

Another respondent, a former career officer in the Hungarian Army, stated:

It would appeal more to the character of the Hungarian people if they (the Western radio stations) would speak to their intelligence. This means that they should not encourage them (the Hungarians) so much, but should rather give them facts about what can be expected, and what possibilities can be counted on. They should also say what role the Hungarians would play in the reorganization and in the new order. In the first year of the Communist rule (1948) this encouragement was wonderful, because people thought that regardless of what might happen, they would be free by 1950 or 1951. Now, however, the same kind of encouraging talk cannot achieve the same results. People have grown tired of waiting so long, and they are impatient. If nothing can be done right now, they at least want some explanation. This does not necessarily apply to the VOA only, but generally to all the (Western) stations. (027/8-9)

The wife of a veterinarian made the following remarks:

Until the end of 1948, or maybe until the beginning of 1949, people trusted the VOA very much. People listened with confidence to the broadcasts of American statesmen, Hungarian Protestant ministers living in America, and other Hungarians Since then trust in the VOA and in the US has weakened considerably At the time of the arrest and trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, the VOA continually made strong statements against the Hungarian Communists. The Hungarians believed very much that this would have results, but their trust was shaken again when nothing happened to free Mindszenty from the hands of the Communists There are practical facts which prove that during the past two or three years the Communists have succeeded in consolidating their position in Hungary more and more. The US and the West were unable to prevent it, and so the encouragement broadcast by the VOA about the attitude of the mighty West against Communism, and generally the broadcasts of Western stations about the liberation of the Hungarians sound more and more empty. (063/9-10)

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Six combinations of objectivity and hope appear in the interviews when the VOA and the BBC are compared. The opinions of VOA preferents did not differ from those of other listeners with the exception of BBC preferents.

Table 26

OBJECTIVITY* AND HOPE ON VOA AND BBC

	<u>Total</u>	<u>BBC Preferents</u>
Both stations the same in objectivity; VOA gives more hope	48%	(4)
Both stations the same in both objectivity and hope**	16	(0)
BBC more objective; VOA gives more hope	14	(4)
BBC more objective; VOA does not give more hope	2	(0)
VOA more objective and gives more hope	3	(0)
VOA more objective; does not give more hope	2	(1)
Other	3	(0)
Don't know	12	(0)
Total Cases (100%) =	(58)***	(9)

* Objectivity is here defined as in Table 24. Those respondents who spoke only of a difference in tone between VOA and BBC are classified as considering both stations to be the same in objectivity.
 ** Or, BBC is not more objective, VOA does not give more hope. Such a statement was classified as meaning that both stations were the same unless other statements in the interview indicated that the respondent thought that BBC was less objective than VOA and/or VOA gave less hope than BBC.
 *** Includes only those who listened to both VOA and BBC.

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Broadcasting Preference and Evaluation: Presentation of Domestic Issues and Affairs

As has been pointed out in the section on general motivations leading to foreign broadcast listening, the desire to hear programs which discredit or serve to place checks upon the activities of the regime is one of the principal reasons for tuning in the Western stations. The programs of this type are those which deal with internal events and conditions in Hungary. The importance of such programs can hardly be over-estimated. As previously discussed (pp. 65-69), nearly one-third of the respondents who listened to foreign stations considered domestic events and issues to be the most important topics which could be broadcast and two-thirds said that no other topics were more important. The table of percentages of opinions on this matter may be given again here for convenient reference.

Table 27

IMPORTANCE OF DEALING WITH DOMESTIC ISSUES AND AFFAIRS ON WESTERN BROADCASTS

More important than anything else*	30%
Important but other topics equally important	36
Less important than other topics	16
Not ascertainable	18
Total Cases (100%) =	(80)

The exact kinds of domestic issues and affairs which are considered to be important will be discussed presently. However, it is useful here to point out that what the listeners want to hear is not

* There were no particular social or educational groups in the sample who felt exceptionally strongly about this matter.

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simple news about their own country but critical attacks on domestic conditions and Communists. This fact must be kept in mind in assessing the reasons for the desire to hear about domestic affairs. Certainly people like to hear about the things that are closest to them, and this motive unquestionably is an important component of the interest in hearing about domestic affairs on the foreign radio; but when people want to hear only unfavorable comments about the things close to them, it is obvious that other factors are operating. In the Hungarian situation one of the other factors is doubtless the desire to learn the truth about what is happening in the country, yet among the chief kinds of domestic-issue broadcasts mentioned by the respondents are attacks on Communist persecution and on domestic economic conditions, conditions about which most respondents know the truth by personal experience. Desire to hear the truth about matters such as this seems to be principally desire to hear the truth spoken freely in contrast to the stream of lies and distortions which emanate from the Communist media:

The largest part of all our news came from Western radio programs beamed to Hungary. We listened to them because these were the only stations which talked frankly and openly about the Hungarian situation. (004/1)

We tried to listen (to foreign broadcasts) because we wanted to hear the voice of opposition -- no matter where it came from. The broadcasts of these (foreign) stations were the opposite of those of Budapest. For example, over Radio Budapest we heard confessions of the priests (at their trial). However, we felt and believed that priests would not admit things like that. So we waited anxiously for the Western broadcasts in order to know the true facts about the trial. It was the same as far as other information is concerned. We were always convinced

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that the opposite of what Budapest said was true. It was a nice feeling to hear the truth broadcast by (the Voice of) America. The falseness of the information coming from Budapest was well known. The statements of RFE about Communists whom we knew also pleased us particularly. It was a satisfaction for us that others knew them as well as we did. (011/3)

Matters about which the truth is not known and is greatly desired are such things as the names of Communist informers, disputes among the Party members, and warnings of impending Communist measures. Here the desire to learn the truth is the desire to safeguard oneself plus the desire to feel that all is not well with the regime and that attempts of the regime to spy upon and control the population are being or can be counteracted. If the policies of the regime are failing and if the leaders of the regime cannot agree, then the day of the regime's end seems closer or at least seems possible. In the same way, the truth about the economic conditions in the country makes economic collapse and hence the end of Communism in Hungary seem possible. It is the wish for the end of the regime, the hope for liberation, that is the common denominator in all the desires to hear about domestic events and issues on the foreign radio. When to this is added the interest in hearing about the things which are closest to the listener, the interest in hearing about the hidden developments in the country which native sources do not mention, and the satisfaction and comfort derived from knowing that the world outside is familiar with and sympathetic toward the problems of the Hungarian people, then the treatment of domestic issues by the Western stations becomes enormously important.

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Programs about the domestic scene have still an additional advantage that adds to their popularity. Attacks upon existing bad conditions with which the listener has intimate unpleasant familiarity, and particularly upon named persons whom the listener knows about or may even know personally, have a virulent anti-Communist quality that reports about diplomatic developments and rearmament in the world at large, however anti-Communist such reports may be, can never have. It is in this respect that an unofficial Western station like RFE has an advantage in capturing listener attention over the official governmental stations. RFE can and does exploit its attacks on the domestic scene and says things that a diplomatically friendly government could not very well say -- for example, it broadcasts names of Communist informers. This station is considered the specialist in broadcasts dealing with domestic affairs, and its popularity is overwhelmingly derived from such broadcasts.

RFE spoke even more to our taste and could even throw a better light on our problems. For instance: the serious economic situation of the peasants, the encouraging of the youth to endurance, the terror against workers in the factories. From all this we got a perfect picture of the situation of the country and we saw also that all this was known abroad, too. This was important because our propaganda would like to make us believe that 'the foreign countries are looking on Hungary as a builder of socialism.' When later we listened to the radio, we knew that the Western laborer was not deceived and that in the West they were informed about what was going on in Hungary. The news service of RFE was so good that it not only reported daily events, but it even predicted many things, for instance, the shortage of fuel, of meat, etc. Such things are disclosed by our propaganda only later (and explained) as damage caused by the kulaks. RFE, however, tells it in advance and explains the real causes. (052/5)

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Eighty-two per cent of RFE's preferents said that they preferred it because of its broadcasts about the domestic scene, and when respondents who preferred other stations said that RFE was the most preferred station among the Hungarian population at large, they almost invariably said that this was because RFE's broadcasts deal with home affairs.

Comparison of VOA and RFE

As the following table indicates, while the VOA is not infrequently charged with neglecting local problems, RFE is almost never accused of deficiency in this regard.

Table 28

ADEQUACY OF BROADCASTS ABOUT DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

	<u>On VOA</u>	<u>On RFE</u>
Time devoted to broadcasts of domestic affairs is adequate	46%	40%
Too little time is devoted to domestic affairs	46	6
Too much time is devoted to domestic affairs	3	5
Don't know; not ascertainable	5	49
Total Cases (100%)=	(74)	(62)

This table should be taken only as indicating the general trend of respondent thought, because RFE was not asked about directly. Hence there is a high percentage of "not ascertainables." Every respondent was asked about VOA. The "don't knows" and "not ascertainables" with respect to VOA came from respondents who said that sometimes more time should be devoted to domestic problems, sometimes less, according to

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what was going on in the world and at home, from those who said that VOA has less broadcasting time than RFE and hence cannot spend much time on domestic affairs, and from those who were not enough interested in hearing about domestic issues to care. In spite of the incompleteness of the table, it is significant to note that there are almost no complaints about RFE for broadcasting too little domestic news, and that two-fifths of the RFE listeners, without being directly asked, expressed their satisfaction with the amount of time RFE spent on this topic. Only 2 VOA listeners and 3 RFE listeners said these stations spent too much time on the topic. And although a considerable number of respondents were satisfied with VOA's domestic news broadcasts, an equal percentage felt that VOA did not devote sufficient time to the matter. In this respect a considerable difference shows up between VOA preferents and non-preferents (there was no difference between VOA non-preferents in general and RFE preferents in particular).

Table 29

ADEQUACY OF VOA'S BROADCASTS ABOUT DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

	<u>VOA Preferents</u>	<u>Other VOA Listeners</u>
VOA devotes adequate time	55%	39%
VOA devotes too little time	39	51
VOA devotes too much time	3	3
Don't know; not ascertainable	3	7
Total Cases (100%) =	(33)	(41)

The contrast between VOA and RFE with regard to coverage of the local scene is drawn over and over again in the interviews:

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The VOA does not talk enough about home problems. RFE gives much more and is therefore much more popular. I know of course that all the time cannot be spent for home news. I realize that there are people whose information about the home situation is better than the average. They get more news because they have more intelligent friends or they visited the capital or they travel around the country. Such people of course would like to know more of the happenings outside of the border. That means that you cannot limit yourself to home news, but none of the stations does it. On the other hand, you really have to give some home news because the interest disappears if you don't have some. As I see it, Madrid ceased to be a success when people realized that Madrid is not in a position constantly to obtain recent Hungarian news. At the same time they can personally check how much RFE knows and how exact they are. (004/5)

When RFE started to operate, it conquered the people by speaking more accurately of the life of the Hungarian people, and reported where what happened. It reported the kind of events in Hungary which we could not have learned of in any other way. For instance, we could not have learned from each other in conversation what the AVO did with somebody. We could learn these things from the reports of Balint Boda on RFE. Well, when we spoke before about where we got our information from concerning the domestic situation, I should have mentioned the Western radio broadcasts, too. The VOA broadcasts the same things also but in not as much detail as RFE. (013/4)

Sometimes the complaints are aimed directly at VOA without contrasting the superior performance of RFE:

The VOA should deal with Hungarian problems more and more, because otherwise it will lose its popularity Personally, I skipped the home news, because it was not important to me. But if you ask me what is generally most important to the public, I have to say that people are most interested in home news and in world news which is directly connected with the fate of Hungary Such news is also important because it keeps the population opposed to the regime. (033/7)

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A handful of respondents ascribe differential roles to RFE and VOA. While they recognize the distinct variation in emphasis of the program content of the two stations, they appear to consider this a useful division of labor.

I liked the VOA and RFE alike. The latter dealt more with Hungarian matters and so, in this field, it was worth more to me (than the VOA). The VOA did not have much time left for this; however it had plenty of foreign news material, such as detailed reports about Korea. I liked this very much on the VOA. (025/5)

It is of no use for the VOA to spend time on unimportant questions. It would be out of place if it read the names of trustees, or something similar. This would only break up the work in small parts, and the essence would dissolve. The essence is: inform the Hungarian listeners about the general line in world policy. There has to be a radio station which gives general directions. The VOA does it. RFE, which is also managed by Americans, speaks enough about small questions of detail. The VOA should speak exactly as much about Hungary as it has done up to now. It is necessary that it should speak about her. Hungary has always existed and when speaking about her the VOA proves, although it follows a general line of world policy, that it acknowledges the existence of Hungary and gives importance to her. This is important for people at home to know, because they can see thus that Hungary and also the Hungarian people will be a factor in the coming new order. The Hungarian people wish to know through the VOA broadcasts only that America includes them in making up the accounts. The worries of everyday life are handled in particular by RFE. (076/11-12)

What Are the Important Domestic Issues and Affairs?

It is the exceptional individual who restricts his discussion of foreign broadcasting about internal conditions to a single topic or issue. Most of these problems are inextricably interrelated, in reality as much as in the minds of respondents. As previously mentioned, almost all of the topics mentioned concern matters which reflect discredit on

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the regime. The wide dissemination of such information is expected to promote the discomfiture, the general weakening, and hopefully, the ultimate overthrow of Communism in Hungary.

Table 30

DOMESTIC ISSUES IMPORTANT IN FOREIGN BROADCASTING*

Oppression of population, exploitation of workers by Communism, deportations	63%
Denunciation of Communist informers, trusties, etc.	43%
Criticisms of home economic conditions	30%
Contents which counteract Communist attempts to indoctrinate the people	29%
Forecasts, warnings of impending Communist measures	27%
The embarrassment of Communist officials	26%
Advice on ways of counteracting, resisting or evading regime measures	21%
Reports of regime struggle against the Church and religion	18%
Programs of national music	18%
Advice on how to escape	17%
Reports of internal dissension within the Communist Party	10%
Contents dealing with national culture, art, literature, history.	8%
The nature of the Hungary of the future	7%
Total Cases (100%)=	(100)

Factual information in some of these areas may have immediate practical usefulness and, as has been pointed out in previous sections, has additional and important morale functions.

The majority of the Hungarian respondents, including those who did not listen to foreign broadcasts, named Communist oppression in Hungary as the topic of greatest interest among domestic events and issues.

* This table indicates the number of respondents who referred specifically to each of these problems in discussing the content of foreign broadcasts.

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This area comprises both political persecution (deportation, arrests, police brutalities), and exploitation of workers and peasants, as illustrated by the following statements:

The Western radios should speak primarily about the Hungarian political situation and about how people are treated and manhandled by the AVH (Hungarian political police, formerly AVO), and in the Hungarian prisons. Back home, not even those who have been hurt in those places dare speak about their experiences. My pal, with whom I escaped, had already tried to escape once before, but he had been caught and got three months in jail for it. He told me only when we got to Austria that after he had been caught he was beaten up and kicked around by the AVH men. At his interrogation they asked him whether he had been beaten. If he said 'yes' he was beaten up for that, and if he said that he had not been beaten, then he was beaten up again for lying. Regardless of what he answered, it always ended in his being beaten. It is with certain satisfaction that the Hungarians back home listen to news about these things over Western radios, and to their reports, saying that they (the Western radios) are clear about the Communists' doings back home. It would be good if the Western radios spoke about these Communist acts. . . . If the Western radio spoke about these things often, there would be different people who would be able to listen to the broadcasts at different times, and so the word would get around that an eye was being kept on the Hungarian Communists by the West. (065/5-6)

Western radio broadcasts dealing with Hungarian matters were most effective. Whenever there was a broadcast which said that such-and-such a kulak was arrested and his property confiscated, or any other broadcast dealing with events in Hungary, then the reaction of the Hungarian listener was that the VOA -- or another Western station -- knew what was going on in Hungary and that they (the West) were interested in us and were watching over us. This is a tremendous spiritual boost. (092/11)

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A part of the technical intelligentsia is really impressed by the speed with which the Communists build up (industry) in Hungary. Never before has there been so much industrial construction in Hungary. The factories which they build now will remain there and will enrich the country. But the names of the Communists will also be linked with the inhuman terror by which they have been wringing this achievement out of the Hungarian people in such a short time. It would not do any harm to repeat on the radio over and over again that the Communists have no right to exploit the people to such an extent. It ought to be said what would happen in America if the government began to employ such methods of construction. (076/14)

Also very welcome in foreign broadcasts are denunciations of Communist informers and agents (mentioned by 43 per cent of the respondents). Such denunciations stimulate hope in anti-Communists and are supposed to act as a brake on some Communists, who become fearful that they may be singled out for revenge in the event of a shift of power.*

I and my husband were enthusiastic listeners to Western radio stations We particularly enjoyed it when RFE talked about Communism in Sopron and mentioned the names of (prominent) Communists. These broadcasts were very effective threats to these Communists and at the same time they brought comfort to good Hungarians who saw that they had some protection. (073/4)

* Occasionally such denunciations may have unfortunate effects as in the case described below in which the accusation was unjust:

Great trouble was caused once in our village by the Western radio. RFE disclosed who the Communist informers were in the village, and the five or six persons who were mentioned were the most honest people and of the best character. And just those weren't mentioned who could have been suspected or about whom we positively knew it (that they were Communist informers) already. This broke down those whose names were slandered and it also discredited RFE. Later the whole thing was forgotten. This (sort of program) makes sense only if the information is correct. Then it has a terrific deterring effect. But when it is incorrect, then it only causes quarrels and bitterness. It is a very sharp weapon, but also very delicate. (052/7)

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RFE is better inasmuch as it broadcasts more about Hungarian affairs and is closer to the country. I mean that I recognized the situation in Hungarian villages and towns better on the RFE broadcasts than on VOA. However, VOA is well-informed about life in Hungary, too. Balint Boda, on RFE, named every Communist personality in various plants in Hungary, and told precisely what they were doing. These Roll Calls were on the air every Wednesday and we enjoyed them very much, particularly when they named Communists from our neighborhood. They reported, twice, the names of Secret Police officers stationed at Sopron and names of Communist managers and informers. The announcer warned people to watch out and reported that the personalities were on a black list. (028/5)

Another topic that respondents believe should be given great emphasis is the failure of Communism to produce the economic Utopia which was to come with the elimination of capitalism. Almost one out of three respondents mention criticisms of economic conditions at home as excellent material for Western broadcasts.

The favorite subjects among Western radio news were those about faltering production and other Communist difficulties back home We found out (from the radio) how well the West knew about these things, and how seriously it dealt with them. This had a better effect than news about sympathy demonstrations because, even if they liked to listen to (the latter), people could not get too excited about it. (060/7)

We were also very interested in the total exposure of economic conditions in Hungary and in the convincing evidence that the economic crisis must lead to the total ruin of Communism in Hungary. (073/4)

Such criticism exploits existing dissatisfaction over economic hardships ascribed directly to the regime and attacks Communists at one of their most vulnerable points.

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A relatively large number of respondents (3 out of 10) gave vent to their preoccupation with the danger of Communist attempts to indoctrinate the people, particularly children and adolescents, and expressed the desire to hear programs designed to counteract these attempts. The general area of refutation of Communist propaganda will be discussed in a subsequent section, but this specific topic is best included here, since it is usually referred to by the respondents in the context of domestic issues. The range of problems covered by the statements in this respect, and the recommendations for the foreign broadcasters based thereupon, are illustrated by the following:

Young people should be given the most attention, because the Communists are working on them most. For example, the Communists claim that young people have no future in the West, while in the Soviet Union opportunities never known before have opened to them. It should be explained what the truth is on this question. Another thing is that the Communists give uniforms and food to the apprentices. They (the apprentices) should be told where the money to pay for this came from, that it was the Hungarian people who suffered and sweated for it. These apprentices are told by the Communists that they must be grateful to the State. They are also told that the State now can expect and demand any kind of sacrifice from them, because they have to pay back their debts. If only one of these boys heard the real truth over the radio (about this problem), a hundred would know it soon, too. Other, similar problems should also be thought about. (033/9)

The Communists succeed best in fooling the youth. They set up various speed-up courses which they promise will replace school education. They also promise good possibilities for excellent jobs upon completion of the courses. The Communists make the youth believe thus that they have opened perspectives before them which they never had before under any kind of regime. Therefore many young people feel gratitude towards the Communists. Later on, they will discover one day that the whole thing was a trick. Nevertheless, while these young

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people feel obliged the Party uses them as enthusiastic agitators A beautiful task for the Western radios would be to open the eyes of the misled youth and explain to them all I spoke about previously. (079/8-9)

The Communists manage to trick most people by sending them to an indoctrination course for a few months, and then they give them jobs. These people don't realize that the time will come when they, too, will be thrown out. And they are thrown out half a year later. The (Western) radio should explain to these people how little their being kings for a day is worth. It should explain that these people did not gain a position because the regime really wanted to help poor people It does not pay to argue with the Communists, but it is useful to make things clear to people who have fallen for some Communist trick. (059/9)

An almost equal number of respondents (27 per cent) expressed the desire to hear on foreign broadcasts warnings of impending Communist measures as an item of practical value to the Hungarian listeners. Some of these respondents also pointed up to the possibility of inhibiting the execution of the exposed plans.

We also thought that it was very good when the Western stations reported in advance about the plans of the Communists. We had the impression that the Communists often had to abandon their plans because of this. (073/4)

There should be more Hungarian news and commentaries. For example, when they abduct people, or if the government is preparing to issue a new decree, as, for instance, in connection with the state loans. People don't learn about things through Hungarian newspapers and the radio, or only belatedly. Western radios ought to try to announce such things in advance. In this way they could really help the populace which could then get ready for certain things. In the second place, they could harm the Communists, because things would become public which they wanted to conceal. In the third place, they would directly

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serve Western interests, because the listening audience would be greater. This would be important for those in the West, because those listening to Hungarian news would at the same time automatically hear news the West wanted to relate about itself. (019/8)

Twenty-one per cent of the respondents recommended that foreign broadcasts transmit advice on ways of reacting to Communist measures, of resisting them if possible, and of evading them if impossible. One of the RFE preferents, a young university-trained economist, engaged in a lengthy discussion which sums up this question rather well and shows, too, how domestic news is related to international news about measures taken toward liberation of the Hungarians:

With an appropriate news service, several million dollars' worth of damage could be caused to the production program of the Hungarian Communist Party, through passive resistance or silent sabotage. Such broadcasts should say that the workers should not be like robots when going to the factory, and that the peasants should hide everything they can. Because of intensive Communist propaganda and as a result of being overworked, most of the people in Hungary have become exhausted, opportunists, and compromisers. Many people were made to believe that the road of progress was set by the Communists' production program, even if it is not without mistakes. Time has ground away the spiritual resistance of people. They hope for and expect a change (of regime) in time, but they dare not oppose the present regime in thought or action, because they do not expect the desired changes will occur during their lives. They consider that there has been Soviet rule in Russia for more than 30 years and that events in Hungary gradually follow (the pattern of) what has happened in the Soviet Union. They believe Communist propaganda that the Soviet Union desires world peace, and that, in turn, excludes the possibility of a change (of regime) for a long time. They regard it as being in their interest to remain in their jobs, to advance, to be able to buy clothes and shoes for themselves and their families. Western radios should adapt themselves to that mentality, and they should speak about

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when the coming war will probably start and end, and they should emphasize that people who think along the lines I mentioned just now are lost people. Besides increasing their spiritual strength, people should also be persuaded to rather endure a year or two of want than to spoil their entire future lives. Specific instructions given by Hungarian political leaders living abroad could well influence the conditions back home. Many of these leaders would be listened to because of their having personal prestige (among the Hungarian population), even if this is not true about all of them. It is a pity that they cannot be heard over the Western stations. (092/11)

The other respondents who mentioned this problem expressed also, in a similar vein, their willingness, nay, their anxiety to be guided by advice coming from the foreign stations. Only two respondents, one of whom did not listen to foreign broadcasts at all, expressed doubt as to the wisdom of transmitting this sort of advice, particularly if it were to urge the Hungarians to active resistance.

