

OFFICIAL DISPATCH

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CLASSIFICATION

TO : Chief, Foreign Branch M DATE: 21 October 1947

FROM : Chief [] I CR

SUBJECT: GENERAL: France
SPECIFIC: KOBALIDZE and Grégoire BERIDZE Spain

Ref: Wash Cable 7742, Heid Cable 1862

Source: [] [] [] []
Noted

Michel Kedie
Diplomatic Mission

1. With reference to the information in Heid Cable No. 1862 on Grégoire BERIDZE and KOBALIDZE, we herewith forward a summary of the latest information received on the activities of the two.

2. *KOBALIDZE* Georgian. Cousin of Michel KEDIA; related to GUEGUETCHKORI. During the war he was one of KEDIA's closest collaborators in KEDIA's work for the Germans. He has recently become openly pro-Soviet and is now editing a pro-Soviet newspaper in France.

GVINADZE, member of the Soviet Legation, Bern, visited Paris. KOBALIDZE contacted him and arranged for GVINADZE to meet KEDIA in Switzerland. This story contradicts KEDIA's version of how he happened to meet GVINADZE accidentally in Arkadi WEIZENFELD's delicatessen and, recognizing GVINADZE as a fellow Georgian, struck up an acquaintanceship. KOBALIDZE made a trip in 1946 to Moscow where he is believed to have had an interview with BERIA. KEDIA's wife and children are in Paris and are completely under KOBALIDZE's influence.

Madame KEDIA is reported to be the mistress of the Counselor of the Soviet Embassy, Paris. In any case she has been trying to persuade her husband to return to Soviet Georgia with her. A certain Mme. Pierrette BERTRAND and a chauffeur of the Cuban Embassy, Paris, have acted as couriers between KEDIA, his wife and KOBALIDZE. Through Ali Khan KANTEMIR, former Muselman collaborator of KEDIA in Berlin, Source [] learned that the Georgian General (UJAPARIDZE) (Major General of the MGB?) defected in France, apparently at the time of BERIA's inspection tour of Europe. UJAPARIDZE was in contact with JORDANIA, GUEGUETCHKORI, and KEDIA. According to KANTEMIR the

Prepared by []

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French are closely guarding DJAFARIDZE, who nevertheless persists in maintaining contact with a Georgian compatriot DVARVALDZE. The result of the defection was to make the Georgian Colony in Paris turn against JORDANIA, GUEGUETCHKORI and KOBAHIDZE and their efforts to persuade the Georgians to join forces with the Soviets.

Spain
2. BERIDZE, ^{ced} Grégoire BERIDZE first came to the attention of this office in connection with Safehaven matters. He was reportedly connected with Harold FEHRMANN and Eugen LANG in building up a fund for the SD through foreign currency exchange, the export of looted goods and smuggling. He organized the smuggling of Russian platinum and industrial diamonds and in so doing apparently built up a considerable fortune for himself in Swiss banks and elsewhere. BERIDZE and his wife Vera entered Switzerland in July 1944. They carried "La Hansa" passports when they first went to France and in France they received French passports. BERIDZE now travels on a "Nansen" passport issued in Lausanne on 4 February 1947.

Spain
BERIDZE is reported to have admitted that he supplied the Germans with complete information on the location, capacity, and production techniques of the Caucasian oilfields. He was interested in the "IPSA, Fur Petroleum A.G.", a black-listed firm in which he hoped to interest British and American capital. The French services in Switzerland have always been interested in following BERIDZE's activities. They reported in July 1945 through the Commercial Section, Legation, Bern that BERIDZE and Emil ROGER were instrumental in concealing German interests in the Balkans and France. The code words "BERO" and "ROBE", composed of the first two letters of both names, were used for these transactions. ROGER was caught by the Swiss in August 1943 trying to leave Switzerland for France with documents belonging to BERIDZE and Michel OLIAN, Armenian lawyer also involved in Safehaven activities. ROGER talked to the Swiss and BERIDZE was on the verge of arrest, but he somehow either talked or bought his way out of the predicament.

