

Subject: Information from CIA Files Concerning Ferenc Vajta

1. Ferenc Vajta, whose real name is reported to be Vicssek, was born at Debrecen, Hungary in 1914. He studied at the Sorbonne and at Geneva, and later spent several years in Rome as correspondent of the Hungarian paper "Uj Magyarasag" until expelled in 1941 for his criticism of the Italian Army. While in Italy, Vajta was in the service of both the Hungarian Intelligence Service and the German Wehrmacht. He is also reported to have worked for the Hungarian Service, at dates not specified, in Belgrade and Istanbul. In 1941-42 he was the Berlin correspondent of "Uj Magyarasag" and Cultural Attache to the Hungarian Legation in Berlin. Back in Budapest in 1943, he founded and edited the pro-Nazi weekly "Az Orszag," described as "a creature of MSCSER and ANTAL" (two principal political agents of the Germans in Hungary), his task was to destroy pro-American or pro-British sympathies in the upper and middle class readers of his paper; his comments were often verbatim translations of official German propaganda, and he made scurrilous attacks on the President of the United States and other Allied leaders. He was a member of the Hungarian Nazi Ferenc SZALASI's Arrow Cross Party, and when SZALASI seized power in 1944 Vajta was appointed Consul General in Vienna. At the beginning of the siege of Vienna, he decamped with the consulate funds and the valuables of his staff. When later arrested by the Americans, some of the stolen property was found in his home.

2. By the Allied Governments' definition of war crimes, he fell into the automatic arrest category and was taken into custody by OSS on 7 June 1945, being subsequently released to 7th Army custody. A few weeks after his arrest, he escaped to the French Zone, and by disclosing the burial place of several thousand kilograms of gold and diamonds he worked himself into the good graces of the French authorities and obtained employment with the French Intelligence Service at Innsbruck. Several attempts were made by JCSA Headquarters to have him returned and assurances were given by the French that he would be returned, but he was eventually permitted to escape to Italy.

3. In August 1946, there was founded at Innsbruck the "Hungarian Popular Front," composed of General FARKAS, Jozsef NYIRO, Count Mihaly TELLEKY, Lajos LIPTAY, Elemér KORANI, and Vajta. This group was officially admitted into the "Intermarium." In June 1946 Vajta had gone clandestinely to northern Italy, still working for the French. By September 1946 he was in Rome. There he claimed to be a Hapsburg follower and boasted of his contact with De GAULLE. From Rome he made at least one trip to Paris. He had several contacts in the Vatican, including Magr. Zoltan NYISTOR, head of the Vatican Press Office. At one time Vajta was briefly detained by the Allied authorities.

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4. In Madrid in February 1947, Vajta approached the Spanish Foreign Office with the statement that he represented the anti-soviet movement "Intermarium," which, he said, was to provide an army to fight on the side of England and France against the USSR. The Foreign Office approved his plans and put him in touch with the Cardinal Primate of Spain, the Archbishop of Toledo, to seek financial aid. Vajta's ostensible purpose in Madrid, however, was to handle Hungarian refugee matters. He had a large sum of money at his disposal, which one source believed had come from the Vatican.

5. Returning to Rome about March 1947, Vajta became increasingly active in Hungarian circles. He was in touch with Father Tibor Galoss, acting head of Hungarian relief at the Vatican, and was also in touch with the "Intermarium" group. He had established a tile factory, purchased a restaurant, and written a book called "Save Hungary." He bitterly criticized American policy in Austria and Germany.

6. In April 1947 Vajta was arrested by the Rome Questura at the request of the Communist Hungarian Charge; the Budapest government requested his extradition as a war criminal. Vajta was eventually released by the Italians, but was told to "disappear." The police kept his documents for some time, and he was hidden by the Jesuits until he recovered his papers. On 1 September 1947, the Italian Foreign Ministry issued an extradition order against Vajta, but a young American CIC officer, acting unofficially, helped him to get away on the S. S. "Ciudad de Valencia" sailing from Genoa to Barcelona. Vajta arrived in Madrid on 25 September.

7. While in Rome, Vajta had attempted to form an organization to be known as the "Unione Continentale" or "Center of Studies for the Balkans and Central Europe," whose purpose would be to assemble emigre anti-Communist elements, and incidentally, to replace the "Intermarium." During the summer of 1947, Vajta wrote and had published a book called "La Confederazione Danubiana," in which he summarized the ideas underlying his post-war activity. According to his own statements, the British and French have offered Vajta assignments in the "Europa Union," an organization sponsored by those two countries, but he claims to have refused the offers.

8. Vajta is married (to a second wife) and has one child, a son of eight years.