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HUNGARY
(REDEFECTION)

RE-EMIGRANTS (2700) ✓

SURVEY OF HUNGARIAN REDEFECTION FROM BRITAIN

SOURCE LONDON: RFE News Bureau.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until July 1957.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This is an interesting and comprehensive account of the redefection position in England.

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According to Home Office statistics, 640 Hungarians redefected from England up to June 1. The LONDON Hungarian Legation speaks about a round number of a thousand, but it includes those who only asked the legation for information.

As long as the LONDON Austrian Legation granted transit-visas 180 refugees went home via Austria. It was known at the legation that several among these redefectors wished to hang back in Austria and emigrate to America from there. 80 Hungarians had redefected via West Germany and Czechoslovakia up to the end of February.

The list of names can be obtained through private information only. No official list is available at any of the legations, and it is impossible to get the names from the various scattered camps and hostels. It is strictly forbidden for interpreters to release the names of redefectors. Those who want to go home keep their intention secret. They tell their camp-mates that they are emigrating to Canada, and just vanish. Later on it turns out that they have redefected.

According to information received from welfare organiza-
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tions, 70 per cent of the redefectors go home because they cannot enter the US. This was also the reason for the hunger-strikes in Ireland and North Scotland. There are few Hungarian children alone in England. There are approximately 70 to 80 minors under 15 years of age. Approximately 48 to 55 children under 18 went home.

The other redefectors are mostly middle-aged men whose families remained in Hungary: workers, artisans and field laborers. British authorities do not inquire why someone wishes to redefect. This has to be told at the Hungarian Legation only. But the British learn from the interpreters that men with families suffer from loneliness and cannot resist the letters asking them to come home.

The first redefectors were those who escaped from the revolutionaries. There was hardly one woman redefector, and so far not a single person who came to England since the end of December, and who originally planned to stay, has redefected.

British authorities do not prevent the would-be redefectors from continuing to live in the camps and going to work in order to earn their traveling expenses, but they have to pay for their board. Those who leave the camps and come to LONDON to report at the legation, and wish to wait there for their permit, are not accepted in refugee homes, but the Red Cross and the Salvation Army put them up either gratis or for a few pennies.

Interpreter's opinion: the LONDON Hungarian Legation does not send redefection-propagandists to the camps. The refugees are not approached in the camps. However, it is likely that those who report for redefection encourage the others to do the same. The inmates of the camps (Blackpool, Hednesford, Nuneaton) keep aloof from those whom they know wish to redefect. They are afraid they might report on them at home. The redefectors are all aware that once they are home they will have to tell lies. They also know that their applications have to contain complaints against the country they were given refuge in. This is demanded by the Hungarian Legation.

In mid-January a Hungarian named SZITA started to recruit redefectors in the Blackpool camp. He said that if either 50 or 100 would apply for redefection the Hungarian Legation promised to pay the traveling fees. Perhaps ten reported, and SZITA was asked to submit their applications to the legation. Of course, the legation paid nothing at all. We have no knowledge about the number of redefectors, because at the time the camps in England were constantly transferred from one place to another.

At Nuneaton, a smaller camp where the number of inmates ranges from 100 to 300, depending on how many find jobs, four boys under 18 and five workers between 18 and 26 have returned

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home since the amnesty decree of March. They promised to write immediately after their arrival, but even the boys did not write a word to their friends in England.

Three more men in this camp wish to redefect. They applied for their permits three weeks ago. On their written request, the LONDON Hungarian Legation sent them the forms by post (copy available). After the preliminary forms were filled, the application forms were sent to them. Each person had to fill in two application and two questionnaires. All the personal data had to be given, including that of parents, occupation, financial status, when and under what circumstances the refugee left the country, a detailed report on activities during the revolution, and also detailed reasons why the person wanted to redefect. Seven photos are needed for the passport and visa.