Twenty-six per cent of the respondents said also that they liked to hear reports which were embarrassing to the Communist officials. By such reports they meant almost any unfavorable comments on the Hungarian domestic scene; practically anything that is wrong with life in Hungary can be blamed on the Communists and should embarrass them because it gives the lie to their promises and claims.

Other important items (each mentioned by between 7 and 18 respondents) are: information about the regime's struggle against religion and the Church, programs of national music banned by the regime, advice on how to escape from Hungary, reports of internal dissension among Communists, programs dealing with national culture, and statements of what the future Hungary will be like.

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There seems to be little doubt that, given the importance to the listeners of foreign broadcast treatment of domestic events and issues, those foreign stations are decidedly well advised which devote considerable attention to the domestic scene. RFE is considered to be the best station in this respect. This poses a problem to the VOA. A responsible governmental station cannot, of course, use the domestic scene to launch into the kinds of attacks on governments and people that make RFE so popular, but if policy decisions allow the VOA to concentrate more than at present on fairly strong attacks on, say, the violations of human rights or the domestic economy, the effectiveness of the VOA should be increased. With a more extensive coverage of domestic issues, the VOA, because of the importance of its sponsorship and with the additional help of the excellence of its news service, might well become clearly the most preferred Western station. Its only rival now is RFE (as shown in a previous section, it is not clear which of the two is the most preferred station among the Hungarian population at large), and RFE's popularity is based almost entirely upon its strong attack on domestic issues and personalities.

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Broadcasting Preference and Evaluation:
Belligerent Anti-Communist Stand

The belligerent anti-Communist character of the broadcasts was mentioned as a preference reason with respect to the VOA by 4 listeners (non-preferents) and with respect to RFE by 4 listeners. These figures, however, do not place strongly worded anti-Communist broadcasts in proper perspective. This is because so many other statements of the respondents imply desire to hear and approval of violent attacks on Communism but are not specifically phrased in those terms. News which can be interpreted as meaning that the West is arming in order to wage war on Communism is certainly belligerent; the strong US stand against Communism on the international scene which some respondents contrast favorably with the "weak" British attitude is, when reported in the broadcasts, considered to have the proper anti-Communist tone; and above all else the attacks on the domestic regime and the denunciations of and promises of retaliation against Communist informers which are broadcast by RFE are belligerent in character. These and related topics have all been discussed extensively in preceding sections and need not be elaborated upon here.

It is clear that except for listeners who want objectivity or who want to hear only pure news reports without commentary, belligerency or strongly stated anti-Communism which suggests that the Communist regimes are about to be eradicated is greatly valued, and this means that most listeners want to hear it. And the clear impression which is gained from reading the interviews, although this impression cannot be properly quantified, is that RFE is considered by the respondents to be

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the most belligerent station. BBC is the least belligerent, and VOA occupies a middle ground. When the subject is mentioned, RFE is characterized as more "stimulating", "violent", "immoderate and aggressive", "ironical and cutting" than VOA. When the VOA is referred to as belligerent it is usually in terms of its firmness and determination. No direct question was asked of the interviewees on this topic, and many did not rate the stations. Among those who spoke about it, however, the verdict as to the relative belligerency of these stations was practically unanimous.*

* Madrid was also considered belligerent, but too few respondents discussed Madrid in any detail to allow the formation of a clear picture of the respondents' conceptions of the virtue of its program.

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Broadcasting Preference and Evaluation: Features

With the exception of broadcasts dealing with American life, no programs which could be classified as features were mentioned as preference reasons by Hungarian respondents. Since two special questions were asked concerning the treatment of American life on foreign broadcasts, this particular type of feature material is dealt with separately below.

Although features did not figure as preference reasons, many Hungarian respondents, when asked to outline what should go into an "ideal program," mentioned types of content which can be classified as features. These included music, sports news, reviews of cultural activities, talks having to do with technical and scientific progress and stories for children. In American media contents of this kind have the functions of educating and entertaining the audience. But it is difficult to find a single Hungarian respondent who wanted to hear features simply in order to be entertained or enlightened. In every case, the particular type of feature material called for turns out to have political significance for the respondent.

A good example is the young Hungarian factory worker who at first appeared to be interested in sports for their own sake:

I and my fellow workers liked much more to hear features, especially concerning technical developments and sports, than news. At the time of one boat race, I met a man interested in sports in Budapest who told us that there is a new type of shell in the US. He saw it because he had been in Western Europe. It was very easily handled -- it was easy to take it from the water. We tried to sketch how it looked. It would be very interesting to hear something about such things over the VOA.
(005/5)

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On closer examination his desire to hear sports news from the West is seen to arise from his wish to be able to counter the boasts in the Communist press concerning Russian accomplishments in sports:

The same sports news was in Szabad Nep and the weekly called Nepsport. It is said that the Russians are the best in every kind of sport; for example it said that in crew the Russians made so and so many kilometers during a certain period, but since I myself had done crew racing and knew something about it, I couldn't believe it. In football and other kinds of sports also the Russians were held up to be better than Hungarians, even though we knew that the Hungarians were much better. Nothing was said about Western sports. (005/2)

"Good old Hungarian music" (018/8) was included in the "ideal programs" more often than any other type of feature. The respondents were referring to the kind of Hungarian folk music which has been banned by the Communists. Most of them made this point explicitly. They were not only nostalgic for the music but they wanted the enjoyable opportunity to defy the ban.

Hungarian music is missing from Radio Budapest broadcasts; moreover, most of it is completely banned. Foreign stations should supplement this to a greater extent. This is what attracts the simple people most, and even the other groups, because the Communists want to make them forget it. (054/12)

In the Hungarian program there should be, from time to time, broadcasts of Hungarian songs banned by the Communists, to serve as an expression of the national spirit and to further national feeling. (092/17)

Talks on scientific and technical developments in the Western world and reviews of activities in the arts, even though completely non-political in content, were thought of by the respondents as answers to

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Communist lies and boasts. They help, one respondent said, to preserve the memory of "old values" which the Communists are seeking to destroy:

I forgot to include sciences and literature when I composed the 30-minute radio program. I was a student and I knew well what the situation in these fields was. There are hardly any books left in Hungary which aren't full of lies. If I had known beforehand the questions you are asking me here, I would have put some school books into my pocket instead of another pair of shorts, when I escaped from Hungary. I could show them to you now and you could see what kind of things are written in them. Every inventor and scientist was, without exception, a Russian. If the VOA spoke about atomic research, rocket ships to the moon, about history and literature and so on, it would serve a double goal: First of all the listeners would learn the truth. Secondly, all the people who don't listen now because they don't care about politics would become listeners. The VOA reports of a political nature would reach thus also those whose political sense is undeveloped. (089/9)

Regular information on scientific, art and other technical literature, as well as about fiction. Besides discussing new literary works, mention should also be made about old literary values, because the peoples living behind the Iron Curtain are even deprived of those by the Communists. (087/11)

A few respondents suggested programs for children as competing attractions for the activities of the Communist youth movement:

Youth should be dealt with. The most dangerous age is between six and fifteen (because they are under constant Communist influence at school and in the Pioneer (Young Communist) movement. The parents cannot care for them, because they are working all the time. That's why, especially during the winter when children are forced to stay at home, there should be lectures for young people in the afternoon. There should be lectures about the Scout movement, Indian stories, and so on, which could act as a brake in holding them back from (adopting) Communism, and which would draw their attention to something else. (051/10)

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One respondent wanted the Voice to transmit some guidance from Protestant leaders in the West because the Hungarian Protestant leaders, he said, are all Communist sympathizers:

The US is a leading Protestant great power and so the broadcasts of the Voice ought to concern themselves more with the Protestant Church and social life. The lack of this was felt all the more back home, because the present official leaders of the Protestant churches in Hungary are Communist sympathizers and so do not seek to create contacts with Protestant churches in the West. An inevitable consequence of this is that the contact with Protestant churches in the West can only be maintained in an inadequate fashion by certain persons in the Protestant Church, but the great masses of Protestants are almost completely debarred from learning anything about Protestant church life in the West. Thus, for example, there is no clear and objective picture back home in Protestant circles as to what the stand of the Western Protestant churches is with regard to the Communist-directed peace movement. And in general we should have liked to become acquainted with the opinions of Protestant churches abroad in regard to questions affecting the peoples of the world. We would have liked to hear more about this from BBC, too. But there at least there is a Protestant press review every two weeks. This, too, is lacking on the VOA. (021/23-24)

Another wanted religious services for those who did not "dare go to church":

During religious holidays, masses and especially religious sermons should be broadcast in the morning. State employees do not dare to go to church at that time in Hungary. Their religious needs would be well satisfied by the radio. (092/19)

From all of these quotations it becomes clear that the motives for listening to features on the foreign broadcasts complement the motives for listening to news and commentary. Respondents were interested in sports, literature and science but they were irritated by the intrusion of Communist values into these fields in all the domestic

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media and by the Communist claims to a monopoly of achievement in everything. They wanted the foreign feature broadcasts to provide them with a foundation for their disbelief in these claims, and to attack Communism as news broadcasts and commentaries do, and they also wanted to maintain contact with Western values by keeping abreast of cultural developments.

Fifty-eight per cent of the Hungarian respondents wanted some time to be reserved on an "ideal program" for features (other than those dealing with American life); 32 per cent felt that features other than those on American life were unnecessary or undesirable; 5 per cent felt that all features were unnecessary and 5 per cent did not indicate their personal views about the desirability of feature broadcasts. Even where features were felt to be important, respondents considered them secondary to news and commentary. Eighteen per cent of the respondents suggested that about a third of a 30-minute program be devoted to features, but most of those who wanted to hear features thought that from 2 to 5 minutes of a half-hour broadcast every day or a few times a week was enough time to devote to this kind of program.

Presentation of American Life

Unlike other features, programs describing America and dealing with life and conditions in the United States did figure as preference reasons for VOA listeners. Thirty per cent of the VOA preferents mentioned such broadcasts among their preference reasons and 7 per cent of those who were not VOA preferents but who made preference statements about VOA mentioned information about American life. When asked directly whether VOA

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should broadcast about life in America, 94 per cent of the Hungarian respondents indicated that they wanted to hear something about this subject.

It is not curiosity about America per se which motivates such a large proportion of Hungarian respondents to want to hear about life in the US. As with other features, the motive is actually political: life in America, in all its most attractive aspects -- the high standard of living and the personal liberty -- constitutes an argument against Communism. The Communists themselves implicitly admit that a regime is to be judged by the way of life it produces by constantly reiterating that American society produces unemployment and misery for its workers. The truth about the American workers' way of life thus becomes, for the respondents, a powerful weapon against Communism:

A relative of mine used to argue very often with the Communists who, he knew, would not report him to the police, and his primary argument was about the American way of life. As a matter of fact, this was his decisive argument. Actually, he has no accurate information about it (the American way of life), and most of the time he let his imagination work when telling them about how people lived there (in America). (033/7-8)

Through the transmissions of the VOA it becomes clearly apparent how good life is in the USA, the extent to which men really get ahead there, and the way in which the rights of freedom are not assured merely on paper. Through the VOA people became aware that even the criticism of President Truman is entirely permissible there. No one is afflicted with consequences even remotely comparable to those which in Hungary would descend on anyone who dared to criticize Matyas Rakosi or other Communist leaders. It is essential that everyone in Hungary be clearly aware of this and, on the basis of the transmissions of the VOA, be able to make comparisons with the situation back home at all times. This also holds

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true with respect to the VOA's description of American labor conditions as, for example, when it describes the life of the worker there, and what he can buy with his earnings. Enviously Hungarian workers hear that in the USA the worker is truly a man and is not exposed to the bestial fate which is the lot of the Hungarian worker. But this envy is healthful because it makes men consciously aware of the difference and makes the elimination of this difference desirable on the part of Hungarian workers.
(036/6)

One respondent, a skilled worker, when asked whether VOA should broadcast about American life, at first did not appear to be much interested:

It was worthwhile to talk about American life. However, people know that there is a higher standard of living in America. Anyhow it is more important to talk about events in Hungary. . . (003/5)

However, in making up his ideal program, he said:

. . . Industry, techniques and machines should be treated on a comparative basis. They (the Communists) led me to believe at home that the (agricultural) combine is a new revolutionary Soviet invention. Now I see here that not a bit of it is true because I have seen combines in the West, even better ones. The people at home are not informed about it. Even the enemies of the Communists believe that only the Russians have combines.
(003/6)

And when asked whether VOA was successfully conveying the favorable aspects of American life, he said:

In my opinion the VOA has not spoken enough about the subject that was the most interesting for me, technical progress. It spoke about this only when something had been invented. As to the rest, the radio never detailed the everyday progress of techniques. This theme, however, interests everybody in the different trades. Communists repeat it so often that, if the other side remains silent, people will consider it proved that everything has been invented

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by the Russians and that it is in the East that technical progress is still going on. (003/10)

In his mind, information about technical progress in America would have been the conclusive answer to this "argument" about the greater technological progressiveness of the Communist system, and therefore he wanted to have information about this progress; but he had but little interest in American life as such -- i.e., American life if not used as an attack on the Communists.

Another respondent, a former office employee in a government agency showed very clearly in what he said that information about the United States was interesting only to the extent that it was perceived as an "answer" to Communist arguments or a weapon against the Communists. In answer to the question "Should we broadcast about American life?", he said:

It would be an excellent idea to compare the earning conditions in America and in Hungary. This means facts, not phrases. These facts could be a clever answer, when, for instance, the Communist propaganda asserts that the Americans collect their food from the garbage. It's true that on such occasions the Hungarians ask the question, 'Are the parcels they send us also collected from garbage?' (055/9)

And then, without a break, he went on to say:

I found it useless when on the VOA broadcasts I heard a description of an American landscape or some other review about the US. It made the impression on me that it was just to fill out the time, because they didn't have anything better to tell us. Even if there is really nothing to say they could leave such things for the end of the broadcast. Many listeners turn off their radio hearing these things and deprive themselves of the subsequent and more interesting announcements. The VOA almost every time ends its program with interesting replies (to the Communists). (055/9)

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A third example of the basic motivation for listening to broadcasts about American life is provided by a respondent who began by saying:

News concerning American party politics and American domestic policy doesn't much interest the Hungarian people while they are suffering under the Communist system. (001/3)

But immediately following this he added:

VOA answered very well the Hungarian Communist argument that the Hungarian press is free while the American press is under the rule of big capital. (001/3)

News about America was of no interest in itself -- but the moment it became an answer to a Communist argument, he welcomed it.

The fact that broadcasts about American life are conceived of as part of the fight against Communism is pointed up by the fact that 74 per cent of those who said that broadcast time should be devoted to American life said that this time should be spent in comparing the good conditions in America to the bad ones in Hungary, thus showing in concrete terms what life under Communism meant. It is significant to note that no specific question or probe in the interview was asked concerning the making of comparisons between the American and Hungarian life. The suggestion that such comparisons be made was entirely spontaneous on the part of the respondents, and the fact that as many as three-quarters of the respondents made it points up the importance of this mode of handling broadcasts about American life. Had a specific question been asked, the proportion of those who stated that they wanted comparisons would doubtless have been considerably higher.

The couching of broadcasts about conditions in America in terms of contrasts with conditions in Hungary makes these broadcasts essentially
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attacks on the regime, and the desire to hear them comes from the desire to hear the regime or Communism discredited. In this respect the broadcasts about American life really become for the respondents a sort of adjunct to the very important broadcasts about domestic issues and affairs: conditions in America serve as weapons for the attack on conditions in Hungary.

The direct manner in which broadcasts about American life are thought of as actually part of the broadcasts about domestic events and issues is perhaps best illustrated by the following quotation describing what should be broadcast during the first third of an ideal thirty-minute program:

Ten minutes should be devoted to the reviewing of how people's livelihood is being ruined in Hungary. That includes, for instance, how the tradesmen were deprived of tools and opportunities for obtaining raw material, and how the farmers were deprived of opportunities for individual farming. It should be mentioned how the merchants and artisans were forced to abandon their occupations, their business and their basic capital within 24 hours. (It should be mentioned) how the workers are being hindered from choosing their place of work freely and how their strength is being exploited. On the other hand, there should be mention of the opportunities for success of the people having the same occupations in America and in other Western nations. A radio interview with some of those people could also illustrate their individual lot. (087/10)

The specific examples of broadcast topics cited by the respondents chiefly had to do with comparisons of the living standards of workingmen:

I listened with great interests to VOA broadcasts comparing the living conditions of the American workers with those of the Hungarian and Russian

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workers. It (the VOA) usually talked about those things when prices went up in Hungary, making a livelihood more difficult to obtain. The VOA not only mentioned the exact salaries of the workers in those countries, but also pointed out how long a worker had to work in the USA, in Hungary or in the Soviet Union to earn the price of various necessities, for instance, clothing or a certain amount of butter. I found the truth in those broadcasts, in contrast to the propaganda back home about Communist prosperity. (085/8)

In my opinion economic news should consist of broadcasts about the living conditions of a different person each time. Today it might be a tailor's apprentice, tomorrow a streetcar conductor, then a factory doorman, a weaving mill worker, and so on, and they should broadcast about what they earn and what their financial situation is. For instance, if a (Hungarian) streetcar conductor were to hear that a streetcar conductor in a Western country can make good earnings, then this would stick in his mind and would bother him, because it is about his own trade. However, if we talk only generally about the good salaries and well-being of the Western workers, without mentioning individual trades, then the listeners forget such a broadcast more easily. The streetcar conductor who heard that broadcast would certainly mention it to his colleagues at the streetcar depot the next day For instance, it (the Western broadcast) could mention that a Western streetcar conductor surprised his wife by buying her a tin washtub, because that was such a minor expenditure that he could cover it with one day's salary, whereas a Budapest streetcar conductor would be able to buy it by spending two weeks' salary for it. (049/14)

The VOA used to compare regularly, in a very educational manner, how much the American and Hungarian workers earned, and what they were able to buy for their pay. I found these reports very useful. For instance, an oft-repeated VOA announcement stuck in my memory, according to which a dishwasher girl could live better from her pay in the US than a man in Hungary working in some intellectual job. It also drew attention when the VOA pointed out that to support a family in Hungary it was necessary for all the adults in the family, and even the older children,

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to work, while in America the pay of the father was enough to support the family. They (the VOA) should report about how the American standard of living compares with the standard of living in Hungary, and how much the American worker can save from his pay and how much goods he can buy with it. . . . The VOA should report every week about the wage rates of the American workers and about the things he can buy with his earnings. (024/6)

This would be very good. Compare the American worker's wage and the value of his money with the Hungarian. That should be done, if it is not already done. I did not hear such a broadcast. The Communists are forever telling lies about the bad life of the American working man. It has to be proven that it is not so. Of course no one believes the lies of the Communists and the people surmise the truth. But it still would be better to prove the denials with figures. (075/6)

Other respondents wanted to hear not only about wages but also about hours of work and systems of pay, about freedom to choose one's own job or to strike, about provisions for security and about civil liberties. In general, however, the physical conditions of life and work are considered to be more important than ideological questions such as civil liberties. The emphasis throughout is on the life of American workingmen with whom the respondents felt they could compare themselves.*

* It will be seen in the section of the present report dealing with the images which respondents had of Americans that the respondents thought of Americans primarily in terms of only two social or economic classes: workers and employers. That is, the respondents thought in categories which had meaning in terms of their own life and world outlook. Hence the broadcasts about American life which had real meaning for them were broadcasts about American workers' lives. In general, the concept of the "the average American" had little meaning or was interpreted to mean "American worker." (Footnote continued on next page)

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Living conditions in the US, and generally in the West, should be dealt with more than the VOA does it now. Ten minutes a day should be devoted to this, too. I am thinking mostly about comparisons between living conditions in the peoples' democracies and the free countries. Political freedom, as well as the freedom of speech and religion, and other human rights should also be mentioned in these broadcasts. The problem of the right to strike should be especially clarified in the face of the Communist propaganda, which claims that the many mass strikes are signs of dissatisfaction in the West, and that the economic and political structure of the peoples' democracies makes strikes unnecessary. These broadcasts should emphasize that the right to strike is also an important human right. They should also explain in what way and with what effects this right can successfully be employed in the West. (038/8)

* (Footnote continued from preceding page)

The VOA used to talk about this quite nicely several times. It used to say, for instance, that in America it was the average man who bought the most television sets. But saying this isn't enough, because this is not an everyday thing. They should be able to explain better how the daily life of an American worker goes on. The example of the television set is something too high (for the comprehension of a Hungarian worker). From this they cannot compare their lives to that of the American worker. Probably even Rakosi hasn't seen a television set yet. I have only heard that it is supposed to have been invented in Russia. What they (the Western radios) should make clear is that not only the upper 10,000 have a good life in America; that there is a good life in America, is known by everybody in Hungary, anyway. But they should speak about how a factory worker or an agricultural laborer is living, so that people in Hungary would not think that a good life does not apply to these groups. (043/8)

Evidently this respondent, even though evidencing a somewhat sophisticated mode of thought, is not at all sure that the VOA's "average man" is not the "upper 10,000," and he points out clearly the usual Hungarian's approach to such concepts.

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Once I heard, for instance, how many hours a Hungarian and an American workman have to work to buy two pounds of bread or a pair of shoes, This is an important and useful program. But this is only one way to approach the question and not always successful because the more simple Hungarian workmen are not able to figure out what it means in reality. It should be told how much is the effective monthly salary of an American workman, how many articles of need can he buy from it, and how much money there is left to him when he has bought them all. Further it should be told what possibilities of comfort, entertainment and of culture are open to the American worker. In the second place much attention ought to be given to the organizing of work and the paying of wages. It would be useful because nowadays at home the quota system and the prolonged hours of work are the most depressing problems of the people. With expert and repeated discussions of this question one could make it clear who exploits the people, the capitalists or the Communists. The third question which should be continuously spoken about is the rights of the American worker secured by law. This should be emphasized because in Hungary the workers have already officially lost, for instance, their right to choose freely their place of work. The above-mentioned problems shouldn't be repeated too often, but it would be extremely useful if the VOA cleared up from time to time these three questions referring to the various categories of employees.
(076/12)

VOA's Presentation of American Life

The VOA listeners in the sample were asked to evaluate the VOA broadcasts about American life. One-quarter of them felt that VOA's presentation was good in all respects; one-fifth either said that they didn't know how to evaluate these broadcasts or did not answer the question. The majority, 53 per cent, felt that the broadcasts were good in some respects but qualified their approval in some way. Only two per cent of VOA listeners did not want to hear such programs at all.

