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**The United States of America through the Eyes of
Hungarian State Security, 1956-1989**

Doktori (PhD) értekezés

Témavezető:
Dr. Glant Tibor, PhD, habilitált egyetemi docens

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The United States of America through the Eyes of Hungarian State Security, 1956-1989

Értekezés a doktori (PhD) fokozat megszerzése érdekében
az irodalom- és kultúratudományok tudományágban.

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okleveles angol nyelv és irodalom szakos tanár, nemzetközi kapcsolatok szakértő

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List of Abbreviations

ÁBTL – Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security)

ÁVH – Államvédelmi Hatóság (State Protection Authority)

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CoCom – Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls

Comintern – Communist International

CPSU – Communist Party of the Soviet Union

DIA – Defense Intelligence Agency

DOD – Department of Defense

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

GRU – Glavnoye razvedyvatel'noye upravleniye (Main Intelligence Directorate)

IMF – International Monetary Fund

KGB - Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)

MDP – Magyar Dolgozók Pártja (Hungarian Workers' Party)

MGB – Ministerstvo gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Ministry of State Security)

MNVK-2 – Magyar Néphadsereg Vezérkar 2. Csoportfőnöksége (Office Division 2 of the Hungarian People's Army General Staff)

MSZMP – Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party)

NSA – National Security Agency

UN – United Nations, United Nations Organization

Introduction

Hence it is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for purposes of spying and thereby they achieve great result¹

The task of Soviet intelligence when working against the main enemy is not only to gather reliable information about conditions in the United States, the plans of the American government, but also to, through deep analysis, discover the weak and vulnerable points in American society, economic life, military and political organizations, and the international relations of the United States, to come up with recommendations and actively participate in carrying out attacks on the most vulnerable points of the United States.²

During the greater part of the Cold War, studying the languages, history, and culture of the countries of the Western bloc was strongly discouraged, at times practically forbidden in Hungary and elsewhere in the Eastern bloc. The United States, the leading power of the Western World, was obviously no exception: for example, the English Department at the University of Debrecen was closed twice for political reasons during the communist era.³ Public discourse in general is substantially limited and controlled under totalitarian regimes: its purpose is to serve the interests of the ruling class and to shape public opinion accordingly. At the same time, this does not mean that the USA was completely ignored by the communist regimes during the Cold War.

As Tibor Glant demonstrates in “Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary,”⁴ in the People’s Republic of Hungary, public rhetoric was only one of at least three different layers of discourse about the United States. The official image of America presented to the average Hungarian was based on the contemporary party line and was heavily controlled by the Communist Party. From the “union” with the Social Democrats in 1948 until 1956 this was the MDP, reorganized in 1956 as the MSZMP, which remained in power until the first elections following the fall of communism in Hungary in 1990. The second level of discourse,

¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 13.27. accessed August 9, 2021, <https://suntzusaid.com/book/13/27/>.

² *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok ügynöki-operatív helyzetének elemzése és az amerikaiak közötti beszerző munka néhány sajátossága* (Budapest: BM III/I Csoportfőnökség Személyügyi és Kiképzési Osztálya, 1970), ÁBTL-4.1. A-3005/6, 16.

³ Zoltán Abádi-Nagy, “Anglisztika-amerikanisztika a mai Magyarországon” in Tibor Frank and Krisztina Károly, eds. *Anglisztika és Amerikanisztika. Magyar kutatások az ezredfordulón* (Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó, 2009): 16.

⁴ Tibor Glant, “Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary,” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, 16.1-2 (2010): 171-184.

which was overwhelmingly positive, was how people talked when they believed to be able to speak freely, without danger of being overheard. This was based on common sense, personal recollections, popular culture, and American cultural propaganda. The third layer was the academia, which showed genuine interest in the United States and represented an attempt to get to know more about the country. This, of course, had a very limited audience, and had little influence on the image of America presented to the public. But it turns out that there was another level of discourse, that of the Hungarian state security, where the various intelligence agencies were aiming to understand and interpret the opposing superpower and assess potential threats to the security of the regime. This dissertation analyzes how the image of the United States of America changed from the perspective of state security during the second half of the Cold War, based on textbooks that were used during the preparation of Hungarian intelligence officers who were going to work undercover against the United States.

Until the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989-90, relations between Hungary and the United States were determined by the Cold War situation, the opposition between the two blocs, which revolved around the ups and downs of the Soviet–American relationship. At the same time, while Hungary and the United States were members of opposing camps in the Cold War, their relationship underwent various changes. Initially following the trend of the relaxation of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, the icy bilateral relationship started to warm up during *détente* in the 1960s and 1970s. Eventually, by the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, most of the bilateral issues between Hungary and the U.S. were resolved, and these improvements were not reversed during the period of renewed Soviet–American tensions in the early 1980s. The textbooks presented in this dissertation also reflect this tendency to a certain extent. Yet these changes did not affect the fundamental fact that in reality, the goals of Hungarian foreign policy were still in accordance with the interests of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. The main purpose of the intelligence agencies of the People’s Republic of Hungary was to ensure the maintenance and survival of the rule of the Communist Party in Hungary. In spite of certain important changes, the essence of the regime remained the same. Throughout the whole period, Hungary remained a totalitarian communist dictatorship under the rule of the Communist Party, the power of which was upheld by the occupying military forces of the Soviet Union, formally an ally, practically a warden of Hungary.

We know from the research done Zsuzsanna Borvendég, that at least some elements inside the Hungarian intelligence organizations were doing very effective work during the Cold

War, especially on the economic front.⁵ In order to evaluate the Hungarian foreign intelligence's image of the United States of America during the second half of the Cold War, this dissertation examines a number of textbooks that were used to prepare intelligence officers from the second half of the 1960s until the end of the 1980s. This is done by an analysis of the changes and consistencies in how various topics— American history, politics, economics, and American society – were presented in the textbooks over the period, and how the content of the textbooks compares to the reports sent by the intelligence officers. The aim of this dissertation is to take a look at these preparatory materials and see whether their depiction of the United States was an attempt to represent objective reality, or an ideologically distorted image that was close to what was being presented to the contemporary public; that is, to communist propaganda. To what an extent was Hungarian-American rapprochement during *détente* mirrored by an increased interest in a more objective perception of the United States during the preparation of the intelligence officers? Could the image presented in these materials serve as the foundation for serious, effective intelligence work, or was it rather a form of ideological education?

The main primary sources used in this dissertation are a series of textbooks that were part of the preparation of intelligence officers for work against the United States, published by the Ministry of the Interior between 1965 and 1985. Today, these materials can be found in Budapest, in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security (Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, ÁBTL), which preserves documents produced by the state security organizations during the communist period in Hungary. In order to put the books into perspective, Chapter 1 of this dissertation discusses what we know about the training and preparation of the intelligence officers, and the textbooks themselves are presented and described in greater detail in Chapter 2.

So far, no comprehensive work has been published specifically about the preparation of intelligence officers in the People's Republic of Hungary, but there are a number of secondary sources about related topics. With regards to the preparation of officers of other branches of the state security in Hungary, one of the best works is *Hogyan üldözzünk egyházakat? Állambiztonsági tankönyv tartótiszteknek*⁶ [How to Persecute Churches? Training Manuals of

⁵ See, Zsuzsanna Borvendég, *Az impexek kora – Külkereskedelmi fedéssel folytatott pénzkivonás a „népgazdaságból” a Kádár-rendszer idején az állambiztonsági iratok tükrében* [The Era of “Impexes” – The Withdrawal of Money from the „People's Economy” Under the Cover of Foreign Trade During the Kádár Regime, as Reflected by Documents of the State Security], (Budapest, Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága, 2017).

⁶ Réka Kiss, Viktor Soós, and Gábor Tabajdi, *Hogyan üldözzünk egyházakat? Állambiztonsági tankönyv tartótiszteknek*, [How Should the Churches Be Persecuted? The Training Manual of the State Security for Head Officers] (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2012).

the State Security for Head Officers] by Réka Kiss, Viktor Attila Sós, and Gábor Tabajdi, based on a state security textbook that was used by the internal security organizations during the persecution of churches. Also, Rolf Müller has published an article on the training of counterintelligence officers in the 1950s.⁷

With regards to the preparation of Hungarian intelligence officers in particular, Gábor Andreides has an article on a textbook that describes the operative situation in Italy.⁸ István Pál has written about the materials that prepared Hungarian officers for work against the United States, he has a study on the image of the FBI in the preparatory books,⁹ and another study where he analyzes a work that is also featured in this dissertation, a report by an intelligence officer, István Pozsonyi, about his work in the United States.¹⁰ Zsuzsanna Borvendég has done groundbreaking research on the inner workings the state security organizations and the foreign intelligence of the People's Republic of Hungary, especially on the field of economic and technological intelligence, in *Az impexek kora*,¹¹ *Mesés kémjátszmák*,¹² and other works. The publications of the ÁBTL have also been valuable sources for this dissertation, including several studies in *Trezor*, the yearbook of the ÁBTL and its predecessor, the Történeti Hivatal [Historical Office] and *Betekintő*,¹³ the online quarterly periodical of the ÁBTL. They shed light on the structure, operation, as well as international relations of the Hungarian state security organizations, and include publications by Magdolna Baráth, Gergő Bendegúz Cseh, Zolt Krahulcsán, Mária Palasik, Éva Sz. Kovács, Gábor Tabajdi, Eszter Tóth, among others. Concerning field of international relations, the history of the Hungarian–American relationship, the international relations of Hungary, the Soviet–American relationship, and the foreign policy

⁷ Rolf Müller, „Ügynök-iskola: Ideológiai alapok és gyakorlati tudnivalók ’támadólagos elhárítóknak,’” [Agent School: Ideological Basics and Practical Knowledge for „Aggressive Counterintelligence”] *Betekintő*, no. 3 (2007): accessed January 15, 2020, http://www.betekinto.hu/hu/2007_3_muller.

⁸ Gábor Andreides, “Praktikus tanácsok Olaszországba készülőknek – operatív tisztektől operatív tisztektnek...” [Practical Advice for People Going to Italy: From Intelligence Officers to Intelligence Officers] *Öt kontinens*, no.1 (2018): 7-28, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://edit.elte.hu/xmlui/handle/10831/38426?key=>.

⁹ István Pál, “‘A főellenség’ – Az FBI ábrázolása a Belügyminisztérium első operatív tankönyvében,” [The Main Enemy – The Representation of the FBI in the First Operative Textbook of the Ministry of Interior] in *Fókuszban a konfliktusok – Tanulmányok a diplomáciatörténet és regionális konfliktusok témájában*. (Budapest, Eötvös Lóránt Tudományegyetem, Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Új-és Jelenkori Egyetemes Történeti Tanszék, 2014): 51-68.

¹⁰ István Pál, “Egy magyar hírszerző Amerikában. Pozsonyi István rendőr alezredes beszámolója az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban szerzett tapasztalatairól.” [A Hungarian intelligence officer in America – Police lieutenant-colonel István Pozsonyi’s report on his experiences in the United States], *Polymatheia* 18, No. 3-4 (2021): 91-103.

¹¹ Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*.

¹² Zsuzsanna Borvendég, *Mesés kémjátszmák. A nyugati külkereskedelmi hálózatok kiépülése 1945 után*. [Fabulous spy games: The building of the Western international trade networks after 1945] (Budapest: Magyarságtudományi Intézet, 2020).

¹³ *Betekintő*, accessed January 15, 2020, <http://www.betekinto.hu/>.

of the United States, the works of Csaba Békés, László Borhi, Tibor Glant, and Tamás Magyarics have been used as secondary sources.

During the writing of the dissertation, it has been a challenge to find the English equivalent of a number of terms and names. This is true in the field of intelligence and state security in general, as well as with regards to the specific terminology of various Hungarian state security organizations and other government agencies of the People's Republic of Hungary (such as the official names of organizational levels and various institutions, titles, or technical terms used by the state security). While these terms are explained in the body of the text itself, there is a list of abbreviations at the beginning of the dissertation. When available, the translation provided on the website of the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security is used. Other sources for defining and translating the terms are *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence*,¹⁴ an influential textbook on intelligence by Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt, and a handful of dictionaries. These include the *Állambiztonsági értelmező kéziszótár*,¹⁵ a glossary of state security-related terms published by the Ministry of the Interior of Hungary in 1980, as well as the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*,¹⁶ available on the website of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with several other dictionaries. The rest of the translations were done by the author, including the translation of primary sources and articles that were originally in Hungarian.

It has to be noted that the textbooks consistently refer to African-Americans using the term “néger” in Hungarian, which could be translated into English as “Negro.” Until the 1970s, “Negro” was commonly used to refer to African-Americans in the United States, but today this is a controversial word, and most people who belong to this group would use Black or African-American to refer to themselves. For the sake of authenticity, the original phrase “Negro” is maintained in the dissertation whenever there is a quote from, or a direct reference to the sources. Otherwise, more contemporary terminology is used to designate people of African-American descent.

The first chapter of the dissertation (1) clarifies some of the most relevant terms related to state security, national security, and foreign intelligence, (2) outlines the organizational

¹⁴ Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2002).

¹⁵ *Állambiztonsági értelmező kéziszótár*, [Dictionary of the State Security] ed. Attila Gergely (Budapest: BM Könyvkiadó, 1980), ÁBTL 4.1. A-3036.

¹⁶ Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, October 2019), accessed January 15, 2020, <http://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/DOD-Terminology/>.

history of Hungarian state security and foreign intelligence in the communist period, and (3) reviews the preparation of intelligence officers. Chapter 2 includes a general overview of the materials used during the preparation, and the preparatory textbooks about the United States are introduced in detail. Subsequent chapters analyze the image of the United States as it is presented in the training materials, focusing on a number of topics that are discussed in several of these books. First, the image of American history and the American political system in Chapter 3, the foreign policy of the United States and American politics in general in Chapter 4, the American economy in Chapter 5, and finally, American people and the American society in Chapter 6. These chapters follow a general structure: first, an overview explaining which textbooks discuss the issue in question and how extensively. This is followed by the presentation of the actual content of the textbooks, what the common themes are between them, what are the similarities, and what changed over time. Finally, the image is compared to the contemporary communist narrative that was also available for the public. The aim is to determine to the purpose of these sources, whether they contained actual information about the United States, or echoed the communist propaganda, and to what extent they could be actually useful during the preparation of intelligence officers. Chapter 7 presents an overview some of the documents produced by Hungarian intelligence in the period and examines the extent to which they reflect the content of the preparatory textbooks. The dissertation concludes with a summary of the findings, and the discussion of how the image of America changed in the textbooks, and how this relates to what we know about the operation of the Hungarian state security during the communist period.

Chapter 1

The Foreign Intelligence of the People's Republic of Hungary and the Preparation of Intelligence Officers

1.1 Intelligence in Communist Hungary

This chapter presents background information to what follows in the rest of the dissertation. The first subchapter introduces the definitions of some key terms related to the world of intelligence, then continues with the discussion of the nature of intelligence services in Hungary under communism. The second subchapter provides an outline of the organizational history of Hungarian state security in the communist period. The third subchapter is an overview of what we know about the preparation of intelligence officers and state security officers in general, and serves as a background to Chapter 2, which contains the presentation of the preparatory textbooks that are the main primary sources used in this dissertation.

Since the dawn of human civilization, obtaining information about the adversary has been an integral element of international conflict. *The Art of War*, usually considered to be the first book on military strategy written in ancient China in the 5th century BCE, already has a chapter dedicated to espionage which, as we will see below, is a form of gathering intelligence.¹⁷ But what exactly is the meaning of the term “intelligence”? Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt (in accordance with the definition provided by the *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*¹⁸) give a threefold definition. (1) Intelligence is information “relevant to a government’s formulation and implementation of policy to further its national security interests and to deal with threats from actual or potential adversaries.” (2) It is activity that “involves the collection and analysis of intelligence information” as well as “activity to counter the intelligence activities of adversaries” – in other words, counterintelligence. (3) It is “an organization that carries out such activities.”¹⁹ Thus, intelligence can refer to the information itself, the activity which aims at obtaining this information, and the organizations that perform this activity.

¹⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Chapter 13.

¹⁸ Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington DC: The Joint Staff, October 2019), s.v. “intelligence.”

¹⁹ Shulsky and Schmitt, *Silent Warfare*, 1-2.

Espionage – which most people tend to associate intelligence with – is just one form of collecting information. In the current terminology, it is commonly referred to as “human intelligence collection” or “HUMINT,” and it usually “involves the identifying and recruiting of a foreign official” or a private person who has access to “important information and who is willing, for some reason, to pass it to the officers of one’s intelligence service.” This process typically involves two sides: the “source” or “agent” provides the information, whereas the intelligence officer or “handler,” the employee of the intelligence agency, maintains communication with the source, transmits the information to the intelligence service, and makes sure that the flow of information continues.²⁰ As in most cases this activity should remain hidden from the government of the foreign country where it takes place, intelligence officers need a cover: “a plausible reason for being in the country, visible means of financial support, a pretext for meeting people with access to sensitive information, and so forth.” We can differentiate between official cover, when the intelligence officer is disguised as a diplomat or other government official, and nonofficial cover, which can refer to any other type of disguise, e.g., businessman, journalist, etc. Both of these forms of cover have advantages as well as disadvantages and are frequently used by intelligence agencies.²¹

Most governments break down intelligence tasks and divide them between several agencies or various, mostly independent, branches of the same agency, which are supposed to coordinate with each other on some level. This was already the case during the Cold War. The division can be based on the nature of the information that the agencies gather, the target of the intelligence activity. From this perspective, we can differentiate between (1) scientific and technical intelligence, (2) military intelligence, (3) political intelligence, and (4) economic and social intelligence.²² Another possible classification is based on whether the target of the activity is domestic or foreign. Foreign intelligence can be defined as “information relating to capabilities, intentions, and activities of foreign governments or elements thereof, foreign organizations, or foreign persons, or international terrorist activities.”²³ Domestic intelligence is related to activities or conditions within the country that threaten its internal security,²⁴ which is “the state of law and order prevailing within a nation.”²⁵ It is important to note that while this division is true in the case of democratic countries, intelligence works differently in a totalitarian regime. In a totalitarian dictatorship, internal security does not refer to the defense

²⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

²¹ Ibid., 12-13.

²² Ibid., 53-56.

²³ *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, s.v. “foreign intelligence.”

²⁴ Ibid., s.v. “domestic intelligence.”

²⁵ Ibid., s.v. “internal security.”

of law and order. Along with the classical tasks of intelligence, the intelligence agency also acts as a political police force that the regime uses as a tool against dissenters, against its own citizens.

Following the model established by the Soviet Union, in the People's Republic of Hungary there was an institutional distinction between the military and the "civilian" intelligence agencies. Based on the GRU in the Soviet Union, the military agencies were operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense or the Hungarian People's Army. The civilian intelligence agencies, modeled after the KGB or its predecessor, the MGB, were first organized within the police, then they became an independent institution, the ÁVH, and finally, an institution (Office Division) inside the Ministry of the Interior after 1956.²⁶ It is not surprising that Hungary was following the Soviet model, given the prominent role of Soviet "advisors" and "experts" in the period, and especially during the organization of the intelligence agencies.²⁷

When they were organized at the end of the war, the most important role of all of these agencies was nominally the identification and prosecution war criminals. With the help of the Soviets, the Hungarian communists quickly took control of these organizations, and used them to go after their political opponents.²⁸ After 1956, during the Kádár regime, the military agencies were supposed to conduct military intelligence abroad, while the "civilian" agencies were responsible for scientific, technical, political, economic, and social intelligence, as well as counterintelligence. Due to their larger scope, the civilian agencies were operating with a larger budget and staff. But over time, the lines between these fields were blurred. As Zsuzsanna Borvendég demonstrates in *Az impexek kora*, by the final decades of the communist regime, MNVK-2, the military intelligence organization of the Hungarian People's Army, became instrumental in technical and economic intelligence.²⁹ In addition, MNVK-2 played a key role in the corrupt financial schemes that ensured the survival of the economic power of members of the communist elite until well after the end of communism in Hungary.³⁰

²⁶ Krisztián Ungváry, "Az állambiztonsági szervek intézménytörténeti struktúrájának vázlata," [Historical overview of the structure of state security organizations] in *A Szakértői Bizottság jelentése 2007-2008*, ed. János Kenedi, accessed August 24, 2021, <http://mek.oszk.hu/08400/08450/>.

²⁷ Magdolna Baráth, *A szovjet tényező – Szovjet tanácsadók Magyarországon* [The Soviet factor – Soviet advisors in Hungary] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2017).

²⁸ See Rolf Müller, *Politikai rendőrség a Rákosi-korszakban* [Political police in the Rákosi period] (Budapest: Jaffa, 2012).

²⁹ For the history of military intelligence in Hungary from the end of the Second World War to the end of communism, see Imre Okváth, "A magyar katonai hírszerzés és kémelhárítás története a második világháború végéről a rendszerváltásig," *Felderítő Szemle* 17, no. 2 (2018): 38-50.

³⁰ Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*, 159-161.

The translation of the names of the various institutional levels of Hungarian state security organizations poses a specific problem for the researcher of the history of the Hungarian state security. Unfortunately, here the literature (including the website of ÁBTL itself) is remarkably inconsistent. The translations used in the dissertation are based on “Act No. III of 2003 On the Disclosure of the Secret Service Activities of the Communist Regime and on the Establishment of the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security,” the full text of which is available in English on the website of the ÁBTL.³¹ Here *főcsoportfőnökség*, is translated as “Office Division,” *csoportfőnökség* as “Office Group,” *főosztály* as “Division,” *osztály* as “Department,” and even though the term *alosztály* does not appear in the text of the law, it can be translated as “Sub-Department.” Another issue is that even in Hungarian, the actual designations of the various institutions were not at all consistent throughout the period. The names were often changed, some organizational units or even levels were created and then disappeared or were renamed after the next reorganization. Still, it is possible to establish the hierarchy of the institutional levels from the highest to the lowest as “Office Division,” “Office Group,” “Division,” “Department,” and finally, “Sub-Department.”

As explained above, information is always gathered by the agencies in order to serve the interests of a given political entity: in the era of nation states, this is normally referred to as the national interest. When we discuss intelligence services in Hungary under communism, we have to keep in mind that while on the surface, the operation of the Hungarian agencies and their sister organizations in the communist dictatorships of the Eastern bloc may seem to have been similar to their counterparts in the West, they were fundamentally different institutions. In a distorted sense of the term, the communist agencies were also serving the national interest as every intelligence agency is supposed to, but this national interest was defined by a very narrow ruling political elite. As Éva Sz. Kovács puts it,

In the traditional sense, the civilian [that is, nonmilitary] secret services work to protect the internal and external sovereignty of a country, taking into account the social, political, economic and military interests of the state as a whole. However, the Soviet model defined state security from the perspective of one social class, the working class, and its presumed leading force, the Communist Party; therefore, ‘who is not with us is against us.’³²

³¹ “GENERAL INFORMATION,” ÁBTL, accessed January 10, 2021, <https://www.abtl.hu/english-information> (in Hungarian: “2003. évi III. törvény az elmúlt rendszer titkosszolgálati tevékenységének feltárásáról és az Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára létrehozásáról”).

³² Éva Sz. Kovács, “Néhány gondolat az egykori magyar állambiztonság működéséről,” [Thoughts on the operation of the former Hungarian state security] *Levéltári Szemle*, 61, no. 1 (2011), 5.

Hungary cannot be considered a fully sovereign nation during the communist period [or even earlier].³³ According to László Borhi's characterization of the initial period of the communist era, "Hungary lost her independence and sovereignty in 1948, as the strategic decisions that influenced the fate of the country were no longer made in Budapest."³⁴ The real decisions about Hungary were made by the Soviets and executed by Hungarian communists. This led to the Hungarian intelligence agencies in essence serving the interests of the Soviet empire [i.e., the interests of those making the political decisions]. In Hungary and other countries of the Eastern bloc, under communism, the real task of intelligence agencies was maintaining the control of the Communist Party and promoting the interests of the Communist bloc. Zsuzsanna Borvendég claims that in this period, the Hungarian intelligence organizations were not promoting real national interests. "They were following the orders of a party that took power with the help of a foreign military force and built a totalitarian dictatorship; that is, these organizations were created in opposition to Hungarian society."³⁵ Levente Sipos of the Institute of Political History (the former Institute of Party History of the MSZMP) comes to a similar conclusion in the 2008 Report of the Committee of Experts that was set up to examine the archival materials of the state security: "[the state security organizations] narrowly equated national interest with interests related to the character of the regime, and national security interests with the security of preserving the regime. The state security organizations served the interests of the single-party state."³⁶

The interests of communism and especially the Soviet Union were promoted even further by the involvement of the Soviets in the creation and daily operation of the Hungarian intelligence organizations. In an interview in 1998, István Horváth, the last Minister of the Interior of the People's Republic of Hungary, claimed that there were no international treaties about cooperation between the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior and the state security organizations of the Soviet Union, and that there were no Soviet advisors in the Ministry. Zsolt Krahulcsán, however, has demonstrated that these claims were false. The two countries signed

³³There is a heated debate in Hungary among historians as well as in the general public about the extent to which Hungary can be considered sovereign in 1944-45, especially with regards to Hungarian participation and agency in the Holocaust that followed the German occupation. It is not amongst the goals of this dissertation, or those of the author, to take sides in this debate.

³⁴ László Borhi, „A nemzeti külpolitika határai: az Egyesült Államok és Magyarország, 1941–1989,” *Történelmi Szemle*, 2010.2: 209-236.

³⁵ Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*, 7.

³⁶ Levente Sipos, “A nemzetbiztonsági érdek és az iratminősítés,” [The interests of national security and the classification of documents] in *A Szakértői Bizottság jelentése 2007-2008*, ed. János Kenedi, accessed August 24, 2021, <http://mek.oszk.hu/08400/08450/>, 211.

a treaty about intelligence cooperation in 1962, it was renewed in 1973, and there was an attempt to renew it again as late as 1989.³⁷

Having provided a short introduction to the terminology related to intelligence, the following subchapter covers the organizational history of the intelligence agencies of the People's Republic of Hungary. It illustrates the Soviet involvement in the creation of Hungarian intelligence and the Soviet presence in these agencies throughout the period of the communist regime. It also gives an overview of the history of the evolution of the structure of the intelligence agencies and shows how they changed as a consequence of certain events and political decisions until the late 1960s. This was when the institutional structure of Hungarian foreign intelligence became stabilized, and it continued to operate with minor changes until the fall of communism in 1989-90.

1.2 Organizational History of the Civilian Intelligence Agencies of the People's Republic of Hungary

In her treatise on the organizational history of civilian (political) foreign intelligence in Hungary under communism, Eszter Tóth points out the scarcity of primary sources available from the period between the end of the Second World War and 1953, which marked the establishment of an independent foreign intelligence agency of the newly proclaimed People's Republic of Hungary.³⁸ One of the reasons is that foreign intelligence was of marginal importance for the Hungarian communists in this era. Initially, the Soviets did not encourage this activity due to the proximity of the Second World War, and because they suspected that an active Hungarian foreign policy could possibly lead to conflicts with the neighboring countries. The borders were only recently restored to what had been determined by the second Trianon peace treaty of 1947, almost completely identical to those established after the First World War. Instead of gathering information about external enemies, nominally, the official focus of the newly organized Hungarian state security was finding war criminals. But the search for war criminals was also used as an excuse to enhance the power of the Hungarian Communist Party by going after their

³⁷ Zsolt Krahulcsán, "KGB és a II. Főcsoportfőnökség: egy kapcsolat vége...(?) – A szovjet-magyar állambiztonsági együttműködés szabályozása 1989-ben," [KGB and Office Division III: The end of a relationship... (?) – The regulation of Soviet-Hungarian state security cooperation in 1989] *Betekintő*, 2007.2, accessed August 24, 2021, <http://www.betekinto.hu/hu/node/146>.

³⁸ Eszter Tóth, "A politikai hírszerzés szervezettörténeti vázlata, 1945-1990," [Overview of the organizational history of political intelligence, 1945-1990] *Betekintő* 2011/2, 1.

political enemies.³⁹ After the takeover and the establishment of the single party state, the state security organizations were involved stabilizing the power of the successor of the Hungarian Communist Party, the MDP. This was also reflected organizationally by the absence of an administrative unit dedicated to foreign intelligence prior to September 1950 within the ÁVH.

Vladimir Farkas was a high-ranking officer in the ÁVH and the son of Mihály Farkas, one of the most prominent leaders of the People's Republic of Hungary in the Rákosi period. According to his recollections, by 1950, the Soviets grew dissatisfied with the foreign intelligence work of the ÁVH and pushed for its reorganization.⁴⁰ At a "discussion" in the spring of 1950 between the leaders of the ÁVH including Vladimir Farkas, and Evgenii Kiselev, Soviet ambassador to Hungary from 1950 to 1954, it was determined that the foreign intelligence work of the Hungarians was completely inadequate, and the Soviets deemed it unsatisfactory. They decided to take matters into their own hands and took control of the reorganization of the foreign intelligence of their "ally" themselves. The discussion was soon followed by a second secret meeting in Moscow between several high-ranking officers of the Soviet state security organizations, Gábor Péter, director of the ÁVH, and Vladimir Farkas, who was to be appointed leader of the newly established foreign intelligence wing of the ÁVH. At this meeting, the participants agreed that Soviet state security was going to send "advisors" to Hungary in order to "help with the creation of the organization, the initiation and implementation of intelligence work."⁴¹

In accordance with the agreement made in Moscow, Soviet experts did indeed arrive in Hungary two weeks later and began to assist with setting up the new foreign intelligence division. Division X/3 of the ÁVH was established in September 1950, only to be reorganized as Division VII a year later in September 1951, with more or less the same people at the helm. Then it became Department II of the Ministry of the Interior in 1953. The practice of constantly restructuring the institutions was not uncommon among the agencies of the Eastern bloc, and this instability often was a source of uncertainty and difficulties.⁴² According to Farkas, the Soviets were closely controlling every step of the process, including details such as the selection

³⁹ For more on the organization and early history of the Hungarian state security, see Rolf, *Politikai rendőrség a Rákosi-korszakban*, and Zsolt Krahulcsán-Rolf Müller, *Dokumentumok a magyar politikai rendőrség történetéből 1. A politikai rendészeti osztályok 1945-1946*. [Documents from the history of the Hungarian political police 1. The departments of state political police] (Budapest, ÁBTL-L'Harmattan, 2009).

⁴⁰ Vladimir Farkas, *Nincs mentség* [There is no excuse] (Budapest: Intertart Stúdió, 1990).

⁴¹ Tóth, "Szervezettörténet," 4.

⁴² For more about the institutional history of the Ministry of the Interior between 1953 and 1956, see György Gyarmati-Mária Palasik, eds. *Trójai faló a Belügyminisztériumban. Az ÁVH szervezete és vezérkara, 1953-1956*. [Trojan horse in the Ministry of the Interior. The organization and general staff of the ÁVH, 1953-1956] (Budapest: ÁBTL-L'Harmattan, 2013).

of the building for the headquarters of the agency or the number of Sub-Departments that would be created.⁴³ In essence, it is no exaggeration to say that the foreign intelligence of the Hungarian People's Republic was created upon the "request" of the Soviets, under the supervision of Soviet experts, and in a way that it would serve the interests not of Hungary, but of the Soviet Union. This Soviet influence remained an integral factor and determined the goals and methods of Hungarian foreign intelligence and state security in general during the whole communist period until, if not beyond, the fall of communism in Hungary, as illustrated by the secret international treaties regulating the cooperation of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior and the KGB.⁴⁴

Parallel to the creation of the first foreign intelligence agency of the People's Republic of Hungary, the first foreign "residency" was also established in 1950, in Vienna.⁴⁵ A residency was the Eastern bloc equivalent of a CIA station, a clandestine form of organization that consisted of state security officers and members of their network (sources), and was created in order to perform certain operative tasks for state security.⁴⁶ The members of the residency were responsible for the recruitment, organization, and maintenance of the intelligence network in the target country. By the outbreak of the Revolution and War of Independence of 1956, the number of Hungarian residencies in the West rose to fourteen. The importance of the United States for Hungarian intelligence is illustrated by the fact that the Anglo-American Sub-Department was created as part of the first organization in 1950, and the Washington residency was also among the first to be established in 1951-1952.⁴⁷

In March 1955, the leaders of the Eastern European state security agencies held a secret summit in Moscow. Here they discussed cooperation between their respective organizations, and in order to make their work more effective, they agreed upon a division of labor: they assigned certain foreign intelligence tasks to the agencies of specific countries.⁴⁸ This was very similar to the way other organizations of the Eastern bloc like the COMECON or the Warsaw Pact worked, it fit into the pattern of how of the empire of the Soviet Union was operated. According to the agreement, the focus of all participating agencies was to be on the struggle against the "main enemy," that is, the capitalist world, especially the United States, and all of them were to gather some information on the subject, if possible (under Soviet guidance).

