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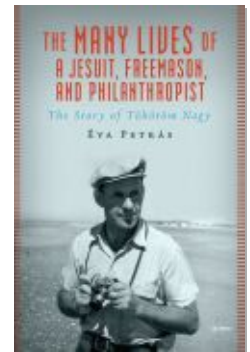
IX. Modus Vivendi Revisited

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IX

Modus Vivendi REVISITED

“And I work towards a modus vivendi, because, in a way, it’s my profession. This is where my personal connections are, my past and my possibilities. And since I know that this people’s democracy needs a certain compromise without forfeiting its principles—and I know very well how far these principles can go—I have volunteered for this role.”¹

1.

As Nagy’s repatriation became a reality, new vigor for a *modus vivendi* surfaced: He wanted to reevaluate the old possibilities, feeling something of an international thaw arising from Vatican II and the partial agreement that had been reached between Hungary and the Holy See. It was his desire to mediate the remaining contentious issues, as well as those which continued to cause friction between the Vatican, the Hungarian Church, and the Hungarian state. So, once more Nagy gathered and relayed news, visiting his Jesuit friends in Hungary, Austria, and Rome, all the while faithfully adhering to the *legend*² that he had returned home to spiritually develop and serve the twin causes of Hungary and the Church.³

In 1968 the relationship between Hungary and the Vatican, and the situation of the Church in the former, were regulated mainly by the partial agreement signed on September 15, 1964 between Hungary and the

1 *Report*. Budapest, August 31, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/1. 72.

2 In state security jargon, a “legend” can refer to a bona fide explanation or cover for a clandestine operation, activity, or even persona. It is crafted from ‘real’ elements that are independently verifiable and outwardly plausible. See Gergely, *Állambiztonsági Értelmező Kiszótár*.

3 ÁBTL 4.9. H-6/15. Hungarian state security audio recording of Nagy made in Budapest on August 30, 1966.

Holy See.⁴ This marked the resumption of official relations between the Vatican and Hungary following the expulsion of nuncio Angelo Rotta in 1945. The Interior Ministry's domestic counterintelligence department and a small residence operating in Rome dealt with the Vatican.⁵ Hungarian state security activities in Italy during the 1950s were confined to general intelligence. Until the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, directly or even indirectly infiltrating the Vatican was widely seen in state security circles as impossible.⁶

With the election of Pope John XXIII, however, this trend in ecclesiastical policy changed. On January 25, 1959, the Holy Father announced at Saint Paul's Cathedral in Rome that he wished to reform the Church by calling a Roman diocesan synod, to be followed by a universal one.⁷ His new Eastern policy, the so-called *Ostpolitik*, was expounded upon in *Pacem in terris*⁸, an encyclical dated April 11, 1963. In rephrasing the Church's teaching to advocate greater equality and social justice, owing to the radical social changes of the last decades as well as his denunciation of the arms race, the new Pope made a deeply positive impression on the Socialist camp.⁹

Sensing the shifting situation, a new concept began forming in Hungary. Given the foreign policy ramifications, it was deemed beneficial in the long run for the Hungarian church to adhere to the Vatican's moderate line.¹⁰ After the Soviet Union sanctioned this rapprochement, the Political Committee of the MSZMP consented to the participation of Hungarian Catholic Church representatives in the Second Vatican Council. According to the summaries prepared after the synod's first session, Hungarian delegates were welcomed by even the highest Vatican circles, something which proved to be significant for the state's ecclesiastical policy.

For its part and in order to overcome the deadlock in their own relations, the Holy See aimed to carefully capture the attention of Hunga-

4 On the text of the agreement see Balogh, Fejérdy and Szabó, "Az 1964-es magyar-szentszéki."

5 Bottoni, "Egy különleges kapcsolat," 258–59.

6 See Csorba, *A római magyar követ jelenti*, 195–99.

7 Szabó, Cs., *A Szentszék*, 20–25.

8 For the full text see Tomka and Goják, *Az egyház társadalmi tanítása*, 161–96.

9 Fejérdy, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni Zsinat*, 18–22.

10 Fejérdy, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni Zsinat*, 40–47.

ry's secular leadership by its actions towards the Hungarian ecclesiastical representatives. As such, it can be said that the first session of Vatican II served as something like a prelude to the negotiations between Hungary and the Holy See, which would not officially commence until spring 1963.¹¹

Participating in negotiations was in both Vatican and Hungarian interests. The MSZMP held its 8th Congress between November 20 and 24, 1962, during which period it was declared that the foundations of socialism had been laid. János Kádár had regained power domestically by the early 1960s; however, insofar as foreign policy was concerned, and particularly with an eye to relations with the West, Hungary remained isolated. Foreign policy thus needed to take a more proactive approach, pursuing contact with the West on every and any level.¹² The existing isolation, largely a result of the 1956 Revolution's aftermath, had abated by 1963, especially following the restoration of Hungary's membership in the United Nations. Another portent of this was the restoration of diplomatic relations with the UK, France, and Belgium to the ambassadorial level in 1963, followed one year later by Sweden, Italy, Switzerland, and Canada. Negotiations with the Holy See were thus part of this larger trend.

The Holy See's rapprochement with the USSR and its satellites also benefited the Catholic Churches and their congregations in the countries involved. An end to the Soviet Union and communism was not yet foreseeable, leaving peaceful coexistence as the only viable option.¹³

Following the death of John XXIII, Pope Paul VI continued his predecessor's *Ostpolitik*. After the tentative journey of the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Franz König, Vice Secretary of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli travelled to Hungary on May 9, 1963.¹⁴ On the Pope's instructions, Casaroli negotiated with representatives of the Hungarian government in the course of three sessions, and after receiving the Holy Father's formal approval, he and József

11 Szabó, *A Szentzséék*, 25.

12 Negotiations on normalizing relations also began between the Hungarian People's Republic and the USA, with the Hungarian issue eventually taken off the UN General Assembly's agenda. Borhi, *Nagyhatalmi érdekek hálójában*, 173–218.

