

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECT OF THE
HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION ON THE POLICIES
AND ATTITUDES OF THE UNITED STATES**

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AND ATTITUDES OF THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Since the close of World War II the maintenance of world peace has depended upon the rational policies of the two superpowers that emerged from that conflict, two nations espousing ideologies in direct opposition, the United States and the Soviet Union. Both countries, though rattling the sabers from time to time, have respected each other's areas of vital interest, at least to the extent of avoiding direct military confrontation. Inevitably, there have been instances of grave danger when the world seemed poised on the brink of the ultimate war, but both the United States and Russia have generally displayed more caution than their pronouncements might have indicated. In fact, it seems there has been a most necessary understanding between the two nuclear giants of the world to respect the vital interests of the other. From 1945 to the present there have been numerous instances of brush-fire wars, some involving the clients of the United States and some involving the United States itself. The Soviet Union often has helped arm, finance and supply the opposite side in those engagements. But, so far at least, the differences between the two nations have not led to the feared nuclear holocaust.

This paper will focus on one world crisis, the uprising in Hungary in the autumn of 1956, and the positions taken by the United

States and the Soviet Union, seeking to show the extant limitations of power imposed by the nuclear stalemate. The writer will examine the crisis primarily from the point of view of the United States. Areas to be dealt with include the role of the crisis on the Presidential election of 1956, the possible incitement of the uprising by Radio Free Europe, an organization allegedly private in control but closely associated with the United States government in the public's mind, the actions at the United Nations concerning the revolution, the extension of sympathy and aid from the United States and the acceptance of thousands of Hungarian refugees. Also to be considered will be the effect of the widely-heralded "liberation" policy as espoused by the GOP from 1952 to the time of the Hungarian Revolution. The writer will assess the overall position of the United States in regard to the crisis, pointing out the contrasts between words and deeds when events in Hungary provided the acid test for "liberation". The overall thrust of the paper will be to show the immutable standoff that exists in the world today as a result of the balance of nuclear terror, and that, despite verbal pronouncements to the contrary, the super powers recognize that balance and the necessity of retaining it by respecting the vital interests of each other.

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Master of Arts

by
Wendell Ray Hudson


August 1972

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Wendell Ray Hudson entitled "An Examination of the Effect of the Hungarian Revolution on the Policies and Attitudes of the United States." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.


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We have read this thesis and
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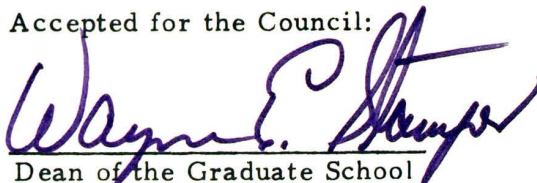

Dean of the Graduate School

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Chapter I

U.S. POLICY: CONTAINMENT TO LIBERATION

With the end of World War II it became increasingly obvious to the United States that one of its major allies, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was the new adversary in the rearranged power structure. The Soviet Union was the foremost practitioner in promoting the rapid and substantial advances being made by Communism all around the world. Disagreement and non-cooperation became the rule rather than the exception in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. This country was faced with the grim realization that the peaceful millennium was not at hand, that it was still a most dangerous world. The world's two most powerful countries, countries that had fought equally hard against the menace of Nazi Germany, were unable to find grounds for agreement to stabilize the world situation. Rather than agreement, there was increased friction and danger.

The war had left power vacuums around the globe, especially in those areas that had fallen under the domination of Germany and Japan. It was into those lands that the expansive force of Communism moved. The United States was perhaps slow to accept the new enemy and respond to the threat, but after the inclusion of most of

eastern Europe into the Russian sphere of influence, the Truman administration acted.

In the Spring of 1947 the famous Truman Doctrine was enunciated and set in motion. Basically this was the policy of containment of the Communist advance. It entailed the use of American economic and military aid to countries directly threatened by Communism. Supplemented with the Marshall Plan (1948), which extended a definite containment policy to Western Europe, Point Four (1949), which vaguely enlarged the policy to much of the remainder of the non-Communist world, and a growing system of alliances, the Truman Doctrine has continued to be the bulwark of U. S. policy toward Communism. The ultimate goal of this policy was to engineer the downfall of the Soviet Union by preventing further Communist successes. The policy was based on a theory that Communism must continually expand in order to survive. It did, however, if only implicitly, recognize the Russian domination of the countries of eastern Europe, countries that had already fallen to the Communists. Such recognition was necessary, of course, since to dispute the Russian control would have meant a confrontation with the Red Army.

The policies of containment and economic rehabilitation, at least in the early stages, were effective. Europe was stabilized and rebuilt. The previously ominous threat of Communist takeovers in Greece and Turkey, and possibly Italy and France, was removed.

The situation in Europe was tense but stable as the Soviet Union consolidated its power in the satellite countries and the United States promoted the maintenance of a strong deterrent force in western Europe through NATO. Though shaky at times, the status quo in Europe was maintained.

It was in the presidential campaign and election of 1952 that the policy of containment first came under intense criticism. It was not criticized because it was ineffective, but rather because it was passive and did not hold out hope for a rollback of the Communist gains. John Foster Dulles was the originator and the chief spokesman for the Republican opposition to containment. As the acknowledged GOP specialist in foreign relations, Dulles's views were of great significance. Throughout the spring and summer of 1952, Dulles spread widely his concept of the American role in relation to the Communists. In Life magazine's May 19, 1952 issue, Dulles expressed his principal ideas. He pointed out that under the Truman Doctrine our posture was purely defensive. He contended that we should seize the initiative rather than wait for the Communists to make a move and then reacting to it. Dulles recited the Communist gains since the end of World War II in Asia and Europe and said that, in relation to the Communist strategy, ours was a treadmill policy which could only postpone the Communist advance. Dulles

doubted our will would last forever in the pursuit of a purely defensive policy. He went on to state that we had the power to move from the policy of containment but that we were misusing our strength. Dulles advocated the building of a military formula more powerful than any ever created and then moving from that base of power to what he termed a "political offense." He put forth a three-point outline of what he considered appropriate U.S. policy. This included a clear statement that the U.S. would seek genuine independence for nations dominated by Moscow. He also advocated stimulation on our part of escapees from behind the Iron Curtain and a more vigorous backing of Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America broadcasts to the captive peoples. Dulles was contending that we should pursue a more positive and dynamic policy. He justified the switch to positive action through a grave indictment of containment when he said, "The present lines will not hold unless our purpose goes beyond¹ confining Soviet Communism within its present orbit." In that statement Dulles condemned containment as ineffective. His alternative policy, which he was to get an opportunity to employ, was liberation of the Communist satellites.

Of course, Dulles's views carried little weight as long as he was outside the realm of governmental responsibility. But the Republican presidential candidate in 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower, was apparently

in agreement with Dulles's position. It developed that Dulles prepared two memos for Eisenhower in the spring of 1952 in which Dulles stated his foreign policy views, one on the idea of what came to be called "massive retaliation" and the other on the policy of liberation. In the ensuing years, "massive retaliation," which was supposed to herald the abandonment of the Truman doctrine of passive containment, allegedly aided the policy of liberation by the dropping of the economically expensive "brush fire" mechanism of defense in favor of an aggressive pose which would tend to intimidate the adversary.

In these memoranda, Dulles urged that the policy of containment was alien to the American spirit and espoused the more positive concept of liberation. Though Eisenhower apparently saw possible difficulties in Dulles's plans, he was in basic agreement. That Eisenhower did sympathize with Dulles's beliefs is evidenced by the fact that Dulles was named to the post of Secretary of State after the Republican victory in the election of 1952. In that position Dulles became the formulator rather than the critic of U.S. policy.

The Republican campaign platform in 1952 was most vocal in its condemnation of the Democratic administration's containment policy. It stated that the defensive policy of containment of Russian Communism had not worked and that the Republicans

shall again make liberty into a beacon light of hope that will penetrate the dark places. That program will give the Voice of America a real function. It will mark the end of the negative, futile and immoral 'policy of containment' which abandons countless human beings to a despotism and Godless terrorism which in turn enables the rulers to forge the captives into a weapon for our destruction.³

Campaign platforms and the rhetoric of aspiring candidates is, of course, cheap and often meaningless, but there were people in 1952 who harbored grave doubts and fears about the proposed policy of liberation. Writing in The Nation in the autumn of 1952, D.F. Fleming went so far as to entitle his article "Does Eisenhower Mean War?". Fleming gave special emphasis to an Eisenhower campaign speech of August 25, 1952, in which he said:

Our government, once and for all, with cold finality must tell the Kremlin that we shall never recognize the slightest permanence in Russia's position in Eastern Europe and Asia...never shall we rest content until the tidal mud of 4 aggressive Communism has receded within its own borders.

Such a statement was an apparent endorsement for U.S. support of a liberation movement in eastern Europe, for if Communism were to "recede within its own borders", it would obviously involve the ouster of the Red Army from the occupied countries and an end to Soviet domination. The problem would naturally come in devising a way to evict the Russians.

What worried many Americans, as well as troubling our allies, was to what extent the policy of liberation would involve direct

military intervention. Any military adventurism would obviously have been of utmost danger and concern to all the world, since there would necessarily be the fear of a nuclear exchange.

The Republican campaigners, and especially Dulles and Eisenhower, were vague as to positive measures to be taken to implement liberation. On September 5, 1952, in fact, Eisenhower toned down his remarks to say that we would only use peaceful means to help the captive peoples of Europe, stating that "victory is impossible in a global war."⁵ That speech of September 5 in Philadelphia implied the recognition that to provoke Soviet Russia in an area of her vital interest would be catastrophic. Though continuing verbally to advocate the rolling back of Communism, Eisenhower was a realist about the world situation throughout his career as President. It undoubtedly sounded very good to speak bravely of a great liberation movement, but even in 1952, Eisenhower and other realistic observers had to detect the massive dangers of such a policy should it be attempted.

