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per DOI 70-17

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Italy 3970
BCFINESSE

Chief, WE
Attn: Chief, Italian Branch
Senior Representative, []

18 November 1954

Alleged Clandestine Communication with
Anti-Communist Cells in the USSR
Father Tomislav POGLAJEN; aka Thomas GEORGE;
aka Tommaso KOLAKOVIC; aka Identity A

Ref: DIR-19627; [] [] []

1. At the request of [] [] met with Subject on 26 October at the home of [] whom Subject had contacted with the message that he had vital information on the political situation in Viet Nam which he claimed was of great importance to ODYOKE. The primary purpose therefore of seeing Subject was to extract from him the information which he allegedly held. However, in addition to the positive intelligence aspects of Subject's return to Rome, [] had received in his previous interview with Subject, reported in [], information sufficient to suggest the possibility that Subject might be of operational interest to KUBARK. Subject's known background as related in the book God's Underground; his alleged high contacts in the Vatican; his affirmation that he was a Catholic priest working under cover; his claim of contacts and communications behind the Iron Curtain and his apparent ability to travel widely all combined to indicate the desirability of learning more about this man and his activities.
2. With this in mind [] met with Subject the evening of 26 October and after an exchange of general amenities and an explanation by [] of []'s inability to meet with him, the interview got underway.
3. Subject told [] that he had arrived in Hanoi the morning of 7 October and had accomplished his mission which was to carry Christian literature for distribution, via Catholic Bishops among whom he named Bishop BOOLBY, Apostolic Delegate and Bishop QUEI, to Catholic priests who will remain behind in North Viet Nam. Subject left Hanoi the evening of 7 October just before the Communists moved into the city. Subject then proceeded to reiterate that information which he had given in references prior to his departure for Saigon. He said that French businessmen and French philo-Communists, the former for economic motives

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and the latter for political motives, were secretly but actively working to destroy Viet Nam independence. He named (fnu) BORIS, (fnu) NORA and (fnu) BORDAZ, Counsellor of the French Commission in Saigon, as the three men who with approval of the French Government are supporting General HIEN (sic), Chief of the General Staff, General LE VEN (sic) and General KYUAN (sic), Chief of the local Security Forces, in their efforts to undermine the DIEM Government. According to Subject these men will be successful in destroying the DIEM Government with the result that South Viet Nam will be laid open to the Communists unless ODYOKE moves fast, declares its firm support of DIEM, and takes a strong and determined stand against French machinations in Viet Nam.

4. Having heard his story [] remarked that what Subject had related did not add substantially to what he had already told us before he went to Saigon. Subject admitted that this was so but said that his visit had confirmed the urgency of the situation and he was eager that this sense of urgency be transmitted to []. [] assured Subject that he would revert to [] what had just been told him and would restate to [] the urgency which he attached to the information. [] pointed out, however, that since DIEM himself was fully informed of the situation and was in direct contact with the ODYOKE Chief of Mission in Saigon it was reasonable to conclude that this same information had already been reported to ODAGID's highest levels. Subject agreed that this was probably true and concurred with [] observation that any report on the matter by [] would probably be superfluous.

5. A pause ensued in the conversation and after a moment or two [] asked Subject if he had something else on his mind. Subject said he also wanted to solicit the aid of [] in procuring a visa so that he could visit the United States and contact various people to appeal to them for money to finance his work. Subject said he wanted to visit Bishop SHEEN and Cardinal STRITCH of Chicago whom he described as the most astute Church leader in America. He also said that he hoped that [] might give him letters of introduction to industrialists such as FORD whom he could approach for the money so necessary to the continuation of his work of feeding the minds and souls of Russian Christians. He added that these Christians are working to spread among the Russian people the Christian ethic, the natural moral law, the standards of human decency and the natural dignity of the individual which will one day cause the atheistic materialism and tyranny of Communism to crumble and fall.

6. [] replied that he would inquire on the question of the visa. [] then expressed great interest in the work which Subject had

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mentioned and told him that [] had many Catholic friends in America who might be willing to assist his work which [] personally regarded as containing a great good for the Western world and an immense potential in the present conflict of two world ideologies. [] observed, however, that he was unable to understand this work embodied only in the person of Subject and confessed that it was difficult to imagine a nameless organization without any known membership and no visible means of support. [] urged Subject to tell him more of the details of his work, its organization, its objectives, its means, its accomplishments, its potential for expansion, etc.

