

RADIO FREE EUROPE

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

A RE-EXAMINATION
OF THE PROGRAM PREFERENCES OF
HUNGARIAN LISTENERS OF RADIO FREE EUROPE

(The data are derived from the study
"The Hungarian Listeners of Western Broadcasts")

JULY, 1959



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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to supply a further qualitative dimension to the quantitative findings of the large-scale study, "The Hungarian Listeners of Western Broadcasts", published at the end of 1957. Based on the same data, the investigation this time was restricted to program preferences and dislikes established on the grounds of two questions from the Audience Research Basic Questionnaire. Only those RFE programs which drew more than 10% positive and/or negative comment from the sample of 315 Hungarian respondents were considered.

For technical reasons this qualitative study had to be delayed for over a year. However, the material in question is not of a perishable kind: the most important - and popular - broadcasts of RFE's Hungarian service are still on the air, and the major reasons for preferences and dislikes voiced at the time of the interviewing (early 1957) do not appear to have been unduly time-bound.

For a detailed description of the sample and method employed, the reader is referred to the introductory chapter of the above-quoted large-scale study. Here it should be mentioned that only two programs, "Black Voice" and "Colonel Bell", were not included in the analysis because they have since been modified or discontinued.

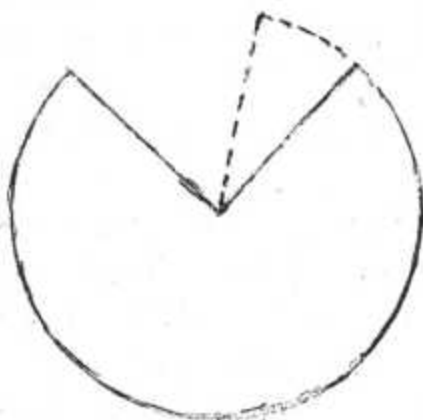
A word should also be said about quotations from the individual questionnaires: it was thought advisable to adhere as closely to the language in which the interviews were conducted (Hungarian) as possible; wherever a choice had to be made between the better English **turn** of phrase and the more faithful rendering of the respondent's thought, we decided on the latter. For the same reason, responses were presented on an almost individual basis; inclusive categories were established only when the key terms employed by a number of respondents were identical or strongly overlapping. In other words, coding procedures used in the quantitative study on which this paper is based were not followed and, instead, the component parts of the various categories were considered directly.



II. THE MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED RFE PROGRAMS

The questions, "Which RFE programs did you like best?" and "Which RFE programs did you like least?" elicited altogether 691 specific answers from the respondents. Naturally, such answers as, "I liked all programs" or "There were none I disliked", were excluded from the above figure. Among the programs mentioned, News, Gallicus (Reflector), Music, Commentaries, Black Voice, Farmers Programs (Farmer Balint), Religious Programs and Colonel Bell, in that order, appeared at the top of the list, while the remaining specific RFE programs - numbering forty odd - were mentioned in increasingly fewer and fewer cases.

How strongly the distribution was slanted in favor of the programs listed above by name can best be seen from the following diagram:



The missing slice of the "pie" (covering an area less than 25% of the total) represents all references made to the two-score RFE programs above and beyond the eight programs specified by name. The dotted line indicates references to "Black Voice" and Colonel Bell programs which, having changed format since the period of observation to which the large-scale Hungarian study referred, are of lesser concern at present and will not be submitted to further scrutiny. Even after the exclusion of these two, the remaining six programs still account for almost exactly two thirds of all positive and negative program mentions.

Taking the 461 references to the six programs in question as 100%, the distribution among the individual programs is as follows:

News	26%
Gallicus	20%
Music	20%
Commentaries	16%
Farmer Balint and farmers programs in general	10%
Religious programs	8%

III. PROGRAM RECALL

"The Hungarian Listeners of Western Broadcasts" (hereinafter referred to as the HLWB) pointed out the high degree of familiarity with RFE programs evinced by the sample. Of the 51 programs of the RFE Hungarian schedule at the time of interviewing, 46 (90%) were mentioned by one or more respondents, and even the remaining five were referred to, although indirectly, by the respondents.

At the same time, as the HLWB pointed out, the identification of "best liked" and "least liked" programs was not unassisted in every instance: in 26% of the interviews a printed program card was handed to the interviewee as a memory aid. This procedure was followed only when the respondent was unable to remember the title of an otherwise correctly described program.