The advocacy of liberation by the Republicans in the 1952 campaign was discussed a great deal in the following years and was the subject of great controversy, especially after events in eastern Europe exposed it as hollow and impotent. As early as 1953, however, there were those who saw the contradiction inherent in the new Eisenhower-Dulles position. Commenting in the March, 1953 edition of the

American Mercury, Patrick McMahon contended that the United States could only promote unrest in the satellite countries as long as those efforts were ineffectual. He believed that, "Any such program that shows promise of becoming effective, which might, in time, accomplish the object of liberating the Soviet satellites, must in itself increase the risk of war." McMahon stressed the dangers in such a course of action, emphasizing that the Red Army was poised in Eastern Europe and that any effort to liberate a satellite country would provoke a confrontation with the Soviet military machine. The London Economist accurately exposed the quixotic nature of liberation when it concluded that liberation "means either the risk of war or it means nothing." The Russians were not going to be removed from eastern Europe by a barrage of words surrounding an alleged change in policy.

Regardless of the contradictions inherent in the policy of liberation, it was generally accepted in America as a plan of real significance and as a real alternative to containment as practiced by Truman and his administration. After Eisenhower's election, and consistent with campaign pronouncements, the news media analyzed the probable direction of the Republican foreign policy by declaring that the United States would face the facts of the cold war and go on the offensive, that no Communist conquests would be accepted as final and that we

would lend encouragement to new Titos (rebellious Communists not subservient to Moscow's dictation) and to captive peoples aspiring to
8
independence.

Though the specific actions that might be taken were never clarified, the Republicans apparently represented in the mind of the American people a new get-tough policy toward the Communists. U. S. News and World Report, in its November 14, 1952 issue, even implied that if the Russians continued to push, then there might occur
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a final showdown.

The possibility of direct confrontation with the Soviet Union was implicit in any effort to intervene in eastern Europe. The ramifications of an attempt to effect liberation were vast, the ultimate possibility being World War III. Such considerations seem to have been ignored by the American public and perhaps by some administration officials. The idea of liberation made exciting copy in the American press, but there was another party to the scenario that was seldom considered----the Soviet Union.

Chapter II

THE CHANGING SOVIET POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE

As the United States was apparently shifting its position in regard to Communism, events were occurring behind the Iron Curtain that would culminate in the great test for the policy of liberation.

Hungary, where the showdown would come, had been accorded treatment which was typical of that being endured by the Russian satellites. It was a land-locked country of about nine million inhabitants. It had fallen into Communist hands as a result of World War II, although it was 1948 before the Communists were in complete control. The policies that were instituted are familiar. Heavy industry was stressed and farms were collectivized with no regard for personal hardship of the Hungarian people. Personal liberty was non-existent and a climate of fear and suspicion was produced by the tactics of the dreaded political police. Hungary's valuable resources were siphoned off to the Soviet Union. Consumer products were slighted and the living standard of the people was low. The Soviet Army remained as an occupation force, allegedly to protect the country from Western aggression but really to awe the Hungarians into submissiveness. Under the Stalinist system Hungary limped along with both production and morale very low.

A turning point in Hungary and the rest of Eastern Europe came with the death of Stalin in March of 1953. After his death momentous events transpired within the Kremlin and there were profound changes in Soviet policy. There was a relaxation of the hard Stalinist line and a discrediting of its proponents throughout the Communist world. In Hungary this was reflected by the coming to power of Imre Nagy as Premier in July of 1953. He replaced Matyas Rakosi, the Hungarian equivalent of Stalin. Nagy began reforms that had been long sought. Concentration camps were ended, political prisoners were released, deportations were halted, consumer goods received a higher priority and peasants were allowed to leave the collective farms. These liberal changes were opposed within Hungary by a core of diehard Stalinists led by Rakosi. In fact, throughout the Communist world there was a bitter debate between the old Stalinists and the liberals as to the proper course of action. The conservatives argued for a return to the stifling methods of Stalin; the liberals, including Nagy in Hungary, advocated a relaxation of controls and more freedom.

The result of this struggle within the Communist ranks was mirrored in the frequent change of leadership in both the Soviet Union and its satellites. In Hungary the more liberal Communists led by Nagy were in control from July of 1953 to August of 1955, when he was forced to resign as Premier and divested of his party functions.

The charges levelled against Nagy were that his agricultural policies were wrong and that more collectivization was needed and also that increased industrialization was called for. The real reason for the ouster of Nagy was simply that the old Stalinist faction had temporarily regained power. Nagy's fall coincided with the fall of Malenkov in the Soviet Union. Malenkov had also advocated a softening of controls. The situation was in a state of flux. There was no predominant consensus on policy within the Communist leadership. There was a lack of direction. But one thing was certain, at least in retrospect, and that is that once the controls had been relaxed, then the attempt to reinstitute the old Stalinist methods would meet increased resistance. However, just as policy-makers in the United States did not thoroughly think through the implications of the announced program of liberation, the leaders in the Kremlin apparently did not realize the dangers inherent in a retreat from Stalinism. Miscalculations in both Washington and Moscow were on a collision course in mid-1955.

The deathblow to the Stalinist faction came when Khrushchev, in his so-called "secret speech," delivered to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, thoroughly denounced Stalin, his brutal policies and tactics, and the "personality cult" that he had fostered. All that Stalin had stood for was discredited. His heavy-handed treatment of internal affairs and of the satellite countries

was condemned. Men long dead as a result of purges, men who had been denounced as counter-revolutionaries or deviationists, were suddenly rehabilitated. This signalled the emergence of the more flexible and liberal leadership in the Kremlin. In eastern Europe the change in leadership was characterized by the acceptance of Khrushchev's "many roads to socialism" formula, a departure from the Stalinist insistence on close conformity to the Moscow line.¹⁰ Suddenly the rigid Stalinist dogma was out of favor. Tito in Yugoslavia, who had been anathema to the Moscow Communists for years, was accepted. Stalinist leaders in the satellite began the customary confessions of their sins, admitting the error of their ways in following the leadership of Stalin.

The Stalinists were on the way out. In Hungary, Rakosi was again removed from the head of the government, but the hard-liners retreated slowly as they were able to replace Rakosi with Erno Gero as Premier. Gero was also identified with Stalinism, but he was forced to grant some concessions, ease the harshest controls and even allow an element of dissent. Discontent which had been long-suppressed and silent began to surface and grow more vocal.

Inside Hungary, criticism of internal conditions began to be heard. A center of unrest was the Petofi Circle, a group of writers and journalists who met regularly in the capital city of Budapest.

The club was named after Sandor Petofi, the poet-patriot of the abortive revolution of 1848. Their meetings, after the relaxation of controls, became more and more outspoken in criticism of the Soviet overlords and even of Communism itself. In general, the demands of the group coincided with the demands being heard throughout the satellite countries. They wanted more national autonomy, wider personal freedoms, a slowing or total abandonment of collectivization and less pressure on labor in the industrialization process. A year earlier such criticism would have been quickly squelched and the participants deported, but the political climate in the summer of 1956 allowed more free expression and the Hungarian dissidents were able to make their arguments public. There was in Hungary in mid-1956, a new-found freedom, a slight opening of avenues for criticism. The Soviets were to discover, as Alexis de Tocqueville had once commented, that the critical time for an oppressive regime comes
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 when it attempts to reform itself.

The tinder was present in Hungary, but the spark that set off the Hungarian Revolution came from events in Poland, where the same dissatisfactions were present. The Poles, on October 19, 1956, succeeded in electing a national Communist, Wladyslaw Gomulka, as First Secretary of their Communist Party in defiance of the Soviet Union. After several days it became obvious that the Soviets

were going to permit the Poles to get away with their defiant move and were willing to grant them increased autonomy and internal freedom. The Polish Communists had won a major victory in gaining wider latitude in determining their own course. The situation had been tense but they had succeeded.

The example of Poland was not lost on the Hungarians, but when the Hungarians tried to copy the Polish example, the result was to be very different. The success of Poland had backed the Russians into a corner. Relaxation and de-Stalinization had reached the ultimate in Poland. Poland, though gaining a measure of autonomy along the lines of Tito in Yugoslavia, had not abandoned Communism. The Hungarians, when they did rise up, were to attempt to push too far, too fast and by doing so were to lose all.

In the days immediately prior to the outbreak of actual violence in Hungary, no one could have predicted the bloodbath that was to follow. It is doubtful that officials in either Moscow or Washington had a contingency plan for the startling events that were to occur in October and November of 1956. Despite the vague talk in the United States of liberation that had been bruited about, especially in the campaign of 1952, this country was unready to react when the opportunity presented itself. As the satellites became more and more restive, the United States, as subsequent inaction was to show, formulated no plan of response, military or otherwise, should an

actual rebellion occur. In fact, when the uprising did take place in Hungary, few faulted the United States for non-intervention, but many were outspoken in condemning our unpreparedness and the fact that we were taken by surprise.

Contrary to roseate statements made by administration officials regarding the possible fragmentation of the Communist empire, it seems that the view from Washington was that the Communist monolith was secure in its sphere and that no internal revolt could really shake the structure. If Washington was not convinced that the Communists were firmly entrenched in power, then it is difficult to explain the lack of a systematic response. Apparently no one in a position of authority felt the need to prepare a response for an event that could never happen, that is the massive and spontaneous uprising of a satellite country. In short, official statements for public consumption, and especially the doctrine of liberation, ran opposite to the true official assessment of the situation. As a result of incorrect assessments and rather reckless and meaningless policy pronouncements concerning the Communist empire, the Eisenhower administration had succeeded in setting a trap for itself.

Chapter III

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

As the Polish success became more apparent the situation in Hungary became more dangerous. Demonstrations were organized to voice support for the Poles and to demand equal concessions for Hungary. In the forefront of the movement were the students, the group that had supposedly been most thoroughly indoctrinated. On October 23, 1956, a large group of protesters marched to the government radio station in an effort to air their demands. At that point they were asking for no more than a revision of the extant brand of Communism, a relaxation of controls similar to what had been achieved in Poland. Basically, the demonstrators were calling for the withdrawal of the Russian troops and the ouster of the predominantly Stalinist government led by Erno Gero. They called for the reinstatement and return to power of Imre Nagy, a proponent of national communism and a liberal.

