

OFFICIAL DISPATCH

VIA Air
(Specify Air or Sea Pouch)

DISPATCH NO. UFLW-384

SECRET
CLASSIFICATION

TO

DATE

FROM Chief, WE

INFC: []

SUBJECT { GENERAL Operational
SPECIFIC Ferenc Vajta - Trip to Europe

Attn: BGFINSSE

REFERENCE: LISB-749, 14 January 1954 (INFO: SBOGO, SMAER)
BOGO-309, 15 January 1954 (INFO: SLISE, SMAER)
DIR-34506, 15 January 1954 (INFO: SMAER, SBOGO)
LISE-752, 19 January 1954 (INFO: SMAER, SBOGO)

1. We are forwarding biographic data on Subject of reference cables, for information and files. The Desk recently received from Bogota information that he was leaving for Europe, and that his itinerary included stops at Lisbon and possibly Madrid. There is considerable material on Subject's prior activities and background in the files of Registry and the Colombian Desk.
2. Subject is reputedly a man without principles or scruples and a dangerous demagog who appears to have jumped from one sponsor to another, if the change were to his advantage. His connection with the notorious Hungarian Nazi Party is well established. He also is reported to have been a Soviet agent, but there is considerable doubt that he is, or could be, an agent of the USSR. In February 1948, a Havana source, rated C-3, claimed that Subject was a member of the Hungarian Communist Party under a Ukrainian name, and that, following instructions of Soviet agents, he had joined the Hungarian Nazi Party. This source assertedly was acquainted with Subject when both were students at the University of Hungary in or about 1930, and claims that Subject was active in extremist circles and was in communication with the Soviet Embassy in Budapest. In April 1948, an Italian source, rated C-3 and identified as a Hungarian ecclesiastical leader in Italy, stated that Subject was an agent provocateur of the Russians sent to penetrate Hungarian circles in the United States. At that time the Hungarian desk commented there was nothing in Subject's file to substantiate this source's suspicion. It is felt that

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These charges/

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these charges should be viewed with some degree of caution, and it seems more believable that subject has always been an opportunist. Examination of Headquarters files indicates that subject has been consistently pro-Nazi, anti-American and anti-British. It is also significant that in early 1947 the Communist Hungarian Charge in Rome requested the Italian Police to arrest subject on the grounds he was classified as a war criminal by the present Hungarian regime.

3. Subject was born at Debrecen, Hungary, in 1914. He studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and at Geneva, and spent several years in Rome as the correspondent of the Hungarian newspaper Uj Magyarug until he was expelled in 1941 for criticism of the Italian army. While in Italy he reportedly was in the service of both the Hungarian Intelligence Service and the German Abwehr. He also is said to have worked at unspecified dates for the Hungarian I.S. in Belgrade and Istanbul. In 1941-42 he was Berlin correspondent of Uj Magyarug and Cultural Attache to the Hungarian Legation in Berlin. In 1943 he founded and edited a Budapest pro-Nazi weekly, az Orszag, which became a semi-official organ of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. In this publication he championed the Nazi cause and demanded death by hanging for captured American flyers. Subject was appointed Consul General in Vienna by the Hungarian Nazi leader, Ferenc SZALASI, after the Germans occupied Hungary in 1944. At the beginning of the siege of Vienna, he reportedly decamped with the Consulate funds and valuables of the staff. When he was later arrested by PUTNAM, some of the stolen property was discovered in his possession. This arrest took place 7 June 1945; subsequently he was released to 7th Army custody. A few weeks later, subject escaped to the French Zone where he is said to have worked himself into the good graces of the French authorities by disclosing the location of a cache of gold and diamonds. He obtained employment as an informer for the French I.S. in Innsbruck. When ODIERNA officials requested his extradition, he allegedly was permitted to escape to Italy. On 4 May 1945 his name had been placed on a War Criminal list prepared by the Small Landholder Party of Premier NADY of Hungary, "for having done intellectual work in the service of the most intensive persecution of the war and in support of the Arrow Cross (Fascist) movement."
4. In February 1947, subject was reported to be in Madrid, ostensibly to handle Hungarian refugee matters. He is said to have approached

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the Spanish Foreign Office claiming to represent the anti-soviet movement INTERNACION, which he claimed was to provide an army to fight with British and French forces against the USSR. The Spanish Foreign Office reportedly approved his plan and put him in contact with the Cardinal Primate of Spain, the Archbishop of Toledo. At this time he asserted that Soviet agents were at work in Spain.