7. Since it would serve little practical purpose to convey here the complete narrative form of the conversation that ensued between Subject and [] follows a presentation of the essentials which Subject related to [] and which were derived partially from direct and indirect questioning and probing and partially from Subject's voluntary explanations of his background, his work and his objectives.

8. Subject first became convinced of the reality of a Christian underground in Russia when he served as a partisan officer in the Red Army in 1944. During that time he remained a practicing Catholic priest and continued to say Mass and minister the Sacraments clandestinely. After the surrender of Germany, Subject, with the assistance of high-ranking Soviet army officers to whom he had bound himself by restoring their Faith and by ministering to them the Sacraments of his Church, entered Russia under an assumed identity and travelled extensively throughout the country always moving from one Christian contact to another. During this sojourn he found overwhelming evidence that the basically spiritual nature of the Russian people, both Catholic and Orthodox, had survived the anti-religious campaigns and spurious religious toleration of the State. He found among all levels of society persons fired with the counter-ideology of Christian beliefs and teachings which gave them the strength to organize clandestine Christian communities and to preserve the validity of the conscience as a moral guide in questions of right and wrong. He found true anti-Communists who risked death and punishment to persevere in the true practice of their religions.

9. Inspired by his conviction that an efficacious counter-force, backed by strong spiritual motivations which equalled and surpassed those of the convinced Marxist, did in fact exist within Russia, he determined upon his return to the West to devote himself to supplying these people with literature wherewith they could expand and teach Christian counter-propaganda. He sought and received support for his campaign from Cardinal TISSERANT of the Congregation of the Oriental Church under whose competence fall the Oriental Rites of the East which are in communion with Rome. As a Jesuit, subject to the oath of obedience to his

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superiors he sought and received the support and approbation of the Jesuit General (then the Polish predecessor to the incumbent Belgian General JANSSENS). He was authorized by his superiors to remain a clandestine Catholic priest.

10. Subject cited as supporters and collaborators who are au courant of his work, Fr. LEIBER, S.J., Secretary to the Pope and Monsignor SIGISMUNDI of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide whose raison d'etre is the Propagation of the Faith throughout the world. Although Cardinal FUMASONDI-BIONDI is currently Prefect of Propaganda Fide he is too old to carry his duties and the practical administration of the Congregation falls to his secretary, SIGISMUNDI. In addition to the finances received from these churchmen Subject receives donations from Catholic Bishops throughout the world and from Catholic industrialists of proven faith. Catholic publishers in Europe cooperate with him in the publication of anti-Communist books and pamphlets. These publications Subject described as designed to hit at the base of the Marxist structure, to expose the deception and lack of logic in the Marxist theory, to show the inconsistencies of the present day Soviet leaders, and to restore minds, which have been twisted by Communist propaganda, to the light of truth. Subject said his publications are based on Christian philosophy and Catholicism and treat also with sociological and economic thought.

11. Subject's methods for getting the literature behind the Iron Curtain and into interior channels are varied. They include contacting trusted European travellers from the West (apparently those from all European countries whom he referred to as "our friends") who travel to Russia and the Satellite countries on legitimate trade and commercial visits. He also uses those who travel from the East to the West for business reasons, to attend sport events and fairs and those who are in the West on diplomatic and technical missions. Although Subject admitted that these latter were few and very difficult to contact securely he said he had met with some measure of success among them. No contact is made unless the person being considered is vouched for by known and trusted friends. Preliminary contacts are sometimes made over and over again by refugee co-nationals to gauge the political thought and spiritual substance of the person being considered. After having recruited persons to the task of carrying the material across the borders they are given the name of one person inside to whom they consign the publications. This person then distributes the material to his contacts and the books are passed on from one to another among the members of the underground.

12. When asked for specific examples Subject told [] that "We have a French girl in Moscow University who works for us; who is doing excellent work among the students and who is free to travel between Moscow and Paris to report her progress." He cited also "a radio engineer

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in Prague who speaks and acts like a Communist but is one of us working clandestinely against the regime." Subject said this engineer has built up a small cell. The system of the structure is that of insulated contact by which one man converts four and then each of the four converts another four, etc., without identifying one to another. He described the work as infinitely slow because of the security involved but said that as a long-range program the work is moving forward. He added, "Of course we have many in prison and some have died but the work continues." His people work also on the Soviet soldiery outside of Russia and he claims to have converted some who then have gone back to Russia and quietly joined the ranks of the underground.