As was to be expected, the ratio of "free recall" and "assisted recall" was different in each of the six programs discussed:*

* The following table must not be compared with the one on page 47 of the HLWB, since the statistical bases of the two counts were different.



High Free Recall

News
Farmer Balint and other
farmers' programs
Music
Gallicus

Low Free Recall

Religious programs
Commentaries

These can then be compared with the findings of the previous section regarding the ratio of mentions (both "free recall" and "assisted recall") of the same programs. However, because of the nature of the distribution of mentions, three rather than two categories will have to be used:

Most frequently mentioned

News

Median

Gallicus
Music
Commentaries

Least frequently mentioned

Farmer Balint and
other farmers' programs
Religious programs

It will be noted that whereas news, Gallicus and music scored both the highest share of mentions and the highest ratio of unaided recall, commentaries, religious programs and farmers' programs (including Farmer Balint) diverged from the above pattern. The last of the three showed the most striking differences with regard to its place in the two sets of categories: while conspicuously highly placed on the free recall scale, farmers' programs occupied the next to last place on the frequency of mention scale. In other words, although this program was spoken of relatively infrequently, those who spoke about it as one of the "best liked" or "least liked" programs did so without prompting in almost every instance. Such a striking deviation from the norm indicates a peculiarity of the program from the point of view of impact or a peculiarity of the sample or both. The latter is the case here, and will be discussed at some length at the appropriate place in this study.



IV. THE "BEST LIKED"- "LEAST LIKED" RATIOS
AMONG THE SIX MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED RFE PROGRAMS

It has already been stated that the six programs in question drew two thirds of all references made to RFE Hungarian programs by the 305 respondents who listened to this station. The following table illustrates how many respondents mentioned the individual programs:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Frequency of mention</u>	<u>Best liked</u>	<u>Least liked</u>
News	118	111 (94%)*	7 (6%)*
Gallicus	93	73 (79%)	20 (21%)
Music	92	87 (95%)	5 (5%)
Commentaries	77	70 (91%)	7 (9%)
Farmer Balint and other peasant programs	45	28 (62%)	17 (38%)
Religious programs	36	32 (89%)	4 (11%)

*The percentages in brackets refer to the positive-negative ratio of the individual programs; they add up to 100% horizontally.

It will be noted that in terms of net preference rate (i.e. "best liked" minus "least liked") the rank order of programs would be different: (1) Music, (2) News, (3) Religious programs, (4) Commentaries, (5) Gallicus and (6) Farmers' programs.

Farmer Balint and the farmers' programs in general have already been pointed out as atypical on the basis of a comparison between the frequency of mention and free recall ratios; now it is the Gallicus program which slips, as a result of the relatively high ratio of negative mentions, from the second to the penultimate position. Thus even on a purely quantitative basis the somewhat controversial nature of these two RFE programs comes to the fore.

As for the remainder of the programs, the overwhelming majority of mentions comes under the "best liked" heading. RFE's newscasts are again, as in the two preceding tables, high on the list.

Concerning the column of "least liked" responses, an interesting phenomenon emerges: respondents were much more likely to regard a program favorably than to reject it; only some 10% of all mentions



come under the heading "least liked" as opposed to 90% which mentioned the different programs as "best liked". Indeed, 209 (63%) of all respondents stated expressly that there was no program they "liked least". Altogether there were 75 references to 46 programs entered under the "least liked" heading; of these 60 referred to the six programs listed above, and the remaining 15 were scattered among the 40 RFE Hungarian programs drawing only an insignificant number of reactions. On the other hand, of the 616 "best liked" entries, 401 referred to the above six programs, and 215 were distributed among the remainder. This means that the six programs in question drew the greatest number of both positive and negative votes of the respondents and that, to some degree, not only Farmer Balint, farmers' programs in general, and Gallicus, but also the remaining four programs were "controversial" if the latter term is defined as "serving as a catalyst for the largest number of positive and negative views in a given population of opinions".

V. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENTS' VIEWS
ON THE SIX PROGRAMS IN QUESTION

(A) NEWS

By far the largest percentage of respondents mentioned this RFE program: the 118 responses falling to News represent 39% of the sample of 305 interviewees. To the question, "Why do you like News best (or least)?", respondents offered the following reasons:



<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>Total 111</u>
"Informative"	44
"Interesting"	23
"Superior to regime news; revealed regime lies; offered information withheld by regime; quicker; etc."	12
"Told the truth; reliable; trustworthy; objective"	4
"Gave us hope"	4
"Thorough; well presented"	3
"Hoped to hear some good news at last"	2
"Dealt with many Hungarian problems"	2
"I listened to them in order to alleviate my despair; was the only program I listened to"	2
"Helped to form an independent opinion"	1
"Registered events of an historical value"	1
"They had a good effect on us"	1
"They were presented without comment"	1
No reasons given	11

<u>"Liked least"</u>	<u>Total 7</u>
"Frequent untrue statements; unwarranted political news; I was shocked by the pack of lies"	4
"Endless repeats"	3

Since to be "informative" is the main objective of any newscast, it is not surprising that two out of every five listeners spoke of this aspect of the newscast. "Interesting", the second most populous category of reasons, is closely related to the former, even though it lacks the undertones of "true", "reliable" and "trustworthy" which are comprised in "informative".

It should be noted that no differentiation was made between answers referring to RFE newscasts as "interesting" and those which spoke of "interest in the news", the slight difference between the two is even less pronounced in Hungarian than in English.



At first glance, the low ratio of statements explicitly referring to the newscasts as "truthful", "objective", etc., might be taken as an indication of unvoiced criticism regarding this program. However, it should be borne in mind that "informative", which carries connotations of "reliability" even in English, is particularly strongly slanted in this direction in the original language, owing to the fact that the adjective cannot stand alone in Hungarian but must carry the qualifier "well" or "badly", as the case may be. Here, the category of "informative" consists entirely of responses expressing the view that RFE newscasts "informed well".

It may not be out of place here to devote a few paragraphs to the thorny question of "objectivity" as construed by the audience". While it is quite true that "objectivity" and "credibility" were, in the main, equated by the respondents (viz. HLWB, p.62 and passim), there is yet another factor to be considered: "Objective" means, among other things, "impartial" and this may be looked upon either favorably or unfavorably by respondents. The majority of respondents regarded BBC as the most "objective" station and bolstered their views by pointing to the "reliability" of the British radio and the "lack of propaganda" in its broadcasts. The latter praise indicates that being not involved was regarded as a virtue of BBC, probably because such a non-involvement would render it, as an unprejudiced observer, more trustworthy. It is needless to say that although BBC makes use of stylistic means to reinforce this image of an "unprejudiced observer", the acceptance of the British radio as impartial depends on a decision of the listener himself. Once such a decision is arrived at it is not easily shaken. In this way, BBC's high standing as the objective station is to some extent self-perpetuating, inasmuch as the "who" in "who says what" model of communication may easily be the decisive element: the same statement over BBC and some other radio station may be accepted as "non-propagandistic" in the first case and rejected as "propaganda" in the second.

In contradistinction to BBC, RFE is an engagé station and can hardly hope to qualify as "objective" in the above sense. Indeed, if the reader consults the table of the HLWB (p.64) he will find



that the largest number of respondents who considered RFE the most objective station did so because, in their view, "RFE was more concerned with Hungary than other stations were". While one may regard this definition of objectivity as self-defeating, it nevertheless points out the main weakness of the "unprejudiced observer's" position: namely, he may be regarded not only as disinterested, but also as uninterested and callous. From such a vantage point non-involvement is an unfavorable attribute and it disqualifies the communicator in the eyes of the communicant, whereas involvement, and this alone, gives him the right to speak.

Thus while the majority delimited objectivity only in the direction of over-involvement where the communication is too strongly colored by wishes and emotions, a minority delimited objectivity in the other direction, drawing a line beyond which the communication is irrelevant because of a total absence of empathy.

The next most numerous group of respondents made comparisons between RFE and regime newscasts, indicating the different areas where the "guided media" show themselves most vulnerable. These views touched upon RFE's role of correcting, complementing, and disproving the misleading, incomplete, or untrue information provided by the regime.

The remaining opinions were too scattered to offer any solid analytical basis, although it should be noted that one way or another nearly 10% of the respondents liked RFE newscasts for their morale-building value.