The gathering at the radio station was peaceful, and if the government had granted some concessions there might never have been a revolution. But the Hungarian internal police, the hated AVH, opened fire on the crowd at the radio station. With those shots, perhaps fired out of panic, the revolution was born. Spontaneously,

with no apparent leadership, the Hungarian people, so long repressed
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 and controlled, took to the streets and the fighting began.

Russian troops were almost immediately called in by Premier Gero. Gero's action was later to be condemned by the Russian leadership as an overreaction that helped create an impossible situation. The calling for Russian troops was practically the last official act performed by Gero as he was soon replaced by Nagy in an effort to appease the rebels. Nagy was never able to gain command of the revolution, however. The timing of his assumption of the premiership led many freedom fighters to assume that he was responsible for the Russian presence. Thus, he was discredited in the eyes of the Hungarians. On the other hand, the Russians considered Nagy to be a very weak man and an ineffectual leader. They were willing to install him as leader as a symbol of national communism in Hungary, but he proved unable to hold the line for the retention of any sort of communism. As a result he was unacceptable
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 to either side.

Nagy was a pathetic figure in the course of the revolution. He was supposedly at the head of the new Hungarian government but his orders and pleas were disobeyed and even ignored by the freedom fighters in the streets and by the ruling clique inside the Kremlin. He was borne along on the wave of revolt, tossed about endlessly by

events over which he had no control. Nagy was forced to make disastrous concessions that perhaps led to the destruction of his country by pushing the Soviets too far. It was not his destiny to become the Tito of Hungary, partly because of uncontrollable decisions made in Moscow, but mainly a result of his inability to lead rather than be driven by events.

From October 24 to October 28 of 1956, street fighting raged in Budapest and in outlying districts. The Hungarians demonstrated tremendous bravery and resolve as they faced the superior firepower of the Soviet troops and the AVH. The Hungarian Army was generally sympathetic to the rebels and was often reluctant to fight against them. Many elements even crossed over to the rebel side, supplying much-needed arms, ammunition and experience. The Red Army itself was very restrained in its efforts to subdue the revolt. The original Soviet troops in Budapest showed no great enthusiasm for quelling the disturbance. Apparently, in the October days of the revolt, Moscow was still undecided as to the proper course to pursue. In the meantime, the fighting throughout Hungary was mainly carried on between the freedom fighters and the AVH. It had been the AVH that had symbolized the whole system of repression, terror and brutality. When one of the AVH men was captured, his fate was quickly determined. Many were beaten to death and hung up

by their heels by the insurgents who had long been subjected to their terror. The Hungarians showed no restraint in dealing with the security police. No quarter was given in meting out swift retributive justice to any AVH man unlucky enough to fall into the hands of the rebels.

Throughout the country all economic activity ground to a halt. A general strike prevailed. Despite alternate pleas and threats from Nagy's government the people refused to return to normalcy. In fact, the original demands of the rebels were increased, applying more pressure on the inept and ineffectual Nagy. The demands included a withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and from inclusion within the Soviet orbit. They also called for an abandonment of collectivization and a slowdown of industrialization. Nagy, unable to stand the pressure exerted by the rebels, made one concession after another. On October 27, he announced the formation of a new government, including in it non-communist post-war leaders who had been ousted in the Communist takeover. On October 30, he announced the end of the one-party system and promised new, free elections.

Appeasement of the revolutionaries was impossible unless Nagy was willing completely to abandon Communism. Under duress, the ostensible Hungarian government was not able sufficiently to check the progress of the revolt following the initial gains to enable

the establishment of a national Communist regime like Yugoslavia's or Poland's . Unable to draw the line on its own demands, the Hungarian movement ran out of control in late October.

The Russians were forced to make an agonizing reappraisal when it became evident that the Nagy leadership could not retain any vestige of the Communist system. With their satellite empire in eastern Europe apparently tottering, the Kremlin decision-makers made a tactical retreat under the guise of appeasement and reconciliation. On October 31, there appeared in Pravda an article entitled "Declaration by the Soviet Government on the Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States." The statement was very conciliatory toward the captive satellites and was taken to be an acceptance by Russia of the right to self-determination of the countries of Eastern Europe. ¹⁴ This announcement seemed to mean that Hungary had indeed won. In the United States there was jubilation at the apparent success of Hungary and the obvious discomfiture of Russia. Administration officials were quick to claim credit for the Hungarian uprising and victory, implying that the policy of liberation had brought forth glorious fruit. Eisenhower noted the Russian position and sent a personal message to the Soviet Premier, Bulganin, praising the Russian temperance and

statesmanship. The Russians were said to be in a process of removing their remaining forces in Hungary.

While an extremely optimistic view of the situation prevailed, while American analysts were claiming some credit for the victory, the Soviet Union was making ready an awesome counter-attack. There were disquieting reports of Soviet troop movement along Hungary's frontiers. Russian forces seized vital communication and transportation centers, ostensibly to insure their safe withdrawal, but really in preparation for the assault that was to come.

As October drew to a close and November began the view from the United States toward events in Hungary was a mixture of optimism and fear. Many pointed out the positive aspects, such as the contention that the uprising displayed the Communist failure to indoctrinate the young, since it had been the students that had touched off the revolt.¹⁵ Taking this assessment to its logical conclusion, many observers concluded that the Communist system could not survive, that it was actually in its death throes. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles believed that the satellite states were the "Achilles heel" of the Communist world. He felt that Russia was entrapped in a hopeless quandary, that if they relaxed their grip and gave in to demands of the captive people, then the demands would only increase, but if Russia tightened the controls in an effort

to reimpose Stalinism, then they would only engender more hatred.
 From such an evaluation, there was no way the Soviet Union could win.

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Another aspect of the rebellion that greatly encouraged the United States was the disloyalty of the Hungarian Army. The fact that the Hungarian troops refused to fight against the rebels, and actually often fought with them, was taken as evidence that Russia could not rely on satellite help in the event of a war with the West. It was even asserted that Russia might have to occupy the captive nations in a general war to prevent their fighting against them. This line of thinking led U.S. News and World Report later to estimate that the Hungarian Revolution had decreased Russian manpower from previous estimates by as many as one million men.

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When the Hungarians had apparently won their revolution the United States was eager to take a sanguine view of the situation. Harry Schwartz, writing the the New York Times, declared that the events in Hungary had comprised the worst political defeat the Soviet Union had suffered in the postwar period. Quite obviously, if the Soviet Union had suffered a reverse, then the United States had shared in a victory. It was in the very nature of the post-World War II world.

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Any victory, any liberation of a satellite of the Soviet Union,

would naturally redound to the benefit of the Eisenhower Administration which had been elected in 1952 on a platform promising to work for such a liberation. In the first days of November in 1956, the Republicans did indeed congratulate themselves for the turmoil in eastern Europe, though the only direct action that Washington had taken had been at the ineffective United Nations. 19

Republican orators heralded the success of the liberation doctrine. Thomas Dewey, former governor of New York and an unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1948, said in a speech on November 1, 1956, that Eisenhower's policies were "bearing historic fruit by the spontaneous self-liberation of the enslaved peoples" of Poland and Hungary. 20 Vice-President Nixon also gave praise to Eisenhower's policies and implied that the uprisings in Eastern Europe were partly a result of the GOP's advocacy of liberation. Nixon maintained that the re-election of Eisenhower would insure the continuation of such wise and fruitful policies as would encourage the dissolution of the satellite empire. 21

All was not optimism, however, as November opened in 1956. Despite a willingness to accept a measure of credit for Hungary's apparent success, the administration leaders were wary of their pronouncements. Both Eisenhower and Dulles spoke of possible economic aid to the rebels in Hungary, but both were careful to rule

out military intervention. In fact, during the Polish unrest Dulles had negated any thoughts of U. S. intervention, saying it could "precipitate a World War which could wipe out the Polish people." ²² Dulles's evaluation held true for Hungary as well as for Poland.

In an address to the American people over radio and TV on October 31, 1956, one day after the Russians had issued their conciliatory announcement which apparently promised a peaceful settlement with the rebellious freedom fighters of Hungary, President Eisenhower stated his views. He reasserted the desire of America to see the satellites attain sovereignty and self-government, but he made it crystal clear that, "We could not, of course, carry ²³ out this policy by resort to force." Eisenhower asserted that the United States would be willing to extend economic aid to any country that might sever its association with Communist control from Moscow. Eisenhower emphasized that America had no ulterior motive in seeking to further the independence of the satellites and that the United States did not seek alliances with the rebels.

The stance taken by Eisenhower had been stated first by Secretary of State Dulles on October 27, 1956, in a speech before the Council of World Affairs in Dallas. Dulles, too, promised economic aid to the rebels in eastern Europe while denying any ulterior motive on the part of the United States. He also reassured the world that this ²⁴ country would not resort to military intervention. The spokesmen

for the administration left no doubt about the position of the United States. Moscow could rest assured that there would be no intervention from America. Such assurances were obviously a denial of the most positive aspects of the liberation doctrine.

Although direct military intervention was ruled out by Washington policy-makers, there remained the power of world opinion, of moral and humanitarian considerations. Moscow, like Washington, was involved in an effort to win friends among the neutral nations, and would not ignore world reaction to any decision she might make concerning Hungary. Though the United States could not control the Russian decision on how to deal with Hungary, there was the belief that by focusing world attention on that situation the Russians could be forced to react moderately. The forum for such action was to be the United Nations where the United States hoped to spotlight the Hungarian situation and level the force of world opinion against a Russian intervention.