⁴³ Tóth, "Szervezettörténet," 4.

⁴⁴ Krahulcsán, "KGB és a III. Főcsoportfőnökség."

⁴⁵ Mária Palasik, "A Hírszerző Osztály szervezete és állománya, 1956-1962" [The organization and personnel of the Intelligence Department, 1956-1963] *Betekintő* 2011/2, 3.

⁴⁶ *Állambiztonsági értelmező kéziszótár*, s.v. "rezidentúra" [residency].

⁴⁷ Tóth, "Szervezettörténet," 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

Furthermore, they divided the potential targets amongst each other, and each country was responsible for a specific area, usually based on the Warsaw Pact plans for a potential war against NATO.⁴⁹ Hungarian intelligence was to concentrate on infiltrating and gathering information on the political and economic institutions of West Germany, the USA, England, France, Austria, and Yugoslavia, as well as other countries with a significant Hungarian emigrant community. Another assignment for the Hungarian state security was to focus on scientific and technical intelligence, which became even more prominent later, in the Kádár era.⁵⁰ Additionally, it was the task of the Hungarian state security to establish illegal residencies in West Germany, Yugoslavia, and Austria, and it was directed to make attempts to infiltrate the Vatican and various international organizations, such as the United Nations.⁵¹ This prompted yet another reorganization and led to an increase in the number of employees of the Foreign Intelligence Division.

As Zsuzsanna Borvendég claims in *Az impexek kora*, in spite of the Soviet presence and control, before 1956, the Hungarian foreign intelligence was largely incapable of successfully completing serious tasks⁵² – with some notable exceptions. While most of the officers newly recruited during the Rákosi regime for Hungarian intelligence were indeed poorly trained and incompetent, in *Mesés kémjátszmák*, Zsuzsanna Borvendég notes that there was a significant minority of Hungarian intelligence officers who were more experienced and quite capable. These were the “Muscovites,” the Hungarian communist *émigrés* who left the country after the fall of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 and returned with the Red Army and the Soviet secret services in 1944. The Muscovites were trained in the Soviet Union and spent the interwar years working actively to promote the Bolshevik cause worldwide through the Comintern (Communist International). This group of Hungarians played an important role in the work of illegal communist movements all over the world, and earned experience in “transferring black money, they learned the art of secret transactions, moving money covertly, every nook and cranny of conspiring underground.”⁵³ As *Mesés kémjátszmák* shows, these people used their old connections and experience very effectively in foreign trade and economic intelligence after their return to Hungary, starting from the second half of the 1940s. At the same time, the Muscovites often did not work for the Hungarian civilian intelligence

⁴⁹ József Boda, “Titkosszolgálatok a hidegháború időszakában,” [Secret services in the Cold War] in *A hírszerzés története az ókortól napjainkig* [The history of intelligence from the ancient times to our present day], eds. József Boda, Ferenc Dávid, and Kund Regényi (Budapest: Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 2019), 146.

⁵⁰ Palasik, “A Hírszerző Osztály,” 4.

⁵¹ Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 6.

⁵² Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*, 12.

⁵³ Borvendég, *Mesés kémjátszmák*, 47.

organizations, but for the military intelligence and/or the Soviet sister organizations. Generally speaking, the conditions in the Hungarian military intelligence organizations were more consistent, which made them more suitable for professional work. First of all, they used the experience of the predecessor organization (VKF-2) and initially held on to some of its officers. In addition, the reorganizations usually did not affect the leadership and the internal structure of the organization, unlike in the case of the agencies that belonged under the Ministry of the Interior.⁵⁴

Initially, the main priority of the Hungarian state security was consolidating the power of the regime and aiding the “socialist” transformation of the country by fighting against its “internal enemies.” Other than the previously mentioned important exceptions, the foreign intelligence work of the Hungarian state security was negligible. Mária Palasik points to frequent reorganizations, changes in leadership, and the incompetence of intelligence officers as major factors contributing to this poor performance. The main consideration during the recruitment of intelligence officers in Hungary before 1956 was political credentials and loyalty to the regime, not competence or professional expertise. Consequently, they were mostly incompetent, unqualified, uneducated, and quite often they lacked the foreign language skills that would have been necessary to properly perform their job.

When foreign intelligence became organizationally independent in 1950, the ranks were filled either with new recruits who had just finished secondary school, or older, reliable cadres with a long history of involvement in the workers’ movement. Neither of these two groups had any experience with gathering intelligence or counterespionage, not to mention foreign languages. What is more, often their political reliability was not verified properly either.⁵⁵ The training that they received at the Intelligence School of State Security [Államvédelmi Hírszerző Iskola] often proved to be inadequate. In 1956, evaluation of the Ministry of the Interior was that a number of intelligence officers were rather unsuccessful and not careful enough, and there were various instances of corruption.⁵⁶ There were considerable changes after 1956, when the rising importance of foreign intelligence was also reflected by the recruitment and training of intelligence officers.

When it comes to civilian intelligence, the incompetence of intelligence officers was a constant a source of tension between the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Ministry, especially during the Rákosi era. Throughout the whole communist period, the majority of

⁵⁴ Okváth, “A magyar katonai hírszerzés és kémelhárítás története,” 41.

⁵⁵ Palasik, “A Hírszerző Osztály,” 3-4.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

Hungarian intelligence officers were working under official, diplomatic cover, as there were times when this was more or less the only contact that remained between the countries of the two blocs. Later during the Kádár regime, when economic relations between the East and the West were improving, foreign trade representations were established, and as they started to become more active, the size of their staff also increased. From then on, they could also be used as cover by Hungarian foreign intelligence. But this was not the case before 1956. As Borvendég points out, in this period, there was very little movement between Hungary and the West other than official business, and diplomatic cover was essentially the only option.⁵⁷

The Foreign Ministry repeatedly raised attention to and complained about the incompetence of the intelligence officers that they were required to employ. As has been explained, the majority of the operatives were barely fit to perform their duties as intelligence officers. This was even more true when it came to their cover positions as diplomats or embassy workers. A number of younger officers did not possess the skills and experience necessary to perform these jobs, while those who belonged to the older generation tended to lack the education, cultural knowledge, and language skills that their position would have required. Palasik cites an example from 1956, when a Hungarian “cultural attaché” did not know that Béla Bartók had already died in 1945.⁵⁸ This became an issue for both ministries, as other employees at the Foreign Ministry could easily draw the conclusion that these people would not have gotten into the position they were in, unless it was a cover. Their rapid rise in the ranks was also a clear indication that they were in fact intelligence officers: unlike actual employees who normally had to prove their worth before getting appointed to a position abroad, intelligence officers generally only spent a few weeks working in the Foreign Ministry before being sent to a foreign post. Normally, it was more than unusual to get promoted to a position at a foreign mission this quickly. Also, intelligence officers apparently did not follow the official protocols of the Foreign Ministry; for example, sometimes they returned to Hungary to report to the agency that sent them without going through the necessary official steps and also reporting to the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁹

The events following October 23, 1956, essentially put the work of Hungarian foreign intelligence on hold. The operation of the agency was practically made impossible during the Revolution, and it had to be rebuilt from the ground up and reorganized during the stabilization of the Kádár regime. During the Revolution, some of the heads of Hungarian foreign missions

⁵⁷ Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*, 22.

⁵⁸ Palasik, “A Hírszerző Osztály,” 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8

intentionally revealed the identity of a number of state security officers working at the residencies. In addition, back in Budapest, the Revolutionary Commission formed at the Foreign Ministry compiled a list of intelligence officers who were known to be working undercover at the various diplomatic missions. On November 1, the Foreign Ministry sent an open telegram ordering the heads of missions to send all members of the illegal state security residencies back to Hungary.⁶⁰ As a result, the residencies in the United States, Italy, and Switzerland ceased to function. What is more, there was a strong probability that the whole organization of foreign intelligence could have been compromised. After Prime Minister Imre Nagy officially disbanded the ÁVH during the Revolution, the revolutionaries managed to enter the abandoned building of the Ministry of the Interior and gained access to the archives, during the course of which event some of the documents disappeared or were destroyed. The extent of the breach was impossible to determine after the crushing of the Revolution.⁶¹

When it came to the post-revolutionary reorganization of the state security, there were debates about the place of foreign intelligence in the new institutional structure, and even about its very existence. Some of the decision-makers in the new communist leadership were wondering “whether a small country like Hungary needed foreign intelligence at all.”⁶² In December 1956, police colonel László Mátyás summarized the status of the Political Investigation Division that temporarily took over the role of the ÁVH as the main state security organization during the stabilization of the Kádár regime, and theoretically was also responsible for foreign intelligence. He claimed that all the residencies had been compromised during the “counterrevolutionary events;” the counterintelligence organizations of the capitalist countries took advantage of the situation and “attempted to force them to commit treason,” thus making further operative work impossible. The situation became especially difficult in the USA, the UK, Austria, France, and Italy. He suggested the compromised personnel to be recalled and gradually replaced with new people, which was going to take years, especially as the earlier practices (e.g., only using diplomatic positions as cover) had to be changed, and new methods of network building would have to be introduced. This, along with the selection and training of new officers, would have to become the main task of the Department that would be responsible for intelligence.

Eventually, it was decided that foreign intelligence was to be reorganized, originally under the Ministry of Defense in January 1957. Then it was practically immediately transferred

⁶⁰ Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 7-8.

⁶¹ Palasik, “A Hírszerző Osztály,” 6.

⁶² Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 8.

to the Ministry of the Interior in February 1957. As the extent of the security breach in 1956 could not be determined, following the recommendations of colonel László Mátyás, gradually all intelligence officers were replaced. A completely new network was created, including new covers. In April, the Provisional Executive Commission (Ideiglenes Intéző Bizottság) of the MSZMP made a decision about a number of positions which would serve as cover for the intelligence agency, mainly inside the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, at various trade representations, import-export companies, and other organizations. The World Federation of Hungarians (Magyarok Világszövetsége), was also to become a cover organization for Hungarian intelligence.⁶³

The Ministry of the Interior underwent another reorganization in August 1962, and Office Division III of the Ministry of the Interior was created. In spite of the various institutional changes, this structure turned out to be remarkably consistent, as Office Division III continued to be responsible for state security until 1990. It coordinated all intelligence activity except for military foreign intelligence, which belonged to MNVK-2 under the Hungarian People's Army. Office Division III was further divided into various smaller Departments (indicated by Arab numerals) which were directly under the control of the Office Division, and five main Office Groups (indicated by Roman numerals), all responsible for a specific aspect of intelligence activity. Office Group III/I was tasked with foreign intelligence, III/II with counterintelligence, III/III with internal security or according to the contemporary terminology, "counter internal reaction," [belső reakció elhárítás] III/IV with military counterintelligence, and III/V with operational technology.⁶⁴

While Office Group III/I remained responsible for foreign intelligence, it underwent still another internal reorganization in 1967, although this did not affect its position within the institutional structure under Office Division III. Eszter Tóth identifies two reasons for the changes which were initiated by the political leadership: (1) several high profile defections that once again made the work of Hungarian intelligence impossible, especially in the United States, and (2) the emergence of new priorities.⁶⁵ In 1964, László Szabó, a Hungarian operative officer, defected in London and applied for asylum from the United States.⁶⁶ Especially after he testified

⁶³ Ibid. 9.

⁶⁴ Ungváry, "Az állambiztonsági szervek intézménytörténeti struktúrájának vázlata," 52-56.

⁶⁵ Tóth, "Szervezettörténet," 14-15.

⁶⁶ Mária Palasik, "A szolgálati helyéről eltűnt hírszerző – Az USA-ban politikai menedékjogért folyamodó Szabó László története," [The intelligence officer who disappeared from his assigned station – The story of László Szabó, who applied for asylum in the United States] *Betekintő*, 2016/1.

before the CIA Subcommittee of the U.S. Congress in 1966,⁶⁷ it became obvious that Szabó disclosed sensitive information about the operative situation in Hungary and the Hungarian secret services, probably including operations against the United States. At about the same time as Szabó was sentenced to death *in absentia* in 1967,⁶⁸ there were two more defections that compromised the Washington residence in the spring of 1967: that of János Radványi, the *chargé d'affaires* of the legation of the Hungarian People's Republic in Washington, and of the "resident spy," Ernő Bernát.⁶⁹ The defection of Radványi was especially sensitive, as he used to belong to the innermost circle of János Kádár. These events prompted the Political Committee of the MSZMP to discuss the "development of foreign intelligence," and make a decision in October 1967 about the revision of intelligence personnel and changes to the recruitment and preparation of intelligence officers.⁷⁰

The other reason for reorganization identified by Tóth was the change in priorities. The rising popularity and acceptance of Kádár in the West and the willingness of many Western countries to trade and enter into various business operations opened up new opportunities for intelligence work. This came at a time when the technological gap between the Eastern and the Western bloc was growing. Thus, activity that could potentially result in acquiring technological devices, blueprints, descriptions of technologies that were on the CoCom list, meaning that they were under embargo, became especially valuable.⁷¹ The changes were also reflected by a decision of the Council of Ministers in the summer of 1967, which declared technical intelligence to be one of the top priorities.⁷² A proposal to the Political Committee by the Minister of the Interior András Benkei, Sándor Rácz, the head of Office Division III, as well as Sándor Rajnai, the head of Office Group III/I, set forth the main targets for Hungarian intelligence.⁷³ Politically, this meant increased focus on the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Vatican, and possibly Israel. From the perspective of scientific and

⁶⁷ *Statement of Laszlo Szabo in Hearing before the CIA Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives Eighty-ninth Congress Second Session, March 17, 1966*, (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1966, [No. 49]), 5331-5377, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951p01159177m&view=1up&seq=1>.

⁶⁸ According to Géza M. Szebeni, Hungarian intelligence unsuccessfully tried to locate Szabó after his Congressional hearing, and eventually his case was closed in 1974. At the same time, Szebeni mentions gossips at the Foreign Ministry, according to which Szabó mysteriously "fell" into an elevator shaft. See, Géza M. Szebeni, "A 'külügyes Szabó', aki a 'liftaknába zuhant,'" ["Szabó from the Foreign Ministry" who "fell into an elevator shaft"] *Grotius*, 2011/5, accessed May 1, 2021, http://www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/TDSESM/2011_112_m.%20szebeni%20geza_a%20kulugyes%20szabo.pdf.

⁶⁹ Géza M. Szebeni, "A Radványi-ügy," [The Radványi case] *Grotius*, 2011/5, accessed May 1, 2021, http://www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/DBTRNE/2011_115_m.%20szebeni%20geza_a%20radvanyi-%C3%BCgy.pdf.

⁷⁰ Tóth, "Szervezettörténet," 14.

⁷¹ Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*, 14.

⁷² Tóth, "Szervezettörténet," 14.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 14.

technological intelligence, the main targets were the electronics industry, the chemical industry, and in accordance with the obligations that stemmed from the Warsaw Pact, the “strategic sciences,” which probably refers to the interests of military intelligence. The range of potential covers was also extended, and the increasing trade activity provided ample opportunities for economic abuses by import-export companies, as described by Zsuzsanna Borvendég. These opportunities were further extended in 1972 when it became possible for import-export companies to establish firms in foreign countries without any restrictions.⁷⁴

From 1962 to 1989, Office Group III/I underwent various minor reorganizations (as Eszter Tóth’s organizational history recounts, following 1967 this happened again in 1971, in 1976, 1978, 1980, and several times in the 1980s).⁷⁵ But these were relatively small changes compared to what took place earlier, they only impacted the internal structure of the Office Group, and from 1962 to 1989, Office Group III/I remained responsible for foreign intelligence. The number of departments within the Office Group grew parallel to the increasing emphasis on foreign intelligence. Departments in Office Group III/I were either administrative, or responsible for intelligence within a geographical area, or a specific field (e.g., counterintelligence abroad, or cryptography). During the history of Office Group III/I, departments were sometimes renamed, they were assigned a new number, or a particular field was transferred from one department to the other, but the structure remained essentially the same. As Tóth concludes, as a result of the shift in Hungarian foreign policy in the period, the workload of Hungarian intelligence increased, and this led to a larger, more specialized, and more bureaucratic organization. The reorganizations were the consequences of bureaucratic development and changes in foreign policy. The target countries, the “enemy states,” mostly remained the same, and the emphasis shifted towards a more pragmatic approach, as well as towards economic and technological intelligence.⁷⁶ Another important difference from the period recognized by Tóth is that while earlier in the 1950s and the early 1960s, the institutional reorganizations were generated from above, by the political leadership (or, as we could see, the Soviets), from the second half of the 1960s onwards, they were mostly initiated by the intelligence organization itself.

Before the 1967 reorganization, intelligence directed towards the United States belonged to Sub-Department A under Department III/I-1 (political and economic intelligence),

⁷⁴ Zsuzsanna Borvendég, *A kádári Magyarország titkos élete* [The Secret Life of Hungary under Kádár] (Kárpátia: Köröstárkány-Balatonfőkajár, 2020), 260-261.

⁷⁵ See Tables 6 (1967-1971), 7 (1971-80), and 8 (1981-1989) in Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 17-18, 19-21, and 21-24.

⁷⁶ Tóth, “Szervezettörténet, 25.”

which was also responsible for intelligence against Canada and Brazil.⁷⁷ The structure created in 1967 reflected the growing significance of the United States for Hungarian intelligence, as one of the nine departments, Department III/I-1 was specifically tasked with political and economic intelligence against America. “England” was added to the profile of Department III/I-1 for a short time between 1968 and 1970, and “international organizations” from 1970 to 1982. When communism fell in 1990, Office Group III/I was disbanded along with the entire Office Division III, and the newly established “Információs Hivatal” [Information Office] became the civilian intelligence agency of the newly proclaimed and democratic Republic of Hungary. At the time of the dissolution of Office Group III/I, Department III/I-1 was one of twelve departments and five independent sub-departments, and it was responsible for “American intelligence.” Since 1981, Department III/I-1 also had two sub-departments, “A” directing the work of the residency and “B” processing information, which clearly shows the rising importance of the field and the growing complexity of the approach.⁷⁸

As we can see, the institutional structure of Office Group III/I created in the 1960s served as the framework for the expanding foreign intelligence work of the People’s Republic of Hungary during the second half of the Cold War. At the same time, the internal structure of the Office Group underwent reorganizations every few years. As the situation changed, parallel to the newly emerging and shifting priorities, the competence of foreign intelligence officers also had to be given more consideration.⁷⁹ In order to be able to perform the new tasks, they needed to be prepared in a different way, which was also reflected by the organizational structure. The next subchapter presents how the changes influenced the training of intelligence officers and led to the emergence of the teaching materials that are discussed in the dissertation.

1.3 The Preparation of Intelligence Officers in the People’s Republic of Hungary

As it was the case with most aspects of life in the People’s Republic of Hungary,⁸⁰ the Soviets considerably influenced the training of state security officers from the very beginning. Krisztián Ungváry notes that Hungarian students were sent to the Soviet Union for college level state security education regularly during the entirety of the communist period, but the training in

⁷⁷ See “5. számú táblázat: A hírszerzés szervezeti felépítése 1962 és 1967 között” [Table 5: The structure of intelligence between 1962 and 1967] in Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 13.

⁷⁸ See Tables 6 (1967-1971), 7 (1971-80), and 8 (1981-1989) in Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 17-18, 19-21, and 21-24.

⁷⁹ Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*, 12.

⁸⁰ See Baráth, *Szovjet tanácsadók Magyarországon*.

Hungary was also affected by the Soviet example.⁸¹ After the communists took power in Hungary, initially, the Police Academy [Rendőrákadémia], later renamed as Police Officer Training School [Rendőrtisztképző Iskola] was responsible for the education of law enforcement personnel, and while the training did include subjects related to state security, there was no specialized course for state security officers.⁸² In 1950, Department X/3 organized two six-month courses for intelligence officers to teach the basics of intelligence and foreign languages.⁸³ The Dzerzhinsky Officer Training School [Dzerzsinszkij Tiszti Iskola] was established in 1951, and it provided education for state security operatives in a year-long course, organized by the Education Department of the ÁVH.⁸⁴

After 1956, the Dzerzhinsky Officer Training School was quick to resume operation, and it continued its work until the end of the decade.⁸⁵ This was shortly followed by the establishment of the Foreign Language College of the Ministry of the Interior [BM Idegennyelvi Főiskola] that provided three-year training exclusively for state security officers, and a two-year Police Officer Academy [Rendőrtiszt Akadémia].⁸⁶ A separate state security group was set up, which later became the State Security Department [Állambiztonsági Tanszék] within the Police Officer Training College [Rendőrtiszt Főiskola] when the institution was established in 1970.⁸⁷ The State Security Department was working closely with Office Division III of the Ministry of the Interior, which provided the study materials necessary for the state security courses, and participated in preparation for operative work.⁸⁸ The instructors were assigned to operative agencies from time to time, and there was strong Soviet involvement. The state security training initially started with the participation of Soviet teachers, and from 1973

⁸¹ Ungváry, “Az állambiztonsági szervek intézménytörténeti struktúrájának vázlata,” 57.

⁸² Ibid., 57.

⁸³ Béla Révész, “Az állambiztonsági szervek politológiai kutatásainak kérdéséhez,” [To the political questions of the political study of the state security organizations] *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis: acta juridica et politica* 66, no.17 (2004), 21, accessed May 1, 2021, http://acta.bibl.u-szeged.hu/7259/1/juridpol_066_fasc_017_001-136.pdf.

⁸⁴ Révész, “Az állambiztonsági szervek,” 21.

⁸⁵ Ágnes Jobst, “A titkosszolgálatok tudománya az oktatás és a tananyagok tükrében – 1945 után,” [The scholarship of the secret services in light of education and educational materials – after 1945] in *Szakszolgálat Magyarországon, Avagy tanulmányok a hírszerzés és titkos adatgyűjtés világából, 1785-2011*, eds. József Boda, Györgyi Csóka, Tibor Fülöp, Orsolya Horváth, Roland Lakatos, Csaba Schmidt (Budapest: Nemzetbiztonsági Szakszolgálat, 2012).

⁸⁶ Révész, “Az állambiztonsági szervek,” 21.

⁸⁷ Ungváry, “Az állambiztonsági szervek intézménytörténeti struktúrájának vázlata,” 57.

⁸⁸ Imre Dobák, “A nemzetbiztonsági képzésről...” [On the national security training...] in “Állambiztonsági szolgálatok – Nemzetbiztonsági szolgálatok. Képzéstörténeti tudományos konferencia [State security services – National security services. Scholarly conference on the history of training] *Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle* 2, no. 1 (2014), 69.

onwards, a number of state security instructors and students regularly pursued their studies in the Soviet Union.⁸⁹

Ágnes Jobst briefly analyzes the state security education materials from the 1950s that are available in the ÁBTL. There is no information on when their publication began, but the earliest one that was found is from 1952 about military émigré organizations in the Federal Republic of Germany, followed by another one about recruiting agents published in 1955. Between 1955 and 1957, the majority of the textbooks were translated from Russian. The next written material written by Hungarians is from 1957, followed by more until the end of the decade, published by various organizations of the Ministry of the Interior (including the Dzerzhinsky Officer Training School and the Police Academy), motivated especially by the experience of the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence.⁹⁰ As far as their content is concerned, Jobst groups the documents from the 1950s into the following categories, where the percentage indicate what proportion of the material was about that particular topic: (1) State security specific knowledge – 37%, (2) General policing knowledge – 9%, (3) Criminal law – 15%, (4) Intelligence – 17%, (5) Other – 7%, and (6) Translations, which she does not divide into further categories – 15%.⁹¹ She also discusses the tone of these preparatory materials and concludes that they were written using Cold War terminology: the authors were attempting to appeal to emotions, and with very few exceptions, were hardly driven by considerations of objectivity.⁹²

This dissertation focuses on materials that were published later and were specifically written for intelligence officers and were created by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I. Office Group III/I did more than just cooperate with various other institutions to train intelligence officers: a separate branch of the organization was dedicated to training. Department III/I-10, Personnel and Training Department, was created in July 1968 with three Sub-Departments, responsible for Research, Personnel, and Education and Training.⁹³ This took place in the aftermath of the reorganization of intelligence and the selection and preparation of intelligence officers that came about in 1967 as a consequence of the defection of Radványi as well as the decision about the new priorities of Hungarian intelligence.⁹⁴ Tóth quotes an earlier proposal to the Political Committee about the creation of

⁸⁹ Dobák, “A nemzetbiztonsági képzésről,” 70.

⁹⁰ Jobst, “A titkosszolgálatok tudománya az oktatás és a tananyagok tükrében – 1945 után,” 428-430.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 429.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 429-30.

⁹³ Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 15.

⁹⁴ Szebeni, “A Radványi-ügy,” 7-8.

a department responsible for training, that lists what would eventually become the objective of Department III/I-10:

“Finding suitable candidates for foreign intelligence, studying them over a longer period of time, and examining them from various angles. [...] In certain cases, providing individual training for intelligence officers. Conducting research and the proposal of new methods to be applied in intelligence work. Preparing plans for the development of personnel, controlling and helping its realization, etc.”⁹⁵

In his study about *Beszámoló a külföldi munkáról (Egyesült Államok)* [Report on work abroad [United States], hereafter referred to as *Report*],⁹⁶ István Pál lists some of the common characteristics of the operative manuals that were used to prepare intelligence officers.⁹⁷ When it comes to the text itself, he describes the books as impersonal, they do not refer to specific cases, and they are full of self-repetition and the required ideological self-congratulation. He claims that these manuals were intended to prepare younger officers for work abroad and to strengthen their political commitment.

The materials created by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III, as well as the earlier preparatory materials that were analyzed by Jobst and various other documents, can be found in Section 4 (Collections) of the ÁBTL. According to the English language website of the archives, Section 4 is made up of “different background materials used by the former State Security Organizations; a collection of decrees in connection with State Security; documents concerning different extreme rightwing organizations; a collection of items handed over to the Archives for safe custody; and contemporary State Security training films.”⁹⁸ Section 4 is made up of 103.29 linear meters of materials, which consist of 655 boxes of documents (where 517 boxes contain originals and the rest are doubles) and 154 separate volumes. Most of this material was used for purposes other than the preparation of intelligence officers. Documents that were published by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I can be found in boxes 238 to 274 (36 boxes), which contain about 350 titles, the earliest one published in 1970, the latest in 1986. The following chapter contains the detailed description the main sources of this dissertation: four longer textbooks and two shorter ones on the United States, where two of the longer books and one of the shorter ones are translations of Soviet works, while the other shorter and the two longer works were written by Hungarian authors.

⁹⁵ ÁBTL 1.11.4. 67-146/1968. “Javaslat a III/I-10. Osztály létrehozására. 1968. január 24,” in Tóth, “Szervezettörténet,” 16.

⁹⁶ ÁBTL-4.1. A-3000/1 István Pozsonyi, *Beszámoló a külföldi munkáról (Egyesült Államok)*.

⁹⁷ István Pál, “Egy magyar hírszerző Amerikában,” 91.

⁹⁸ “GENERAL INFORMATION,” ÁBTL, accessed August 10, 2021, <https://www.abtl.hu/english-information>

Chapter 2

Introduction to the Preparatory Textbooks

2.1 The Textbooks

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the preparatory textbooks that serve as the main sources used in the later parts of the dissertation. After a general introduction to some of the common characteristics of the documents and a discussion of issues related to their date of publication, the following subchapters continue with the presentation of the books. The main topics that are examined include the title of the textbook, its purpose, what, if anything, is known about the author, and an overview of the topics that are discussed in each one of the materials.

The four main textbooks can be found in the ÁBTL in Budapest, and they are, in the order of publication: (1) ÁBTL-4.1. A-3005/2 *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok /Általános ismertetés/*⁹⁹ [The United States of America – General description, hereafter referred to as *General Description*] by an unknown, presumably Soviet author. (2) ÁBTL-4.1. A-3005/6 *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok ügynöki-operatív helyzetének elemzése és az amerikaiak közötti beszerző munka néhány sajátossága*¹⁰⁰ [Analysis of the agency-operative situation in the United States and certain characteristics of recruitment among the Americans, hereafter referred to as *Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment*], which is, in fact, two works published in one volume, also by an unknown Soviet author (or authors). The second section starts on page 85, and the title is *A személyes és személytelen kapcsolattartás sajátosságai az USA viszonylatában* [The characteristics of personal and non-personal contact with regards to the USA]. The last two books were written by Hungarian authors, (3) ÁBTL-4.1. A-3000/40 *Hasznos ismeretek az Egyesült Államokról /Segédanyag a külföldi munkához való felkészítéshez/*¹⁰¹ [Useful knowledge about the United States – Aid to preparation for working abroad, hereafter referred to as *Useful Knowledge*] by István Pozsonyi, and (4) ÁBTL-4.1. A-3006/33 *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok operatív helyzete* [The operative situation of the United States, hereafter referred to as *Operative Situation*]¹⁰² by János Szecsődi. There are also two shorter materials that are relevant to the topics discussed in this dissertation. The first one is also written by István Pozsonyi, it is his report about his work as an intelligence officer in the

⁹⁹ ÁBTL-4.1. A-3005/2 *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok /Általános ismertetés/*

¹⁰⁰ ÁBTL-4.1. A-3005/6 *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok ügynöki-operatív helyzetének elemzése és az amerikaiak közötti beszerző munka néhány sajátossága*

¹⁰¹ ÁBTL-4.1. A-3000/40 István Pozsonyi, *Hasznos ismeretek az Egyesült Államokról /Segédanyag a külföldi munkához való felkészítéshez/*

¹⁰² ÁBTL-4.1. A-3006/33 János Szecsődi, *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok Operatív helyzete*

U.S.: *Beszámoló a külföldi munkáról (Egyesült Államok)* [Report on work abroad [United States], hereafter referred to as *Report*].¹⁰³ The second one is once again the work of an unknown author, translated from Russian, *Az amerikaiak nemzeti jellege* [National characteristics of the Americans, hereafter referred to as *National Characteristics*].

The first thing that is common in all the books is the publisher and the intended audience. All of these books were published by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I of the Ministry of the Interior. This indicates that they were meant for intelligence officers who had already been recruited and trained, and were prepared for work in the field; in this case, in the United States. These materials were not intended to be used during general training, but during preparation for a specific task. As the titles of the books also suggest, the topics discussed in these materials may be somewhat similar, but they vary to a great extent, they are not the same subject. These are not different editions of the same book, but distinct works by different authors, with each one of them having their own focus. Still, there is a certain degree of overlap. The following chapters of this dissertation provide an analysis of the topics that are present in the books – some are discussed in all of the materials, while some issues come up in only some of them.