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Table 31

VOA LISTENERS' REACTIONS TO VOA BROADCASTS
ABOUT AMERICAN LIFE

Unqualified approval	26%
Qualified approval:	
programs should be improved	53
Unqualified disapproval: such programs should not be broadcast	2
Don't know or not ascertainable*	19
Total Cases (100%)=	(74)

It should be noted that those who give unqualified approval to the VOA programs are not by any means thereby requesting more and more of such programs. Very often the respondent who approves states specifically that only a limited amount of time should be devoted to the topic:

I listened with great interest to VOA broadcasts comparing the living conditions of American workers with those of Hungarian and Russian workers I found the truth in those broadcasts, in contrast to the propoganda back home about Communist prosperity. . . . People back home are interested in this. They also get information about these things through letters and parcels received from abroad, and they can well imagine how much better a world there is in America than in Hungary. In my opinion, for that reason such broadcasts are not very important. They (the foreign stations) should rather talk more about the problems of liberation. (085/8, 12-13)

The kinds of dissatisfactions mentioned by the interviewees who wanted to hear about life in America but who expressed criticism of VOA's handling of the subject were too varied to permit systematic classification.

* This category is primarily composed of respondents who said they never heard a VOA broadcast about American life.

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Several of them have been indicated already in previous quotations, for example, those which said that the VOA should deal with conditions in specific occupations rather than with workers in general and that the VOA should explain in full detail the buying power of a month's wages rather than making fragmentary comparisons. Other criticisms concern the manner of presentation and lack of inclusion of various topics. The selection of quotations which follows illustrates more of the kinds of criticisms which were mentioned:

It would also be better if such VOA broadcasts were made by a Hungarian worker who escaped the country this year or last year, instead of being broadcast by somebody who went to the US before the war, because he already had enough time to establish himself in a new existence. A recent emigrant should be the witness -- someone whose broadcast everybody in Hungary would understand. (024/6)

Sometimes the VOA talks about the things I mentioned about America, but still much more could be broadcast. I am thinking of 'on-the-spot visits,' interviews with workers, and so forth. Of course everyone cannot leave Hungary. The reason these things must be discussed is not to entice people out of Hungary but to enable them at home to be able to answer the Communists' lies, for without this they would lose hope that their lives would ever be better. (004/8)

I often heard instructive comparisons between living conditions in America and behind the Iron Curtain. The most important thing in this field is:

- a. To show how freedom and prosperity are connected;
- b. To show what spiritual (religious, moral, scientific, artistic) and economic life are like in reality, not only on paper; and
- c. To show what the fate and the opportunities for success are for the youth of the US, as compared to the countries behind the Iron Curtain. In that respect the broadcasts of the VOA should be somewhat modified from what they used to be. The previous

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broadcasts dealt mostly with living conditions of people belonging to certain occupational categories. That was good, but was not enough. (093/19)

What I said about freedom (in America) I did not learn from the VOA but . . . heard about it always this way for a long time It would be good if the VOA helped in such things to open people's eyes. (058/12)

. . . I miss information about US social conditions, such as, for instance, the scope of social security, and the possibilities of (paid) vacations and meals in a factory. All this is presented by the Communist propaganda in a very distorted manner. They (the Communists) like to emphasize the things that are lacking in this respect, and they say that only the rich can have pleasant vacations in the US, while the workers hardly have opportunities to go anywhere during their vacation. (060/10)

Further, there were other such broadcasts over VOA. For instance, a soldier from Korea wrote a letter to President Truman. The President answered, too. This report was extremely important because you could see what real democracy meant. Unfortunately I never heard anything said over the VOA about the activities of the trade unions in America, although, I think, this should be an important part of the program. I thought of it because the trade unions in Hungary are a whip in the hands of the Government to drive people to work. I don't know whether the Americans are aware of this. The Hungarians should be continuously told over the radio what sort of organizations the trade unions are abroad. I don't think of dry statistics, but of interviews, etc., from which the listeners would get a clear picture about the activities of the American trade unions. For instance, an old worker who doesn't work any more could recount in what circumstances he lives now, and when and in what privileges he had partaken in the past, thanks to the trade union: unemployment relief, childbirth aid, etc. (095/8)

In some cases the respondents indicated that too much talk about the good life in America, even in a context of invidious

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comparison with the Communists, would begin after a while to "hurt," because it is they, themselves, after all, who are the victims of the situation:

When the VOA spoke about American life, I listened to it all cheered up and my soul rejoiced when I heard what they had there (in the US). It hurts, naturally, (when we realize) how much we have to suffer. (018/8)

The VOA used to talk about this continually. For instance, it used to say that a Hungarian worker worked for almost a full day to earn the price of a kilogram of sugar. At the same time, the American worker earned the price of a pair of shoes in less time. In Hungary, this (the price of a pair of shoes) would be almost a month's salary. This propaganda works both ways, however, because people listen to it and get desperate afterwards over killing themselves with work, and achieving no results. A person who buys a pair of shoes in Hungary must fast all month. People rather expect the radio to report about the thunder of arms in Europe. (051/8)

Obviously, desires are so varied that it is not possible to satisfy all listeners, and therefore the fact that there are so many criticisms of the VOA does not necessarily mean that the VOA is doing a poor job. These suggestions and criticisms concerning the presentation of life in the US do, however, point to two conclusions; a majority of the foreign broadcast listeners in the Hungarian sample want to hear about American life, but only in a context which clearly defines this material as a weapon of attack against Communism. In some instances the respondents themselves interpret facts about America as anti-Communist arguments without assistance from the broadcasts, but in most cases they want explicit comparisons with Communist conditions to be made. One respondent quoted above (p.160), for example, had heard a Communist source say that the American press was controlled by capitalists. When he then heard a program asserting the freedom of the American

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press, he interpreted this as an answer to the Communist statement. This same respondent, however, said that descriptions of American domestic politics were uninteresting. Evidently he was unable by himself to draw the relevant comparisons with totalitarian politics, but he probably would have been interested had they been drawn for him.

The second conclusion is that too much or too frequent description of the good life in America is likely to become unpleasant to the listeners, even if it is used as a basis for discrediting the Communists. Beyond a certain point, it focusses the listeners' attention on the bitterness of their own misery and makes them all the more impatient to hear news of action toward liberation. Although the respondents did not specify, in terms of time, how much such talk was "too much," they made it clear that broadcasts describing American life should occupy a place on the VOA program decidedly subordinate to international and domestic news bearing on the struggle against Communism.

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Broadcasting Preference and Evaluation: Humor and Satire

In discussing programs of humor and satire on foreign broadcasts the respondents talked exclusively about humor with political content. These shows are thought of as another means for the expression of anti-Communist feelings.

I was very glad to hear jokes. The Paris radio had a program every Wednesday, when they ridiculed the Hungarian Communist bosses by singing old Hungarian tunes with satirical verses. It is very good if they comment on the situation back home in a satirical way. Those 30,000 people at Dunapentele (industrial section of Budapest) cannot voice their opinion and they are very glad if somebody does. They know very well that they are not the ones the radio attacks and ridicules. I do not remember hearing any humorous program on the VOA. (020/9)

Only 2 VOA preferents, 3 RFE preferents and 1 Radio Paris preferent mentioned humor and satire as preference reasons. When respondents were asked what funny things they had heard on foreign broadcasts, however, 53 per cent of the RFE listeners spontaneously mentioned RFE's humorous broadcasts, all but three of them making favorable comments, usually about the satirical songs to popular tunes known as "csaszuska". Twenty-eight per cent of Radio Paris listeners made some favorable reference to humorous broadcasts on the Paris radio and 12 per cent of the BBC listeners referred to humor on the BBC, only 1 of the comments being unfavorable. Several respondents who compared foreign stations in terms of humor claimed both that RFE carried more humor than other stations and that its material was more successful.

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If the radio makes jokes it creates a good mood. In that way RFE is more successful than the others. They have many more funny features than the VOA. They broadcast Csasztuska songs The next day all the people talk about these humorous episodes. The jokes were never annoying as they were directed against the people whom the labor class dislikes. The people are happy that someone should make fun of the party secretaries or factory directors. (004/6)

The csasztuskas broadcast by RFE on Saturdays are very effective. People note them down and next day they tell each other. Jokes against Rakosi and Stalin are particularly liked, and people pass them on. Michurin jokes are also very popular. Everyone is glad to hear that in the West they dare make fun of the hated leaders of the regime. It may be that VOA's humorous broadcasts have escaped my attention accidentally. But it may also be that they don't give such programs. At all events, it is my feeling that RFE and Paris are better at this. Even what Andrew Martin does over the BBC can in part be characterized as humor. Rather it's not even what he says, but how he says it. (019/10-11)

Humor on the VOA

Respondents were specifically asked to evaluate the humor on VOA. Fewer than 1 out of 4 VOA listeners reported having heard humorous or satirical material on a VOA broadcast. Seventy-four per cent had seldom or never heard VOA use such material but offered an opinion on the desirability of its inclusion; 3 per cent expressed no opinion at all on this question.

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Table 32

HUMOR ON VOA

VOA listeners who heard humor on VOA	23%
VOA listeners who heard no humor on VOA but expressed an opinion on the use of humor	74
VOA listeners who made no comment	3
 Total Cases (100%) =	 (74)

Of the 77 respondents who heard humor on VOA, 15 expressed favorable opinions and 2 were critical.

Humorous broadcasts have instructive effects back home, and also give pleasant moments to the listener. They constitute variety. Their effect can be seen by their spreading from mouth to mouth. The VOA's lectures about the radio and penicillin and an ironical broadcast presenting Christopher Columbus as a Volga boatman made Communist statements about the progress of mankind being due entirely to Russian discoveries and inventions look ridiculous. (098/14)

There were jokes on the VOA. We liked to hear somebody ridiculing the Communists. Instead of listening to their continued boasting and how much they produced, we were having a real good laugh. They were always bragging and boasting on the Budapest radio. We got a chance to laugh only when the foreign radios were making fun of them. There were such good jokes that all of us had to hold our sides. We heard jokes not only over VOA, but on the French and British broadcasts, too. All of them were good in this respect. (088/7)

One of the critical respondents was apparently offended by an ironic parallel drawn by VOA between the Communists' practice of honoring their satellite puppets and the old Hapsburg practice of honoring members of the aristocracy.

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VOA once reported about the appointment of Matyas Rakosi and Erno Cero as honorary Russian colonels. The speaker tried to be ironic but it didn't sound that way. He said that in ancient times it was mainly dukes who were appointed as honorary colonels. It is strange that VOA should find fault with that. Rakosi and Cero rendered much better services to Moscow than the Austrian dukes to the Hapsburg dynasty and monarchy. Therefore it is not a matter for satire that Moscow wished to reward the Hungarian Communist leaders who rendered them such precious services. (001/3)

The other found VOA's humor ineffective and thought, besides, that this type of program was not appropriate for a station which ranked as the spokesman of the leading Western power.

I thought the humorous broadcasts heard over the VOA were not worth very much. I cannot even recall them exactly. People rather expect more serious broadcasts. To do such humorous broadcasts is the job of RFE. Maybe it (RFE) wants to make people confident by the use (of humorous broadcasts), too. At any rate, people like the jokes. Among people the jokes of the Western radio help form a topic of conversation or an opinion. They not only make the atmosphere more pleasant but also advance the clarification of viewpoints and the judgment of things; I mean mainly anti-Communist political jokes. (000/13)

Fifty-four of the Hungarian listeners to VOA claimed that they had never heard or did not recall hearing humorous VOA programs. Some said they had heard such programs on VOA so rarely that they could not evaluate them. However, many ventured an opinion on the desirability of including humor on VOA broadcasts. The following table presents the recommendations of these respondents, over three-fourths of whom would favor VOA's using humor.

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Table 33

ATTITUDES TOWARD VOA'S USE OF HUMOR OF RESPONDENTS
WHO HEARD LITTLE OR NO HUMOR ON VOA

Explicitly recommend that VOA use humor	21%
Like humor on other stations; implicitly suggest that such humor be incorporated into VOA programs	54
Explicitly state that VOA should <u>not</u> use humor, but believe that stations other than VOA should	9
Want no humor on any foreign broadcasts	13
Total Cases (100%) =	(54)

A summary breakdown of the opinions of the 74 VOA listeners reveals 78 per cent in favor of some element of satire in the Voice's approach to the Hungarian domestic scene, 19 per cent opposed, and 3 per cent with no comment offered.

It is generally agreed by those who favor humorous material that derision of Communism and the twitting of Communists add flavor to foreign broadcasts. Far from offending the anti-Communist, it makes for audience-appeal. At the same time, it serves to bolster the morale of people whose life is already too drab. Two respondents who could not recall hearing any humor on VOA remarked:

The VOA does not broadcast jokes; this is done by RFE, but I didn't listen to them. The VOA would be more colorful if they would also carry jokes, twice or three times a week. But they should be '6-month jokes': (Question: What are those?) They are jokes for which you would get six months in jail, should the AVO (political police) accidentally overhear them. (024/9)

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Every Saturday we used to listen to csaszuskas over RFE. Everybody used to listen to this, because humor had ceased to exist on the Hungarian radio programs. They (the Communists) were not interested in having the people entertained. All that was important to them was that their plans should succeed. So this Saturday evening RFE program was the only one over which people could really have a laugh. It would mean a lot if the VOA gave such humorous programs from time to time. (043/9-10)

Several respondents pointed to the special political effectiveness of humor:

Humorous programs about the doings of the Russians and the Communists are good reminders and warnings. For instance, in the beginning I did not understand what a Western station meant by saying that the Russians did not want to get out of Austria and Germany because they could hear the ticking of Swiss watches. Then it was explained to me that this was a reference to the Russian war-time lootings, when they 'collected' all the watches they could lay their hands on in Hungary after World War II. After it was explained, the joke characterized the robber instincts of the Communists better for me than any long and dull lecture. (064/11)

Of the 12 listeners who didn't want humorous broadcasts, 5 felt that humor is all right for other stations, but not for VOA. One of these respondents, like the critic of VOA's humor quoted above, felt that this type of broadcast was not appropriate for such an important station.

I heard a funny rhyme about Rakosi over the Spanish radio. The purpose of that (humorous program) is that if a person is in difficulties, he at least has a laugh over it. There could be such things on VOA, too, sometimes. But it is also possible that it is enough to have such things broadcast by the Spanish radio, because America is a more important state than Spain, and so such things might not fit America. America is the leader of the West, while Spain is a satellite state of America. (059/9-10)

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Another respondent, while he did not explicitly mention VOA, implied that the limited time America was on the air precluded the possibility of making room for humor.

On Saturdays RFE used to broadcast the conversation of Karcsi and Juliska about Hungarian life and the living standard. In these talks Juliska glorified Communist freedom whereas her husband showed in a humorous way what Communist freedom means. I heard several jokes about Matyas Rakcsi. In the all-day broadcasts of RFE there is time for it, and it is right to broadcast such things. But it would be a waste of time to broadcast humor when there is only a limited time for news. (074/10)

A similar division of opinion existed among the 7 who wanted no humor on any foreign broadcast. Some thought there was not enough time for it:

I don't remember having heard humorous stories told by the Western stations. I don't know whether it is necessary or not. It would not do any harm, but the time is too short for it. Once I heard people talk about a funny song by Katalin Karady (RFE). (011/14)

Others felt that in view of the seriousness of the situation in Hungary, humor on foreign broadcasts was out of place.

The prevailing opinion about humorous radio broadcasts is that it is easy for them to be funny and to ridicule the things back home. People do not want such humorous broadcasts. (063/14)

Humor would be interesting only if a person were able to sleep in peace. Inasmuch as this is impossible back home, humor is inappropriate. When I was sleeping hidden in the harvested crops in order to escape internment, there was nothing I wanted less than humor on the radio. (070/8)

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In sum, three-fourths of VOA's audience believe that there is room for humor on VOA broadcasts. Humor, they feel, helps bolster morale and brings cheerful encouragement. Respondents who have heard such satirical programs on VOA generally like what they have heard. One-fifth of VOA's listeners would rather that VOA abstained from humorous attempts. In their opinion, VOA is the official American station with the sober responsibility of dealing seriously with the crucial issues of the day. Some feel that VOA's program is so short as to preclude the presentation of any but the most important material -- namely, the news.

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Broadcasting Preference and Evaluation: "Personalities" on the Broadcasts

Among the important preference reasons for RFE and BBC are the broadcasts by known personalities who are listened to as "stars" by their audiences. The ultimate appeal of these stars rests, of course, in the content of their programs, but the audience tunes in not just to listen to "the news" or to "what the West has to say" but in order to hear a certain individual speak about these things. The presence of these individuals appears to make the programs more interesting and probably increases the size of the audiences of the stations concerned.

The major star of the Western stations is RFE's Balint Boda. Boda is represented as a man who makes frequent secret trips through Hungary, returning after each trip to tell the Hungarians, via RFE, what he has found out. His audience appeal rests in his daring defiance of the Communists (it is apparently believed by most that he actually makes journeys through Hungary), the supposedly uncanny accuracy of his information about the doings of the Communists (particularly Communist informers), and the fiery language with which he attacks the people who have betrayed his country. Perhaps the best understanding of his appeal can be gained by examining what was said about him by a respondent who preferred broadcasts diametrically opposed in type to those which Boda gave and who, therefore, one would think, might not like Boda. This respondent was a BBC preferent who wanted to hear international news, who liked the relatively calm BBC presentation, and who specifically stated that he did not like RFE because of its emphasis on domestic news and because of its over-belligerent manner of presentation -- its threats without action.

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I and my friends didn't like RFE because there were too many speeches over it. We wanted news and not talking. In the RFE broadcasts the Communists were menaced, but nothing happened to them. (005/3)

He did say, however, that the Hungarian people in general preferred RFE, precisely because of the things he disliked about it. Since Balint Boda is the quintessence of what he disliked, one might expect this respondent to talk about Boda as an example of how RFE went wrong, but Boda's appeal overcame any such objections. The respondent in question did not listen to RFE often, and he heard Boda only once, but he heard him talked about a great deal, and the one broadcast he listened to made a deep impression. For example, this respondent who did not like RFE broadcasts in which the Communists were "menaced, but nothing happened to them" nevertheless liked Boda's threats:

Three or four months ago (Boda) reported that the Communists had killed his younger brother and buried his body in a bushy part of Rakoskeresztur. He said the Communists were really going to pay for this, and I liked his getting tough with them. (005/2)

And he said about Boda in general:

As I mentioned before, he (Boda) was very popular. I and my friend really enjoyed how strictly he talked to the Communists -- how he gave them hell. We said, 'How in God's name can he return and go around Hungary without being captured?' The people were really surprised at how exact his information was, and they said that one day it wouldn't work out -- that the Communists would catch him. (005/5)

When a BBC preferent says something like this, it is not surprising to find someone who likes the RFE approach making a statement like the following:

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The broadcasts of Balint Boda over RFE, about his visits to various places in Hungary, could get me so excited that afterwards I had such a desperate look on my face that I would almost have been afraid to meet Communists, for fear of betraying the mood Balint Boda's broadcasts got me into. (054/6)

A subsequent statement of the last-quoted respondent gives a clue to the reason why people who were tired of words without action nevertheless liked Boda: he was considered to satisfy their desire for action:

His (Boda's) broadcasts made a special impression upon simpler people. My experience was that, especially as far as the peasants were concerned, the RFE program quite fulfilled their desire for striking (against the Communists) instead of waiting. They enjoyed the accuracy with which it (RFE) announced the names of Communists pillaging Hungary, their occupations, their addresses, their acts, and the uncovering of the Arrow Cross (the Hungarian equivalent of the Nazi swastika) or other past activities. Balint Boda's programs expressed that you have to treat a dog like a dog. (054/9-10)

Part of Boda's appeal undoubtedly rests in the fact that he is supposed actually to travel in Hungary rather than merely remaining on the outside, talking; but as the above quotation indicates, "striking" against the Communists seems more to be the pinpointing of informers and other Communists -- the dissemination of information which is damaging to Communist plans -- in contrast to mere vague threats that the day of Communism's end in Hungary is coming. Boda's exposure of Communist informers helps non-Communists and hurts the Communist arrangements for controlling the population, and it also allows the people to take action -- they can prevent the informers from getting information and they can spread the names of informers around:

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I was very much interested in hearing Balint Boda's reports about Hungary over RFE. Boda had a series of talks called 'The Sopron Hills'; he named all the informers in our neighborhood. He reported the informers in Sutto, too. He named several persons who we never would have thought were informers. . . . Whenever RFE reported informers, I took a pencil and put down their names. Some of our relatives lived in Fertoendre. It was a village in the neighborhood. When RFE reported the names of some informers from Fertoendre, I got on a bicycle and visited my relatives to tell them who the informers were. (039/5,6)

Furthermore, Boda's supposed omnipresence in Hungary allows people actively to express opposition to the regime by writing "BB" or "Balint Boda is coming" on walls. Since Boda's naming of Communists is damaging to the Communists thus exposed, the signs announcing his coming frequently begin by enjoining the Communists to "fear and tremble." It seems as though the coming of Balint Boda serves as a kind of substitute for the coming of the liberating forces of the West. The news of his coming to a particular locality stirs the residents up, and it is supposed that outbreaks may occur and that political policemen become afraid of what may happen to them at the time:

I experienced the active effects of the Western broadcasts when RFE announced that Balint Boda was going to take a walk next week in the vineyards of Sopron. The AVO men raided everywhere in the surroundings of Sopron at this time. Unknown authors wrote great BB letters on houses, fences, on the walls of the toilets in the factories and even on the walls of the Police building. In many places they wrote: 'Fear and tremble, Balint Boda is coming.' In these days the policemen didn't dare walk alone, only in couples. (058/5)

Finally, Boda appears to address the Hungarian people in a direct, warm appeal to their patriotism, which touched some respondents deeply:

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I listened to Balint Boda weekly, on Wednesdays, because he spoke in a way that reached a man's heart. He said, for example: 'Hungarians, do not believe the Communists, they mislead you, remain Hungarians.' These words meant very much to us and Balint Boda spoke them beautifully. My husband was also enthusiastic about him, and there were people in the factory, too, who talked about him. There were days when my husband quit the factory at 3 P.M. instead of 4 P.M., so he could go home and listen to Balint Boda at 4 P.M. At 4 P.M. you could hear him more clearly than at 6:30. On fruit stands, bridges, and on the sidewalks one could see signs saying, 'Come Balint Boda!' I don't know who painted these signs. The AVO man used to scrub them off with wet brushes. (026/6-7)

A few respondents reproached Boda for a certain vulgarity of language, but they praised him much more than they criticized him:

Balint Boda bawled out the Communists a little coarsely, but with the feelings of a real Hungarian. (058/6)

Five of the 22 RFE preferents gave the desire to hear Boda as a preference reason for listening to RFE.* In addition, at least 9 more respondents who gave RFE's emphasis on domestic affairs as their reason for preferring this station also mentioned liking the manner in which these affairs were treated by Boda. It is highly possible that some if not all of these latter respondents can be classified as preferring RFE, at least to a certain degree, because of Boda's broadcasts; such respondents, in giving their preference reasons, spoke only in the most general terms and simply included Boda's program in the more general category of domestic news and issues. It can therefore probably be said that between

* Altogether, 7 RFE preferents gave RFE stars as preference reasons. The other stars mentioned were Katalin Karady, Oliver Lantos, and Károly and Juliska.