13 Szabó, *A Szentzséék*, 28–31.

14 Stehle, *Geheimdiplomatie*, 292.

Prantner, President of the State Office for Church Affairs, signed an agreement on September 15, 1964.¹⁵

The crux of this shift in church policy was twofold: First, the Vatican agreed to tolerate a certain level of collaboration with the communist regime, while, at the same time, it ceased overtly supporting resistance to the regime.¹⁶ Until the removal of Mindszenty in 1971, his situation remained the only real area of contention in Hungarian-Vatican relations.¹⁷

Although negotiations between the parties continued after the partial agreement until the fall of Communism,¹⁸ and it may have been thought in the Vatican that they had succeeded in resolving the Hungarian Catholic Church's difficulties in an exemplary fashion, the agreement signified more of a beneficial change in practice for the Hungarian party, and, by extension, the Hungarian People's Republic.¹⁹ The partial agreement between the Holy See and Hungary was considered one of the Kádár regime's biggest foreign policy coups, as it affirmed the perception of Kádár's Hungary in Western circles as "liberal." Meanwhile, the Hungarian state's ecclesiastical policy was able, not only to monitor the Catholic Church's domestic activities, but also to influence them.²⁰

In fact, intelligence against the Vatican became more pronounced during the 1960s.²¹ Apart from the organizational unit in charge of the Catholic Church (Department III/III), which countered internal reaction, Department III/I, intelligence, grew to play an increasingly important role.²² Indeed, starting in the mid-1960s, the Vatican, following the USA and West Germany, became the third highest priority for Hungarian intelligence.²³

15 On the documents of the negotiations see Szabó, *A Szentszékek*, 152–64, 180–81, and Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyház, vallásgyakorlás*, 1027–29.

16 Gárdonyi, "Túlélés – együttműködés – ellenállás," 41, and Casaroli, *A türelem vértanúsága*, 123–71.

17 Balogh, "Ikonná dermedt emlékirat," 16, 2

18 Delegates of the Hungarian Government and the Vatican met 63 times between 1963 and 1977: 32 of these meetings were in Budapest, while 31 were in Rome. Soós, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal*, 176–85, and Soós, *Kádár János*.

19 Cf. Szabó, *A Vatikán*.

20 About the ambivalence of Ostpolitik in regard of Hungary, see: Dunn, *Détente*, 232–69.

21 Vörös, "Egyházak," 295; Vörös, "Hálózatok," and Vörös, "Állambiztonság."

22 Okváth, "Jelentés," 689–90; Bandi, "A magyar hírszerzés," 47–60.

23 On the importance of this see Hal'ko, "A Magyar és csehszlovák titkosszolgálat."

Leading Warsaw Pact intelligence service officials held a summit in Budapest from July 24 to 27 1967, to discuss “[w]hat’s to be done against the Vatican; steps to discredit the Vatican and its supporters and how to exacerbate conflicts inside the Vatican and between the Vatican and capitalist states.”²⁴ Accordingly, a large-scale program was launched between 1968 and 1969, with the aim of placing informers in every important field of Vatican leadership. After the successful takeover of the Hungarian Papal Institute,²⁵ Hungarian state security was tasked with infiltrating every congregation, the Secretariat of State, and the monastic orders, foremost among them the Jesuits led by Pedro Arrupe.²⁶ This last effort was necessitated by their hostile view of the Jesuit Order as the center of Vatican “espionage.”²⁷

In consort with its domestic and Warsaw Pact counterparts, Hungarian state security also formed its own strategy for piercing the Vatican. These efforts had borne fruit by the early 1970s, being led until 1976 by Sándor Rajnai. After that, success continued all the way up to November 1989 under the leadership of János Bogye, who was fluent in Italian and Spanish.²⁸ Aside from developing a professional staff, the biggest secret of their success was the active recruitment and employment of individuals with clerical connections abroad, who had plausible reasons to travel to the West and engage in espionage at ecclesiastical centers or among émigré organizations.²⁹ Nagy was just such a person, whose tasks eventually shifted from disruption by publication to disinformation against the Vatican, as well as intelligence and counterintelligence activity. Nagy, mediator and harbinger of the new *modus vivendi*, was seen by state security

24 No record of this conference has been found by the author in Hungarian archives. Source of the quote: Andrew and Mitrohin, *A Mitrohin-archívum*, 651.

25 Bandi, “Adalékok,” 189–05.

26 They did succeed, and as a result, gathered intelligence e.g., on the events at the center of the Jesuit Order, informing the partner organizations of socialist countries of these. *Information for the intelligence agencies of the Ministry for Interior of the Polish People’s Republic*. Budapest, April 16, 1971. ÁBTL 3.2.5. O-8-254/2. 202.

27 Fejérdy, “Az Államtitkárság,” 374–406.

28 János Bogye (1931–?) was a Lt. Colonel, later Colonel in the police during Nagy’s tenure as an agent. From 1971–1976, he led Sub Department III/I-3 of the Interior Ministry. Thereafter, he became deputy head of Department III/I, and deputy head of Department III. See: https://www.abtl.hu/ords/archontologia/f?p=108:13::NO:13:P13_OBJECT_ID,P13_OBJECT_TYPE:895106,ELETRAJZ (Last retrieved: 31.10.2021.)

29 Vörös, *Egyházak*, 142.

as the facilitator of both informational and disinformation “channels.” Still, he was constantly under surveillance and never above reproach. In addition to his reports and publications—as we will see—he participated in other activities, such as those directed against Freemasonry and South American countries.

2.

Nagy’s visit home in 1966 and repatriation two years later in 1968 caused a sensation in Hungary among Jesuits who had remained together after the 1950 ban.³⁰ For his part, Nagy reported to the Hungarian authorities that, in Rome, “the Jesuit fathers at the Curia have literally ‘written off’ their confreres who stayed in Hungary as no longer usable people, who cannot be counted on. They believe that they froze in 1945, and time has passed them by.”³¹ As such, Nagy visited them questioningly, and was slightly unsettled by what he encountered.

Following his visit to his confreres living in the Pannonhalma abbey in 1966, which they called “holy prison” and the “silent internment camp,” as well as his visit to Budapest,³² several opinions about Nagy formed. Some thought that

Töhötöm Nagy (Töhi) is the same old cheeky sort, who can’t forget his Jesuit past, his heart still beats for the Society of Jesus, so, even if he is unaware, his every sentence is soaked in some kind of painful loss on the one hand, and self-justification on the other. Members of the Order welcomed him warmly, but with obvious reservations, because they didn’t know why he had come. [...] His lay colleague of old expressed his opinion bluntly and without any spiritual depth: Töhi, you’ve always been an impostor and you still are.³³ The purpose of his visit is unclear.