The previous table presented respondents' opinions on this RFE program in narrow, self-contained categories. It may be useful to group these in a broader phenomenological order imposed from without:



Preference in terms of the intrinsic qualities of the newscast (including: "informative"; thorough, well-presented"; "interesting"; "dealt with many Hungarian problems").....	72
Preference in terms of comparative value of the newscast (including: "superior to regime news" etc).....	12
Preference in terms of reliability and absence of propaganda (including: "told the truth, etc."; "helped to form an independent opinion"; "registered events of a historic value"; "presented without comment").....	7
Preference in terms of hope sustained (including: "we took hope from them"; "hoped to hear some good news at last"; "I listened to alleviate my despair, etc."; "they had a good effect on us").....	10
No reason given	11

Concerning the reasons why respondents listed RFE newscasts among the "least liked" programs, it should be noted that nearly half of the criticism was of a technical nature. Only four out of the seven respondents rejecting these programs offered substantive negative opinions.

(B) GALLICUS

The 93 respondents who mentioned this program among the "best liked" or "least liked" RFE broadcasts amounted to 30% of the sample. 79% of these opinions were favorable, 21% unfavorable.



<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>Total 73</u>
"Interesting"	11
"Witty; biting satire; sharp criticism; keen sense of humor"	9
"Illuminating; unmasked communist machinations"	7
"Well-informed"	5
"Raised the spirit of the people; gave us the strength to fight"	5
"Severe; gave them a piece of his mind"	5
"Objective; realistic"	4
"Brought home the truth to us"	4
"Splendid analysis of events; has a keen eye for political affairs"	4
"Hates communists"	4
"Said what we were not allowed to say"	2
"Pointed toward the right goals"	2
"Very effective"	2
"It was a real experience"	1
"Reflected my own opinion"	1
"Presented convincing arguments for democracy and against communism"	1
"Sincere"	1
"I liked his ominous voice"	1
"I liked it from an artistic and literary point of view"	1
No reasons given	3

<u>"Liked least"</u>	<u>Total 20</u>
"Deliberate incitement; partly responsible for the Hungarian tragedy"	9
"His rasping, sharp voice; his sharp tone"	4
"Biased; many untrue statements"	4
"Empty threats"	1
"Said what we knew anyway"	1
"Uncalled for"	1



As from past Audience Research material, Gallicus again emerges from the views of the present sample as a strong radio personality drawing enthusiastic praise as well as outraged censure. That Gallicus rarely meets with indifferent reaction is shown not only in the extremely low ratio of such respondents who gave no reason for "liking" Gallicus "best" but also in the relatively low figure of the "interesting" category: in the vast majority of cases his followers wished to be as specific as possible. This is represented by the great variety of views offered in answer to the question why they "liked" Gallicus "best" among RFE programs.

It might have been expected that a highly combative program such as Gallicus' would score overwhelmingly or even exclusively along such lines as "because he hates the communists" or "because he unmasked the regime". In point of fact, opinions of this type did not amount to more than one third of all the positive answers. Somewhat more than another third emphasized, instead of the anti-communist and anti-regime element, some positive accomplishment of the broadcaster. He was variously described as "objective", "realistic", "well-informed", "sincere", "witty", "keen", etc., by these respondents. Lastly, a minority praised him in terms of the effect he had on the listener: "it was a real experience" etc. If we disregard the responses which gave no reason for preference or offered only the rather non-committal qualifier of "interesting", the remaining opinions could be grouped as follows:

Preference in terms of anti-regime, anti-communist affinities (including: "illuminating, unmasked communist machinations"; "raised people's spirit, etc."; "severe, etc."; "hates communists"; "said what we were not allowed to say"; "liked his ominous voice")..... 24

Preference in terms of positive accomplishments of the broadcaster (including: "witty, etc"; "brought home the truth to us"; "well informed"; "splendid analysis of events, etc."; "objective, realistic"; "pointed toward the right goals"; "presented convincing arguments, etc."; "sincere", "artistic qualities")..... 31

Preference in terms of impact of broadcast on the listener (including "very effective"; "it was a real experience"; "reflected my own opinion")..... 4



