

COURIER REPORT OF THE DIPLOMAT OF THE MONARCHY: JÁNOS CSISZÁRIK, 8-24 JULY 1924.

CESTOVNÝ DENNÍK DIPLOMATA MONARCHIE: JÁNOS CSISZÁRIK, 8.-24. JÚL 1924

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ABSTRACT

In 2022, press reports on churches are increasingly frequent. The war that broke out on 24 February brought to the fore once again such previously less central topics as the churches, the role of Christians, and within this the Catholic-Orthodox relationship. Partly because of this fact, it is worth taking a look at how Vatican diplomacy was shaped during Trianon, what role the churches played in the political decisions that were taken. Our analysis is based on the diary of a former elected Catholic bishop who served as a church adviser in the Austro-Hungarian Empire's diplomacy². The diary was recently processed and published by Péter Bertalan, following detailed archival research³, and thus entirely new information has been made available to the public on this topic. In the following, we will show how János Csiszárík tried to achieve political results through the network of church connections that remained from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy⁴. In the following, we will shed light on how networks shape the events of a given era, how much human ties, friendships and personal experiences matter. The analysis of Peter Bertalan's travel diary, published for the first time, has highlighted the importance of the network of relationships that provide insights into the difficult situation of Vatican diplomacy in the period under study.

ABSTRAKT

V roku 2022 sa v tlači čoraz častejšie objavujú správy o cirkvách. Vypuknutím vojny 24. februára sa do popredia opätovne dostali menej ústredné témy ako cirkvi, úloha kresťanov ako aj vzťah katolíkov a pravoslávnych. Sčasti aj, preto je vhodné pozrieť sa na to, ako sa formovala vatikánska diplomacia počas Trianonu a akú úlohu zohrávali cirkvi pri prijímaní politických rozhodnutí. Naša analýza vychádza z denníka bývalého katolíckeho biskupa, ktorý pôsobil ako cirkevný poradca v Rakúsko-Uhorskej diplomacii. Denník po podrobnom archívnom výskume nedávno spracoval a vydal Péter Bertalan, čím boli verejnosti sprístupnené nové informácie na túto tému. V nasledujúcom texte poukážeme na, to ako sa János Csiszárík snažil dosiahnuť politické výsledky prostredníctvom systému cirkevných konexií, ktoré zostali z čias Rakúsko-Uhorskej monarchie. V nasledujúcom texte objasníme, ako tento systém formoval udalosti danej doby, ako veľmi záležalo na ľudských väzbách, priateľstvách a osobných skúsenostiach. Prvýkrát publikovaná analýza cestovného denníka Petra Bertalana poukázala na význam

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³ BERTALAN PÉTER – CSISZÁRIK JÁNOS: Egy vatikáni diplomata naplója. Lymbus, Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények, 2020, 18, 780.

⁴ A revised Hungarian version of the study was published in BIRHER NÁNDOR, MISKOLCZI-BODNÁR PÉTER, NAGY PÉTER, TÓTH J. ZOLTÁN (ed), De iuris peritorum meritis 18. 70 Studia in honorem István Stipta, Károli Gáspár Reformed University Faculty of Law and Political Sciences Budapest, 2022.

systemu vzťahov, ktoré umožňujú nahliadnúť do zložitej situácie vatikánskej diplomacie v skúmanom období.

I. CHURCH POLICY COMPLICATIONS IN HUNGARY AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

It can be seen that Rome, including the Vatican, is not only a historical centre but also a centre of relations for the Catholic Church⁵. That is why personal friendships, which can be vital in certain decision-making situations, are of great importance. The later Cardinal, Primate of Esztergom, Justinian Serédi⁶, who was very active in the drafting of the first Code of Canon Law during the First World War, but also his contemporary, the Monarchy's diplomat and elected bishop János Csiszárík, had such a network of contacts. More recently, Péter Bertalan published Csiszárík's diary, which he made on a short courier trip between 8 and 24 July 1924, of which the trip to the Vatican lasted until 16 July. During this short period, which must include the long journey, Csiszárík had more than thirty encounters, each one in the context of its purpose. As the diary reveals, the purpose of the mission was to prevent the resignation of Greek Catholic Bishop Antal Papp⁷, or at least to obtain details of the workings of Vatican diplomacy with the bishop and the territorial aspects of the dioceses.