Determining the actual date of publication of the books poses certain problems, at least in the case of the first two textbooks. The finding aid for collection 4.1. that can be downloaded from the website of the ÁBTL provides two dates for each document: one is referred to as the date of the document and the other one as the date of the topic.¹⁰⁴ The two numbers are not necessarily identical: the earliest book that is discussed in this dissertation, *General Description*, is dated to 1970 in the ÁBTL finding aid, and the year of the topic is 1965. The finding aid also notes that the book was likely translated from Russian. We can also find the same two dates on the cover of the textbook. The filing number that was originally assigned to the document by the Ministry of the Interior would indicate the year 1970, while the year 1965 is printed on the center of the cover, under the title. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I was only established in 1968, so they could not have published this book in 1965. A probable explanation for the discrepancy between the two dates is that this book was originally written by the unknown Soviet author

¹⁰³ ÁBTL-4.1. A-3000/1 István Pozsonyi, *Beszámoló a külföldi munkáról (Egyesült Államok)*, which is analyzed by István Pál in “Egy magyar hírszerző Amerikában.”

¹⁰⁴ “Fond-és állagjegyzék, raktári jegyzékek” [Catalogue of record groups and collections, finding aids] ÁBTL, accessed August 25, 2021, https://www.abtl.hu/iratok/segedletek/fond_allagjegyzek

and published in the Soviet Union earlier, in 1965, then it was translated from Russian into Hungarian and published by the Personnel and Training Department later, in 1970.

The year given in the finding aid of the ÁBTL as the date of the document for the second textbook, *Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment*, is also 1970, and two numbers are provided as the date of the topic, 1967 and 1970. The filing number on the cover of this book also contains the year 1970. There is no publication date indicated in the first section of the book, but from the text it can be deduced that it must have been written sometime at the end of 1967 or the beginning of 1968. Events that took place during the summer of 1967 are mentioned, and Johnson is still referred to as president, but Nixon or Reagan are named as potential Republican contenders (Nixon officially became the Republican presidential nominee after the Republican National Convention that was held in August 1968). As it was noted above, this volume in fact contains two different works that were published as one; the second section of the book starts on page 85, the year provided at the center of the page is 1967. The same assumption can be made as is in the case of the first book, namely that these works were written earlier by the Soviets, then translated and published in one volume by the Hungarians in 1970.

Determining the publication date of the later books is more straightforward. With regards to the two shorter booklets, for Pozsonyi's *Report*, the date of the topic is 1965-1971, and the date of the document is 1971, while for *National Characteristics*, both dates are 1973. For the two longer Hungarian-written textbooks, the year of the document and that of the topic are identical in the finding aid, and they also coincide with what is on the cover of the books: 1974 for *Useful Knowledge* by Pozsonyi, and 1985 for *Operative Situation* by Szecsődi (1985-86 is given as the year of the document).

As we can see, while the first two books were originally written by Soviet authors a few years apart in the second half of the 1960s, they were both published in Hungarian in the same year, 1970, shortly after the Personnel and Training Department was established. A probable explanation is that when the Department started operation, they needed preparatory material on the United States. But evidently, there were no Hungarian-written textbooks about the topic, and there were no Hungarian intelligence officers who would have been capable of writing such an educational material. They were either incompetent, did not have enough experience, or they had been compromised one way or the other. Thus, the Department relied on material translated from Russian, which also indicates that there was very little difference between the goals of the intelligence agencies of the People's Republic of Hungary and those of the Soviet Union. In fact, a number of additional preparatory materials in the finding aid of the ÁBTL (including

National Characteristics from 1973) were also translated from Russian, especially those that were published around the period when the Personnel and Training Department was created in 1968.¹⁰⁵ Later, in the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s, the situation changed. First of all, by this time there were Hungarian intelligence officers with enough experience to write textbooks to prepare the new operatives, and also, the priorities of the Hungarian agencies changed, Hungarian intelligence had goals for which the preparation that could be provided by the Soviet materials would not have been adequate.

2.2 Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok /Általános ismertetés/ - The United States of America /General Description/

As it was mentioned above in the previous subchapter, *General Description* was originally written by an unknown Soviet author in 1965, and the Hungarian translation was published in 1970 by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I of the Ministry of the Interior. As the title suggests, the text provides an overview of the target country and presents some of its most relevant general features. It is 187 pages long, consists of six chapters, and also includes an appendix and a table of contents.¹⁰⁶ The six main chapters discuss (1) the United States as the target of Soviet intelligence, (2) the role of monopolies in American life, (3) the American economy, (4) scientific institutions in the US, (5) the influence of the U.S. and American institutions and military bases abroad, and (6) the characteristics and personality of the average American. The appendix provides an insight into the main targets of Eastern bloc intelligence at the time, namely scientific institutions, as well as the influence of communist ideology on the whole text.

The first chapter of *General Description* is twenty-six pages long, and its title is “American Imperialism – The Main Force of War and Aggression. The USA, as the Main Target of Soviet Intelligence.” It consists of five subchapters. The first one is the longest (more than seven pages), it is titled “The USA, the Main Country of Capitalism, the Fundamental Target of Soviet Intelligence,” and it describes the position of the “monopolies” of the United States in the world economy as the “main exploiter,” primarily relying on the documents of the CPSU as a source. The second subchapter enumerates the conditions that have enabled the economic development of the United States. The next subchapter is on the borders of the

¹⁰⁵ See, “Fond-és állagjegyzék, raktári jegyzékek.”

¹⁰⁶ Due to the inconsistency of the original page numbering in some of the textbooks, the dissertation is going to rely on the page numbering provided by the archivists of the ÁBTL, where page 1 is designated the cover page of the documents.

country, border protection, and customs. The fourth subchapter discusses the military-strategic situation of the US, and the fifth provides an overview of US-Soviet relations. Basically, it serves as an introduction to the rest of the chapters, which elaborate on these topics.

The title of the second chapter of the book is “The Role of Monopolies in the Economic and Political Life of the United States, and Their Ambitions of World Domination. The Influence of Monopolies on the Government Apparatus, its Tools and Methods,” and it is twenty-five pages long. It begins with a long discussion of the “The Rule of the Monopolies in the Economic and Political Life of the Country.” This is a fourteen-page long overview of the historical development of the American political system and the influence of corporations, written from a communist perspective. The second subchapter is about “The subordination of the government apparatus to the monopolistic capital. Its basic tools and methods.” This subchapter is eleven pages long and focuses more on the contemporary political situation, the positions of the political parties, and how the corporations influence them through lobbying and other methods.

The book continues in the next chapter with presenting “The Level of the Economic Development of the USA, its Economic and Military Potential. The Economic Relations of the USA with Other Countries,” and its length is thirty pages. It contains three subchapters, the first one of which is “General Description of the Economy of the United States. The Evaluation of its Economic-Military Potential.” It is seven pages long, and it focuses mostly on describing some general characteristics of the American economy, especially the industry, and the history of the development of capital structure, quoting extensively from the teachings of Lenin. The second subchapter, “The Main Branches of the American Economy and the Perspectives of the Soviet-American Economic Competition,” is longer, sixteen pages, and it enumerates and describes the condition of the major industries, such as energy, tool manufacturing, chemical industry, nuclear industry, as well as agriculture, and also provides a comparison with the Soviet Union. There is almost no mention of the service sector, as if this segment of the economy did not even exist. The last subchapter of Chapter III offers an overview of foreign trade between the United States and the rest of the world since the Second World War in about seven pages.

The title of Chapter IV is “The Situation of Science and the Main Scientific-Research Institutions of the USA. The Importance of the International Relations of the Scientific-Technological Institutions of the USA from the Perspective of Organizing Scientific-Technological Intelligence from the Territory of Third Countries.” It is twenty-six pages long, and it is divided into three subchapters. The first one is relatively short, four pages, and it is

about the main objectives and tasks of Soviet scientific-technological intelligence in the struggle against the United States. The next subchapter is about the organization of scientific work and research in the United States and the newest results of American science, and it is divided into additional sections. The first section is about the government organizations that control and coordinate scientific research, the next one is about the research conducted by corporations, and the last one is about the latest scientific results. The third subchapter is about using the international relations of American research institutions and corporations with third countries for intelligence purposes.

Chapter V, “The Political, Economic and Ideological Expansion of the USA. American Institutions and Military Bases abroad,” describes American foreign policy and the military, economic and political influence of the United States of the world. It consists of thirty-five pages and is made up of three subchapters. The first one is “The Role of Political and Ideology [sic!] Expansion in the Aggressive Plans of the USA,” followed by “The Main Forms of the Economic Expansion of the USA,” and finally, a subchapter on the military bases of the US, the “main enemy,” abroad, referred to as the “threat to peace.”

The final chapter of the book is thirty pages long, and its title is “National characteristics. Characteristic Features of American Traditions and Lifestyle. The Behavior of Americans Abroad.” Unlike the other chapters, this begins with a two-page introduction that provides statistics about the American population, and continues with two subchapters, the first one describing the emergence of the American nation and the national characteristics, and the second one about the behavior of Americans abroad. This is a description of how the author perceived Americans from a very peculiar perspective, as this characterization has a specific goal: to provide information that could be used to recruit Americans to become assets for the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc.

There is an appendix at the end of the textbook, which includes a list of the most important objects of scientific-technological intelligence in the US, consisting of the name and location of various research institutes, as well as their field of study. The list contains twenty-four institutes that specialize in nuclear science, biology, rocket science, space exploration, or other fields that could be relevant from a military perspective. This is followed by a chart that provides an organizational model of the scientific research institutions financed by the U.S. government. Then we can find a one-page syllabus for the course that would accompany the textbook, with a list of the main questions that should be discussed, corresponding to the issues presented in the book. The appendix ends with a bibliography and a table of contents. The list

of the literature that the book draws on begins with works by Marx and Lenin, as well as the minutes of various party congresses of the CPSU. The rest of the material follows an apparently arbitrary order; almost without exception, the authors have Russian names, or the texts are reports by various Soviet agencies.

Rather than a general description of the United States, this textbook is the discussion of certain aspects of American life and the United States that could be relevant for the Soviet agencies. The majority of these issues are also presented in the other books, and their comparative analysis in the subsequent chapters provides insight into how the representation of the U.S. changed in these textbooks.

2.3 Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok ügynöki-operatív helyzetének elemzése és az amerikaiak közötti beszerző munka néhány sajátossága - Analysis of the Agency-Operative Situation in the United States and Certain Characteristics of Recruitment Among the Americans

Similarly to *General Description*, the second textbook, *Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment* was also translated from Russian. As it has been mentioned, this volume contains two works, as beside the eighty-page first text, it also includes a shorter second one (the pages of which were originally numbered independently from the first one), the forty-page “The characteristics of personal and non-personal contact with regards to the USA.” The first text was originally written in 1967-68, the second one in 1967, and they were translated and published in Hungary by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I in 1970. But what was the reason for publishing a second textbook beside *General Description* in 1970? It was necessary because they cover different issues and topics. As the titles imply, while *General Description* set out to provide a general overview of the United States, the goal of *Agency-Operative Situation* was more specific. The first material included in the booklet was written in order to prepare intelligence officers for the intelligence situation in the United States and give some advice on how to recruit Americans, whereas the second material is mostly concerned with a description of the cities where the officers were going to be stationed and contains information on how to maintain contact with the agents that were recruited while avoiding detection by the American counterintelligence agencies.

The title of the first, longer text is almost identical with that of the textbook: “Certain issues related to the agency-operative situation in the United States of America and the

characteristics of recruitment among the Americans.” It does not include a table of contents or an appendix, the sources are not indicated, and the text is not divided into chapters or subchapters. Still, it is possible to separate and classify the topics discussed. The first five pages of the text contain an overview of the situation of the American economy and the reasons for its quick growth and development. This is done from an unmistakably communist perspective and in a rather antagonistic tone, referring to the United States by using terms such as the “main bastion of imperialism.”¹⁰⁷ With the presentation of the American military industry and the comparison of the military power of the United States and the Soviet Union on pages 7 to 9, the text shifts into the discussion of the “ideological struggle” between the two blocks, American propaganda, and American foreign policy from a Cold War perspective. This is followed by a one-page discussion of the goals of Soviet intelligence in “the work against the main enemy”¹⁰⁸ on page 16. The book continues with a three-page overview of American politics, including the situation of President Lyndon B. Johnson, the possible outcome of the upcoming presidential election, and racial issues.

The presentation of the political landscape of the United States opens up the discussion of the issues that directly influence the operative situation in the country. The author highlights four areas that are especially relevant for the work of Soviet intelligence: (1) The rise of the American right, especially the “far right,” which is discussed on pages from 19 to 24. (2) The expansion of the power of the government in the United States, the growth of the size of the government sector in the economy and other fields of life, and the increasing centralization of political decision-making to the inner circle of President Johnson (24-25). (3) The growing crime rates in the United States, especially with regards to “drug use, rape, and perversion,” which force the Johnson administration to take extraordinary measures and increase the funding and presence of the police on the streets (25-28). (4) Finally, the growing power of the American counterintelligence organizations, the work of which is coordinated by the FBI, and their rapidly developing technology, illustrated with a number of examples (28-48). This section of the book also includes some suggestions for the Soviet agencies, giving them advice on what they should do in order to avoid American counterintelligence, for example by operating in third countries.

The aspects of the recruitment of American agents are discussed on pages 48 to 73, focusing on questions such as: Which groups of Americans should be considered as potential

¹⁰⁷ ÁBTL-4.1. A-3005/6 *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok ügynöki-operatív helyzetének elemzése és az amerikaiak közötti beszerző munka néhány sajátossága*, 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 16.

targets for recruitment, who are susceptible to being approached by Eastern European agencies? Who have access to information that could be valuable for the Soviet Union? What could serve as the basis of recruitment (financial, ideological motivations, blackmail, etc.)? This also includes an overview of the financial status of the average American, the ideological stance of American people on various issues, and even a list of what are considered to be digressions for the members of the American intelligence agencies (such as drug use or homosexuality), as well as the sanctions that these carry. Related to recruitment, the following section of the text (73-83) discusses various, possibly relevant, aspects of the “national characteristics” of the American people. Many of these are presented in a negative light, such as greed or false modesty. Finally, the text is concluded on pages 83-84 with a list of methods that could result in success in the “work against the main enemy,” and could lead to the recruitment of Americans by the Soviet agencies.

The second section of the booklet, “The characteristics of personal and non-personal contact with regards to the USA,” begins on page 85 with a cover page. The first topic discussed on pages 86 to 92 is the difficult situation of Soviet intelligence in the United States, and an elaboration on the methods and techniques employed by the American counterintelligence agencies, especially when it comes to the surveillance of Soviet citizens who work at diplomatic posts. This was especially relevant in this period, as there were limited contacts between the superpowers, and most of the intelligence officers were working under diplomatic cover, thus they were under the eye of the American organizations.

This is the reason why the textbook focuses especially on the description of two cities, Washington, D.C., and New York City, as these were the locations of the diplomatic representations where intelligence officers could be placed. The embassies are always situated in the capital, and the Headquarters of the United Nations, thus the Soviet diplomatic mission, was in New York. The discussion of Washington from page 92 to 100 includes a presentation of the city from the perspective of Soviet intelligence, including its layout, demographics, transportation, restaurants and theaters that could be used to meet sources, and the 25-mile area surrounding the city where Soviet diplomats were allowed to move freely, without special permission. The section about Washington is concluded with what is known about the surveillance of the Soviet embassy and its staff, and the activity of American counterintelligence in the city in general. The description of New York City ranges from page 100 to 108. This also includes a short description of the layout of the city, including Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens, transportation, museums, theaters, and restaurants, as well

as the surveillance of Soviet citizens working for the Soviet representation at the United Nations and other Soviet organizations, and advice on how to deal with them.

The second half of the text details the protocol for keeping contact with the members of the agency without being detected by American counterintelligence. From pages 108 to 118, the author gives advice on organizing personal meetings between the intelligence officer and the agent in Washington and New York, as well as possibly in other cities. This is described as especially difficult, given the travel restrictions on Soviet citizens. Pages 118 to 126 discuss the non-personal forms of contact which have “basically become the main form of keeping contact with the agency”¹⁰⁹ in the United States, such as the “dead drop,” when the officer leaves a note at a prearranged location.¹¹⁰ The final paragraph on page 126-127 concludes by saying that while intelligence work in the United States is not impossible, it is certainly difficult, and requires the application of new methods.

2.4 Beszámoló a külföldi munkáról (Egyesült Államok) – Report on Work abroad (United States)

Report is one of the two shorter textbooks, it is only 32 pages long, including the preface as well. It was published in 1971, and it is the earliest one of the materials examined in this dissertation to be written by a Hungarian author, István Pozsonyi. Pozsonyi is also the author of *Useful Knowledge*, his personnel file is available in the ÁBTL and gives some insight into his background.¹¹¹ István Pozsonyi was born in 1930, his personnel file reveals that both of his parents were party members, and while his father’s occupation is not listed, the “Dr.” honorific suggests a middle-class background. Pozsonyi seems to have been active in the Hungarian Communist Party from a very young age, he started participating in the worker’s movement in 1943 and joined the party in 1945. Given that he was thirteen and fifteen at this time, this indicates that probably because of his parents, he was practically raised into the Party. He graduated as a military engineer from the Budapest University of Technology in 1953 and he had worked for the Ministry of the Interior all his life, from 1953 to 1984, when he retired. He got an advanced level English language exam in 1961 and was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in 1968. Pozsonyi already belonged to a newer generation of state security officers. We can see

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 118.

¹¹⁰ Shulsky and Schmitt, *Silent Warfare*, 20. The authors also note that “dead drops” have often been the preferred mode of communication by the Soviet, and later the Russian agencies.

¹¹¹ ÁBTL 2.8.1. BM Központi Fogyaték 17053 (Pozsonyi István).

that he was a real party man, he had been involved in the communist movement since his early childhood, but at the same time, he was also educated, and spoke good English.

His *Report* also supports this hypothesis, as Pozsonyi reveals that he worked as the chief engineer of the Hungarian Atomic Energy Commission, this is how he got into the Foreign Ministry in 1965.¹¹² His first placement was in London, and he was moved to Washington in November 1967, after the defection of Radványi and Bernáth,¹¹³ working undercover as scientific-technological attaché as well as cultural attaché. Pozsonyi returned to Hungary from the U.S. after three years. The prologue to the booklet written by the head of the Personnel and Training Department notes that his experience could potentially be helpful for the “comrades” who are going to work in the United States, or those who would prepare them.

István Pál, who did further research on Pozsonyi, writes in his 2021 study that currently, it is impossible to know the full extent of Pozsonyi’s activities, as the files of the people involved in scientific-technological intelligence after 1967 are not in the ÁBTL. At the same time, Pál notes that according to his unnamed source, Pozsonyi was prone to exaggerations, he tended to overrate his own achievements and his own importance. Pál also reveals that Pozsonyi passed away in 1994.¹¹⁴

The booklet consists of five short chapters. (1) Cover and questions related to the cover work (1-5), (2) Experience related to the activities and operation of the counterintelligence organizations (5-17), (3) Experience related to operative activity, building a network (15-22), (4) Issues related to the characteristics of the target country (22-29), and (5) Other issues, recommendations (29-30). The report provides a summary of the conditions of his work in the United States, the characteristics of the target country, and recommendations for future officers, rather than any actual results of his intelligence work. Many of the passages also appear in *Useful Knowledge*, written in 1974, mostly based on his experience between 1967 and 1971.

2.5 Az amerikaiak nemzeti jellege – The National Characteristics of the Americans

The last Soviet book included among the sources of this dissertation is *National Characteristics*, written in 1973, translated and published by the Personnel and Training Department in the very same year. This is also a short work of only 16 pages, and it relies on

¹¹² *Report*, 1.

¹¹³ See Géza M. Szebeni, “A Radványi-ügy,” *Grotius* (2011), accessed March 16, 2021, http://www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/DBTRNE/2011_115_m.%20szebeni%20geza_a%20radvanyi-%C3%BCgy.pdf.

¹¹⁴ István Pál, “Egy magyar hírszerző Amerikában,” 103.

the experiences of the KGB. The goal is to present the characteristics of the Americans that could potentially be targeted by the intelligence agencies of the communist countries. The booklet begins with a short introduction (1) and continues with discussing several issues. The first one is political views (2-5), followed by the American approach to the national question (5-7), the business mentality (7-8), cultural level (8-10), women working in the administration (10-12), religion (12-13), behavioral norms (13-15), and the American family (15-16). The material is short, but concise, and contains rather specific information.

2.6 *Hasznos ismeretek az Egyesült Államokról /Segédanyag a külföldi munkához való felkészítéshez/ - Useful Knowledge about the United States /Aid to Preparation for Work Abroad/*

The third longer textbook, *Useful Knowledge*, was written by the same author as *Report on Work Abroad*, István Pozsonyi. The subtitle already identifies the purpose of the book: to aid the preparation of intelligence officers for working abroad. It was published by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I in 1974, and in the case of this textbook, the date of publication on the cover is identical to the date of the document and the date of the topic in the ÁBTL finding aid. 1974 was well into *détente* and the period during which the normalization of Hungarian-American relations took place, and seven years after the defection of Radványi and Bernáth. Thus, Hungarian intelligence had enough time to get reestablished and gain experience working in the United States, and they could write a textbook specifically for future Hungarian intelligence officers.

Useful Knowledge is 114 pages long and consists of a “Table of Contents” and fifteen chapters, the last one of which is a list of recommended literature. The final page of the textbook contains information that is related to the possible use of the material, as it states that it was printed in five copies, then photoduplicated in twenty-eight additional copies. This means that its distribution was quite exclusive, this material was definitely not for the general public and not even for every intelligence officer; the target audience were specifically those who were to work in the United States.

The chapters are relatively short and cover relatively narrow, well-defined topics: (I) “Territory and government,” which describes the territory and basic knowledge about the system of government of the United States, similar to what one would find in an encyclopedia, 3 pages, (II) “Population, Nationalities, Social Situation and Religion,” 4 pages, (III)

“Economy,” 3 pages, (IV) “Education and the Press,” 6 pages, (V) “Arrival, Necessary Documents, Passport and Customs Inspection,” 5 pages, (VI) “Post, Telephone, Radio, Television,” 7 pages, (VII) “Transportation,” 8 pages, (VIII) “Housing, Hotels, etc.,” 8 pages, (IX) “Scientific, cultural, artistic, social life,” which includes a short history of American literature, and as well as a description of the average American, and certain aspects of American culture, 18 pages, (X) “Important services, hairdresser, tipping, fashion, restaurant, food, drinks, shopping, etc.,” 12 pages, (XI) “The Negro and Colored Question,” 3 pages, (XII) “Crime,” 3 pages, (XIII) “Washington,” 16 pages, (XIV) “New York,” 17 pages, and a one-page list of recommended literature, which includes works by Hungarian journalists (Pál Ipper, Péter Vajda) about the United States, as well as American authors that had been published in Hungarian. At the same time, this list of recommended readings does not contain any books by Hungarian scholars of American studies, such as László Országh, whose *Bevezetés az amerikanisztikába* [Introduction to American Studies] had been published two years earlier and was widely available by then.¹¹⁵

The tone of this textbook differs from that of the earlier ones. The most striking change is that it seems to have a more balanced view of the United States. The book is critical of a number of policies of the United States and certain characteristics of the Americans, but this criticism is not as harsh as what could be read in the previous books, and it is less ideologically driven. What we can sometimes see (especially in the description of the average Americans) is the condescending tone of a “cultured European” diplomat towards the “vulgar Americans.” The communist rhetoric is still present, but it is considerably less pervasive in this text. The author seems to show genuine interest in the United States: some parts of the textbook in fact resemble a guidebook, such as the description of the museums and sights in Washington, D.C., and New York City.

2.7 Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok Operatív helyzete – The Operative Situation of the United States

Operative Situation was published in 1985 by the Personnel and Training Department of Office Group III/I, and was written by another Hungarian operative, János Szecsődi, whose rank indicated on the cover page was police major. Szecsődi’s personnel file was not available at the

¹¹⁵ László Országh, *Bevezetés az amerikanisztikába*, (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1972).

ÁBTL at the time when I was gathering sources for my research. By the early 1980s, Hungarian-American relations were “normalized,” they were as close as it was possible between a Soviet satellite and the United States. The key outstanding bilateral issues had been settled in the late 1960s-1970s, Hungary joined the International Monetary Fund in 1982, and there were considerable economic contacts between the two countries. While the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States was growing during the Reagan administration, this did not lead to the reversal of the Hungarian-American rapprochement.

With 143 pages, *Operative Situation* is the longest of the four preparatory book, and contains a table of contents, a short introduction, five main chapters with many subchapters, and a list of recommended literature. As can be implied from the title, the main focus of this textbook, similar to that of *Agency-Operative Situation*, is to examine and present the operative situation, that is, the conditions for conducting intelligence work in the United States.

After a short, one-page introduction, the first chapter of the book of 18 pages and four subchapters (1.1) is about the “Political Elements” of the operative situation. It presents the structure of the government and the power structure, political parties and organizations, the foreign relations of the country, and public education. While there are numerous factual mistakes in the text and the political system of the U.S. is criticized to a certain extent, this is a relatively detailed description of how the American political system works, with some reflection on current issues.

(1.2) the second chapter of the book is about the “Economic Elements” of the operative situation, and it is 12 pages long. It includes seven subchapters, about the economy of the USA in general, about agriculture, the energy industry and reserves, labor force and employment, foreign trade, scientific research and development, and the influence of foreign “monopolies.” This chapter presents a rather impartial picture of the U.S. economy, and compared to the earlier materials, there is much less emphasis on the military industry, the focus is more on technology as well as the general state of the economy.

The third chapter (1.3), “Counterintelligence, Police Organizations, and the System of Public Administration” is the longest one with 73 pages from 36 to 109, and eight subchapters, some of which are divided into further units, but the structure and the numbering of the subchapters is rather confusing and inconsistent. The first part of subchapter (1.3) provides an overview counterintelligence in the US. First, the security organizations of the United States are presented – their history, what they really do, their role in the American government, the methods that they employ, etc. The list of organizations discussed includes the FBI, the CIA,

the DIA, the NSA, the border patrol and the customs service, and the Atomic Energy Commission.¹¹⁶ Then there is a section on the protection of information in the United States, including the various levels of classified information. The second part of chapter 1.3 is about citizenship, identification documents, application for citizenship, and the administration related to immigration. The third part of the chapter presents a legislative proposal about immigration and the protection provided by the Hungarian embassy and consular service to Hungarian citizens, including intelligence officers. The next part of 1.3 is about border control and customs, then finally are two short sections on the propaganda activity of the American counterintelligence organizations and on terrorism.

Chapter 1.4, “The general national and cultural characteristics of the population,” is a short, 8-page introduction to certain characteristics of American society. This consists of four subchapters, which discuss the composition of American society, the “national psychology,” cultural life, and the role of religion and family in the USA. The final chapter, 1.5, “General historical and geographic data” is 7 pages long, and it includes a description of the main geographical regions of the country, and a short overview of American history.

The section on recommended literature consists of four separate lists. The first one cites eight Hungarian-language books, among them works by communist writers such as Rezső Békés, as well as scholars of American studies such as Julianna Puskás. The second list consists of foreign language literature on the United States, such as the Annual Report of the Council on Foreign Relations, or a study on American politics by the Brookings Institute. The third list is a mixture of Hungarian and English language literature related to intelligence and counterintelligence, and the final one enumerates the documents published by the Hungarian intelligence agencies themselves about the United States.

¹¹⁶ See the list of acronyms at the beginning of the dissertation.

Chapter 3

American History and the American Political System

3.1 The Position of American History and Politics in the Preparatory Materials

According to the definition offered by Shulsky and Scmitt (see Chapter 1), one of the possible meanings of the term “intelligence” is gathering information “relevant to a government’s formulation and implementation of policy to further its national security interests and to deal with threats from actual or potential adversaries.”¹¹⁷ This also includes knowledge about the political system and current political developments in a given country. The task of intelligence organizations is to provide information about the conditions in the target country, aiming to assist the political decision-making of the sending government. According to Shulsky and Scmitt, in order to be able to make an informed decision, a country’s officials need to know more about a potential adversary than its military or diplomatic secrets. Bringing up major political events in America, such as a congressional vote or a presidential campaign as examples, they argue that “to conduct its policy toward the United States, another country would find that a good understanding of such matters could be as important as obtaining U.S. national security secrets.”¹¹⁸ Being familiar with the political system of a country is a crucial prerequisite for making informed decisions.

This aspect of intelligence work was also relevant during the Cold War; one of the main tasks of the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc was to gather information about the political situation in the countries of the opposing side, including the United States. In order to be able to understand the conditions in a given country, it is also necessary to examine their past development, to be able to put the current situation into a historical context. These requirements were also reflected by the textbooks discussed in this dissertation, as in one way or the other, the political system, contemporary politics, and the history of the United States were included in the preparatory materials for intelligence officers. These sections provide a good foundation for our analysis of the changes in the image of the United States of America in these materials, as well as for examining whether this image was just an ideological projection by the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc, or whether it reflected a genuine

¹¹⁷ Shulsky and Scmitt, *Silent Warfare*, 1. See footnote 16.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 163.

attempt to understand the country, thus could potentially serve as a basis for real, effective intelligence work.

Consequently, this chapter discusses how American history and the emergence of the American political system are presented in the preparatory textbooks of the Hungarian state security that were published during the period in question. This introduction (3.1) continues with an overview of where and how extensively these issues are discussed in the materials. The next subchapter (3.2) focuses on the presentation of American history, the explanation given in the textbooks for the rapid pace of development of the American economy, and how this narrative changed over the period. Subchapter 3.3 examines the representation of the American political system and the political parties. Finally, the conclusion (3.4) provides a critical evaluation of the material covered in this chapter. Given their prominence in the materials, the presentation of contemporary political events, foreign policy, and economic policy in the textbooks are discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters (Chapter 4 and 5). At the same time, it is difficult to separate the representation of economic and foreign policy from that of the political system and politics in general, especially as they are often discussed together in the source documents; hence the large number of cross references in this chapter.

The amount of attention dedicated to the presentation of the history of the United States, the American political system, and American politics, varies greatly in the textbooks; while these topics are discussed in greater detail in some, they are barely mentioned in others. In *General Description* (1965), various chapters touch upon these topics: Chapter I is mostly about American foreign policy, Chapter II elaborates on the role of monopolies in American politics and economy, and Chapter VI presents the national characteristics of the American people. History and politics are also included in these chapters, inasmuch as they are relevant to the topic. *Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment* (1967) provides an overview of American politics in a general sense alongside its description of foreign policy on the first pages of the textbook, as well as later, related to the operative situation. Politics or history are not discussed in the second section of the source, “The characteristics of personal and non-personal contact with regards to the USA,” which is more concerned with information directly related to the practical side of intelligence. The third Russian translation, the short booklet titled *National Characteristics* (1973) discusses politics as far as it is relevant to the description of the American people, especially those who work in the administration or in other positions that could be important for the purposes of Soviet intelligence.

When it comes to the Hungarian books, history and politics are not featured prominently in Pozsonyi's *Useful Knowledge* (1975), which only includes a brief overview, or his *Report* (1971), but they are discussed quite extensively in *Operative Situation* (1985) by Szecsődi. Pozsonyi gives a presentation the American system of government at the beginning of *Useful Knowledge*, and there are some sporadic references to politics and history later in the book. The issue is not detailed in his *Report* either, as this document describes Pozsonyi's work as an intelligence officer in the United States and presents the operative situation; thus, he does not elaborate on the wider perspective. Politics is only mentioned in so far as it is related to his intelligence work, as he does talk about certain issues, such as racial and class tensions. These social issues are discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation, which is dedicated to the representation of American society in the preparatory materials. In the second major Hungarian textbook, Szecsődi does present a detailed overview of the contemporary political situation in the United States in the first chapter of *Operative Situation*. Additional political topics also come up later in the book, always related to the issue that is being discussed (e.g., immigration policy), and there is a brief summary of the historical development of the United States at the end of the textbook.