It is noteworthy that the second group of the above tabulation includes a number of cases stressing Gallicus' "Objective, realistic" excellence. One would not expect to find such terms employed in praise of a highly incisive and pugnacious program like "Reflector". While only extensive and rigorous depth analyses could offer any relative certainty on this score, it is not impossible that the presence of such views is indicative of the partly conscious, partly unconscious process of assimilation of the Gallicus broadcasts. Very tentatively one may regard the 24 and 31 respondents as representing two successive but distinct stages of internalization. In the first stage, listeners found a congenial link with Gallicus in their shared anti-communist, anti-regime feelings and gained an emotional release which can be summed up by the statement: "said what we were not allowed to say". In the second stage, the mere "anti-communism" of Gallicus' broadcasts is swallowed up and superseded by an appreciation of the positive elements in the broadcasts, as distinguished from its "anti-regime" elements. The wide spectrum of opinions emanating from this group may be the result of temperamental and intellectual differences among the individuals - these must, by definition, be more perceptible at the second stage of internalization than at the first. These differences in the second group of views come under two main headings: praise of Gallicus' wit, acerbity, sincerity and the artistic quality of his broadcasts were referred to by one sub-group, while the other sub-group emphasized his well-informedness, objectivity, the correctness of his political judgment, etc. The latter opinions indicate the highest degree of identification between listener and radio commentator, especially one whose main weapon is ridicule. By stressing the solid, factual basis of the Gallicus broadcasts, these respondents also pointed to the essential quality of satire - which is its truth. In other words, while the first group of respondents were satisfied with the emotional release they derived from Gallicus' anti-regime attitude, the second group went further by concretizing their pleasure either in terms of Gallicus' accomplishment as a craftsman ("witty", "biting", etc.) or in the even more significant terms of his message being true.

The small minority which liked this program best because of its



impact on the listener stands in a tangential relationship to the above linear model of "degrees of identification": they are closest to the relatively noncommittal group which found this RFE program no more than "interesting".

The reasons why a minority of respondents placed Gallicus programs in the "liked least" category may also be grouped according to the opposites of the previous headings:

Rejection in terms of antipathy toward the anti-communist anti-regime nature of the program..... 0

Rejection in terms of shortcomings of the program (including: "his rasping, harsh voice; his sharp tone"; "biased, many untrue statements"; "empty threats"; "said what we knew anyway"; "uncalled for").....11

Rejection in terms of the effect of the program on the listeners (including: "deliberate incitement, etc.")..... 9

Here again, as with those who considered Gallicus one of the "best liked" programs, the second category of reasons is most numerous. It is not in the least surprising that nobody rejected "Reflector" on the basis of its anti-communism. Even if such sentiments were entertained by Gallicus' critics they would certainly not have found expression on that primary level, but would have been subjected to rationalizations of the kind presented in the second category ("empty threats" is a border case, and it could be argued that it should be part of the first group of reasons for rejection).

It is worthy of note that Gallicus' voice and delivery, which were praised by those who "liked" his program best, were an argument against him in the case of his detractors. Though this is clearly outside the scope of this study, the fact should be mentioned that staff members of Audience Research agreed - after systematic listening to this program - that it "fell flat" whenever Gallicus was prevented from reading his own script. This consensus corroborates what was already manifest by the sample reaction, namely that Gallicus is a strong radio personality whose impact lies in the total sensuous-cerebral experience of his broadcast. For this reason many of his "opponents" might have become predisposed against him merely on the basis of his manner of delivery. The "ominous voice" which one respondent referred to as pleasing may also be regarded as an "empty threat".



Indeed the high proportion of negative opinions framed in terms of the effect of Gallicus' broadcasts on the listeners (third category) points in this direction. People who accused Gallicus of "incitement" and, more extremely, of being "partly responsible for the Hungarian tragedy" did not dispute his effectiveness as a communicator with regard to others; to the contrary, it was the very success of his communication with a large number of their fellow countrymen which the critical respondents castigated.

Considering that the interviews were conducted not long after the unsuccessful Hungarian revolution, one may even speculate as to whether Gallicus' critics did not vent their anger on RFE as a whole in condemning this specific program. Such scape-goating is not at all uncommon, although in this particular case hard and fast evidence of such a transference of guilt is lacking.

(C) MUSIC

The 92 respondents who mentioned "Music" among their "best liked" or "least liked" RFE programs amounted to 30% of the sample. Of these opinions, 95% were positive, giving "Music" the highest net preference rate among all programs.

