

OFFICIAL DISPATCH

VIA: AIR

Despatch No. WSMA-38

CLASSIFICATION

To: Chief, FEW

Date: 16 January 1948

From: []

Subject: General:

Specific: Latest developments in VAJTA - SZUMLAKOWSKI matter.

Source: W/BC

Attached hereto is a copy of the last memorandum from [] marked Attachment 1, also a copy of NYISZTOR's testimonial letter, marked Attachment 2, and copies of the translations of letters to VAJTA allegedly written by Gowen, marked Attachment 3.

2. NYISZTOR's letter, attachment 2, was written in German and translated by []

3. The letters in attachment 3 were translated from Italian by [] and were originally written by hand, which accounts for the "rough" translation. [] tells me that he has a post card with Gowen's picture on it, which he signed "Bill", and that the handwriting is similar. VAJTA has said the letters were written by Gowen, and [] is of the opinion that they actually were, although he has no proof except the similarity in handwriting. Gowen uses various names in signing his letters. VAJTA is addressed as Bill or Feri.

[]

Attachments- 3 (Attachment No. 3 is attached to original only)

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

SECRET EE

Information prepared for
in response to a Congressional inquiry.
16 Jan 48. jkm

January 13, 1948

To: []
From: []
Re: The VAJTA Affair

Mr. SZUMLAKOWSKI called this morning to state that he had received another letter from Mr. VAJTA, postmarked New York, in which the latter wrote that, upon arriving in N. Y., the pro-Communist Hungarian newspaper of one GONDOR had attacked him as "a Nazi bandit, assassin and Fascist chieftan." Mr. VAJTA added in his letter that he had already written a reply to the attack defending himself which would be published in the Catholic press in the U. S.

This GONDOR, according to Mr. VAJTA's letter, is connected in some way with the present Soviet-dominated Government of Hungary.

Mr. SZUMLAKOWSKI was informed that from now on, contacts re his group should be made with you. He was extremely worried about the repercussions of Mr. VAJTA's trip to the States; that is, the adverse press and Congressional interest, and stated that he would ask Monseigneur NYISZTOR to write the Embassy a letter outlining all the talks held in Rome between Mr. Edward Page Jr. of the Rome Embassy as well as with Mr. Wm. Gowen of the attached agency there. He added that Msgr. NYISZTOR still receives letters from Mr. Gowen, postmarked from Bayreuth, Germany, which he would bring in. Likewise, Msgr NYISZTOR's letter would "squash" any rumors to the effect that Mr. VAJTA was a Nazi chieftan or "bandit".

He added that Mr. Gowen's interest in the Eastern European business is apparently continuing, and that upon leaving Italy, Gowen gave VAJTA \$1,500 for his three-months stay in Spain. (He later modified that statement to say that Gowen sent it to VAJTA).

He went away much upset and firmly determined to hunt down the facts and to show previous U. S. interest in the whole group, although once or twice during the conversation he again said that Mr. VAJTA's presence in Madrid would not be necessary to the success of the group.

Mr. VAJTA's letter stated that he would be in Washington on or about the 15-17 of this month, where he would surely see Mr. Franklin C. Gowen, father of Mr. Wm. Gowen.

A letter has also been received by Msgr. NYISZTOR from Father Bela VARGA, aide of Prime Minister NAGY and ex-Pres. of the Hungarian Parliament, in which VARGA adheres to Msgr. NYISZTOR and the Continental Union. Mr. VAJTA's letter also alludes to this change and states that VARGA will be the leading Hungarian of Catholic faith, as against NAGY, who is a Protestant.

attachment 1

Translation of testimonial letter concerning Ferenc VAJTA written by
Monseigneur Dr. Zoltan NYISZTOR, formerly head, Vatican Press Office.

TRANSLATION COPY

January 13, 1948

"To the American Embassy, Madrid:

"After viewing the fiery debate over the person of Mr. Ferenc VAJTA, I feel an obligation to give the following to the American Embassy:

"Ferenc VAJTA has always been called Ferenc VAJTA since he entered Hungarian journalism and has never borne another name. If his family was formerly called VILCSEK, that is no responsibility of his because in the last fifty years in many thousands of cases family names have been Magyarized. In spite of his youth, Ferenc VAJTA has established for himself an extraordinarily good position in journalism, and in the shortest time was counted among the leading publicists. He was the leading associate in one of the largest and most influential newspapers, and chief editor of a large weekly periodical.

"He was never a Nazi nor a Crossed Arrow; on the contrary, the main object of his newspaper has always been anti-Crossed Arrow expansion and especially the extreme Right. For these reasons I have entered into the closest connections with him and we reached an agreement that I was to write ten long leading articles for his newspaper with this orientation. Unfortunately, the advance of the German Army prevented this.

"That he has now been named by the Communists, and especially the fellow-traveling Hungarian Press as a leading Nazi, murderer, robber, etc., is nothing new since all former journalists who do not sympathize with Communism and Social Democracy have been so named. Now the fact that the untruthful accusations have been made in the United States is, for the logical thinking mind, a sign that the Fifth Column of America, at least from the Hungarian angle, is still very influential and dangerous.

Very truly yours,

Monseigneur Dr. Zoltan NYISZTOR
Prelate, Chief Editor

attachment 2