

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

5 August 1953

MEMORANDUM

TO: FT/STC

FROM: Acting Chief, CR/2

SUBJECT: Request for Appropriate Clearance for Alfreds BERZINS

1. It is requested that appropriate clearance be granted for the use of subject named individual pertaining to whom FRQ Part 1 is attached. It is anticipated that subject may possibly become useful in an attempt to induce the defection of a Soviet official. To date BERZINS has not been approached on this matter and is quite ignorant of the fact that we are requesting clearance for him. Consequently, neither government nor CIA interest should be indicated if any active investigation is undertaken in the process of clearing BERZINS.

2. BERZINS will be approached on this matter initially subsequent to receipt of clearance.

3. This branch is well aware of the fact that BERZINS' services are being utilized by another component of the Agency. However, this clearance is of a tenuous nature and does not include the handling of classified information and other sensitive materials. Inasmuch as the above defection attempt will entail revealing to BERZINS information which is a great deal more sensitive than he has handled so far, it is assumed that he would need a different type clearance. Should we decide to utilize BERZINS - subsequent to receipt of appropriate clearance - we will then take necessary steps to procure a release from the other Agency component involved. No additional pertinent information is available in RI files with the exception of the following two items:

a. Formerly a Minister in the Umanis Cabinet in Latvia, who was in touch with the Japanese in Helsinki in 1940, through whom he obtained a Manchurian passport. (Berzins is an) adventurer and untrustworthy."

b. "Gestapo agent. Betrayed to Gestapo the Director of the firm 'Ostlandfilm' and caused two members of the firm to be placed in a concentration camp." (1945 information).

No explanation regarding (a) has been obtained from Berzins, nor can the case officer shed any further light on the matter. However, the statement that Berzins is an adventurer and untrustworthy can be disregarded

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as utterances made by an individual who is either politically or personally opposed to him. Regarding (b) the following desk comment is on file in the Baltic Section:

This is not believed to be correct as Berzins today is a member of the board of governors of this same film company which is today known as Rigas Films and is located on the Island of St. Johns in Canada, and whose present as well as past director is Mr. Jekste, a man who has never been denounced to the Gestapo.

The allegations, outlined above, which generally tend to show that Berzins has been an axis collaborator do not appear to be feasible, since it is quite improbable for him to have been incarcerated in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp for 33 months, had he collaborated with the axis powers.

4. A Green List check has been initiated.

5. Inasmuch as this is a matter of great urgency, it is requested that everything possible be done to grant this clearance by 12 August 1953. Should your office not be able to meet this deadline or should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact [redacted] 06 "J", extension 8547.]

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