Csiszárík, who comes from a Greek Catholic family, had already been very involved in Greek Catholic issues and had tried to represent Hungarian interests within Greek Catholicism. Csiszárík felt it was his mission to prevent a kind of "Slavification" and excessive rapprochement with Orthodoxy through the Greek Catholics, even in the motherland, because of the introduction of the Old Slavonic liturgical language⁸. The respective bishop of the Greek Catholics also played a very important role in this struggle, so Csiszárík's commitment during his trip to Rome is understandable.

To understand the diary, it is necessary to know that Antal Papp became the head of the Diocese of Munkács in 1912 and the apostolic governor of the Diocese of Hajdúdorog, which was established in the same year. After Trianon, however, the Transcarpathian territories became part of Czechoslovakia. Antal Papp refused to take the oath of allegiance to the state, and the Czechoslovak state did its utmost to make life difficult for Catholics and Greek Catholics, especially Hungarians. Papp himself went to the Pope to argue for the Hungarian point of view, but to no avail, and was forced to accept the Pope's decision to transfer him.

From 1923, however, until 1925, Vatican-Czechoslovak relations were somewhat normalised, and one of the first consequences of the newly established diplomatic relations was that the Pope, with the active participation of Pius XI, Nuncio Marmaggi, sought to settle the situation of the disunited dioceses. However, this did not favour Hungarian politics, but the result of this series of events was that on 4 June 1924 the Pope appointed Antal Papp as titular archbishop of „Küzike” by decree (which had essentially no significance apart from the title) and established an Apostolic Governorate in the Hungarian territories, where Antal Papp became Apostolic Governor on 1 July 1924.

All this meant that the borders of the dioceses were adjusted to the new borders of the country, without consulting the Hungarian government. The Hungarians naturally did everything they could to protest against the situation, trying to keep Antal Papp in the bishopric

⁵ VRANA, V.: Roman diplomacy in ancient Rome. *Glossa Iuridica*, 2021, 8(3), 123-140.

⁶ CSÍKY B.– SERÉDI, J. Magyarország hercegprímása. *Collectanea Studiorum Et Textuum Classis I*, vol. 3, Budapest, MTA– PPKE Fraknói Vilmos Római Történeti Kutatócsoport, 2018.

⁷ Antal Papp was made coadjutor bishop of Munkács on 29 April 1912, and was consecrated bishop on 12 October of the same year by Gyula Drohobeczky. In July 1924, Pope Pius XI appointed him governor of the newly founded Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc.

⁸ PIRIGYI ISTVÁN: A miskolci apostoli exarchatus története. <https://www.byzantinohungarica.com/index.php/tortenelem-01/pirigy-istvan-a-miskolci-apostoli-exarchatus-tortenete> (2021. 08. 06.)

of the Czechoslovak territories as long as possible, or at least to have him spectacularly deported from Czechoslovakia. Finally, on 11 September 1925, the expulsion took place with a sufficient show of force and press coverage.

II. THE TRAVEL DIARY OF JÁNOS CSISZÁRIK - MEETING THE POPE

In this difficult situation, Csiszárík tried to mobilise his own network of contacts on Papp's behalf, but without any significant results. On his arrival in Rome, he was received by the best of Hungarian diplomacy, including Serédi. Relatively soon the Pope, Pius XI, also offered the opportunity for a meeting. At noon on 12 July 1924, the Pope had a pleasant conversation with Csiszárík about Hungarian agriculture and advanced irrigation techniques, and at the beginning of the conversation, in response to his thanks for the reception, he remarked, according to the diary, "I was happy to do so in consideration of those whom you represented." By which he obviously meant the Hungarian government.⁹ But he avoided the substantive, political questions so obviously that Csiszárík did not even dare to ask.

It should be noted that Csiszárík did not stand a chance, since Pope Pius XI, himself a diplomat, was Polish nuncius in 1919 and a doctor of canon law. He was well familiar with the situation in Upper Silesia and Prussia¹⁰ and the seriousness of the conflicts. His ecclesiastical activity after the First World War was characterised by a theological desire to restore peace and a legal settlement through concordats¹¹. He did all this with a professional diplomatic flair, leaving little room for personal preferences to guide his decisions in the short term.