3.2 Perceptions of American History in the Textbooks

While the other books occasionally also contain references to history, especially when discussing American foreign policy, the economy, or society, two of the textbooks, the earliest and the latest, elaborate on the subject and provide a more coherent overview of American history. *General Description* (1965) has a five-page subchapter (1.2) dedicated to "The Conditions Enabling the Economic Development of the United States of America,"¹¹⁹ and Szecsődi includes a five-page subchapter in *Operative Situation* (1985), titled "The History of the USA."¹²⁰ The analysis and comparison of these two texts gives us an insight into the narrative of American history presented to state security officers during their preparation and it provides us with an opportunity to see how it changed over the *détente* period.

General Description (1965) begins its discussion of American history by stating that the exceptionally fast pace of the economic development of the USA can be attributed to a number of historical and geographic conditions. The author continues with a brief summary of the origins of the country: British colonization, the American Revolution, and the founding of the

¹¹⁹ *General Description*, 10-14.

¹²⁰ *Operative Situation*, 135-140.

country, while at the same time he emphasizes how young the United States is. The development of the U.S. is recognized as being fast, given that from a historical perspective, a relatively short time has passed since the Declaration of Independence, still, the USA could rise to become the number one industrial power in the world. The absence of feudalism, in contrast with the countries on the European continent, is pointed out as one of the reasons for this rapid growth. Slavery, which the book erroneously claims to have been eliminated during the Civil War,¹²¹ is mentioned as the last remnant of feudalism, and the last obstacle in the way of total, unlimited free market economic competition. There are various issues with this statement: first, chattel slavery in the American South had very little in common with feudalism in Europe and elsewhere – for example, in these systems, production was based on serfdom, not slavery. Second, the author contradicts his previous claim that the United States was free of the restrictions of feudalism.¹²²

In accordance with communist ideology, the textbook claims that capitalism initially played a progressive historical role, as it led to “the development of productive forces, the concentration of capital and production, and later the creation of huge monopolies.”¹²³ The abundance of land and natural resources is named as another factor that enabled the development of the country, and it attracted capital and immigrants to America. The author claims that as many as 41 million people migrated to America from Europe from 1820 until the writing of the book, who were “mostly young, energetic, and hardworking people.”¹²⁴ The last condition listed as having contributed to the economic growth of the U.S. is that there have been no wars on American soil since the Civil War, but at the same time, American monopolies have profited from wars abroad.¹²⁵

The development of the United States until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries is evaluated quite positively from a historical perspective in *General Description*. This corresponds to the communist narrative of social development over the course of history, which the textbook demonstrates with a quote from Lenin, who said that the United States “has no comparable competitor with regards to the political freedom and cultural level of the masses.

¹²¹ While the Emancipation Proclamation was indeed issued during the Civil War, the 13th Amendment that officially put an end to chattel slavery in the whole country was not adopted until the war was over. Also, chattel slavery was only one form of slavery, albeit the most brutal one. Various other forms of slavery, such as debt slavery or the sharecropping system that developed in the South after the Civil War, survived well into the post-Reconstruction era.

¹²² *General Description*, 11.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

In many respects, this country is the blueprint and ideal for our bourgeois civilization.”¹²⁶ But, according to the narrative, at the beginning of the 20th century, the United States entered imperialism, the final stage of capitalism, and the country’s economic growth started to decline. The large corporations have taken over the government apparatus, and, according to the 22nd Congress of the CPSU (1961), they proceeded to “unite the power of the state with the power of the monopolies into one machine in order to enrich the monopolies, suppress the workers’ movement and the struggles for national liberation, save the capitalist social order, and begin aggressive wars.”¹²⁷ The political situation in the United States changed, as “American imperialism has become the focus for all the most barbaric traits that are closely related to the essence of capitalism.”¹²⁸ According to Lenin, essentially, American imperialism is “the most vicious form of imperialism, a method of oppressing, crushing weak and small nations in the most shameful way.”¹²⁹ With regards to the global role of the United States, the militarization of the economy and the arms race are favorable for the monopolies, but detrimental to the general public, as they lead to increased taxes, the loss of the purchasing power of the population, and economic crisis.

As a conclusion to the chapter, the author notes that there are also those who stand against the “assault of reactionary forces.” These include “the masses of workers and the progressive social forces” as well as “the Negro people” [*a néger nép*] within the county, and the Soviet Union and the socialist countries globally.¹³⁰ The Soviet Union “plays an enormous role in uncovering the aggressive and reactionary policies of the leading circles of the United States,” through its peaceful policies and the “achievements of the Soviet people in building communism, the achievements of the development of Soviet science and technology.”¹³¹ The expression, “fight for peace,” is emphasized so much that in one version or the other, it appears four times in the two-sentence paragraph.

“The Negro people” [*A Néger nép*] is an expression that was commonly used in the contemporary communist parlance. It was often capitalized in the textbooks as well as elsewhere, in spite of the fact that adjectives or names of people are by the general rule not capitalized in Hungarian. The terminology is quite revealing: the word *nép* in Hungarian has no direct equivalent in English, it can mean nation or people. But the connotation is that a nation

¹²⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 13.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 13-14.

¹³¹ Ibid., 14.

or people that is referred to as *nép* is politically distinct from other groups, it has its own political leaders and even own territory or territorial ambitions, it has its own country or at least autonomy, a certain degree of political independence. The assumption here is clearly that the “Negro people” are not members of the American nation, or at least not completely. As we will see, this terminology is often used in the materials, and this is the connotation that it carries.

There are various inaccuracies in the text which include factual mistakes that must have been part of the original, Russian-language text (e.g., the claim that the first settlers from Europe went from England to the Atlantic coast of the United States in the 17th century, or that the Civil War was fought exclusively over the liberation of the slaves), as well as errors that could potentially be attributed to the translation from Russian to Hungarian. One example is referring to the original thirteen colonies as “settlements,” *település* instead of *gyarmat*, which reveals that the translator must have been unfamiliar with the topic, and was ignorant about the language of contemporary historiography.¹³² As illustrated by the quotations from the text above, the tone is explicitly hostile towards the United States and the narrative is ideologically driven, as demonstrated by the use of communist terminology and ideas that reflect communist theories, including quotes from Lenin and the official documents of the CPSU. To summarize the argument of the textbook, *General Description* claims that the United States was developing rapidly and in a socially progressive way until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. But then it reached imperialism, the final phase of capitalism according to Marxist theory. This gave rise to the rule of the monopolies, economic and social decline, and aggressive foreign policy, which would probably lead to disaster, if not for the resistance of the Soviet Union and their allies in the U.S. and abroad.

Szecsődi’s overview of American history in *Operative Situation* (1985) also starts out with a description of colonization, but he is more accurate than the earlier work; he acknowledges the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French as having been the first European colonizers in North America.¹³³ When talking about the early stages of American history he also mentions immigration, and similarly to the earlier text, he also attributes it to the abundance of natural resources. In addition, he mentions the beginnings of slavery, as well as the struggle between the British and the French for the control of the North American colonies. The road that led to independence and the American Revolution is presented in more detail than in the previous textbook, and Szecsődi seems to evaluate the actions of the colonists as having been justified by the behavior of the British, which is in accordance with the interpretation that could

¹³² Ibid., 10.

¹³³ *Operative Situation*, 136.

be found in contemporary textbooks of American history. There are some inaccuracies here, e.g., Szecsődi claims that the First Continental Congress was held in 1764 instead of 1774.¹³⁴ The next historical event that the author describes is the Westward expansion, of which he is quite critical, pointing out for example, not incorrectly, that the Mexican-American war in the middle of the 19th century was fought over fabricated claims. He mentions the annexation of Hawaii (which he misspells as “Hawai”) as a sign of the “insatiable appetite and aspirations for world domination of the rising capitalist power.”¹³⁵

The rise of capitalism in the North eventually led to conflict with the South over the issue of slavery, which was hindering capitalist development. This conflict culminated in the Civil War, which “gave birth to the new United States, the paradigm of capitalist countries, the new world power.”¹³⁶ The end of the Civil War marks the beginning of the period of American imperialism, according to Szecsődi. He criticizes how the U.S. nominally supported the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain at the end of the 19th century but eventually ended up dominating the island, along with the rest of Latin-America: “the whole continent became the colony of the USA, part of its sphere of influence.”¹³⁷ American expansionism was made possible by the force of the U.S. Navy, as well as the economic influence of the country and its financial institutions. The United States became even stronger after its rivals were weakened by the First World War. This shift in power dynamics resulted in conflicts on the global stage, and “naturally led to a new clash between the imperialist powers, the Second World War – in the case of the USA, to the conflict with Japan.”¹³⁸ But another world power was also on the rise: the Soviet Union, and eventually, a conflict emerged between the two superpowers. Szecsődi describes the period when the book was written as a time when “the USA is stronger, at the same time, weaker than ever in shaping global affairs.”¹³⁹

Szecsődi’s description of American history is more detailed and nuanced than the earlier book. While there are still some factual mistakes, it gives a more accurate overview of the history of the country, with more attention to details. Gone are the references to the works by Lenin and the documents of the CPSU and the long enumerations of the “sins” of America, but there is still tangible belligerence and hostility towards the United States, although not nearly as strong and explicit as in the previous textbooks. The *Operative Situation* is at times quite

¹³⁴ Ibid., 137.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 137.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 137.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 138.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 138.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 139.

similar to what one would find in a standard American history book from that time period. This is not by accident, as the recommended literature at the end of the textbook also includes the 1977 edition of *A Short History of the American Nation* by John A. Garraty,¹⁴⁰ which is a popular textbook for high schools and universities, published in 81 editions in five languages.¹⁴¹

3.3 The American Constitutional and Political System

The description of the political system and the political situation in the United States is featured more prominently in these preparatory materials than American history: more space is dedicated to the issue, and the topic is discussed in more in depth in the textbooks. In *General Description* (1965), Chapter I presents the objectives of Soviet intelligence in the United States, including political goals, and politics is one of the main topics of Chapter II. This chapter is about the influence of monopolies in America, and also includes a general description of the American political system. The textbook discusses contemporary domestic politics, and it contains another chapter on American foreign policy, but as noted above, such topics are analyzed in the following chapter of this dissertation. Politics also comes up in *Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment* (1967), first an overview of the then current political situation at the beginning of the material, as well as towards the end of the text, where politics is discussed more specifically in the context of its relevance to the practical work of intelligence officers. *National Characteristics* (1973) takes a similar approach: American politics is discussed as far as it is related to the topic of the textbook, namely the way it affects the average Americans and as far as it is relevant for gathering intelligence.

The textbooks written by Hungarians also discuss politics. Pozsonyi gives a short overview of the American political system in the first chapter of *Useful Knowledge* (1974), and there are sporadic political references in his *Report* (1971). He does not provide a detailed review of the topic, but Szecsődi writes more extensively about politics in *Operative Situation* (1985), especially in the first chapter, dedicated to a presentation of the American political system and the contemporary political situation. There are additional references to politics in the later parts of the text, especially when it comes to foreign policy, as well as various aspects of domestic policy that may be relevant for the work of intelligence officers.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 141.

¹⁴¹ “John A. Garraty,” *Worldcat.org*, accessed August 12, 2021. <http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79121338/>

Chapter I of *General Description* (1965) is basically a long list of grievances against the United States that begins with an attempt to demonstrate the danger America poses to global peace and the international order. It also provides an overview of American domestic politics, which is described as being characterized by “intensifying internal reaction, raging racial discrimination, an increased activity of the extreme right, and unrestricted anti-communist propaganda,”¹⁴² all of which can pose issues for Soviet intelligence. Anti-communism is presented as the principal ideology of the leading circles of the United States, and according to a quote from the records of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, it “represents the final stage of the decline of bourgeois ideology.”¹⁴³ Anti-communism is considered to be pervasive in the media (radio, television, and the press), and the textbook laments that anti-communist courses were introduced in secondary schools, as well as in institutions of higher learning. The Soviet state security seems to be most concerned with how this widespread anti-communism makes the operation of the Soviet agencies more difficult. Due to this prevalent anti-Soviet propaganda, Americans are unwilling to establish contact with Soviet citizens and even less so with Soviet intelligence agencies, especially as laws “punish contact with foreign intelligence agencies,”¹⁴⁴ while at the same time, people who immediately report recruitment attempts by foreign agencies do not suffer any retribution.

Chapter II of *General Description* details the influence of the monopolies, big corporations, on the American political and economic system, which is presented as being all-pervasive. The chapter begins with the following statement, which summarizes its message: “In the capitalist countries, the financial oligarchy controls not just the economic, but also political life. In the period of imperialism, it completely dominates the bourgeois state, and uses it according to its own interests.”¹⁴⁵ American “democracy” is introduced in a derogatory manner, claiming that in reality, the government of the United States is controlled by a small group of millionaires and billionaires. These people occupy the highest political positions and ensure the adoption of laws that are beneficial for them and their social class: “the government has become an administrative committee of the monopolistic bourgeoisie.”¹⁴⁶ At the same time, according to the text, these capitalist groups are not united in their purpose, they are engaged in a constant struggle for power, and this division should be exploited by the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the

¹⁴² *General Description*, 7.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

relationship between the capitalist classes and the political sphere should be one of the main targets of Soviet intelligence.

The criticism of American democracy is followed by the description of the constitutional system and its historical development, then an overview of the operation of the three branches of the government and an evaluation the American political system in general. Maybe it would be more accurate to refer to this as the passing of judgement rather than evaluation, as the tone of the text is rather disparaging. The presentation of the history of the development of the American constitutional system begins with the assertion that the Constitution and the laws were created in order to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie and to provide the monopolies with opportunities to become even more rich. The Constitution is presented as having been created by capitalists and slave owners who obtained their own independence by aggressive means, by starting a war.¹⁴⁸ This is of course technically speaking true, the Founding Fathers were indeed the political and economic elite of the contemporary society, many of them were slave owners, and the independence of the United States was indeed won in the War of Independence. But it is quite telling that only these negative aspects of the history of American independence are emphasized and not, for example, the underlying principles, the conduct of the British Crown and the British atrocities before the War of Independence, or the novelty of the American democratic experiment.

There is a short description of the American constitutional and legal system, a presentation of the structure of the U.S. government, and the operation of a federal republic, the division of power between the states and the federal government. It is also noted that the rights of the people were originally not included in the Constitution. The textbook claims that Congress adopted constitutional amendments in 1791 due to “the pressure from the popular masses.”¹⁴⁹ Displaying unfamiliarity with the American Constitution, the text refers to these first ten amendments as the “declaration of human rights” [*az emberi jogok deklarációja*¹⁵⁰] instead of the Bill of Rights. This is not the only mistake in this section that continues with an overview of the Constitutional amendments. Once again, it is quite possible that these mistakes originate from translator who translated the text from Russian and most likely had rather limited knowledge of American history and the American political system. Another similar example is that the text talks about the “liberation of the peoples” [*a népek felszabadítása*¹⁵¹] after the Civil

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 30.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 30.

War, where the original text must have referred to the liberation of the slaves – most likely, using the “Negro people” expression mentioned above in the previous subchapter (3.2).

General Description continues with an overview of the American political system, starting out with the executive branch. The president is presented as having more power than he actually does: “The only restriction imposed upon his power by the Constitution is that the ratification of treaties and appointments to the administration can only be made with the ‘consent of the Senate.’ But this restriction is only formal, because the Senate rarely overturns presidential decisions.”¹⁵² This is of course not accurate: checks and balances is one of the main principles of the American constitutional system, and the different branches of government have more than one way to keep the other branches in check. While missing this important point, the text sometimes goes into detail and describes such relatively minor features of the political system as the “pocket veto” of the president.

The section about the Congress is also riddled with inaccuracies, for example, the textbook claims, “Deciding about foreign policy is the privilege of the Senate, while the House is concerned with domestic policy and finance.” There is an element of truth to this, as the Senate has more power in decisions about the course of foreign policy than the House of Representatives (because as mentioned above, its consent is needed for declarations of war, the ratification of international treaties, and appointments). But this does not mean that the House has no say about this issue, or that foreign policy would be the only concern of the Senate. In general, the description of the work of the U. S. Congress in *General Description* is quite detailed and technical, relatively neutral in tone. The electoral process is explained, and procedural issues are mentioned, such as the role and function of the Speaker, the work of the committees, and even the filibuster. But the final sentence of the presentation of the Congress reveals where the priorities of the author lie, namely class politics: “Both houses of Congress are made up of the representatives of the bourgeoisie and wealthy landowners, there is not even one worker or farmer there.”¹⁵³ This statement clearly mirrors communist rhetoric about the United States.

The section about the third branch of the government in *General Description* is relatively short, but politically charged. The judiciary is presented as a tool of the ruling classes that is used to preserve the *status quo* of the social order with an iron fist. The judges are described as “experienced lawyers who represent the reactionary bourgeoisie”¹⁵⁴ and who

¹⁵² Ibid., 30.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 32.

enforce the “reactionary, anti-worker” laws and the decisions of the administration in line with the interests of the ruling classes. Based on these, the courts persecute “communists, workers, and progressive individuals.”

The American party system is discussed in a later section of *General Description*.¹⁵⁵ The two parties are described as both representing the interests of distinct groups of the “monopolistic capital.” The author quotes and follows the arguments of Engels and Lenin, who claimed that the two parties were created to “deceive the class consciousness of the workers,” and distract them from class warfare. The text describes the differences between the organization of European and American political parties and criticizes the American system of ballot access and campaign finance. He claims that this is how the monopolies keep the parties under control, finance one or the other, and use them to exert control over the political system.

We can draw the conclusion that the evaluation of the American political system in *General Description* is completely in line with the standard communist interpretation of the period. The author notes that “bourgeois propaganda” claims that the American “superstructure” is a system that is chosen by the people and that serves their interests. But behind the *façade* of bourgeois democracy, there is the reactionary reality, characterized by “racial discrimination, the inequality of the rights of women and immigrants, the cruel oppression and greedy dictatorship of capital.”¹⁵⁶ The historical development of capitalism has led the country to imperialism, and the United States has become “the most reactionary, most aggressive” capitalist country, a “police state” that crushes the democratic rights of the workers.¹⁵⁷ The government serves the interests of the big monopolies, which see it as “a tool for financial profit.” As a result of various corrupt activities, the taxes paid by the workers end up in the pockets of the financial magnates. The last train of thought in the description of the American political system is a quote from the program of the CPSU. The translation from Russian is of such poor quality that the sentence as written makes no sense in Hungarian. Still, its meaning can be deduced: essentially, the textbook claims that “state monopolistic capitalism” unites the power of the state and the power of the monopolies in order to provide an opportunity for the monopolies to become even more rich, oppress workers and suppress the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 44-45.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 34.

struggle for national liberation, to save the capitalist system, and to initiate wars of aggression.¹⁵⁸

The second Soviet textbook, *Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment* (1967), presents the contemporary political situation, but it does not discuss the Constitution and the system of government. On the other hand, the short booklet *National Characteristics* (1971) provides insight into how the Soviet agencies perceived the American political system from a practical perspective, how its relevance for intelligence purposes was evaluated. The text identifies which people they would focus on as potential recruits, who hold valuable information. This includes those who work at the institutions that make decisions about foreign policy (White House, State Department), or institutions that have access to important information (Pentagon, CIA), think tanks, research centers, and finally, educational establishments that prepare people for this type of work.¹⁵⁹ Basically, professionals and government officials who work for or aspire to work for the administration, and have access to relevant information.

The author notes that the bourgeois democracy of the United States “permits” the operation of a wide range of political organizations, “from reactionary ultra-left groups to militant ultra-right organizations.” The people that belong to the groups that the Soviet agencies are interested in tend to hold centrist views, they stand in the middle of the political spectrum: they might lean conservative or liberal, but they are “all under the influence of anti-communist ideology.” As far as the two political parties are concerned, their evaluation is similar to is in *General Description*. Both the Democrats and the Republicans are presented as serving the interests of big business. On the surface, they are supported by various capitalist groups, but in reality, the policies that they advocate for are essentially not that different from one another. They only differ in the tactics that they employ, and their rivalry mirrors the struggle between various business interests for the power to exert greater influence on American policy. *National Characteristics* explains that there is no formal membership in these political parties, it is only based on who the given citizen votes for at the election. The text also points out that most of the Americans in the focus of the agencies are apolitical, they mostly act exclusively based on

¹⁵⁸ In Hungarian: “Az állami monopolkapitalizmus – mutat rá az SZKP programja – a monopoliumok erejét az állam erejével egyesíti egy mechanizmusba a monopoliumok gazdagodása a munkásmozgalom és a nemzeti felszabadító harcok, a kapitalista rendszer megmentése, agresszió háborúk kiobbantása érdekében.” Ibid., 35.

¹⁵⁹ *National Characteristics*, 2.

professional interest, and their actions have nothing to do with the political party in power or their program.¹⁶⁰

Similarly to *General Description*, *National Characteristics* also mentions the division of the powers of government, and also points to the rising influence and power of the executive branch. It is emphasized here that most of the government workers that the readers of the textbook (that is, future Soviet and other Eastern European intelligence operatives) are going to meet work for the executive branch. The book notes about these Americans that “most of the time, their evaluation of the ‘babble’ about the democratic principles of the American political system is rather skeptical,”¹⁶¹ as they see these as restrictions that are just obstacles to reaching the true objectives of America. This is a surprisingly accurate observation that we can witness in the attitude of some in the executive branch (and its various agencies) even today. They tend to see the democratic foundations and checks created by the Constitution as an obstacle to “getting things done.” At the same time, the textbook notes that along with other Americans, these potential targets evaluate the two-party system and other political institutions in a mostly positive way. They believe that this political system ensures the highest living standards and quality of production in the world, which is the reason why there have been no serious or successful attempts to overthrow it. Even though the Americans in question criticize certain military and political leaders, they never doubt that the system itself is in essence good and proper.¹⁶²

Continuing our analysis with the Hungarian books, the short, 3-page Chapter I of *Useful Knowledge* (1974) by Pozsonyi is titled the “Territory, System of Government” of the United States.¹⁶³ After a brief, one-paragraph presentation of the geography of the country, Pozsonyi continues with the description of the form of government and the states, and he lists the territories that belong to the United States. The following section on the Constitution and the political system of the country is similar to what one would expect to find in an encyclopedia. There is a short description of the branches of the government, the first and the then incumbent president (Richard Nixon) are mentioned by name, with relatively little commentary or evaluation. Still, there are some mistakes in the text, that indicate the gaps in the knowledge of the author. For example, Pozsonyi claims that the Constitution was ratified by the representatives of the thirteen *Northern* states that participated in the War of Independence.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶² Ibid., 4.

¹⁶³ *Useful Knowledge*, 1-3.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 2.

The author also seems to be confused about how the electoral system works. He asserts that the people do not vote for the president but for the electors, who then pick the president. He neglects to mention that practically, the Electoral College is mostly a formality. In reality, the ballot contains name of the presidential candidates and not the electors, and that the electors are not free to vote as they choose, they pledge to cast their vote in the Electoral College for the candidate of their party.

The description of the operation and election of the legislative branch is relatively accurate. There are some unnecessary details here, e.g., that Nebraska is the only state that does not have a bicameral legislature, which is a piece of information that does not need to be included in a three-page description of the American political system. The Cabinet is also mentioned, and it is pointed out that the President appoints the secretaries, but the Senate has to approve them. The National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency are named examples of organizations that belong under the executive branch.

In contrast with the relatively neutral presentation of the constitutional system, similarly to the earlier books, contemporary American political life and political parties are presented in a negative light. Pozsonyi points out that the electoral system was designed in such a way that “only these two parties of the ruling classes have a realistic chance to gain power at the elections.”¹⁶⁵ The two parties are seemingly in a fierce struggle with each other, “which is primarily reflected by external appearances and propaganda. This deception is especially present at presidential, Senate, and gubernatorial elections.”¹⁶⁶ But this is just the surface, there is not that much difference between the actual policies of the two major parties. As we can see, whereas there is no value judgement during the presentation of the political system, the final conclusion, which is more or less objective, the evaluation is once again quite negative.

Szecsődi begins his textbook, *Operative Situation* (1985), with the description of the American political system, and the first sentence is an evaluation that is at first sight, surprisingly positive, especially when compared to the earliest books: “After the struggle for independence, the United States of America was the most democratic political system of the world at the time.”¹⁶⁷ He also notes the historical significance of the U.S. Constitution worldwide, and that for more than a century, it served as an example for progressive political forces globally. But while the wording is remarkably positive, the substance is not that different from the previous textbooks. As we could see, they also claimed, in accordance with the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶⁷ *Operative Situation* 4.

communist interpretation of historical development, that the U.S. was in many ways the most progressive country before the 20th century, but they immediately emphasized that this was in accordance with the communist interpretation of capitalist historical development.

Szecsődi lists what he sees as the main principles of the Constitution: (1) the equal rights of the states, (2) the separation of powers and the three branches of government, (3) equality before the law, (4) the rule of law, (5) the power of the government can only be broadened or narrowed by constitutional amendments, and (6) the Constitution is at the top of the legal hierarchy, followed by “Congressional resolutions,” and international agreements. This is indeed a relatively accurate description of some of the main underlying assumptions of the American constitutional system, but there also are numerous inaccuracies. For example, in (4), Szecsődi claims that “The government is the source of all the rights,”¹⁶⁸ which is the exact opposite of what Jefferson establishes in the Declaration of Independence, where he subscribes to the natural law interpretation by claiming that the Creator is the source of rights, the government just has to acknowledge them. The other one is the assertion in (5) that the power of the government can only be expanded by a constitutional amendment.¹⁶⁹ Many constitutional conservatives and libertarians wish that this was true, but unfortunately, American history, especially the 20th century onwards, is ripe with examples of the unconstitutional expansion of government power. This description in *Operative Situation* is obviously not the work of a political scientist or a constitutional lawyer, it represents an attempt to describe the American constitutional system on a very superficial level, but it reflects a more honest effort to understand it than the earlier texts display.

The Founding Fathers are evaluated in a way that is, in essence, similar to what could be found in *General Description*, but the language is somewhat less ideologically driven and hostile. Szecsődi also points out that they represented the “bourgeois” America, wanted a stable government that guaranteed property rights, and that it took several years to add the Bill of Rights (he uses the English term in the text) to the Constitution. Meanwhile, unlike in *General Description*, it is no longer emphasized that Founding Fathers were big landowners and slaveholders. But Szecsődi notes that the “Constitution could not go further than the formal equality of citizens before the law. Real legal and economic equality could never become an ideal in the United States.”¹⁷⁰ He claims that those who want to take steps towards “economic equality,” are necessarily doomed to failure in the American political system. Economic

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

inequalities are deeply rooted in the national mythology of the United States, which, according to Szecsődi, is that those who work hard can get ahead in life, and if they work even harder, they can become wealthy. He concludes that “this is at the root of the hatred and contempt towards the poor in America.”¹⁷¹

The evaluation of the historical development of the political system of the United States is similar to the previous materials. Szecsődi claims that the wealthy ruling classes were reluctant to provide general suffrage and to liberate the slaves. Even when general suffrage was achieved after a long struggle, it only meant formal equality, and in practice, many poor Americans, especially people of color, were still excluded from the political process. He also asserts that the economic power is concentrated in the hands of the big corporations, parallel to the political power being concentrated in the federal government, and that this makes the contrast between the stated goals of the Constitution and reality even more conspicuous. Szecsődi declares that the American political system is “obviously the tool of the ruling class that they use to keep their power and protect their interests”¹⁷² This includes the politicians themselves, Congress, the federal government, the political parties, the Supreme Court, and “the complicated mechanism of mass manipulation,” that is, the media.¹⁷³

He continues with the claim that the coexistence of various levels of legislative and executive organs is just a formality, and the states have no real power either, since everything is centralized. Szecsődi asserts that due to political traditions, Congressional candidates have to appear to be ordinary people as far as their occupational status is concerned, but in reality, they are financially beholden to corporate interests. He also describes the process of lobbying and the most important lobbies, presenting it as a form of institutionalized corruption.¹⁷⁴ Unlike some of the previous texts, he acknowledges that Congress can sometimes become an arena for serious political debate, and that it can oppose the President, which happens especially often if it is dominated by the opposition party (the Democrats remained in control of the House all throughout the Reagan administration, which is when the book was written). When describing the executive branch, Szecsődi lists the functions of the President and his powers, but he also takes note of the importance of the Secretaries, presidential advisers, and the heads of the various executive agencies. He appreciates the importance of the Supreme Court: “its political role is very significant, its decisions are conclusive with regards to the relationship between the

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷² Ibid., 10.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 11.

laws and the constitution.”¹⁷⁵ This is not surprising, given the importance of some Supreme Court decisions that were made in the 1960s and 1970s.

Operative Situation has a section on political parties and other organizations. It is noted that the U.S. has a two-party system, and that the two main parties can hardly be called political parties, they are “loose associations without a stable, explicit program or responsibility, where each representative (groups of representatives) work for ‘themselves,’ and only take into consideration their own political safety and interests.”¹⁷⁶ Like Pozsonyi and the Soviet authors, Szecsődi claims that the American system of political parties and elections is a tool that is used to deceive the voters and hide the real problems.¹⁷⁷ The parties are the instruments of professional politicians, who are mostly devoted to organizing campaigns, as while elections are not the only theater of political struggle, they are essential to obtaining and keeping power. The history of the two political parties is also discussed briefly. The conclusion about the Republicans is that “The Republican Party is the main party of the American monopolistic capital”¹⁷⁸ – for the first time in the book, his use of this expression is reminiscent of the language of the earlier Soviet textbooks. The Democratic Party is presented in a somewhat more positive light. Szecsődi even remarks that “During the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Democratic Party came into contact with more progressive forces,”¹⁷⁹ and that its voting base is more diverse when it comes to class and ethnic background.

His evaluation of the role of the political parties is to a certain extent similar to that of the previous works, namely that “both parties represent the same ruling class, at best, its different wings.”¹⁸⁰ But Szecsődi recognizes that there are indeed differences between what he calls the “conservative” and the “reformist” wings of the American elite. He claims that the Republican Party is rigidly attached to the *status quo* and are opposed to even moderate reforms, whereas the Democrats are more open to understanding social conflicts and implementing reforms. At the same time, he maintains that both parties basically follow the same course in foreign policy.¹⁸¹

3.4 Conclusion

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 14.

This chapter demonstrates that the discussion of the historical development of the United States and an overview of the American political system were standard elements of the preparation of Hungarian intelligence officers throughout the period. But do these materials reflect a real willingness to understand American politics, an attempt to scratch beneath the surface? Do the textbooks offer a deeper analysis of American history and the American political system, do they go beyond narrative of the official propaganda in the Eastern bloc, or are they at least to some extent accurate in what they present? Furthermore, was the perception of the history and politics of the United States constant, or did anything change over the period? These are the questions that need to be answered.

There is an obvious difference between the tone of the earlier, Soviet books from the 1960s and the somewhat later books that were written by Hungarians. The language of the Soviet books reflects an earlier period of the Cold War, that of ideologically driven contempt and open hatred against the United States and everything American. The vocabulary is at times reminiscent of the official Hungarian government propaganda of the 1950s, where, as Tibor Glant notes, the U.S. was mostly referred to as “imperialist” and “fascist,” described as the “stumbling block to human progress.”¹⁸² Of the Soviet books, *National Characteristics* appears to provide the most insightful commentary on American politics. This is not surprising, as this textbook is the most recent, as well as most practical of the Soviet materials. The section on American politics is more descriptive, its purpose is not to pass judgment, but to provide an overview of the political perspective of the average American in general, and in particular, the Americans that would be targeted by Soviet and Eastern bloc intelligence agencies. The short booklet does not contain a bibliography, but it is mentioned that it is based on the experience of the KGB in the United States and third countries¹⁸³ - a lot more professional than the communist ideological sources of the other two Soviet books. Whereas the objective of the earlier two books was clearly ideological education, *National Characteristics* had more to do with preparation for actual intelligence work.

