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21 JUN 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)  
SUBJECT: Background Paper on Pope Paul VI

1. The information in the attached memorandum is derived from a well-informed article of intellectual tone appearing in Realites of May 1962, and from Clandestine Services file holdings.

2. In <sup>50X1</sup> [redacted] a CIA staff officer <sup>50X1</sup> [redacted] was introduced to Monsignor Montini, then Pro-Papal Secretary of State, by the Papal Nuncio to the West German Government <sup>50X1</sup> [redacted]

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CIA Statute

Attachment:  
(Biography of Pope Paul VI)

cc: DDCI

Chief  
Western Europe Division

Declassified Under Authority of the  
Interagency Security Classification  
Appeals Panel, E.O. 13526, sec. 5.3(b)(3)  
ISCAP Appeal No. 2019-058, document 3  
Declassification Date: January 2, 2025

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Pope Paul VI

1. Biographic Data

a. Family Background

Pope Paul VI, formerly Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini of Milan, was born in 1897 in the province of Brescia near Milan. His father was a middle class lawyer, a journalist and deputy in Parliament who fought Mussolini's fascists. His older brother is now a D.C. deputy, and a younger brother is a physician.

b. Church Career

Ordained in 1920, Pope Paul had a long career in the Vatican diplomatic service. Although not officially named Pro-Secretary of State until 1952, he had in effect filled that role under the greater part of the Papacy of Pius XII (1939-1958). Montini was considered Pius XII's alter ego in political and foreign affairs. He was credited largely with having mustered the Church's support of the CD Party in the 1948 elections. Montini was made a cardinal in December 1958 by the late Pope John. It was reported that Pope Pius XII as early as 1953 had offered the cardinal's cap to Montini but that he had declined in order to remain at the side of Pius XII as Pro-Secretary of State. At the time of Montini's appointment to the Archbishopric of Milan, it was reported that Pope Pius XII intimated that Montini would be papabile (i. e., eligible to become Pope) in about five years. In fact, it is generally opined that save for the strength which Cardinal Tisserant organized in favor of Cardinal Roncalli, Montini might well have been papal successor to Pius XII.

In 1960 Cardinal Montini visited the United States, reportedly to explain to American bishops that the Church's intervention in Italian elections was not applicable to the U.S. where Marxism is non-existent.

2. Pope Paul's Personality

Pope Paul's appearance is that of a high Church prelate: tall, slim, ascetic, blue, deep-set eyes, penetrating look, intimidating but charming. At first sight he is friendly but reserved and intense. He was described as an emotional man who keeps close control over himself. Pope Paul has great drive and energy tempered by caution and

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-2-

prudence, which has at times made him appear somewhat enigmatic.

### 3. Pope Paul's Views and Orientation

Pope Paul is known for the increased emphasis he has given to economic and social reforms and for Vatican support of European integration. He is also associated with the French "worker-priest" movement which in 1953 became a debacle owing to the defection of a number of the French priests to the Communists. Montini, a proponent -- some say the chief advocate -- of this experiment within the Vatican, came under criticism for his part in it. From about this time his name is brought increasingly to the fore both in discussions of a liberal-conservative schism within the Vatican and of the likely succession to the papacy after Pius XII. In Milan, Montini set about to become the "workers bishop". This he succeeded in doing to the extent that he is credited with having made significant inroads against the entrenched Communists in the political and labor organizations in Milan. There Montini has had the opportunity to put into practice, particularly among the workers, his ideas about the work of the modern Church.

As with most ranking political figures in Italy the recorded comments about Montini run heavily to the extremes depending upon which side of the fence the commentator sits. In this way, Montini's appointment as Archbishop of Milan was interpreted variously. To the conservatives in the Vatican it was seen as a fortuitous removal of bad influence from the immediate side of the Pope and the seat of Church government. To Montini's friends and the liberal element the Archbishopric of Milan was an unmistakable step up the ladder toward the Papacy. It would appear, however, that Montini, a very enlightened liberal who had perhaps more than any other man been Pope Pius XII's counsel on the Church's fight in the cold war, was not soft on communism. His view as to the most effective corrective for the Italian Communist menace was undoubtedly at odds with those of the conservative cardinals such as Siri, Ottaviani, and Ruffini.

Politically, as a Archbishop of Milan, he at first exulted the left wing of the local CD Party because of his reputation as "a bishop of the workers". He visited factories and addressed the workers. Gradually he became less bold politically and it appeared that it had been too readily assumed that he was a man with Leftish views. His ideal probably would be a form of regulated capitalism under a non-religious democratic state, based nevertheless on principles of

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Christian doctrine. He is concerned with social problems and encourages the activities of the Italian Catholic Workers Association, sponsoring apprentice training centers, etc., but he kept a tight rein on them politically because he apparently feared a leftward drift from spiritual to temporal concerns. He is said to represent both tendencies which have been present in the Church since 1880, i. e., tradition (resistance based on doctrine) and progress (adaptation to the demands of modern society).

4. Pope Paul's Achievements in Milan

As Archbishop of Milan he was responsible for the building of many new churches, parish schools, meeting halls, welfare offices for the poor and occasionally, vocational schools. The idea he had was to make each parish the center of neighborhood life: a church in the midst of a section of Southern immigrants, adjoined by a school, a worker-training center, dormitories, dining hall, parochial movie house, etc.

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