30 The Jesuits did not accept the state’s dissolution of their Order, and sought, as elsewhere, to conform to conditions within the country and accept the new political system, keeping in line with their traditional approach to repression. They adhered to the principle of “once a priest, always a priest,” keeping in close contact even when scattered. Bánkuti, *Jezsuiták a diktatúrában*, 73–80.

31 *Report*. Budapest, May 31, 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/1. 151.

32 ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-40009. 181–83.

33 From another report, it is possible to determine that this colleague was Ferenc Magyar, from *Új Ember. Jelentés*. Budapest, August 17, 1966. ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-40009. 70.

[...] There are uncontrolled whispers that Töhötöm Nagy is somehow involved in the resumption of negotiations between church and state.³⁴

Provincial Superior Fr Ferenc Kollár³⁵ believed that “the Vatican wouldn’t give an assignment to someone who is anti-clerical, a Mason,” and firmly asked Nagy “not to disturb Jesuit confreres, if he doesn’t want to cause a nuisance or discomfort.”³⁶ Kollár’s caution was justified; however, he likely had no idea that his words would be passed on to Hungarian state security. Nagy submitted a report concerning his conversations in Pannonhalma and Budapest with Fr Csávossy, Tüll³⁷ and Jenő Kerkai, as well as Fr Kollár, Fr Géza Süle³⁸ and Fr György Kerkai³⁹. He summarized their views on the relationship between the Church and state, the country, teaching divinity, collaborationist priests, and the everyday difficulties of the banned order.⁴⁰

This was also the period when Nagy learned about the death of József Jánosi, which, according to an agent priest codenamed “Remete” (Hermit), unsettled him deeply.⁴¹ “Remete’s” job was to keep Nagy under surveillance. Nagy’s former confreres told him that Fr Jánosi “went to Graz in 1947,⁴² became a university professor there, switched to being a lay priest and held lectures as such. He would cross the border to an Italian village near the border to celebrate mass and return to the university on Mondays. He would still go there in 1965. He also mentioned to the local parish priest that he was about to write a memorandum at Casaroli’s request on the state of the Hungarian Catholic Church and potential solutions,

34 *Abstract of network report*. Budapest, September 8, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 15–16.

35 Ferenc Kollár SJ (1912–1978) was a Jesuit, and editor-in-chief of spiritual journal *A Szív* [The heart] between 1944 and 1951. Between 1955–1978, he served as Provincial Superior of the Hungarian Province. On his life see Bikfalvi, *Magyar jezsuiták*, 121.

36 *Abstract of network report*. Budapest, October 13, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 28.

37 Alajos Tüll SJ (1894–1987) was a Jesuit, imprisoned in 1950, taken to an internment camp in Kistarcsa, and imprisoned again in 1953. He lived in Pannonhalma from his release until his death. Bikfalvi, *Magyar jezsuiták*, 234–35.

38 Géza Süle SJ (1914–1988) was a Jesuit who was imprisoned between 1955 and 1957 in Vác. Bikfalvi, *Magyar jezsuiták*, 216.

39 György Kerkai SJ (1906–1985), was the younger brother of Jenő Kerkai and also a Jesuit. On his life see Bikfalvi, *Magyar jezsuiták*, 113.

40 *Report*. Budapest, August 27, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/1. 33–43.

41 “Remete” was most likely Bertalan Bíró, a diocesan priest from Vác.

42 Actually, Jánosi emigrated on February 4, 1949 with István Barankovics, secretary general of the Democratic People’s Party.

and sharply opposed Mindszenty's rigid policy. Fr Jánosi did complain to this parish priest that, while he was away for the weekend, someone would always rifle through his desk, his books etc., but leaving everything intact. When Casaroli first came there before returning to Italy, Jánosi prepared his manuscript (Jánosi was staunchly left-wing), and, the next weekend, took it with him in a briefcase. But he never reached the Italian village; he was thrown out of the train and found dead along the rails. His briefcase was sent back ten days later by the Italian railway company, noting that it was empty, and that they were sending it back on the basis of the business card found inside it.⁴³

Nagy likely saw something in Jánosi's death that had an intelligence dimension, and which disconcerted him, given his own work in the same area. Despite his best efforts, most of Nagy's former confreres harbored suspicions about him, (rightly) believing that his apartment in Rózsa-domb had been part of a "quid pro quo" with the state authorities.⁴⁴ Prior to this, familiarity with his book *Jesuits and Freemasons*, led them to note that "Töhi was an instrument for good in the hands of Kerkai back then, and now has become an instrument for evil in the hands of Freemasonry. I am more and more under the impression that he's being used as an agent to further their goals."⁴⁵ Later, speculations were made: "he might play the role of 'peritus' (expert) for the Party or the Police..."⁴⁶ Regardless of whether he was considered a Mason or a Communist, they agreed that "[i]t's a fact that he has an adventurous nature and won't sit quietly and silently at home. He is going to look for opportunities to act, and others are expecting this and will use him to achieve their goals."⁴⁷

It certainly did not take state security long to find a use for Nagy. Police Lt. Colonel Emil Zalai,⁴⁸ head of Department III/III-1, called for

43 *Abstract of agent "Remete's" report of 15 September 1966.* ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 18. Jánosi's accident happened near Friesenheim.

44 *Abstract of agent "Tömör's" [Solid] report.* Budapest, August 7, 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 133. Agent "Tömör" was János Tamás SJ, a Jesuit (1915-1993) who became Provincial Superior from 1978-1984. On his life see Bikfalvi, *Magyar jezsuiták*, 225-26.

45 *Report.* Budapest, 8 June 1966. ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-40009. 55-57. And *Töhi and the Masonic problem.* Budapest, July 6, 1966. ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-40009. 58.

46 *Abstract of agent "Tömör's" report.* Budapest, August 7, 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 133.

47 *Abstract of agent "Tömör's" report.* Budapest, August 7, 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 133.

48 Emil Zalai (1922-2006) was a Lt. Colonel in the police around the time of Nagy's state security activities. He served as deputy head of the Interior Ministry's Department III/III-1.

