

Laura Ingalls Planned 'Peace' Flight to Germany, Jury Told

Aviatrix Sought Aid of Nazi Embassy; FBI Agents Tell of Her 'Hate' Speeches

By JOSEPH L. MYLER T-42/11/42

Julia Kraus, a plump spinster with graying hair, testified in District Court yesterday that Laura Ingalls, 38-year-old flyer, made overtures to German Embassy officials here concerning a "peace flight" she planned to make to Germany last fall.

Miss Kraus, a native of Germany who recently was employed by the District of Columbia Alley Dwelling Authority, said the flyer asked her to assist her in establishing contact with somebody at the German embassy.

Acted in Flyer's Behalf

She testified in Miss Ingalls' trial on charges of failing to register with the State Department as an agent of the German government.

The witness testified that she knew Mrs. Bernhardine Wagner, housekeeper for Baron Ulrich von Gienanth, second secretary at the embassy, and told Miss Ingalls "I would be glad to see what I could do."

"I called Mrs. Wagner," Miss Kraus continued. "I told her that Miss Ingalls, the famous flyer, was here and wanted to see somebody about peace flying."

Miss Kraus had been alluded to in previous testimony as the person who sent a \$100 telegraphic money order to Miss Ingalls signed "Grace Rutch."

The witness then identified a series of letters exchanged between her, in Washington, and Miss Ingalls, in New York.

In one letter dated August 29, 1941, Miss Kraus referred to the flyer as "A Rising Star in the Heavens" and called her "My Dear Sweet Laura." She said she had spoken with certain persons, whom she did not identify, and that they had warned her that Miss Ingalls' activities might get her in trouble because "you are not registered with the (Blank) department and therefore would be accused of being a friend or agent."

On the stand Miss Kraus said the reference was to the Department of State, with which all agents of a foreign principal are required to register. Miss Ingalls was not registered.

Friendly With Thomsen

In a letter dated September 1 Miss Ingalls asked whether or not certain material she had mailed had "reached its destination." Miss Kraus testified that the flyer was referring to literature she had sent to Dr. Hans Thomsen, then German charge d'affaires. Miss Ingalls also asked "if they watch your mail."

In one letter Miss Kraus said she had talked to certain persons under discussion and had been told that both she and Miss Ingalls could do their best work "right here in the good old U. S. A., whose ship of state is foundering in a sea of uncertainty."

Earlier, two attractive women—one of them a sister aviatrix—testified that Miss Ingalls was strongly pro-German and believed that this country needed men like Adolf Hitler.

They testified after a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent described, from the witness stand, meetings between Miss Ingalls and Baron Ulrich von Gienanth, second secretary of the German embassy, from whom the 38-year-old flyer received admitted payments totaling \$400.

Second Day of Trial

The stories were unfolded during the second day of Miss Ingalls' trial on charges of failing to register with the State Department as a paid agent of the German government.

visited Miss Ingalls at the apartment of Julia Kraus, with whom the flyer was staying, and delivered a paper-wrapped package which Powell later said contained among other things a history of Germany since the Versailles Treaty.

Powell also told of a visit Van Gienanth made to Miss Kraus' apartment the night of last November 26. Miss Ingalls was not present. FBI men in an adjacent apartment, the witness said, heard the German say, "here's \$50 for your trouble."

Cash Transaction

They heard Miss Kraus ask if the money could be traced. Powell continued, and Von Gienanth reply, "I deal only in cash."

The agent then quoted Miss Kraus as saying "I am typing all letters to her on a typewriter in my office—is that satisfactory?"

Von Gienanth's reply, Powell said, was "perfectly."

On cross-examination Defense Attorney James F. Reilly agreed that Miss Kraus had sent money to Miss Ingalls and cited a telegraphic money order for \$100 sent to the flyer in Colorado Springs on November 28. The telegram was one of four introduced in evidence with the consent of the defense attorney. It was signed "Grace Rutch," and Reilly admitted this was a name used by Miss Kraus.

Reilly, in questioning the FBI agent, said he wished to bring out whether Miss Kraus was an "accomplice" of Miss Ingalls, as well as the fact that Miss Kraus had never been indicted.

Powell, on direct examination, described a meeting of members of the America First Committee, Brooklyn chapter in Washington last October 22. Miss Ingalls, he said, led a group which attempted to present to Senator James M. Mead (D.) of New York an anti-war petition.

Miss Ingalls banged on the door to Mead's office repeatedly, Powell said, but the group was not admitted.

The defense has admitted that Miss Ingalls was frequently in contact with Von Gienanth and received money from him. Her contention, however, is that she was engaged in a private investigation of the Germans, the only purpose of which, according to Reilly, was "to serve her country."

Powell testified after the jury was shown a small, red leather diary in which Miss Ingalls had jotted down cryptic allusions to her dealings with German representatives.

"Hate" Preaching Charged

During the afternoon session of the trial a series of FBI agents testified that Miss Ingalls preached a gospel of "hate" at America First Committee meetings throughout the country and at times verged upon proposals of revolution.

The testimony was offered by the prosecution in reply to defense claims that Miss Ingalls' whole purpose in her dealings with Germans was to conduct a private investigation against them.