The Hungarian books have a different tone, the language is not as openly hostile and ideologically driven as that of the earlier Soviet textbooks. But the fact that the United States is no longer (always) referred to as imperialistic or represented as a danger to world peace does not mean that these books are objective by any standard. The historical narrative that is

¹⁸² Tibor Glant, “Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary,” *Hungarian Journal of English And American Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (2010), 171-184.

A typical example of this kind of rhetoric is J. N. Szemjonov, *A fasiszta geopolitika az amerikai imperializmus szolgálatában*, [Fascist Geopolitics in the Service of American Imperialism] (Budapest: Szikra, 1953).

¹⁸³ *National Characteristics*, 1.

presented is in essence, not that much different from that of the Soviet materials. The vision of American history that all these books present is that the United States started out as relatively progressive, but it was transformed by the influence of the great corporations as it entered the late stage of capitalism in the late 19th century. The main difference between the descriptions in the books is linguistic, not ideological. Like the Hungarians, the Soviet authors also acknowledge that the United States was the most democratic country in the 19th century – although in order to justify this, they quoted Lenin, while Szecsődi could declare this as a generally known and widely acknowledged fact. When it comes to certain details, such as political freedom in the United States or the causes for the War of Independence, he could evaluate American historical development more positively, without having to immediately explain why this is not in contradiction with communist ideology.

In all the books that discuss the topic, there are several more or less serious factual mistakes when it comes to dates, names, events in American history. The authors are obviously not historians, and they are not really concerned about historical accuracy, as it is not necessary to achieve their real objective. The presentation of American history is, strictly speaking, not relevant for the intelligence officers, it serves as an illustration of background to their actual work, it is part of the ideological education. The authors also do not hesitate to change or misrepresent historical facts in order to illustrate their point about the corruptive nature of American capitalism.

If we strip off the differences in rhetoric, there are also considerable similarities between the perspective of the materials when it comes to the evaluation of the American political system. The earlier as well as the later books claim that the Constitution and the whole American political system were created to protect the power of the elites. The American democratic process is a deception, the two major political parties are essentially the same: they both represent the interests of the same capitalist class, and their struggle for power only mirrors the struggle between various capitalist interest groups. Here there is a certain difference between Szecsődi and the earlier books, including the short evaluation provided by Pozsonyi. While still seeing them as instruments of the ruling classes, *Operative Situation* acknowledges a certain degree of difference between the two major political parties, and in general, this textbook reflects at least some familiarity with the basic principles of the American constitutional system.

There are many valid reasons to criticize the American political system, but the condemnations in the textbooks are quite hypocritical, coming from intelligence officers who

were working to uphold a communist dictatorship. Certain aspects of American politics that the materials discuss, such as lobbying, the growing power of the executive branch, the disregard for limitations on political power in the Constitution, or certain aspects of the electoral system could indeed be criticized legitimately. But this is not what we can find in these books – this is not a well-founded analysis of the American system of government, but, once again, ideological indoctrination. The authors attempt to present the downsides of American politics without really understanding it, in order to present it in an unfavorable light in front of the intelligence officers, so that they would hopefully be more loyal to the communist regime, and less susceptible to American propaganda.

The sources that are referenced in the books give us some insight into the reasons for the differences between them when it comes to the tone, as well as the to a certain degree, the interpretation. In *General Description* (the only Soviet-written book that has a bibliography), there are numerous quotes from Lenin, from the documents of the CPSU in the text, and the six-page list of sources consists of works by Marx, Lenin, Engels, and materials published in the late 1950s-early 1960s, almost exclusively by authors with Russian names.¹⁸⁴

In *Useful Knowledge*, Pozsonyi provides a list of recommended readings,¹⁸⁵ where the author of the only book on American history is William Z. Foster, one of the most prominent American communists of the 20th century. The title of the book is in Hungarian (*Az amerikai földrész története*), in spite of the fact that supposedly, Pozsonyi had an advanced level English language exam, so we can presume that he would have been able to read in English. The reason could be the (lack of) language skills among the intelligence officers who were to use this book, as well as the lack of availability of American history books in Hungary in 1974. At the same time, this is also a testament to the sloppiness of the preparation – as noted earlier in this dissertation, by this time, László Országh's American studies textbook¹⁸⁶ had already been out for two years, and it is not even mentioned among the recommended readings. When it comes to politics, the authors of the sources that Pozsonyi used are the exact same people that Tibor Glant mentions in his article "Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary:"¹⁸⁷ journalists like Pál Ipper, Péter Vajda, and Iván Boldizsár. These people conveyed the Kádár regime's official image of America to the Hungarian public, and apparently, to the intelligence officers. In addition, as Zsuzsanna Borvendég has demonstrated, there was a strong

¹⁸⁴ *General Description* 177-182.

¹⁸⁵ *Useful Knowledge*, 114.

¹⁸⁶ Országh, *Bevezetés az amerikanisztikába*.

¹⁸⁷ Glant, "Travel Writing," 181.

relationship between the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc and journalists.¹⁸⁸ If Pozsonyi used their works when writing his book, it is little wonder that he had a negative impression of the American political system.

Szecsődi also provides a list of recommended literature, which is somewhat longer, and a lot more eclectic than that of Pozsonyi.¹⁸⁹ As mentioned in subchapter 3.2, Szecsődi already used a standard American history textbook (by John A. Garraty), which is quite apparent from the way he writes about American history.¹⁹⁰ The bibliography also contains a guide to the American citizenship exam published in Hungarian in 1961, the widely known *Panoráma* guidebook,¹⁹¹ a book by the diplomat Mihály Sinai,¹⁹² two books on American politics in French, the *Annual Report* of the Council on Foreign Relations,¹⁹³ and other works. Still, the only representative of American studies in Hungary that is mentioned is Julianna Puskás.¹⁹⁴ This seems to be a very haphazardly assembled collection of materials, and while there are some books on it that could indeed contribute to understanding America, it is still far from a comprehensive, well thought-out reading list.

Let us revisit the questions from the first paragraph of this subchapter. We can conclude that these preparatory materials do not constitute a genuine attempt to understand the politics and history of the United States. While undoubtedly there is a change in the tone and rhetoric as we move forward in time, the textbooks do not seem to go beyond the level of official propaganda, there is no willingness to represent American history and politics accurately, without the rigid constraints of the communist perspective. Rather than trying to examine the United States objectively, we see that the textbooks are projections of the official narrative. Even in *Operative Situation*, where there is some evidence that Szecsődi did indeed use English-language sources, the representation of American history and the American political system does not go beyond the level of an introductory textbook or the citizenship exam. In conclusion, these booklets could not serve as the basis for serious intelligence work, but this

¹⁸⁸ On the relationship of journalism and state security, see Zsuzsanna Borvendég, *Újságírásnak álcázva* [Disguised as journalism], (Budapest: Nemzeti Emlékezet Bizottsága, 2015).

¹⁸⁹ *Operative Situation*, 141-143.

¹⁹⁰ See footnote 137.

¹⁹¹ Csaba Kiss, *Amerikai Egyesült Államok* [United States of America] (Budapest: Panoráma, 1982).

¹⁹² Mihály Sinai, *Az Egyesült Államok a 200. évforduló előtt* [The United States before the 200th anniversary] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1974)

¹⁹³ Council on Foreign Relations, *Annual Report 1982-83*, accessed May 3, 2021.

<https://mealib.nic.in/?2511?000>

¹⁹⁴ Julianna Puskás, *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940*. [Hungarian emigrants in the United States, 1880-1940] (Budapest: Akadémia, 1982).

was not their real task – when it comes to politics, they were part of the ideological preparation of the officers.

Chapter 4

Contemporary American Politics

4.1 The Position of Politics in the Preparatory Materials

As discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter, the work of foreign intelligence agencies includes gathering information about the political system of the target country and the political situation.¹⁹⁵ The first subchapter of Chapter 3 provided an overview of where and how much information is contained in the preparatory textbooks of the Hungarian state security about the politics and history of the United States. The focus in Chapter 3 fell on the historical development of the United States in the textbooks, and the presentation of the American political system in general. Future operatives, however, also needed to be familiar with the contemporary political situation and events. The current chapter examines how contemporary political figures, issues, events, both foreign and domestic, were presented in the preparatory materials.

The preparatory textbooks were written during the period between the middle of the 1960s and the middle of the 1980s. This was a turbulent era in the history of the United States, a time of major political and social changes. In international relations, following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the world first witnessed the emergence of *détente* between the two superpowers and then the return to a more antagonistic relationship with the “New Cold War” in the early 1980s. In domestic politics, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, another one, Richard Nixon was impeached, and for the first time in American history, was forced to resign in disgrace, and there was an assassination attempt against a third one, Ronald Reagan. Social movements emerged and faded away. This was the period of the Civil Rights Movements and the end of legal segregation, the protests against the Vietnam War, the second wave of feminism, the rise of the modern environmentalist movement, and various other grassroots initiatives. Eastern European operatives had to be prepared to navigate this turbulent political landscape.

This chapter sets out to answer are similar to those in the previous one: was the purpose of the presentation of American politics in the preparatory materials for Hungarian intelligence officers? Was it merely a repetition of propaganda and the projection of communist ideology onto the United States, primarily a tool of indoctrination? Or did it reflect an actual serious

¹⁹⁵ See Chapter 3.1.

attempt to convey knowledge about the political situation in America? Did it contain information that could potentially be useful for the future intelligence officers during their work, or was it an instrument of ideological education, a way of making sure that the officers would follow the party line? To what degree was the material updated from textbook to textbook? Since foreign policy proved to be one of the most significant aspects of American politics for the prospective intelligence officers, the subchapter that follows deals with the depiction of U.S. foreign policy, which was one of the most significant aspects of American politics. The subchapter after that outlines which contemporary domestic political events were seen as relevant enough to be included in the preparatory materials, how certain political figures, interest groups, political movements, and political issues were presented and interpreted.

4.2 American Foreign Policy

In order to be able to determine the future course of their behavior, it is quite important for decision-makers to be familiar with the foreign policy of their international partners and adversaries. Clearly, the leaders of the communist countries wanted to understand, interpret, and make predictions about American foreign policy. For this reason, they needed information, which the intelligence agencies could gather. Thus, foreign policy was featured prominently in the several preparatory materials that were intended for future operatives.

General Description (1965), predictably, has a rather negative view of American foreign policy, it is close to what one would expect from a material written by Soviet communists in the given period of the Cold War. It puts a great emphasis on the presentation of American foreign policy, especially the US-Soviet relationship. There is a seven-page subchapter that is exclusively dedicated to the relationship between the two superpowers¹⁹⁶ and there are also references to it elsewhere in the book. Other aspects of American foreign policy are also presented in detail, especially the political and economic “expansionism” of the U.S. (that is, the growth of American influence), including American presence in third countries, to which *General Description* dedicates a whole chapter.¹⁹⁷ The presentation of the global economic role of the United States in the textbooks is discussed elsewhere in the dissertation (Chapter 5), the topic of this current chapter are the political and military aspects of American foreign policy.

¹⁹⁶ *General Description*, 18-24.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 106-140

General Description presents a short overview of the entire history of Soviet-American relations. The narrative presented in the textbook is simplistic and it often contradicts even well established historical facts. It is essentially an enumeration of alleged American crimes committed against the Soviet Union. The Americans are presented as having been hostile towards the Soviets for no reason since the Bolshevik Revolution, always rejecting the friendship of the Soviet Union. The description begins as early as 1919, when the Soviet government wanted peaceful economic cooperation with the United States. But the Americans decided to ignore this offer and “organize and finance the counterrevolution of the bourgeoisie and the landowners and provided arms and ammunition to the hordes of the White Guard.”¹⁹⁸ After the end of the Russian Civil War, the Americans refused to trade and establish diplomatic relations with the young Soviet state.

The first real changes came during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who accepted the Soviet offer and normalized relations between the two countries. The author notes that the two governments have agreed not to intervene into the domestic affairs of each other. The Americans have continuously ignored this – they refused to abide by the terms of the “treaty,” and the volume of trade between the two countries did not increase either. In the 1930s, the Americans dismissed the proposal of the Soviet Union to create a system of collective security, and the author claims that this has contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War. Later international pressure forced the Americans to enter the “anti-Hitler coalition,”¹⁹⁹ but they did not fulfill their obligations. This interpretation of history is of course demonstrably false on many different levels. The author even goes so far as to claim that the United States helped the Germans in order to weaken the Soviet Union and force it to become a second-rate power. The point is to illustrate the alleged depravity of the United States by diminishing the American role in the Second World War, even by falsely asserting that they were aiding National Socialist Germany in some way.

The Teheran and Potsdam conferences are cited as examples that cooperation between the two superpowers is possible, but the author claims that after the end of the war, the Americans decided to violate the Potsdam treaty. They prevented the transformation of a unified Germany into a “peaceful democratic state” – which, in the Soviet interpretation, means communist dictatorship – and attempted to slow the economic growth of the Soviet Union by refusing to trade with her. But this American policy failed as a consequence of the rapid development of the communist countries and the efforts of the Soviet Union to establish

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 20.

peaceful relations with all countries. Eventually, the United States was forced to broaden the scope of relations with the Soviets.²⁰⁰ Several examples are cited for *détente*, including collaboration in space exploration, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and the author is hopeful about the future expansion of mutually beneficial trade between the two superpowers. But the big corporations involved in the military industry and the leadership of the military urge the return to a hardline policy. Referring to the 1964 presidential election, the author claims that, thankfully, the American people have proved their commitment to peace, and rejected the “dangerous adventurous policies that the Republican Party and its Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater tried to force upon the country.”²⁰¹

As far as the global position of the United States and its relationship to the rest of the world is concerned, *General Description* once again calls on the program of the CPSU to orient the reader. “Under the false flag of freedom and democracy, American imperialism fulfills the role of the policeman of the world, protects reactionary dictatorial regimes, steps up against democratic revolutionary transformations, and exercises aggression against the peoples fighting for independence.”²⁰² The author claims that the U.S. financially supports corrupt leaders in many countries in order to fight against communism. To prove his point, he cites an article from the “bourgeois” *The New York Times*, which lists a number of mostly Latin-American dictators who were supported by the U.S. because of their anti-communism. The case of Cuba is discussed in detail, which is not surprising, given its special importance for the Soviets, as Cuba was the only country where communists gained power without the direct “help” of the Soviet (or Chinese) military (although at the time of the Cuban Revolution, Castro was not yet openly communist).²⁰³ Helping the Belgians in the Congo and the intervention in Vietnam are also listed as examples for American imperialism.

According to *General Description*, the main foreign policy goal of the USA is to prepare for a world war against the communist countries by claiming to protect the free world from communism.²⁰⁴ As part of this preparation, the U.S. builds military alliances, arms other capitalist countries, and establishes military bases all around the world. The textbook also notes that the U.S. has taken steps to increase the role of intelligence agencies and illustrates this with the expanding role of the already existing organizations, such as the CIA, as well as the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 22.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 26.

²⁰² Ibid., 106.

²⁰³ For more, see Tibor Glant, “Már a kubai rakétaválság sem a régi”: Gondolatok a hidegháború legforróbb pillanatának 50. évfordulója alkalmából.” [“The Cuban Missile Crisis Ain't What It Used to Be:” Thoughts on the 50th anniversary of the hottest moment of the Cold War] In AETAS Vol. 29/2 (2014): 126-42.

²⁰⁴ *General Description*, 107.

establishment of new ones. These intelligence agencies play a part in the expansionist policy of the U.S., especially in the developing countries, and attempt to weaken the influence of the Soviet Union and other communist countries by spreading lies and disinformation.²⁰⁵ The textbook claims that the United States covers its expansionist foreign policy by pretending to spread freedom and democracy, and prepares for war against the communist bloc by talking about the liberation of the Eastern European countries; the book brings up Captive Nations Week²⁰⁶ as an example for American propaganda.

The book emphasizes the rising importance of the ideological aspect of the conflict between the two blocs: “as the political, economic strength of the socialist camp grows and the crisis of global capitalism deepens, the role of the ideological struggle becomes even more significant.”²⁰⁷ The author lists three reasons why ideology has become the main front of the Cold War during the *détente* period. First, the “imperialists” have realized that they are not going to be able to achieve total military victory, so they needed to find an alternative way to fight against the Soviets and their allies. Second, the increasing influence of communism and other progressive ideologies all over the world needed to be countered by the Americans somehow. The final reason given is the newly gained independence of the former colonies in the Third World. The author claims that decolonization is against the interests of the Americans, they want to subjugate the third world, keep them under control, and one of the ways to do this is through propaganda and ideological warfare.

The author begins the discussion of the content of American propaganda by referring to a directive by the CPSU as a point of reference. He proclaims that anti-communism is the main ideological message of the Americans, as communism is a “deadly menace”²⁰⁸ to the capitalist system. They promote “the American way of life,” and use the “relatively high level of consumption” in the U.S. as a propaganda tool, a proof of the supremacy of their own economic and political system. It is also proclaimed that government organizations, monopolies, social organizations, and “the church” [sic] all participate in American ideological warfare. Of course, if the definition of American ideological warfare includes the popularization of the American way of life, it is not surprising that this list is quite extensive.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 109.

²⁰⁶ The Captive Nations Week was started by President Eisenhower in 1959. He designated the third week of July to celebrate nations that are under communist rule and to express solidarity with their struggle for freedom. It has been celebrated ever since, and obviously, it was always protested by the Soviets and other communist countries. (Marion Smith, „This Captive Nations Week, America Must Stand with Those Struggling for Freedom around the World,” *National Review*, July 15, 2019.

²⁰⁷ *General Description*, 110.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 111.

It is determined that while in the U.S. (unlike in the Soviet Union), formally there is no one single organization that would coordinate ideological work within the government apparatus, the general ideological direction is defined by the National Security Council. The Peace Corps and the USIA²⁰⁹ are highlighted as playing a significant role in American ideological expansionism, and the text discusses the structure, goals, and activities of these two organizations in great detail. Both are described as being used to spread American propaganda and provide cover for U. S. intelligence organizations.²¹⁰ It is telling that the expressions “volunteer” and “help” are consistently put into quotation marks when referring to the charitable activities of the Peace Corps in the Third World.²¹¹ This signifies that the author of the book believed these to be, at best, cover for more sinister activities.

After the discussion of the global economic influence of the U.S. (discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this dissertation), the textbook continues with the presence of the U.S. in third countries and explains why and how this is relevant for Soviet intelligence. A lot of Americans work overseas, they can be potential sources of information, and it is relatively easy to recruit them. In addition, American counterintelligence is weaker abroad, and Americans tend to be more openminded and are more likely to show interest in the Soviets when they are overseas. The text also includes a detailed description of American diplomatic representations: their operation, various functions, and organizational structure. It is quite apparent that the people working at American diplomatic missions were counted among some of the most important potential targets for Soviet intelligence.

Along with the diplomatic posts, the military presence of the U.S. in third countries is also discussed in detail. The text describes the command structure of the American military and provides an overview of the location of American bases all over the world, country by country. The author notes that the Americans see their military presence in close proximity of the countries of the Eastern bloc as evidence of their military superiority, as from there, their

²⁰⁹ The Peace Corps is an American government-run volunteer organization, established by an executive order of President John F. Kennedy in 1961. The Peace Corps is supposed to be free of the influence of intelligence agencies, those who have worked for intelligence agencies are not eligible for ten years, and those who have ever worked for the CIA are not eligible at all. This is, of course not necessarily true. “Eligibility,” *Peace Corps*, accessed January 8, 2021, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/agency-jobs/eligibility/>.

The United States Information Agency (USIA) was an independent executive agency responsible for American public diplomacy from 1953 until 1999. William M. Chodkowski, “The United States Information Agency Fact Sheet,” *American Security Project*, accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/ASP%20Reports/Ref%200097%20-%20The%20United%20States%20Information%20Agency.pdf>.

²¹⁰ The USIA played an important role in American cultural diplomacy in the Cold War. For more, see Michael L. Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy – 1770 to the Present Day*, (London: Bloomybury, 2017).

²¹¹ *General Description*, 112-119.

nuclear weapons could reach the Soviet Union. But the Soviets have proclaimed that if they or their allies in the Eastern bloc got attacked, they would respond with overwhelming force. Also, in the countries where the Americans have military, large sections of the local society are against their presence.²¹²

The final conclusion of the text concerning the American military is that while it represents a real threat to the communist countries, there is no need to be afraid. In one of the most chilling paragraphs of the textbook, the author – erroneously – brags that if the Americans started a war, their military capacity would quickly be destroyed: “The armed forces of the Soviet Union are armed with first-class missile technology, and they are capable of annihilating their targets anywhere on the globe. The retribution for their aggression is going to reach those that provoke the war not only on foreign lands, but on the territory of the United States itself, the whole area of which is accessible for Soviet ballistic missiles.”²¹³ By claiming that their missiles are better and that they would be able to destroy the U. S., the Soviets invoke two Cold War theories, the “missile gap” and “mutually assured destruction.” The term missile gap was first used by John F. Kennedy during his presidential campaign, and it is the claim that the Soviet Union was superior to the United States in the number and power of nuclear missiles. Later it was revealed that the intelligence estimations were far exaggerated, and in fact, the missile gap never existed.²¹⁴ Mutually assured destruction was a military doctrine that served as a strong argument against the deployment of nuclear weapons, as it would lead to an all-out nuclear war, and the complete annihilation of both sides.²¹⁵

Agency-Operative Situation (1967) discusses some of the same aspects of the global influence of the United States as *General Description*. *Agency-Operative Situation* provides an estimate of the nuclear capabilities of the U.S. military and comes to similar conclusions as the earlier text. The author claims that even though it is possible that certain American right-wing military circles could be right and their military could be stronger, but this is irrelevant in a nuclear war, as it would not “save the country from total annihilation.”²¹⁶ In a matter-of-fact manner, the author speculates that as 85% of the population and industry are concentrated on 2% of its, the United States is particularly vulnerable to nuclear attacks, and eighteen 50-100

²¹² Ibid., 139.

²¹³ Ibid., 142.

²¹⁴ Christopher A. Preble, "Who Ever Believed in the 'Missile Gap'?: John F. Kennedy and the Politics of National Security," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2003): 801-26, accessed February 3, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552538>.

²¹⁵ Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly* 110, no. 2 (1995): 157-81, accessed February 3, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2152358>.

²¹⁶ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 6.

megaton atomic bombs would be enough to destroy the human and industrial potential of the U.S.²¹⁷ For this reason, American decision-makers are careful to avoid direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, but they attempt to increase their influence in certain third countries when they believe that the global situation would permit it. They achieve this by manipulating the political situation in the given country, or even by military intervention.²¹⁸ These steps are taken when the leading American circles believe that the Soviets are not going to risk armed confrontation over the affair, or when the location of the American military intrusion is situated far enough from the Soviet Union to rule out effective intervention. The evaluation is of course correct, the Americans did not want a direct military conflict with the Soviet Union, as it could have escalated and led to a nuclear war.

Similarly to *General Description*, *Agency-Operative Situation* also asserts that in the age of *détente*, the main front of the Cold War is ideological, and the United States is at the center of this type of psychological warfare. The textbook also lists some organizations that participate in the ideological struggle: most prominently, the already familiar USIA, as well as the American intelligence agencies, the most significant among them being the CIA. The main direction of American ideological warfare identified by the author is the attempt to break the unity of the communists, “to compromise the ideals of communism, falsify them, and prove that communism no longer exists as a unified teaching.”²¹⁹ This concern is not completely unfounded, as during *détente*, the United States did attempt to differentiate between the communist countries and treat the various members of the Eastern bloc individually, on a one-by-one basis, aiming at achieving concessions on one issue or the other. Their objective was to exploit and widen the internal divisions and they hoped to advance on certain issues with the individual countries, if possible.

As examples for the American attempt to divide communists, the textbook brings up the classification of the communist countries by the foreign policy expert Hans Morgenthau²²⁰ and the differential treatment of the Eastern bloc countries and the People’s Republic of China in the American media. The author notes that the theory that the Soviet Union and the Eastern European communist countries are becoming more bourgeois and that they are seeking

²¹⁷ Ibid., 6.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 8.

²²⁰ Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980), not to be confused with Henry Morgenthau (1891-1967), was German-born American political scientist and one of the major theorists of international relations, often considered to be a founder of the realist school. He was a consultant in the Kennedy as well as the Johnson administrations, until he was dismissed because of his criticism of the Vietnam war but continued to be an important voice in foreign policy circles.

reconciliation with the West is false and anti-Soviet. At the same time, he also sees this as an opportunity. Giving the impression that the European communist countries are less dangerous could make operative work easier, as Americans would be less suspicious and more open to establishing contact with Soviet citizens.

Agency-Operative Situation does not differ too much from the previous book as far as it also defines the global position of the United States as the center around which the forces of “global reaction, dictatorial regimes, and colonizers”²²¹ congregate, as it tries to strengthen the “aggressive” military alliances. But, according to the book, while the U.S. is still powerful, it is in decline. Some of the reasons given are similar to *General Description*: the increasing power of the Soviet Union and the communist countries, the national liberation movements, and the end of colonialism in the third world, as well as the weakening military blocks. But there is a new element: the “growth of division among the imperialists”²²² is mentioned, probably as a reference to the process of European integration that was speeding up in the 1960s, and to the more independent foreign policy of West Germany and France.

At the same time, the author claims that the Johnson administration sees the international situation ripe for the U.S. to conduct a more active foreign policy. He also elaborates on the reasons that could have led the Americans to this conclusion. First of all, the rapid economic growth and perceived economic superiority of the U.S. – according to American economists, of course. Another reason given is the lack of unity in the communist camp, mainly due to the activity of “the Chinese separatists,”²²³ but also because of the “excessive attention to national characteristics” by certain communist countries, which open up the opportunity for the “bridge-building” policy of the Americans. Finally, right-wing governments have come into power in some developing countries, mostly as a consequence of economic hardships. The textbook quotes American economists who predict that due to economic difficulties and their growing population, Third-World countries are going to grow increasingly dependent on Western loans and aid, especially when it comes to food.²²⁴

To illustrate this more active American foreign policy, *Agency-Operative Situation* lists the countries where the United States has recently strengthened its global political positions or initiated the use of military force. The author continues to define the Johnson doctrine as “the right of the United States to military intervention into the affairs of Latin-American and

²²¹ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 9.

²²² *Ibid.*, 10.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

Southeast Asian countries.”²²⁵ He does not mention that the doctrine was originally used in reference to thwarting attempts to establish communist dictatorships. The struggle against the Soviet Union and the international communist movement is still one of the main priorities of American foreign policy, and American intelligence agencies play an significant role in this. The author refers to Zbigniew Brzezinski’s (whose name is spelled wrong, probably due to it being transcribed from Cyrillic script by a translator) theory that the United States is the only global superpower, and the Soviet Union is only a regional power. To refute this claim, he repeats that the American public is afraid of a nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union, and the American government cautiously attempts to avoid it. Similarly to *General Description*, he also evaluates the victory of Johnson over Goldwater as proof that the American people would prefer a more friendly relationship with the Soviet Union. Finally, he lays out the objectives of Soviet intelligence with regards to the United States: to gain information about the weak points in the American government, society, economics, military and political organizations, as well as the global situation, and then to come up with proposals and participate in actions against them.²²⁶

The rising importance of conducting espionage against the United States in third countries is also mentioned, as a response to the difficulties Soviet and other communist operatives face in America. The author claims that around 2-3 million Americans live abroad, lists the countries with the largest American expatriate communities, and some of the reasons why it could be easier to approach these people there than in the U.S. The author also lists some of the reasons why Americans would be living abroad. Beside the people who work for the American government (diplomats, the CIA, and the Peace Corps are emphasized), the military, and people employed by private companies, the author also mentions people who “fled abroad from conscription (there are particularly many of them in Canada),” people who want to escape racism, and those who want to avoid having to pay their taxes.²²⁷

As his primary focus is on everyday life, Pozsonyi in *Useful Knowledge* (1974) does not discuss the foreign policy of the U.S., but Szecsődi dedicates a section of *Operative Situation* (1985) to it. The first sentence of his chapter indicates that his basic approach would be similar to that of the previous books, faithful to the communist interpretation: “The international expansionist ambitions of the American monopolies have gotten a decisive role to play in American foreign and economic policy since the Second World War.”²²⁸ This textbook

²²⁵ Ibid., 12.

²²⁶ Ibid., 14.

²²⁷ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 43-44.

²²⁸ *Operative Situation*, 15.

emphasizes the economic dimensions of American foreign policy, in fact, the topic takes up about half of the six-page chapter. As it is the case with the rest of the textbooks, *Operative Situation*'s perception of the American economy is discussed later, in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

After the involvement of the monopolies in American foreign policy and the effects of the supposed economic rise of the Eastern bloc on the relations between the U.S. and the communist countries, Szecsődi continues with the overview of the relationship between the U. S. and Western Europe. He shortly presents the economic and political effects of early European integration, then moves on to the political ties between the U.S. and Western Europe. He claims that due to the Vietnam War, political scandals such as Watergate, and American conduct in the Third World, there is less support for the United States in Western Europe than earlier. The relationship with Western Europe is only one link in the network of American alliances, the main cohesive bond of which is still opposition to the Soviet Union.²²⁹

Szecsődi elaborates on the rift between the Western allies during the Reagan administration when it comes to their approach to foreign policy. The Americans were dissatisfied because the Europeans did not support their military actions in the Persian Gulf, and they also disagree with their Western European allies about the relationship with the Eastern bloc. The "crude anti-communist conservative trends"²³⁰ that the Americans seem to have adopted have not gained the approval of most Western European countries. It is interesting to note that with regards to Europe, Szecsődi already refers to the Cold War as a thing of the past, claiming that the Western European countries "did not simply coexist with the socialist countries after the end of the Cold War years without any significant problems, but this cooperation has turned out to be beneficial for them politically as well as economically."²³¹ This cooperation was of course also beneficial for Hungary in the late Kádár regime, as the country was in desperate need of loans and Western technology, and welcomed Western investments.

Next, Szecsődi elaborates on the contemporary state of Soviet-American relations. Anti-communism is at the core of the struggle against the Soviet Union, which has been the central element of American foreign policy since the end of the Second World War. The economic and military parity between the two superpowers has forced the United States to accept *détente* in the 1970s, but the Soviet-American relationship is quite hectic. In the mid-1970s, certain

²²⁹ Ibid., 17-18.

²³⁰ Ibid., 18.

²³¹ Ibid., 18.

political and military powers in the U.S. wanted to slow down *détente*, claiming that it only benefitted the Soviets and resulted in America being left behind in the arms race and losing positions globally. Thus, Szecsődi claims that initially, the foreign policy of the Reagan administration was characterized by “simplistic and dangerously false premises,” although this has started to change. While Americans constantly attempt to upset the balance of power, they seem to be more open to continuing negotiations with the Soviets. Referring to the arms race of the 1980s, Szecsődi recognizes that the Reagan administration attempts to establish the military superiority of the United States, and parallelly, also intensifies its “political-propagandistic actions,” and “has started an economic-financial war.”²³² This has resulted in declining trade between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. It has become more difficult to acquire trade permits, and sanctions have been introduced under the pretext of protest against the events in Poland, which further contributed to the deterioration of economic relations, parallel to political relations under the Reagan administration. Surprisingly, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is not even mentioned, in spite of the fact that it was named by the Americans as one of main the reasons for the economic sanctions.²³³ It is unlikely that Szecsődi did not know about this; possibly, this topic was a taboo that had to be avoided.