13. Obviously all of that which Subject told [] was of interest and carries a significant potential for the accomplishment of KUBARK's intelligence mission. The potential in the ZODIAC-ZOMBIE field is immediately apparent. The existence of a potential in the propaganda and psychological warfare field is manifest. All this of course predicated on the establishment of certain facts. For [] the first fact to establish was the bona fides of Subject himself although admittedly all of Subject's claims relative to a functioning underground behind the Curtain are going to require careful investigation and assessment. It will be noted that the traces forwarded in DIR-19627 reported Subject as an adventurer and impostor who was without high Vatican contacts. This report led [] to be slightly chary of Subject and to seek tangible evidence that Subject was in fact supported by Cardinal TISSERANT.

14. Consequently [] told Subject that his personal interest was high enough to stimulate a desire to talk directly to Cardinal TISSERANT in order that he might hear the Cardinal's views and opinions on the work which Subject had described. Subject replied that he could not promise the Cardinal would see [] but said that he thought the Cardinal would receive []. [] pointed out to Subject that [] responsibilities involved Italy and that she was much too preoccupied with her duties in that direction to turn her attention to such a global situation as the matter under discussion. Subject then agreed that he would seek an appointment for [] to talk with TISSERANT the next day.

15. As [] rose to terminate the interview, having set an hour for a phone call the morning of 27 October, Subject stated that he would confide to [] a closely guarded secret which he begged [] to protect most discreetly because there are very few persons in Italy who know it. Subject then related that Minister FANFANI had issued him a false passport under a false name (that of Identity A reference). [] examined the passport briefly and saw that it was much used and had been issued by the Questura of Rome about a year ago. To [] inquiries Subject replied that he had used stateless refugee papers

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issued by the Belgian Government formerly but had found that with such documents extensive travel was extremely difficult and hopelessly complicated. In addition he said he felt that he could move more securely and accomplish more if his movements were not generally known as they would be under any of his old identities. Consequently he requested FANFANI, then Minister of Interior, whom he described as a good Catholic, to help him. The Minister personally had the passport issued and according to Subject the only persons who know to whom the passport went are FANFANI and DOMODO (sic) in the Foreign Office. (DOMODO may be identical with Francesco Maria DOMINICO.)

16. On the morning of 27 October [] after having cleared with [] met Subject at a pre-arranged spot and together proceeded to 34 Via della Conciliazione, offices of the Congregation of the Oriental Church, to meet with Cardinal TISSERANT. Upon entering the building Subject asked [] if he preferred to talk to the Cardinal alone. [] responded that he had nothing to say to the Cardinal which he did not want Subject to hear and that he had no objections. Subject being present during the interview. The Cardinal received [] most cordially in a friendly informal manner with no sign of officiousness or consciousness of the dignity of his rank. After all were comfortably seated the conversation opened with an exchange of conventional remarks on Rome and the climate, etc. After some minutes [] opened the business at hand by stating that he had had a most interesting conversation with Subject the night before and that what he had heard indicated to [] that Subject's work was of immense value to the world, to the West and to the Church. [] frankly stated that what Subject was doing was something that needed to be done and expressed personal regret that the Vatican had not seen the necessity of such work long ago. The Cardinal agreed that the Vatican had been slow and added that "we in the Vatican do not always think alike." The Cardinal said that he had worked with Subject since 1946 and regarded Subject as completely dedicated to his work which he considered of the highest importance to the Church and to the West. The Cardinal continued by saying that he gave assistance to Subject not as Prefect of the Oriental Congregation but as an individual Cardinal of the Church. (This distinction is not quite clear but perhaps TISSERANT meant as an individual Cardinal with diocesan responsibilities.) In response to []' direct question the Cardinal confirmed that Subject is a practicing priest who celebrates daily Mass privately. Returning to the subject of division of thought among Vatican personalities the Cardinal stated that he personally advocated the Church Militant. [] replied that he too shared this attitude and expressed the opinion that although the Church Suffering could undoubtedly accomplish a great deal spiritually [] was convinced that prayer and suffering in the face of such an enemy as atheistic Communism needed to be united actively with the Church Militant if we in our day were to see

