

CONFIDENTIAL

TRANSLATION

(Jan 14 1957)

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READ AND DESTROY

ITEM No 1124-1/56

US
Dec 15
XIII-1337/A

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Political Advisor
Audience Analysis

HUNGARY

EXILE (1200)
Anti-Communist Propaganda (1207)

AN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL ABOUT POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

SOURCE SALZBURG: A 40-year-old administrative official from SZOMBATHELY.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Up to November 20 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: None.

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Before the revolution RFE rendered enormous service by maintaining the Hungarian people's hope in a better future. Each of its words was a proof that there was a life, and an even better one outside the Communist sphere. Yet its main importance for us was the fact that its existence was a proof that the leading world power, the US, was interested in our fate. I think it is unnecessary to add that I, as well as all my acquaintances, considered RFE the official mouthpiece of the US Government.

Once in a while in the past RFE made the mistake of broadcasting incorrect data concerning Hungarian internal events. Such a slip resulted in destroying for a time the near-fanatical belief in RFE's authenticity and gave to the

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Communists an opportunity to refer to "RFE lies". It is true that even this did not harm RFE's prestige much, but for us, who would have loved "our radio" to be infallible, a slip like this was annoying.

Generally speaking, before the Revolution, RFE was the radio station which had the greatest number of listeners in Hungary and its effect on the formation of public mood could not be underestimated.

I think that the outbreak of the revolution occurred quite unexpectedly as far as RFE was concerned because, during the first hours, the broadcasts were rather uncertain. We felt this and it was a little disappointing for us who had attributed to RFE a nearly supernatural force.

Have I answered with this your question as to whether RFE had incited us? Or that it had promised help? I think I did, because in the case of RFE reckoning with an uprising, its broadcasts during the first hours would not have been hesitant and uncertain.

However, RFE quickly adapted itself to the new situation and with its usual speedy and reliable news service did an enormous service for the population, who were completely cut off from any other source of news.

It was also RFE who informed us of what was happening around us during the revolution.

On the other hand, the total passivity of the West and the impotence in regard to the Hungarian cause had a fatal effect on us. No one in Hungary with common sense had reckoned with the sending of troops and arms (how could these troops have crossed neutral Austria without the outbreak of a new war ?) But the spineless attitude taken by the UN, accepting KADAR as the legal head of the government, (whereas an active minister of the last legal Hungarian government, Anna KETHLY, was not even allowed to speak up at the General Assembly) and putting up with the impertinence of comrade HORVATH: All this shocked us too much and was such a sign of the impotence of the whole West, including the US, that the effects of it cannot be made good for a long time.

Considering things with complete objectivity, we first of all could have expected from the West their rejection of the KADAR-gang as a government. Secondly, we expected them to inform MOSCOW plainly, through economic and other sanctions,

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(for example the recall of the ambassador) that as long as they refused to withdraw their troops from Hungary, the Soviets would not be considered "fit for good society". The West, however, did nothing of the kind and continued to confer with MOSCOW and even KADAR. There would have been no need for a war if the Soviets had been forced to realize that they could not proceed in Hungary in a way some colonial power would have dealt with a revolting negro tribe a hundred years ago. (Today these colonial powers could not behave toward negroes as the Soviets behave toward us). In some way the Soviets should have been forced to negotiate and tens of thousands of Hungarian lives would have been saved.

The future duty of RFE and the other radio stations will be to restore the much-shaken Western prestige in the country and - if they can - to explain why everything had to happen as it did.

It won't be an easy task but if it is not performed, the Hungarian people will think the West has definitely given us up and does not care about our fate. Consequently, in my opinion, RFE should be maintained and should continue its programs.

End

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