Ind
Turk
Milan
In December 1945 a former agent of this office was asked by BERIDZE to investigate a Turk, Sachier SOEZEN, employee of the Turkish Legation, Milan. SOEZEN was supposed to have arranged for a transfer of money from Turkey to BERIDZE through a Swiss watch firm, EBEL. X BERIDZE said that SOEZEN's brother in Turkey was a banker and that through the two brothers and the Swiss firm a monthly payment from BERIDZE's large accounts in Turkey had been arranged; however, no money had been forthcoming (BX-564). SOEZEN gave our former source a letter to take to BERIDZE. This letter, written in Turkish, was forwarded to Washington for translation and read as follows (X-4052):
"I send you my heartfelt greetings, and reassurances for fighting

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services' to our Great Caucasus. I am in Italy, where I have been since I left you. ESTELI-BEYLI, too, is in Rome. I sent two of our fellow strugglers in independence to you. It is now 25 days since they have been lost (or-they have lost them: translator's note - meaning is not clear). Send letters only by selected persons. Who of our friends are there? It would be preferable not to let anyone know where KEDIA is. It would be helpful if you would let us have prompt and reliable news about the activities of the (your) work. As to the results of our work, the news will be given you by the letters which you receive from us." "Yours, your little father".

German
inter-
Ostufaf. MAULATZ, former economic head of the SD in Paris, said that BERIDZE was the chief link in the German courier service to the Balkans, the Near East, Germany and Spain. This courier service was concerned with concealing German assets and looted goods. BERIDZE worked almost exclusively with Eugen LANG and Harold FEHRMANN in obtaining and securing foreign exchange.

Spain
In February 1947 BERIDZE showed up at the Commercial Attaché's Office, Legation, Bern, announcing that he intended to leave Switzerland for Spanish Morocco where he would reorganize the North African Mining Co., Ltd., in which he was the majority stockholder. He was going to fly to Spain where he would see Eugen LANG. He claimed that he had not seen nor been in correspondence with FEHRMANN since 1944. After visiting Spanish Morocco, BERIDZE intended to go to England and from there to return to Switzerland. In June 1947 Vera BERIDZE told friends in the hotel in Lausanne where she and her husband lived, that both she and her husband were going to Tangier with the intention of emigrating to South America.

Italy
Source [] and Source [] reported that BERIDZE had been in contact with the British in Spain and had arranged for KEDIA to make contact with them. Apparently BERIDZE has been and still is financing KEDIA - to the extent of 500 Sw. frs. per month. Ali Khan KANTEMIR reported that although the negotiations between KEDIA and the BIS were in the embryonic stage, nevertheless this first step assured BERIDZE of financial success (apparently in his exploitation of the mines in Spanish Morocco in which British capital was interested). Contact with the British was made by BERIDZE with the support of Prince SOUKBATOV and Jacques SALMANOWITZ, *ud*

Spain
[] has reported that KEDIA has been disillusioned and disappointed since his first contact with the British. In the meantime, however, BERIDZE appears to be travelling in a circuit of Lausanne, Barcelona, Spanish Morocco and London. The Spaniards are not too pleased by the BERIDZE/British combination but BERIDZE seems to have full British support. BERIDZE was also reported involved in the sale of arms to an unknown buyer.

(Field Comment: The French are still interested in all BERIDZE's

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and apparently the latter is still unable to enter France. This does not work too great a handicap: Mme. Vera BERIDZE's nephew (this relationship has never been living in France and remarked to an occupant of the house in Lausanne, when young BERIDZE was visiting there, that he served as his "father's" courier between France and Switzerland. Furthermore KEDIA's frequent courier service between his wife (KOBANIDZE) and himself serves to keep BERIDZE well connected with France. This brings up the problem of KEDIA: whatever concerns either BERIDZE or KOBANIDZE will also involve KEDIA. This office is keenly interested in any information on KEDIA -- confirmation of his reported contact with the British, his contact with his wife and KOBANIDZE, etc. We should also like to know if KOBANIDZE has visited Switzerland personally.

References:

BERIDZE, Grégoire: BX-564, X-4052, [] Cable 399 of 13 November 1945, [] Cable No. 47 of 14 January 1946, MSB-1017, MSB-1088, MSB-1216.

ROMANOWITZ, Jacques: Described in the PIERT/PESCATORE interrogation as a BIS agent. Runs the "Société Générale de Surveillance" of Geneva, a large transport insurance business with subsidiary firms in southeastern Europe. Provided the American Consulate, Geneva, and Legation, Bern, with economic information during the war. Very wealthy and has contributed much to help Jews persecuted by Nazis. Has also contributed to the "Parti de Travail". BX-835, TX-0929, [] Cable 68 of 16 May 1946, [] Cable 48 of 20 May 1946, [] Cable 255 of 18 July 1947, [] Cable 266 of 25 July 1947, [] Cable of 29 August 1947.

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