

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

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1 June 52

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

FBI

Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Attention: Deputy Director, Plans

Dear Sir:

For your information, I am enclosing communications which may be of interest to you.

Very truly yours,

*J. Edgar Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover  
Director

*1000/40*  
-Enc.

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FORM 2227  
1-64

[ (40-999) ]

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DATE 2006

100-18891

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

57

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

FILE NO.

REPORT MADE AT New York	DATE WHEN MADE MAY 1952	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 4/19, 21, 27, 10/52	REPORT MADE BY VITOLLO
TITLE VITOLLO, WALTER, was.		CHARACTER OF CASE LATVIAN SECURITY - R. S. L.	

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

Subject's former wife, **MRS. PORTMANIS, was.**, interviewed 5/19/52. Has known entire PORTMANIS family since 1941 and believes family are all "opportunists", but does not consider them Communists. Subject in Latvia made many enemies who tried to blacken reputation by accusing him of Communist sympathies. Believes charges against VITOLLO and PORTMANIS are untrue.

MICROFILMED  
MAY 1963  
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- RUC -

**DETAILS**

Mr. **CHARLES WERWOLD**, superintendent at 100 West 55th Street, New York City, advised that **PORTMANIS, WALTER** had moved from this address in October of 1951 leaving no forwarding address.

Mr. **GUINAPPE VITOLIANO**, real estate broker, 129 East 55th Street, who had rented the premises at 100 West 55th Street to Mrs. PORTMANIS, advised that it was his impression she had moved to the beaux Arts Apartment on East 44th Street. Inquiry at the beaux Arts Apartment reflected, however, that Mrs. PORTMANIS had never resided there.

On May 9, 1952 Mrs. **GEORGINA LAPINA**, apartment 104, 365 West End Avenue, a Latvian displaced person and who is known to be a friend of Mrs. PORTMANIS, furnished the letter's

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE <i>[Signature]</i>	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
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*[Handwritten initials]*

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current address is 58 West 58th Street, apartment 4L. In addition Mrs. LAPINA furnished a residence telephone number for Mrs. FORMANIS as Winroy Hill 4-8171 and a business telephone number of Circle 5-7400.

On May 10, 1952 Mrs. FORMANIS was interviewed at her residence 58 West 58th Street by the writer and SA DONALD L. FUEL. Mrs. FORMANIS advised that she is currently using the name Miss GALBA FERNELL and she will be referred to by that name throughout the remainder of this report.

Miss FERNELL advised that she was born in Latvia on February 26, 1921. She and VITOLDS FORMANIS were married on July 18, 1944 and in February of 1947 they entered the United States as displaced persons from Latvia. They immediately proceeded to Detroit, Michigan to live with Miss FERNELL's relatives, (Mr. and Mrs. CHRISTIAN JACOBSON. Miss FERNELL advised that in January, 1950 she and her husband separated and she came to New York to live with a friend from Latvia, a Miss RUTH PETERSON.

Miss FERNELL stated that she is presently employed as a bookkeeper at the 42nd Street Branch of the Chase National Bank. She stated that in March of 1952 she filed her first application for American citizenship and she expressed great concern that allegations against her husband might effect her citizenship application.

Concerning her knowledge of her husband's activities and the allegations against him, Miss FERNELL advised as follows:

She stated that she had known of the FORMANIS family in Latvia for several years prior to 1940, the year of the Russian occupation of her country. During that period the FORMANIS family appeared extremely well off financially to Miss FERNELL in that they owned several automobiles, had household servants and lived quite graciously. The subject's mother was a practicing physician in Latvia and his father was a high city official in Riga, a post which he continued to hold during the Russian occupation. According to Miss FERNELL, the subject was a sports reporter for a Latvian newspaper prior to the Russian occupation.

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According to Miss PARSONS, the fortune of the PORAMNIS family suffered no great changes under the Soviet occupation other than the loss of their automobiles. She was aware that under the Russians VIPOLES PORAMNIS worked as a reporter for the Communist dominated and controlled newspaper "Cina" (Latvian word meaning "fight"). Miss PARSONS pointed out that PORAMNIS worked for this paper for only five or six months and he had ceased his connection with it by the time her personal friendship with him had developed in late 1940. Miss PARSONS was of the opinion that PORAMNIS had obtained his position with "Cina" because of the high political connection of his father.