Operative Situation is the only one of the four longer textbooks to directly address the Hungarian-American relationship, albeit only in a few paragraphs. Although short, this text provides us with some insight into how the Hungarian intelligence community and the Hungarian communist leadership viewed *détente* and Hungarian-American rapprochement. The author acknowledges that in the past, the bilateral relationship between the People’s Republic of Hungary and the United States was no different from relations with other members of the Warsaw Pact (in fact, in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1956, in many respects, it was even worse). But this changed with the coming of *détente*, which made it possible to resolve many of the bilateral issues, abolish various discriminatory measures, and Hungary gained Most Favored Nation status.²³⁴ These improvements in the relationship proved to be resilient, as Hungarian-American relations remained close in spite of the slowing of *détente* between the two superpowers at the beginning of the 1980s.

Szecsődi’s analysis reveals how recent improvements in the Hungarian-American relationship were evaluated by the Hungarian intelligence towards end of the communist period. First of all, Szecsődi considers it to be a positive thing that the good bilateral relationship

²³² Ibid., 20.

²³³ László Borhi, *Nagyhatalmi érdekek hálójában* (Budapest: Osiris, 2015), 391.

²³⁴ *Operative Situation*, 21.

between the two countries could be preserved, and there were even developments in the economic sphere. He primarily credits the consistency of Hungarian foreign policy for being able to maintain this relationship, in spite of the renewed Soviet-American rivalry and the increasingly hostile international environment. But he also regards American foreign policy towards Hungary in a positive way, which is quite different from the previous textbooks. As we could see, in the earlier, Soviet-written materials, American attempts of “bridge building,” the differential treatment of communist countries, were condemned and presented as malicious efforts to divide the Eastern bloc. But in the 1985 book, Szecsődi presents American “differentiation” between communist countries as something that has made the preservation of the good relationship between Hungary and the United States possible, evidence that the American government tried to protect bilateral relations from effects that could lead to their deterioration. The validity of this evaluation is also corroborated by László Borhi’s research, who shows that Hungary became “one of the most important partners of the United States behind the Iron Curtain” in spite of the international tensions, which is a complete break with the earlier practice.²³⁵

An in-depth analysis of how the American intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies are presented in the preparatory textbooks of the Hungarian state security goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. Obviously, the discussion of the various American intelligence organizations is an integral part of the description of the operative situation, and it was featured prominently in the preparatory materials. There were separate textbooks written explicitly about these agencies.²³⁶ The reason why it is important to discuss the issue to some extent in relation to Szecsődi’s *Operative Situation* is because he draws a relationship between intelligence and politics, and extensively discusses the role of intelligence organizations, especially the CIA, in shaping American foreign policy.²³⁷

Szecsődi explains that the main expectation towards the CIA and other intelligence agencies is to provide information for the decision-makers. Currently, American politicians put the emphasis on long-term planning, they expect a wider range of assessments and forecasts about specific areas and problems rather than straightforward policy recommendations. The focus is on improving technical intelligence and the analytic capabilities of the agencies. Szecsődi also puts this new role in a historical context. Since the end of the Second World War,

²³⁵ Borhi, *Nagyhatalmi érdekek hálójában*, 384.

²³⁶ For more on the representation of the FBI and other intelligence agencies in the preparatory materials, see István Pál, “‘A főellenség’ – Az FBI ábrázolása a Belügyminisztérium első operatív tankönyvében.”

²³⁷ *Operative Situation*, 50-51.

intelligence agencies have always played an active role in the formulation and execution of American foreign policy, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, when the CIA conducted secret military operations all over the world. But after the foreign policy failures of Cuba, Vietnam, and Iran, the public demanded a revision of intelligence policy, and the Senate pressed for more oversight, which, along with the media spotlight, reflected negatively on the involvement of the CIA.

While Carter decided to attempt to reorganize the Agency, Reagan plans to give it a role not just in the implementation of foreign policy but also in decision-making. Pointing to the strong personal connections between the Reagan administration and the leadership of the CIA, Szecsődi proclaims that: “Since 1981, the relationship between the makers of foreign policy and the CIA has been considerably more comprehensive than earlier,”²³⁸ and that Hungarian operatives have to count on the presence of the CIA in all aspects of foreign relations. Szecsődi also discusses the internal dynamics of foreign policy decision-making inside the Reagan White House, and the influence of the CIA and its director, William Casey.²³⁹ He elaborates on the growing power of the CIA inside the administration as well as within the intelligence community and provides details about the global presence of the Agency. Based on studies by Harvard Sovietologist Franklyn D. Holzman, Szecsődi correctly identifies that the predictions of the CIA especially with regards to the Cold War are unreliable, they purposefully exaggerate the threat of the Soviet Union in order to justify certain policies.

Szecsődi also details the activity of the CIA against the communist countries and places it into the context of American foreign policy, as determined by the political, economic, and military goals of the USA. The Reagan administration has increased the power of the CIA and silenced the earlier critics.²⁴⁰ Szecsődi supports his claim that the CIA is becoming more active in Hungary by pointing to the large number of attempted recruitments, and that four Hungarian agents of the CIA that had been recruited abroad were discovered and convicted.²⁴¹ With regards to Hungary, American intelligence agencies seem to be most interested in conducting espionage against the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries through Hungary, the Soviet-Hungarian relationship, and the Hungarian-Polish relationship, especially with regards to a potential Warsaw Pact intervention in Poland.

²³⁸ Ibid., 52.

²³⁹ William J. Casey was the director of the CIA from 1981 to 1987.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 57.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 59.

Szecsődi points to the role embargos play in American foreign policy, the way that they are used to hinder the development of the communist countries, and the role of intelligence agencies in this process. The CIA gathers information about the technological and economic issues that the Warsaw Pact countries face, and based on this intelligence, NATO countries can target these specific areas and use the embargo as a weapon to weaken their adversaries. The CIA and other agencies utilize legal as well as illegal means to gain access to this information and use every level of international relations, including diplomacy. Similarly to the previous materials, Szecsődi also mentions the propaganda activities of American agencies.²⁴² This includes exaggerating the “Soviet peril” domestically, but it is also used to support foreign policy projects against the communist countries by attempting to counter Soviet propaganda, presenting the Soviet Union as an aggressor, while representing American foreign policy in a more favorable light. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are specifically mentioned as tools of American propaganda.

Terrorism is a novel issue, *Operative Situation* is the first one of these textbooks where it is mentioned. This is a consequence of the fact that the fight against terrorism became one of the priorities of American foreign policy during the Reagan administration.²⁴³ Szecsődi defines the term, explains its importance from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy, and presents the relevant legislation. He points out that due to pressure from the CIA and the FBI, the U.S. has decided to warn communist countries that they are aware the relationship between their intelligence agencies and various terrorist organizations, and disapprove of it. In parentheses, Szecsődi also notes that “The intelligence agencies of the USA know about the Palestinian terrorists who travel to and stay in Hungary. While the position of Hungary with the USA is somewhat exceptional, this warning has to be taken seriously.”²⁴⁴ In the late part of the Cold War, communist parties were actively involved in supporting terrorist groups, and Hungary often served as a meeting place for various terrorist leaders.²⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that

²⁴² Ibid., 119-120.

²⁴³ See Kiron K. Skinner, “The Beginning of a New U.S. Grand Strategy: Policy on Terror During the Reagan Era,” in *Reagan’s Legacy in a World Transformed*, eds. Jeffrey L. Chidester and Paul Kengor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2015), 101-123.

²⁴⁴ *Operative Situation*, 121-122.

²⁴⁵ For more on the topic, see Ágnes Hankiss, “Terroristák Budapesten – A kommunista állambiztonság és Európa,” [Terrorists in Budapest – The communist state security and Europe] Hamvas Intézet, Budapest, 2013, accessed May 3, 2021, http://www.hamvasintezet.hu/uploads/assets/files/terrorist%C3%A1k_beliv.pdf and Balázs Orbán-Schwarzkopf, “A magyar állambiztonság és a nemzetközi terrorizmus az 1980-as években – Az iratok tükrében,” [Hungarian state security and international terrorism in the 1980s – In light of the documents] *Kommentár* no. 6 (2016): 86-102, accessed May 3, 2021, <http://kommentar.info.hu/uploads/2016/6/1582275668.pdf>

Szecsődi refers to the Palestinians as terrorists rather than freedom fighters, which was their usual designation in the contemporary communist discourse.

4.3 American Domestic Politics: Issues, Interest Groups, and Political Figures

As demonstrated in Chapter III, the preparatory textbooks present a negative and simplistic image of American politics. In essence, they claim that the main reason for the creation of the American government and political system was to uphold the power of the elites, the capitalist interest groups. The writers of the textbooks consider American democracy to be no more than an illusion that serves to deceive the population, claim that there are no substantial differences between the political parties, and the issues that they seemingly disagree upon are only superficial. Political struggles within the system are regarded to be conflicts within the elite, between the various capitalist groups, and they have no real, long-lasting consequences. The vocabulary of these textbooks may differ, but they convey the same, standard communist narrative.

General Description's (1965) presentation of the contemporary American political scene is determined by the image of the American political system in the textbook (see Chapter 3). One area in American politics that the text describes in detail is the direct connections between the monopolies and people in the government, which is used to illustrate how corrupt the American system is. From the past administrations, the textbook mentions the relationship between Charles Wilson, Secretary of Defense under Eisenhower, and General Motors,²⁴⁶ as well as the wealth of the Kennedy family, which is cited as proof that President Kennedy also was a member of the elite. When it comes to contemporary politicians, the author goes into details about the financial situation and corporate connections of the most powerful members of the Johnson administration. This includes the President, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of the Treasury Clarence Dillon, and Director of Central Intelligence John McCone.²⁴⁷ The text also presents the corruption of the party system and describes lobbying (see Chapter 3), that is used to demonstrate the crookedness and depravity of the American political system. The author points out that

²⁴⁶ *General Description*, 40.

²⁴⁷ This section once again demonstrates the translator's lack of familiarity with the subject, as well as proper English spelling. Rusk's position, "Secretary of State," is mistakenly translated as "államtitkár." In Hungarian, "államtitkár" refers to the position of the under secretary, and "Secretary of State" should be translated as "külgügyminiszter," Foreign Minister. This is a common mistake that unfortunately occurs even among "serious" journalists in our present day. All of the other names are misspelled, McNamara as "MacNamara," Clarence as "Clarens," and McCone as "MacCone."

revealing the connections between the monopolies and members of the administration is an important objective of the Soviet agencies, as it can be used to damage politicians, create instability, and reveal the true nature of the system.

Beside presenting the political system and the relationship between economic interests and government, the next book, *Agency-Operative Situation* (1967), comments on some of the contemporary political personalities and events. Johnson's Great Society is among the first issues discussed in this textbook; the author identifies the core idea of the program as "reaching complete peace between the social classes and abundance through the elimination of poverty and racial discrimination in the United States."²⁴⁸ The evaluation of the program is actually somewhat positive: it is acknowledged that "it was not exclusively created for demagogic reasons."²⁴⁹ Of course, seeing a large government program as a potentially effective way to improve society is entirely consistent with communist ideology. The author argues that eliminating the worst social ills of capitalism could have made that economic system more attractive for the Third World, but the money was spent on military expenditure for the Vietnam War instead of the Great Society.

The author gives a relatively detailed description of the contemporary American political situation, which he evaluates as volatile.²⁵⁰ Johnson underestimated the tensions within American society that came about as the consequence of racial and social injustice, as evidenced by the mass movements of "the Negro people."²⁵¹ Johnson's position is unstable, he is very unpopular, he is forced to negotiate, compromise, and he is under pressure from political groups, especially from the right. There is also social unrest due to "economic, political, and social problems: rising living costs, growing crime, the riots of the Negro people, the Vietnam War, the loss of prestige of the United States abroad, etc."²⁵² This discontent is expressed by all kinds of groups from the right as well as the left, and can take many forms, from "the drug abuse of the American youth" to "the armed insurrections of the Negro population,"²⁵³ who are turning to more and more radical means to fight for equality (for more on racism and the Civil Rights Movements, see Chapter 6 of this dissertation). *Agency-Operative Situation* takes a practical approach and evaluates the opportunities that the situation presents for the communist intelligence agencies as a consequence of. The "Negro uprisings" can be used to

²⁴⁸ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 2-3.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-22.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 16.

undermine the Johnson administration and damage the reputation of the United States abroad, they are good propaganda material. But he warns against the “Negroes as a basis for recruitment,” as many of them are Trotskyites, anti-Soviets, and even “racial supremacists” [fajvédő].²⁵⁴ As a possible solution, he recommends approaching them under a false flag.²⁵⁵

Agency-Operative Situation highlights the rise of right-wing elements in the United States, including “far right groups” as a relatively recent phenomenon. The “general crisis of capitalism” has led to the weakening of the U.S. and the escalation of conflicts in American society. For certain groups within the American bourgeoisie, the solution is “the fascistization of the country, attacks against progressive and liberal elements, the activation of forceful aggressive imperialistic foreign policy, anti-communism, and racist persecution.”²⁵⁶ This movement is mostly funded by financiers and industrialist from the South and the West, and its social base is the middle class: entrepreneurs, administrators, and some workers and farmers. The text presents a paranoid vision of the rise of the American right, painting every movement right of center with the same brush. Some of the large right-wing and conservative groups are listed and presented here as if there was very little difference among them, from the Catholic fraternal organization Knights of Columbus to the Ku-Klux Klan. He mentions that due to the American participation in the Second World War and “the large influence of the American Jewish population,” it is “currently considerably difficult” for the fascists to organize openly,²⁵⁷ which is in direct contrast with the earlier claims about the “fascistization” of the country. The list even includes a number of miniscule groups that openly embrace national socialism (like the National Socialist White People’s Party), the purpose of which is to present fascism/national socialism as a real , credible threat, in spite of the fact that the NSWPP or other openly Nazi parties never had more than a handful of members in the U.S.²⁵⁸

The author also elaborates on the rise of more conservative elements inside the U.S. Congress, the Republican Party, and the media. He points to the presidential nomination of Barry Goldwater, and predicts that Nixon or Reagan, “who are connected to the most radical

²⁵⁴ “The use of the term “fajvédő” is very much out of place in this context. Its literal translation is “racial protectionist,” and it is used to refer to an openly racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic movement and various political parties in Hungary in the interwar period and during the Second World War.

²⁵⁵ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 17.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁵⁸ Even the openly neo-Nazi *National Vanguard* acknowledges that the NSWPP had about 600 supporters at its peak in the 1970s. See, Chris Rosetti, “The History of American National Socialism — Part VII: The National Socialist White People’s Party (1967-1982),” *National Vanguard*, accessed February 3, 2021. <https://nationalvanguard.org/2018/05/the-history-of-american-national-socialism-part-vii-the-national-socialist-white-peoples-party-1967-1982/>

right-wing groups inside the Republican Party,”²⁵⁹ are most likely to become the presidential nominee in 1968. The author claims that the reason for this shift to the right inside the Republican Party and Congress is the ever-increasing economic power of the military-industrial complex, which has especially strong positions in the South and the West and attempts to influence politics. The author points to right-wing organizations as potential targets for Soviet intelligence due to their power and access to information, and claims that using them as a “false flag” could also be possible during operative work among certain groups.

Agency-Operative Situation also discusses centralization, the increasing power of the federal government in politics as well as in the economy. Statistical data is presented to support these claims, and the author concludes that “as a consequence of a number of his professional and personal characteristics, Johnson has practically annexed and centralized this power into his own hands.”²⁶⁰ He has diminished the role of Congress, the National Security Council, and the Cabinet. He makes decisions personally, and he only relies on a small number of close advisors. This makes it especially important to study him personally. “All means must be focused on the infiltration of Johnson’s immediate environment, as the activity of this person can potentially determine the development of our relations with the United States, and ultimately the question of war and peace.”²⁶¹ Obviously, this was intended for the original, Soviet audience, as infiltrating the inner circle of the President would have exceeded the potential capabilities of the Hungarian state security.

As part of the fight against the growing crime rates, the Johnson administration attempts to strengthen law enforcement, which means increasing police presence. Being of course very relevant for operative purposes, the operation and methods of the FBI are presented in great detail, also illustrated by examples. The author discusses the growing power of the FBI and its director, J. Edgar Hoover, under whose leadership the FBI has become “an uncontrolled branch of government,” which has seriously compromising materials on most politicians, including the President. *Agency-Operative Situation* also demonstrates how the FBI has used anti-communist spy hysteria as a way to distract the public from its own abuses of power, which is of course a correct observation.²⁶²

The main goal of Soviet intelligence was to infiltrate important institutions and attempt to approach people who have access to relevant information. *Agency-Operative Situation* shows

²⁵⁹ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 22.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 27.

us who the Soviets saw both inside and outside the government as potentially well-informed enough to warrant their attention, and who they considered to be potential sources. First of all, the book lists and details the work of certain government institutions that should be considered primary targets, including the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, certain congressional committees, etc. The author warns that American government officials are usually loyal (even if they have progressive beliefs), well-prepared by American counterintelligence, and claims that Soviet officers are better off attempting to recruit technical staff or newly hired officials.

The Soviet intelligence officers can also try to approach people who do not hold official positions in the government, but still have access to confidential information, such as those who are close to former politicians, the leaders of the political parties, or members of Congress. The author notes that Johnson often consults former Presidents Eisenhower and Truman, whose environment is not under strict FBI surveillance, and he regularly informs other politicians (congressmen, state governors, etc.) about various decisions. The staff of powerful political personages (some of whom are listed in the textbook) are often volunteers, they are usually not watched by counterintelligence, but can have access to the information of their “patron,” and are going to continue working for him if he gets appointed to an important position. Another group of potential assets are journalists, especially those who work at the White House and often have access to insider information. The text also makes a reference to think-tanks and other research institutes, and even provides a list of relevant topics that the Rand Corporation was working on at the time of writing.²⁶³ Lobbyists are mentioned, along with “political, religious organizations, and others, especially the representatives of the business circles that can exert pressure on politicians.” Finally, the author suggests recruiting students, who “do not have well-established political views, and are often in a bad financial situation,”²⁶⁴ (for more about the political views of students and other social groups, see Chapter 6 of this dissertation) and encouraging them to infiltrate the target institutions.

Similarly to *General Description*, *Agency-Operative Situation* also has a section on corruption in American politics: “no American politician would reject ‘presents’ or various other forms of bribery.”²⁶⁵ He provides examples for corruption scandals from the Eisenhower and Johnson administrations. Political campaigns have become so expensive that it is impossible to get elected to a high position without financial help from one capitalist group or

²⁶³ Ibid., 52-53.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 55.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 58.

another. As elections have basically become a struggle between these groups, it is important to note who stands behind each politician and what types of policies they advocate. This book also alludes to the struggle for control over the political parties and various political positions between the “‘younger,’ more reactionary, more aggressive” groups from the South and the West, and the traditionally more powerful “more flexible and more moderate” groups from the Northeast and the Midwest.²⁶⁶ The election of Johnson is seen a victory for the former group, but the struggle continues.

The short *National Characteristics* (1973) focuses on social rather than political questions, but it does reflect upon a number of contemporary events. Similarly to the previous books, it describes how the two major parties serve the interests of big business, but mentions that the two-party system is in a crisis due to foreign policy failures, social discrimination, and the activity of the “Negro movement.”²⁶⁷ This was further exacerbated by the third-party presidential candidacy of George Wallace in 1968, who managed to get 10 million votes. The other issue that *National Characteristics* discusses, similarly to *Agency-Operative Situation*, is the growth of executive power, embodied by the President and his administration, which can be especially dangerous, even for world peace.

As noted earlier, Pozsonyi does not discuss contemporary politics, but the other Hungarian book, *Operative Situation* (1985) by Szecsődi, does have a section that also reflects on domestic politics. Similarly to his Soviet predecessors, Szecsődi describes the conflict for control that has been going on since the 1950s between the more traditional capitalist groups and the newer, up-and-coming ones from the West and the South.²⁶⁸ The inclusion of the South and the West in politics already started during the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations, but it has reached a new level under Reagan, who has brought “California” into a leadership position. They represent the quickly developing modern technology industries and the military industry. They managed to gain power at a difficult time, characterized by the changing global position of the country, economic crisis, and a political crisis defined by the loss of trust in institutions and uncertainty due to the “Negro civil rights movement,”²⁶⁹ the struggle for women’s equality, the failure of the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 59.

²⁶⁷ *National Characteristics*, 2.

²⁶⁸ *Operative Situation*, 6.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.

Szecsődi analyzes the policy of the two main parties.²⁷⁰ He claims that the Republicans are opposed to even the most moderate social changes, while the Democrats seem more inclined to introduce at least some reforms. He notes the recent rise in the number of independents, concludes that a lot of people have turned away from the two parties, and 46% of voters did not vote in the 1980 election. He considers the decline of liberalism and the rise of “neoconservatism” to be the most significant political phenomena at the turn of the 1970s-1980s, evidenced by the election of Reagan. He notes that conservatism has always been a part of the American political spectrum, and in some respects, the neoconservatives follow in the footsteps of their predecessors: they support free market competition, social Darwinism, upholding the global position of the U.S. and enhancing its military presence, as well as anti-communism. They are characterized by comprehensive foreign and domestic programs, but they are not a united movement, they can be found in both major political parties. Szecsődi also compares the neoconservatives in the Democratic and Republican Party.²⁷¹

Operative Situation also describes the situation of the American left, which he sees as fragmented. The American left consists of the CPUSA, a few socialist groups, union leaders, some “Negro” civil rights groups, peace and anti-nuclear organizations, and many independent, radical individuals. He gives a surprisingly legitimate explanation for the lack of a strong socialist movement in the U.S.: the large degree of social mobility. “A great number of avenues were open for a smart, entrepreneurial worker: becoming a farmer on free land, moving West, entering business life.”²⁷² For similar reasons, he rejects most of the American trade unions as potential allies in intelligence work, claiming that none of them are left-wing, not even in the American sense. This coincides with Pozsonyi’s *Report* (1971), where he claims that while one would normally presume that the unions of the organized construction workers or the Teamsters would be progressive, “In case of the USA, the opposite is true. The ruling classes can always count on these two working class groups.”²⁷³

4.4 Conclusion

The preparatory textbooks put a great emphasis on the presentation of American foreign and domestic policy. Once again, the question is what was the real objective of these books, what

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 12.

²⁷¹ The rise of neoconservatism was widely discussed in communist Hungary in the 1980s, see Imre Forgács, *Neokonzervatív fordulat az Egyesült Államokban* [Neoconservative turn in the United States], (Budapest: Kossuth, 1987).

²⁷² *Operative Situation*, 13.

²⁷³ *Report*, 24.

did the authors want to achieve? Do these texts reflect a genuine attempt to present American foreign or domestic policy, or are they really just part of the ideological preparation of the intelligence officers? How accurately do they describe the subject? Also, is there a considerable difference between the way the various textbooks discuss the topic, or is it more or less the same? Does the image of American foreign and domestic policy change, or does it remain relatively constant throughout the period?

When it comes to American foreign policy, the presentation of the East-West relationship is the most important in the textbooks, which most of the times is synonymous with the presentation of the Soviet-American relationship. This is an ideologically charged issue, where the facts are often distorted in order to fit the narrative – for example, during the presentation of the history of the relationship of the two superpowers, going so far as to deny the American contribution to the Second World War. Anti-communism, crystallized as opposition to the Soviet Union, is presented as the main driving ideology of the foreign policy of the United States. According to the interpretation of the textbooks regardless of when and by whom they were written, American foreign policy is influenced by the monopolies, who want to extend their influence all over the world under the guise of spreading “freedom” and “democracy.” Because of the military power, especially the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union, and the economic development of the Eastern bloc [about the validity of this claim, see the following chapter of the dissertation], the Americans have been forced to scale back their animosity, and accept *détente*. The textbooks agree that the focus of the Cold War has shifted to the economic and ideological front, as well as a struggle for the Third World, where the American monopolies attempt to expand their influence by political, economic, and even military means.

Szecsődi is the only author who discusses Hungarian-American relations. He enumerates the results of the improvement of the relationship, and notes that they could be preserved in spite of the deterioration of *détente* between the two superpowers. While previously, the American differentiation between the communist countries was presented as a hostile attempt to divide the Eastern bloc, Szecsődi sees it as an opportunity to protect the results of the bilateral rapprochement that the Hungarians were able to take advantage of. He also attributes the worsening of the relationship between the U.S. and its European allies to the different approach to *détente*. In addition, there is an increasing economic competition between Western Europe and America that can to a certain extent be seen as the result of the success of the European integration, that has also been noted by some of the earlier books.

With regards to domestic policy, the narrative of the textbooks builds upon what has already been said about the political system in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, namely that American democracy is an illusion, and behind the scenes, the two main political parties are controlled by the monopolies, they act according to their economic interests. In order to illustrate this, the authors emphasize the corruption in the American political elite – at the same time, corruption was also important for operative reasons. The materials also enumerated a number of people who were close to politics, politicians, and could possibly be approached by the agencies of the Eastern bloc and enable them to access important information. In addition, the textbooks discussed recent developments in American politics, often related to changes that could be potentially problematic for the countries of the Eastern bloc (e.g. the rise of the right or the emergence of neoconservatives), or provided an opportunity for the communist intelligence agencies (e.g. the African American civil rights movement, etc.). In addition, raising the specter of a rising “fascist” movement in the U.S. and intentionally blurring the lines between genuinely far right and moderate also served to ideologically “educate,” manipulate the operatives. It is apparent from the texts that beside gathering information, political destabilization was also an objective.

The image of American politics presented in these texts is dualistic; a mixture of ideological projections and insightful observations, which often lead to rather apparent contradictions. The United States openly prepares for a nuclear war, yet it is trying to avoid direct confrontation with the Soviet Union at all costs. American society is undergoing “fascistization,” yet it does not tolerate open fascists. At the same time, Szecsódi’s observation about working class movements was quite accurate, as were the interpretations of American military doctrine with regards to avoiding direct confrontation with the Soviet Union in some of the earlier books.

The most valuable information in the textbooks is often more directly related to the actual work of the intelligence officers. Examples for this include the role of the intelligence agencies, the CIA and the FBI in American politics, the description of the people who would have access to valuable information, various political movements, or the political background of the people that could potentially be approached by Eastern bloc operatives. This is the area of expertise of the authors, this is where they feel most comfortable. Also, this was the information that the operatives needed in order to identify their potential allies and targets for recruitment and get close to them.

At the same time, in the case of the Soviet materials, the translator was not an expert, as evidenced by the common spelling and factual errors. It demonstrates how difficult it is to translate a text if one is not familiar with the topic. The situation was different when Hungarian intelligence already had officers capable of preparing these educational materials themselves, demonstrating a certain expertise in the field, understanding the internal logic and methods of the American agencies, and in some cases, a degree of familiarity with American scholarship (e.g., Morgenthau or Holzmann).

In short, while there is a good amount of ideological projection in this material, it also contains information that could have been useful for future intelligence operatives. The purpose seems to have been twofold, reinforcing the ideological education of the officers, while also providing them with some knowledge that may prove relevant for their work. There was a certain effort to understand American culture, society, and politics, as long as it was more or less directly related to intelligence.

Chapter 5

The American Economy and Hungarian State Security

5.1 The Place of the Economy in the Preparatory Materials

Economic conditions play a decisive role in international conflicts, as has been recognized since the earliest known examples of strategic thinking from the ancient times.²⁷⁴ The Cold War is a prime example for this, as among many other things, it was also a competition between two economic systems: centrally planned socialist economy²⁷⁵ on the one side, and (mostly) free market capitalism on the other. The fundamental importance of the economy in the given geopolitical situation was recognized on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In the words of the Joint Economic Committee from 1955 (quoted in a CIA paper), “In the struggle between the Communist Bloc and the Free World, the factor of relative economic strength is fundamental. Neither morale nor political stability nor a firm military posture can long be sustained in its absence.”²⁷⁶ The disparity between the structure and organization of the economic systems of the two blocks resulted in largely different rates of development and innovation that had serious consequences in the long run. With the passing of time, the gap between the economic performances of the two sides became increasingly apparent. Eventually, the shortcomings of the socialist economies led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist regimes in Europe; and thus to the end of the conflict. This surprised contemporary commentators and political actors. While many realized that the Soviet state and economy were heavily bureaucratic and in many ways extremely ineffective, and that the Soviet Union was facing serious economic and other difficulties, “hardly anyone expected the state to evaporate, let alone to do so any time soon.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ See, Matthew McCaffrey, ‘The Political Economy of ‘The Art of War,’” In *Comparative Strategy* 33, no. 4 (2014): 354-371, accessed July 2, 2019, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2508183>.

²⁷⁵ The term “socialist” or “socialism” are used differently in the common vernacular, in political science, and in scholarly economic literature. Political economy refers to the economic system of the countries of the Eastern bloc that we usually call “communist” as “the socialist system.” For more, see János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton UP, 1992). When we talk about the political system of these countries, the term “communist” is used.

²⁷⁶ “Trends in Economic Growth: A Comparison of the Western Powers and the Soviet Bloc.” quoted in “A Comparison of Soviet and US Gross National Products, 1960-83,” 1, *Central Intelligence Agency – Freedom of Information Act Reading Room*. General CIA Records, accessed May 6, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00313r000200060004-2>.

²⁷⁷ Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR from 1945* (London: Longman, 2003), 1. Hereafter cited as *The Rise and Fall*.

Due to its strategic importance, economy has always been a primary target for intelligence. “Economic strength is a major determinant of international power.”²⁷⁸ This evaluation by the Central Intelligence Agency, formulated in a research paper that compared the gross national product of the two superpowers in 1984, was also shared by the state security agencies on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Economy was one of the most prominent fields of competition between the two blocks, especially as communist ideology puts a special emphasis on economic questions, and the leaders of the Eastern bloc were specifically concerned with growth and development. Because of their relative economic backwardness, the communist countries always had an inferiority complex towards the countries of the West. One of the main economic goals of the Soviet Union was to “catch up and overtake” the West and especially the United States, which would have been seen as evidence to prove the superiority of the socialist way of organizing the economy.²⁷⁹ As a result of this approach, in the materials used for preparation by the Hungarian state security, the economic performance of the U.S. is often measured relative to the USSR.

Industrial espionage, gathering information about the industrial strength of the target country, about the various strategically significant branches of industry, industrial products, or ongoing research, was a prominent objective of the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc. Having access to information about the structure of the economy was essential to the success of this endeavor. The importance of this aspect of foreign intelligence increased further in the final period of the Cold War, when the technological gap between the two superpowers widened even further, especially in fields such as computers or telecommunications technology. The West was taking advantage of this gap by setting up the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom) that compiled a list of embargoed goods, making it forbidden to export them to the countries of the Eastern bloc. The CoCom list contained the most up-to-date technology, and as they were falling behind technologically, the communist countries developed a gradually increasing urge to use any means necessary (including intelligence) to obtain these goods.²⁸⁰

Another reason why economic issues were included in the textbooks was that intelligence officers had to be prepared for the discrepancy between the communist propaganda about the supposed decline of Western, more specifically, American economy, and what they

²⁷⁸ “A Comparison of Soviet and US Gross National Products, 1960-83.”

²⁷⁹ Hanson, *Rise and Fall*, 1.

²⁸⁰ For more on the involvement of military intelligence in evading the embargo, see Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*.

would actually experience in the United States. According to the estimates of the CIA, even in 1983, the per capita consumption in the Soviet Union was still only slightly more than one-third of that of the United States.²⁸¹ Defection was a concern for communist intelligence agencies: the prospects of a better life, better economic conditions, often played a major part in the decision of those intelligence officers who left the Eastern bloc for the West during the Cold War. The differences between the economic performances of the two blocks, especially the living standard of the general population, in favor of the West was noticeable for anybody who visited countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain. East-European intelligence officers had to be prepared for this.