Csiszárík's next interlocutor was Francesco Borgongini-Duca, the ecclesiastical lawyer, jurist and cardinal-diplomat responsible for diplomatic relations, who was later also responsible for the preparation of the Lateran Treaty¹². It is clear from his words that he put ecclesiastical interests before national interests. It was in conversation with him that the idea was raised that the bishops concerned should decide together on disputed questions of property¹³, with a certain subordination of the States.

"For my part," said Msgr. Borgongini, "I have long been thinking of bringing together the bishops concerned in a joint commission chaired by the Holy See and its delegate to resolve this question. But this, he added, is unlikely to be accepted by governments." "Our government," I said, "I do not think that our government will oppose to this."¹⁴ Throughout the talks, Vatican diplomacy had certainly tried to steer the land issues towards a settlement. Of course, their method was, as Peter Bertalan put it, the 'message, not command' diplomatic method¹⁵.

The Cardinal's parting words are a good description of this. "You have to think about it," said Msgr. It will be difficult to find a solution." He then added: "We have repeatedly told the Czechs that until the land dispute is settled, there can be no question of a new division."¹⁶ There was even a later recorded statement by Borgonigni that the Czechs would agree to the Bishop of Košice, the Hungarian Fischer Colbri Ágoston Fischer, remaining in place.

⁹ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 780.

¹⁰ On the German situation at the time: ŠTENPIEN, ERIK: Peace conference in Paris and negotiations with Germany in 1919. *Glossa Iuridica*, 2021, 8(3), 63-83.

¹¹ And before the outbreak of the Second World War, he clearly pointed out the dangers of fascist and communist dictatorships with his encyclicals *Mit brennender Sorge*, (14 March 1937) and *Divini Redemptoris* (19 March 1937).

¹² The Treaty of 11 February 1929 between the Holy See and Italy (*Trattato Lateranense*), which grants the Holy See full independence (creation of Vatican City, international sovereignty of the Holy See), and the Holy See recognises that the "Roman question" has been definitively and irrevocably resolved, i.e. it renounces its claims against the Kingdom of Italy.

¹³ A major issue was the fate of the ecclesiastical estates that had been "exported" and the benefits that came from them.

¹⁴ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 782.

¹⁵ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 778.

¹⁶ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 782.

In comparison, of course, a contradictory and unfavourable decision was taken with regard to the Hungarian faithful and territories outside the border, including Bishop Papp. However, the rest of the diary shows that the Vatican had little room for manoeuvre. The Vatican diplomacy was also forced into the disadvantageous playing field that the peace treaties represented.

The situation is illustrated by a few lines from Pius XI's first encyclical, *Ubi arcano Dei consilio*, published on Christmas 1922:

"Our daily duties were accompanied by many extraordinary ones, such as those of the most important matters which were well advanced towards solution even before our election and which we had to complete in haste, those which concerned the holy places, those which concerned the well-being of Christianity itself, or such was the situation of the dioceses which were among the most important in the Catholic world."

"One thing is certain today. Since the end of the Great War, individuals, different classes of society, the nations of the earth have not yet found true peace."

The Pope was therefore aware that the world was still a long way from the peace he coveted. He also felt that he had to work for the peace of all humanity, beyond individual national interests.

Csiszárík's next conversation was with the "Cardinals' Secretary of State" Gasparri. The meeting seemed less than friendly, and immediately began with the Cardinal reminding Csiszárík that "those good times are over".

In contrast, representatives of other nations went to the Secretary of State with pride. "While I was waiting for my turn in the hall of the Cardinal Secretary of State, the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, the Dutch Ambassador and the Czech Ambassador passed by. The latter with his chest puffed out with self-consciousness and a Napoleonic pose. He did not even know that he was passing one of the most unpretentious priests in mutilated Hungary.¹⁷" But Gasparri was certainly aware of the dates on which he invited his guests.

