

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2E
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2004 2006

SR/2-B-61-419

13 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, SR
VIA : Chief, SR/2
SUBJECT : Karl LINNAS

1. In early 1961 the Soviet Estonian press initiated a series of accusations leveled against former Estonians, now living in the West, who were alleged to be "war criminals", "German Fascist handymen", "murderers", etc. and were said to have been responsible for mass exterminations and other atrocities committed against innocent people during the Nazi occupation of Estonia. The Soviet Estonian press named a number of these individuals; most of whom now live in England, Australia, Sweden, Iceland and the United States.

2. In March 1961, the Soviet government opened a trial of "Estonian War Criminals" in Tallinn, Estonia. Notes were delivered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the governments of Great Britain and Australia which requested the extradition of two of these "war criminals" to the Soviet Union in order that they stand trial for mass exterminations and other atrocities committed against innocent people during the Nazi occupation of Estonia. Both the British and Australian governments refused to comply with the requests and pointed out that their governments at no time recognized de jure the incorporation of Estonia into the USSR. The two for whom extradition had been requested were sentenced to death in absentia.

3. In May 1961 the Moscow radio, in a broadcast to Eastern North America, accused Karl LINNAS, now living in New York, and Johannes SOODLA, now living in Los Angeles, as being responsible for crimes of mass shootings of innocent people during the Nazi occupation of Estonia and stated that the investigation of these former residents of Estonia, who now live in the United States, was before the Estonian courts. It was further stated that the Estonian public demanded stern punishment for these criminals and their delivery into the hands of the law.

SECRET

SECRET

SR/2-B-61-419
Page Two

4. On 12 October 1961, the Soviet News Agency TASS reported that the Soviet government had sent a note to the United States calling for the extradition of Karl LINNAS and calling attention to the international agreements of the countries who fought against Germany. CIA files contain only a single reference to LINNAS and this document has been destroyed.

5. According to AEGORILLA, Johannes SOODLA, mentioned in Paragraph 3 above, was working for the American intelligence (date of this information was 1953) in Trieste. An attempt will be made to clarify the status of SOODLA when his file is received from the Records Center on 16 October 1961.

6. It is not impossible that the Soviets will, in the future, ask for the extradition of Eduard REISSAAR. He did work with the German Security Police during the German occupation of Estonia and later joined the Abwehr. Since REISSAAR is a contract agent of SR/2/Baltic, and has performed a number of assignments, it may be judicious to alert him to this possibility. However, to date, there is no indication of any such action by the Soviets.

CONCLUSION

7. It is believed that LINNAS had no past contact with CIA and there seems to be no need for CIA action in this matter. In the event that the Soviets make similar requests for REISSAAR, who is of CIA interest, it is suggested that CIA intercede with the proper authorities to deny the Soviets any jurisdiction over the men and to prevent extradition. If it is ascertained that SOODLA is also of CIA interest, a similar recommendation will be made; otherwise, no CIA action need be taken.

SR/2/Baltic/Estonia

* * 16 Oct.
No record of American intelligence activities.
In 1952 went to Trieste from Germany. Arrived in U.S. - probably late 1958 - destined to Jha Karmwaji
2418 Detroit St., LA 36, Calif

SECRET