What effect world condemnation might have had is unknown due to other momentous occurrences that developed at the same time. Though the Kremlin leaders would have probably acted to crush the Hungarian freedom fighters in any event, their decision was made much easier by the simultaneous explosion of a crisis in the Middle East. On October 29, 1956, just as it appeared that Russia might

indeed be willing to withdraw from Hungary and grant concessions to the rebels, the Israelis launched an attack on Egypt in the Middle East. This was an entirely different crisis situation in the world, but it was to have a distinct bearing on the destiny of Hungary. Two days after the Israeli attack, Great Britain and France joined in the offensive to secure the vital Suez Canal Zone. The United States, the most important ally of the aggressors in the Middle East, was not even consulted before the attack. The result was a dangerous split in the Western world at a critical time. The Eisenhower administration was angry at England, France and Israel for taking the offensive without consultation with Washington. The resultant division weakened any attempt to condemn Russia's action in Hungary. Aggression by the Soviet Union could not be logically discriminated from the Western aggression in the Middle East. As a result of the twin crises occurring simultaneously, the effort to create a strong united front of world opinion against Russia was thwarted. As Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon later said, we were "fighting England and France rather than the Communists" when the situation in Hungary became most critical.

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Whether or not a concerted effort to focus world attention on Hungary would have altered the result is uncertain, but it is a fact that Russia did seize the initiative in diverting the world's eye

toward the Middle East while sending her forces back into Hungary to suppress the rebels. In short, the timing of the crisis in the Middle East was perfectly suited to provide a smokescreen for the Russian action in Hungary. ²⁶ Though it is impossible to prove, many observers felt that the Soviet onslaught against Hungary never ²⁷ would have occurred if the West had been united at that time.

The Middle East was a potentially more dangerous situation than Hungary, and, as such, it received first priority in the world's attention. The Hungarian Revolution was relegated to a secondary position at the United Nations, in the newspapers and other media broadcasts, and almost certainly in the minds of the world's leaders. In Hungary there was never much chance of a confrontation between the super powers that might lead to war. In the Middle East, on the other hand, there was a very real threat of global war, since Russia threatened intervention against England, France and Israel. If Russia had intervened, the United States almost certainly would have had to join the Western powers and a nuclear holocaust could have resulted. In comparative terms, Hungary was of slight importance.

With the crisis in the Middle East at its height, Russia, in the early morning hours of November 4, sent an awesome invading force against Budapest and the other areas of resistance within the

country. The result was never in doubt. The Hungarians fought bravely, but they were no match for the firepower of the Red Army. The city of Budapest was devastated. Buildings harboring the freedom fighters were totally demolished. Reports from Hungary stated that many of the Soviet troops actually thought they were in the Suez Canal area fighting against American imperialists, or perhaps in East Germany countering a Western offensive. Many of the new troops sent into Hungary were Asiatics. They were much more enthusiastic than the original forces that had been present in Hungary. Wherever they thought they were, the Russian forces did a brutally efficient job of crushing the resistance within the country.

While the world was primarily interested in events transpiring in the Middle East, while the United States watched in an anguished silence enforced by the realities of world power, the Hungarian bid for freedom was ruthlessly squelched. One by one the liberated radio stations within Hungary fell silent and then began broadcasting the official Moscow line. The unfortunate Imre Nagy was replaced by the Russian puppet, Janos Kadar. Nagy, a pathetic figure to the end, was finally kidnapped from the Yugoslav embassy and executed for his role in the rebellion.

The Russians clamped down on communication with the outside world while they went about their business of eliminating the

scattered pockets of resistance. President Eisenhower sent a personal note of protest to Premier Bulganin of the Soviet Union. Bulganin's reply was typical of the Soviet attitude. In effect, Bulganin informed Eisenhower that events in Hungary were none of the United States' business. ²⁸ Though rather blunt, Bulganin's summary of the situation was essentially correct. For all practical purposes, Hungary was beyond the influence of the United States. Once the Soviet Union had determined to act in massive force, there was nothing short of nuclear war that could have thwarted them.

By November 10, 1956, the Hungarian Revolution was effectively ended. On that date there was still sporadic fighting in some sections of Budapest and the outlying provinces, but the forces of the Soviet Union were in firm control. From the rest of the world, and particularly from the United States, there was a massive outpouring of sympathy and material aid to the thousands of refugees who fled their homeland in search of safety and freedom. Most of the refugees went to Austria, bringing with them little more than the clothes on their backs. In Austria, temporary camps were set up to process the refugees and to expedite their passage to countries willing to accept them. In the first days following the Russian re-entrance, practically all countries expressed a willingness to welcome the Hungarian freedom fighters. Such open-heartedness and generosity were to fade as time passed.

Chapter IV

AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLUTION AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS

In the United States, in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution, there was a re-evaluation of policy in regard to the captive satellites. Administration leaders restated, with necessary variations, the liberation doctrine, defining it to the point of meaninglessness. There was also a search for scapegoats, for someone or some agency to blame for our failure. Radio Free Europe came in for a large share of criticism as some charged that its broadcasts had served to incite the insurrection. In the United States there was also loud criticism for the United Nations for its failure to aid Hungary and for its application of an apparent double standard in regard to the twin crises in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe. Mainly, the United States reaction was confined to aiding the refugees from Hungary, though even that effort was to create new problems as 1956 drew to a close.

The Hungarian Revolution was to have a drawn-out and lasting effect on the policy and posture of the United States as it clearly illuminated the grim reality of the division of global power. Several myths were exploded, including the emptiness of the so-called

liberation doctrine and the futility of the United Nations when the interests of a great power are involved.

The Revolution's Effect on the Election of 1956

There were more immediate effects of the Hungarian tragedy and the simultaneous upheaval in the Middle East. One result of the crises was to add to the landslide victory of President Eisenhower over his Democratic challenger, Adlai Stevenson.

In the last days of the campaign, world tensions, first in Eastern Europe and then in the Middle East, became more and more critical. There was, especially over the Middle East situation, a very real fear of possible nuclear war should the world's two super powers become involved. During such critical periods the American people have historically rallied behind the incumbent leader. When international tensions have intensified, the American people have generally united in support of their President. Though the Democrats charged that the Republicans had helped precipitate the crises through faulty management of American diplomacy, the voting populace obviously did not agree to the extent of supporting Stevenson. Also working to Eisenhower's benefit was his past military career. Many voters apparently felt that, if war were to come, he would be the ideal man to have at the helm. The opposite side of such a consideration was an element of distrust of

Stevenson, who did not inspire the faith and trust that Eisenhower did.

In the closing days of the presidential campaign, GOP speechmakers reminded the electorate of the President's qualifications and at the same time downgraded his challenger. Speaking at San Diego on October 30, 1956, Vice-President Nixon, in reference to the world situation, said, "This is not the moment to replace the greatest commander-in-chief America has ever had in war or peace with a jittery, inexperienced novice." ²⁹ While the Republicans defended Eisenhower and attacked Stevenson, the Democrats charged that the Republicans were responsible for losing control of world events. The Democrats blamed the Republicans for shattering the Western alliance, pointing out that the administration had not even known of the French and English plans to invade Egypt. They charged that our allies no longer had confidence in the United States.

As has been shown, the Republicans had claimed credit for the uprisings in Eastern Europe. But, after the Russians had overwhelmingly crushed the Hungarians, the GOP strategists merely shifted their emphasis to Eisenhower's outstanding military record. Either way the Eisenhower administration stood to gain. Had the rebellion succeeded, the Republicans were prepared to accept the glory. Since it failed and the continued threat of

aggressive Communism remained, the Republicans pointed out the need for the retention of Eisenhower's military experience, wisdom and toughness.

In analyzing the vote that retained Eisenhower in office, Louis H. Bean, writing in The Nation, contended that "popularity" and "crisis" were the key words in understanding the results. First, there was the great popularity and appeal of the Republican candidate. Eisenhower was probably unbeatable with that advantage alone. His appeal certainly transcended that of his chosen party, as the Democrats swept both houses of Congress in the election. Bean contends that the magnitude of the Eisenhower victory was greatly enhanced by the critical world situation. He asserts that in a time of international tension, the man in the White House, whether Democrat or Republican, always benefits. Bean estimated, and most knowledgeable observers agreed, that Eisenhower received a last minute lift of about five percent due to "frightening international developments," and that probably as many as three million voters switched to Eisenhower due to confidence in him to handle better the world crises. As Bean saw it, "The majority of voters decided against swapping an elephant for a donkey in midstream."

All observers of the 1956 election were in general agreement with the views expressed in the analysis by Louis Bean. Most agreed

that Eisenhower would have triumphed anyway, but that Hungary and the Middle East added to his margin.

Stevenson's campaign manager, James A. Finnegan, stated that, "the situation in the Middle East and the outbreak of hostilities in Hungary were the primary factors that occasioned the (Eisenhower) landslide." ³² Senator Everett Dirksen, Republican from Illinois, was most emphatic in his assessment when he contended that the foreign crises "became the most important element in the whole ³³ election."

Professional politicians, winners and losers alike, interviewed in a post-election survey conducted by U.S. News and World Report, which appeared in the edition of November 16, 1956, generally voiced similar opinions. All believed that the voters had trusted Eisenhower to deal with the delicate situations extant in the world. In the voting booths, "Millions.... showed that they have faith in President Eisenhower to keep the nation out of war----but to win the war if ³⁴ staying out should prove impossible."

The Role of Radio Free Europe

There were many questions to be answered and accusations levelled following the suppression of the Hungarian revolt. One question posed was to what extent American propaganda broadcasts had incited the rebellion. The agencies principally involved in the

dissemination of propaganda behind the Iron Curtain were Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America. Of these, it was the activity of Radio Free Europe that came under the most strident attack. It had begun operations on July 4, 1950 as a "strictly private enterprise".³⁵ It maintained the operation of five stations with twenty-nine powerful transmitters beaming broadcasts into the captive nations of Eastern Europe. The Communists naturally attempted to jam the transmissions to prevent the stimulation of unrest. But the Radio Free Europe organization did not stop with radio broadcasts. This agency was responsible for dropping leaflets into the satellites. The leaflets were carried by balloons which floated over the subjected countries. By March of 1956, Radio Free Europe officials estimated that over two-hundred-and-fifty million leaflets had been dropped into Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia.³⁶

What effect these efforts at encouraging unrest actually had is uncertain and was the subject of much debate. In the aftermath of the bloodshed in Hungary, spokesmen for Radio Free Europe denied any responsibility. Joseph Grew, one of the directors of the operation, said that it was "an insult to the brave Hungarian people to suggest that they have responded to any other influence than their innate love of liberty."³⁷ However, European Director Richard Condon, while denying that the broadcasts had been inflammatory,

did admit that Radio Free Europe had emphasized the attacks on the Soviet Union in the United Nations. He also said that they had reported in full the protests against Russia from all over the world. Such reporting could very well have given a distorted picture of world support, which was never any more than verbal in nature.

