

Mindszenty Living Life of Prisoner in U.S. Legation

Editor's Note: This is the second of a series of dispatches by the only American reporter to stay in Budapest through the rebellion and its crushing. He was expelled last week.

By Russell Jones
United Press Correspondent

London — (UPI) — At about 10 o'clock each morning in the American legation in Budapest, a small Hungarian woman scurries from the kitchen in the basement to a room on the third floor.

She knocks on the door, deposits a tray on a chair just outside. It bears a typical American breakfast — scrambled eggs, toast, fruit juice and coffee.

The man in the room — who takes the tray over to a desk that serves as his breakfast table — is short, slight and bowed with his 64 years, the last eight in Communist prisons.

He is Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, prince-primate of Hungary, a priest without a pulpit, a leader who cannot speak to his people.

The whole world is watching to see what happens to this man. He has become the symbol of a free Hungary.

Mindszenty's own freedom lasted only five days, from the morning of Oct. 31 when Hungarian soldiers freed him until Nov. 4 when he took sanctuary in the American legation as Russian tanks slaughtered the freedom fighters in the streets.

Faces Re-arrest
If he steps from that building he faces almost certain return to the Communist jails where, as he put it, he endured "things which are unspeakable and defy the imagination of every normal man."

His secretary, Father Egon Turcsanyi, left the legation and tried to reach the West on Nov. 10. He was arrested immediately.

Opinion in Budapest is that the Red Regime of Janos Kadar and the Russians will not try to force their way into the legation and seize Mindszenty.

"Why should they?" one Hungarian asked me. "The situation now is the same as when the AVH secret police had him — but now the Americans run the jail."

There is grim truth in the remark. The cardinal's life, although comfortable enough, is that of a prisoner. What the future holds is not clear. Some legal experts believe the United States cannot continue to shelter him if the puppet government takes formal steps. Neither do

they believe he will be given safe conduct out of the country.

Visitors Turned Away

Legation officials will not discuss events and they have been very careful in the manner of his asylum. No messages from or to the cardinal are delivered. Visitors are politely but firmly turned away.

For Cardinal Mindszenty, each day is much like the last. He rises about 7 a.m. and prays and meditates for several hours before breakfast. Then he works on the memoirs to which he is devoting his main energies.

The room in which he works and sleeps is the private office of U. S. Minister Thomas P. Walles. His bed is the minister's leather couch.

The desk he uses for both work and as a dining table also serves as an altar when he celebrates mass. In performing the religious rites, he is assisted by a former nun and another Hungarian woman, both legation employees. At one of his masses during the height of the fighting, 15 American correspondents were present.

Although he wears the red cap of his office in the building, the cardinal puts on a plain black

slouch hat when he walks in the legation courtyard.

Mindszenty, son of a peasant family, was made a cardinal in February, 1946, at the same ceremony that saw New York's Archbishop Spellman elevated to the same rank.

He was arrested the day after Christmas in 1948. In the weeks before, his anti-Communist rallies drew crowds so large they could hardly be accommodated.

The world was shocked when six weeks later, he parroted a confession of working against the state and humbly pledged obedience. The pictures taken at the trial were of a man who looked near insanity, his bulging eyes shifting in a frightened manner around the courtroom.

The full story of what broke him is yet to be told. He has said the drugs were not used. But it is known he underwent interrogation for days on end without sleep. Priests were brought before him who urged him to confess.

He was convicted Feb. 8, 1949, on treason, disloyalty to the government and currency-law violations. He was sentenced to life.

For almost eight years he was dragged from one Communist prison to another—seven in all.

"Sometimes I did not know where I was," he said.

