

PRIORITY

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Dec 6

IX-Unnumbered

HUNGARYRESISTANCE

Revolution

/2900/

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EXILE

Anti-Communist Propaganda

/1200/

/1207/

RADIO FREE EUROPE AND THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION.SOURCE VIENNA I: A well educated chemical engineer from BUDAPEST.

SOURCE II: An intense intelligent young woman of 18. Comes from a upper middle class family. During the interview, she would sometimes shamefacedly apologize for the heat with which she pressed her charges.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until Mid-November 1956.EVALUATION COMMENT: None.

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Source I.

The Hungarians, says source, feel with justification that they have been misled and let down by the West, the US and Radio Free Europe.

Through its presentation of news particularly, RFE led its Hungarian listeners to believe that the Hungarian nation and Hungarian problems were constantly one of the top continuing news stories in the world. Granting that Hungarians were always pleased to hear of news affecting them or the country, source says the manner in which RFE Hungarian Section played news always in a leading position, but out of proportion to reality, gave listeners the mistaken idea that the eyes of the Western world were closely focused on Hungary. This over-emphasis on Hungarian items in the news budget and the careful selective "spool-feeding" of items which generally were as inoffensive as possible, gave

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source the feeling that RFE regarded its Hungarian listeners as children to be protected, rather than as thinking adults.

A cardinal error of the RFE line, says source, was the mistaken belief that it was necessary to tell and remind Hungarians of the horrors of Communism when, living in its midst, they knew far better than any out-of-touch editors of the radio.

In engaging in a nearly absurd screening of the news, source feels that RFE sacrificed the objectivity which listeners required to properly see their country's possible relation to the outside world. Source points out that BBC, although an official governmental agency, allowed for a divergence of views and free expression on its round table and discussion programs, but that this was never the case with RFE. Because of its unwavering line and fierce anti-Communist policy, Hungarians in general assumed that the station, while not American Government operated, was at least a semi-official organ of US policy. In the words of source: "The terrible lesson of October 23 and of the days after was that you /RFE/ did not have the backing of the US Government, but were a private enterprise."

In the presentation of the news, said source, RFE had been guilty of inaccurate reporting. Pointing out the danger inherent in misinformation, source cited the case during the revolution in which RFE reported "fierce fighting" near ZALAEGERSZEG. Source who was at the mentioned location, said that "only three or four shots were fired there."

Source recalled that the BBC Hungarian broadcast announced at 1700 hours that MOLOTOV had been appointed Minister of State Control. RFE did not mention this important bit of news in its news broadcasts at that time.

Source cited the "terrible effect" in Hungary of the speech delivered several weeks ago by President EISENHOWER in which the US leader said that neither he nor the policy of the American people had been to incite people to revolt against the Russians. The "effect," says source, was that something unjust and untrue had been said by a man regarded as honorable and fair by the Hungarian people. "It was also the fault of RFE because we all in Hungary felt," said source, "that this station made propaganda for a revolution against the Russians and Soviet imperialism. Even at the time of the revolution there were these errors, that RFE did not stop making propaganda against NAGY even when he was free and had made concessions. There was a general feeling that in undermining the position of NAGY, there was always the danger of two governments. Such a possibility would have represented

an open invitation to the Russians to interfere.

Source said in answer to a question, that he had never heard the slightest suggestion that RFE had started the revolution or had issued calls to arms, or had promised arms deliveries.

Particularly farmers, who were among RFE most faithful listeners had a common feeling that the West had betrayed Hungary and then abandoned it. People also felt that EDEN and the French Government by "their so-called police action" in SUEZ had destroyed the Hungarian freedom. This is the common belief, said source.

The tone and presentation of RFE Hungarian broadcasts made those in Hungary say: "It is easy for them to talk like that from MUNICH!" The MUNICH Hungarian staff, says source, acts as though they have no approach to their subject through "the schools of fear and first-hand knowledge of the Russians. What is needed, are people who are Hungarian citizens to talk to Hungary, not Americans."

On the political side Hungarians believe that the British and French got a free hand in SUEZ in exchange for the grant of a free hand to the Russians in Hungary. But even so, source feels that the action of the ICFTU /Int. Confederation of Free Trade Unions/ in refusing to handle Russian shipments and in organizing anti-Russian boycotts had "great echoes in Hungary."

The Western world and the US failed to back up their policy during the time of the revolution. But, says source bitterly, they are doing nothing now. "Nothing happens. They could throughout the Western world announce quite clearly for the world and Hungary that they will not recognize the KADAR Government. They could globally launch a massive boycott of Russian goods. But it is terrible. They are doing nothing. Nothing happens. The United States is not even helping refugees. All these refugees here were misled by the US."

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Source II.

Source was of the feeling that the Hungarian people do not feel that RFE is Hungarian. Many of the voices which she heard led her to the belief that RFE had merely kept its speakers by paying them large sums and that the staff members of the Hungarian

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Desk were much more motivated by money than patriotism. Additionally source found that RFE Hungarian voices were "hard, harsh, and not good."

On the political side RFE is guilty of having misled the Hungarian people during the revolution by not advising the Hungarian people to stop fighting, but egging them on. "Everyone knows that 9,000,000 Hungarians had no hope of defeating and beating 200,000,000 Russians. RFE should have said the 'West can't help you!' But they didn't. They wouldn't."

One often heard that criticism of RFE is based not so much on a sin of commission, but one of omission. Thus, this young girl said, as have many of her fellows, "RFE knew that the United Nations wouldn't come to our aid with troops. But they didn't mention this. They didn't even hint at it and they should have done so, they should have."

This young lady was fervent in her pleas that Radio Free Europe exercise greater care with the accuracy of its news items. "If RFE uses one untrue news item on its broadcasts," she said, "it destroys the good done by 3,000 true ones."

When asked in the face of this criticism if she thought it would be best for RFE to descontinue its Hungarian broadcasts, the girl said: "No, no, you must go on. You should not stop. But Radio Free Europe must change its voice. It must speak with the voice of Hungarians who have lived and fought Communism and not with the voice of old, disinterested emigrés."

Source volunteered the opinion that the United States by its loudly proclaimed aim of avoiding war and military entanglement at almost any cost had "given the Russians an open invitation to do anything they wanted to."

End.