The ostensible activities of Radio Free Europe are defensible, but Leslie B. Bain, writing in The Reporter, asserted that the broadcasts were not limited to factual accounts, but that they were often emotional and slanted, and that they did contribute to false and dangerous hopes. Bain states that Radio Free Europe was guilty of emphasizing and re-emphasizing a phrase from Henry Cabot Lodge's remarks at the United Nations in which he said, "We shall not fail them." Bain contends that such statements were often broadcast out of context and did mislead the Hungarians into believing that active support from the West, and particularly the United States, would be forthcoming.

Bain and others also argued that Radio Free Europe had played a role in pushing the Nagy government too far in demands for Russian withdrawal and concessions, demands, that in their extremism, provoked Russia to react in force. As an on-the-spot reporter, he asserted that the broadcasts served to undermine the government by airing "increasingly extreme and impossible demands."

Those demands, if met by the Soviet occupiers, would have meant the end to Communism in Hungary and probably the beginning of the end of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, a result the Soviet Union could not accept.

To deny the impact of the Radio Free Europe broadcasts is difficult, as there is ample evidence to prove that they did influence the Hungarian freedom fighters. For instance, twelve demands were broadcast every day over Radio Free Europe and also carried by the balloons and dropped in the form of leaflets. Those very same demands were broadcast from the radio stations within Hungary that were seized by the rebels during the revolt. Certainly such a fact could not be mere coincidence. As one Hungarian escapee later said, "The Hungarian uprising was entirely the making of the people in Hungary. But it was the radio link with the West which had taught them which way to go, what to hope for, what to demand.⁴¹" Although the Hungarian quoted above apparently intended to assign total responsibility for the revolt to the Hungarian people, he also reinforced the accusation made by Leslie Bain and others against Radio Free Europe. Basically that accusation was that the broadcasts had advocated the adoption of extreme demands and that the intemperance of those demands had provoked terrible Russian retaliation.

At the very least, the activities of Radio Free Europe were of questionable value and possibly promoted considerable violence and needless bloodshed. Whether or not the broadcasts were actually at fault is debatable, as is the very usefulness of such an organization. It seems that where rebellion can not succeed, agitation is not only uncalled for but also deserving of condemnation.

The nature of Radio Free Europe as a privately operated concern, if indeed it was, raises grave questions. It is obviously a very dangerous matter when private individuals have a controlling voice in decisions and programs that must necessarily reflect upon their country. Whether correctly or not, Radio Free Europe was accepted as a spokesman for the United States. Thus, any broadcast from any of the five operative stations could have easily been taken by listeners in the satellites to be representative of the policy of the United States. And, though the policy of Washington in regard to Eastern Europe was cautious, the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe were apparently more aggressive in tone. The result was that the radio broadcasts, in their aggressiveness, tended to work against the cautious, go-slow policy being urged by the State Department upon the Hungarian rebels.⁴² In any event, Radio Free Europe seems to have been operating at cross purposes to the official U. S. policy.

The Efforts of the United Nations

The United Nations was another organization to come under attack as a result of its role in the Hungarian crisis. Unlike Radio Free Europe, however, the UN was not criticized for what it did but rather for what it failed to do. There was perhaps little expectation that the international organization could be effective in coercing a major power to stop aggression, but the Hungarian episode proved conclusively the futility of the UN when it was defied by one of the world's super powers. All that the UN was able to provide was a sounding board for world opinion concerning Hungary. It was, as Senate Minority Leader William Knowland of California characterized it, a mere "debating society" in the face of Soviet

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Aggression.

The UN faced unusual handicaps in its attempts to deal with the critical trouble spots extant around the world in October and November of 1956. The simultaneous outbursts in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe presented two very distinct problems for both the United Nations and for the United States. In the case of Hungary, there was overwhelming world support for the Hungarian rebels and for their efforts to win autonomy. The United States, supported by its closest allies, Great Britain and France, led the marshalling of world opinion in favor of the Hungarian freedom

fighters and in opposition to the Soviet oppressors. But, after October 29, when the Israelis attacked Egypt, precipitating a grave world crisis in the Middle East, the Western effort to maintain world attention on events inside Hungary was destroyed. Two days later, on October 31, when there was a lull in fighting in Hungary, and when it appeared that Russia might allow the Hungarians to win their revolution, the French and English joined the attack on Egypt. The effect of the French and English attack along the Suez Canal had extensive ramifications, some of them touching Hungary.

The escalation of hostilities in the Middle East created the possibility of world war, as Russia bitterly condemned the aggressors and made threats of intervention on the side of Egypt. If the Russians had intervened, then the United States, though opposing the action of its allies, almost certainly would have been forced to fight for them. The situation in the Middle East was fraught with danger, and it occupied the attention of the United States and the United Nations to a predominant degree.

The timing of the explosion in the Middle East was ideal for the Soviet Union and most unfortunate for Hungary. By using the Suez crisis as a diversion of sorts, the Soviet Union was able to suppress the freedom fighters of Hungary with a minimum of world protest. The efforts of the United States at the UN to condemn Russian

aggression were embarrassed by the aggression being carried on by its own allies in the Middle East. The United States was placed in an untenable position, unable to condemn aggression in Hungary while ignoring aggression in the Middle East. On October 31, 1956, President Eisenhower stated the position of his country regarding the world situation. He said, "There can be no peace without law. And there can be no law if we were to invoke one code of international conduct for those who oppose us and another for our friends."⁴⁴ The position of the United States was resented by Britain and France and was therefore divisive at the very time a united front was most needed against Russia to be of help to the embattled Hungarians.

As to actual maneuverings at the UN, the United States had initiated informal discussions with Great Britain and France as early as October 25, to decide on what course of action to pursue concerning Hungary. Throughout the October days of the rebellion the United States was reluctant to push the discussion at the UN. The feeling was that the Hungarians might gain concessions on their own and that to agitate the Soviets might be counter-productive.

There was also the certainty that any resolution proposed in the Security Council faced a definite Soviet veto. Nevertheless, the Security Council did meet on October 27, to discuss the events in

Hungary. The United States made no proposal. The Russians did take advantage of the meeting to express their version of the affair, charging that the United States had stirred up internal strife within Hungary.

Russian withdrawal from Hungary was apparently underway by the 29th and by October 30th the fighting in Hungary had actually stopped. At that point there was nothing to be gained by pushing the matter at the UN. Also, by that time the crisis in the Middle East was beginning and concern for Hungary was relegated to a secondary status.

Between October 28 and November 2, there were no meetings held at the UN concerning Hungary. However, by November 2, when it became obvious that the Russian withdrawal was really only a reshuffling of their forces and that they did intend to reassert their control, the United States was quick to call for another meeting of the Security Council for that date.

In the meantime Premier Nagy, recognizing the hopelessness of his position if no outside assistance was forthcoming, had sent a message to the UN requesting the Secretary-General "to call upon the great powers to recognize the neutrality of Hungary and ask the Security Council to instruct the Soviet and Hungarian governments
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to start negotiations immediately" which would lead to Soviet withdrawal.

Despite the appeal from Nagy and his government, there was no decisive action taken at the meeting of the Security Council held on November 2. The Secretary-General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjold, did not even attend the session, which was perhaps indicative of his overriding involvement with the more dangerous Suez crisis. Throughout the critical period for Hungary, the Middle East situation occupied first priority at the United Nations and all around the world.

By November 3, the city of Budapest had been sealed off by the Russian forces. On that date, the United States, realizing the urgency of the situation, presented a draft resolution to the Security Council which called on Russia to refrain from intervening or from sending additional troops into Hungary. The resolution also affirmed Hungary's right to self-determination and called on the Secretary-General to investigate ways of aiding the Hungarian people. The Security Council, however, did not take action on the resolution but deferred it for further study.

While talk continued at the "debating society" in New York, the Russians acted in Hungary. Early on the morning of November 4, the Russians invaded Budapest in force and began the slaughter of the Hungarian insurgents. The Security Council of the UN was reconvened at 3 A.M., New York time, on the morning of November 4.

The ambassador from the United States, Henry Cabot Lodge, introduced a strongly worded resolution denouncing the Soviet action. As had been anticipated, the Soviet Union vetoed the resolution. The United States then proposed moving the matter to the General Assembly for further consideration. There was nothing to be gained by extensive debate in the Security Council. The Russian veto was all-powerful.

The General Assembly of the United Nations met six times in special session between November 4 and November 10 to discuss the Hungarian question. Altogether eighteen hours of debate were held. It was largely confined to charges and counter-charges between the United States and the Soviet Union. As the verbiage continued, the Russians proceeded to crush all resistance within Hungary.

Through November and into December of 1956, several resolutions were passed by the General Assembly. They invariably called for an investigation of events in Hungary, the admittance of UN observers, a condemnation of Soviet action and the sending of relief supplies. Just as invariably, the Soviets ignored or rejected the UN resolutions. No observers were admitted, not even the Secretary-General himself who asked for personal permission to go to Hungary and observe. The puppet government led by Janos Kadar also denied the validity of Nagy's call for UN aid on the grounds that

Nagy had never been the real leader of Hungary and that the trouble was a domestic insurrection over which the UN could not claim jurisdiction. The Soviet overlords effectively told the UN, just as they had informed President Eisenhower, that events in Hungary were none of their business.

Finally, on December 12, 1956, two months after the revolution had been crushed, the UN General Assembly did pass a resolution sponsored by the United States which specifically condemned the Soviet Union for the Hungarian intervention, its non-cooperation and
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obstructionism. As during the uprising itself, all that could be directed at the aggressor were words.