It was felt that Csiszárík's reputation was in serious decline, which is why it was time to put Serédi - also from the Hungarian government's side - in the forefront of the negotiations. With Gasparri, Csiszárík, who represented the formerly more conservative direction, had almost no chance, unlike Serédi, a close friend of the Cardinal Secretary of State, with whom he had drafted the Church Codex.

Naturally, Csiszárík was unable to bring up Bishop Papp's case at the meeting of the Secretary of State. The only result - at least in terms of Csiszárík's good sense - was that during a half-hour-long waiting in the anteroom he had a conversation with the Cardinal's secretary, who praised the Germans, belittled the French and called Greater Poland and Greater Romania transitional entities. This was a subtle sign that new webs of interest were being woven in the future. It also indicated that Vatican diplomacy was also expecting a major political reshuffle and revision. In light of this, they were trying to postpone decisions as long as possible¹⁸.

III. THE TRAVEL DIARY OF JÁNOS CSISZÁRIK - MEETING FRIENDS

After the "Vatican official" meetings were over, Csiszárík talked to his own circle of friends, mostly complaining to them. Cardinal Bizleti and Duke George of Bavaria were 'understanding', and even employed him as a postman to deliver a wedding present to Archduke Franz Joseph in a 'very large' hatbox.

The conversation with Cardinal Frühwirth (it is significant that the German cardinal was moved from his former residence to two simple rooms in the Anima German College until he could find more suitable accommodation) was irrelevant to Csiszárík's diplomatic mission, but it did indicate that the alliances of interests representing Hungarian interests had been

¹⁷ BERTALAN-CISISZÁRIK 783.

¹⁸ BIRHER NÁNDOR: A jog és a vallás normarendjei Trianon idején. *Glossa Iuridica* 2021, 8(3), 141-160.

considerably weakened by 1924, while the interests of the victors had been strengthened. The following quote sums it up well:

"We soon came to the matter of Papp, and the Cardinal, who knew nothing of the Greek Catholic Apostolic Administratorship in Hungary, said sadly, with reference to the removal of Papp: 'I regret I could not prevent it, but I look forward with great anxiety to possible developments. I am familiar with the Ruthenian question from Galicia, where I spent some time at the time. I am very sorry that this happened, it was not my fault, but it is true that the Vatican was in a very difficult situation. The Czech ambassador had been on my back for a year and a half. He had been running around the Vatican with even greater zeal on the same subject. To my fellow Cardinal, too. The Vatican's situation was aggravated by the fact that they were working concentrically against Papp on the Czech side. On the one hand, the Czech ambassador, and on the other, Nuncio Marmaggi, who is completely in the hands of the Czechs. For my part, I repeatedly emphasised to the Czech ambassador that the Holy See can only remove a bishop for canonical reasons if the bishop does not voluntarily resign. And I told Bishop Papp quite openly not to resign. Marmaggi is not an independent man, he does not even have his own home. The Prince lives with the Archbishop, the Czechs influence him with threats. They make complications for him, and Marmaggi backs down and does as they please. This was the trump card in the Papp affair: the Czech ambassador, on behalf of his government, had recently been saying that the Czechs would support the schismatic movement until the Holy See removed Papp. As soon as that happens, the Czech government will withdraw its support from the schismatics.¹⁹"

Ironically, while Csiszárík was in Rome, negotiations on the concordat in Romania were also completed and reported in the daily *Messaggero*. It is strange that the Hungarian ambassador did not receive any insider information about these negotiations either²⁰. The day after the *Messaggero* article was published, the Hungarian ambassador held a brunch to try to find out how the text of the agreed concordat could be obtained. It turned out: probably not.

"Count Somssich, when he invited me for brunch after my arrival, asked me if I believed that the Cardinal Minister of State would show us the draft concordat before signing it. I replied that I did not think so either, but that we had to ask because we could not rule out the possibility of complying with the request. Especially if we recall the analogy with the Serbian concordat before the war.²¹"

It is clear that the Hungarian diplomat and his narrow network of contacts were constantly caught up in Vatican resistance. This is confirmed by the Jesuit General Ledochovsky (who was sensitive to the Hungarian question if only because of Father Bangha) and especially by the official who was only elevated to the rank of cardinal in 1935, Nicola Canali. Canali had been Pope Pius X's Under-Secretary of State, but in 1924 his "good times" seemed to have just passed. Canali accurately described how the Cardinal Secretary of State Gasparri and his immediate entourage now had all the decisions regarding the destiny of the region in their hands.