“deepen[ing] the existing ideological conflicts between members of the Jesuit Order, start[ing] debates on some issues, exacerbate[ing] differences.”⁴⁹ What role, if any, Nagy played in this is unclear; however, Nagy’s file was attached to Zalai’s draft.⁵⁰ Still, after 1968, the Hungarian Jesuits appear to have lost contact with Nagy, perhaps for their own or even his own protection, as the authorities also believed that intense interaction could prove risky. As a result, “for the sake of the conspiratorial situation, we kept the agent away from these circles,”⁵¹ Nagy could, and did, continue to interact with members of the Society of Jesus in Rome and Austria,⁵² as well as domestically, in the person of his old friend, Jenő Kerkai.

There is still no definitive answer as to whether Kerkai ever suspected Nagy of ties to Hungarian state security. From 1963, when they resumed their relationship, the two corresponded intensively. So much so that Kerkai was aware of Nagy’s works in the *villas miserias* in Buenos Aires and wanted to see them.⁵³ He was delighted as to the success of *Jesuits and Freemasons*,⁵⁴ which presumably had a hand in his desire to return home. Nagy’s new life goal of the pursuit of Soviet-Catholic rapprochement encouraged the pair to devise new joint plans. “My, or dare I say our, magnum opus will be to draft the rapprochement between the Church and Communism. We began our lives’ works together, let’s finish them together. A clear path: always reconcile, resolve differences, and fight

He retired in 1972. See https://www.abtl.hu/ords/archontologia/f?p=108:13:::NO:13:P13_OBJECT_ID,P13_OBJECT_TYPE:875961,ELETRAJZ (Last retrieved: 10.11.2021.)

49 *Draft*. Budapest, 22 October 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 136. This is in accordance with the MSZMP’s Political Committee’s decree of 4 March 1968 on state of church policy and other tasks. Differences would be resolved not by crude intervention, but – in the spirit of “liberalization” – by ideological and political means. See Krahulcsán, *Pártállambiztonság*, 189–208.

50 Krahulcsán, *Pártállambiztonság*, 137–38.

51 *Summary report*. Budapest, April 14, 1972. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/5. 8.

52 Nagy regularly visited Hungarian Jesuits living in Klagenfurt. His reports on them can be found in: ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 165/33–42., *Report*. Budapest, May 9, 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/1. 131. And *Report*. Budapest, May 13, 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/1. 138–42. He listed his Jesuit contacts for the authorities, including their names, addresses, and short biographical snippets. *My Jesuit acquaintances I can count on*. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/5. 36.

53 *Jenő Kerkai’s diary notes, 1965–1966*. OSZK Kt., f. 216/498. And Töhötöm Nagy’s letter to Jenő Kerkai on planning the journey. Buenos Aires, May 1, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/1. 108/86–87.

54 *Jenő Kerkai’s letter to Töhötöm Nagy*. [Püspökszentlászló] August 30, 1964. OSZK Kt., f. 216/430. 1. Fol. Letter 3.

against prejudice and hatred,”⁵⁵ Nagy wrote to Kerkai in a letter before his visit home in 1966.

The only reaction that Kerkai offered was “Your intention to return home, my dear Sándor, may decide your fate.”⁵⁶ This was enigmatic by design, in order not to reveal any information to the state security authorities reading their communiques. But for Nagy, whom Kerkai would greet with the phrase “My soul’s other half!,” it was an unequivocally clear invitation.⁵⁷

However, state security did learn something of Kerkai’s position from another source, codenamed “Barát” (Friend).⁵⁸ His reports noted how Kerkai hoped Nagy “[would] play a significant role in the Church’s dialogue of synodal spirit and humanizing socialism. As a non-committed, but—socially, financially, and politically—pronounced left-wing persona, he was to play the biggest and most significant role of his life. Kerkai’s life’s dream would come true, if, through Töhötöm Nagy, pure ecclesiastical thought and unadulterated socialist thought could come closer to one another.”⁵⁹

In the summer of 1966, Nagy and Kerkai again met in person after a twenty-year separation. Two years later, Nagy summed up his impressions of Kerkai in a letter addressed to Andor Varga in Rome, but given, as a sign of trust, to his case officer in the “Budavár” apartment.⁶⁰ According to this report, after Nagy’s visit to Pannonhalma, they had parted on uncertain terms because, according to Nagy, Kerkai “couldn’t stomach that I had started a family, and was so far away.” The two met once more in October 1968, this time in Győr, and spoke while Kerkai was waiting for a medical examination. At this meeting, their old friendship was resurrected, with Nagy remarking to Varga: “I felt very sorry for my poor old former collab-

55 *Letter to Jenő Kerkai*. Buenos Aires, May 1, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/1. 108/89.

56 *Letter to Töhötöm Nagy*. Pannonhalma, June 22, 1966. OSZK Kt., f. 216/365. Letter 30. As Margit Balogh also emphasizes, Kerkai’s letters and writings grew terser over time. Balogh, “Kerkai Jenő,” 51.

57 See e.g., *Töhötöm Nagy’s letters to Jenő Kerkai*. OSZK Kt., f. 216/236., or *Jenő Kerkai’s letters to Töhötöm Nagy*: OSZK Kt., f. 216/365.

58 Agent “Barát” a.k.a. “Baráth” = Dr. Ágoston Takáts. Takáts was recruited on March 25, 1958 based on kompromat, or compromising material. State security authorities employed him mostly in targeting the Catholic Church and the Jesuit Order. ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-26962/2. 47.

59 *Report*. Budapest, April 29, 1969. ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-41644. 94.

60 *Töhötöm Nagy’s letter to Andor Varga SJ*. Budapest, 10 December 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/1. 153–156.

orator. He was frozen in time. Crippled. We had to take a break in the conversation after thirty minutes, because he couldn't take any more. [...] he has no desire to work, to do things, to organize. Put it this way: he would have, but now he knows that he's crippled and doesn't have much time left." Nagy thought one of the reasons Kerkai had asked to meet him was to make sure there was no "thorn," or ill will between the two, in case he died.