The obvious truth to be gained from the UN's futility in the Hungarian matter was that the United Nations could not force either of the super powers to do anything contrary to what they perceive to be their national interest.

In stark contrast to the failure of the UN in Hungary, the organization was able effectively to halt the fighting in the Middle East. The critical difference was that in the Middle East the Soviet Union and the United States acted in concert. Both agreed that the aggression by Israel, Britain, and France should be halted and a cease-fire arranged. With the super powers in agreement and acting through the machinery of the UN, the shooting in the Middle

East stopped. Where pressure could not deter Russia, it could influence Britain and France when applied by both the Soviet Union and the United States acting through the United Nations.

It was true, as Congressman Wayne Hays of Ohio charged, that the United Nations maintained "a dual standard of justice, one kind for small countries and the other for large countries." ⁴⁷ If anything, the Russian handling of Hungary had less justification than the intervention in Egypt conducted by Britain, France and Israel, but the realities of power dictated non-action against the nuclear-armed and determined Soviets. To have defied Russia could have provoked a world war. The UN, although applying an obvious double standard, did the best it could under the circumstances. There could have been no coercion of Russia, just as there could be no coercion of the United States. That is not justice, but it is a recognition of reality.

Exposure of Liberation

Though the United Nations was widely criticized for its inability to help Hungary, the attacks on that organization were not strident. Most people were already aware of the weakness of the UN and had placed slight reliance on its efficacy in an emergency. Within the United States, however, there were some bitter recriminations and attacks on the Eisenhower administration's handling of the crisis.

Some of the criticism was partisan in nature, politically motivated. But there was also room for and a need for a questioning of America's role in the affair.

Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon led the criticism of the Eisenhower administration, saying it had "made every effort to exaggerate the differences between its Eastern European policies and that of the preceding administration." ⁴⁸ Neuberger's assertions were correct as the Republican spokesmen, dating all the way back to the campaign of 1952 and to the platform adopted in that year, had taken every opportunity to condemn the Truman-Acheson policy of containment. The Republicans had maintained until the very eve of the Hungarian Revolution that they did indeed have an alternative to containment. This was the vague policy of liberation, which was ultimately put to the test in Hungary and found not only to be lacking in power, but totally absent. There was no policy of liberation in 1956, nor had there ever been one.

The Eisenhower forces understandably attempted to clarify and justify exactly what they had intended by their previous pronouncements concerning the captive nations. Secretary of State Dulles, the foremost advocate of liberation, was asked at a news conference in early December of 1956 if he felt that the United States was in any way responsible for the Hungarian bloodbath. He replied that both

he and Eisenhower had "emphasized that liberation would have to be brought about as an evolutionary process, and we did not see how violent revolution would prevail." ⁴⁹ This explanation satisfied no one. Representative Alvin M. Bentley of Michigan, speaking on the House of Representatives floor on March 18, 1957, took up the Dulles argument and refuted it when he declared that the United States was devoid of "information on which to adopt the policy to assist evolutionary liberation any more than we had a policy last fall to adopt with respect to revolutionary liberation." ⁵⁰ However, both arguments seem to evade the facts. Liberation by any means, evolutionary or revolutionary, if it were to be assisted by the United States, would still involve the ouster of the Red Army, and that event was and is beyond imagination.

The policy of the United States regarding Eastern Europe was totally unrealistic. Writing in the New York Times, C. L. Sulzberger analyzed that "our attitude on Eastern Europe has been one of devout hope but little practical intention." ⁵¹ He went on, saying that "we talked about liberation without hard thought about methods of accomplishing this." ⁵²

There does indeed appear to have been much careless talk about rolling back the Iron Curtain, when a realistic assessment would have branded such an avowed policy as dangerous and quixotic.

Senator Neuberger, in a speech delivered at Hermiston, Oregon on December 10, 1956, and inserted into the Congressional Record on January 17, 1957, called for an investigation of the effects of American statements and broadcasts advocating liberation or "rollbacks". He said that "our national spokesmen must have known all along, before any revolts happened in the Soviet empire, that we could not support such revolts against Soviet military repression." 53

Neuberger, in his remarks on the Senate floor, also quoted from a newspaper correspondent who had been in Hungary at the time of the uprising to the effect that the Hungarians had truly expected help 54 from the United States. What Neuberger and others were disturbed about and were questioning was how and why the Hungarians had come to believe that aid from the United States was forthcoming, when, in fact, there was never any possibility of support from this country. The disquieting answer was perhaps that statements of American leaders and broadcasts by Radio Free Europe or Voice of America had incited the rebellion.

Apart from the debate on whether or not the United States had contributed to the incitement of the rebellion, there was a great deal of criticism of our unpreparedness when it did occur. Representative John McCormack of Massachusetts asserted that the Hungarian Revolution had "revealed the cold fact that our intelligence system

has fallen into disrepair and that intelligence data are being manufactured to support conclusions arrived at by a group of immature theorists.⁵⁵ McCormack apparently felt that our lack of a policy to deal with the revolt and to seize whatever opportunities it presented was due to a misapprehension, a belief that the Communist empire was unshakeable. He felt that the United States had been handcuffed by a reliance on invalid assumptions about the situation in Eastern Europe.

Whatever errors of omission or commission that were made, one certain victim of the Hungarian Revolution was the vaunted policy of liberation. Some contended that it was proved obsolete by the occurrences in Eastern Europe, but it is probably nearer the truth to agree with an editorial from the Life magazine issue of March 4, 1957, which declared that the true lesson of Hungary was not that the policy of liberation was obsolete, but rather that there⁵⁶ never had been such a policy.

The Hungarian Revolution had been an object lesson in the balance of terror. To have aided the Hungarian freedom fighters in any significant way would have meant not only the risk but the probability of nuclear war. Hungary clearly showed the impossibility of intervention against a nuclear power and was a painful lesson to the United States on the limitations of power.

Nuclear weapons had become "a form of blackmail to suppress
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 revolutions against tyranny." While the free people of the world
 might sympathize with the people of the captive nations, there was
 no possibility of forceful assistance. As Secretary of State Dulles
 said on the idea of sending troops from the United States, "This
 would be madness. The only way we can save Hungary at this time
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 would be through all-out nuclear war," which, of course would not
 only not have saved Hungary, but possibly could have destroyed the
 planet.

Positive Aspects of the Revolution

Though criticism of the role of the United States regarding the
 Hungarian Revolution was the predominant theme, there were
 observers who took heart in some aspects of the affair.

It was inevitable that GOP spokesmen in particular should
 search for positive interpretations of the events that had occurred in
 Eastern Europe. There were, for instance, assertions that the
 Russians, by invading Hungary in a show of brute force, had
 completely alienated the neutral nations of the world, which both
 they and the United States had long sought to win. Vice-President
 Nixon expressed this contention in a speech before the Automobile
 Manufacturer's Association in New York on December 6, 1956, when
 he rhetorically asked, "Can it be seriously suggested that any nation

in the world today would trust the butchers of Budapest?"⁵⁹ Nixon also voiced the opinion that the United States had possibly prevented a similar Russian assault against Poland by directing world criticism against Russia's actions in Hungary.

President Eisenhower and other administration officials were also quick to point out the moral uprightness of the position of the United States in both the Middle Eastern and East European crisis. Although the opposition of the United States to the British, French, and Israeli invasion of Egypt had strained the Western alliance, Washington asserted that the stand taken in that instance had given greater credence to our condemnation of the Russian aggression in Hungary. Vice-President Nixon, in a highly moral justification of U.S. policy, said, "Because we stood firmly against the use of force in Egypt, we were in a moral position to condemn the ruthless and barbarous conquest" of Hungary.⁶⁰

Despite administration attempts to elicit some measure of praise for its policies in relation to the twin crises, there was actually a very distinct difference in the role the United States played in the two troubled areas. Basically, the efforts of the United States in the Middle East were effective, while in Hungary they were of no efficacy at all. In any event, talk of moral pressure or of the retention of our moral integrity were of no value

to the beleaguered Hungarians. Revolutions need action, not talk. It could hardly make a significant difference on the result inside Hungary, or in the minds of the Hungarian rebels, that the United States had remained consistent and morally pure in its response to their problem. The United States, both before and after the Hungarian rebellion, substituted words for concrete policies and actions, and, as the Hungarian freedom fighters found, words are of slight value against tanks.

In searching for the most optimistic assessment of the Hungarian Revolution, analysts in the United States pointed to the weakness in the Soviet empire which had been exposed. Representative Henry S. Reuss of Wisconsin made a typical assessment when he said that events in Hungary had provided "proof that Communism as an ideology had failed completely to win the hearts and minds of men, and that it is only by brute force that the Soviet tyrants are able to
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hold power." The use of brute force by the Soviets was interpreted in the United States as being the final proof that Russia was the real colonialist operative in the world and that only by armed force and political oppression did they maintain their hold on Eastern Europe. It was a comforting sound in the United States to hear the cry of
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"Rusky go home" being heard in Hungary. Having long been condemned by Communist propaganda as an imperialist, the U. S.

was cheered to witness the Russian embarrassment on the same charge.

Some observers, including Secretary of State Dulles, detected a fatal flaw in the Soviet policy in regard to their satellites and predicted increasing unrest and rebellion, even to the point of dissolution. The flaw was repression itself, as Dulles saw in it a hopeless dilemma for the Russians. He contended that increased harshness would only create increased resistance, while concessions would only lead to new demands. However, Dulles, like other administration officials, no longer even hinted at anything more than moral pressure from the United States to encourage the potential
63
rebels. It was a great retreat from the bold but empty policy of liberation.

Another encouraging feature of the abortive revolt in Hungary was the loss of prestige and support the Communists suffered around the world, not only in neutral nations, but even within their own ranks. Newsweek magazine on November 26, 1956, documented the confusion and disillusionment within the Communist parties around the world that had been occasioned by the inconsistencies of the Party's policies, beginning with the downgrading of Stalin and culminating with the use of naked force to quell the Hungarian Revolution. The article asserted that the intramural battles within

the Party had bred divisiveness and weakness.⁶⁴ Naturally such interpretations were quite popular and comfortable to the United States.

