

Western Europe

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The Chess Player Was A Soviet Agent

Background of the Anasov Case -- Diplomat found his victim in a Coffee House.

Vienna. The case of the accredited Soviet Attache in Vienna, M.A.S. Anasov, has created a sensation with the Austrian public. As reported, the diplomat, a member of the Soviet civilian intelligence service, attempted to bribe a Vienna municipal official and was caught in the act. How Anasov proceeded to reach his objective has now become known in detail.

The attache approached the municipal official at a chess club, located in a coffee house in the Seventh District. The municipal official is a member of this chess board -- a coincidence which the diplomat had cleverly controlled. In order to secure the good will of the official, he [the diplomat] surprised him first with small gifts; sometimes the gifts were theater tickets and at other times books. That was last year. In the spring of 1967, Anasov let his real intentions show through for the first time. He first carefully questioned the official, who worked in Municipal Department 61 for Citizenship Matters, about his type of work and one day he openly stated what he wanted.

There are two versions about this: Vienna City Hall officials surmise that the content of specific citizenship records: other sources believe that he intended to get his victim to make false file cards and to smuggle them into the records. This would have made it possible for the Soviet Intelligence Service to supply an agent with Austrian documents. The agent would not have had to do anything but apply for a proof of citizenship record, which would have most probably been issued to him on the basis of the false material inserted in the files.

There are also two interpretations about what happened after Anasov made his proposal to the municipal official. While it is explained in the City Council that the official became suspicious when this chess partner suddenly went beyond his customary attentiveness and attempted to press money on him -- a fact the official immediately reported to his superiors -- other sources claim the official took the money. A total of about 4,000 shillings was reportedly involved. The official is said to have lost his nerve at the last moment and reported the matter. He informed the City Council, which reported the matter to the state police.