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one-quarter and one-half of the preferences for RFE can be laid, at least partly, at Boda's feet -- a rather impressive testimony to the drawing power of this one program.

Twenty-nine respondents, or 36 per cent of the foreign broadcast listeners, mentioned Boda's name when asked what stars they could remember. The second best-known star, mentioned by 15 respondents, was Andrew Martin, a political commentator of the BBC. His program was given as a reason for preferring BBC by 3 of the 10 BBC preferents. Like the station on which he speaks, Andrew Martin has special appeal for better educated listeners. In his commentaries he gives selected political topics a detailed, analytical treatment which provides a good basis for informed discussion:

Great discussion developed every Wednesday morning as a result of Andrew Martin's summing up on foreign policy, heard the night before. He gave topics of conversation for the entire following week. The VOA never treated European problems in so much detail; it mostly gave brief reports on the events of world policy. That is the reason why the workers succeeded better in following the VOA. But the intellectuals have more knowledge about everything and are therefore able to understand the BBC's detailed analysis of foreign policy and make better use of it. (078/10)

In his Tuesday night commentary broadcast over the BBC, Andrew Martin always analyzed the international or Hungarian political events of the week sharply and wittily. I liked his drawing of a legal and historical background regarding Hungarian problems and the way he pointed out the weaknesses in Communist decisions and attitudes. At the end of the summer of 1949, for instance, he threw a sharp spotlight on the entire so-called Bolshevik constitutionality, when the Hungarian Administrative Courts were disbanded. He was also able to present international political events in accordance with the Hungarian viewpoint. He pointed out what their relation to Hungary was, or at least how the average Hungarian should try to figure out their significance. (093/18)

YPCF, 7-5



One young man suggested that VOA should have a commentator similar to Andrew Martin, saying, "This would give a line of direction every week to political thinking in Hungary as much as Andrew Martin gives it." (076/11)

Several people mentioned liking Martin's witty, satirical style, which they find subtler than that of RFE.

From the standpoint of style and content, my parents and I liked Andrew Martin's Tuesday evening political commentaries best of all the Hungarian-language broadcasts of the BBC. He deals wittily, with fine satire and broad knowledge, with questions relating to Hungary. . . . (His) weekly commentary . . . made witty fun of the Communist leaders and pointed out the mistakes and quirks of the Communists. He described world events from the Hungarian point of view. He always properly confronted the Communist lies. Many preferred his high and not too agitating tone to the sharp commentaries of RFE. (021/17,24)

A few respondents commented on the fact that the VOA has no stars. Some thought that VOA would be more popular if it did have stars, and others felt that stars were unnecessary. Those who did suggest a star for VOA all had in mind a political commentator of some sort.

. . . a steady weekly commentator would be good to have on the VOA, too. (021/25)

It might be that the great speed of American life was the reason for the VOA's not having similar stars. Their regular work (broadcasting) made demands on them which required an intense dramatization of the broadcasts. Perhaps it was for that reason that they could not include stars on their broadcasts, because there was no time for their (the stars') development. If, after such consideration, it was possible to have such stars speak over the VOA, then that would increase the VOA's popularity. In this field I am thinking primarily about international political summaries. They should be broadcast by a person who has a sharp insight into historically developed differences between European and American legal and political ideas. (093/18)

093/18



Another respondent, although he liked Andrew Martin, represents the viewpoint of those who felt that it was unnecessary for VOA to have a "star" commentator:

From the broadcasts of Andrew Martin over the BBC, one could get brief but concise information on what had happened in foreign politics during the week. There was no such star on the VOA program. I did not miss it. In my opinion, people are not interested in the personality of the announcer, but in what he says.



Language and Style of VOA Broadcasts

Almost all VOA listeners in the present sample indicated that their appraisal of the language and style of VOA's Hungarian broadcasts was favorable. A sizable proportion made explicit remarks about this question, while the majority, by their failure to say anything, implied that this aspect of VOA broadcasts was not unsatisfactory. A very small number of respondents criticized the VOA in this respect.

Table 34

ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE OF VOA BROADCASTS

Explicit favorable comments	35%
Implicit favorable attitudes.	60
Explicit criticisms	5
Total cases (100%).	(74)

Here are some illustrations.

The announcers on the Hungarian programs of the VOA, BBC and Radio Paris used as clear (pure) Hungarian language as if they were from our town itself. (087/9)

I never noticed that the speakers on Western broadcasts in Hungarian did not speak Hungarian well or that their way of expressing themselves could be considered un-Hungarian. (074/7)

The few critical comments are rather mild. For example:

The wording of VOA newscasts was stylistically foreign. It did not approximate the 'Weltanschauung' and the manner of speaking of the common people. (Furthermore) the announcer had a characteristic nasal tone when he said: 'Dear listeners, this is the Voice of America.' Even in that announcement there was a foreign accent. The Hungarians regarded him as a foreigner talking to them, and so the broadcast lost much of its appeal. The composition of RFE broadcasts is much more Hungarian . . . (092/15)

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Another respondent made this sweeping generalization when asked whether the announcers of foreign broadcasts sounded foreign:

This can be said about practically every radio announcer on the Western Hungarian-language programs. (This respondent was a frequent listener to the VOA, BEC, RFE, Madrid, Paris and Ankara.) (059/5)

However, this question of the language and style of foreign broadcasts appears to have no real importance, even for the few critical respondents, as was rather well expressed by one of them:

I did not pay any attention to this (problem). To me, the question was whether I heard something interesting on the Western radio programs and not the way in which it was said. There was one announcer, probably an older man, who spoke Hungarian with a kind of jargon but, because of the reason I have mentioned, I never stopped to think about it. (049/11)

Furthermore, no complaints were made by the respondents in the present sample with respect to the Hungarian spirit of the broadcasts. Only a few individuals mentioned this aspect at all, and they said that the Western stations did not lack in Hungarian spirit. For example:

I never experienced a lack of Hungarian spirit on Western broadcasts. (058/6)

We . . . felt that the VOA was talking to the Hungarians; its programs had a warm, Hungarian spirit. (100/4)

Evidently, this aspect of the language, style and Hungarian spirit of VOA's and other foreign broadcasts is of so slight importance as to have occurred to only an extremely small number of Hungarian respondents.

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Credibility of Foreign Broadcasts

The opinions of these refugees concerning the credibility of foreign broadcasts are precisely the reverse of their opinions concerning the credibility of the domestic output. All were disposed to trust foreign broadcasts; 73 per cent claimed that they never had occasion to question foreign broadcast reports, and 27 per cent, although they questioned some of the reports, asserted that they believed most of them. The overwhelming majority, then, was of this sentiment:

People absolutely believe what they hear and do not think it necessary to check on it. Over a long time they have had a chance to become convinced that the Western stations do not lie. And so the listening audience believes everything. (019/4-5)

As might be expected, unreserved faith in foreign broadcasts is somewhat more characteristic of the less well-educated Hungarians; their better educated compatriots are more likely to listen to the foreign radio critically.

Table 35

CREDIBILITY OF FOREIGN BROADCASTS
ACCORDING TO EDUCATION

	<u>College and High School</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Total</u>
Express complete belief in foreign radio	58%	82%	73%
Believe foreign radio with reservations	42	18	27
Total Listeners (100%) =	(31)	(49)	(80)

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The Process of Belief

TO BEGIN WITH, FOREIGN BROADCASTS GAIN CREDIBILITY BY REPRESENTING opposition to the hated regime and serving as the antithesis of the Communist domestic media which these refugees disparage so strongly.* Half of the foreign broadcast listeners connect their belief in foreign broadcasts to their rejection of Communist propaganda:

We were so sure that our domestic news service always lied that we did not believe anything in it. Most of the other people felt just the same as I did. When we went to work in the morning my buddies talked about the RFE broadcast of the night before. They were not interested in the domestic news services. Only the Communists believed in the latter, but recently even they took up the habit of listening to the Western radio stations. This proves that their trust in the domestic service was shaken. (007/2)

Moreover, the conviction that foreign broadcasts speak the truth because the domestic media do not is maintained regardless of whether the foreign reports can be verified. In some instances this goes so far that "people believe unconditionally everything the Western stations announce" (057/8), but more frequently verification of some kind does play a role in the Hungarian faith in foreign broadcasts. Just as personal experience gives the lie to the content of the domestic media, so does personal experience verify the content of the foreign broadcasts. One-third of the foreign broadcast listeners reported that their trust in the statements of the foreign stations was strengthened by the corroborations of personal experience as in the following instances:

* See earlier section on evaluation of domestic media.

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About two or three days before our escape I heard a Western broadcast about deportations in various parts of the country. I asked a merchant ship captain acquaintance, who is a radio mechanic now, about it, and he confirmed that 60 per cent of the population of 'X' was deported. We received reliable news about every foreign and local event from the Western radios. Their reliability was often proved by personal information, like in the case I mentioned, as well as by other radio news. (056/3)

It was very characteristic of Western radios that they revealed things about which the news sources back home had been quiet. For instance, I heard on the VOA — or maybe it was RFE — that an AVO (political police) barracks was being built with great secrecy in a forest near a town which was mentioned by name, and that it was for this reason that the inhabitants of the village were not allowed to enter that part of the forest. As a DISZ (Communist youth organization) secretary I was sent to that village some time after the broadcast, and not only was I subjected to a very strict identification procedure at the railroad station, but I was also questioned in detail about the reasons for my trip. Afterwards I saw building material being transported on military trucks in the village. So I could see proof of the accuracy of the broadcast. And it was through RFE that I discovered where my aunt had been deported. It (RFE) reported the place to which people had been deported on the days when my aunt had been deported. A few days later I actually received mail from my aunt from that place. (066/5)

Furthermore, just as demonstrable falsehoods in the Communist news led these respondents to generalize about misrepresentations in the domestic media, so did the demonstrable truths in the foreign broadcasts lead them to generalize about the reliability of Western broadcasts. In fact, most respondents even said that there was no need to check further:*

* The fact that foreign-broadcast attacks on the domestic situation support the credibility of foreign broadcasts in general emphasizes the importance (discussed in a previous section) of programs dealing with domestic issues and affairs.

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Back home, people have no means of checking the authenticity of Western broadcasts. There is no need for such means, however, because they can see that the news turns out to be true when it is about Hungary; thus they also believe what the Western radio stations report about the foreign situation. (024/4)

Still another facet of this antithetical pattern is that the foreign broadcasts, unlike the domestic media, report failures or setbacks.* Fifty-five per cent of these Hungarians mentioned this in explaining their belief in foreign broadcasts.

Finally, there is an element of sheer faith, the simple will to believe, which is implicit in many of these interviews. This will to believe what they hear on Western broadcasts is essentially a part of the listeners' faith in the integrity of the West; it is intimately connected with their aspirations for liberation, and with the psychological necessity to preserve intact one's trust in the symbol of promised freedom.** Although this connection was rarely explicit in these Hungarian interviews, it is clearly implied in such statements as the following:

Eighty per cent of the Hungarian population are against Communists, and they want to listen to the news from the West in spite of difficulties and adverse propaganda. . . . The Western news and other reports correspond to their feelings. (007/10)

* The reporting of setbacks and its effect on credibility of foreign broadcasts will be dealt with in the section which follows, because it was a special area of inquiry. Similarly, the extent to which jamming of foreign broadcasts by the Communists adds to the credibility of these foreign broadcasts is discussed separately.

** Again this is the converse of attitudes surrounding the domestic media, where hostility to the regime predisposed these refugees to mistrust everything reported in the domestic media.

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That these refugees were strongly predisposed to believe everything broadcast by the Western radio is supported by the fact that several of those who asserted that they fully trusted foreign broadcasts, nevertheless recalled one or more instances of untrue reports contained in foreign broadcasts. A few of these described some statements which they found implausible, for example:

I did not hear anything unbelievable on the VOA. But people used to say about the adventures of Balint Boda (on RFE) that it was impossible for anybody to go back and forth across the frontier as often as Balint Boda claimed he did. (086/10)

Others referred to reports which were actually incorrect; most of these pertained to domestic events. For example:

A Western radio, I don't know which, announced that radio subscription rates in Hungary would be raised according to the number of tubes in the set, while the subscription rate of 10 forints for the Peoples' Sets would be kept. This did not happen. (054/11)

Some Western radio station reported about the flight of the Czech Foreign Minister Clementis from Czechoslovakia to Yugoslavia through Styria in order to ask Tito for asylum. Later I heard that Clementis was arrested in Czechoslovakia. (074/3)

Nevertheless, these instances were not permitted to violate the faith these Hungarians had in the veracity of the Western radio. Indeed, so strong is their faith and so closely connected is it with their hopes for liberation that when the West broadcasts news which they find difficult to take — because it definitely weakens the prospect of liberation — they pursue an elaborate course of thinking which enables them to reject the information without criticizing the West. The way they do this is to say that the news is not true but that the Western radio has announced it

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for pro-Hungarian or pro-liberation purposes; in other words, the West is using a propaganda device but since it serves the interest of Hungary the Hungarian is not deceived, but, rather, he is in on it. In this way the listener can go on feeling that the West is always truthful.

I did not believe Truman's statement, broadcast by the VOA, according to which the Soviet Union, too, had the atomic bomb. With the Soviet Union's technical backwardness, I found it inconceivable, because they could not even produce ball bearings or bicycles capable of competing on the world market. I have that conviction as a result of my 26 months of experiences in Russia. He who is a good skilled worker in our country would correspond to a good technician in the Soviet Union (by technician I mean a person carrying out the job of an engineer, while not having a university education). In my opinion, Truman made that statement so as to make the people of America better realize the Soviet danger. (092/16)

The Critical Listener

Twenty-seven per cent of the foreign broadcast listeners were comparatively cautious and guarded in accepting the foreign radio at its word. Needless to say, none of these respondents questioned outright the veracity of what he heard. On the contrary, much of the weight of their remarks is quite similar to that of the majority in the sample. Like the total believers, they are strongly predisposed to trust the foreign radio in preference to the domestic communication media. They too, had occasion to confirm foreign reports by their own experience and they found a convincing ring in the frankness with which VOA and other stations admit Western setbacks and disappointments. And yet, in spite of the evidence attesting to the general reliability of foreign broadcasts, these respondents harbored some doubt and listened with a critical ear.

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Partly responsible for this more suspicious approach is the attitude that a thinking man must always reserve the right to ascertain for himself what is true and what is false. Foreign broadcasts, like any other media of information, must be open to critical appraisal and discriminatory judgment. In the opinion of these respondents, truth cannot be arrived at by a blind acceptance of information coming from one source only; it is necessary to get information from several different sources, and then compare and weigh it. For example:

I learned about home events mostly from Hungarian newspapers and the (domestic) radio. It was easy to compare their reports with my personal experiences and to get the truth this way. Concerning foreign events, I made a similar comparison between the local newspapers and radio, on the one side, and the Western broadcasts, on the other side. (049/6)

A more frequent attitude among the critical listeners is based on the feeling that a station which has been caught in the act of broadcasting incorrect information can no longer be considered completely reliable, particularly when the listener has no means of verifying what he hears.

None of us particularly liked RFE. . . . We were not always sure how authentic its information was. RFE announced, for example, names of persons saying that they are Communist trustees, of whom we most definitely knew that they were not. Furthermore, it was confusing when RFE spoke about some questions in a very vague and uncertain manner. One of these questions was information about the value of the forint, another the report about the events of Tatabanya. Both topics were discussed in detail over RFE, but you could easily tell that they did not exactly know what the situation was. (079/5-6)

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Many people in our village brought up the point that the VOA had been promising the liberation of Hungary a year earlier. It was still promising the same thing now. People can no longer believe that promise, because it has not been kept, and so now they believe the VOA broadcasts less. (084/8)

A handful of respondents felt that foreign broadcasts, or particular foreign stations, were liable to the sins of propaganda which, being tantamount sometimes to a departure from the path of truth, made the reliability of these broadcasts questionable.

We noticed that the VOA sometimes abandoned the truth for the sake of propaganda effects, or that it misled us because it wanted to create some illusions. (073/6)

I know that every radio station serves propaganda purposes, and many people handle the news before it is broadcast. Therefore, I have to take into consideration that no radio news item is 100 per cent true. I think that the news service of RFE was 80 per cent true, and the news service of Radio Budapest was 50 per cent true. (072/7)*

The RFE broadcasts are not 100 per cent good. Its Hungarian news does not always cover the truth. Sometimes they exaggerate the home news. For instance, I heard on RFE in January that a wave of night-raids in the apartments had started, because the police were looking for those who had been deported during the summer and later on escaped back home to Budapest. I had spoken to such a lot of people that I would have learned, I'm sure, if there was anything true in this news. What the Paris radio says, either in news about Hungary or in messages from the editor, is absolutely reliable. It made a mistake once, but it was easy to understand why, and it corrected the blunder next day. It reported on the death of Gizi Bajor and Uray (actor and actress of the National Theater, Budapest). The telegram was misspelled, instead of 'Gizi Bajor and husband,' 'Gizi Bajor and Uray'*** was written. Radio Paris apologized next day. However, when you listen to RFE you have to doubt about everything they are telling you. They always go too far and speak in an extremely violent way. (095/5-6)

* This respondent listened only to RFE.

U.S. ...



These people differ in one crucial respect from the others, discussed earlier, who grant propagandistic motives to foreign broadcasts. The earlier group starts from the assumption that the broadcasts are reliable, and when certain implausible statements are broadcast, these statements are not judged in a credibility framework but, rather, are considered to be a legitimate means of furthering a justified end. The critical group, however, views itself as the target for the alleged propagandistic output and, making its judgment within the credibility framework, feels that it has to separate the falsehoods from the truth.

In sum, the overwhelming majority of these Hungarian refugees were strongly convinced of the reliability and dependability of foreign broadcasts. Not only were they strongly predisposed by their hostility to the regime and the Communist media to trust the foreign radio, they also found to their satisfaction that with few unimportant exceptions the information provided by the Western broadcasts corresponded with reality as they knew it or would have wished to have it.

Twenty-seven per cent of the respondents expressed some reluctance to trust the foreign broadcasts unconditionally. Like the majority, they are convinced that the Western radio is much more trustworthy than the Hungarian press and radio. Nevertheless, these respondents, who are somewhat better educated than their more trusting compatriots, maintained a more cautious and critical attitude, stating that human reason, experience and/or the propagandistic tone of the broadcasts demonstrated that the broadcast assertions could not be accepted in toto.

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Reporting of Setbacks Experienced by the US

Almost all the respondents knew of instances in which the United States had suffered some kind of setback. Reports of such difficulties are received with mixed feelings. Obviously, people do not like to hear such news; some, indeed, find it quite distressing. Nevertheless, practically all of these Hungarians believe that setbacks should be reported by the VOA.

Exposure to News of Setbacks

With few exceptions, the people who listened to foreign broadcasts while in Hungary reported that they had heard of some domestic or international difficulties encountered by the United States. Many of them, in fact, knew of problems on both the domestic and international scene. Thus, almost half the respondents said they had heard about reversals for the Americans in Korea; an equal number had heard reports of strikes and other internal problems; and a handful knew of diplomatic rebuffs suffered by the United States.

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Table 36

EXPOSURE TO SETBACKS AMONG LISTENERS
TO FOREIGN BROADCASTS

Had heard about setbacks in:

Korea	46%
Domestic affairs*	45%
Diplomatic relations	9%
Total who had heard about setbacks of some sort 79%	
Had never heard about setbacks	20
Not ascertainable	1
Total Cases (100%)	(80)

All in all, therefore, 4 out of 5 of these Hungarians at one time or another had had forced upon their attention evidence that things do not always go smoothly for the Americans. VOA preferents were not any more conscious of such setbacks than other respondents.

Reaction to Reports of Strikes in the US
and Retreats in Korea

Respondents reacted in various ways to news reports of strikes in the United States and reversals for the UN forces in Korea. Certainly, no one liked hearing about such developments. Some respondents, however, were able to take such news completely in stride. In certain instances, they did not even consider them setbacks. Some people were disturbed by news of strikes and completely unperturbed by reversals in Korea; some

* Strikes were the domestic problem most widely recalled and discussed. A few people mentioned crime and race relations.

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people were troubled when they heard about retreats in Korea and found reports of strikes easy to take. Still others found both types of setbacks disturbing. However, in all but a very few cases the disturbing effect was small.