Liberated During Revolt

His liberation came at the height of the success of the Hungarian revolt. A Hungarian army squad led by Major Josef Palin-

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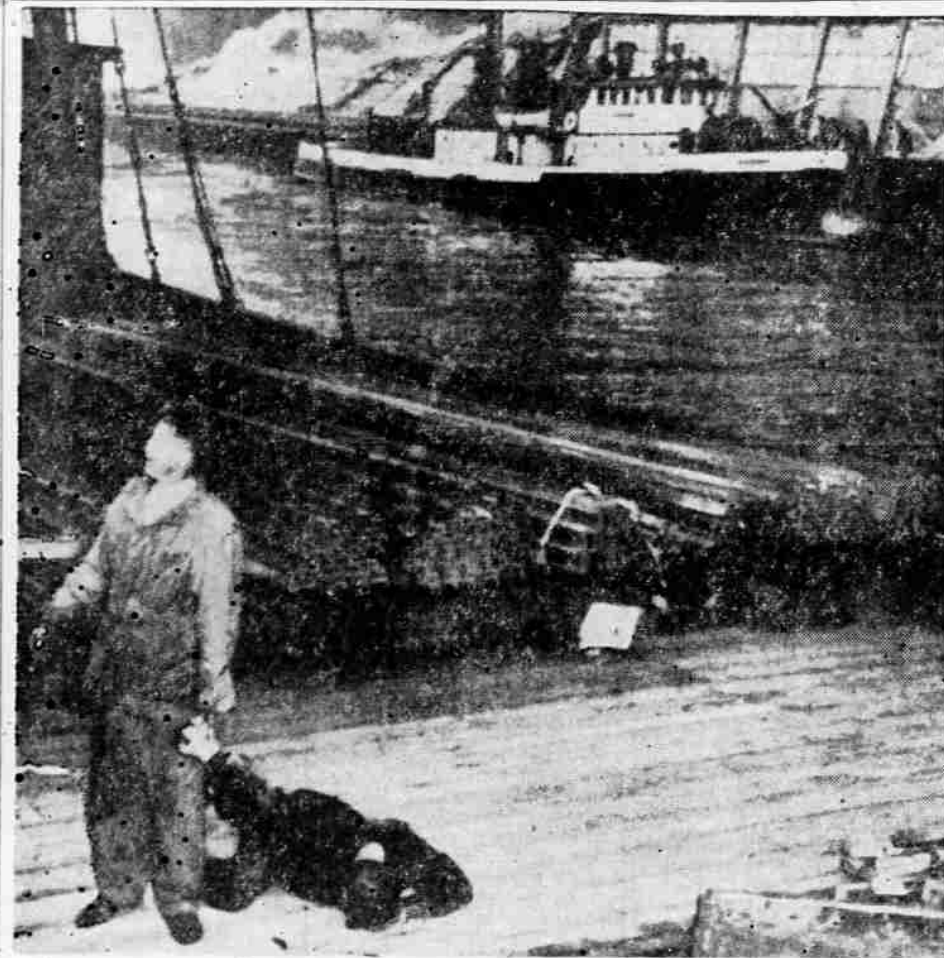
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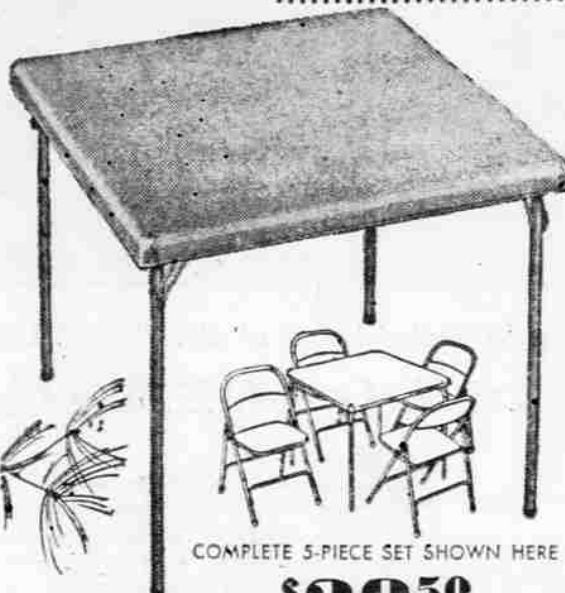
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