

Memorandum

*File in
Hungarian folder*

April 1, 1957

From: AD
To: PEZ, HLR, FD, EF,

Subject: Visit to the Society for the Investigation of the
Human Ecology, 440 East 69th St., New York 21
(Region 43400)

AD was invited to attend a session of the Society which in conjunction with the Cornell Medical Center is currently conducting a series of psychological and medical depth interviews of Hungarian refugees. The experience was interesting and relations cordial.

The Society, in conjunction with physicians and sociologists (the latter, several men from Rutgers, part of Professor Riley's group, with Stevenson and Shulman) plans to give two-day interviews each to about 70 selected Hungarian refugees. Their interest is primarily in the impact of the Hungarian experience--the last decade, but more particularly the revolt of October, 1956--on the psyche and the physical condition of Hungarian society. They are interested in the individual, not in the system or in society as a whole.

The session I attended consisted of a discussion of two specific individuals, twenty year old Hungarian country boys, who had been interviewed by a group of about ten--fairly competent and some senior people, including a refugee psychiatrist, several American physicians, one anthropologist, two sociologists, and two social psychologists. The group is operating under the supervision of Professor Lawrence E. Hinkle. The discussion was interesting, though from our point of view not excessively fruitful. The group has arrived at a number of hypotheses that go beyond its own field of work, and it is in connection with these broader implications that they are interested in establishing and maintaining contact with other groups such as ours. I know that they have been in touch or plan to be with the Free Europe people, American University, Bud Wilson's Shop, etc.

We agreed, after some discussion with James L. Monroe, executive secretary of the Society (and whom I know for his previous work at the HERRI at Maxwell Field), that it would be best to have them call a conference in about two or three weeks at which each of the five or six interested groups would participate and which could constitute an exchange of opinions on the various projects involved but would also stimulate further substantive discussion. We also agreed that the protocols of their project would be open to us and ours to them to the extent that this is desirable. I am sure that no conflicts of interest and jurisdiction are likely to arise. On the other hand, relations with the Rutgers group need further attention since the overlap in subject matter between

Memorandum

April 1, 1957

them and us is more considerable than I had suspected.

The impression of all those involved in this project was to me that the Free Europe Questionnaire is far too broad and vague.

The Society's own work is partly colored by its experience with a similar project involving Chinese and Korean prisoners of war a few years ago. They are interested in comparisons including the extent of Communist values and indoctrination, but only to the extent that it influences the individual personality. At the same time, some of their material includes suggestions, for instance, that in Hungary (unlike China) parental authority is considerably stronger than the influence of college or other higher education among rural residents who leave their village and later return. It is ideas such as these that may need further exploration and that they are anxious to share with us.