As to the different musical genres, the breakdown of responses in the "best liked" category was the following:

Gypsy Music	30
Light, Jazz, Dance Music...	30
"Serious" Music:.....	17
Music in general.....	10

In the "least liked" group of references, light music and jazz were mentioned by two respondents, classical music, church music and music in general by one respondent each.

Gypsy music and light jazz and dance music accounted for most of the favorable comment. Classical music, the audience for which is considerably narrower, still drew a significant number of positive responses.

As was to be expected, the large majority of respondents failed to answer why they liked music programs best. In a few isolated



cases gypsy music fans remarked that although gypsy music is played over the regime radio, the bands were not as good as the ones heard over RFE. One respondent, speaking about music in general, made the rather pathetic statement: "While listening to music, one is able to forget one's sad lot".

In general terms, the high incidence of references to "Music" in the present sample may be at least partly due to the strong representation of young people (under 20) and of women - demographic groups generally under-represented among refugees.

(D) COMMENTARIES

Twenty-five per cent of Western broadcasts in the sample mentioned "Commentaries" and "Commentator Balass Balogh as their "best liked" or "least liked" RFE program. 91% of the statements were of a positive and 9% of a negative kind. To the question why they "liked" commentaries "best" or "least" the following answers were given:

<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>Total 70</u>
All commentaries:	
"Informative".....	30
"Informed us about events suppressed by regime"; "regime commentaries were misleading"; "gave us means for comparisons"; "presented the Western points of view correctly".....	10
"Objective"; "truthful"; "exact and consistent".	9
"We took hope from them".....	4
"Interesting".....	4
"Reacted promptly and wittily to new developments"	1
"Indicated future developments".....	1
No reason given.....	2



"Liked least"

Total 7

All commentaries:

- "International commentaries gave insufficient information"..... 1
- "Home commentaries contained exaggerated statements"..... 1
- "Economic commentaries did not interest me"... 1
- "I don't like to have things explained to me". 1

Balogh Balazs:

- "Inciting"..... 1
- "It was easy for him to instruct us from 800 kms away"..... 1
- "At times biased and superficial"..... 1

The most salient aspect of the list of reasons why the above respondents liked commentaries best among RFE programs is its similarity with the reasons given for preference of the newscasts:

<u>Categories of reasons</u>	<u>News</u>	<u>Commentaries</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
"Informative"	40	43
"Interesting"	20	11
Comparisons with regime media	10	14
"Objective, truthful"	4	13
"Sustaining hope"	4	4

It is interesting that both proportionately and in absolute figures the number of respondents who praised commentaries in terms of their objectivity, truthfulness, etc., was larger than the number of those who spoke about RFE newscasts in such terms. Two independent factors might have been operating here:

- (a) Listeners who took the objectivity, exactness, etc. of RFE newscasts for granted felt the need to specify this feature in connection with commentaries;
- (b) There may exist another definition of objectivity (see pages 8 and 9), according to which the concept is delineated not in relation to parti-pris but in relation to lack of feeling and sympathy without which the communication is meaningless.

Although there is no theoretical reason why the two factors



should be mutually exclusive, it is to be assumed that in actual fact they are. The instrument at our disposal does not permit us to ascertain to what extent one or the other affected the picture decisively. Nonetheless, the fact that commentaries (which by definition have more of a "morale-boosting" character than straight news) were not praised from this vantage point more often than the newscasts must be regarded as an indication that the above-mentioned (b) factor was not altogether absent. The presence of the (a) factor is, of course, self-evident.

The "least liked" entries are self-explanatory; they are both too few and too scattered to offer a basis for analysis.

(E) FARMER BALINT AND FARMERS' PROGRAMS

Fifteen per cent of the respondents who had listened to Western broadcasts while in Hungary referred to these programs. Two-thirds listed Farmer Balint and farmers' programs in the "best liked" category, one-third in the "least liked" category.

The HLWB (p. 39) stated that "the success of farmers' programs was limited to, but very pronounced with, the farmers". On quantitative grounds the statement is unimpeachable; inhabitants of the capital supplied the overwhelming majority of "liked least" responses, while no farmer or farmhand figured in that group. Similarly educational level and frequency of "liked least" mentions of this program correlated. Nevertheless, the qualitative dimension now added to the study will not inconsiderably modify the findings based on purely quantitative data.