The preparatory materials had to offer some explanation why the living standard of the average worker in the United States of America was so much higher than in the self-proclaimed worker's paradise (the Soviet bloc); and why, especially towards the end of the Cold War, instead of "catching up and overtaking" the West, the Eastern bloc actually seemed to be lagging further and further behind. For this reason, the economy was featured prominently in several of the textbooks. Almost one third of the first book, *General Discussion* (1965), discusses economic questions. In the 183-page textbook, there is a 25-page chapter on the „monopolies,” the big corporations, followed by a 30-page chapter on the American economy itself, and, towards the end of the text, there is a 9-page subchapter on "The main forms of the economic expansion of the USA." *Agency-Operative Situation* (1967) is not divided into chapters, but economic questions are discussed in the first text, on about 10 of the 82 pages. In the second text from the booklet, the economy is only mentioned as far as it is related to the financial conditions of the average American, and the same is true for *National Characteristics* (1973). This aspect of the preparation is discussed in the chapter about the image of American society and the average American (Chapter 6). While the economy was clearly not his main focus, in Pozsonyi's *Useful Knowledge* (1974) there is a short chapter on the subject (2-3 pages out of 111), and economic issues related to everyday life are also presented in the material. *Operative Situation* (1985) by Szecsődi has a chapter on the economy of the United States, which is 12 pages out of the total of 141, but a considerable part of the 20 page chapter on the political situation of the U.S. also discuss economic questions.

This chapter of the dissertation presents an overview of how the economy of the United States was discussed in the preparatory materials of Hungarian state security. The next subchapter provides an insight into how the communist elite in both Hungary and the Soviet

²⁸¹ "A Comparison of Soviet and US Gross National Products, 1960-83."

Union perceived the comparison between the economies of the two superpowers. This is followed by the examination of how the global status of the American economy was evaluated in the preparatory materials, including its relation to the Soviet economy. The next subchapter is about the development of the American economy and contemporary economic trends, and the subsequent one is about how the influence of big corporations (monopolies)²⁸² was presented in the materials. The conclusion examines the comparison of the American and the Soviet economy in the textbooks in light of what we know about them today. It also addresses the vision of the communist elite and the official communist narrative presented to the public in the communist countries. The questions we specifically address in this chapter include: How accurate was the representation of the American economy in these preparatory materials? Could it really be used for the purposes of gathering real, valuable intelligence? How did it relate to contemporary public discourse?

5.2 Cold War Intelligence and the Economy

The ideological background to the preparation of Hungarian intelligence officers included the expectation that the Eastern bloc aspired to, and was almost certainly going to, “catch up and overtake” the West. At the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in 1961, First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev boldly made the prediction that in twenty years, by 1981, the Soviet Union would have a higher standard of living than the United States or any capitalist country. As we all know, the USSR did not manage to achieve this goal, and this became quite obvious for most observers from the mid-1970s onwards. CIA materials from the 1980s concluded that the economy of the Soviet Union was crumbling and, in many respects, lagging far behind that of the United States.²⁸³ The belief in the superiority and eventual victory of the centrally planned socialist economic system and communism over free market capitalism was also a constant feature of the preparatory materials of the Hungarian state security. This subchapter aims to decide whether the triumph of the socialist economy over capitalism was something that the leaders of the Eastern bloc actually believed to be possible, or it was just part of communist propaganda.

²⁸² In the economic literature, the term “monopoly” refers to the situation when one company has a dominant share of a particular market. But in the communist phraseology, “monopoly” is used to refer to the big corporations, trusts in a negative context. The Soviet books almost exclusively use this term to describe large Western companies, but it often appears in the later books as well.

²⁸³ “A Comparison of the US and Soviet Economies: Evaluating the Performance of the Soviet System,” 2. *Central Intelligence Agency – Freedom of Information Act Reading Room*. General CIA Records, accessed May 6, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp08s01350r000100070002-8>.

The official communist standpoint declared the superiority of the Soviet-style socialist economic system over its Western counterpart. Marxist-Leninist ideologues predicted that although due to historical reasons, the economy of the Soviet Union and other communist countries of the Eastern bloc had initially started out as poorer and less developed, in the future, their economic production would be growing at a faster rate than that of the capitalist countries. They argued that due to the internal contradictions inherent to capitalism, the West would soon have to enter a period of decline, and thus, in a relatively short time, the countries of the Eastern bloc would develop faster and in time, overtake them. *General Description* proclaims, “in an economic sense, the primacy of the USA will end forever in the foreseeable future.”²⁸⁴ But measuring the development of the communist countries was quite difficult for various reasons, one of them being that the statistical data provided by these countries was quite unreliable. Due to problems inherent in the system,²⁸⁵ economic records were often unsound, in addition, at times they were intentionally falsified. In some cases, completely irrelevant economic index numbers were used that could mislead the observer.²⁸⁶

Furthermore, there is an even deeper problem when it comes to the difficulty of economic calculation in a socialist system, where money as we know it in a free-market economy does not exist. From the perspective of economics, the currency of communist countries cannot fulfill all the functions of money. The contributions of the Austrian school of economics to the calculation debate in the 1920s show that without money in a real sense and a real price system, the allocation of resources poses a constant problem in a socialist economy.²⁸⁷ Thus, even if they had wanted to, it would have been practically impossible for the Soviets and other communist countries to provide real (that is, comparable to Western) data about the economic conditions in their country because simply put, there was no way to measure it properly.

We know little about the how much of leaders of the communist countries actually knew about the economy of the two superpowers and their position on the economic competition between the blocs, or whether they actually believed that the East would eventually overtake

²⁸⁴ *General Description*, 74.

²⁸⁵ See Kornai, *The Socialist System*, especially Chapter 7 on the problems of bureaucratic planning.

²⁸⁶ As Hanson also notes (*Rise and Fall*, 25), Soviet figures were often displayed as propaganda. In the West, a whole industry developed around attempting to recalculate these numbers. Soviet economists did not trust the official figures either – not that it mattered much, given how little influence they had on policy (*Rise and Fall*, 126).

²⁸⁷ See Ludwig von Mises, “Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth,” In *Collectivist Economic Planning*, Friedrich A. Hayek, ed. Clifton, NJ: Kelley Publishing, 1975, pp. 87-130, and Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1990, accessed August 18, 2021. <https://mises.org/library/economic-calculation-socialist-commonwealth>, and Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 2005). <https://mises.org/library/road-serfdom-0>. Kornai in *The Socialist System* also discusses the problem of money and prices in a socialist economy in detail in Chapter 8.

the West. Research by Eszter Tóth provides some insight into the discourse between the Hungarian and Soviet communist elites through the records of a series of secret meetings.²⁸⁸ These can enhance our understanding by showing how the communist leaders discussed these topics when they were amongst themselves. This, in turn, can also be compared to the image of the American economy in relation to the Soviet Union in the textbooks. The meetings that Tóth describes took place in December 1968 in Budapest between some of the highest-ranking officers of the Soviet state security and the leaders of the MSZMP and the Hungarian People's Republic.²⁸⁹ According to the report, several topics were on the table; among other issues, the Soviet delegation shortly presented the then current state of the Soviet Union, including the condition of the Soviet economy.

Apparently, Yuri Andropov, then chairman of the KGB, trusted the official numbers for economic development (or at least he did not raise any objections with regards to their reliability, not even in this confidential environment).²⁹⁰ Andropov was well known to the Hungarian leaders, as he was the Soviet ambassador to Hungary in 1956, and played an important role in the decision for Soviet intervention against the revolution. Based on the data available to him, the chairman of the KGB claimed that in the Soviet Union, the rate of development of most industries was 6-8%, and that the structural transformation of the economy was on the way, with a special emphasis on the development of the machine industry. At the same time, Andropov also acknowledged some of the problems with the Soviet economy. This included the previously mentioned well-known and practically permanent issue that has always plagued every socialist economy: how to decide where to invest resources in order to best promote the development of the economy? The KGB chairman also mentioned the "insufficient

²⁸⁸ Tóth Eszter, "‘A harc mindenesetre folyik; vigyázni kell, mert a világreakció rájött, hogy túljártunk az eszén.’ A KGB vezetőinek Budapesten tartott helyzetértékelése 1968 decemberében" ["By all means, the fight continues; we have to be careful, because the world of reaction has realized that we have outsmarted them." Evaluation provided by the leaders of the KGB in Budapest in December 1968], *Betekintő*, no.2 (2012), accessed October 11, 2020, http://www.betekinto.hu/sites/default/files/betekinto-szamok/2012_2_toth.pdf.

²⁸⁹ The participants at the meetings in December 1968 included Yuri Andropov, Chairman of the KGB, Aleksandr Sakharovsky, head of the First Chief Directorate (foreign intelligence) of the KGB, Georgiy Karpovich Tsinev, head of Soviet counterintelligence, and Fyodor Titov, Soviet ambassador to Hungary on the Soviet side, as well as János Kádár, General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party, András Benkei, Minister of the Interior, Béla Biszku, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and Sándor Rácz, deputy of the Minister of the Interior responsible for state security. Tóth, "A harc mindenesetre folyik," 4.

²⁹⁰ Hanson suggests that the Soviets also knew that their data were unreliable, but they had to work with what was available. After the fall of the Soviet Union, when (some) material from the Soviet archives became (more or less) available, it turned out, that there was no secret set of numbers, different from what was published. Some of the data (e.g. military production, etc.) was not public, but "[o]therwise, they were no better informed than we were." For this reason, Hanson, along with other scholars writing about the economic history of the Soviet Union, uses the recalculations of the CIA, which apparently seem to be the best data available. (*Rise and Fall*, 3-4).

improvement of the technological level and quality”²⁹¹ of Soviet-made products, especially goods intended for general consumption, for the domestic market. In those branches of the industry where competition with the “capitalist” world was more direct, such as the military industry, aerial defense, or space exploration, Andropov considered the qualitative improvement to be more satisfactory. Obviously, these areas of the economy had higher priority for the central planners in the Soviet government, so they ended up having access to more capital, labor, and other resources. The KGB chairman had high hopes for the new economic reforms that were introduced in the Soviet Union in 1965 (the Kosygin reforms)²⁹² and focused on an attempt to reorganize the way various branches of industry were controlled and directed, as well on the introduction of a more independent method of company management.

Andropov’s evaluation of the Soviet economy was in many ways accurate, and he actually managed to identify a number of significant problems. In some respects, his assessment was also in line with the contemporary estimates of the Americans services, as illustrated by a report of the CIA from the beginning of 1966.²⁹³ In this document, while CIA experts point out some of the methodological problems that have come up during the comparison of the economy of the two superpowers, similarly to Andropov, they also acknowledge the rapid growth of the Soviet economy in the previous period. At the same time, they explain that the reason for this development was that the Soviet central planners were allocating more resources to the more direct promotion of economic growth instead of public consumption; that is, they spent a lot on education, industrial investment, and civilian research and development.²⁹⁴

Similarly to Andropov at the secret meeting, the CIA also emphasizes the issues with the quality of goods produced in the USSR, most importantly, durable goods, machinery, and construction. The authors of the CIA study claim that a lot of the Soviet-made goods were so outdated that comparing them to their American counterparts during the analysis of the two economies turned out to be particularly difficult. The technological gap was so big that Soviet-made goods were often similar not to contemporary American products, but those that were made in the U.S. almost thirty years earlier, “before the Second World War.”²⁹⁵ For the purposes of analysis, they “had to be compared, for the most part, with the cheapest U.S. models, and even these are generally superior to the Soviet goods in appearance, workmanship,

²⁹¹ Tóth, “A harc mindenesetre folyik,” 5.

²⁹² See Kornai, *A szocialista rendszer*, 419-420.

²⁹³ “US and USSR: Comparisons of Size and Use of Gross National Product, 1955-64,” *Central Intelligence Agency – Freedom of Information Act Reading Room*. General CIA Records, accessed October 13, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp07-00617r000100120001-8>.

²⁹⁴ “Intelligence Report – US and USSR: Comparisons of Size and Use of Gross National Product, 1955-64,” 2.

²⁹⁵ “Intelligence Report – US and USSR: Comparisons of Size and Use of Gross National Product, 1955-64,” 17.

and operating features of one kind or another.”²⁹⁶ The issue with the quality of Soviet goods reached such proportions that, according to the CIA, it seriously impacted the reliability of the comparison of the economy of the two superpowers.

Based on what we know from the meetings presented by Tóth, even while certain issues that affected the Soviet economy were apparently recognized by the highest circles of the communist leadership and state security, the people who were in charge often misdiagnosed the reasons for these problems, as well as their nature and severity. They were under the impression that it would be possible to solve them through economic reforms. The dogma of the economic superiority of the socialist system and the belief that the Soviet Union would eventually overtake the United States were not questioned by the participants of the Budapest meeting, at least not openly. As Tóth notes, beside the apparent and declared goal of increasing cooperation between the state security agencies of the two communist countries, the meeting also had a secondary purpose. It served as an opportunity for the Soviet leaders to instruct and guide the Hungarian party leadership to interpret the then current international situation “properly;” namely, to convince the people at the head of the satellite country that in spite of all the superficial problems, the economic development of the Soviet Union was unhindered, and that they were getting closer to the goal of overtaking the West.²⁹⁷

The Hungarians had to be reassured that even if it took a lot of effort and sometimes required drastic solutions, the Soviet economy would continue to grow. As presented in the rest of this chapter, the preparatory materials convey a similar attitude, but naturally, while it is often explicitly or implicitly compared to that of the Soviet Union, the emphasis is on the presentation of the economy of the United States. The KGB wanted to make sure that the leaders of the Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party still adhered to the principle of “catch up and overtake” and did not doubt that the Soviet economy would triumph over the American, so much so that Andropov himself attempted to demonstrate this to them. And the Hungarians fell in line – after all, who would contradict Andropov, the director of the KGB, Soviet ambassador to Hungary in 1956, only twelve years after the Revolution? The purpose seems to have been similar in the case of the intelligence officers of the Hungarian state organizations, namely, ideological education, reinforcing adherence to the communist ideology.

²⁹⁶ “US and USSR: Comparisons of Size and Use of Gross National Product, 1955-64,” 17.

²⁹⁷ Tóth, “A harc mindenesetre folyik,” 3.

5.3 The Global Position of the American Economy and the Comparison of the Soviet and American Economies in the Textbooks

In the preparatory materials, the economic strength and the global leading position of the United States are often recognized, at times even emphasized. But in accordance with the communist predictions for the future mentioned above, the topic of the supposed decline of capitalism in general and the American economy in particular is a common trope. This is especially true when it is compared to the countries of the Eastern bloc, first and foremost the Soviet Union. The common narrative present in the textbooks acknowledges that by the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the United States had become the fastest developing economy in the world, and it experienced hitherto unprecedented economic growth. In a matter of decades, during the period referred to as the “Gilded Age,” this primarily agrarian, economically marginally significant country was transformed into the world’s foremost industrial nation and strongest economy. The narrative in the preparatory documents concedes that this phenomenon was due to the productive powers of free market capitalism. But, according to the Marxist interpretation, with the advent of the 20th century, the United States entered the final stage of capitalism: imperialism. As a consequence, the growth of the American economy slowed down, stopped, or was even reversed, and the country entered or would soon enter a period of sharp economic decline, and would be overtaken by the Soviet Union.

This narrative is outlined in the most detailed way in *General Description* (1965), which puts a great emphasis on the presentation of the American economy and its position in the world. It is asserted that “the United States of America is the main country of modern capitalism, which is characterized by highly developed productive forces, a large-scale concentration of production and capital.”²⁹⁸ This statement is illustrated by statistics that show that the United States is in a leading position in the capitalist world when it comes to various industries. A few pages later, in the introduction to the description of the American economy, the author contends that “production in the United States of America has reached the highest level possible for the capitalist economy,” and a few lines later affirms that the U.S. has become an “imperialistic great power that is number one in the world with regards to industrial production.”²⁹⁹ The wording implies that this statement is true within the confines of the *capitalist* world, allowing for the possibility that the level of production could be higher in the communist world, especially in the Soviet Union.

²⁹⁸ *General Description*, 2.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

The American economy is compared to other capitalist countries at the beginning of the chapter on the American economy in *General Description*.³⁰⁰ It is shown that while certain countries might outperform the United States in one branch of industry or another, as a whole, the quality and quantity of goods produced in America surpasses the output of the other capitalist countries. This is followed by the comparison of the American and the Soviet economies in a subchapter titled “The Main Branches of the American Economy and the Economic Perspectives of the Soviet-American Competition.”³⁰¹ The textbook points to certain industries where the U.S. seems to be ahead of the Soviets and presents them as challenges that the Soviet economy has to overcome, as well as potential targets for state security organizations. One such example is the machine industry, where “investigating the experiences and tendencies can be of special interest”³⁰² for the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc. This coincides with what was said during the Budapest meeting, where Andropov also emphasized the development of the machine industry as a priority for the Soviet Union.

The justification for the special focus on studying the American economy provided in the textbook is also ideological: “the current phase of the economic competition between socialism and capitalism is defined above all by the projected growth of the industry of the Soviet Union and the USA.”³⁰³ The comparison of the two countries focuses almost exclusively on the industrial sector, which is not surprising, as communists put a great emphasis on the development of this branch of the economy. The author claims that the USSR is second only to the U.S in industrial production in the world and has already left all other capitalist countries behind. But as the rate of growth of the Soviet industry is faster, it is also going to overtake America in the foreseeable future. A typical example provided by the author is that “between 1954 and 1963, the production of industrial goods meant for domestic consumption by the general population increased by 128% in the Soviet Union, while only by 15% in the USA.”³⁰⁴ The presentation of the statistical data is of course misleading, it does not reveal anything relevant, as the text fails to provide what the base figures were, and what was the quantitative difference between them. One can safely assume that after the years of Stalinism, even with a 128% increase, Soviet domestic consumption must have been lagging far behind the American. This is a clear example of the statistical tricks used by the Soviets in order to demonstrate their alleged superiority one way or the other.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 50-56.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 56-72.

³⁰² Ibid., 60.

³⁰³ Ibid., 70.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 70.

A number of statistics are cited in an attempt to illustrate that the USSR has already overtaken the U.S. in the production of various industrial goods and raw materials, as well as capital investment.³⁰⁵ But he notes that quantity is not the only aspect of the competition, and whereas initially the main objective of the Soviet Union was to produce more goods, by now, quality has also become important. He emphasizes the increasingly efficient use of productive capabilities and claims that the Soviets are already ahead of the U.S. in a number of indicators. One example given in the textbook is the supposedly more effective use of workforce, and the absence of unemployment in the Soviet Union is cited as proof, compared to the “millions of unemployed waiting at the gates of the companies” in the United States.³⁰⁶ This statistical figure is once again misleading, as nominally zero unemployment is a common characteristic of the socialist economic systems, where internal unemployment exists within the companies instead. In fact, the opposite of what the book claims was true. During the Cold War, productivity was a lot worse in the communist countries – to a certain extent, exactly due to this hidden unemployment, as socialist companies almost always had to hire more workers than what would have been necessary.³⁰⁷

The author of *General Description* points out that one of the greatest differences between the American and the Soviet economies is the living standard of the population, which is once again, in accordance with what Andropov said. The text is somewhat unclear on the basis of the comparison, but it is stated that the consumption of the general public in the Soviet Union is around 40% of what it is in the USA. It is quickly pointed out why this number could be misleading from a communist perspective: “But if we leave out of the comparison (*luxury* [added later in longhand]) the data about the goods that only serve the idleness and debauchery of the bourgeoisie, then with regards to the everyday household items of the working population, we have reached no less than 50% of the American numbers.”³⁰⁸ This reveals that the intention of the author is to convince the reader that at least one of the reasons, if not the main reason, why living standards in the U.S. appear to be higher than in the Soviet Union is the immoral luxurious lifestyle of the bourgeoisie. But if we only compared the consumption of the working class, the difference between the two countries would not be as large as it first seems. In conclusion, the author of *General Description* predicts that “in the near future, the economic primacy of the USA is going to end forever.”³⁰⁹ For those operatives who would still

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 70-71.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 53.

³⁰⁷ Kornai, 250.

³⁰⁸ *General Description*, 72.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 72.

long for the luxurious debauchery of the bourgeoisie, Lenin's words are added to the end of the subchapter as consolation: when Soviet progress eventually leaves the imperialists behind, "the profit to our side is not going to be exclusively economic."³¹⁰

Agency-Operative Situation and Recruitment (1967) also acknowledges the leading position of the United States in the economy of the capitalist world. The author points to the high productivity of the American economy and its well-developed structure as well as the ability to put scientific results into practice quickly. It is conceded that the U.S. spends more on research and development than the rest of the world combined and that it has by far the largest economy and highest living standards in the world. It is also pointed out that the U.S. is developing fast, as "the USA has considerably increased its lead among the countries of the capitalist world."³¹¹ Once again, the emphasis is on *capitalist*.

This textbook does not go into great details during the comparison of the economy of the United States and the Soviet Union,, but it does mention that the American economy has to be one of the main targets of Soviet intelligence.³¹² It is acknowledged that the economy of the United States has grown rapidly in the 1960s, which has increased the divide between the U.S. and other countries, "according to the evaluation of American economists, including the Soviet Union."³¹³ By adding that this is the evaluation of the American economists, the author implies that this statement is dubious. After all, American economists are, or at least should be, considered untrustworthy. The other issue mentioned is the presence of a gap between the level of economic development of the United States and the rest of the world, which "creates the impression in the leading circles of the United States that they are winning the economic competition over socialism."³¹⁴ Once again, the implication is that this impression is false, that the "leading circles of the U.S." – whoever they might be – are wrong.

Pozsonyi's short overview of the American economy in *Useful Knowledge* (1974) states that "the USA is the leading power of the capitalist world and its biggest industrial and agricultural country."³¹⁵ Later, he goes on to describe the industry of the United States as also being the first in the capitalist world, and cites statistics, according to which in 1964 the U.S. made up 44.7% of the industrial production of – as he once again emphasizes – the capitalist

³¹⁰ Ibid., 72.

³¹¹ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 2.

³¹² Ibid., 14.

³¹³ Ibid., 12.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 12.

³¹⁵ *Useful Knowledge*, 9.

world.³¹⁶ As far as the other Hungarian-authored book, *Operative Situation* (1985) is concerned, it is revealing that Szecsődi still claims that the “American Cold War policy, economic warfare, has failed. The Soviet Union has gradually closed the historic gap in comparison with the United States in all fields of the economy.”³¹⁷ This is in spite of the fact that he is writing in the 1980s, when it was already obvious that Khrushchev’s prediction had not come true. Szecsődi points out that “the economy of the United States is still suffering from the recession,”³¹⁸ referring to the oil crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He also argues that the relationship between the United States and Western Europe has changed.³¹⁹ The United States is still in the lead in most respects, but the gap between the economy of the U.S. and the Western European countries is gradually becoming more and more narrow. Western Europe is closing up to America in the proportion of the world GDP that they produce, in terms of productivity, the number of new patents, as well as in exports. Szecsődi argues that the reason for this is European integration, which, in spite of certain internal contradictions and the conflicting interests of the nations, seems to be quite effective, operates as a tool of common protectionism, and “strongly hurts the interests of the United States.”³²⁰

The rhetoric and the vocabulary notwithstanding, the message of these texts about the position of the American economy is more or less the same. The comparison of the Soviet and the American economies in *General Description* corresponds to what Andropov said at the Budapest meeting. It is acknowledged that the economy of the United States is leading in many respects, but this is often undermined by frequently emphasizing that this is true for the capitalist world, or pointing out that this is according to Western economists. All the books that contain a comparison of the two economies claim that the Soviets are closing the gap or might have already closed it in some fields. This is even present in Szecsődi’s book which was written in the 1980s: apparently, this was an axiom of the regime that could not be challenged. In the conclusion to this chapter where the validity of the assertions made in the textbooks is examined, we also address the question whether this was ever even a realistic possibility.

5.4 The Development and Contemporary State of the American Economy

³¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

³¹⁷ *Operative Situation*, 22.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 16.

³²⁰ Ibid., 16.

As has been discussed in Chapter 3, in some of the textbooks the sections that describe American history include a presentation of the development of the American economy. The underlying narrative in the materials is that in the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the economy of the United States was growing faster than that of any other country. The main reasons provided by the authors for this rapid development are the absence of the restrictions that were imposed upon the European countries by feudalism, North America's richness in natural resources, and the immigration of ambitious, talented people. These factors contributed to the growth of American capitalism, but around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the country entered the imperialistic stage of development. Monopolistic corporations emerged and took control of the economy, and economic growth slowed down. This subchapter elaborates on how the contemporary American economy, regarded as the pinnacle of capitalism by the communists, was presented in the textbooks, and whether this could serve as the basis for effective intelligence work.

After enumerating the factors that made the quick economic development of the United States possible in the past, *General Description* (1965) continues with the assertion that these favorable circumstances are no longer relevant at the time of writing. The author claims that the rate of growth of the American economy is barely higher than the natural rate of growth of the population, it has slowed down as the country entered the period of imperialism, which is characterized by the constant crisis of capitalism. The greater part of the arable landmass in the USA is already under agricultural cultivation. The development of farming has slowed down, as there is no more available uncultivated land, which used to be the major factor that enabled it. Due to the influx of large numbers of unemployed people, the American government has also limited the number of immigrants who are allowed to enter the country. "Unrestricted" capitalism inevitably led to the concentration of productive forces and capital, and the emergence of monopolies. These monopolies have submitted the government to their own interests and play a leading role in the political and economic life of the country, which the book also elaborates on (see subchapter 5.5 of this dissertation). Quoting from the records of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, the author describes the period of monopolistic capitalism as follows: "it unites the forces of the monopolies and the forces of the government into one machine, in order to suppress the worker's movement and the struggle for national liberation, to save the capitalist social order, and in order to start wars of aggression."³²¹

³²¹ *General Description*, 10.

A subchapter of *General Description* describes the contemporary condition of the American economy, with a special emphasis on its military potential.³²² Once again, it is acknowledged that the U.S. is in the lead among the capitalist countries, and there is a description of the main branches of the economy of the United States. The author pays special attention to heavy industry and other industries that have military significance. The central role of the monopolies is also underlined (see subchapter 5.5), and it is mentioned that as a consequence of the activity of the monopolies, there are certain productive capacities that are not used, and there is unemployment.

Agency-Operative Situation (1967) explains why – at least according to the author – the apparent growth of the American economy is, in fact, only an illusion. The book begins by denouncing the Western economists who claim that the United States has entered the phase of “economic development without crisis.”³²³ In order to explain why the American economy, supposedly in crisis, is still growing rapidly, the author turns to Lenin, who wrote about the “unequal development of imperialism,” and argued that appearances can be deceiving. Lenin claimed that certain branches of the imperialist economy might be showing signs of growth, while the system is still in decline, inequalities are increasing, and this tendency is manifested in the “rotting of the strongest capitalist countries themselves.”³²⁴ This explanation was of course very convenient for the communists, as they could point to any growth in the American economy as a possible exception, an anomaly that does not affect general trends, thus it would not contradict the theory about the decline of capitalism. Even if one would accept the validity of Lenin’s description of the situation in the early 20th century when he wrote it, using his ideas to interpret the contemporary situation of the American economy in the 1960s is absurd, given that Lenin died in 1924, more than forty years before the writing of the textbook.

The symptoms of the deterioration of the American economy are listed to illustrate the decline of American capitalism. Some of the criticisms of the contemporary (and, in fact, the current) state of the American economy are valid, such as the steady growth of the level of national as well as personal debt, inflation and the weakening of the dollar, and the ever-increasing budget deficit. But while these concerns are somewhat well-founded, the author also lists as one of the “parasitic traits” that signal the “decay” of capitalism something that is in fact a sign of development, namely, “the growth of the non-productive sectors of the economy.”³²⁵

³²² Ibid., 50-56.

³²³ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 5.

³²⁴ Ibid., 6.

³²⁵ Ibid., 6.

This reveals a lot about the communist perspective on the issue; the process that the textbook refers to is the shift between the sectors of the economy that took place in the United States and most Western countries in the second half of the 20th century. The weight of services within the economy increased, overtook industries, and the so-called tertiary sector became the most important sector of the economy. This change is difficult to interpret from a communist perspective, as communist theorists have always emphasized industry (especially heavy industry), the actual production of physically tangible goods, as the most important function of the economy, and largely ignored the service sector. This attitude is also apparent during the analysis of the Soviet and the American economies (see subchapter 5.3 above), where the textbook emphasizes the comparison of the indexes that measure the physical quantity of industrial production. The authors interpret the diminishing significance of the industrial sector in the United States as a sign of the weakening of the American economy – while in fact, the Americans were already shifting to a new phase of production, which has become even more dominant since then, and in reality, it was the communist countries that were lagging behind. The author notes that with the Great Society program the Johnson administration attempted to decrease the inequalities caused by capitalism, alleviate the “most painful scourges of capitalist society,” social and racial inequality. The Great Society program could have been an important propaganda tool in the hands of the Americans, but most of the money that should have been used by the Great Society was used up for the military expenditures of the Vietnam War.³²⁶

The prediction in *Agency-Operative Situation* for the future of the American economy is that “it is dubious whether the pace of development of the previous years can be sustained,” and the evaluation of the then contemporary situation is that “the economic foundations of the bastion of imperialism – the economy of the United States – are not as secure as the leaders of the American government would want it to be.”³²⁷ This is illustrated by providing certain index numbers about the slowing rate of the growth of industrial production in the United States, the diminishing rate of capital investment, and certain branches of the industry that are shrinking, such as car production, steel production, and construction. This shows how out of touch the Soviets and their allies were with processes in the American economy.

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, in his short description of the subject, Pozsonyi acknowledges the power of the American economy in *Useful Knowledge* (1974). He also lists its main sectors and branches, singling out manufacturing as the most important one.³²⁸

³²⁶ Ibid., 3.

³²⁷ Ibid., 6.

³²⁸ *Useful Knowledge*, 6-8.

He describes the United States as: “in its economic life, capital has been concentrated to the highest extent in the history of capitalism.” He also mentions the most important corporations, monopolies, as well as their influence on American politics and society (for details, see the next subchapter.) He notes that this high concentration that can be witnessed in other branches of the economy is also present in agriculture, which is likewise characterized by production on the large scale. Pozsonyi also observes the rapid changes that take place in the American economy, especially due to the development of the chemical industry and the automation-electronic industry.³²⁹

In *Operative Situation* (1985), the contemporary state of the American economy is described in greater detail than in any of the earlier textbooks. The differences between the economic policies of the various presidential administrations are enumerated and, in certain sections of this book, the American economy is presented in a less (ideologically) biased way. During the brief description of the American economy in the first, introductory chapter, a number of issues are listed that the U.S. economy was facing at the time of writing in the early 1980s. These include the slowing growth rate, “stagflation,” and the economic challenges posed by the emergence of Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany as competitors on the global stage.³³⁰ The influence of corporations on society and political life is also discussed, and it is explained how they achieve this by, for example, lobbying.

Szecsődi further elaborates on the state of the American economy in a chapter that is dedicated to this topic, which he begins by revisiting the then current state of the American economy and by elaborating on the effects of the recession. He claims that although the most important economic indexes are slowly turning positive, the U.S. is still struggling with an unusually long and deep recession.³³¹ What follows is a relatively thorough analysis of the consequences of the oil crisis of the 1970s. Szecsődi discusses the energy crisis, the economic policy of the Carter and the Reagan administrations, and the role of the Federal Reserve and its chairman, Paul Volcker.³³² While the U.S. is still in a recession, Szecsődi is cautiously optimistic about the future perspectives of the American economy. On the one hand, he predicts that the falling oil prices are going to affect certain branches of the economy in a beneficial way, especially the chemical industry and transportation. On the other hand, their effect on the

³²⁹ Ibid., 8.

³³⁰ *Operative Situation*, 6-7.

³³¹ Ibid., 24.

³³² Ibid., 24-26.

international financial world is negative, which could in turn influence the American banking system, and could once again lead to high interest rates.

