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SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE: 2001-2008

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE
INFO : VIENNA, TRIESTE, ROME, ZAGREB

FROM : Amembassy BELGRADE

DATE: December 26, 1967

SUBJECT : Austrian View of the Draganovic Case

REF :

The Political Counselor (Franz SCHMID) of the Austrian Embassy recently discussed the Draganovic case. He said that the Austrian Government acknowledges that it will not be able to render consular assistance to an Austrian citizen who is also a Yugoslav national in a case such as Draganovic's. Austrian efforts in the case have therefore been directed toward getting the Yugoslav authorities to acknowledge that the Austrian Government nevertheless has a "vital interest" in such matters. Schmid theorized that the case may have developed along the following lines.

1. Draganovic apparently learned in Rome that the Church no longer approves what he had been doing among the emigres, but could not face returning to Austria to live among them while refusing to lead them. Therefore, he sought to make a deal with the Yugoslav authorities that would permit his return here.

2. The essentials of the deal are that, for his part, Draganovic would destroy all the materials he has in connection with the book he was writing and would, upon his return to Yugoslavia, make statement(s) acceptable to the Yugoslav authorities. For its part, the Yugoslav Government would find some solution to the legal-criminal aspects of the matter that would leave Draganovic free or at most lightly punished. Schmid does not even rule out the possibility that Draganovic may be allowed to return to Austria in the not-distant future. Another element of the deal may have been that Draganovic would reveal the names and addresses of colleagues among the emigres. In any case, the two-month period between Draganovic's disappearance and his surfacing in Yugoslavia, according to Schmid, represents the time it took Yugoslav agents to assure themselves that all copies of the notes and of the manuscripts had been located and/or

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destroyed. Schmid speculated that the deal was made in Trieste, where Draganovic got into an automobile with Yugoslav agents. Schmid also thought it unlikely that Draganovic was free to change his mind once he got into the automobile. For when he was asked directly about whether he had voluntarily entered Yugoslavia, Draganovic cryptically said only that he entered the country on an Austrian passport.

Comment. Two difficulties suggest themselves in connection with Schmid's speculation which presumably also is the Austrian Foreign Office's theory of the case. Draganovic is presented as priest enough to follow the Vatican's wishes on his activities but at the same time is regarded as unpriestly enough to be willing to betray his colleagues. Schmid himself was not troubled by this: he said the interview had shown Draganovic to be "an intellectual" (untrustworthy types!) rather than a priest. The other inconsistency concerns the speculation that Draganovic may soon be free even to travel back to Austria. This implies that he wants to do so. If Draganovic returned to Yugoslavia to avoid having to face his former emigre compatriots, and if the notes of the book were destroyed, the question arises why Draganovic would be contemplating returning to Austria.

Schmid concedes that much of his speculation is based upon little evidence, and that developed by and communicated through the Austrian Embassy's press officer's impressions from a monitored interview. Much, Schmid admitted, must be surmised from Draganovic's often-cryptic answer to questions. Moreover, much must be made of the fact that in many cases Draganovic's answers were not really responsive, but were apparently designed to suggest hidden meanings.

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