As to the reasons for liking this program least, the 17 respondents in question offered the following answers:

<u>"Liked least"</u>	<u>Total 17</u>
"Village (peasant) programs bored (did not interest) me".....	10
"Propagandistic".....	3
"Did not like the manner of delivery".....	2
"Contents were not close enough to the Hungarian peasant".....	1
"Said nothing new, hence dull".....	1



By far the largest group rejected farmers' programs on the basis of lack of interest. If this fact is considered in the light of quantitative findings about the ecological and educational make-up of the "liked least" group, this absence of appeal on the part of a highly group-oriented program is anything but surprising. Consequently, in order to avoid the necessity of treating the substantive criticism of the remaining minority unduly lightly, we should disregard the 10 respondents who liked farmers' programs least for no reason other than their understandable disinterest in the topics discussed therein.

This, necessarily, changes the quantitative relations as well: the "least liked" category drops from one third of all mentions to one fifth, with a corresponding increase in the "best liked" ratio.

As far as the socio-economic breakdown of both groups of respondents is concerned, the following new picture emerges:

	<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>"Liked least"</u>
Farmers	7	-
Other socio-economic groups	21	7

On this basis, the net preference rate of the farmers' program is +100% among such farmers and farmhands who specified this program and +75% among the others specifying this program.

The absence of criticism of farmers' programs among farmers and farmhands confirms that this program is a definite success with the occupational group at which it is directed. But it appears to be also signally successful with other population strata.

An investigation of the relative preponderance of mentions of farmers' programs in general and of the Farmer Balint broadcasts in particular produced the following results:

<u>FARMERS PROGRAMS</u>		
	<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>"Liked least"</u>
Farmers.....	3	-
Other occupational groups.....	6	5



FARMER BALINT

	<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>"Liked least"</u>
Farmers.....	4	-
Other occupational groups	15	2

It is immediately apparent that Farmer Balint's broadcasts are a decisive factor in the high popular standing (in terms of "best liked" and "least liked") of this group-oriented RFE program. The degree to which the former predominated over the latter is best expressed by the quantitative relationship between the two:

Net preference rate of farmers' programs.....+23%
 Net preference rate of Farmer Balint broadcasts...+77%

Furthermore, whereas the farmers split their "votes" almost evenly between farmers' programs in general and Farmer Balint broadcasts, nearly three out of four of the non-farmer respondents "liked" Farmer Balint "best" and only one out of four spoke in "best-liked" terms of the agricultural programs in toto:

<u>Farmers</u>	<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>Other occupational groups</u>	<u>"Liked best"</u>
Farmer Balint.....	57%	Farmer Balint.....	71%
Farmers' programs..	43%	Farmers' programs.....	29%

These quantitative relationships tell almost the entire story: Farmer Balint appears, from the farmer's point of view, as an excellent commentator within the framework of RFE broadcasts for the peasantry - but in the eyes of the other occupational groups, whose interest in the subject matter is limited, his qualities must be of a kind which transcend the confines of the group-oriented program. This is, indeed, the case. The more articulate reasons given by non-peasant listeners as to why they liked Farmer Balint best were the following: "He gave us strength to keep fighting"; "He made fools of the communists"; "He was best in unmasking the communists"; "He told good and new things"; "His originality"; "I liked his whole attitude"; "His colorful language".

Some of the reasons listed are identical with those put forward in praise of Gallicus; some, however, are slightly different: "his originality", "his whole attitude", "his colorful language" refer



to specific "peasant" traits of Farmer Balint broadcasts. These views were offered by respondents who belonged to socio-economic groups other than the peasantry. While the data does not allow more than very tentative speculation on this subject, one is entitled to ask whether there is not a significant group of Hungarian listeners to whom Farmer Balint represents more than a broadcaster and more, even, than a radio personality by reason of his embodiment of "peasant wisdom" and "endurance" - characteristics which are also attributed to the nation as a whole. In other words, Farmer Balint may serve as a symbol of the station's national character by the same token as "the peasant" is, for historical reasons, the representative par excellence of the whole nation, whether "nation" is considered as an ethnic or a cultural concept. This may well be the reason why among those who "liked" Farmer Balint "best" technicians, industrial workers, housewives, and typists outnumbered peasants. (The composition of the sample was, of course, the primary reason for this. Farmers and farmhands were underrepresented: only 7% of the sample belonged to this socio-economic group, although it amounts to 41% of the total population).