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the Church Triumphant. (The use of the above terms in the sense given are of course technically and doctrinally allegorical.) [] continued by stating that he saw in Subject's program the potential for expansion and the possibility of making it even more active. [] pointed out that since Subject had channels through which anti-Communist propaganda could flow it occurred to [] that these channels could be two way and that by them information, which the Cardinal surely recognized as also being important to the West, could flow out. The Cardinal replied that he recognized this possibility but that this was not the prime objective of Subject's work. The Cardinal added, however, that he does receive information from behind the Iron Curtain which permits him to measure the effect and progress of the Christian work being carried on by Subject and his friends. [] again indicated his interest and repeated to the Cardinal that which he had told Subject the night before: viz: that [] had many Catholic friends in America who might be willing to help and that [] intended to contact them when he visited America in November. The Cardinal said that this would be good and requested [] to be discreet in his contacts. [] replied that it was his intention to be discreet and observed with a smile that although he had been in Italy only a few years he did not have the impression, from his observations, that the Vatican itself was very secure in its internal matters. The Cardinal returned the smile and said that he had been in Rome since 1908 and that he was very much aware of the lack of security in the Vatican. He said it was for this very reason that his assistance to Subject was always handled by him-^{self} personally and with the greatest discretion. (Later as Subject and [] were leaving the building Subject praised TISSERANT and said that this was one Cardinal who knew how to keep his lips sealed. Subject observed, to emphasize his statement, that none of the functionaries in the offices knew his real identity or the reasons for his many visits to the Cardinal.) While on the subject of security [] remarked that, inasmuch as we shared the same attitude on the security of the Vatican he would appreciate it if the Cardinal would regard our conversation in confidence and jokingly added that he was not quite asking for the seal of the confessional. TISSERANT smiled and hastened to assure [] that our discussion would remain with him alone. Before leaving [] told TISSERANT he would be most appreciative if, upon his return to Rome, he might meet with the Cardinal from time to time for further conversation. The Cardinal said he would be most happy to receive [] at his office in the Congregation or at his home and added that [] could call him directly on his private telephone to fix an appointment at which time he would receive [] as discreetly as possible. Our conversation ended with a few pleasantries turning on [] impending home leave, [] family and the Cardinal's visits to the United States.

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17. Herewith for the record and possible future use are the addresses and telephone numbers of Cardinal TISSERANT. Home: Via Po 25c, Rome, telephone 865-844. Office: Via della Conciliazione 34, Rome, telephone 555-251 (Vatican Central), personal extension 273.

18. Subject and [] left the building of the Congregation together and Subject accepted [] invitation to drive him to a bus stop where he could catch a bus to carry him downtown to a travel agency where Subject intended to book reservations to Venezuela. While driving Subject turned to the question of a visa and stated that he would like to include a visit to the U. S. on his way to Venezuela. He added that he was in a hurry to get started since he had many South American businessmen who he expected would give him financial assistance. [] asked Subject exactly how he worked his approach since obviously if he were to accomplish his purpose he would have to introduce himself under his real identity and establish his bona fides. Subject explained that he used his present identity only for travel and made his introductions under the name of Father GEORGE since he was well known by that name. He said his bona fides were easily established wherever he went by Catholic friends and Catholic Bishops all over the world.

19. [] explained to Subject the difficulties in acquiring a visitor's visa, one of which was the requirement of filling out a detailed questionnaire which would obviously present some problems considering the fact that he was travelling under false documentation. Subject said that he could provide the name of a person in Washington, one Monsignor Paul YBOU-PIN, Chinese Culture Center, who would vouch for his visit. With further explanation by [] Subject quickly perceived that more than a few complexities would arise in getting a visa. His identity and relationship to TISSERANT were to be protected. [] indicated that it might not be impossible to arrange a visa but that it was something that could not be done quickly if it was to be done securely. [] reminded Subject that it would be indeed awkward and embarrassing if it became known that PANFANI had issued him the passport which he carried. Subject agreed that this was true and accepted [] suggestion that he leave the matter of the visa suspended until [] returned to Rome and could personally turn his attention to the problem. [] told Subject that they would see each other again upon [] return to Rome and asked Subject what his plans were in the meantime. Subject said he planned to fly to Paris on 28 October; remain there for a few days and then on to Venezuela where he planned to stay until about the first of December. He intended then to return to Rome and within a few days go to India. He described India as the most important field for his work outside the Iron Curtain because Communist propaganda is gaining swiftly every day and there is no effective counter-propaganda to combat their doctrine. He will attend a

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church conference in India and again return to Rome about 1 April 1955.
[] expressed his regrets at being absent from Rome in December but
said that [] would be happy to see him and asked that Subject
call [] at his home when he returned from Venezuela.

20. [] in taking leave of Subject, reaffirmed his interest in
Subject's work and told Subject he would look forward to seeing him again
in Rome upon his return from India. Subject said that he would call
[] upon his return and reminded [] that he could always reach him
via Cardinal TISSERANT.

Prepared by []
5 November 1954

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