Respondents who are able to listen to news about strikes and/or reversals in Korea without flinching, themselves supplied the rationalizations that removed the sting from what might otherwise have been unpleasant news. Thus, if they heard of strikes in the United States, they were able to interpret them as a sign of the freedom which exists in America:

The VOA acted quite correctly in not trying to suppress news about Western strikes and in giving a detailed picture about them. Even though the Hungarian constitution and the trade union regulations permit a strike, every Hungarian worker knows that anybody who would try to strike in Hungary would be called a traitor. The fact that the freedom to strike exists in practice, too, in the West, resulted in a favorable opinion, even if it was revealed that the strike had caused difficulties. The Hungarian worker knows that the strike is a program-like means of political expression for organized labor, and so it is not shocking for him if light is cast upon the political background of the strikes. (092/18)

I often heard detailed reports about Western strikes over VOA. My friends and I, who were talking about this, saw the sign of Western freedom in these facts, and also in the VOA's blunt admission of the difficulties caused by these strikes. Nobody regarded this as a proof of the weakness of the West, and people were glad to get reliable information, even on this subject. (038/10)

Similarly, news of a retreat in Korea was dismissed as a military or political tactic or a temporary thing at most:

They (the UN forces in Korea) are evidently stronger (than the Communist forces); hence it must be a matter of tactics that they do not liquidate the situation immediately. . . . I don't know what the motive for the delay might be; the American strategic staff knows it much better. (003/10)

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There must be political reasons which I don't understand to explain why they haven't beaten back their enemies. (025/13)

Western radios report quite sincerely about misfortunes, like for instance, those in Korea. This is right. This might have had some temporary unfavorable reaction in the mood of young people. But older people know that luck in warfare is something that changes. At the same time, with this sincerity, the radio increases the trust in it even more. (051/10)

There can be little doubt that in such instances the respondents' supreme confidence in the United States is what enabled them to rationalize in this fashion. More than that, however, the admission of such setbacks by the United States evidently confirmed them in their belief in America's trustworthiness and strength:

I recall that the VOA once reported on a 48-hour strike of the American dock workers. I cannot recall in detail what the broadcast said. Szabad Nep and other local news sources hastened to say that the American workers had been driven to strike because of the miserable wage conditions, and that the strike had been broken by the capitalists using police brutality. It is quite right if the Western radios give a clear explanation of the reasons for the strike, and a clear picture about its development (to contradict the Communists). This method (explanation) is the best antidote for Communist propaganda, and the best assurance that people will disbelieve it. I think that in general a radio station can be more trusted if it admits (Western) difficulties sincerely, and as a result it would thus establish its trustworthiness when it broadcasts favorable (to the West) information. I think most Hungarians think the same way. (066/9)

The admission of the existence of the difficulties in the free world by the VOA and other free radio stations was proof of the honesty, objectivity and strength of the free world which has no reason to regard sincerity as being dangerous. Since the radio is a public medium, it is ridiculous to hear Communist propaganda of the opposite type (Communist propaganda that there are no difficulties in Communist countries). (093/21)

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Other respondents, however, were less sanguine about news of setbacks. They admitted that it made them sad to hear about setbacks for the United States because they were worried about the fate of their own country. But most such people approved of reporting setbacks. A Hungarian woman first stressed her unhappiness when she heard of Western difficulties:

We were also very much interested in Korea among the news reports of foreign radios. We were afraid of what would happen if the Russians won. We were desperate when the VOA reported about American withdrawals, because we were waiting for liberation every moment, and we thought that it (liberation) would be delayed with the Communists being better off in Korea, according to the radio news. (100/2)

but in another part of the interview voiced an unqualified approval of reporting military reversals suffered by the US in Korea:

It is true that we were desperate when the VOA announced that the Americans had gone back in Korea and had lost many men. But we thought that it was good that it did not try to mislead us. That also showed that it was always sticking to the truth. We used to say: 'The Germans were at the gates of Moscow, too; still they were defeated. Don't be afraid, the Americans will not let themselves be beaten in Korea. The encirclement (of the enemy) will come soon.' Soon, that was actually reported by the VOA, and we told each other: 'Didn't I tell you so? They have brains.' (100/5)

It becomes quite clear, in the comments of the more articulate, that the respondents who hear Western admissions of setbacks do not draw the implication that the West is weak or is succumbing to Communism. Perhaps this is because the listeners cannot bear the thought of their potential liberators' loss of liberating power in any degree, but whatever the motive, the thought of weakness is rationalized away, usually on quite logical grounds:

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I didn't hear anything like that. When I heard about difficulties in the US, for instance when they broadcast about strikes, to me this was a proof of American democracy. It showed me that in America workers may go on strike without the serious consequences which strikes in Hungary have. I feel that VOA may broadcast this and nobody thinks the US any weaker because of this. If VOA was of the opinion that strikes were a sign of weakness, it wouldn't broadcast about strikes; however, if they did broadcast about strikes, it is because they know very well that this would not make listeners believe that America was weak because of the strikes. (028/7)

Attitudes toward the Policy of Reporting Setbacks

While there is no question that the particular setbacks which respondents discussed in these interviews did generate a certain amount of anxiety, and while it is likely that reports of other setbacks might have a similar effect, it is equally clear that the respondents are overwhelmingly in favor of continuing the policy of reporting such developments.

More than 4 out of 5 of these refugees said explicitly and unqualifiedly that setbacks should be reported. Another handful also voiced approval of this general policy, but made qualifying remarks about the way in which this should be done. Only 1 respondent said that under no circumstances should setbacks be reported.

Table 37

ATTITUDES TOWARD REPORTING OF SETBACKS
AMONG FOREIGN BROADCAST LISTENERS

Unqualified approval	81%
Qualified approval	5
Disapproval	1
Not ascertainable	10
Total Cases (100%) =	(80)

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Whatever emotional antipathy exists among the respondents with regard to hearing about setbacks is evidently offset by some very practical considerations. This emerges quite clearly in the arguments respondents present in favor of the policy of reporting setbacks.

About two-thirds of those who adopt this position point out that the inclusion of items unfavorable to the West is essential because it offers proof to the listeners that the broadcasters are telling the truth. This point of view was expressed both by people who were distressed when they heard about setbacks and by people who found it relatively easy to accept such information, as the previous quotations have shown.

Behind such comments, of course, is the belief that truthfulness is a major feature which distinguishes the VOA and other foreign stations from the Communist-controlled radio. This was expressed in so many words by a number of respondents:

It would have disappointed the Hungarians if the Western radios did not broadcast news about current difficulties. It is the method of the Soviet Union to do so only after the difficulty has passed, or was eliminated. People would become suspicious of the West if it tried to follow the same method. (092/18)

I also heard on Western radio stations about American difficulties and failures. This is good as here you can see that they really tell the truth, and that is why the popularity of the transmissions is increasing. It seems to me that the BBC is the best in this respect; they not only report the troubles but go deep into an explanation of them, but all the other stations also report the troubles too. I can recall for instance the Iran problem or the meeting of the foreign ministers where they did not hide the difficulties with which they were confronted. I would not say people at home are happy about bad

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news but they cannot blame the western broadcasts for them. They respect the stations for announcing them. I know this because people often compare this with the method of the Budapest radio, which reports results all the time but they are lies. (004/6)

The implication of such remarks is clear: if the Western stations failed to report their setbacks, they would no longer be different from the Communist stations. People are apparently willing to suffer the consequences of hearing unpleasant news in order to preserve their faith in the truthfulness of the West.

Another factor which appears to be decisive in making respondents approve of the admission of setbacks is the recognition, that it is almost impossible to conceal such news. The respondents know from their own experience that Communist propaganda is quick to capitalize on Western defeats. It is better, under the circumstances, they feel, for such news to come from the West first in order to forestall later unfortunate results.

I heard about this. For instance, there were the Korean local defeats, and the French strikes. I think they are right (to broadcast such news). Naturally, one gets more excited while listening to the news about an American withdrawal, but this does not mean that it should not be broadcast. In such a case, the effects would be all the more unpleasant later. In my opinion, it would be stupidity to advise that VOA should not report unpleasant news. Sooner or later, it would become public anyway, and then the disappointment would be even greater. You can keep quiet only about something which those from whom you keep it secret can never find out later. That's why I am definitely in favor of the Western radios announcing the difficulties. I am sure others would say the same, if I asked them. I never heard anybody saying anything contrary to the spirit of this. (027/12)

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A corollary of this is that forthright statements of difficulties prevent the circulation of harmful rumors based upon half-truths or, worse, upon untruths promulgated by "hostile sources":

The VOA gave a faithful report on the difficulties which have arisen in connection with Western armament. Such announcements are good because they prevent news from hostile sources from circulating about the subject. This would namely give occasion for false deductions; thus, however, the truth is clear. (055/11)

Finally, there were some people who felt that there was no harm in admitting setbacks because such things are perfectly normal and to be expected.

When we heard through Western broadcasts that something didn't go well for the Americans in Korea, then we merely said that it had to be that way. If one fights a war, he has to have some losses. No one was disturbed by this (American setbacks). (088/6)

The one person who completely disapproves of broadcasting news of difficulties faced by the democracies feels that the danger lies in demoralisation of the non-Communists behind the Iron Curtain. She believes that such items simply feed the propaganda of the Communists, without having other compensatory values:

When the Western radios reported about strikes in Western countries, my husband, with whom I used to listen to the broadcasts, always burst out, saying 'Why do they have to announce this?' We both thought that such reports support the Communists' statements about oppression and misery in the West. It brings the West into an unequal position with the Communists, who always hide their own troubles. (056/8)

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The people who give qualified approval to the announcement of setbacks lie closer to the majority opinion which approves this policy than they do to the side of complete disapproval. They claim, like the majority, that it is important to preserve the quality of truthfulness in Western broadcasts. At the same time, however, they feel that certain measures should be taken to avoid the danger of demoralization and despair. For instance, one respondent recommended that setbacks be underplayed by an appropriate selection of items for broadcasting:

The open admission by the American side of the military losses in Korea had a very good moral effect on people. It strengthened their belief that the VOA was not lying and that they could trust its reports. However, when the VOA reported on the difficulties of rearmament (in the West) and about the great strength of the Communists on the other side, that made a very bad moral effect on people. It would be better not to emphasize these things, because they lower the hopes of people in Hungary very much, whose nerves are worn out. The reports of the VOA on Western difficulties should be selected on the basis of such considerations. (060/13)

Another suggestion was that the VOA present such items more fully, taking time to explain the causes, pointing out the good side as well as the bad, and indicating what is being done to overcome the problem.

In my opinion, speaking about Western strikes would be right only if they gave an explanation for them. It should be told who the people are who strike. It should be told also whether it is the Communists who instigated them to strike. Or whether it is only the workers who make use of their right. What do they want to achieve by it? It should be pointed out, too, that the workers in the West are permitted to strike because they are not shot for it like in Hungary. Workers in the West are not imprisoned and don't have to starve just because they demand their rights. (081/9)

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The Refutation of Communist Propaganda by the VOA

A rather important subsidiary function of foreign broadcasts to satellite countries is to supply sympathizers behind the Iron Curtain with the factual ammunition to resist Communist propaganda encountered in domestic media or to counter the arguments of the Communists who surround them. A total of 78 per cent of the respondents who listened to foreign stations felt that these stations should devote part of their programs to refuting Communist propaganda, or at least certain aspects thereof. However, this function of foreign broadcasts appears to be considered by most respondents as decidedly secondary in importance. Furthermore, most respondents seem to desire, by virtue of the specific examples which they mention, that the VOA refute this propaganda through demonstrable truths and thus expose the Communist propagandists for the liars they are believed to be. It follows that the desired areas of refutation are in most cases restricted to the domestic scene. Very few respondents mentioned Communist propaganda themes and charges directed against the US. In brief, the discussion of the problem of refuting regime propaganda appears to be, for these Hungarian refugees, just another expression of their desire to hear the domestic actualities exposed and attacked by the foreign broadcasts.

Here are two statements which rather neatly sum up the problem:

In my opinion, people in Budapest don't believe the Communists in anything. However, it makes sense when the VOA argues with them. At home (in Hungary) people who read Szabad Nep see only that it tells lies again. But in many cases they don't know where the truth is. The VOA can answer mostly in a briefer and more effective way than the people at home. The best answers are, when the VOA pulls out some old copy of Szabad Nep, written years

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ago and quotes from the speeches of Rakosi or some other important person which tell exactly the contrary of what is happening now. The people at home have no means of getting hold of such copies, they need the VOA to do it for them. I heard such arguings over the VOA more than once; however, I recollect only the broadcast when the VOA, in connection with the Mindszenty case, reminded the listeners of the time when Rakosi spoke for the Church and even gave money for the reconstruction of St. Stephen's cathedral in Budapest. (095/10-11)

As to polemics against the Communist doctrine, I cannot quote examples, but I feel that one could bring better and stronger arguments against the Communist propaganda over the Voice of America. I may be able to give an example: I mean the Voice of America, at present, should mainly point out the American living standard. At the moment the Hungarian workers are deprived of everything, as all goods are exported to foreign countries, mainly to Russia. It is daily hammered into the Hungarian workers by the official propaganda how well off they are and they are invited to enjoy it compared to the misery in the West. The workers feel that this is not true and therefore one should not cease to broadcast the truth about the American living standard. (002/4)

Since most statements closely follow this pattern and are no different from the reactions to, and recommendations for, the treatment of domestic events and issues,* we shall deal with them here only inasmuch as they reveal an evaluation of the VOA's performance in this field.

In this respect, a plurality of respondents (35 per cent) find that the VOA is adequately answering Communist propaganda claims. A smaller group (20 per cent) feel that the VOA has been somewhat negligent and should have done more.

* Refer to section on Domestic Issues and Affairs (p. 133). See also the section on broadcasts about American life (p. 156) for a discussion of how broadcasts describing the American living standard (such as the ones requested in the second quotation above) actually form part of the treatment of domestic events and issues.

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Table 38

REFUTATION OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA BY VOA

Communist propaganda attacks should be refuted and:	
VOA is doing a good job	35%
VOA is partly unsatisfactory.	20
Do not evaluate VOA performance	23
Communist propaganda attacks are disbelieved and may be ignored	6
No opinion	16
Total Cases (100%)	(80)

Those respondents who find the VOA's performance satisfactory made simple statements to this effect, which run usually somewhat like the following:

VOA, on many occasions, replied to the Communist propaganda well. We used to say at such times: 'If Matyas Rakosi is listening to this, his mouth surely must be agape.' I do not remember, however, exactly what these VOA answers were. (018/19)

Those, on the other hand, who find room for improvement in VOA's treatment of Communist propaganda claims, ordinarily have in mind specific Communist allegations which they find themselves unable to answer or consider that others in their country need reassurance about.

After World War II, land was divided among the people and they also received cattle and seed. No taxes were required of them. Then they (the Communists) started asking for back taxes, and placed such burdens on the shoulders of people that everybody tried to get rid of the land quickly. This is how the Communists prepared the ground for getting people into the kolkhozes. Many people realized the phoniness of this. But it would be good to make people remember exactly what had happened to the land, and to tell them that the Communists were lying about the advantages of the kolkhozes, just as their program of land reform was a lie and was used as bait. It

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should also be explained that the great educational opportunities about which the Communists boast are only good for the training of Party secretaries and other spokesmen for Communism. However, there are no advantages in these opportunities for the great masses, and even the trained Communists do not know when they will fall out of favor. Many people were tricked in this way. People should be made to understand clearly how untrue the Communist statements about Western misery, lack of food, and poor housing are. The Communists talk about it so much that there are always more people who believe it. I cannot recall any VOA lectures on this subject. (064/10)

The programs of Radio Budapest are so dominated by the Five-Year Plan (propaganda) that the VOA should deal more with why the Communists' claims about the improvement of the economic and social standards, resulting from the Plan, are not true. (092/18)

A handful of respondents indicated that, in their opinion, Communist propaganda attacks and claims could be ignored because they were disbelieved by the Hungarian people anyhow.

It doesn't make any sense for the Western radios to get into a discussion with Szabad Nep's statements. The people don't believe them anyway, because they know from their own experience that they are not true. Secondly, these articles are hardly read by anyone. This is also true of the things which they say on the radio or at meetings. (075/8)

The people don't believe them (the Communists) any more. They don't even listen to what the Communists speak about. People couldn't protest but this doesn't mean necessarily that they believe what they are told. The Communists said recently, for instance, that people should sign for Peace loans because it would serve the interests of their better future and peace. The most stupid people and the last gipsy in the village wouldn't give credit to such an assertion. Until 1949 the people still believed the Communists sometimes. Life was still relatively good then and some people could have thought that even the Communists worked for a good cause. This belief doesn't exist any more. Nowadays one doesn't have

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to explain to the people that the Communists don't tell the truth; they are quite convinced of it. The people should only be told what the truth is instead. (078/11)

In Hungary, experience has taught people a lot of things. They know now, without explanations, how the Communist arguments stand. Today, the only remaining followers of Communism are those who make a lot of money by it. Those who were convinced Communists are no longer followers of the regime, because they did not want and did not expect Communism in the form in which it now exists (in Hungary). I knew such disillusioned old Communists. For this reason, there is no necessity for the VOA to devote a lot of time to arguments (with the Communists). (051/10)

In sum, it appears that the Hungarian respondents do not seem to be unduly perturbed over Communist propaganda charges, and in particular over attacks against the US. However, although they do not differentiate it from the general treatment of domestic issues and conditions, they do recognize the usefulness of a rudimentary counterpropaganda, as the following will show:

Even though the Communist political propaganda is unbelievable, they are still able easily to answer anything, because they have prepared all the answers in advance. Most of the time you can feel what to tell them (the Communists); still you can't do it, because you are not as prepared as they are. And if you only got mad and said the first thing that entered your mind, then you would really get in trouble. That's why it would be good to teach people over the radio how to answer the Communists nicely and briefly, without getting into big trouble. It has happened to me that I told them something which they could not answer, and where they could not make a point. So all they said was: 'You better keep quiet.' You cannot notice in individual arguments whether you have been helped by listening to the VOA. But if you were a regular radio listener, then you would have confidence to argue about anything with people, because you would know what it was all about. To be able to do this, you have to listen to the radio often, and you have to pick up a lot of knowledge. (043/9)

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Incidents Precipitated By Foreign Broadcasts

In an attempt to assess the impact of foreign broadcasts upon their audience in Hungary it is of interest to find out to what degree, if any, these broadcasts may have resulted in overt action on the part of sizable groups among the population. It was known beforehand that information broadcast by the VOA had precipitated a generalized hoarding of food in anticipation of the reintroduction of rationing. This fact has received confirmation in the framework of the present study and other similar incidents have been related by the respondents.

Fewer than one-third of the respondents who listened to foreign stations (31 per cent) recounted instances of specific behavior among large numbers of the Hungarian people which they associated with foreign broadcasts. A total of 25 respondents mentioned one or more such incidents: 4 mentioned the hoarding of food, 13 mentioned the buying spree provoked by the news that bills of a certain denomination would be withdrawn from circulation, and 11 mentioned various other incidents.* It can be gathered from the statements of the respondents that most of the incidents referred to, and particularly the buying spree, were rather widespread throughout Hungary. The fact that two-thirds of the respondents failed to recall these incidents is not necessarily a contradiction, since it is quite likely that the news which was at the basis of the incidents was originally heard on the radio by only a proportion of the

* One respondent, a resident of an area of Hungary annexed by Czechoslovakia in 1947, recounted an incident which had taken place in the latter country. Since the subsequent discussion concerns incidents which happened in Hungary, this respondent will not be included.

YFOR, Inc.



foreign broadcast listeners, while the other listeners and the non-listeners learned about it indirectly, by word of mouth transmittal of the broadcast content. In fact, practically all respondents who mentioned an incident of this sort indicated that they had heard directly the broadcasts which precipitated it. In consequence, a clear cause and effect relationship between the broadcasts and the incidents is seen and stated by all these respondents. Furthermore, the broadcasts referred to are firmly believed to have been the sole determining factor in creating each incident; there is no evidence that any other factors may have operated; in fact, the very possibility did not even occur to the respondents.

The major incident referred to is a buying spree which followed a series of foreign-broadcast announcements late in 1950 to the effect that the Hungarian 100-forint bills were going to be withdrawn from circulation or devalued. People tried to get rid of the condemned bills by spending them on any commodity they could lay their hands on. This prediction eventually failed to materialize, since these bills were not withdrawn at that time. This fact created an incident within the incident, as it were, as it provoked either feelings of exuberant satisfaction with the effectiveness of the foreign broadcasts which were credited with having prevented the execution of a contemplated measure by destroying the essential element of surprise, or, in some cases, a sentiment of sharp disappointment with what was considered a piece of incorrect and misleading information. Incidentally, this provides a vivid illustration

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of the problems involved in broadcasting warnings of impending Communist measures which, as we have seen, so many Hungarians desire. Here are some statements referring to this incident.

The VOA and RFE reported that the Hungarian 100-forint bills would be withdrawn from circulation. Every one hurried to get rid of his 100-forint bills (by buying things). Then the merchants rushed to the banks to get rid of the bills too. The whole thing was called off, but my sister was informed at the Hungarian National Bank that it had been planned. The Communists were forced to drop the plan because it had been disclosed. (073/4)

During the fall of 1950, RFE talked a lot about the exchange or devaluation of paper currency in Hungary. The VOA also talked about the Hungarian currency at that time. The broadcast was about the Hungarian currency having no backing, and we regarded it as a reference to devaluation. As a result of the broadcasts, people tried to get rid of all the paper currency quickly. I, too, got rid of mine and my brother's money. I bought clothes and shoes, too, in order to spend the money. I heard from other people that the same thing had happened in 'X'. There was such a tumult in the stores that one could hardly move inside. Everything in the shops was sold out within a few days. (086/8)

When the VOA announced the devaluation of the forint, everybody got rid of the bills. But when nothing happened and there was no devaluation — for days nobody turned on the radio, saying: 'It is lying, anyway.' (020/4)

A few respondents mentioned a food buying and hoarding panic which broke out as the result of a VOA broadcast:

When VOA announced the re-introduction of rationing in Hungary, people hastened to buy 10 kilograms of every kind of goods they could get. When a shortage of soap was also announced by VOA, people started buying bars of soap, ten at a time. The Communists branded VOA's announcement as a slanderous lie nobody would be fooled by. However, ration cards were issued two weeks later. (016/8)

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It happened in 'X' that people rushed (to the stores) to buy flour, because they heard on the VOA's broadcast that there were difficulties in Hungary concerning flour supplies. (018/11)

As we have seen, several respondents mentioned various other instances of behavior on the part of large groups of the Hungarian population under the influence of foreign broadcasts. In some cases, it was only an "accidental" result of foreign-broadcast information which would not seem to be incident-provoking in nature -- for example Balint Boda's proposed visits to certain places in Hungary:

I experienced the active effects of the Western broadcasts when RFE announced that Balint Boda was going to take a walk the next week in the vineyards of 'X'. At that time the AVO men raided the whole neighborhood of 'X'. Unknown authors had written large BB letters on houses, fences, on the walls of the toilets in factories, and even on the walls of the Police building. In many places they had written: 'Fear and tremble, Balint Boda is coming.' On those days policemen did not dare to walk alone, only in pairs. (058/5)

A few other respondents made similar statements. Most individuals in this group, however, referred to instances of behavior based on specific advice which the Hungarian listeners were given by certain foreign stations and which they evidently followed faithfully. We have pointed out, in one of the previous sections, that a sizeable proportion of respondents expressed the wish to have practical advice broadcast to them on ways of counteracting or evading or acting toward regime measures. Here we find evidence that this course has already been taken in certain cases:

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Last summer RFE called for a 'silent strike' for a week. I found that people were trying to stick to this. During that week we hardly received any instructions from the offices. There was nothing to do in the workshops. They did not complete the Plan, and they were late. It looked as if the strike was led from the offices, but nobody knew this for sure. It (the strike) had no unpleasant consequences. We told people that this sabotage was a result of RFE's appeal, and they were very glad when they saw the results. There were people, however, to whom this could not be told, and of course, they did not know what was going on. The simple workers who were pro-Communist did not even notice the whole thing. But the Communist big shots surely must have known about it, because I think they also listen to RFE. There were 50 people in the workshop where I worked. Among these the foreman and two workers were Communists. (026/5)

During the last elections in Hungary people planned not to vote, because we could vote only for one ticket. At that time the VOA explained that the election was not valid anyway, but that the Communists would cause trouble to people who did not attend. So the VOA advised that everybody should go calmly to the election and vote the way the Communists wanted. People became reassured, and acted that way. (059/7)

Many workers joined the (Communist) Party when RFE broadcast to them not to throw away (jeopardize) their daily bread and (to join the Party) in case they could not withstand the pressure, because there would not be any punishment later on account of their having joined the Party. Also the acts of sabotage committed by my fellow railway workers were in connection with the RFE instigation to sabotage. (013/5)

An . . . example of the effect of foreign radios came up when signatures were collected against Cardinal Mindszenty. The Vatican and some other station told us that everybody could sign these documents and not worry about it. This radio news solved a great many people's grave problem of conscience. Many people who otherwise would have refused to give their signature avoided, with the help of this radio news, superfluous persecution. (076/8)

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These cases appear to confirm the fact that there is a definite impact of foreign broadcasts upon the Hungarian population and that there is, among the Hungarians, a spirit of receptivity toward the directives broadcast by foreign stations.