(F) RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS

Thirty-six respondents, 12% of the listeners of Western broadcasts in the sample on which the HLWB was based, listed RFE religious programs among the "best" and "least liked" broadcasts. The positive/negative ratio was 89%/11%.

As the above-quoted study pointed out, among those who looked upon religious broadcasts as one of their favorite RFE programs, women and respondents over fifty years of age predominated (proportionately) over the other demographic groups. Conversely, men and respondents under twenty years of age were overrepresented in the group which referred to this program as "least liked". Demographical differences did not appear to affect the picture.

Half of all positive references were made to Catholic Mass, another third to Clerical News; the Protestant Hour was favored by four (12%), and "Fighting Church" by one (3%) respondent.



The reasons proffered for liking religious programs best and least were the following:

<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>Total 32</u>
"Regime radio never broadcast Holy Mass;" "Was unable to go to church".....	8
"Protestant Hour served a good purpose"; "had a good effect"; "was spiritually reviv- ifying"; "instructive".....	4
"Only source of information".....	2
"Interesting".....	1
No reasons given.....	17
<u>"Liked least"</u>	<u>Total 4</u>
"One ought not to mix religion and politics".....	3
"Clerical News contained no important information".....	1

More than half of those who liked religious broadcasts best refused to elaborate on this statement. This is not surprising in view of the fact that religious experience is of a deeply personal nature, not easily or willingly externalized. The remaining fifteen reasons offered were also, in their great majority, made in guarded terms. Only one respondent mentioned the "spiritually revivifying" quality of these broadcasts. It is interesting to note that no respondent who preferred this type of broadcast pointed explicitly to the antithesis between the materialist and the theocentric views of the world and of man.

With regard to the "least liked" mentions of religious programs, it should be pointed out that apart from one criticism of a particular religious program on technical grounds, all adverse views came under a single heading. The injunction that "religion should not be mixed up with politics" might originate, paradoxically, either from an anti-clerical or anti-religious attitude or from contrary motives of a deeply religious nature. In the first case religion is excluded from politics as "irrelevant"; in the latter case religious broadcasts over RFE may be criticized on the grounds that religion is thereby debased into a mere political argument.



The questionnaire employed can, because of its nature, shed no light on whether one or the other motivational spring was operative in the above three cases. However, the tenor of the interviews in question would indicate that the second type of reasoning underlay the respondents' critical attitude to this program.



ERRATUM

FROM: Audience Research

TO :

A RE-EXAMINATION
OF THE PROGRAM PREFERENCES OF
HUNGARIAN LISTENERS OF RADIO FREE EUROPE

Will you kindly replace Page 16 of the above study
(distributed July 2, 1959) with the attached retyped Page 16.



cases gypsy music fans remarked that although gypsy music is played over the regime radio, the bands were not as good as the ones heard over RFE. One respondent, speaking about music in general, made the rather pathetic statement: "While listening to music, one is able to forget one's sad lot".

In general terms, the high incidence of references to "Music" in the present sample may be at least partly due to the strong representation of young people (under 20) and of women - demographic groups generally under-represented among refugees.

(D) COMMENTARIES

Twenty-five per cent of Western broadcasts in the sample mentioned "Commentaries" and "Commentator Balazs Balogh as their "best liked" or "least liked" RFE program. 91% of the statements were of a positive and 9% of a negative kind. To the question why they "liked" commentaries "best" or "least" the following answers were given:

<u>"Liked best"</u>	<u>Total 70</u>
<u>All commentaries:</u>	
"Informative".....	30
"Informed us about events suppressed by regime"; "regime commentaries were misleading"; "gave us means for comparisons"; "presented the Western points of view correctly".....	10
"Objective"; "truthful"; "exact and consistent"	9
"We took hope from them".....	4
"Interesting".....	4
"Reacted promptly and wittily to new developments".....	1
"Indicated future developments".....	1
No reason given.....	1
<u>Balogh Balogh:</u>	
"Interesting"; "lively presentation".....	4
"Characteristically Hungarian".....	2
"Bolstered resistance".....	2
No reason given.....	2

