

OFFICIAL DISPATCH

VIA: _____
SPECIFY AIR OR SEA POUCH

DISPATCH NO. MAVA-990

CLASSIFICATION _____

TO Chief, Foreign Branch N

DATE: 3 March 1948

FROM Chief of Station, Vienna, Austria

SUBJECT: GENERAL: Operational

SPECIFIC: Jenos GEMER

1. Your attention is called to MAV-406, dated 17 February 1948, cable number Vien 1206, which contained information regarding Father KERRAI's trip to Rome and his conversations there with important Vatican officials on the Church's attitude towards the present situation in Hungary. Fr. KERRAI had left Budapest for Rome in the middle of January 1948 and passed through Vienna. He returned to Vienna on 13 February on his way back to Budapest. Each time he stopped in Vienna he got into contact with CIC, which facilitated his trip. Mr. Imhof of CIC dealt with Fr. KERRAI and reported to us the following information of CE interest.

2. During the period Fr. KERRAI was in Rome, he had the impression that a certain Hungarian named Johann GEMER was following him around and checking up on his activities. Fr. KERRAI knew that GEMER had once worked for a "Captain" Aradi of the American Intelligence Service. On one occasion Fr. KERRAI reported to the American authorities in Budapest that he had reason to believe that GEMER is now working for the Soviets. Mr. Imhof instructed the priest to repeat such a warning to the Americans in Budapest upon his (KERRAI's) return. If Fr. KERRAI returns to Vienna, he will again contact CIC. He indicated, however, that he did not expect to return to Austria in the near future. It is to be noted that Fr. KERRAI does not wish that other agencies learn that he is in touch with CIC. Any persons who contact KERRAI in the future should not indicate prior knowledge of his (KERRAI's) contact with the Americans.

3. Regarding the information on Johann GEMER submitted by Fr. KERRAI, [] has the following clarification to make. In the late winter of 1945 and early spring of 1946, Mr. Aradi, acting in the interests of this station, was in touch with a member of a Hungarian Catholic Youth group named Jenos GEMER. This young man, whose code name was Jones, offered to supply economic, political and military information about the Hungarian Communist Party and the Soviet occupational forces in Hungary. He claimed to have a group of zealous

cc: Germany
Rome

FORM NO. 51-28

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Source: F. SAILER, Wien IX, Porzellangasse 43

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young people who could assist him in the collection of such information. Jones actually did submit some information, the value of which could not be determined by [redacted]. On one of his trips to Vienna Jones brought with him a young Jesuit priest named Fr. Gosa IZAY. This priest, to whom the code name "Dubois" was assigned, was a leading person in the Catholic Youth movement in Hungary and head of "Jones" group; he was on his way to Rome where he intended to contact higher Jesuit authorities. At about the same time Jones reported that he had been contacted by the RIS in Budapest and recruited to spy against the Catholic Youth movement. By agreement with the RIS to whom Jones had indicated that he intended to travel to Rome, Jones was assigned the mission of penetrating the Vatican and Hungarian circles in Rome. The details of this affair are not very distinct in [redacted] mind but could be obtained from a study of the Irving Smith Project (Professor) file in Rome and in Washington. The Vienna station offered to turn over this operation to the Rome office which agreed to run Jones through the agent known as the "Professor." The entire project, which developed out of the Irving Smith Project, is outlined in a memorandum from SAINT, Austria, to SAINT, Rome, dated 19 February 1946, Subject: "Janos GEMER, SI Agent Travelling to Rome."

4. A check of the cable traffic concerning this project indicates that the following cables were sent in connection with the "Jones-Dubois" mission to Rome: Vien 936, dated 25 March 1946, Vien 984, dated 1 April 1946, and Vien 997, dated 5 April 1946; also Rome 381. In March 1946, Jones and Dubois set out for Rome together in the train leaving Vienna with travel documents supplied by this office. On the way across the demarcation line between the American and Soviet zones of Austria, Dubois was arrested by the Soviets because his papers were not completely satisfactory. Dubois was removed from the train, but Jones was permitted to proceed undisturbed to Rome, where he reported to the Professor. Meanwhile, Dubois eluded the Soviet guards on the same day, made his way back to Vienna and was flown to Rome by an American military plane.

5. [redacted] talked briefly with Jones in one of the houses of the Society of Jesus in Rome in April 1946. Subsequently [redacted] learned from Mr. Aradi and the Professor that Jones had failed in his mission and had proved difficult to handle. He was dropped by the [redacted] station. The Professor also indicated that Dubois would be dismissed from the Society of Jesus because of serious faults in his character.