In connection with the foregoing Miss PARSONS described the entire PORAMNIS family as "opportunists". She stated that they would take the necessary steps to protect their own personal and financial welfare even if this required some collaboration with the Communists. However, Miss PARSONS does not feel that any member of the PORAMNIS family actually was a Communist.

According to Miss PARSONS's recollection, PORAMNIS, while attending the University of Riga, had been a member of a student fraternity known as "Lettonia", which she described as a non-Communist group maintaining extremely high standards of discipline. Miss PARSONS recalled that PORAMNIS was expelled from this fraternity during 1940 and she believed his expulsion was because of disregard of the fraternity's disciplinary code and not because of Communist sympathies as alleged by other sources.

Miss PARSONS advised that her social friendship with the subject developed late in 1940 subsequent to the aforementioned expulsion from the fraternity but during a period when both she and PORAMNIS were attending the University of Riga studying law. At that time she recalled that PORAMNIS was employed in a bakery owned by a family friend.

In 1941, according to Miss PARSONS, the Soviets were driven out of Latvia and the country was occupied by the Germans. She recalled that PORAMNIS appeared extremely happy to have the Soviets driven out by the Nazis. However, she stated that shortly after the Germans took over the country PORAMNIS was arrested by the Gestapo. He was held by the German security Police for approximately three weeks in a prison in Riga.

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during which time he was questioned at the Gestapo concerning his Communist connections.

Miss FARNELL stated that FORSMAN was arrested because of his connection with "China" and because of other allegations of Communist activities, the exact nature of which was unknown to her other than FORSMAN was accused of having caused the deportation to Liberia of several Latvian army officers. She stated that she does not believe any of those allegations were true and she is of the opinion that they were made against FORSMAN by some of the many enemies he had made at the University of Mine among the student organizations. In this connection, Miss FARNELL pointed out that FORSMAN has always had an outspoken personality and has made very few friends. She did recall, however, that in student discussions at the university FORSMAN always was outspokenly anti-Communist and she, therefore, believes the charges against him are untrue.

While the subject was held at the Gestapo, Miss FARNELL moved from Mine to a country home of relatives. She stated that she did not again see FORSMAN for several months after his release by the Germans. Miss FARNELL stated that FORSMAN never mentioned anything to her about working for the German authorities and she does not believe he ever did this.

She stated that both prior to and after her marriage to FORSMAN they were in two different displaced persons camps together. However, she does not recall having attended any parties in these displaced persons camps where the subject could have made the statements attributed to him. She was certain that no party was held together prior to their departure for the United States.

Miss FARNELL stated that her marriage with FORSMAN split up entirely because of personal reasons and had nothing to do with his political past. She stated that her divorce became final in December, 1951. She was aware of FORSMAN's remarriage, but advised that she knows nothing of his present wife other than the fact that she also is a Latvian displaced person. Miss FARNELL stated that she has had no personal contact with the subject for about a year, although she did have a telephone conversation with him in December of 1951 concerning

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the divorce proceedings. Miss PERELL stated that neither she nor her husband have any friends in New York City.

When questioned concerning their relationship with ARNOLD BACATIL she stated that he is a native Latvian who is a good friend of her sister, a Mrs. ELLA PERELL of Detroit, Michigan. She recalled that BACATIL was a merchant sailor for several years and that he was in New York City when she and her husband arrived in the United States in February of 1947. She stated that BACATIL met them at the ship and that they stayed with him for a day or two before leaving for Detroit. She advised that since she has been in New York City she has visited BACATIL and his wife GUTMAN on one occasion but has not seen them for over a year. Miss PERELL recalled that BACATIL has told her that he is having difficulty obtaining his American citizenship because of an allegation of Communism against him. She said that BACATIL claims that some years ago while in New York he was attempting to obtain a berth on a merchant ship and he had joined a labor union for a short while. He told her that he had no idea that this union was connected with Communism and that he definitely is not a Communist.

Miss PERELL stated that if in the future she is in a position to be of assistance in any matter relating to Latvians in the United States she would be most willing to cooperate.

- REFUSED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

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