The three men are aged 23, 26 and 28 and all are from BUDAPEST. The enterprises where they previously worked sent them letters of invitation. It might be that they themselves wrote to the enterprises, or that their family members let the enterprises send them recalling letters. All three of them maintain they did not ask for the letters. One, a former worker in the slaughter-house, showed the letters he got, one from the director and the other from the Party secretary. They were addressed "comrade". The letters themselves were very kind: he should not hesitate but return home speedily, no harm would come to him, his previous post was guaranteed, they were waiting for him with affection, they were in need of men "who became fed up and disgusted by the blessings of Western democracies." The letter ended with a note that "this little study-tour can only be useful for the Hungarian people building socialism," because the experiences he gained would have a disillusioning effect on youth.

The redefectors are well aware that lies will be expected from them, because they are listeners to "Szulofoldem" (Radio BUDAPEST). These radio programs are the only means for luring home in the camps. Reception of RFE is very bad and its programs, say refugees, are boring. When they listen to the news they only hear about disarmament conferences, about attempts made to come to an agreement, but they know that the Hungarians cannot expect help. In which case, they prefer to return home.

In Camp Nuneaton, we know only about one person making propaganda for redefection. His name was Ferenc TOTH, he was a police lieutenant in Hungary and escaped during the first week of the revolution. According to the opinion of the camp inmates, he was afraid of the rebels. He redefected as early as January. In this camp too, there are a few tramps, who never work but let someone else keep them and organize and encourage the others to redefect. Though they are afraid of going home, they think that if their employers recall them, there will be no trouble for them.

They say one should write to Party member relatives and ask for their protection.

The adults who applied for redefection since April 1 have to wait for three weeks, because their applications have to be sent to Hungary, and the LONDON Hungarian Legation grants a permit only after the Hungarian authorities give their consent. Two of the three men have got their visas and were promised by the legation that they could leave England on June 11. The redefectors have to pay traveling expenses to the tourist agency. There is also the possibility for relatives in Hungary to pay the expenses but this is a lengthy procedure and would-be redefectors are advised against it by the LONDON legation.

Tibor SZABO, who made a statement in the May 26 issue of "Somogyorszag", was also a former inmate at the Nuneaton camp. The others in the camp wrote a letter to him in which he was told to be ashamed of his lies. Janos SLIK or SCHLIK, a miner from TATABANYA, redefected from Blackpool at the time of the amnesty decree. Two weeks ago, his relatives wrote a letter from Hungary inquiring about his whereabouts, because so far he has not arrived home.

Allegedly, the redefectors have to wait now as new application forms are being printed. In January, the redefectors also had to wait, because the Kossuth emblems had to be printed on the new forms. The previous ones carried the Soviet star with the sickle and the ear of wheat. Now those with the Kossuth emblem are no longer valid.

The redefectors have to wait in the ante-room of the legation, whereas British subjects applying for a visa are received by the consul in his room. A lady was there a week ago. The magazine "Irodalmi Ujsag" published in LONDON and "Magyar Szo" were lying on his desk. The consul started to abuse the staff of "Picture Post" and the LONDON Hungarian journalists, whom he accused of telling lies and presenting the murderers as heroes. "Because," he said, "these were ordinary murderers." The visitor asked him: "Do you call murderers these poor refugees waiting in the ante-room?" The question took the consul unawares and he only said: "These are poor misguided youngsters."

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Redefection now seems to have stopped altogether. No one sits waiting at the legation to fill up forms. Sixteen were granted permits in June, but these never came to fetch their documents.

Hungarian authorities are spreading the news that

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Hungarian brawlers are expelled from LONDON. This is an impertinent lie. The "guilty" were interrogated at a closed session, they could be visited in prison, and their names were kept secret even from the Hungarian Legation. They were not sentenced, but a great many offers arrived from Hungarians in LONDON to pay their fines.

On June 29, an iron worker, his wife and little son, started from BRISTOL on their way to BUDAPEST. Their names: Janos RADO CZ, Erzsebet his wife and his son Janos. A brother of his sent them the tickets from BUDAPEST.

During March, a 21-year-old miner redefected from the Blackpool camp. He informed his parents about it. Since then the parents inquired several times at the camp what happened to their son, because he had not arrived home. Then on July 2 they wrote a letter from TATABANYA that their son had arrived. He was held three months in detention. He did not speak much about his hearings but he confessed that he had to give an account of the other refugees. He warned them not to return home. They took away from the young miner all his clothing, books and photos he had with him.

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