

Ex-C.I.A. Source Troubles to '59 Visit to Cuba

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SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 20 — For two years after he fled to the United States, Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera says, he was a source for information that the Central Intelligence Agency relied on repeatedly.

A refugee from the Hungarian uprising, and before that an inmate in a Siberian prison and a survivor of Auschwitz, the young man won praise for his initial work for the intelligence agency.

But after 1959, he says, not only did his relationship with the agency turn sour, but his career and his personal life were also affected.

His once cordial dealings with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to which he also had provided information, deteriorated to the point that two agents accused him of being a Soviet spy.

He was turned down repeatedly for grants and scholarships for overseas travel and research in his field of Eastern European history. He had trouble several times when, traveling on his own money, he asked United States embassy personnel for assistance.

Dr. Nagy-Talavera, who is now a full professor at California State University

at Chico, was puzzled for years about the Government's change of attitude until a friend recently suggested that he ask for his C.I.A. files under the Freedom of Information Act.

The C.I.A. has declined to discuss the matter on the ground that Dr. Nagy-Talavera is in a dispute with the agency over some of the papers. But he now has about 40 percent of the contents of his files, he says, and thinks he knows what caused the change.

Born in Hungary

The turning point, he now believes, was a trip he made to Cuba in 1956, while he was a student at the University of California at Berkeley, and, more specifically, an article he wrote for the campus newspaper when he returned. In the article he said that the United States was foolishly forcing Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary leader, into the Soviet orbit.

From that point on, instead of memorandums of praise in his C.I.A. files, there appeared accusations about his stability, petty criticisms of his personality and rumors about his sexual orientation.

The files that Dr. Nagy-Talavera obtained from the C.I.A., the F.B.I. and the State Department identify him as having been born in Hungary in 1929 into a fami-

ly that was Hungarian, from Transylvania, and Jewish, from Spain. At the age of 13, he was fluent in French, English, German, Spanish and Hungarian.

By age 15 he was in Auschwitz. He survived a year in the camps before American troops freed him. Back in Budapest, he was involved in resistance to the ruling regime.

He said, in a report to the C.I.A. in 1957, that he had supplied information to military attaches in the United States Embassy there, and helped refugees to escape. He was trapped by Soviet agents in the Soviet zone of Vienna on Jan. 27, 1949. After two months of torture, he was sentenced to 25 years in Siberian prison camps.

He was sent to jail in Hungary in 1955 and released in 1956. In time to take part in the revolt there and to flee to the United States after the uprising was crushed by Soviet troops.

The files show that his C.I.A. contacts began soon after he arrived.

Contacts With C.I.A. Continued
An intra-agency memorandum of July 23, 1957, described him as a brilliant man and quoted sources as saying that "Nagy, although of Jewish ethnic origin, was very anti-Communist and a sincere, cooperative Hungarian."

By Aug. 19, 1957, the Los Angeles field office of the C.I.A. produced a memo that said, "He is extremely intelligent, tough-minded and reliable individual."

The subject of this assessment, by then 28 years old, enrolled in the University of California, Berkeley.

Mr. Nagy-Talavera became an active member of the Union of Free Hungarian Students at Berkeley. "This was a C.I.A. front organization, but he said that he had not realized it when he was a member."

At the Hungarian group's national meeting at Athens, Ohio, in 1959 it was decided that Mr. Nagy-Talavera was suited to go to Cuba, to investigate the direction of the Castro regime, which had taken over six months earlier.

In Cuba, he met Mr. Castro and other leaders, and decided that the United

States pursuing a foolish policy. He came back to Berkeley and expressed this opinion, in his article for The Daily Californian on Nov. 13, 1959.

On Jan. 13, 1961, a San Francisco-based C.I.A. agent wrote in a memo that "one of Nagy's fraternity brothers has intimated that Nagy has homosexual tendencies."

He became a citizen in 1962. In May 1962, in May of that year, an agent wrote that when he first interviewed Mr. Nagy-Talavera in 1957, he was repelled by halitosis and a tendency to expectorate droplets of spittle when the talk became excited. The agent reported this twice in a two-page memo which also recounted the criticism of United States policy toward Cuba, and repeated the report of possible homosexuality.

On May 25, 1962, Free Europe Committee Inc. was told that he could not be given security clearance.

On April 19, 1965, the State Department file noted that his application for a Fulbright-Hays grant was turned down "on the basis of suitability."

In 1967, his passport renewal was delayed.

On July 26, 1967, a memorandum said, the C.I.A. decided to "at least go on record with the F.B.I." about his somewhat unstable character and background, his interest in this agency and his reported visit to the U.S.S.R. in June 1967.

This led to the stormy meeting at which the two agents accused him of being a Soviet spy.

By that time, he had become a faculty member at Chico. He held a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees and a doctor of philosophy degree from Berkeley.

He was interviewed in the presence of his lawyer, Louis Haas. They were asked about the allegations the C.I.A. made against him.

"We have to face the fact he is a homosexual," said Mr. Haas.

"Not by choice," said Dr. Nagy-Talavera. "Before I was shoved into the Siberian camps because I'd helped the American intelligence officers in Hungary, I was living like a normal teen-ager, running around after girls, I lead an honorable life. I do the best I can. But some things are so strong."