At Appleton, Wis., on November 13, FBI Agent M. R. Flynn testified, Miss Ingalls told her audience that "the time is fast approaching when the American people must take matters into their own hands."

At Gary, Ind., on November 25, according to FBI Agent George M.

Mrs. Aline Rhonie of New York

she did not identify, and that they had warned her that Miss Ingalls' activities might get her in trouble because "you are not registered with the (Blank) department and therefore would be accused of being a friend or agent."

On the stand Miss Kraus said the reference was to the Department of State, with which all agents of a foreign principal are required to register. Miss Ingalls was not registered.

Friendly With Thomsen

In a letter dated September 1 Miss Ingalls asked whether or not certain material she had mailed had "reached its destination." Miss Kraus testified that the flyer was referring to literature she had sent to Dr. Hans Thomsen, then German charge d'affaires. Miss Ingalls also asked "if they watch your mail."

In one letter Miss Kraus said she had talked to certain persons under discussion and had been told that both she and Miss Ingalls could do their best work "right here in the good old U. S. A., whose ship of state is foundering in a sea of uncertainty."

Earlier, two attractive women—one of them a sister aviator—testified that Miss Ingalls was strongly pro-German and believed that this country needed men like Adolf Hitler.

They testified after a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent described, from the witness stand, meetings between Miss Ingalls and Baron Ulrich von Gienanth, second secretary of the German embassy, from whom the 38-year-old flyer received admitted payments totaling \$400.

Second Day of Trial

The stories were unfolded during the second day of Miss Ingalls' trial on charges of failing to register with the State Department as a paid agent of the German government.

Mrs. Aline Rhonie, of New York, a painter and holder of a commercial pilot's license, described a conversation she had with Miss Ingalls at the Los Angeles Metropolitan Airport last summer in which Miss Ingalls registered opposition to Mrs. Rhonie's pro-Allied sentiments.

Mrs. Rhonie said she had been a volunteer worker in England and France during the early months of the war, doing evacuation work in London and driving an ambulance in France. On her return to this country in April, 1940, she engaged in volunteer work to help Allied fliers.

Conversation Recalled

She said she met Miss Ingalls at Los Angeles airport, and they discussed the work they were doing.

"She said she had heard I was working for the Allies," Mrs. Rhonie said, "and that she felt very differently. When I said I was for the Allies, she said she felt quite the opposite. I said I didn't want to discuss it further and left."

Mrs. Gloria Tucker, who was Miss Ingalls' hostess when the flier visited Stockton, Calif., during air shows held there in April, 1940, testified that she criticized the Government of this country and declared "We need such men as Hitler."

She added that Miss Ingalls said "Mr. Hitler is a man to be admired—if we had more like him we would be better off in this country."

William B. Powell, FBI agent who kept Miss Ingalls under surveillance during the Government's investigation of her activities, de-

whether Miss Kraus was an "accomplice" of Miss Ingalls, as well as the fact that Miss Kraus had never been indicted.

Powell, on direct examination, described a meeting of members of the America First Committee, Brooklyn chapter in Washington last October 22. Miss Ingalls, he said, led a group which attempted to present to Senator James M. Mead (D.) of New York an anti-war petition.

Miss Ingalls banged on the door to Mead's office repeatedly, Powell said, but the group was not admitted.

The defense has admitted that Miss Ingalls was frequently in contact with Von Gienanth and received money from him. Her contention, however, is that she was engaged in a private investigation of the Germans, the only purpose of which, according to Reilly, was "to serve her country."

Powell testified after the jury was shown a small, red leather diary in which Miss Ingalls had jotted down cryptic allusions to her dealings with German representatives.

"Hate" Preaching Charged

During the afternoon session of the trial a series of FBI agents testified that Miss Ingalls preached a gospel of "hate" at America First Committee meetings throughout the country and at times verged upon proposals of revolution.

The testimony was offered by the prosecution in reply to defense claims that Miss Ingalls' whole purpose in her dealings with Germans was to conduct a private investigation against them.

At Appleton, Wis., on November 13, FBI Agent M. R. Flynn testified, Miss Ingalls told her audience that "the time is fast approaching when the American people must take matters into their own hands."

At Gary, Ind., on November 25, according to FBI Agent George M. Washington, the flyer "called the President a liar" and asserted that "the only difference between President Roosevelt and Hitler was that Hitler was doing a good job for the German people and they knew it."

Other Talks Quoted

Miss Ingalls, Washington testified, said that "hate was the most desirable emotion for the people at this time." He also quoted her as saying:

"I hope and pray that it may not become necessary for us to present force in opposition to this Administration, but that time may come."

Other FBI agents testified in a similar vein.

In the well-thumbed diary were such notes as "letter to 1439," and "established contact."

The Government contends that "letter to 1439" referred to communication by the famed flyer with the German Embassy at 1439 Massachusetts Ave. NW.

Large brief cases filled with folders, pamphlets, books, newspaper clippings, publications of the German library of information, small black address books, and miscellaneous material were placed in evidence. The defense stipulated that they were the property of Miss Ingalls, seized in her quarters here and in New York.