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CHAPTER IV

ORAL DISSEMINATION OF FOREIGN BROADCAST NEWS

General Situational Background

The statements of our respondents provide clear-cut evidence that oral dissemination of news broadcast by foreign stations is going on in Hungary and occupies a rather important position among the different sources of information about domestic and world events. Ninety-two per cent of the respondents, listeners and non-listeners, stated that there was oral dissemination, and this testimony is based almost completely on personal experience. Five per cent of the respondents did not discuss this problem, while only three per cent specifically stated that they never experienced this information medium and were therefore unprepared to say whether or not it existed.

In view of this evidence there is little reason to doubt that news originating with foreign broadcasts is commonly circulated by word of mouth in Hungary and that this compensates to a considerable extent for the inaccessibility of the foreign broadcasts for many people. In other words, due to this process, the proportion of people who are exposed to the content of foreign broadcasts (at least as far as news is concerned) is considerably higher than the actual audience of the foreign station.

This is also significant because, as we have seen, many respondents claimed that diffusion of foreign broadcast news by word of mouth frequently involved unpleasant consequences or even was prohibited and punishable under the law. It appears now that these risks do not have

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much effect as deterrents, since there is almost absolute unanimity among the respondents about the existence of oral dissemination as a firmly established pattern of behavior in present day Hungary. Even if most respondents indicated that this circulation of news by word of mouth was restricted to people who knew each other well, and was surrounded by an atmosphere of caution, yet the general impression is that it went on rather freely and with the barest minimum of precautionary measures.

Let us consider, for example, where the news originating with foreign broadcasts was being passed around. Practically all respondents who discussed this aspect (84 per cent of the sample) said that conversations about news from foreign broadcasts took place mostly in informal groups of friends, wherever such friends happened to meet, including the factory and other places of work. The factory and the office are specifically mentioned in this respect by at least two out of five respondents, which indicates that security measures were not too strictly enforced and that the danger of being overheard by trustees was not of great concern. A number of respondents stressed that they would not talk about foreign broadcast news to people whom they did not know well for fear of being reported to the authorities as guilty of "whispered propaganda" or of "spreading panic-provoking rumors," but this risk does not seem to have been a really serious deterrent of discussion of the news broadcast by foreign stations with other people.

Another indication of the relative safety with which news from foreign broadcasts is circulated in Hungary is provided by the statements concerning the speed with which this news was disseminated. Only 40 per cent of the respondents offered comments upon this point, but all of these

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unanimously claimed that the news spread extremely fast. A typical statement in this respect was: "Everybody in our community knew it the next day." Slightly more than a half of the respondents who discussed this point subscribed to this view, while the rest made more general comments to the effect that the news spread at once or very fast. This seems to indicate rather clearly that no great risks could have been associated with this sort of activity.

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Source of News Disseminated Orally

Two-thirds of the respondents made some comment about the relative importance of the different foreign stations as sources of news circulated by word of mouth. These respondents fall into four groups of approximately equal size. The first group stated that news spread by word of mouth came particularly from the VOA. The second group claimed that although the VOA was the most important source, news from other stations was given practically equally wide currency. The third category said that news originating from other stations (usually RFE) was more apt to be passed around among the people than news broadcast by the VOA. Among these respondents, all but two listened to the VOA and four were VOA preferents. Finally, the remaining respondents stated that the news spread by word of mouth was identified solely as coming from foreign stations and was not associated with any specific station.

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Kinds of News Given Widest Dissemination

The majority of our respondents (83 per cent) mentioned the themes of the news which was most eagerly passed around by word of mouth. The frequency with which different themes are mentioned follows:

Table 39

BROADCAST TOPICS GIVEN WIDEST ORAL DISSEMINATION

Liberation		67%
News suggesting that liberation is near	24%	
News suggesting imminence of war	16	
Diplomatic and military setbacks of Communism	14	
Western rearmament, new weapons	13	
Domestic events and issues		63%
Demunciation of Communist informers	15%	
Deportations	14	
Escapes to the West	8	
Economic conditions	7	
Failures of the regime	6	
Political trials	6	
Purges, dissension within Communist Party	4	
Domestic events in general	3	
Korea		26%
World events		15%
World events in general	9%	
Austrian peace treaty	6	
Anything against Communism		10%
"Important" news		6%
Humor, jokes		4%
No answer		17%
Total Cases (100%) =		(100)

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This table, as is to be expected, simply underlines what has been said in the previous pages about the motivations of the Hungarians for listening to foreign broadcasts and about the kinds of things the respondents said should be broadcast. The topics which people talked about were those which they were most interested in hearing, and all had to do with the desire for the end of the regime in Hungary.

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Belief in News Disseminated by Word of Mouth

Only 38 per cent of the respondents made comments about the degree of belief in news disseminated orally. With the exception of six individuals, all these respondents said that this news was believed as much as news heard directly over the radio. Some individuals in this group added that the news was so believed if the informant was considered to be reliable; others indicated an implicit belief in news credited to foreign stations.

People absolutely believe what they hear (from other people) and do not think it is necessary to check on it. (019/4)

We trusted those people of whom we knew by experience that they passed on reliably the news from the Western radio. But in 'X' (town where the respondent lived) there were one or two people who spread fake news; we were angry with them because they undermined the credit of the Western stations. They spread fantastic rumors . . . they recounted (them) as news heard on Western broadcasts. (021/26)

Six respondents said that they mistrusted the news disseminated by word of mouth because they doubted the reliability of the carriers.

People often exaggerated the news when telling it to others and added things which had not been said originally. (092/13)

There seems to be no doubt that a very considerable proportion of the Hungarian population is in fact exposed to news broadcast by foreign stations through the indirect medium of dissemination of such news by word of mouth. This so-called "whispered propaganda" provides a substitute for actual personal exposure to foreign broadcasts and increases the impact of the broadcasts on the population at large.

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PART II

IMAGE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



CHAPTER I

IMAGE OF LIFE IN AMERICA

It is the economic advantages of life in America that dominate the image of America held by these refugees and that provoke the widest and most enthusiastic comment. Spontaneous discussions about life in the United States revolve almost exclusively about economic themes, and even when attention is directed to other aspects of American life, responses continue to display strong economic overtones.

For these refugees, America is still the golden land of opportunity where prosperity reigns endlessly. They speak with awe of the bountiful resources of America and of the technological wizardry of her people which have combined to produce a steady stream of consumer goods. They see America as a land where economic opportunity is open to all -- where ability, initiative, and hard work lead straight to the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Here employer and employee live together in relative harmony, equitably sharing in the great bounty they produce together -- the worker protected by his freedom to pick and choose employment and to strike -- the employer restrained from the impulse to exploit the worker by the knowledge that it is to his own best interest to keep the production process uninterrupted.

In this economic dreamland, the worker is envisioned as leading a life of almost unsullied proletarian bliss. He is well paid, works short hours, can spend his leisure hours as caprice dictates, can work or not as he chooses, has ideal physical conditions on the job, and always has the shining hope that through industry and thrift he may some

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day purchase land or embark on his own business thus passing into the ranks of the entrepreneurs.

Commentaries on the political organization of the United States and political conditions in America share the utopian quality of the respondents' vision of economic life in America reported above. Almost without exception, these respondents affirm that the United States is a true political democracy. They feel that the people and not the moneyed classes select the government and that America is characterized by freedom of political expression. The minority who credit the American financial elite with political power state that the ranks of the elite are open to all.

Some of the civil rights of Americans which these Hungarians sorely miss under the Communist regime are the free expression of opinion (especially with regard to political matters), the freedom to join the political party of their choice or to remain outside the political arena if so inclined, the freedom of unrestricted movement from one place to another through free media of communication, and freedom of worship.*

Very few of the respondents have anything to say about discrimination against minority groups. Such comment as there is generally affirms the complete equality of all racial groups in America. A small number testify to the existence of discriminatory practices against Negroes in America, but these persons are generally noncommittal or sympathetic to the white majority on this issue. There is only one strong statement against American patterns of discrimination.

* Since most of the comment is made in a comparative context (America vs. Hungary under Communism) the implication is fairly clear that the individual liberties as well as other aspects of American life most highly praised are the ones that these Hungarians miss most keenly at home.

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There also appears to be little strong feeling about formal Communist organizations in America. Although more than two out of five respondents introduce the topic into their discussions, most of them simply make a matter of fact acknowledgement of the existence of Communist groups in the US and no more. However, there is a small number who express resentment and apprehension because of the leniency shown by the US in dealing with domestic Communism.

But these are minor considerations. As has already been indicated, the aspect of life in America that inspires the greatest admiration among these respondents is the economic advantage which they believe Americans have over other nations. When asked directly what they considered the most favorable aspect of life in the USA, respondents' comments revealed the same strong economic emphasis evidenced by their free responses. Although nearly half the respondents named political and civil liberties as attractive aspects of life in America, most of these named them in conjunction with economic factors. One-fifth of the respondents spoke about political rights alone while one-third explained their admiration for the USA exclusively in terms of the material advantages to be had there.

This intense preoccupation with the material benefits of life under the capitalistic system suggests that dissatisfaction with conditions at home more often reflects resentment of economic hardships connected with the regime than strong ideological convictions. This conclusion is supported by other evidence, notably the explicit assertion of several respondents that they are uninterested in who wields political power as

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long as the ruling elite provides for their economic needs. Many who do not state their position so unequivocally imply strongly that they are basically in agreement on this point with their more outspoken compatriots.

Thus, while these respondents generally profess almost unre- served admiration for American political democracy, this admiration as well as the motivation for their defection seems to be more strongly rooted in economic factors than in moral or philosophical convictions about the conflicting ideologies of America and the Soviet world.

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Images of Economic Life in the US

Almost without exception, these refugees conceive of life in America as one of unparalleled comfort and economic plenty. Ninety-three per cent of the respondents make reference to the prosperity and abundance which they believe reigns throughout the US in reporting their impressions of what life in that country is like. About half of them (49 per cent of the total sample) ascribe America's economic predominance and the numerous material benefits enjoyed by her citizens to the advanced state of American technology. American technical skills and mass production methods have provided an abundance of goods which are well within the reach of the well-paid workers.

The most attractive thing about US life is that if one has a skill, he can put it to better use there than in Hungary. Shorter working hours, more production, higher pay than in Hungary — the worker can produce more there because the technical development is higher. At the same time, greater production results in higher wages. In America very many people have an adequate income. One who has an income can buy things because there is no shortage of goods nor rationing.
(004/8)

Most of the remaining statements do not attempt to analyze the factors which have contributed to America's economically favorable position. They are little more than flat assertions that in America well-being and even luxury are within reach of all who are willing to exercise even a relatively modest effort. "Even a day laborer earns so much that he is able to satisfy his most exquisite needs regarding entertainment."
(098/16) "In America everybody is prosperous. The little man can also buy what he needs and doesn't feel there are others who are doing better than he."
(016/11)

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The fact that many people whom the respondents know, either personally or by hearsay, have made impressive fortunes in the US also serves to nourish this picture of the all-pervasive and uninterrupted character of American prosperity.

The fact that there is a better life in America than in Europe is certain, since plenty of the Hungarians acquired their money there. All of them who returned bought a couple of houses and fields. The same person could not have achieved that at home. It is because the wages are higher in America. Half of the wages could be saved and they can have a good life for the other half. The wages are higher because there are richer employers in America who can afford to pay greater salaries to the workers. (010/6)

Some of the stories about individual emigrants have a slightly apocryphal ring which serves to emphasize the folk-myth quality of many of the statements regarding the facility with which substantial wealth may be acquired in the US.*

In May, 1950. . . an acquaintance left for Canada with his wife to work as a mason. He wrote to me that a car was waiting for them when they arrived and that they were taken to a beautiful castle. Their employers bought them two suitcases full of clothes. In the castle, he and his wife were given four rooms and a bathroom. Before entering the rooms they were thinking about how they would furnish the four rooms. When they opened the door, they saw that all the rooms were furnished and there was also kitchen equipment. They also received some spending money; so they had something to live on until he received his first pay. He got this pay one week later. His daily pay was about 21 Canadian dollars and his monthly rent was 70 dollars. In essence, I imagine the US is just like this. There too, they surely help the immigrants to find a place in their new homeland, and there too it is possible to earn enough from the beginning to obtain the necessities of everyday life. (018/12)

* Refer to Part II Chapter IV, "Sources of Images of America."

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I saw letters from the West at my mother-in-law's, whose brothers and sisters are in America. In one letter, for instance, it said that one of their daughters of the same age as my wife bought a motor bicycle since the family already possessed four cars. This was news of such interest that we could hardly eat. They could send all the children to schools though their father was a worker and had four children. All four have a high school diploma.
(013/3)

The flow of parcels to Hungary from Hungarians who have emigrated to America, as the respondent just quoted pointed out, provides further evidence of the abundance that exists in America. This palpable proof that stories of American plenty have basis in reality is useful in refuting Communist claims that American capitalism is characterized by mass unemployment and abject poverty:

It is a pet statement of Communist propaganda that people in the US live from leftover food and trash they collect on trash dumps. To this the Hungarians used to answer, "What could all the things in those trash dumps be if the people who do not live well in the US are continually able to send useful and valuable things back home?"
(054/7)

Thus, the overwhelming majority of respondents, envision life in America in the rosiest of terms. They see America as a place where there is limitless opportunity to earn money, where labor is generously paid, and all kinds of goods are available at reasonable prices on the open market. More about these aspects of life in the US will be reported in the section on the life of the worker since it is in this context that most respondents go into detailed discussions of American economic life.

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The Class Structure

As is suggested by some of the statements which have been cited in the immediately foregoing pages, the bulk of these respondents believe that there exist class divisions in America. For most of these (60 per cent of the total sample) this division is a simple dichotomy of employer and employee -- the moneyed capitalist and the worker.* An additional 14 per cent think primarily in terms of this two way division but do make some spontaneous references to other classes or at least imply that there exist other class groups in American society.

Although this two class concept of the American social structure has general acceptance, a majority are convinced that the class division is not a rigid one. They believe firmly that with personal ability, perseverance and thrift every man in America has an opportunity to rise upward in the social and economic scale. Many assert that the wealthy have no differential advantages over the poor. Others, who perhaps more realistically concede that the wealthy may exercise certain powers and have certain privileges not enjoyed by the working class, argue that this is a natural or non-objectionable state since the American worker is patently

* The implications of this two-class concept of American society should be noted. The respondents' mode of thought coincides with (but is not necessarily due to) the Socialist-Communist definition of class division -- worker vs. entrepreneur -- and they think of America in these terms. They have not, however, accepted the second premise, which makes the first of these two groups the exploited and the second the exploiter, at least as far as the US is concerned. But the idea of the "average American", John Doe, middle class, generally has little meaning for them, and it is important to have this in mind when broadcasting to these people about American society, if the broadcasts are to have interest and be understood.

ENCLOSURE



so well off. Only one respondent suggested that the poor in America may be at a real disadvantage, but even this individual believes that everybody in the US lives well.*

The assertion that economic opportunity is open to all regardless of economic or social status is made by 84 per cent of the respondents. This includes 24 per cent who generally ignore or lightly dismiss the existence of any class distinctions and 60 per cent who contend that existing class distinctions do not affect access to economic opportunities.

* This man entered upon a discussion of the relative merits of nationalisation of production and private ownership in the course of which he commented:

I don't know because I haven't been to America yet, but it is possible that social class differences arise when the factories are in private hands The class difference could lead to a situation where the proprietor employs in his factory the son of his friend and doesn't employ those who are not recommended. Anyway there may be a difference between the American factory owner and workman because of money The most important thing for me would be that people should be judged according to their learning, and their wages and living should be in proportion to it. Differences between people shouldn't be made because of their money. However, this isn't well arranged even in the US. (080/12)

In his final words on the subject, however, he practically retracted in toto the implications of these statements.

What I said about the class differences due to the differences in riches would be, naturally, also valid for America. But if I achieved my own good living, I wouldn't bother with this problem. This whole class difference was only my deduction. Maybe there is no such difference at all in America. I only imagined it so, taking the Horthy regime as an example. But I know quite well that everybody lives well in the US. (080/12)

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The smaller group places almost no qualifications on the statement that success is open to everyone.

Obviously the US is called the country of possibilities because everybody there has the possibility for success. It's only skill that counts. Success is not influenced by birth or material situation. (061/11)

It is certain that those with money are masters. But if everybody has money, then everybody is a master. Some of them bigger, others smaller, but all are masters. (024/13)

In America the 'Capitalist class exploits the worker',* but my most ardent desire is to be an employee with good wages in America working for such an exploiter. I don't believe a word of such charges. In America everyone gets ahead according to his abilities and how much he works. (019/15)

So strong is the belief that success depends solely on individual willingness to strive for economic self-betterment that some go so far as to say that only those are poor who want to be so.

I have never heard that honest people in the US were oppressed by the rich, if they wanted to work. I rather think that everybody can make a living, without hindrance, if they work diligently. Naturally, there are drunks and other no-goods in the US too, but it is their own fault if they can't make a living. (044/9)

* The respondent was repeating part of the question put to him. This is actually a borderline case which might be coded among the next group to be discussed. In this case it is not of crucial importance to establish a rigorous distinction between the two categories since they are effectively equated in that all the respondents in the two groups believe America offers unlimited opportunity without class discrimination.

END



The remaining 60 per cent is similarly enthusiastic about the liberality and fluidity of American society. However, they show much more awareness of the existence of a moneyed and powerful class in America. They do not associate special privileges, advantages, or handicaps with membership in one class or another but they do explicitly take cognizance of the fact that classes do exist.

In the USA there are undoubtedly many rich men. But the American worker, both culturally and materially, stands on such a high level that he feels himself independent and is able to free himself from the influence of the rich. Getting rich in the US depends on alertness, industry and luck, too. But the same holds for lower levels of prosperity too, and in almost every case, an industrious, capable man can earn enough not to feel dependent upon those with larger fortunes. In the USA, moreover, in view of the general human freedom, there are no oppressed or underprivileged strata. (036/10)

We all know that whoever wants, likes, or is able to work can make a good living in America on his salary. Everybody can by working achieve the position of those who are called American capitalists by the Communists. There is freedom in America. Anyone belonging to the working class can get as far as his talents enable him to go. The capitalists do not stop him from doing it. For instance, should someone invent something, it is only natural that he will be rewarded for it. He would be rewarded even if he was only a simple workman. I can't believe that a workman's talented and ambitious child would be excluded from the opportunities of education. He could even become a banker; although this is somewhat exaggerated because you need capital to begin with. But he could easily become a bank clerk. (090/12)

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Foreign Minister Acheson certainly does not want his son to become a shoemaker. However, the son of a shoemaker can easily become a member of the cabinet of the US. To attend a 200-guest banquet for Acheson might not be a greater joy than being one of five guests at the table of the shoemaker. The guests at both dinner tables are surely equally independent Americans. (049/22)

A small number (15 per cent) consider that the wealthy constitute a privileged and influential group in America but regard this as non-objectionable since the worker is allowed to live in relative ease and his inferior status is not an oppressive burden to him.

Anything the rich want in America they get. But there are no oppressed people there. The high standard of living guarantees good living conditions for the rich and also for the poor who are less ambitious than the rich. It is not important, therefore, that the rich may do anything they like because this does not affect the individual citizen. In Europe, the non-ruling classes are much more aware of their position than in America. (045/11)

Thus, the overall picture which these refugees have of the American class structure is one in which the capitalist and the worker, or the rich and the poor, employer and employee live side by side in relative harmony -- in which there is a maximum of opportunity for the capable and ambitious individual to pass from the worker into the proprietary group. Even those who lack the ability or the impulse to strive for self-advancement are not really subject to exploitation since the worker is fairly independent of his employer and the employer himself is not inclined to impose restraint upon or defraud his workers.*

* A discussion of the relationship between wealth and political power in the US appears on pp. 246 - 250. This section amplifies the picture presented here of a wealthy and privileged but benevolent dominating class.

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The Life of the Worker

The images which these refugees report of the way of life of the American worker reveal a great deal not only about their concepts of life in America but also about the situation of the worker under the Communist regime in Hungary. About three in five give their impression of how the worker lives in America in a comparative context -- contrasting the conditions they believe predominate in the US with the actual situation in their own country. It is probably safe to infer that those advantages of the workers' life in the US that appear most attractive to these respondents are the ones they miss most keenly at home and the ones which lie at the roots of much of the resentment against the current regime.

Consonant with the respondents' general attitude toward America, the most exciting and noteworthy aspect about the way of life of the American worker for them is the general prosperity which he enjoys. Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents made specific reference to the economic advantages enjoyed by the worker in America. The high wage scale of US workers permits them to live comfortably and still save sufficiently to provide for their old age or purchase a home or an automobile.* "They can not only live on their wages but also save money for

* The idea that many American workers own automobiles is considered quite sensational by these respondents and this alone is accepted by many as prima facie evidence of the affluence of the American worker.

Maybe I could characterize Hungarian opinion about American life with the sentence: Poor American unemployed workers, they ride in their own cars when they go to the trade union looking for work. (095/14)

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their old age." (078/13) "Those who work earn enough not only for their food but more. They can buy their clothing and if they save money for years they could even buy a house or a car." (091/6) Popular conceptions of the wide gulf between the living standard of the American worker and his counterpart in the Soviet world have inspired humorous anecdotes such as the one which follows:

The difference between the USA and the Soviet Union is expressed in a widely spread joke: Stalin asks Truman how much a worker in America earns. Then he asks how much the worker needs to live on. Truman says, 'Four-fifths of his income.' When Stalin asks, 'What does he do with the fifth he has left?', Truman answers, 'This does not concern me.' When Truman asks Stalin the same questions, he gets the answer, 'The Russian-worker spends one-fifth more than he earns.' Then Truman wants Stalin to tell him how the Russian worker can manage this. But Stalin now gives the same answer, 'That's none of my business.' (007/14)

Some of the luxuries which are available to the American worker and which are, of course, far beyond the reach of all but the most highly placed Hungarians are enumerated by a former textile worker.

The American worker goes to the factory either walking, or by streetcar, or riding a bike. At home a workman doesn't even have enough money to buy himself a bike. Nowadays the following thing is done: the factory advances the money for a bicycle and deducts the loan from the workman's wages on an installment plan. However, only workers who have worked in the factory for decades and can prove they live very far away get this privilege. The American foreman probably even has a car, because I believe everybody there is being paid according to his knowledge. It is maybe also possible that an outstanding worker is able to buy a car if he doesn't spend his money on unnecessary things. The Americans have better food. We at home eat meat at most once a week. The American worker, if he chooses, can eat meat

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twice a day. Probably even the drinks are not limited like they are in Hungary. The Americans wear good quality clothes and have good taste. Certainly everybody has four suits and three pairs of shoes. (090/10-11)

Heavy work schedules and enforced attendance at political indoctrination classes and other state functions during time away from work have made these respondents very appreciative of the comparatively short hours of the American work week and the American freedom to indulge personal taste in the selection of leisure time activities. This observation was made by seventy-four per cent of the respondents. The pattern of leisure time activity and the wide range of such activities open to the individual is, of course, connected by respondents with the high earning power they generally ascribe to the American worker. Thus, the American worker is pictured in the happy circumstance of having the time, the money, and the available facilities for indulging his personal fancy in deciding what to do with his spare time.