"I could talk to Canali with complete confidence. When I spoke of the repercussions of certain measures of the Holy See in our country, he said, "It is a great evil, almost a misfortune. The biggest problem is that it can hardly be helped. No one among the Cardinals, except the Secretary of State, can get into the spokes of the government circles. Everything is handled by the Secretary of State and Borgongini, and the personal matters by Pizzardo. And all three of

¹⁹ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 787-788.

²⁰ BIRHER NÁNDOR: A Vatikáni politika elemei az I. világháború után: enciklikák és kollégiumok. In: ŠTENPIEN, Erik (szerk.): 100 rokov Trianonskej zmluvy - diplomacia, štát a právo na prelome storočí. Košice, Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach, 2021, 22-32.

²¹ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 789.

them with a dearth of competence. But there are other problems too: since Benedict XV, the Vatican has been prepared to make any sacrifice, even a sacrifice of principle, to increase the number of foreign missions by one." "When the first French ambassador made his introductory address to the Pope," continued Msgr. Canali, in his speech, the ambassador intangibly indicated the long-standing and offensive cult laws, and His Holiness responded to this speech, which was presented to him beforehand as usual, without the French ambassador reacting to this impertinence, by praising France. It was with great sadness that I witnessed this scene. [...] On one occasion, the whole diplomatic corps was assembled to appear before the Cardinal's Secretary of State. But it is a good thing you did not have to be there, Msgr., apart from a few distinguished individuals, I will say apart from your ambassador, who is an impeccable gentleman, it is a terrible mixed company. It's full of journalists, lawyers and no other less gentlemanly elements. And stepping in front of this company, the Minister of State, the Cardinal, delighted, exclaimed, "What would St. Peter, surrounded by a few poor fishermen, say, if he saw this bright assembly! In the Vatican, they tremble at the thought that the number of representations might dwindle. And they are sometimes more willing to make incomprehensible sacrifices to prevent that from happening. Apart from France, Portugal and the Czechoslovak Republic are classic examples. The bolder the ambassadors, the more they achieve. [...] Canali continued: the Czech ambassador is Pallier, they say he is a Freemason. Here the permissive are easily negated. Nobility is not a very good way to achieve results. It was in vain that your ambassador boasted in a company that he was the most beautiful ambassador to the Holy See. The less distinguished will find it easier. The Czech ambassador is in the Vatican without a break and very often visits the congregation of the Cardinals. True, the congregations (here no doubt he means the congregations per gli affari stra-ordinari) are convened very rarely, but sometimes the Vatican officials do not quite decide on their own authority."²²

It is clear from the quotation that the classic, traditional networks of contacts, still linked to the aristocracy, have been replaced by "lawyers, journalists", horrible dictu, "freemasons" in the Vatican sphere of interest. At least, that was the appearance of it from the point of view of those who were excluded from power. What is certain, however, is that secular liberal movements had a significant impact on Vatican diplomacy. At the same time, it can be seen that at the operational level, a kind of resistance emerged which sought to restore the old order represented by Pius X. It was precisely for this reason that a visit to the tomb of Pope Pius X was an important programme for Csiszárík. In his diary, he detailed in detail the order of the flowers and candles placed on the tomb, and also mentioned a miracle of the Pope (which, incidentally, he had heard precisely from Canali).

It is a different matter that the policy displayed by Gasparri's measured diplomacy was much more practical, and resulted in the conclusion of the Czechoslovak Agreement being delayed almost until the first Vienna decision. However, as soon as the opportunity arose, Vatican diplomacy took a clear and rapid stand on the question of the settlement of the boundaries of the Hungarian dioceses.

It is easy to see that Hungarian diplomacy was mostly hoping that the wheel of history would turn again and the old times would return - at least by some miracle. In the meantime, however, Vatican diplomacy sought to build its relations with the new states mainly along the lines of current interests²³. In these negotiations, the Pope has had relatively little role and public input

²² BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK i. m. 789.