Probably the most encouraging aspect of the revolution to observers in the United States was the fact that the revolt had been led by young people. This was taken as proof that Communism had failed, that opposition would be lasting, and that the opposition of young people proved the ineffectiveness of Communist propaganda efforts. Also, many observers pointed out the unreliability of the satellite armies, saying they would not support Russia in a war. The most roseate interpretations possible were given to events that had transpired within Hungary, some even prophesying the beginning of the end of the Soviet empire and the Communist system. As in the days before the uprising ever occurred, such analyses failed to take into account the power and presence of the Red Army and the determination of the Kremlin hierarchy to retain its control.

Chapter V

THE REFUGEE AND RELIEF EFFORT

The one area in which America could be effective in aiding the Hungarians was relief and support for the thousands of refugees who were forced to flee their troubled land. In the first days after the Russian re-entrance, American aid and sympathy gushed forth, but as the days stretched on, even the relief activity became tedious and clouded with controversy.

The air of urgency that was apparent immediately after the revolution was short lived. The great ardor for the Hungarian cause vanished and the embattled Hungarians were relegated to the back pages of newspapers as the world turned its attention elsewhere. Too, after the initial warm willingness to accept the refugees had faded, there arose grave questions about some of the refugees as to their past political affiliations. Some Americans suggested the possibility of Communist infiltration. Others began to assert that the massive influx of immigrants would serve only to deprive native Americans of jobs while adding to the welfare rolls.

As some Americans began to take a dim view of the entrance of the refugees, the head of one welfare organization aiding the refugees in this country actually reported that "two-fifths (of the

refugees) were criminals and adventurers, two-fifths were people simply trying to escape a generally poor life, and only one-fifth actual freedom fighters." ⁶⁵ There was much disagreement in the United States as to the nature of the refugees, but many accepted the contention that, on the whole, they were undesirable. The debate over the question of whether or not this country should grant asylum to large numbers of refugees was to last for well over a year and was to have wide-ranging ramifications.

Relief donations from the United States flowed into Austria, (where most of the refugees had taken sanctuary), in vast amounts and greatly varied form in the last days of November and early December of 1956. Throughout the United States private individuals and large corporations donated money or supplies to aid the people of Hungary who had been driven out of their homeland. Rich and poor alike contributed. The activity was coordinated primarily by the American Red Cross, but the outpouring of sympathy and material support was incredibly diverse. Donations ranged from a \$100,000 check given by Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller to small checks from individuals. Money poured in from church congregations that took special interest in the project. Companies all over the United States organized fund-raising projects. Clothing was collected by a multitude of church and civic organizations. Colleges and

universities pledged grants to students among the refugees.⁶⁶
All across the land protest meetings were held to condemn the Russian brutality. Especially in New York and Washington D. C., the Russian representatives were picketed and their country denounced. In the forefront of such demonstrations were Americans of East European heritage, though others joined in the denunciation of Russia.

Gifts from America took all manner of forms. The Charles Pfizer Company donated \$15,000 worth of antibiotics. Pan American World Airways flew medicines into Eastern Europe free of charge. Baby foods were donated by Gerber. The Pitman-Moore Company sent needed Salk vaccine. GE sent a \$25,000 mobile X-ray unit. The Penn-Texas Corporation pledged they would provide 1,000 jobs,⁶⁷ homes, and training for refugees that came to America.

Offers of assistance came from all over the land. Everyone desired to lend an active hand in helping the brave freedom fighters in the days immediately following their attempted revolution. Political leaders, from President Eisenhower down to town mayors, called for an outpouring of American generosity and support, and their calls were initially well-received and effective.

As citizens and organizations within the United States donated money, food, clothing, medicines and other needed supplies to the

Hungarians who had fled into Austria, it became obvious that resettlement of the refugees would have to be expedited, not only on humanitarian grounds, but also to relieve the terrific burden on Austria. In the first days after the quelling of the revolution, estimates were made as to how many refugees would escape from Hungary. Those estimated were to be proven woefully inaccurate as the stream of Hungarians fleeing their country steadily increased. In all, there were about 200,000 Hungarians who made it safely out of their homeland. Many of them came out with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Many parents sent their children out while they remained behind to carry the fight to the bitter end. It was a touching spectacle along the Austrian border as the struggling refugees staggered, many of them exhausted, freezing, into Austria and what they hoped was freedom and safety. As newscasts carried the story and newspapers published pictures and graphic accounts of their suffering, the heart of the world went out to the heroic Hungarians.

As the refugees began to collect in Austria, the United States moved to speed the flow of a part of them to this country. However, under the extant United States immigration law, there were places for only 5,000 Hungarian refugees under the Refugee Relief Act. Also, under that act there were provisions for lengthy and extensive

investigation of any prospective entrant. To sidestep the law's strictures, President Eisenhower, in early November, ordered "extraordinary measures" to facilitate the processing. He urged the cutting of red tape and needless delay.⁶⁸ Eisenhower's calls for action were put into practice with overwhelming support from the American people, but the situation was to grow worse and the President's initial measures were to prove inadequate.

Throughout the period when the Hungarian refugees were a pressing issue, the United States was under considerable pressure to show that this country was still a haven for the downtrodden and oppressed. Officials feared a great propaganda setback should the United States fail openly and generously to receive the Hungarians.⁶⁹ Americans had long boasted of our position as a sanctuary for the world's suppressed masses, especially contrasting our openness to the restrictions of the Communist-controlled states. Should the United States fail to accept the refugees, or so the official reasoning went, then the Communists would certainly seize the opportunity to point out the insincerity of American pronouncements.

When the magnitude of the refugee problem became obvious near the end of November of 1956, the Eisenhower administration was faced with finding some way to permit more immigrants into the United States. The Austrians were greatly overtaxed in their efforts

to care for the refugees and were in bad need of relief. The primary roadblock in the way of increasing the refugee allowance was the McCarran-Walter immigration legislation of 1952, which had been passed over President Truman's veto. The McCarran-Walter Act had provided a rigid system of quotas with a strict and tedious procedure for entrance by an immigrant. The legislation was alleged by political liberals to be discriminatory against people from eastern and southeastern Europe, which, of course, included Hungary, as it severely limited the number of immigrants from those areas. President Truman and others had condemned the McCarran-Walter act as anti-alien, anti-immigration and anti-American. This legislation continued the strict national origins policy adopted in the 1920's and, in late November of 1956, it provided a large obstacle to any additional admission of Hungarians.

Despite obvious technical and legal difficulties, President Eisenhower felt compelled to act. On the first day of December in 1956, the President called for the acceptance of more Hungarians on a parole basis. Congress, he said, would be called upon later to clarify their status since they would not fit into any legal category prior to action by Congress. At the time that Eisenhower proposed his emergency measure to admit more refugees as parolees, it seemed a certainty that Congress would speedily accept

them and grant them permanent status. The high tide of sympathy for them was still running strong, but, before their plight was resolved, there was to be a long and agonizing debate.

The majority of Hungarians who came to America were received at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, an army camp refurbished to serve as a processing center. The new arrivals landed at McGuire Air Force Base and were taken by bus to Camp Kilmer. They were housed there until they were transported to a new location somewhere within the country, usually under the sponsorship of a relative already living here or of an organization actively involved in the refugee resettlement program.

The reception and treatment of the refugees at Camp Kilmer came under attack from some quarters. An editorial in the New York Times condemned what it called the "bungling and bad judgement" of the military authorities in the handling of the situation. The article especially attacked the Army for providing the Hungarians with the spectacle of "uniforms and regimentation
70
all over again" as their first taste of life in America. There was a great deal of criticism of the welcome afforded the first Hungarian refugees to set foot on American soil. They arrived on November 21, 1956 and were promptly asked to applaud the United States' flag. Secretary of the Army Walter M. Brucker, who made

the welcoming address, told them, "I want you to know what freedom
 71
 is all about." Many commentators attacked Brucker for his remarks, charging that the Hungarians had just come from a confrontation with Russian tanks in a quest for freedom and that they did not need anyone to lecture them on its meaning.

It is probably true that the welcome received by the refugees at Camp Kilmer was not of the warmest nature, but in defense of the operation, it must be admitted that the situation was extraordinary. The United States, like all other nations, was taken by surprise and was unprepared. That this country was surprised and unprepared was no fault of the officials in charge of Camp Kilmer, but rather of the intelligence officers and the formulators of policy in high positions. The difficulties that arose in handling the refugees can be traced back to the basic faulty assumption that no massive uprising could occur in the Communist realm. On the basis of such a wrongheaded belief, there was no need to even consider or plan for a sudden influx of refugees. So no preparation was made.

Into December, the refugees continued to collect in Austria, awaiting clearance and passage to a new home. One thing that complicated matters was the preference of approximately 90% of
 72
 them to come to the United States. As they were reluctant to accept an offer to go to another country, this only created more

problems for the Austrians as they had to maintain them. It also applied additional pressure on the United States to open its doors more widely to the refugees.

It was quite natural that the United States would be the first choice of the majority of the refugees as this land represented the place of greatest opportunity. However, even under the Eisenhower formula for allowing the entrance of some Hungarians as parolees, the United States, in mid-December of 1956, projected the admission of only 21,500 refugees at the most. Also, by that time, American generosity and sympathy were becoming strained. As early as November 29, 1956, there appeared in the New York Times an account of incipient opposition to the admission of the Hungarians. The article stated that the White House had already received numerous letters strongly opposing their entrance. The administration faced a difficult quandary. To refuse to admit more refugees would mean a probable propaganda onslaught from the Communists who would be quick to point out the difference between our words and our deeds. On the other hand, to open the gates to unlimited immigration would cause an undetermined degree of internal opposition and also entail the possibility of Communist infiltration.

