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SOURCE

The following information comes from a fairly reliable source who has close connections with several Hungarian prelates in exile and high clerical circles in Rome.

1. Monsignor Jozsef Zagon, Apostolic Visitator for all Hungarian refugees, acts as the official representative of the Hungarian Catholic Church outside of Hungary. He was born in 1909, studied first at the Bishops' Seminary in Győr, then at the Pazmaneum in Vienna where he completed his studies cum laude. In 1935 Zagon was consecrated priest at the Diocese of Győr and was immediately assigned by the late Bishop of Győr, Istvan Breyer, to his palace as Professor of Religion at Győr High School. Later he became cathedral preacher. In 1941 Monsignor Zagon was appointed to the post of Chancellor of the Ordinariat of the Diocese by the late Bishop Baron Vilmos Apor of Győr (he was executed by the Soviets in the spring of 1945).
2. This appointment was re-confirmed by Bishop Apor's successor, Bishop Kalman Papp of Győr. Subsequently, he became Canon. However, because of his outspoken anti-Communist attitude, the Monsignor was forced to flee Hungary in 1948. He has since been living at Mitters in the vicinity of Innsbruck.
3. On 5 August 1950 Zagon was appointed Apostolic Visitator for Europe and several weeks later, in early September, he became Apostolic Visitator for all Hungarians living in exile. He has subsequently been recognized as such by all bishops in Austria, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. It is expected that eventually he will receive recognition from all other bishops in the western world. Zagon's office is presently located in Innsbruck but he plans to transfer it to Rome.
4. Although Monsignor Zagon is reported to have never taken sides in western-oriented politics (and requires similar attitudes from all priests responsible to him), he is nevertheless keenly interested in Hungarian developments. His personal opinion is that shortly after the withdrawal of the Soviets from Hungary, the Catholic element, which comprises 67 per cent of the total population of the country and the only large-scale spiritual assistance to date, will have to play an important role in the rebuilding of the country. It is for this reason that Monsignor Zagon gives all possible support to the education of young Hungarians in exile and observes very closely the current developments in Hungary.

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5. The following evaluations of Hungarian Catholic politicians and their respective followers in exile are reported to be not just the personal opinions of either Monsignor Zagon and other high clerical officials, but rather a consensus of all known facts and opinions. (*)

Dezso Sulrok has overplayed his role and is not expected to regain a position of importance in the future Hungary.

The same applies to Istvan Barankovics who, by his immediate post-war left-liberal tendencies (then considered to be the proper attitude), has lost all sympathy.

Count József Palffy, an honorable man, neither has nor has ever had sufficient followers. He will not be able to cope with post-liberation conditions.

József Koezi-Horvath, now a member of the New York Nagy Committee, is probably one of the stronger leaders in exile, despite the fact that he is not considered qualified to assume a leading role.

6. Evaluations of other Hungarian politicians in exile are as follows:

Apart from a definite lack of leaders, the "Arrow Cross" is composed of fanatics who are discredited by their Nazi collaboration. Consequently, the group is unacceptable to the Hungarian Catholic Church.

"BEMER" (Bolchevista Ellenso-Nemzeti-Erök), now led by Bela Marton of Innsbruck, is a coalition of conservative and rightist elements. Although the attitude of this group is friendly towards the Catholic Church, it cannot be considered a partner of any value.

The same applies to Professor Tiber Barath (Lille, France), who is supported by De Gaulle and other similar rightist groups.

Lajos von Mariaffy and his circle of conservative parliamentarians, including Count Béla Teleki, Mándor Lindvay, and others, are considered highly respectable. However, it is believed that, inasmuch as the members of this group have been in exile for a considerable period, they have lost their contacts with present and future Hungary. Although individuals of this group may have a certain future value, the group itself should be classified as "leaders without followers."

Colonel General Ferenc von Farkas-Kisbarnak is considered highly respectable but his chances are believed to be on a par with Mariaffy's because he compromised himself by becoming too active at an unpropitious moment.

Major General András Zako represents the active "MHBK" (Magyar Harcosok Bajtarsi Községe). This group is considered to have a chance during the first period of liberation only if it is linked to a strong political group.

The same applies to Colonel Lajos Dobolyi and Lt. General Lajos de Folkushazy who head the group of former Hungarian gendarmes. The latter, however, is considered too old and probably exhausted by his vehement Arrow Cross sympathies. Members of this group are responsible for the successful fight against Communism between 1920 and 1944, and could perhaps be as important as General Zako's "MHBK."

Tiber de Eckhardt is the outstanding Hungarian politician with the New York committee. He is very popular, but his ten years of exile and his somewhat fickle nature are not considered advantages. Eckhardt's political experience is by far the greatest of any Hungarian politician in exile.

Ferenc Nagy's appeasement of the Communist Party, his flight, and his theatrical abdication have cost him all sympathies in Hungary. Nagy's attitude towards the Catholic Church is hostile.

Aladár Szegedy-Maszárik and Zoltán Pfeiffer are believed to have no future in Hungary, although the former is presently 'Foreign Minister' in the New York Nagy Committee.

Béla Fabian, also a member of the New York Committee, is considered to be the representative of Hungarian Jewry. He is liberal and would be acceptable as a coalition partner.

Károly Peyer, another member of the New York Committee, until 1944 Chief of Hungarian Socialists, was outclassed by Szakasits while still in a German concentration camp. He is considered a left Socialist and opposed to the Church.

Monsignor Béla Varga, figure-head 'president' of the New York Committee, is considered a kindly and likeable person but without outstanding abilities.

The groups of Antal Bán and Imre Kovács and other Marxist circles are opposed to the Church, and vice versa. This is especially true of Ferenc Gładúr, editor of Az Ember (Published in the United States), who was a Communist Commissar under Bela Kun and has to this day remained a Communist.

7. The consensus of opinion of Hungarian clerical circles in Rome is that leadership in Hungary after liberation will fall to men who have remained underground during the Rakosi regime. Although certain personalities in exile may temporarily attain leading positions, it is hoped that the present refugees will not assume active roles, but will remain as links to the West. They believe that developments in Hungary since 1945 preclude the re-establishment of the status quo for which all refugees more or less work. The weak point is Ferenc Nagy and his group which is allegedly strongly favored by the United States. It is feared that he will cost the United States all sympathies in Hungary, and that Hungary, which will be badly in need of outside assistance, will become pro-French or even pro-German.
8. Of all the Hungarian Church organizations, the Jesuits, having saved most of the younger priests, will play a leading if not the leading role. Scores of these young priests are even now being educated at their Italian seminary.

(*) Field Comment: The apparently natural tendency of refugees in exile to split up into a number of bitterly antagonistic groups is sufficiently notorious to warrant a word of warning. It should be noted that the evaluation of these groups is based on two equally important factors-- their position vis-a-vis Hungary, and vis-a-vis the Church, which, in the final analysis, is the official attitude of the Church towards the various refugee leaders and their followers. Sources' reportage is further weakened by the fact that they give no indication as to how, when, or by whom liberation will come.