As a sign of reconciliation, Kerkai expressed a desire to meet Nagy's wife and daughter. Accordingly, Nagy invited him to their apartment in Pusztaszeri út, and the meeting took place in November 1968, as Kerkai was passing through Budapest. After this meeting, Nagy felt that Kerkai "was finished with the idea that the Church, in particular, a Jesuit could organize politically, to conspire to overthrow forms of society. The time and opportunity for this had passed."⁶¹

Kerkai again visited the Nagy family on his return trip, purportedly telling Nagy that his mission was not in Hungary, but "in a socialist society, because I was a revolutionary type, my place would be in South America among the young priests, they know me there, I would have authority, I could do great things."⁶² This was another insight that deeply affected Nagy, and one that he would contemplate from time to time. At this meeting, Kerkai also told Nagy in strict confidence that, after the latter's visit to Pannonhalma in 1966, Fr Kollár and the others were convinced that Nagy had recorded their conversations, since "they could clearly hear the tape recorder's click, so he must have become a communist informer."⁶³ Kerkai wanted Nagy to know that this was the reason why the confreres had kept their distance, and, perhaps, it might have even been a warning to him. Nevertheless, Kerkai does not appear to have harbored any suspicions about his confreres being correct in their assumption.

3.

The counterweight to Kerkai's role and psychological significance in Nagy's life was Cardinal Mindszenty. Nagy and Mindszenty crossed paths at two significant junctures: First—as we have seen previously—in 1945–1946,

61 Ibid., 154.

62 Ibid., 155.

63 Ibid.

and again after 1966. Their relationship had always been asymmetrical. While in 1945 the freshly appointed head of the Hungarian church paid attention to the Jesuit, even if only marginally, and was instrumental in the direction that Nagy's life took, after Nagy's recruitment in 1966 and repatriation in 1968, there is no evidence that Mindszenty was even aware of Nagy's return. This time, the role played by Nagy would be one-sided: He actively participated in the state security disinformation campaign against Mindszenty.⁶⁴

Despite his activities having been little more than an episode in the Cardinal's life, Nagy saw himself as much more: "I wasn't an eyewitness at the Cardinal's trial, however, I could have been a star witness."⁶⁵ This could, of course, have been justified by the fact that from 1945–1946, Nagy was an important actor in the church and political events which determined the Hungarian Catholic Church's direction after World War II. Through his participation in these, he had first-hand knowledge of Mindszenty's activities, decisions, and behavior. However, Nagy only began to use the phrase "star witness" *after* Mindszenty's trial, his prison term, and his actions during and following the revolution of 1956. The Cardinal's enforced stay at the US Embassy thereafter saw the "Mindszenty issue" remain unresolved for a prolonged period, during the latter part of which Nagy was tangled in the web of state security.

It is interesting, therefore, that Nagy's use of the term emphasizes not only his own role, but also the pressure to conform, as is common with collaborators of various status in contact with state security authorities. In this fashion, the cultural capital Nagy had accumulated (his network, his ecclesiastical expertise, and his relationship with Mindszenty) was put at the disposal of state authorities.⁶⁶ This is not surprising as Nagy's relationship with Mindszenty had been specifically emphasized in his recruit-

64 Two documentaries were made with Nagy, in which he emphatically and unambiguously condemned Mindszenty. *Nagy Töhötöm-interjú* [Interview with Töhötöm Nagy]. OSZK Collection of Historical Interviews 625., and *Egy jezsuita páter vallomása egy hercegprímásról* [Confessions of a Jesuit priest about a Prince Primate]. OSZK Collection of Historical Interviews, Hungarian Motion Picture Treasure Collection 1441.

65 Töhötöm Nagy, *Mindszenty tegnap és ma* [Mindszenty yesterday and today]. ÁBTL III.1.8.33, and Töhötöm Nagy, *Korfordulón*, 406.

66 Cf. Bourdieu, *The Social Structures*, 194–95. On state security's use and abuse of cultural capital see e.g., Slachta, "Unofficial Collaborators," 309–28.

ment proposal: In reference to *Jesuits and Freemasons*, the proposal's writer notes that "the harsh critique of Mindszenty as a proponent of Habsburg restoration and an enemy of every sort of societal progress plays a prominent role."⁶⁷ Thus, Nagy's anti-Mindszenty position, if not exclusively from either party, nonetheless significantly contributed to his appreciation in the eyes of state security. Nagy thus handled this contact with great emphasis and highlighted it throughout.

A sense of his own importance and desire to meet the authorities' expectations were not the only factors that influenced Nagy to self-identify as a star witness. His own personal trauma also played a role.⁶⁸ His defining role in KALOT,⁶⁹ his crossing of the frontlines in 1944,⁷⁰ and his journeys to Rome between 1945 and 1946⁷¹ had fueled his belief that he was an "historical actor." Around the time of Mindszenty's appointment, it briefly seemed that the Prince Primate counted on and even needed Nagy's confidential services. However, the quick escalation of the conflict between the two, culminating in Nagy's transfer to South America and departure from the Jesuit Order, could, in Nagy's mind, be seen as a product of the Cardinal's direct decisions and actions.

In Nagy's view, Mindszenty had not only caused the dramatic shift in his own life, but also the failure of *modus vivendi* and progressive Catholic policy in general. Thus, Nagy had no difficulty in gradually assigning to him all those negative characteristics that Hungarian state security desired and used in their anti-Mindszenty policy and campaigns. After 1966, Nagy, rather than Mindszenty himself, became a victim of his anti-Mindszenty-ism.

Through the psychological process of intellectualization, trauma, a culmination of a difference in principle manifesting in an ever-present conflict, permanently became a conflict between the social "revolutionary"

67 *Proposal*. Budapest, September 7, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/1. 41.

68 Regarding the conflict between Mindszenty and Nagy, Jenő Gergely questions how two of the Cardinal's proponents, József Cavallier and Nagy, could so quickly come into conflict with him. Despite differences between the two cases and the fragmentary nature of sources, it can be said that Nagy's experience was by no means unique. Gergely J., "Magyarország és a Szentszék," 275.