In the closing days of 1956, the opposition to the Hungarian

immigration became more vocal. The leader of this movement was Representative Francis E. Walter of Pennsylvania, who had co-authored the restrictive McCarran-Walter Act of 1950. Walter and others maintained that the very strict regulations should be observed to prevent the entrance of Communist subversives into this country. He claimed that many of the first wave of refugees were members of the Communist Party who were fleeing to save their lives when it appeared that the revolution would succeed. While on a fact-finding mission to Austria to observe the handling of the refugee situation, he asserted that he had actually seen many of the refugees tear up their Party identification cards just as they crossed into
73
Austria.

Walter's charges were obviously extremely serious and the fear of Communist subversion was very real. As a result of such charges, the pace of refugee entrance was slowed. More extensive medical and security checks were instituted. Much of the red tape that had been cut was resumed.

As the ardor for the refugees waned, so did the relief gifts and donations. In December, the American Red Cross and CARE, two of the leading organizations dispensing relief, reported great shortages in money and supplies. The lag was great enough to occasion a Presidential message at Christmas, 1956, expressing

concern and pleading for a more generous response.

Perhaps in an effort to increase American awareness of the plight of the refugees, and also to win support for increased immigration totals, Vice-President Nixon was dispatched to Austria in late 1956 to inspect the refugee camps and report to Eisenhower on additional American aid that might be required. Nixon returned in time to make a Christmas address to the nation, calling for a doubling of American assistance to what he termed the "incredibly courageous" Hungarians. He also declared the Hungarian uprising had signalled "the beginning of the end for international communism." 74

By putting the best possible interpretation on the course of events and by appealing to American sympathy, Nixon apparently set the stage for Eisenhower's call for another increase in the American refugee allowance. As a result of the Nixon report, plus the continuing world pressure on the United States to appear generous and the purely humanitarian considerations, Eisenhower did announce the willingness of the United States to accept more refugees under the same extralegal parole basis.

In his State of the Union Message on January 10, 1957, President Eisenhower called for prompt action by Congress to clarify the status of the parolees by granting them permanent admission. Representative Walter, the leader of the obstructionists, stated

an opposite view, saying he felt that the United States should proceed
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"very, very carefully." The lines of battle were drawn over the
refugee issue, an issue that was to be debated in a long and tedious
fashion, doing credit to no one and serving only to strain the
quality of America's mercy.

Those opposed to the Hungarian refugees on the grounds that
many of them were Communist agents, or had at least once been
Communist Party members, found enough evidence to cast a shadow
over all the refugees. Senator Olin Johnston, acting chairman of
the Senate Internal Security subcommittee, urged in January of
1957 that refugee admittance be halted. He claimed that he was
convinced that a "substantial number" of Communists were slipping
through and the testimony before his subcommittee apparently
76
substantiated his charges. One witness, who was masked to conceal
his identity, even explained how some Communist agents had crossed
the border into Austria. Such revelations effectively aroused
resentment against the refugees and further dampened the already
fading U. S. zeal to help. Advocates of continued refugee admittance
argued that the true freedom fighters would detect and reveal any
former Communists, but their appeals were not heeded. As the
winter of 1957 dragged on, the urgency of the situation and even
the sympathy for the Hungarians decreased.

Despite the uncertainty of their status within this country, the Hungarians who came to the United States were, generally speaking, well-received and resettled as quickly as possible. Despite some hostility and opposition to their presence, the overall record was an admirable one. The total cost of the refugee absorption programs for all countries was estimated at eighty million dollars. Of that figure, the United States paid about sixty million.⁷⁷ From such statistics alone it is obvious that the United States had assumed the lion's share of the burden. However, just as those who opposed the entrance of any refugees were not satisfied, neither were those who felt that the United States had been deficient in its response.

Senator Richard Neuberger was one who later lamented the contribution of the United States. He said, "we have lagged far behind the relative contribution of nations far smaller and less wealthy than the United States." Neuberger supported his assertions with charts showing this country at the bottom of a listing of countries that had aided the refugees.⁷⁸ His charts were on a proportional basis taking into account the size of each country. Though Neuberger and those who agreed with him had an undeniable point, he also alluded in the same address to a reason why the United States had not responded more generously. He admitted that he and other Senators had received many letters expressing

fears of massive immigration, fears of subversives and of possible effects on job opportunities for native Americans. These fears, plus the tough immigration laws, which can be easily defended, explain why America accepted no more immigrants than it did. Also, despite the fact that the United States was largely built by immigrants, there existed an innate distrust and even dislike for newcomers.

Altogether, more than 30,000 Hungarians came to the United States, most of them passing through Camp Kilmer and on to new homes and jobs all across the country. On the whole, the operation was a great success and probably the greatest accomplishment of the United States in an otherwise sad affair.

In the Spring of 1957, the United States practically shut off the flow of Hungarian immigrants, limiting any further entrants to hardship cases involving a refugee with relations already in the United States, or one with special skills who could be easily and effectively integrated into the economy. This was, in effect, the end of the refugee program. The reaction that had been expected did occur. The Communists assailed the United States, charging that America had stirred up the revolt and had then failed to support it, and had finally abandoned the victims. In fact, there were those who had been abandoned. In Austria some 17,000 Hungarians

remained. They were the sick, the old, the infirm, the unwanted.
They were the "bottom of the barrel." ⁸⁰ Their plight was to be pitied but there was no aid forthcoming.

The refugees who had made it to the United States were finally granted permanent status a year-and-a-half after their attempted revolution. With their absorption, the sad story of the Hungarian Revolution came to an end, save for occasional emotional orations in memoriam. From beginning to end, the United States had relied primarily on talk. There had been precious little action from Washington.

Chapter VI

ASSESSMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Hungarian Revolution did not change much on the world scene. Although the Soviet Union had perhaps suffered a setback of sorts in its efforts to win over the world's neutrals, it had achieved the primary goal of keeping its East European empire intact. And although the United States could be criticized for its inaction, a realistic appraisal must commend the American self-restraint exercised out of a necessary caution where the vital interests of the Soviet Union were concerned. Such self-restraint has characterized Russo-American relations since the beginning of the cold war and is an essential requisite not only for world peace, but perhaps even for the perpetuation of the planet itself. ⁸¹ Viewed objectively, it was better that the Hungarian Revolution fail, rather than the world perish due to a foolhardy intervention by the United States.

The Hungarian Revolution also provided a graphic illustration of how political rhetoric can come back to haunt and even entrap official spokesmen. This happened to the Republicans who had so boldly espoused the brave new policy of liberation from 1952 on, though they did tone it down once they were actually in a responsible position of power. John W. Spanier, in his book entitled American

Foreign Policy Since World War II, does an excellent job of pointing out the weaknesses and fallacies inherent in the liberation doctrine. Spanier accuses the Republicans, and especially Dulles, of deluding the American people into believing that a vigorous and innovative foreign policy was possible in regard to Eastern Europe and that the Truman-Acheson policy of containment was futile, costly and hopelessly negative. Spanier charges that such talk was only "verbal dynamism." In brief, Spanier indicts the Republicans for having advocated the hollow policy of liberation only as an effort to get votes, only as a verbal appeal to the American people in the election

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campaign of 1952. The alleged change in policy probably did get votes, but the problem for the Republicans was that the words remained until events turned them into a reproach to them.

Spanier's assessment is almost certainly correct as proven by events. Not only did the United States not abandon containment under Eisenhower and Dulles, but it was under their leadership that the policy was greatly expanded. It was Dulles who led in extending American commitments around the globe by creating numerous security pacts with nations ringing the Communist world. It was during the Eisenhower years that containment was actually solidified.

The Hungarian uprising merely revealed to the American public the reality that administration officials had known all along, that is,

that liberation without total war was impossible. If liberation were going ever to occur with aid from the United States, then Hungary would have been the ideal situation. For in the case of Hungary, at the end of October of 1956, the United States was faced with an opportunity to recognize a liberation movement that had apparently already succeeded. That the United States did not act at that juncture was a tacit admission that we were powerless to influence the flow of events in the Soviet realm. It was understood that Hungary was considered vital to their interests by the Kremlin leaders, and so no added provocation was forthcoming from America. While talk of liberation was undoubtedly welcomed by the American electorate, and may have won some votes, the policy-makers had to realize from the beginning that it was an unattainable goal. The acceptance of that reality was reaffirmed when the Hungarians did rise up and we could do nothing. Liberation sounded good but it crumbled when it collided with reality.

The Hungarian revolt soon passed from the memory of most Americans, but it left behind certain unanswered questions and a few object lessons about the world balance of power. It reaffirmed the contempt many people had harbored about the United Nations, again showing it to be impotent and ineffective, especially in dealing with one of the world's superpowers. It left behind the disturbing question

of possible incitement by the United States through pronouncements of administration leaders or through Radio Free Europe broadcasts.

The Hungarian Revolution reinforced the disquieting fact that there was an immutable stalemate between the Communist world led by Russia and the "free world" led by the United States. The acceptance of that fact had long been resisted, and still is to some degree, by Americans who seem imbued with the notion that the United States, through wise policies, money and effort, can solve any problem, right any wrong and vanquish any foe. Such an attitude had supported the liberation doctrine which the Hungarian episode had definitely exploded. Our impotence in the Hungarian turmoil was very difficult to accept, as are all hard and cruel realities. Somehow it goes against the American tradition to admit an inability to solve a given problem.

Though some political bombast continued in the form of speeches, the Hungarian tragedy slowly faded from view. Other more pressing problems were to be dealt with, but the United States did not totally forget the captive satellites. On July 17, 1959, President Eisenhower proclaimed "Captive Nations Week" in tribute to the East European countries under Soviet domination. America could not completely erase the memory of the Hungarian revolution. It remained, as Premier Khrushchev called it in later years, like

a "dead rat" stuck in the throat of the American people.

Khrushchev was right. The recollection did and does rankle. Having to stand idly by and watch an heroic people perish, while knowing they were fighting for all that America supposedly stood for, was an agonizing ordeal. That the United States had to do so is eloquent testimony about the state of the world, a world divided most dangerously into two nuclear armed camps, a world retaining peace only through the balance of terror.

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