I do not know how many hours more or less they work than we do at home. I do know that they can live well. They earn more than we do. They have money for their free time too. They sit in a cafe and talk politics and dance. They read in the newspapers what it is like in other places or listen to the radio. They can save money for clothing, watches, furniture, or build a house. I heard here in Lins that a worker could buy a car, too. (009/8)

The American worker is paid satisfactorily for his work, and he is able to acquire what he needs. After he has finished working, he can freely decide what to do. He does not have to attend meetings. He can go and entertain himself, and in the summer he can go swimming. (040/8)

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They have such wages that after paying for food and clothing they have something left over for entertainment, too. For theatres, movies, an automobile, vacations. This is partly true with us, too, but we are forced to do everything collectively and everything carries the Party stamp. The American can choose what he wants. (052/13)

Not only is the worker in America permitted to enjoy the fruits of his labor in an unrestricted manner, he is free to choose the kind of work he will do and where he will do it -- he may, in fact, choose not to work at all. "Everybody is allowed to work wherever he likes, where the income and work conditions are best. Nobody is obliged to work for the rich man." (074/13) ". . . in America there is freedom to work too. The Americans may work where they please. Everybody can arrange his life as he likes and nobody tells him what he must do." (031/8) The frequency with which such remarks are made is indicative of the amount of preoccupation and resentment which the rigid state controls on occupations aroused among these respondents. Fifty-seven per cent made reference to the freedom of American workers to choose independently their occupation and place of employment. The fact that such choices can be made irrespective of political affiliation is particularly noteworthy to many of these respondents. "The position and the work of the people in America have no connection with their joining Truman's party or any other party." (059/12) "At the places of work it is skill that counts and not party membership." (081/11) "Nobody is barred from a job which enables him to make a living just because he is not a party member." (034/7)

The worker's right to acquire and own real property or to establish his own business represents another strong attraction of life in America for these refugees (mentioned by 43 per cent of the respondents).

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The following individual admirably contrasted the unlimited opportunities open to all under an economy based on free enterprise with the restrictive and oppressive character of state capitalism on the Soviet model.

In my opinion, the characteristics of the US are complete freedom, free opportunities for success, freedom of private enterprise and its opportunities to expand. These are the great values of democracy opposing the Communist oppression that we ourselves suffer . . . private economy is of basic significance in the US. It results in flexibility of economic life and every other manifestation of life. With flexibility come greater opportunities for making money for everybody. Great fortunes are being established. At the same time, the worker and the poorer people also enjoy the advantages of flexibility because their dependence on those with great fortunes is not as oppressive as is dependence on the state capitalism of the Bolshevik regime. (060/16,17)

This aspect of US life is understandably of especially moving interest to farm people, many of whom have bitter memories of expropriation and impossible production quotas fixed by the state. The respondent here quoted was a farmer all his life but was forced to turn to factory labor when it became impossible to support his large family group on what the government permitted him to keep of the farm's produce.

In America one works for somebody else for a short time, then he becomes independent. If he is an agricultural laborer, he can soon buy a small farm. While he is saving for this he does not have to deny himself entertainment, trips, or the purchase of furniture, clothes and household articles. There is enough for everything. (025/10)

Nearly two out of five of the respondents make reference to the excellence of the physical working conditions which they believe prevail

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in the US. Such comments generally single out the extensive use of machinery to lessen the physical demands of labor on the individual.

"There is no hard physical labor because this is done by machines."

(073/11)

There is no work competition* in America or else VOA would have mentioned it. And still they can produce more without driving the people and without exploitation. This is possible because they have more modern factory equipment. (024/12)

To me the most attractive thing in the US is the fact that mechanization is being used to the fullest extent for the benefit of men. They don't have the slave labor system like in Hungary and in the other countries oppressed by the Communists. (049/20)

A somewhat smaller proportion (27 per cent) consider the fact that American workers are free to strike without fear of reprisals from the government or their employers as especially symbolic of the independence of workers in the US. ". . . it's to be seen from the strikes that people in the West act of their own free will." (058/9) "They don't stick a tommy-gun in the face of a worker in America if he tries to demand his rights." (043/12) ". . . where there are strikes the rights of the workers are observed. Let the workers try to go on strike in Hungary. They would see the pitiful consequences." (039/9)

* The respondent is referring to the standard Communist practice of requiring individual workers or groups of workers to compete in fulfilling or exceeding production quotas. Individual competition of this kind is reflected in Stakhanovism.

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Two more aspects of the life of the worker in America received the attention of fairly substantial proportions of the respondents.* About a fifth pointed out that in America workers are not driven to fulfill unreasonable production norms. About the same number were impressed with the many educational opportunities open to workers and their families in the US. The two quotations that follow suggest the kind of remarks that were made about production quotas and the constant pressures on workers in Hungary.

Nobody stands behind you there driving you on in your work and controlling you. It is up to the individual worker how he works in his own interest. He is not dragged in front of a plant committee or the AVO, charged with having done his work badly.
(067/14)

There are no prescribed work quotas as in Hungary. Workers in America are paid justly, according to their work, and they have no deductions for not fulfilling quotas. (034/7)

Comments about the liberal provisions for the education of the children of workers generally suggest that the working class parent has the opportunity to choose the field of specialization most advantageous for his child and either is able to earn the money to pay for this education himself or can avail himself of existing facilities provided by the government. ". . . it's up to the parents to choose among the learning possibilities for their children." (058/11) "They have time to care for their

* Several other ideas were introduced by small numbers of respondents. These include the notion that in America the worker enjoys the protection of the government and his union, that relations between employer and employees are generally cordial, that women do not work as hard in America as in Hungary, etc.

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children and money to educate them." (026/10) A direct contrast between Hungary and America in this regard is drawn by a young skilled worker:

My brother recently graduated from high school. He tried to become a student of law at the university but he never obtained a full scholarship. The State refused to give more than lodging and food. Everything else was to be paid by my parents, who could not afford it. In America students certainly get the other school fees also after they have been screened to make sure they are capable and that the parents are unable to pay for them. (003/7)

This image of the life of the American working man is, as can be seen, unreservedly favorable. A composite picture of the typical American worker made up from the comments quoted in the last few pages is that of a man who lives at a level often barely distinguishable from that of his employers -- a man with a substantial wage which he can spend on a free market where all types of goods are available at prices within his reach -- a man who can save from his earning to purchase land, embark on his own business if he so desires, and provide for his old age, who has the freedom to choose his work and his employer or may choose not to work at all, who works short hours and can do as he will with his leisure, who can strike in protest if treated inequitably by his employer, who works under almost ideal physical working conditions under no pressure to achieve superhuman production quotas, and who is able to provide for his own education and particularly that of his children.

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Images of Political Life in the US

Just as they believe almost without exception that America is a dreamland of economic plenty so do these refugees generally affirm that there exists true political democracy in the United States. Few of them say so in so many words, but a little better than three out of four make it clear that they believe that there is political freedom for all in America. An additional 5 per cent go along with this view but do make minor reservations. No respondent suggested that there exists political oppression of any sort in the US.*

Wealth and Political Power

As will be remembered, the images of the American class structure which were reported on pages 233-237 demonstrated that these refugees envision America as divided primarily into two classes -- the wealthy employer and the worker. However, almost all of them were of the opinion that in America economic opportunity is open to all regardless of original economic or social status. Although a small number thought that the wealthy enjoy some differential advantages over the less privileged, they emphasized the extreme fluidity of the class system and the freedom of opportunity existing in America. No one thought the poor to be at a serious disadvantage in the US.

In keeping with this image of the relationship between American rich and poor are the views expressed by these respondents about the degree of political influence and power wielded by economically favored groups.

*Nineteen individuals made no clear statement or said nothing at all on this point. The bulk of these claimed total ignorance of political conditions in America and declined to speculate about how Americans are governed.

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The proportion who concurred with the statement that governmental policy is strongly influenced by wealthy groups is relatively small (21 per cent).* Two thirds (66 per cent) denied that the wealthy control the government or have a disproportionate role in determining governmental policy. They asserted that the poor have an equal voice in running the country and have full equality before the law.**

I don't think, however, that being a capitalist or a millionaire makes people eligible to have a say in the government of the US. It is a different problem if the person is a member of the Senate at the same time or if he has some other political position. During elections the entire population, including the workers, votes for the person whom they regard most eligible for running the affairs of the nation. The acquisition of political influence depends on such a type of expression of trust and not on wealth. The rich also have no opportunity to bribe the people who run the affairs of state in order to further their own interests. The elections must certainly put such reliable persons into power that attempts to bribe them would be in vain. (099/15)

The truth is that in America a worker lives like a factory owner. He has a car and a happy family home. The majority decides the affairs of the country and not the rich people. The will of the people decides the questions. The rich cannot oppress anybody. (059/12)

I heard that the great capitalists were ruling the entire country in the US. All the power is in their hands. In my opinion, everybody has equal rights in

* Respondents were asked what they thought of the often repeated statement that rich people rule America, wealth alone determines a man's social position, and wealthy persons are a very privileged class.

**In addition to a small number of "don't knows" there were three respondents who asserted that the ruling elite in America is formed on the basis of knowledge and ability rather than wealth and two who stated that political privilege does exist in the US for those who are in political power.

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the US. The people are free. A capitalist might have more opportunities to make money in the US than a poor man. But even a capitalist has no more civil rights than a worker. (086/15)

You can hear this from the Communists. This is not true. Ruling means that a person can force his will upon others. The American factory owner cannot force his will on anybody. Only those work in his factory who are willing to do so and only for as long as they want. If a workman is able he may also become a factory owner. (089/14)

The few who state or imply that wealth can be equated with the exercise of power invariably discount the idea that the wealthy use their power for sinister purposes or are bent on the oppression of the poor. The rich are commonly pictured as working for the benefit not only of themselves but also of the worker, whom they permit a liberal share of the economic bounty produced by the nation. Since the capable and industrious worker has, in addition, free opportunity to rise in this system into the wealthy but benevolent ruling class, the situation is considered non-objectionable. In fact, more than one respondent proclaimed that he would be only too glad to surrender political power to any elite so long as it permitted the common working man to make a decent living.

The respondent who made probably the strongest statement about the cleavage between rich and poor in the US nevertheless made it clear that however assiduously the wealthy may pursue their own interests in America, they cannot employ coercion to achieve their ends and do not bar the poor but capable individual from entry into their magic circle. The statements in the following quotation to the effect that in America "the rich despise the poor" and "the poor are hindered by the rich in making a living" represent an extreme position rarely taken by these respondents.

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Note, however, that the overall tone of the comment is non-condemnatory. Even the poorest are, after all, amply provided for economically, and it only takes ability and a little initiative to move upward in the social scale. Power is accessible to all who have the drive and capacity to seek it.

A privileged class is represented by the Communists in Hungary today. The people are not equal in the USA either. There are also the rich there who have a better life than the poor. The poor, however, are paid well enough for their work so that they can provide adequately for their needs. Well, there are two classes in the US -- poor and rich, but there is no misery there as in Hungary. Certainly the poor are envious of the rich and sorry to have missed becoming rich also, but it was always the same in every country. The rich despise the poor in the US also. The poor have hardships everywhere in the world. However, the poor may become rich in America. There are two ways of achieving this: inheritance and invention while working. For instance, if and when I should go over there I could not buy a house and have domestics in my lifetime, but if I should work honestly and my children followed my example they might become rich. A generation is not sufficient to become rich unless one invents something, but this possibility has been given only to each hundredth man by the Lord. Anyhow, the rich get along easier anywhere than the poor. Also the poor are hindered by the rich in making a living because everyone tries to make his own fortune. Obviously, the rich despise the poor in the States as anywhere. The rich are not in power in Hungary now, only the Communists. The Hungarian Communists try to prevent the non-Communists from sharing the power. In America the rich try to make the greatest fortunes possible and to guard them. There is the great difference that the American rich do not use violence in order to exclude the workers from the enjoyment of the fortune. The Hungarian Communists use violence in order to exclude the non-Communists from the exercise of power. In America it is true that the rich do everything they can in order to make a greater fortune. It does not mean that others may not become rich when capable. Working honestly, they can do it unless they drink everything they earn. (003/9)

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One respondent freely admitted that America is ruled by a moneyed elite. However, he characterized this as the natural order of things. In America, according to this individual, everyone has free opportunity to take whatever role he is fitted for in the social and political life of the country. Those with money and the capacity for leadership naturally carry out these functions while the less well-endowed are satisfied to follow their lead.

There is an upper 10,000 in the US. This is a natural order of life. No country could flourish if everybody wanted to become a street cleaner or a hotel doorman, and if nobody yearned for political leadership. Every occupation is necessary. The large masses among the people who have no political ambitions elect the ministers and the representatives who accept political leadership and who seem fit for it. It is necessary to have rich businessmen so that they can give bread to the thousands and tens of thousands of workers. However, this does not disturb the success of those who want less. Political freedom and economic competition benefit equally the leaders and those led, the employers and the employees. (049/22)

To summarize, a substantial majority of the respondents maintain that political privilege does not exist in the US and that political power cannot be obtained for money. They contend that no one is able to exert a disproportionate influence on governmental policy since the government is popularly elected and reflects the will of the people. Only a small minority equate wealth and social position with political power and assign political and economic dominance to a small financial elite. The characterization of this capitalist elite is, however, almost never invidious. On the contrary, when its existence is not reported in matter of fact, non-objecting tones, it is praised for having provided unparalleled prosperity for the American worker.

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Rights of the Individual

Although, as has been noted, the attractions of life in America are strongly economic in nature, the respondents also had a great deal to say about civil liberties outside the context of free enterprise and economic opportunity. When speaking of the rights enjoyed by American citizens outside the realm of economics, attention is focused upon freedom of political belief (mentioned by 49 per cent) and upon the rights of free speech (35 per cent). Also mentioned fairly frequently were the freedom to be non-political, i.e., to join no party (30 per cent), the liberty to move from one place to another at will (20 per cent), freedom of worship and of the press (21 and 12 per cent respectively), and what some respondents called "absolute personal freedom," apparently meaning the freedom independently to make decisions regarding personal affairs (19 per cent). Nineteen per cent also noted the absence of a secret police and of the limitations on freedom which that institution entails.

Few respondents mentioned just one freedom in isolation from all the others. In most of the comments there was a sense that the various civil liberties go together and, in many, a feeling that they are all a reflection of the American's basic right to organize his own life rather than have it organized for him by the state.

The fact that everybody lives freely means that everybody can arrange his life the way he wants it, without the intervention of the (political) parties. The only thing one has to be careful about is not to violate the laws. I mean that everybody can do whatever he wants to do. Everybody has a right to go to school or to a university, without regard to rank or social differences. Even the simplest man can become President if

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the people think he is the right man for the job. The political parties do not terrorize the population. However, I am not quite clear about party matters in the US. For instance, I don't know whether the President belongs to a certain party.
(027/15)

Throughout their discussion of individual rights in the US these respondents, either implicitly or explicitly, use as their frame of reference the contrast between conditions in Hungary under the Communists and those in America. For example, freedom of expression in America, including freedom to belong to any party or none at all, to state one's political opinions without fear of arrest, to read and to worship as one chooses were contrasted sharply by the respondents with the situation under a Communist regime:

The following example might illustrate the difference between Western and Eastern democracy. If a nude person stands up in a public place in Moscow and starts talking against the government and its policy, then the police arrest him for what he says. In New York, a policeman would warn him to put on his clothes. Accordingly, public order is important there (in New York) while in Moscow criticism of the government is a mortal danger. Contrary to the single party system of the People's democracies, any number of parties can be formed in the US, and, in fact, there are several parties there. . . . America is vividly characterized by the freedom of religion there. Every American can go to church without fear, he can have his child baptized and religion taught him. In the US party membership is completely irrelevant as far as making a living is concerned.
(098/16)

This contrast is also apparent in the statements of several respondents who particularly emphasized the point that there were no economic penalties attached to non-membership in the "government party" and in the statements of those who placed particular value on the American's freedom of movement:

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There is some kind of a Social Party in the US. I don't know whether there are more parties in the US, and whether they have Communists. Maybe they do. Nobody is barred from a job which enables him to make a living, just because he is not a party member. (034/7)

People move freely in America. There is no need for them to escape to another country if they want to move freely. . . . The farmer may sell his farm if he wants to, he may also move to another state. (050/9)

Similarly, a number of freedoms which are perhaps less fundamental but nevertheless important in the enjoyment of life figure in the happy picture of America as contrasted with proletarian and suspicion-ridden Hungary. For example, to women the freedom to be well-dressed is enviable, as the following remarks of a woman respondent indicate:

To me, the most attractive aspect of the US is that people there can strike; they can write what they want in newspapers; the churches are free; there isn't any caste system of society. There is time for recreation, too; the women may dress elegantly without anyone accusing them of being bourgeois. I think those back home know this as well as I. They wish that it could be the same there, too. I don't know if the Communists know it, for they are mostly uneducated men. But it is certain that if they became acquainted with the American form of life, then they, too, would change. But there is no prospect of such a thing happening, because these men in any case will perish in the war that is coming, or after. They must answer for their sins. (019/13)

And a man longed for the freedom to sit around unmolested in a cafe and take it easy, as well as for the freedom to meet girls and talk to them without worrying about the possibility of their turning him in to the authorities for anti-State sentiments:

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The American is free in his leisure time; that means he does not have to worry about being asked for his identification or for the source of his money when he is sitting in the cafe. No agents will ask him what he has talked about to his friends on the road, and he won't be arrested because of such talk. It cannot happen to an American in the States that he meets a girl on a social occasion who talks to him about emigration and she then turns out to be an agent provocateur of the police. (002/5)

The latter attitude is a particular expression of a much more general point which expresses a fundamental difference between a totalitarian state and a democratic one. This point is that as a result of their freedom Americans are able to have decent personal relations: one man is not set against the other by hopes of gain through political betrayal, and the people are not divided by the existence of an all-powerful political party which gives privilege to its members and affects every aspect of the life of the population. A young farm boy contrasted Hungary and America in this respect in telling about the effect of Communism on his native village:

Everybody has an abundance of everything (in America); therefore nobody touches the property of others. There are no thieves there. There are no murderers there. I never heard of anything like that. We have already had two cases in our neighboring village. An elderly woman had money, and at night somebody came and threw her into a well. He was without work, and had no money. . . . This murderer was a Communist. He spent all his money for drinking. He was not likely to work; therefore he killed. This is due to the presence of the Communists at home. They do not work; they turn their money into drinking. (Question: Those who are not Communists do not kill?) Certainly not; they keep together. (Question: Before the Communists came there was no killing?) Never happened; it never occurred that somebody was killed. . . . The main point in the above is that the Americans live a free life (In a free life) there would be no Party, and in consequence the people would not be against each other. This is the other main thing. (009/9)

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Another respondent put it this way:

The people (in America) are well disposed. They are not sadists. One doesn't work against the other to get him into prison. They help whomever they can. (078/13)

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that respondents frequently made a connection between the existence of the American freedoms and the value placed on the individual person in American society. As one respondent put it, the freedom accorded to the individual was proof of the high value placed on him. The Communists give the lie to their professions of esteem for the individual by according him none of these freedoms.

The laborers do not have to be afraid if they are ill and not able to work. They will not be arrested and charged with sabotage. The Communists say, 'Men are the most valuable things.' But in reality people are considered valuable only if they are working, even if they are half dead. Otherwise men do not have any value. The Americans esteem a man even if he is not able to work or some illness temporarily prevents him from working. (072/9)

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Discrimination Against Minority Groups

Although the persecution of Negroes and other minority groups is a major theme of Communist anti-American propaganda, only 17 per cent of the Hungarian respondents brought up the subject in their descriptions of the United States. Six per cent denied that any racial discrimination exists in America. Eleven per cent admitted that it does exist, but only one of these expressed real disapproval; most said that progress was being made in eliminating discriminatory practices, or else they sought to minimize and justify discrimination.* With the exception of one respondent who mentioned discrimination against the foreign-born, the interviewees spoke only of discrimination against non-whites, principally Negroes.

Respondents who denied the existence of discrimination felt that oppression of minority groups was incompatible with American democracy.

It is said in Hungary that people belonging to colored races are oppressed in America and that they are not permitted to enter many places where there are whites. In my opinion, American democracy excludes the oppression of people belonging to colored races. (087/15)

Most of the people who took this line were more specific about how American democracy works. They felt that the rewarding of individuals solely according to their native talent and industry -- which for them was typical of American society -- applied to Negroes as well. They sometimes cited as evidence the fact that individual American Negroes have achieved the heights of fame. Some of these respondents were also impressed by the personal bearing of American Negro soldiers they had seen.

* Another 40 per cent of the total sample said that there was complete political equality in the US. It is difficult to tell what proportion of these respondents may have had minority groups specifically in mind in making this statement.

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In America everyone gets ahead according to his abilities and according to how much he works. I would gladly be a Negro woman in Harlem, although I back home the Communists really say all they can about the horrible life of Negroes in America. Nevertheless, I am convinced that even as a Negro woman, I could achieve a satisfactory life through my work. (019/15)

The Negro problem in the US has already lost a lot of its tenseness. Undoubtedly, there are still remnants in American public opinion of the fact that the Negroes in America for a long time could only be slaves. The Negroes are an inferior race because of their general lower abilities as compared to the whites. However, many rose from among them individually and succeeded according to their value, such as, for instance, a sports champion or a singer. I do not know much about politics, but I believe that in this field, too, the Negroes succeeded according to their value and merit. (063/17)

In 1945, I myself saw how contented the American Negro soldiers were and that there was no discrimination against them. That is why I do not believe the news about lynchings. (098/16-17)

One woman, who had a secondary school and vocational education and a good deal of common sense, made the sophisticated point that lynchings in America receive wide publicity partly because American freedom of the press precludes the suppression of such stories; whereas news of parallel crimes committed in the Soviet Union can be and is suppressed. This reasoning enabled her largely to discount the Communist propaganda on this subject.

There are bad people and criminals everywhere. They must be held responsible for the lynching of Negroes, and those who commit such crimes are punished. The fact that such lynchings have a greater echo (in the world) is because of the great freedom of the press in America. A person can learn much less about the crimes that are being committed against people in the Communist countries. (054/19)

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Of the eleven respondents who admitted the existence in the US of segregation or discriminatory practices, ten were not very critical. They appeared to feel that there was some justification for these practices and, further, that progress in eliminating them was being made.