69 On this see chapter "Töhötöm Nagy and KALOT."

70 On this see chapter "Either Side of the Front."

71 On this see chapters "Rome! My one earthly love!" and "The Third Rome."

of Catholic inculturation⁷² and the conservative high priest. Nagy's statements from the time evidence a number of colorful flourishes, reflecting his personality both verbally and in writing: He constantly stressed his role and reinterpreted stories from his youth, both distancing himself from and fictionalizing his experiences. This proclivity for myth-making noticeably complicates the process of finding something akin to historical truth, as subjective experience and actual events are fused, with the disparity between the two bridged by theoretical and ideological reflections. One reason for this is that while in South America, Nagy was no longer in direct contact with Mindszenty, learning about the Cardinal's fate and statements from secondary sources, which he then extrapolated further.⁷³

For this reason, Nagy's case officer complained about the dwindling quality and objectivity of his writing on Mindszenty: "[t]he book supplemented with new chapters is inferior to the original. The new parts weren't written from KÖMŰVES' own experience. He reaches muddled theoretical conclusions from unfounded, unscientific hypotheses. He arbitrarily magnifies certain events, glosses over or simply creates other, equally important circumstances. Operatively, the most problematic chapter is the one about Mindszenty."⁷⁴

Nagy did not leave behind a single, coherent memoir, instead expressing his views on Mindszenty several times in different places. From his repatriation until his death in 1979, he wrote books, supplemented and reworked what he had published, appeared in a documentary,⁷⁵ and contributed numerous reports and summaries to the authorities, in which

72 This is how the thread running through Nagy's life is described by Ferenc Jálcs SJ, who met him in Argentina in the 1960s. *Interview with Ferenc Jálcs*. Tahi, July 22, 2015. By Éva Petrás. Ferenc Jálcs (1927–2021) is a Jesuit, theologian, university professor, and spiritual leader. On his life see Bikfalvi, *Magyar jezsuiták*, 102.

73 Nagy's written estate from Rome contains a number of newspaper clippings pertaining to Mindszenty. Among other topics, Nagy collected Hungarian and foreign language articles on Mindszenty. In addition, he gathered information about the Cardinal's participation in the activities of the Hungarian emigration, later by using his network of contacts of Roman and domestic Hungarians. Töhötöm Nagy, *The Mindszenty case*. ÁBTL III.-1.8.

74 This remark refers to the manuscript *Korfordulón* [At the turning point of an era], the main subject of which is the Cardinal's historical role. *Report*. Budapest, June 23, 1978. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/7. 228.

75 We can only gauge the significance of the pitfalls of publication vs. non-publication if we take into account the limits and characteristics of social, political, and scientific publicity in the Kádár era. See Köbel, "Szólásszabadság," 123–92.

the Cardinal played a leading role, repeatedly emerging as a sort of leitmotif. In many of these, Nagy presents himself as a historical actor, vindicated by the passing of time.

Thus, a structural fiction arose alongside Nagy's self-fiction—the image of a social revolutionary. History had rendered judgment on Mindszenty, and vindicated him. He said that “the Zala Lama”⁷⁶ belonged to the past, borrowing a term allegedly from Kerkai, to refer to someone “who represents in vain a world closed down for good.”⁷⁷ In his piece *Az egyház helyzete és lehetőségei Magyarországon* (The state of and possibilities for the Church in Hungary), he specifically references Mindszenty, who “[f]ound it timely at the end of a lost war, in the presence of Soviet tanks, to work for a Habsburg restoration, to secretly organize a new government he himself had put together, to bring to war every beaten force, and to put the Hungarian Church in mortal danger for a reactionary, non-gospel, political goal, that apart from him, only a handful of members of the old ruling class wanted anymore, and not even all of them.”⁷⁸

At the ‘court of history,’ Nagy was a self-proclaimed star witness against Mindszenty, stating with conviction what the Cardinal’s accusers had not even dared to, namely that “[t]he accusation was true, it was proven, so the judgment was just and final.”⁷⁹

Although, on the one hand, Nagy did have valid grievances against the Cardinal on a personal level, his later statements seem motivated more by

76 This is a play on the Hungarian city where Mindszenty had first served as a religion teacher and later priest, Zalaegerszeg and a tongue-in-cheek reference to the ‘14th Dalai Lama’, who was forced into exile, likewise by (Chinese) Communists in 1959. Nagy, *Jezsuiták és szabadkőművesek*, 128.

77 *Report*. [no place.] [no date] ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 100/1.

78 *Az egyház helyzete és lehetőségei Magyarországon. Reflexiók Mindszenty Emlékiratai megjelenése alkalmából* [The state of and possibilities for the Church in Hungary. Reflections on the publication of Mindszenty’s Memoirs]. Budapest, November 20, 1974. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/3. 52–53.

79 Töhötöm Nagy, *Mindszenty tegnap és ma* [Mindszenty yesterday and today]. ÁBTL III.-1.8. 33, and Töhötöm Nagy, *Korfordulón*, 420. Nagy’s thoughts on the Mindszenty trial were likely influenced by his meeting with Vilmos Olti, about whom he reported to the authorities as a prospective agent: “I also spoke with dr Vilmos Olthy, another old friend and colleague in the Szeged corporative movement, where he was our legal counsellor, and served as judge at the Mindszenty trial. He told me many interesting details about the trial, and it’s fair to say, I was shocked not only by Mindszenty’s blindness, but also by the decency and seriousness with which Olthy and others tried to conduct this trial in an orderly manner, the latter of which had a positive effect on me.” *Report*. Budapest, August 29, 1966. ÁBTL 3.2.3. Mt-975/3. 54.

a sort of ex post facto satisfaction and vindictiveness. His renewed pursuit of *modus vivendi*, beginning in the mid-1960s, can be traced to his structural fiction, which ultimately also drove his repatriation. Within this constellation, Nagy rethought his relationship to the Cardinal.

The new *modus vivendi* could only be justified if Nagy ignored the Church's persecution in Hungary after 1948, including that of his dear friend, Kerkai among others. To accomplish this, Nagy ascribed these to the evils of the Rákosi, régime rather than to the system itself. Beginning rather broadly, he writes, "The fact is that Communism has become a permanent reality around the globe. [...] Communism, which they themselves call socialism now, for its original, brittle form proved unrealizable, shows no sign whatsoever of being overthrown."⁸⁰

In summarizing the results of Socialist Hungary, Nagy contrasts the Kádár and Rákosi eras, voicing his sympathy:

[Hungary] became a Communist state out of a completely feudal-capitalist one with no transition, breaking the evolution. It follows logically that this could only have been accomplished through violence. These are historical facts, which may have been unfortunate [...] but Saint Stephen used the same violence to convert Hungarian pagans to Christianity. Every revolutionary change so far has been characterized by violence, bloodshed, persecution, and an unmeasurable number of victims. This is exactly what happened in Hungary: entire social strata were swept away, new people came into leading positions who changed the very structure of society. Such a change cannot be realized without terror. [...] Revolution is a storm, not a quiet spring shower. This state of tension is like a medical operation: it hurts, it bleeds, the patient gets cut, stabbed, but it doesn't last long. In Hungary, it lasted 11 years, until 1956.⁸¹

Nagy continues: "The complete breakdown of relations with the Church can be attributed to the general terror and series of mistakes." Much of this was owing to Mindszenty's "exacerbating role, which was just cata-

80 *Az egyház helyzete és lehetőségei Magyarországon*, 53–54.