5. In April 1947, Subject was arrested by the Rome Questura at the request of the Communist Hungarian Charge. Although the Budapest Government requested his extradition, he was released by Italian authorities. He remained in hiding until September 1947, after which time he fled to Madrid and from there went via TWA to New York.
6. Subject was arrested in Washington, D.C. in January 1948 as an ex-Nazi and was taken to Ellis Island for deportation, where he remained for 22 months. Italy refused to receive him, and he claimed fear of returning to Hungary, so he was deported as an "undesirable alien" 5 February 1950 to Bogota, Colombia.
7. In Bogota, Subject was engaged as a teacher of social science at the Universidad de los Andes and also at the Instituto Pedagogico Nacional, a normal school for girls. In addition he was on the staff of a weekly magazine, Semana, writing a substantial share of each week's edition, including all the international news. During his stay in Colombia, Subject applied many times for permission to enter the United States; among others, he wrote Representative KLEIN of Wisconsin and Senator McCARRAN of Nevada vainly requesting that they aid his return to the United States to "continue" his "fight against Communism." In July 1953 he quit Semana, charging that some of the writers were Communists and were slanting the news in the publication.
8. Subject also tried to contact OPINION interests in Bogota to offer his services. He claimed that he had extensive contacts in Europe and that he would be an asset in the news/propaganda field in opposition to Communism. He was not used, however, in any capacity by the EMBARK Station in Bogota.
9. Subject asked for a leave of absence from his teaching posts and

departed for/

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departed for Europe 30 December 1953. He first was informed that he did not intend to return to Colombia, but LISA-752 indicates that apparently his plans have been revised. According to Bogota, Subject expected to remain in Paris for about a month, and during at least the first part of his stay he was scheduled to live in the Hotel Avenida, 41 rue du Colisse. In Rome his address was to be the Hotel Flora on the Via Veneto. Subject also expected to spend a few days in London and possibly Madrid.

10. [] has advised us that Subject hoped to contact former friends, chiefly Hungarians, on this trip, and that he contemplated forming a Fifth International which would unite many anti-Communist exile groups in a common purpose and campaign. Subject reportedly also hoped to establish some working agreement with ORADID representatives in Paris, as he was certain that he could be of value in KUGOVN-type activities among anti-Communist elements there. In this connection he is said to have anticipated trouble from Hungarian and Russian Communists in Europe, particularly in Paris. We are informed that he also expected that the French and possibly the English might offer him a job, but that he said he had no desire to work for these countries. In a subsequent dispatch [] advised Headquarters that in the event that he was not able to find the type of occupation he wanted, Subject expected to return to Colombia in February 1954.
11. Headquarters is curious about the conditions of Subject's stay in Lisbon, as reported in LISA-752: that he plans to depart for Bogota by air 24 January "unless instructed otherwise." We would appreciate receiving any clarification of this which may obtain through the MA. The Colombian Desk also is interested in how Subject managed to finance so costly a trip as the one we are now following. Any data that Lisbon may acquire concerning Subject's contacts, sponsors, plans and manner of subsidy would be very much appreciated by Headquarters.
13. There are attached, for Lisbon and Madrid only, two papers prepared by Subject himself which were forwarded Headquarters
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[] who noted that no attempt had been made to correct the grammar or spelling. It is believed the information therein may be of some interest to Liden and Madrid. For reasons of security, it is important that Subject never learn that his papers have been passed by [] to Headquarters and thence []

Enclosures:

1. As stated above (2 copies)
2. As stated above (2 copies)

30 January 1964

Distribution:

2 [] w/encls as noted
1 [] w/encls as noted
1 [] w/e encls
1 - WE-3
1 - WE-1
2 - WE-5
1 - HI

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