she parachuted into Poland with SOUCEK and KERSCHE, on the night of 28 June 1943. Partisans received the team and assisted them in traveling from the village where they landed, to Warsaw where they were hidden (no names given of contacts in Poland). On 18 July 1943 they travelled to Vienna and MRAZ stayed with the EXSTER Family, Sagedergasse, "Garden Colony", Vienna 12. She moved to the FREISINGER family, Breitenfurth No. 200, Pöllretzerwiese Settlement, and stayed for two months. On 20 September 1943 she went to Graz and lived with the ROSCHITZ family, Graz-Andritz, Bachgasse 6, for three weeks, then with Mrs. ZECHMANN in Gradwein and the GREINZ family in Gradkorn. Then she moved to Vienna and stayed with MEKISKA in Rodann. She was arrested while living with the SMITTLIX family in Kappellfeld, Brunnengasse.

11. In the radio school MRAZ gave the following names:

Instructors: GELFANT, a Russian and director of the school;
LAPTEV taught Morse; Alexander PETROV taught
theory of Morse; SOLOVYOV gave shop instruction.

Students: Austrians:
Aloisia SOUCEK, code name MICHAELOVA
Hermine KLAPPER, code name: Paula LECHNER
Hans SCHEICHENBERGER, code name VANIA
Ferdinand GOTTHARD, code name PETYA
Willi HOEGL, code name VITTA
Anton SCHLOEGL, code name TOSHA
Josef WIERLAENDER, code name Andre
Other nationals
GERADI, code name, a Berliner
Sepp CHAMOV, code name
Kate ROMANOVA, code name
Frans KLEIN, Sudeten German
VOLDYA, code name, a Czech
BORZOW, code name, a Slovak
NIKITIN, code name, a Czech
Dragan SITNJANSKI, code name, a Slovak
Rumanians, all code names: KOTROW, WASSILJEWA
Kiselewa RAJISSA

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Hungarians, presumably code names: Stefan
BERGER and wife, Vera BERGER
Carpatho-Ukrains: Anja KASINSKAJA
Finns, code names: VOLKOV, MAKAROV, Anna
NIKOLAYEVA, PETROVA
Poles, code names: KARSKI, HERMANN, NATZEK,
Katja FRIEDMANN, STRASJA
French, code names: MAURICE, ROGER, JEAN,
BERNARD DEJEAN
Bulgarians, presumably code names: ANDREJEV,
PALOW, PETSCHEN
Greek, presumably code names: Kostja IWANOW

12. MRAZ was designated as the assistant radio operator with SOUCEK as the chief operator. They were given considerable instruction in repair of radio sets and provided money for the purchase of tubes and spare parts. They were admonished to change location frequently. When the two left Warsaw they took only parts of their sets with them in order to pass the baggage inspection on the trains. Mrs. MACHALEK was supposed to have furnished them with a receiving set. The key book for their cipher was "Education Dictionary" by Wilhelm HERLMANN, published in Leipzig in 1931 by the Alfred KROEMER Verlag. They were also provided with a key poem as a reserve in case the book were lost. SOUCEK and MRAZ were never able to assemble and repair their equipment in Vienna to the point where they could transmit although they were able to pick up their call signal from Moscow.

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