81 *Report*. Budapest, September 8, 1973. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/5. 90.

strophic in times of crisis, when, instead of a sober Realpolitik, all of his behavior was driven by the most impossible daydreams and connected with the vital issues of the Hungarian Church.” Contrasting his new role with Mindszenty’s, he concludes that “Our historical task isn’t to annihilate Socialism, as that is impossible today, but to guide it towards the eternal human norms.”⁸²

Once again, the main impediment to the new *modus vivendi* was Mindszenty, whose position remained unresolved long after the partial agreement between Hungary and the Holy See.⁸³ To Nagy, proclaiming the new *modus vivendi* which aimed to “compromise” and “reconcile” increasingly meant communicating the Hungarian state’s interests and even countering Mindszenty.⁸⁴ Nagy outlined the Hungarian side’s position in a document for a foreign embassy: “The biggest obstacle in settling the relationship between the Hungarian State [sic!] and the Vatican is the Mindszenty issue. Even though the Mindszenty trial took place during the time of the so-called ‘show trials,’ the Hungarian state maintains that the condemnation of Cardinal Mindszenty was just, since he was found guilty of an offence against the law on the defense of the People’s Republic. This is why it considers it fair to request that the Vatican modify its stance from the 1950s, as it has revised many positions of the ‘cold war’ era...”⁸⁵

For Nagy, the anti-Mindszenty struggle became one of the most important causes and goals of his collaboration with Hungarian state security, far exceeding mere theoretical analyses. To this end, he revised *Jesuits and Freemasons*, substantially adding to its German edition. The book’s new edition would prove that its critique of Mindszenty did not just stem from the haphazard nature of the distorting perspective of the contemporary, but from an orchestrated anti-Mindszenty campaign launched by the state security service. Indeed, the book was published in German by the Frick Verlag in Vienna as part of Hungarian state security’s disinformation and propaganda campaign against the Cardinal.⁸⁶ As early as 1967, Nagy pressured Hungarian state security to help him publish a for-

82 *Report*. Budapest, September 8, 1973. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/5. 100.

83 Balogh, *Mindszenty József*, 1202–6.

84 *Report to a South American embassy*. [Budapest] ca. 1974. OSZK Kt., f. 216/93. 39.

85 *Report to a South American embassy*. [Budapest] ca. 1974. OSZK Kt., f. 216/93. 38.

86 Nagy, *Jesuiten und Freimaurer*.

eign language edition: “One more argument: Jesuits and Mas. [sic!] murders Mindszenty. When do we want it out? He’s a sick old man, can die any week. After the glorious news of his death, after a potentially noisy funeral? [...] Now! Today is the time to publish this book.”⁸⁷

The work’s publication was delayed, however, for reasons that neither Nagy nor Hungarian state security could control: Nagy and his family were repatriated in 1968, however, the book was not published until 1969. Nagy could not possibly have known that the defection of Karel Beran, a participant in Operation Book, the Prague Spring of 1968, and the subsequent termination of the relationship between the StB and the Frick Verlag, all of which were interwoven, had impacted his book’s publication.⁸⁸ Each of these factors also help explain why Nagy’s other book project in German, *Church and Communism*, was delayed.

In the fall of 1968, according to Takáts (“Barát”), he optimistically told his acquaintances that he was “[h]appy to show the most recent brochure of the Fricke [sic!] company of Vienna, meaning the publication of his book in German [...] The possibility of publication has grown uncertain over the past few months, but at the moment, chances are good that it will be published anyway. [...] For the book on *Jesuits and Freemasons*, Fricke even obtained clerical approval from the office of Cardinal König of Vienna, but this will not appear in print. Today we have reached the point where the Church’s approval might hinder the work’s success on the book market.”

Takáts noted to state security what Nagy thought of the delay:

What makes this Vienna edition unlikely?—Two points. The first one loomed from the direction of the Church, when Pope Paul published his encyclical against contraception. It could not have been known whether the rigid, conservative trend would prevail, leading to isolation. His book would have been undesirable in this case for several reasons. These are: a progressive, left-wing stance calling for dialogue—anti-Mindszenty-ism—and a certain sympathy towards the Soviets arising from personal experience. The last of these relates to the neg-

87 *Notes on the French edition of Jesuits and Freemasons*. Buenos Aires, May 22, 1967. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 70.

88 Ultimately, the publishing house politely declined to publish *Church and Communism*. Wien, April 30, 1970. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/4. 97/1.

ative climate in the West owing to the events in Czechoslovakia, and the Cold War mindset. This also threatened to make his book untimely and delay its publication.⁸⁹

As the above illustrates, Nagy appears to have sought an explanation in politics and Church policy without ever comprehending the real reasons for the delay(s). Furthermore, it is unlikely that Cardinal König's office approved, let alone sanctioned his work. Hungarian state security material only reveals its desire to use the book's publication to disinform Cardinal König and influence the Western public. Cardinal König considered his visits to Hungary as Archbishop of Vienna legitimate *Besuchspolitik* (visitation policy). He was an unofficial, albeit formidable, emissary between the Vatican and the Hungarian Church, as well as the Vatican and Mindszenty.⁹⁰ For these reasons, disinformation against him was important to state security, with the German edition of *Jesuits and Freemasons* intended as part of a larger campaign.

“Barát” reported to his acquaintance that

[t]hey talked a lot with Töhötöm Nagy, the relationship with whom was getting warmer and warmer. [...] [Nagy] said that his book ‘CHRISTIANITY-COMMUNISM’ was also published in Chile after Argentina,⁹¹ and his work ‘JESUITS AND FREEMASONS’ in Vienna in German.—[Nagy mentioned that to his knowledge, the Viennese Cardinal KÖNIG was looking forward to the book's publication, since the Cardinal was allegedly attacked several times due to his behavior and stance towards Mindszenty, and expected the book by Töhötöm Nagy to inform the Austrian public objectively about Mindszenty's case.]⁹²

According to a handwritten comment, the above section was deemed so important that it was forwarded to the intelligence department focus-

89 *Report*. Budapest, 11 November 1968. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/2. 129–130.