6. In October 1947, [redacted] and [redacted] were entering the American Legation on the Beltsmanngasse, Vienna IX, when they noted Jones who was ringing the bell of the Jesuit monastery next door to the building in which the Legation is located. Jones recognized both [redacted] and [redacted] at once and signified his recognition by bowing his head. Neither [redacted] nor [redacted] returned the greeting. On 14 November 1947, [redacted] was informed by the receptionist at the Legation that a

Mr. GEMER wished to speak to him. Not realizing who the visitor was, [redacted] had GEMER brought up to a conference room and only then recognized GEMER as Jones.

7. The following description of the conversation which then ensued is taken from a memorandum for the files which [redacted] prepared on 17 November 1947:

"GEMER stated that he had lived for some time in Italy and France and that his wife and child had now returned to Budapest. He himself had been in Budapest in 1947 and then had come out because of difficulties with the Communist Party and was trying to return to Italy. He asked [redacted] for 5,000 schillings to send to his family in Budapest. [redacted] refused this request, stating that he was no longer in a position to supply money since the nature of his and [redacted]'s business had changed and since he no longer had government funds to hand out. At this point [redacted] stated that the connection between Jones and [redacted] and [redacted] had ceased in 1946, full payment had been made, and we had every reason to be dissatisfied with the results of our connection. Subject stated that he actually felt that [redacted] would be interested to learn the following facts. He then gave the following account.

"In January 1947 Jones had returned to Budapest. He was not disturbed until March when he was arrested on the street and taken to the Andrássy Utka 60, the address of the Hungarian Political Police. There he was questioned concerning his contacts abroad, the reason for his leaving Hungary, and questioned particularly as to why he had entered the Hungarian-Russian cultural society in the fall of 1945 and had then left it. Jones claimed he had entered the society because he wished to acquire certain experiences about the world and had been thrown out several months later. As a consequence, he had gone abroad to complete his education. Thereupon, he was released. A month or two later Jones was picked up again and interrogated; this time in particular regarding his contacts with Aradi who was described as a Hungarian who travelled about wearing an American uniform. Jones claimed that he did not know Aradi until the latter was identified as the former editor of the magazine "Virgilia," and the interrogators produced substantial evidence proving that they knew definitely subject had been in contact with Aradi. He was again released and remained undisturbed although he noted that he was kept under observation and that people kept following him around.

"In mid-August Jones was arrested as he was leaving the home of a friend in one of the Budapest suburbs, and was driven about the city in a closed car. His eyes were blindfolded and he was brought into a building which may have been Andrássy Utka 60 or the Russian I.S. headquarters in the Hotel Britannia. (Comment: Jones was not certain of this point.) Much to Jones' surprise, the interrogators, who were probably Russian but who spoke flawless Hungarian, without saying a word set Jones down in a chair. They then proceeded to play a record which consisted of the exact conversation which Jones had had with Aradi in the spring of 1946 in the American headquarters in Vienna. Jones stated that he remembered exactly the details of this conversation. He recalled that during this conversation Aradi had asked him for details of his knowledge of the proceedings within the Hungarian-Russian cultural society. The Russians played back only the beginning of this conversation and did not reach this last point. They insistently interrogated Jones regarding the person with whom he had held this conversation. Jones claimed that he did not give any information and was then told to sleep in the bath tub that night, and after additional interrogation on the next day was then released.

"After listening to this story, [] openly expressed his skepticism as to the details cited and again repeated that we had finished our part in this business and had no intention of paying out any more money. [] then dismissed Jones, who left without any visible emotion."

8. In view of the information reported by Fr. KEREAI, it is possible that Jones is actually an agent of the SIS who, in contacting [] was attempting to penetrate the AIS. It is suggested that this memorandum be shown to Mr. Aradi, who is well acquainted with the details of the Jones case, as well as to [] of the [] station. It is possible that Jones is working for the Soviets or for the Hungarians in Rome. Since Vienna is not in contact with our [] office, we shall not undertake to inform this last station regarding Subject. Washington is in the best position to decide whether or not the above information should be passed to []. It is to be noted that Jones' connections with the Soviets or the Hungarian Intelligence Services have not been proved. His present address is unknown, but is presumed to be Rome.

9. Jones' physical description as extracted from our files is as follows:

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Twenty-two years old, 5'10 1/2" in height, long, light-brown hair, penetrating eyes, brown nose, wears horn-rimmed glasses; slender build; round shoulders; has such slugs on shoulders and back; wears walking stick on right hand. Subject was a law student at the University of Maryland in 1945. He is the son of a middle-class family and received a Catholic education. He allegedly joined with the underground movement led by the Germans in Hungary against the Germans. It is reported in 1945 that he was deeply opposed to the Soviet system and the Communist Party in Hungary. Allegedly his walking was "rigid" by the standards in the early days of the Soviet occupation of Budapest.

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