

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Mr. Spelman

3305
1504
4404
3008

ITEM No 3025/54

G
8 Apr
XI-1155

RUMANIA - LEBANON

TRADE
Foreign

RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES
Treaties

SOCIAL STRUCTURE
Profiteers of Regime

Rumania Seeks Trade Agreement With Lebanon.

SOURCE ATHENS: Greek-Rumanian emigré in BEIRUT

DATE OF OBSERVATION: February 1954

EVAL. COMMENT: Nothing has as yet transpired in the RPR press about the commercial delegation to Lebanon. The present contribution adds several interesting details to the former information on the Satellite countries' attempts to be included in the trade of the Middle East countries with the Free World for deals in strategic raw materials. A comparative study of the goal announced by the Rumanian Government shows clearly that the targets for the light industry were shortened, but not those of the heavy industry, with the exception of electricity. It seems that plans for the increase of oil and agricultural production are aimed at strengthening Rumania's position in her attempts to import strategic raw materials and equipment for heavy industry.

No information is available in the files of this office concerning TOKATLIAN and ZOLTOS. However, it is known that CRISTESCU Eugen, former chief of the secret police during ANTONESCU's regime, collaborated with the Communists, allegedly having been employed by the Soviets. As reported, he was the one who had prepared the trial of Zionist leaders confined in the GALATA prison in IASI. Col. DANGULOFF (fnu), is a Soviet-Armenian. He was reputed to be close to STALIN and the Politbureau. He arrived to Rumania in 1944, to take up his duties as special advisor to the Soviet Embassy. He left the country in 1946, after having encouraged the Armenians in Rumania to cooperate with the Soviets.

Concerning NOVAC Nicolae, it is suspected that it is question of NOVAC Mauriciu, Deputy Minister with the Ministry of Foreign Trade. It was he who had discussed the application of the commercial agreement with Hungary on 14 January 1954.

For reference see Item Nos. 8855/52, 321/54 and "Scanteia" of 20 January 1954.

* * *

Over

A three-man Rumanian trade mission visited BEIRUT at the end of February and conducted exploratory talks with Lebanese officials on the conclusion of a commercial agreement between the two countries. The mission was headed by Leon TOKATLIAN; its other two members were Nicolas NOVAC and a certain ZOLTOS (fnu).

TOKATLIAN, who is of Armenian origin, was an espionage agent of the ANTONESCU regime during the war, according to information received by our source from an Armenian ex-resident of BUCHAREST who migrated to the Lebanon in 1950. He was the "man of confidence" of Eugen CHRISTESCU, and ANTONESCU henchmen who was sentenced to 25 years in prison by the Communist regime as a war criminal. As an informer for the fascists, TOKATLIAN denounced many persons he suspected of sympathy for the Americans; when the Communists took power he continued without a hitch in the same line of work - this time for Col. DONGULOFF (fnu), chief of the Soviet secret service in BUCHAREST.

TOKATLIAN's brother was captain of the Rumanian vessel "Transylvania"; he committed suicide at the end of 1947 after the Communists had accused him of "working for the Americans." It was rumored at the time that it was Leon TOKATLIAN who had denounced his brother.

A graduate of the Commercial Academy of BUCHAREST, TOKATLIAN calls himself "doctor." He lives on the Boulevard Lascar Catargiu in BUCHAREST and is despised by the entire Armenian colony of the capital for his ceaseless striving to propagandize them in favor of the Communist regime and his denunciation of all persons of anti-Communist sentiments. Our source was unable to discover anything about the respective backgrounds of NOVAC and ZOLTOS.

In BEIRUT the three Rumanian mission members lived in high style at the "Capitol", a luxury hotel, and spent large sums in search of diversion in nightclubs and cabarets. In their nocturnal adventures they were guided by one Vahvici GELAGIAN, a BEIRUT resident who acts as a broker for the Rumanian government in commercial deals in the Middle East. GELAGIAN went to BUCHAREST last August as a member of the Lebanese delegation to the International Youth Festival, and returned to BEIRUT with an apparently lucrative commission as broker. Our source was informed by Lebanese businessmen that GELAGIAN has been disposing of large quantities of Rumanian caustic soda in the Arab nations. Our source also learned the GELAGIAN contacted a money changer who exchanged \$ 4,800 into Lebanese pounds for NOVAC to defray the expenses of the Rumanian mission's two-week stay in BEIRUT.

Over

Another who was often seen in the company of the Rumanians in dancing places at night was Emerik FRIGHES, BEIRUT agent for Sovromlemn (Rumanian state enterprise for the exploitation of the lumber industry.) FRIGHES is a Hungarian Jew who came to BEIRUT in 1940; he has an office on the Antoun Han.

Our source said that, in addition to conferring with Lebanese officials, the Rumanian mission paid daily visits to the Soviet Legation. An official of the Lebanese Ministry of Finance informed our source that the Rumanians offered to supply Lebanon with chemical products, wheat and dried fruits in exchange for scrap iron, aluminum, drugs and citrus fruits. The Rumanians also offered to pay for half of the Lebanese exports in dollars. Our source said that the Rumanians put out feelers concerning the possible exchange of diplomatic envoys between Rumania and Lebanon.

The Rumanian mission left BEIRUT for CAIRO in the second week of March and is expected to return soon and renew negotiations on the proposed trade accord. Whether the Lebanese government will decide to accept the Rumanian proposal our source was unable to learn. He said that nothing has appeared in the Lebanese press concerning the Rumanian proposal, the mission's visit or the negotiations.

End.