90 König objected to any suggestion that he was a diplomat, emphasizing that official visit can only be made by members of the Vatican Secretariat of State and legates, of which he was neither. Pallagi, “A Mindszenty név,” 879.

91 This is incorrect: *Church and Communism* was published in Chile, but never in Argentina.

92 *Report*. Tatabánya, May 27, 1969. ÁBTL 3.1.2. M-41644. 92.

ing on the Vatican, Israel, and ecclesiastical emigration. An intelligence residency under the codename *Világosság* [Daylight] had been created in the State Office for Church Affairs (SOCHA) in November 1968. Under SOCHA's cover, which enjoyed a stronger position in the Vatican than the Foreign Ministry, it could collect intelligence through international ecclesiastical organizations.⁹³ As a result, the German edition of *Jesuits and Freemasons* received the attention of the disinformation section of state security as material influencing Mindszenty's perception in the West and the Vatican by way of Cardinal König.

We do not know on what information Nagy based the claim that Cardinal König had approved his German edition of *Jesuits and Freemasons*; however, in analyzing the version published in 1969, many additions and rewrites were included. The authorities did not ask Nagy to construct events or add new analyses, but to take a harsher and more decisive tone. Of course, Mindszenty was depicted less favorably, and the Soviets and Hungarian Communists more positively.

Nagy, however, also modified several passages that had nothing to do with Mindszenty directly: In the Austrian/German edition he saw an opportunity to work on his manuscript, which he considered to be a malleable raw material, rather than a final opus. At around the same time, Nagy was also working on several other manuscripts, all of which he expected would be published. Among these was his anti-Mindszenty work, the recently-finished manuscript for *Korfordulón* [At the turning point of an era], which would appear in a separate volume. The German edition of *Jesuits and Freemasons* was the first product of his collaboration with state security, and it could not significantly differ from the Hungarian version. For that reason, he only shifted the text's emphasis, rather than rebuilding its framework.⁹⁴

93 On the *Világosság* residency see Szabó and Soós, "Világosság"; Szabó, "A 'Világosság' fedőnév"; Soós, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal*, 169–74.

94 A detailed comparison is beyond the scope of this book, however, a few examples can be provided. Page 208 of the Hungarian version says that the Russians were "anything but patient," whereas the German version instead references the "moderate segment of the Soviets." In *Jezsuiták és szabaddkőművesek* [1965], 208, and Nagy, *Jesuiten und Freimaurer*, 217. Similarly, the first mandate letter Nagy received from Mindszenty in September 1945 is not mentioned in the German version, while the Hungarian version quotes it verbatim: "Mindszenty handed over a hand-written letter to His Majesty. Here's the letter: 'Your Majesty! As most graciously appointed Primate of Hungary, I have the honor to send to

Nagy's plans to publish in Hungary would not be realized, even though he did write new chapters for *Jesuits and Freemasons* that would be included in a future Hungarian edition. In the interim, however, the position of the Hungarian People's Republic towards Mindszenty shifted, particularly in the aftermath of his death in 1975. Hungarian state security determined that publication should be delayed as it "harms our ecclesiastical political interests." Nagy's case officer reported on the difficulties that this created in handling his agent:

[I] tried convincing him about the Mindszenty chapter, it is not the time to raise the issue again: it would be confusing from an ecclesiastical and political point of view. I expressed my conviction that presumably the Vatican wouldn't take too kindly to the Mindszenty issue being brought up again, and the expected press coverage would upset the existing relationship. Despite my arguments, KŐMŰVES insisted on submitting his book to the publisher [Kossuth] with the new chapters. He stated that if the publisher doesn't take on the additions, he wouldn't approve of the book's publication. [...] Raising the issue isn't timely, and as hostile émigrés, and conservative ecclesiastical circles, also in opposition to the Vatican have joined forces for the canonization of Mindszenty, a writing condemning both Mindszenty's person and his activities would surely provoke attacks from them. KŐMŰVES, driven partly by his personal grievances, writes unequivocally and condemningly of Mindszenty, but is also unable to detach himself from his emotions when dealing with the subject. His knowledge is one-sided, his bias obvious. His writing techniques aren't adequate to tackle such a complex issue. His method is to cause outrage by one-sided, journalistic writing. This can be seen in his strong temperament and attitude. Considering his own, frequently mistaken hypotheses objective, he doesn't aim to check them, but to justify them at any cost.⁹⁵

Your Majesty with my profound reverence, reports and requests, Fr Nagy SJ" In Nagy, *Jezsuiták és szabadkőművesek*, 208. Finally, in the Hungarian version, Mindszenty broaches the subject of monarchy during discussions with Nagy in September 1945, while in the German version, Nagy solicits Mindszenty's opinion on the topic.

95 *Report*. Budapest, June 23, 1978. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/7. 227–28.

The above shows that Nagy even exceeded the expectations of the authorities regarding Mindszenty. He remained obstinate because he knew that his manuscript had successfully made it abroad, having been couriered by his daughter, and that he could trust that it would be published.⁹⁶ He was, however, perhaps too clever for his own good, as the letter to Krisztina in which he asked her to begin the publication process was intercepted by Hungarian state security, and his plans came to naught.⁹⁷

Of course, Nagy's world view and mindset are products of his life and personality; Mindszenty's role in either of these, even if important, is just one of many. Their hostility haunted Nagy well after the Cardinal's death and tormented him for the remaining 4 years of his life. It influenced his outlook and his intentions, sometimes overtly, while only latently influencing that of others. In this way, without ever being aware of it, Mindszenty had become the main antagonist in Nagy's life, driving his actions and thoughts.

96 "So, they put a muzzle on me, tie me to the doghouse, and even toss me a morsel. [...] now it seems they're permanently killing me as a writer. [...] For my part, this is my decision: the book may be published, and if it is, let it be with the additions. [...] So let the book come out, let it be published, and brought to life." *Tőhötöm Nagy's letter 39. to his daughter*. Budapest, July 24, 1978. ÁBTL 3.2.1. Bt-1584/7. 263/4. and 263/5.

97 Ibid. 228.