²³ "On 2 November 1938, the Vatican's Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires was received by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, Secretary of State, for an interrogation, where the questions of the reattachment of the Highland territories were discussed. Although the arbitration decision was not yet known, Pacelli stated that the Church "warmly welcomed" the territorial change because it was well aware of the Hungarian government's position on the Vatican and the interests of the Church, which was "more than reassuring" for the Catholics of the areas to be annexed. Pacelli stressed his confidence in the Hungarian government. The positive reception should come as no surprise in view of the Czechoslovak government's anti-Church policy. The Cardinal Secretary of State said that the reannexed parts would of course revert to their old dioceses, but that since the

- at least from the lower levels²⁴. Csiszárík and his more recent interlocutor Cardinal Merry del Val note that the Pope does not negotiate directly with anyone on these issues, so he cannot be addressed directly. In fact, however, and in the light of the Pope's encyclicals, Vatican diplomacy has been active at all levels, as far as it has been able.

Also, the changing importance of the system of relations with the German Church emerged from a conversation with Prelate Hudal, Rector of the German Pontifical College Anima. It turned out that Bishop Papp had visited him shortly before Csiszárík and asked for his help in his case. It is clear from this conversation that Papp's resignation and departure from the diocese was not such an obvious matter, as they tried to do everything possible to postpone it as long as possible. It is also important to note that a decision on the bishop's fate had been taken months before, and that his successor had even been found.

"But he asked me to be his agent," said Msgr. Hudal, the last time he was here." And who will succeed him? Probably grand provost Gebe, I said. "I see now," said Msgr. Hudal, why I was told at the Secretariat of State in May that Gebe, who was promoted by Bishop Papp, would not be appointed prothonotary because he was up for a higher promotion.²⁵"

It was a small success, but one that became particularly significant from 1925 onwards, that at least in the monastic orders' efforts to divide the primarily Catholic and liberal-Hussite Czech interests in Czechoslovakia. The result was that the Franciscans created the Slovak province in accordance with the aspirations of the Hungarian Antal Buttkay. True, this decision was also in the interests of Catholic Slovaks rather than Hungarians.

"Antal Buttkay speaks of the fact that the classification of the provinces of the Order in accordance with the political boundaries had already been done in the definitory. The Czech ambassador visited him without delay, and in particular he urged that the Franciscan province of Upper Hungary should be called a Czech-Slovak province. The Czech ambassador, however, could not carry through his intention, because the province, at Buttkay's urging, was called the „Szlovenszkoi provincia”.²⁶"

IV. SUMMARY

It can be concluded that history, and within it legal history, is not simply a predictable process of legislation and law application as envisioned by legal positivism. Instead, we find an intricate system of networks of relationships in which religion, national traditions, ethics, and law combine to create a state of affairs that determines the directions of the future. It is precisely for this reason that it is necessary to point out that none of the normative systems just mentioned can be ignored. In the same way, it is impossible to understand the present or plan for the future without knowledge of the past and of the webs of relationships in the past. As Martin Buber says: "All real life is an encounter"!

KEY WORDS

canon law, Vatican diplomacy, diocesan boundaries, Trianon, networks

Czechoslovak *modus vivendi* had formally torn them out of their old framework, only a new decree by the Pope could restore the previous legal status quo. Pacelli was particularly interested in the growth of the Archdiocese of Esztergom and expressed his great pleasure that a significant part of the lost territories of Serédi would be restored." Salacz, G. Salacz: *The Hungarian Catholic Church under the rule of neighbouring states*, *ibid.*, p. 49, cited in CSÍKY BALÁZS – SERÉDI JUSZTINIÁN: *Magyarország hercegprímása. Collectanea Studiorum Et Textuum Classis I*, vol. 3, Budapest, MTA–PPKE Fraknói Vilmos Római Történeti Kutatócsoport, 2018. 228.

²⁴ But if we look at the series of papal encyclicals, we can see how up-to-date Pius XI's involvement in diplomacy was.

²⁵ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK 794.

²⁶ BERTALAN–CSISZÁRIK i. m. 794.

KEÚČOVÉ SLOVÁ

kánonické právo, vatikánska diplomacia, hranice diecézy, Trianon, systém

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