I think that the position of the Negroes in America has improved considerably. I think, however, that even now the Negroes don't have the same chances as the white people in economics and in business. The same is true -- to a lesser extent -- about members of the yellow races. We must consider, however, that -- as I heard other people say -- the Negroes are very promiscuous in their sexual life and are dirty and lazy; they live the life of African primitives in European clothes. If this is really so, I don't blame the white people for their attitude toward Negroes. I do blame them, however, if they discriminate against Negroes of high moral and cultural standing. (045/10)

The Negro's body has a certain odor, it is said, that they cannot eliminate by washing themselves. I think this is enough explanation for why the whites want to segregate themselves from the Negroes in America, as, for instance, on street cars. But I also heard that the Negroes are generally decent and honest people, and that they are treated accordingly. Otherwise I am not familiar with the Negro problem. (056/12)

One respondent pictured the American population as made up of heterogeneous national and racial elements poorly assimilated to each other. He was mildly critical of this situation and suggested that greater mixing, leading to greater assimilation, was needed. This respondent's remarks, however, were in no sense a reflection of Communist propaganda. He is a man with a university education and his analysis of American race relations is his own. He did not place the blame for the difficulties he described on any group of "persecutors," but rather on the problems arising from a varied population:

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In America you can find specimens of every existing race. This is disadvantageous because they can never be as well united as if only one kind of people lived there . . . this is the reason why there are so many parties and religions, which must make it difficult to govern. Every group of people has different traditions, different temperaments and different desires. The national groups in America don't mix easily with each other; they live in different parts of the country and in different districts in the cities. For instance, the Negroes remain within their own group. They don't contract marriages with white people. It's true that this wouldn't even be of any use if it meant only one or two isolated cases of marriage. But if the whites and Negroes mixed in great masses, with the whites in greater numbers than the Negroes, it would be useful. The Negro race being on a lower cultural level would absorb thus the higher culture, originated in Europe, of the whites. Obviously, the same situation prevails in places of work. People of different races don't work together. Naturally, there must be numerous exceptions. (089/11)

The one really critical respondent was a young theological student who hoped to become a pastor in the US; he spoke about the situation of the American Indians:

I cannot understand why the US, as the leading power in the democratic camp, does not give complete autonomy to Indians living in its territories, and why it does not assure them proper representation in both branches of Congress. Communist propaganda in Hungary not long ago took advantage of the lack of equality experienced by Indians in the United States. There were posters everywhere depicting the oppressed peoples of the world in their national garb; among them figured the Indians, too, hopefully turning towards Moscow. (021/32)

This was the only respondent in the Hungarian sample who seemed to have been troubled by Communist propaganda on this subject. The failure of most respondents even to mention the problem, and the fact that, of those who did mention it, one-third denied the existence of discrimination

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and the other two-thirds found some way to justify or rationalize discriminatory practices, shows that the Communist slogans have been almost totally ineffective among this group of people.

The Communist Party in America

Although they were not directly probed regarding the existence of a Communist Party in America, somewhat more than two in five respondents spontaneously introduced American Communism into their discussion of US political life. The largest group among these, (14 per cent of the total sample) merely noted the existence of a Communist Party in the US without expressing their feelings on the subject. Of the remainder, one group (12 per cent of the total sample) felt that the freedom of action accorded to American Communists was a sign of true democracy; another group (8 per cent) expressed surprise and resentment at the toleration of Communists in America; and a third group (4 per cent) asserted that while the Communists had been tolerated in the past they were now being subjected to considerable restrictions -- which was approved of by these respondents. The last group (6 per cent) said that there was no Communist Party in the US -- or, as one of them put it, "I don't want to believe that there is a Communist Party in America." (047/8)

One young man whose family in Hungary had suffered loss of its means of livelihood on account of its known anti-Communist sentiment expressed the view that the free participation of Communists in American political life was good because it would allow the American people to find out for themselves how bad the Communists are. He also felt that the freedom accorded the Communists was proof of American democracy.

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However he did not seem willing to depend entirely on the democratic process to lead to repudiation of the Communists; he added that they should not be allowed to advance "very much":

There is also a Communist Party in America. It is right that it is permitted to operate. That proves that there is no terror in America. It is better if people realize themselves what is right and wrong, instead of pushing the movement underground. The Communists in America, however, should not be permitted to advance very much. As long as they are unable to terrorize others, it is better if people realize from their activities that they are on the wrong side. I heard back home that the Communists were inciting the workers to strike in America. However, the freedom to strike also proves the existence of a free life, without terror. (083/20)

On the other hand, there were respondents who, while they also saw the toleration of the Communist Party as an expression of American political freedom, felt that this was carrying freedom too far. One of these thought that the Communists were gaining in power in America and should be deported:

The gentlemanly attitude in the US toward the activities of the Communist Party, as well as the freedom granted its members regarding organization, employment and expression is something completely incredible to people back home. In general everybody can express his opinion there (in the US). Nobody subjects himself to arrest and police search of his home by turning against the will of the government Hungarians are worried about the great expansion of Communists in America, and they say that the Communists should be deported to Communist countries. (056/10)

Another respondent thought the Communists were less strong but advocated even harsher steps against them:

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I do not know how many parties there are (in America) but there must be several because they also have Communists, even though they are not strong. They ought to be beaten up, but good! If the Russians had shown what they really were in America, as they did in Hungary, then nobody could preach Communism in America any more. (024/13)

A few respondents had heard that new measures have recently been taken against American Communists. Some described these as severe and some as mild; however, none were accurately informed about the prosecution of Communist leaders under the Smith Act or the expulsion of suspected Communists from their jobs under the government loyalty program:

There were Communists in the US; however, they are in jail now. The government asked for a list of Communists before the elections and deprived the Communists of their voting rights. They also arrested them at the same time. The Communist Party was forced to submit a list of their members. The Party was forced to carry out this order because otherwise severe punishment would be meted out to the leaders. (041/10)

Anybody may say whatever he wants in the US. The only change in this respect is that since the Americans are conscious of the Soviet danger, they put down the names of Americans friendly to the Soviets. However, they don't do them any harm. The latter may count on more resolute measures if there is a war and they don't change their present opinions. (045/8)

Thus, although a substantial number of these refugees believe that there is a Communist Party in America, there seems to be little strong feeling about this issue. The largest number of respondents say nothing about the subject or make a non-committal observation of its existence. The largest proportion of the remainder feel that the tolerance of Communist existence in the US is a proof of American democracy, and only a relatively small number castigate the US for its leniency and lack of prudence in permitting a dangerous enemy to operate unhampered within its confines.



Knowledge of the Political Organization of the US

Each respondent was rated during the course of the coding operation on the general knowledge of American political institutions displayed in his commentary on life in America. Those respondents who commanded accurate and fairly comprehensive information were rated as well-informed. They constituted only 10 per cent of the sample. Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents fell into the category of vaguely informed -- that is, they had a few basic facts at their disposal but were obviously projecting from their own experience or relying on sheer speculation to fill out the picture. The remaining third of the sample (32 per cent) were classified as uninformed; either their descriptions consisted almost wholly of misconceptions, or they were able to say nothing at all about US political organization.

Among the respondents who were informed at all, the aspect of American political institutions which is best understood is that of popular election of government officials. Even a rather naive respondent with only 4 years of elementary education was able to point out that in contrast to Hungary, where popular elections are also presumably held, the American people can turn out an official with whom they become dissatisfied and elect another in his place.

They have a president, this is Truman, and he leads all of America. He was elected by the whole population. It is quite different at home. Suddenly one sees in the newspaper that someone or other has been elected, but one cannot find out by whom The Americans want Truman so as to be able to have a quiet life. Truman does not oppress them because the Americans are more cultured than that. They would then immediately elect another President.
(009/9)

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Much less well understood than the principle of popular elections are the nature and functions of American political parties. The idea of the one-party system is so taken for granted by some of these respondents, who have never experienced anything but dictatorial or semi-dictatorial government, that they unthinkingly assume that it exists in the US, too. However, this poses the problem of reconciling the one-party concept with their belief that there is freedom and democracy in America. Some simply imagine that in America "the Party" must be benevolent.

The capitalist Party is in power in America. That means that the big capitalists and rich factory owners establish the policy of the country. But they also care for the poor people, the workers. They (the rich) believe that every man has the right to freedom and a livelihood.* (083/20)

Others think that in America "the Party" must have less power than it does in Hungary.

The Party Secretary (in America) has the right to make decisions only within the limits of his own family. The others attend the meetings when they want to attend the meetings. The secretary may not threaten them with arrest if they do not attend. (050/9)

Still others get around the problem by saying that in America there is no Party at all. The elections are held without benefit of party.

The State is led by Truman. He is the President. He was elected by the people. . . there is no party there. (010/7)

There is no Party there; the people are all of the same kind, (009/9)

* The few respondents who speak of the "capitalist Party" or who say that "the factory management directs the population" (006/6) are uneducated individuals whose ignorance evidently makes them susceptible to Communist propaganda. However, they unanimously reject the idea that the American capitalists exploit the population.

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The well-informed respondents know that there is more than one party in the US. Several of them speak of the "Government party" and the "parties in opposition". Even among these people, however, the majority do not know that there is essentially a two-party system in the US. They think in terms of several important political parties, the pattern more typical of the European democracies.

I think that there are several political parties in the US; I know this because one of the opposition parties is the Communist party, which is small. I am sure there are several opposition parties. (035/10)

In sum, these Hungarians think of American political institutions in terms of the genuine popular election of government officials. The uninformed project their concept of a one-Party system on to America, but think that the Party here is not oppressive like the ones they have known. The better-informed tend to picture the American party system as modeled on that of the European democracies. Few are aware of the distinctive nature of the American two-party system.

Thus only a minority of the impressions that have been reported in the foregoing pages can be said to come from respondents who are well-informed about the government and operations of the US. Presence or lack of accurate information on this topic, however, does not affect their basic images of America. These images are of a prosperous, powerful, democratic country, the antithesis of Communist countries and hence a land which cannot compromise with Communism and which can be looked to as a source of liberation. For people such as these Hungarian respondents whose thoughts on politics are almost entirely concerned in one way or

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another with hope for liberation from Communism, the details of internal politics of another country -- even a country as important as the United States -- are irrelevant. What is relevant is only the broad generalities which make the US the capable opponent of the Kremlin.

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CHAPTER II

REACTION TO POPULAR STEREOTYPES OF AMERICANS

All respondents were directly questioned regarding their feelings about two current and invidious stereotypes of the American character. In addition, a selected number of the persons interviewed were asked about a third widely held picture of what Americans are like. The two stereotypes on which we have direct comment from the entire sample are the often made assertions that: (1) Americans worship money, and (2) although Americans have everything, they do not know how to enjoy life. The more sophisticated and educated among respondents were asked their views about a third character failing often ascribed to Americans by Europeans -- namely, that Americans lack culture.*

Acceptance of these unfavorable stereotypes of Americans is generally low among the respondents. While many of them agree that Americans like money, they do not at all interpret this in a way which implies a neglect of "higher" values. The idea that Americans do not know how to enjoy life despite their material advantages is almost completely repudiated; so also is the idea that Americans lack culture repudiated by those who were asked this question.

It is interesting to note that 41 per cent of the respondents denied ever having heard that Americans are supposed to be money-worshippers,

* Only the better informed and/or more highly educated persons in the sample were asked about this aspect of the American character since the relatively uneducated proved to have little familiarity with the concepts involved and were usually unable or reluctant to make a judgment.

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and 61 per cent said they never heard it said that Americans do not know how to enjoy life. When asked to comment on these charges nonetheless, these respondents did not differ in their opinions from those who admit having heard them. It would appear then that these unfavorable stereotypes about the American character do not have much currency in Hungary.

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Americans Worship Money

Only two of the Hungarian respondents had the invidious conception of Americans as money-worshippers which is regarded as being widespread in Europe. One of these was a former official of the Peasants' Association, a man with a university education in economics. The tone of his comments on life in the US expressed disdain for what he considered to be the American money-centered system of values:

The Hungarians regard the Americans' spirit of (business) speculation as being exaggerated. . . . The American uses figures, determining values and quantities. He expresses everything in terms of money and quantity. . . . The US, the land of opportunities, could be illustrated by the saying 'Time is money.' . . . The only attractive thing in the US for me is the freedom of economic opportunities. Because of the difference between the philosophy of the American and the European, I do not yearn after the US in any other respect. (092/21, 24, 23)

The other negative comment was made by a respondent who came from a family of teachers:

They say . . . that the American system is not progressive because money is the most important thing in America and not the happiness of the people. This is a Communist assertion. . . . But, in my opinion, too, business is, in 80 per cent of the cases, the most important thing in America. . . . The disadvantage of business-like thinking is that morals have a secondary importance. . . . I think wherever there are great business transactions there must also be great frauds. . . . It's just natural that Americans strive for more money. It is not only an American phenomenon but a general human characteristic. (089/14)

Although this man partly accepted the stereotype, he softened his remarks with the final qualification that after all, the striving for money was not typical only of Americans but of everyone. Actually, his viewpoint shades into that of the great majority of the Hungarian

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respondents. Forty-nine per cent of them argued, like him, that love of money was no more characteristic of Americans than of the rest of the human race, but they had no criticism to make of the "natural" human urge to strive after the good things in life:

I have not heard it (that Americans worship money). Maybe the Communists made it up because it is so stupid; it is a stupidity. Money lures everybody in general, but why do they pick the Americans as the people who glorify it? (059/12)

Another 10 per cent made comments which certainly did not deny that money is important to Americans — possibly more important than to other people — but which, on the other hand, did not condemn Americans as mere money-worshippers. They ranged along a continuum from the man who felt that money was the basis of American society but seemed to view this favorably:

In my opinion the Americans realize that money is the basis of all free enterprise and accordingly they think very highly of money. It enables the rich man to provide work for the poor ones. In other words, money is very important in the US because it is the source of people's prosperity. . . . (073/14)

to several who, while admitting that money plays an important role in America, explicitly denied that it was the Americans' highest value:

There is a proverb: 'Where money is, there is also power.' But people also like to say: 'Where money is and knowledge is, there is the power.' This was proved by America, for America always won its wars because it united money with knowledge. The Americans know that without money a man cannot do anything, but this does not mean that the Americans prefer money to knowledge or to liberty. (005/10)

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Fifteen per cent went a step further and emphatically denied that Americans are money-mad. A few cited as evidence the aid which America has given to other nations:

What attracts me most to the US is the pulsing life and the possibility of working . . . and defending (keeping) the money earned with work. . . . I have heard this (that Americans worship money). In my opinion this is true (only) in the meaning I mentioned before, that the Americans take it for granted that they have the possibility of achieving success and defending the results achieved. The American willingness to help is the living denial of the thought that this should be looked upon as egoism and greed. One could not say that America hoped for immediate profits when, after the second World War, even the countries which came under Communist influence got their share in the numerous and very large (American) aid actions. On the contrary, she could not reckon at all on being paid back. It is clear, therefore, that the Americans do not like money in such a way that they would exclude others from using it. (055/13, 14)

A substantial group of respondents (14 per cent) said they had never even heard the stereotype and made no further comment on it;* and

* Altogether 41 per cent said they had not heard the stereotype, but 27 of these commented on it nonetheless.

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the opinions of 10 per cent were not clearly ascertainable.* It is fair, then, to say that this particular stereotype, the American as a money-worshipper, is virtually absent among the Hungarian respondents.

* This 10 per cent is made up principally of the first respondents interviewed. In an attempt to reduce bias that might be induced by asking the respondents a question that might call directly for a strong criticism of Americans, the respondents were asked whether the Hungarians liked money and then were asked probe questions aimed at getting a comparison between Hungarians and Americans in this respect. The usual response to these questions was that both Hungarians and Americans liked money, but in most cases it is impossible to ascertain definitely whether any "worship" of money is involved. The question was later rephrased in such a fashion as to get a definitive answer, while still avoiding the appearance that the interviewee was being forced into a direct criticism of Americans. (The interviewee was asked whether he had heard the stereotype and who had said it, so that he could admit knowledge of it without compromising himself. The fact that, as a result, there was no reason for the respondent to conceal knowledge of the stereotype makes the high figure of 41 per cent who had never heard the stereotype especially significant.)

Although the 10 per cent whose opinions are not clearly ascertainable have been excluded from the tabulations above, the fact that they usually said that both Hungarians and Americans like money makes it appear that their opinions do not differ from those of the rest of the respondents.

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Americans Don't Know How to Enjoy Life

Hungarian respondents are also very unwilling to say that Americans don't know how to enjoy life. A substantial majority (62 per cent) disagreed entirely with this stereotype when it was presented to them. Nineteen per cent said they had never heard it and made no further comment;* the opinions of 8 per cent were not clearly ascertainable. Only 11 per cent expressed partial agreement with this statement.

The most typical comments among the majority group denied that Americans don't know how to have a good time, that American life is characterized by an endless rush after more and more material benefits with which the Americans are never satisfied. Rather the respondents felt that Americans are very active because their work does not exhaust them and because it leaves them time to develop all sorts of leisure time interests.

I have never heard anyone say this but my opinion about it is as follows: Life in the States is very vivid. People are very busy and they are pleased to see the results of their work. Yet there is no haste in work because nobody is required to work beyond his strength. Machines help men to speed up production. Unlike the Communists, the Americans don't require anybody who has already done his duty to increase his efforts further. Everybody likes entertainment and the American can afford it. He enjoys good sports, excursions to mountains, paddling, motor-cycling, fishing and the speed of his car. All that means relaxing for him. This expresses the true nature of men. The Americans live a healthy life unlike those who can think only of food and sleep after their work is done. (007/26)

* Altogether 61 per cent said they had not heard this stereotype, but 42 of these commented on it nonetheless.

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One respondent showed how he felt about this stereotype by repeating a joke about it that he had heard from an acquaintance:

According to the joke, everything is annoying in the US, the car, the good dinner, the cafe, jazz music and undisturbed entertainments like radio listening and reading after 8 hours of work. This monotonous life is dull for people. On the contrary, life in Hungary is a pleasure. In the morning the queuing up is pleasurable; it is also a pleasure if people are able to buy half a kilo of bread and 100 grams of sausage, and it is a pleasure if the neighbors are taken away by the AVO and not I. I prefer the dull and monotonous life in the US. (069/9)

Among the 11 per cent who agreed in part with the stereotype the most frequently expressed idea was that although Americans have a great deal to enjoy they seem always to be seeking new sensations. One young Hungarian respondent cited the baldness of American "big shots" as evidence for the belief that Americans have no peace:

I heard and I also believe that the American is always trying to think up newer and newer things. It is also said, and there must be something in it, that the reason for so many bald men among the big shots in America is that they think so much. (083/22)

The comment of another respondent who accepted the stereotype in part indicates that the idea that American life is dully uniform and lacking in individuality is perhaps current among Hungarians who are in contact with the intellectual fashions of Western Europe. Such people are not strongly represented in the sample:

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I read a number of very witty books published in England, which dealt with the fact that in the US a certain type of man and woman had developed, characterized by a stereotyped form of life. These so-called artificial Americans give the impression of having been produced in some mechanical way. In them there comes into existence not a person living the life of the spirit, but rather a man who regards life as consisting of certain continually recurring motions. I believe that there are such men in the US, but they are by far not characteristic. The more than a century and a half long history of the US and its role in the progress of the world affords easy proofs of this. (021/32)

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Americans are Uncultured

The idea that Americans are uncultured, which also has wide currency among intellectuals in Western Europe was denied by 21 of the 29 Hungarian respondents who were asked what they thought about this stereotype. Three said they had never heard it and only 4 agreed wholly or in part. One respondent said he had heard this from an American soldier and didn't know whether it was true.

In denying the truth of this stereotype the Hungarian respondents interpreted the term "culture" differently from the way it is understood by the largely intellectual strata who make this accusation against Americans. To these Hungarians, culture meant three things: highly developed technology, freely available schooling, and music. While an occasional respondent stated that "In music, maybe, the Hungarians are better" (002/7), they could not agree that the other two were anything but plentiful in the US.

Civilization is at its peak in America. For example, while I was abroad I saw an American film, showing a huge work camp, and oil-well drilling towers. According to the film story, the American worker, once he finished working, went home, washed himself and dressed and was able to appear among his friends as civilized as anybody else. From the film I saw that the machines are well cared for and well used. (018/18)

The wide use of the machine, including its use in households, points to a high level of culture. They make the lives of human beings easier and express the cleverness of their inventors. (099/16)

The US has a higher culture than most European states. The average man there has more schools and his education is better. There are in America relatively more universities and equivalent schools. (005/9)

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The four respondents who agreed with the stereotype were all intellectuals. Two of them agreed only in part. The first of these was a doctor of law:

People used to say that spiritual intelligence is subordinated to technical advancement in America, and that the American is satisfied with a superficial intelligence about anything outside the US. Because of all the opportunities he has in his own country, he does not regard it as necessary to have such intelligence (about foreign matters) and that is evident in him, too. He who has seen American life at close range can easily persuade himself that such an opinion was baseless. The Americans have quite an adolescent interest in everything they do not know about. There are scores of universities, research institutes, permanent and temporary exhibitions and innumerable other opportunities which serve that interest. The large number of newspapers, periodicals and books which are published serve the same purpose. The only thing that can be true in this statement is that the tempo of American life and the great number of varied opportunities inevitably lead some people to become onesided to a smaller or greater extent. If they become familiar with something, they gained that knowledge at the expense of not being informed about other things. (093/27)

The second was the author of a book on philosophy. His statement on the subject was brief:

Americans may be more primitive than Europeans, but they are more progressive. (001/6)

Of the two respondents who really went along with the stereotype, one was not highly educated herself but was the wife of a very cultivated attorney:

...the standard of culture (in America) is much lower (than in Hungary). The same goes for the schools, too . . . that is what I heard in Hungary, not only from Communists but also from others, long before this era. (020/10,11)

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The other was the former official of the Peasants' Association who also thought that Americans are money-mad:

. . . European mentality is closer to general human ideals than is American mentality . . . The natural human instincts are suppressed there by the uniform-face masses. As a result, the American deprives himself of the deeply-rooted beauties of life, like, for instance, the opportunity to develop an artistic taste, which is refined in Europe. (092/12)

It is evident that to these intellectual respondents "culture" means the refinements of mind and taste which come with a great deal of education. They feel that in this sense, American society does not produce as many cultured men as does European society. However, to the Hungarian respondents who are themselves of average education, culture means material progress and fairly available, plentiful schooling. In their sense of the term, Americans are cultured.

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CHAPTER III

AMERICA IN WORLD POLITICS

In addition to the three stereotypes of the American national character (Americans are money mad, don't know how to enjoy life, are uncultured), two other critical images of Americans were presented to the respondents. The section that follows describes respondents' reactions to the two statements, "We can't depend upon the Americans," and "The Americans are seeking world domination; they have ambitions to rule the world."

Almost without exception these respondents are counting upon American help for the liberation of their country, and they discuss American reliability almost exclusively in this context. The consensus is that the US can be depended upon to come through with the necessary help, but for a variety of reasons.

Parallel to this conviction, American economic and political ambitions are minimized by most respondents, who assert that the US has no such aspirations.

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