The recession led to the transformation of the structure of the economy, and Szecsődi provides an overview of these changes. First, he reviews branches of the economy that continued to prosper even under these circumstances, which include the computer industry, the communications industry, robotics and automatization within the machine industry, and information technology and computer services within the service sector. At the same time, the branches of the economy that ended up as the real losers of the recession are the steel industry, the car industry, and constructions. In the earlier textbooks, the focus was on the industrial sector, especially heavy industry, and the increasing importance of the service sector was considered to be a symptom of the decay of the American economy. Szecsődi already realizes that this is not the case. He points out that the importance of services in the American economy has been growing for quite some time, and that this tendency was only strengthened by the recession of the 1970s-early 1980s. He acknowledges that economists claim that this is going to become the model for the future of the economy, a society based on information technology and services.³³³ His description of the American economy is more detailed and objective than that of the previous textbooks.

Apart from Szecsődi's work, the other books do not contain a lot of information that could have been used to understand the contemporary American economy. They are highly ideologically charged sources that reveal more about the way communists thought about the United States than about the country itself. For the first time in these textbooks, in *Operative Situation* we can see an attempt to analyze events that took place in the American economy from a non-communist perspective. But Szecsődi is not an economist, and his knowledge of the American economy is superficial, closer to the level of a well-informed newspaper reader, who is marginally interested in economics. Using American sources, he focuses on some current issues which are important for the American economy, but have little to do with the bilateral relationship, which he completely ignores. This is especially remarkable if we consider the fact that by the 1980s, Hungary already had strong economic ties with the United States, was already a member of the IMF. Realistically, one would expect that a more detailed analysis of the American economy should be an important part of the preparation of intelligence officers, but this is not the case. While Szecsődi's attempt is certainly an improvement over the ideological approach of the Soviet books, it could still not serve as the basis for serious intelligence work.

³³³ Ibid., 27.

5.5 The Influence of American Corporations in the United States and Abroad

The role corporations, or as they are often referred to in the textbooks, “monopolies,” in the American economy and the corporate influence in politics is discussed in detail in several preparatory materials. Such interest is justified, as at the time that the textbooks were written as well as today, large companies did indeed dominate the economic life of the United States, they continue to play a considerable role in the global economy, and also have the capability to influence the course of policy. This process is by all means a legitimate field of study for any intelligence agency. The role of the “monopolies” in economy and politics is also emphasized by communist ideology, as has been shown in Chapter 3 of this dissertation; in fact, they are often presented the sole driving force behind American foreign policy. This subchapter contains an overview and analysis of the way the textbooks portray the role of monopolies in the American economy, globally, as well as how their influence in American politics is demonstrated and explained. We also seek answers to at least two key questions: Does the description of the monopolies occupy such a prominent place in at least some of the materials because it serves a practical purpose? Could the information provided be used during preparation for the Hungarian intelligence officers in a meaningful way, or is it there for other reasons?

Quoting from the minutes of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, *General Description* (1965) explains why monopolies should be considered vital targets by the intelligence agencies of the communist countries. “The monopolistic bourgeoisie of the United States of America has assumed the role of the ‘savior’ of capitalism. [...] The monopolies of the United States that exercise power, aim to achieve world domination, in order to be able to indiscriminately exploit the people of the world.” According to this interpretation, monopolies have a decisive influence over American politics, and they use it to extend their economic power globally. “The endless development of freely competitive capitalism resulted in the unprecedented concentration of capital and production, in the emergence of monopolies, which subjected the state apparatus to their own interests, and play a leading role in the political and economic life of the country.”³³⁴ In essence, the economic interests of the great corporations, monopolies are presented as being practically the only factor that determines the course of the foreign policy of the United States.

³³⁴ *General Description*, 12.

As discussed above in Chapter 3 of this dissertation,³³⁵ the author of *General Description* argues that American democracy is only a *façade*, whereas the real power is exercised by the financial elite. He claims that the capitalist groups establish and strengthen their positions in the government and use it for their own purposes, which would eventually lead to the complete government apparatus becoming a tool to promote the interests of a financial oligarchy.³³⁶ Meanwhile, financial interest groups should not be seen as a unified monolith: the strongest groups of the capitalist oligarchy are in a constant competition among each other for the leading positions in economic life.³³⁷ For this reason, the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc should put a special emphasis on studying these capitalist conglomerates, as their analysis could provide an insight into how the actions of the American government “depends upon the interests of the financial oligarchy”³³⁸ and help predict the future course of American policy.

The author of *General Description* also emphasizes that the fact that the government sector constitutes a relatively small segment of the American economy, even in comparison with other capitalist countries. The reason given for this is that “the government is the obedient tool of the monopolies,”³³⁹ and only performs functions that would not be profitable for the monopolies; then it is noted that even this is too much for some capitalists. He also lists some of the financial capitalist monopolies that occupy leading positions in the American economy.³⁴⁰ These “monopolies” are also described in detail later, in the chapter on the economy, where the author elaborates on their activities, and names some other interest groups.³⁴¹ They are also compared to smaller enterprises, which are often in a close relationship with these monopolies and can, in fact, be considered to be “the dependents of monopolies.”³⁴² It is noted that it is often easier for intelligence officers to infiltrate these smaller companies.³⁴³ Due to their significance, studying the monopolies, the strengths and weaknesses of the American economy and its most significant branches, thus evaluating the country’s economic and military potential, are relevant tasks for Soviet intelligence. The most important industries of the United States are also enumerated, along with the largest monopolies that occupy

³³⁵ See Chapter 3.3.

³³⁶ *General Description*, 28.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁴⁰ He mentions Morgan, Rockefeller, Dupont, Hellon, groups from Cleveland and Chicago (without any further specification), and the Bank of America.

³⁴¹ *General Description*, 55.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 55.

dominant positions in these industries. The selection of the branches of the economy that are mentioned are characteristic of the Soviet approach, as the list includes heavy industries and branches of the machine industry, such as automobile manufacturing, electrotechnology, chemical industry, nuclear industry, metallurgy, and the oil industry. The service sector, of course, is not even mentioned.

In the description of the American monopolies, several of the names of the largest corporations are misspelled. This most stems from mistranslations. This appears to be still another piece of evidence for the unfamiliarity of the translator with the American economy; it indicates that he was translating the Russian-language, Soviet-written material without having a deeper understanding of the subject. It is even more telling that these errors were not corrected later either by an editor. In spite of the claims about the importance of the monopolies in the text, the material that was given to the intelligence officers contains a number of typos and other mistakes, even in the names of some of the most powerful capitalist groups.

The international significance of the monopolies is also discussed in *General Description*: the author points out that the American market has become too small for the largest monopolies, and they have made efforts to spread their influence abroad. The government does not attempt to restrict this in any way, “To the contrary, the leading circles of the USA step on the path of open expansionist policy that aims at world domination, and they use every possible method to protect and expand the international empire of the financial magnates.”³⁴⁴ Monopolies expand their power and influence by making investments abroad, which brings them a lot of extra profit. This process has accelerated since the end of the Second World War, focusing mostly on the developing world. In that region, American corporations can take advantage of the richness in natural resources, cheap labor, cheap land, and the opportunities provided by the insufficient level of economic development in these countries. These factors can easily lead to the developing nations becoming the economically dependent of the U.S. This way, American capital completely dominates the economy of the majority of Latin-America, and has even entered Africa, which has traditionally been the dominion of British and French capitalist groups. The author also lists a number of industries in the specific countries that are under American control, names the monopolies that have invested here, and estimates the extent of American influence in the various developing nations.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 36.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 36-37. The examples provided include the mining interests of the “Morgan house” in various Latin-American countries, such as copper mining in Chile, Peru, and Mexico, or the Rockefellers’ influence in Africa through Chase Manhattan Bank.

The Third World is not the only part of the world that is targeted by American economic expansion. After the Second World War, American monopolies have also increased their rate of investment in developed countries, especially in Western Europe. This occurred first in the automobile industry, but now this pattern is continued in the chemical industry, airplane manufacturing, electronics, and nuclear industry (the establishment of the CERN nuclear research facility in Geneva is brought up as an example). The summary of the author about American investments worldwide is that “the data listed proves that the monopolies of the United States embody the most aggressive circles of American capitalism that strive for global domination.”³⁴⁶

The forms of “economic expansion” that the USA engages in are also specified in *General Description*. The countries where the United States has significant economic interests are listed, along with names the branches of the industry and the companies involved.³⁴⁷ The argument is that the rate of American foreign investment has increased as a consequence of cheap labor costs, lack of competition, and low taxes abroad. Western Europe has increasingly become an important target for American investors because the political climate is calmer and there is almost no risk of sudden, unexpected nationalization. The nature of investments in Latin-America is very different, it “reveals who the real boss is in the Western hemisphere.”³⁴⁸ In case there are any attempts to curb American interests, the American government intervenes, and “the ‘big stick’ strikes at those who are discontent.”³⁴⁹ The author also lists countries in Asia and Africa with significant American economic presence.

It is interesting to note that foreign investments are presented here as something negative, a tool of domination used by the monopolies.³⁵⁰ While foreign influence in a country’s economy certainly has its risks and can have negative impacts, today, economists generally consider foreign investment to be positive development overall.³⁵¹ The Hungarian attitude has apparently also changed during *détente*, as evidenced by the fact that by the 1970s and the 1980s, American investments were allowed, even welcomed in Hungary.³⁵² Similarly, whereas Hungary fought hard and was grateful to receive loans from the International Monetary Fund in the early 1980s, less than two decades earlier in *General Description*, the IMF is (not

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 38.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 119.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 121.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 121.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 125.

³⁵¹ See, Prakash Loungani and Assaf Razin, “How Beneficial Is Foreign Direct Investment for Developing Countries?” *Finance & Development* 38, no. 2 (2001), accessed November 25, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2001/06/loungani.htm>.

³⁵² Borhi, *Nagyhatalmi érdekek hálójában*, 383.

incorrectly) described as a tool of global American economic oppression in the Third World, along with the Export-Import Bank and the World Bank.³⁵³

In *General Description* it is described how American monopolies influence politics in their own country and “submit the government apparatus.” This mostly happens in one of two ways, by “buying” government officials, often by promising them well-paying positions in their companies, or by filling government positions with their own cronies.³⁵⁴ One of the ways how corporate interests influence politics is by financing presidential and other campaigns, often demanding government positions for themselves or their surrogates in return. This is also a field for struggle between the various capitalist groups: it is not enough if the interests of big business in general are represented, it has to be their own companies. Here the Soviet authors make a valid point and formulate a legitimate criticism of the American system of politics. Corporate influence has long been pervasive in American politics, one just has to take a look at the lucrative book deals and public speaking engagements provided by some of the greatest corporations to former presidents, and the presence of the representatives of various corporate groups in basically every administration.

Various examples are provided for the personal links between government and big monopolies and mentions the business ties of the various presidents, with a special focus on Lyndon B. Johnson, the sitting president at the time of writing. It is pointed out that “the exploration of the economic and financial links that connect the President of the United States to the government budget enables us to reveal the deeper secrets of government policy and ensure the possibility of more effective combat against the main enemy.”³⁵⁵ Lucrative military contracts are especially important for the “monopolies.” The State Department, the Department of Defense, the Treasury Department, and the CIA are mentioned as institutions that have been to a great extent “infiltrated” by the representatives of the capitalist interest groups. In order to illustrate this, the author details the business connections and interests of some of the members of the Johnson administration.³⁵⁶

At the same time, government officials try to conceal their relationship with the monopolies from the public, since revealing these could compromise them. Consequently, the author states that special attention should be devoted by the intelligence officers to exploring the connections between politics and big business. The names of the people in the

³⁵³ *General Description*, 126.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 40-44.

administration as well as the names of the companies are often misspelled, probably once again due to translation errors, which makes one doubt the effectiveness and usefulness of this material for actual intelligence officers. This is further underlined by the fact that by the time the material was translated into Hungarian, a lot of this information was already obsolete, given that the original date of publication was 1965, and it was published in Hungarian in 1970.

The process of lobbying is described in *General Description* as “a characteristically bourgeois institution,” and refers to it as “the third house of the Congress of the United States.”³⁵⁷ This is seen as another example for how the monopolies influence politics, and it is also another venue where the conflicts between various interest groups manifest. They try to influence political actors to make decisions that would benefit their company and help gain advantage in the economic competition. The monopolies also attempt to uncover each other’s secrets. The author claims that in the era of the constant crisis of capitalism lobbying also intensifies, as it is a symptom of corruption. Studying this process could provide an opportunity for the Eastern bloc agencies to gain insight into the relationship between the monopolies and the government, predict the course of American foreign policy, and “develop and realize plans to thwart the aggressive schemes of American imperialism.”³⁵⁸

The global influence of the American monopolies is emphasized in *Agency-Operative Situation* (1967) as an important aspect of American economic power, as “it has a wide range of monopolistic connections all over the capitalist world.”³⁵⁹ The pattern presented is similar to the one detailed in *General Description*: the United States invests in more technologically intensive industries (car manufacturing, chemical industry, computers) in the developed countries and in the extraction of raw materials in the developing countries. The author notes that recently (given the date of publication, this refers to the second half of the 1960s), the expansion of American capital has increasingly turned towards Canada and Western Europe. He continues to claim that the influence of American monopolies in these countries has become a source of friction within the “imperialist world,” and studying and exploiting these conflicts should be a priority for Soviet intelligence, France is specifically mentioned as an example.

As far as the influence of the monopolies on American politics is concerned, the author of *Agency-Operative Situation* highlights the role of the military and industrial circles and ties them to the “growing strength of far-right circles.”³⁶⁰ While it would be possible for the

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 47.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 49.

³⁵⁹ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 2.

³⁶⁰ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 20.

American economy to switch to peacetime production, he points out that these powerful groups are not interested in *détente*. Using the press, members of Congress, or other channels, the major military industrial interests step up against any attempt to cut military spending or ease international tensions. President Eisenhower's well-known and controversial farewell address is quoted, where he warned the American public about the potential dangers represented by the military-industrial complex.³⁶¹ The author points out that the aforementioned "far-right" groups, as well as arms manufacturing corporations, can all be sources of valuable information and they should be targets of the activity of the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc. "In order to compromise their influence, we take active actions against them."³⁶²

Agency-Operative Situation represents a practical approach to lobbying, with a focus on those aspects that could be more relevant for actual operative work. The author points out that while lobbyists aim to influence the government, they also gather information about future government actions that could impact their organizations. For arms manufacturers this could include monitoring changes in American military strategy and the decisions of the Department of Defense, for banking and financial circles, shifts in the international situation that could affect stock prices, and oil companies know a lot about the situation in the Middle East. This information could be valuable for operative purposes, and these organizations should also be seen as potential targets for Soviet intelligence.

Even though only a few pages are devoted to the discussion of the American economy in Pozsonyi's *Useful Knowledge* (1974), the role of monopolies is also addressed. Pozsonyi declares that historically, the big trusts have gradually replaced the small companies and have come to dominate every branch of the economy. He lists the largest American banks on the financial capital market and points out that they control most of the monopolies in industry and trade through investments in their shares. He also enumerates the biggest American monopolies in various industries, and names the financial groups that own and control them.³⁶³ He does not mention how the influence of the monopolies is manifested in politics, which is interesting, considering that the topic was discussed in great detail in the Soviet books.

During his overview of American politics in *Operative Situation* (1985), Szecsődi mentions the influence of economic interest groups and explains how the changes in power relations among them also affect politics. He points to the fact that by the middle of the 1980s,

³⁶¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People, January 17, 1961," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed January 18, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>.

³⁶² *Agency-Operative Situation*, 22.

³⁶³ *Useful Knowledge*, 7.

the Reagan administration has brought into the political leadership new Californian groups that are mostly involved in the military industry.³⁶⁴ Szecsődi claims that even though many politicians are not members of the “ruling classes” themselves, they all depend on them, and politicians cannot act against the interests of the ruling elites: “Their election, financial situation, as well as their influence depends on them.”³⁶⁵ Szecsődi points out that while the influence of business interests can be felt in all branches of the government as well as in various government agencies, its effect is the greatest on the legislative branch, which he considers to be the most important target of this type of activity.³⁶⁶ He is of course right; in the American political system the legislative branch of the government is considered to be the most sensitive to lobbying.³⁶⁷ Szecsődi lists some examples for how business interests can influence Congress. First of all, there are people in Congress who are businessmen themselves and represent their own interests, but even if they are not, they have considerable wealth or investments that tie them to these circles.

He describes lobbying, amusingly, as follows: “having an enormous number of letters written to the Senators [sic!] in order to ‘legalize’ the activity, and money is donated to the campaign fund of the given politician as a campaign contribution.”³⁶⁸ Szecsődi lists the most influential lobby groups: the military-industrial lobby, the various industrial lobbies, churches, and foreign lobbies. Here he once again acknowledges the divisions inside the ruling elite of the country: as he points out, the various lobby groups are often engaged in a struggle for the same resources, or the same government contracts that would ensure high profits. He provides details on how lobbyists represent the interests of the “1%” in Washington. He appears to believe that these people make the most important political decisions behind the scenes, including choosing the President. In this regard, his evaluation is not much different from that of the first book, written almost twenty years earlier.

Similarly to the earlier books, Szecsődi declares that since the end of the Second World War, the foreign policy of the United States has been determined by the plans of the monopolies, which aim at further expansion. He elaborates on how foreign policy is directly related to corporate interests:³⁶⁹ through military contracts, through their foreign transactions (such as

³⁶⁴ *Operative Situation*, 6.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁶⁷ Charles McC. Mathias Jr., “Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 5 (Summer 1981), 988.

³⁶⁸ *Operative Situation*, 8.

³⁶⁹ Whereas the previous books used the term “monopoly” to describe the big American companies, Szecsődi uses the term “corporation” and “monopoly” interchangeably.

imports, exports, capital investment, etc.), and the government subsidies for research and development. Szecsődi also claims that while the actual short-term goals and methods and policies that would serve the goals of the monopolies constantly change, their fundamental objectives remain constant. These include stopping the spread of “socialism” and pushing it back, ensuring the hegemony of the United States over its competitors, and with the tools of neocolonialism, establishing and extending the power of American monopolies over the former colonies of the European powers.³⁷⁰ But free competition does not necessarily always benefit exclusively the American monopolies, foreign corporations can also enter the American market. As an example, Szecsődi brings up the detrimental effects of Japanese competition on American car manufacturing.³⁷¹

The discussion of the role of big corporations has to be a part of any meaningful description of the American economy, and it goes without saying that they obviously also have a strong political influence globally and at home. It is hardly surprising that the description of these phenomena is more ideologically charged in the earlier materials and more neutral in the later ones. By the end of the Cold War, Hungary started to open up towards American corporations, and it would have been increasingly justify this if they had kept the same narrative. But in essence, the message remains the same: behind the scenes, the big corporations control American economy and politics. While corporate influence is obviously present, it is an oversimplification to state that this is the only factor that determines the course of American policy, domestic or foreign.

But is this knowledge useful for future intelligence officers, does it promote their understanding of America? It only does so to a very limited extent, and it is difficult to believe that this information could have served as the basis for serious intelligence work – especially if even the name of the biggest corporations is not spelled correctly, which is just an indication about how inaccurate it was.

5.6 Conclusion

Hungarian-American economic relations underwent major improvements during the *détente* period: outstanding financial claims were settled,³⁷² Hungary was granted Most Favored Nation status and was allowed to join the International Monetary Fund (and started taking Western

³⁷⁰ *Operative Situation*, 15.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁷² See: Máté Gergely Balogh, *The Road to the Hungarian-American Claims Settlement – Hungarian-American Relations after 1956 and the Claims Settlement of 1973 between Hungary and the United States of America*. (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller Aktiengesellschaft & Co., 2009).

loans).³⁷³ Certain American companies were allowed to invest in Hungary. But none of this is really reflected by the preparatory materials: the Hungarian-American bilateral economic relationship is not discussed, not even by Szecsődi, who wrote in the middle of the 1980s. For example, when he describes the role of the Federal Reserve in handling the oil crisis, he does not even mention that a high-level Fed delegation visited Hungary in 1974, led by Arthur Burns, who was the chairman of the Fed at the time.³⁷⁴ In general, the American economy is presented from the perspective of the Eastern bloc in general, not of Hungary. The issues that are discussed in the textbooks may be considered important for the Cold War as a whole, but their relevance to the Hungarian-American relationship, or Hungarian economic interests, is negligible.

The information provided about the American economy further confirms that these materials could not serve as a basis for preparation for serious intelligence work. The descriptions of the U.S. economy are superficial and often inaccurate, and the Soviet materials are riddled with spelling and translation errors. Instead of a genuine attempt to understand the United States, what we can see is the projection of communist ideology onto the American economy. The image presented in the textbooks is that the corrupt “monopolies” are in complete control of the American economy, they buy and sell politicians, determine the course of American foreign policy, exploit the whole capitalist world and especially the Third World, and plan to destroy socialism, and especially the Soviet Union. This tells us more about the prejudices and phobias of the communist establishment than about the United States.

The narrative about the American economy in the textbooks mirrors the interpretation that was officially promoted by the communist parties of the Eastern bloc at the time. A good example for this is *Amerika gazdaságföldrajza* [The economic geography of America], a widely distributed Hungarian textbook, first published in 1987.³⁷⁵ The reasons given for the economic development of the United States are similar to what we can find in the preparatory materials, including the emphasis on the absence of feudalism, the abundance of natural resources, and the arrival of talented and hardworking immigrants.³⁷⁶ The interpretation of the emergence of the “monopolies” (referred to as such) and their influence on the foreign policy of the United

³⁷³ For more, see János Honvári, *Magyarország gazdaságtörténete Trianontól a rendszerváltásig* [The Economic History of Hungary from Trianon until the End of Communism] (Budapest: Aula, 2005), and for more on the debt accumulated by Hungary under communism, Attila Mong, *Kádár hitele* [Kádár’s loan] (Budapest: Libri, 2012).

³⁷⁴ “Synopsis of Conversations with Hungarian Officials, May 10-12, 1974.” Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Arthur Burns Papers, 1969-78, Federal Reserve Bank Files, Box D 5.

³⁷⁵ Rezső Mészáros, Ferenc Probáld, Béla Sárfalvi, Nándor Szegedi, *Amerika gazdaságföldrajza*. (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1987).

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 11-13.

States, its “imperialistic ambitions,”³⁷⁷ also follows the pattern laid out by the materials of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior.

The figure on page 13 of *Amerika gazdaságföldrajza* that is used to illustrate the power of the House of Morgan would not be out of place in any of the Soviet textbooks (Figure 1).³⁷⁸ Here, the House of Morgan is represented as a puppet master that controls other major corporations such as Ford, IBM, or Coca Cola, from behind the scenes. It is somewhat unexpected but reveals a lot about the Kádár regime that at a time when the Hungarian economy was on life support from Western loans, this was the discourse presented to the general public about the American economy. This image reflects the same way of thinking that characterized the Soviet textbooks written twenty years earlier, not long after the suppression of the 1956 Revolution. But it is even more telling that the interpretation that was presented to prospective intelligence officers by Szecsődi was also practically the same as in the aforementioned geography textbook, in spite of the fact that by this time, the People’s Republic of Hungary had extensive economic relations with the United States.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁷⁸ See Figure 1.

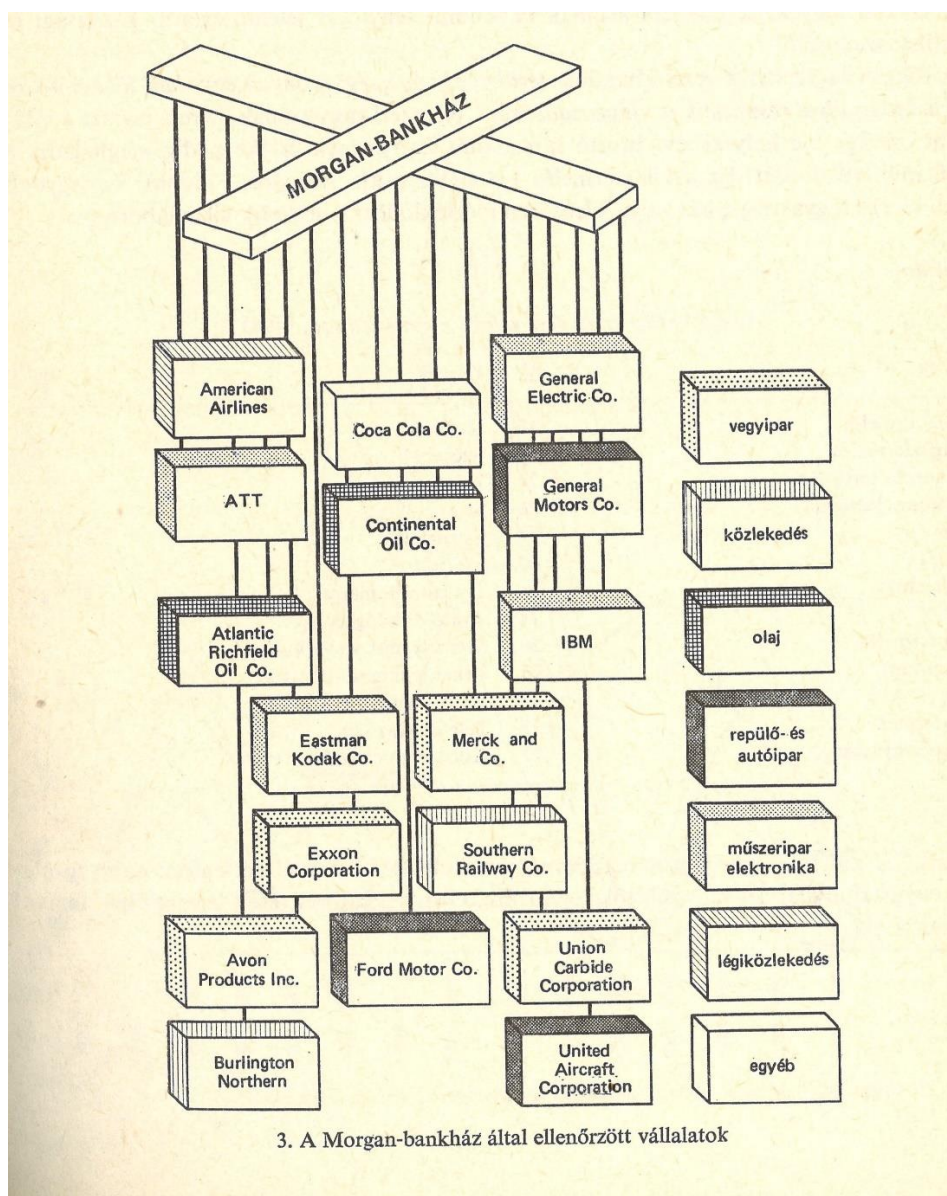


Figure 1: “A Morgan-bankház által ellenőrzött vállalatok” [Companies controlled by the House of Morgan] *Amerika gazdaságföldrajza*, 13.

This all leads us to conclude that the goal of these materials was not to represent the American economy in an accurate way. This is also reflected by the selection of the sources that were used in the textbooks. The Soviet materials of course almost exclusively use Soviet-written sources, records of the CPSU or, as seen earlier, quotes from Lenin, and books written by presumably Soviet authors with Russian names. The Hungarian booklets do not contain any recommended literature that would exclusively focus on economics. Based on the text, we can assume that the sources that they could have used do not go beyond the scope of a moderately informed newspaper reader.

The information presented in the textbooks about the American economy could not serve as preparation for effective intelligence work. The issues that would have been relevant for gathering intelligence from a Hungarian-American perspective are not even mentioned in the textbooks, and what is discussed is clearly ideologically driven and inaccurate. The image of the American economy present in these materials is distorted, it is a projection of communist ideology to the United States, in accordance with the official interpretation, rather than a genuine attempt to analyze reality. But how is this possible when we know that by this time, there were extensive economic contacts between the two countries? What does the relevant literature say?

The research of Zsuzsanna Borvendég has demonstrated that Hungarian military intelligence, the MNVK-2 was very active when it came to the economic field during the Cold War.³⁷⁹ Apparently, the civilian intelligence was not, or at least those officers who were prepared from these textbooks were not. It is quite possible that there were other materials that were used during the preparation of the intelligence officers, possibly related to the American economy as well. But the textbooks that were examined in this chapter were also written by intelligence officers; as mentioned before, we know that Pozsonyi and Szecsődi both worked undercover in the United States themselves. If the preparatory booklets are any indication, economic intelligence against the United States was not a main priority for the civilian intelligence agencies of the Hungarian People's Republic, or at least not for those officers that were prepared from these books.

³⁷⁹ See Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*.

Chapter 6

American Society and the American National Character

6.1 Life in America, American Society, and the American People in the Preparatory Materials

It was necessary to familiarize the audience of the textbooks with various aspects of American society and certain characteristics of the American people for a number of reasons. First of all, these intelligence officers were going to live in the United States, and one of the objectives during their preparation was to help them get acquainted with the country in order to enable them to settle down quickly. They also needed to know their environment in order to be able to blend in and avoid the attention of American authorities, especially counterintelligence. The textbooks also were to “educate” future intelligence officers about the negative aspects of American life and society, so that they would be less likely to question the ideological foundations of their work. Finally, the officers would collect most of the information from human sources – human intelligence, “HUMINT,” as opposed to more technical forms of gathering intelligence. This process typically involves “identifying and recruiting a foreign official” who is willing to share information with the intelligence service.³⁸⁰ This is a relationship between two people, and familiarity with the social and cultural environment is required during the selection of the potential sources, for understanding their motivations, and in order to approach them successfully. While the textbooks discussed American issues such as politics and economy as part of the background for intelligence activity, the description of American society and people was directly relevant for operative work.

Consequently, the textbooks contain quite a lot of information about the national characteristics of the Americans and various features of American society. Beside references to the topic throughout the books, there are specific chapters dedicated to it, as well as an entire shorter booklet, the 16-page *National Characteristics* (1973). In *General Description* (1965), American people and society are discussed in detail in the 30-page final chapter, “National Characteristics, Typical Customs of the Americans and their Way of Life. The Behavior of Americans Abroad.”³⁸¹ *Agency-Operative Situation* (1967) is not divided into chapters, but it covers topics such as race (16-17), crime (23-28), class differences (54-58), as well as certain characteristics of American society and people (60-78). The second text in the same publication,

³⁸⁰ Shulsky and Schmitt, *Silent Warfare*, 11.

³⁸¹ *General Description*, 141-170.

“Personal and Non-Personal Contact,” is specifically about “tradecraft,” methods used by intelligence agencies to operate and communicate with their sources,³⁸² and it also conveys some information about the society that served as a background for this activity. The goal of the 112-page *Useful Knowledge* (1974) by Pozsonyi is to present everyday life in the U.S.; consequently, a large portion of this book is relevant to this current topic. This includes the chapters on “Population, Nationalities, Social Situation, Religion” (3-6), “Scientific, Cultural, Artistic and Social Life” (42-59), “The Negro and Colored Question” (72-75), and certain parts of the chapter that presents New York (94-111). Pozsonyi’s *Report* (1971) also contains information about the characteristics of the American people and society, especially in a 6-page chapter about the typical features of the target country,³⁸³ and the information it provides often complements *Useful Knowledge*. Finally, *Operative Situation* (1985) has a 9-page chapter dedicated to “The General National and Cultural Characteristics of the Population.”

This chapter of the dissertation analyzes the image of American society and American people in the textbooks. Dividing the topic into smaller units poses difficulties, as many of these aspects are closely related, and they are discussed together in the books. The following subchapter examines the presentation of American society and issues such as class, race, nationalities, and religion. The third subchapter discusses the presentation national characteristics and the average American, issues related to personal life, behavior, and values, such as political beliefs, family, sexuality, and social norms. The objectives are similar to those in the previous chapters. Is the treatment of the topic relatively identical in the textbooks over the period, or can we witness a change of perspective over time? What is the objective of the presentation of American society, everyday American life, and the characteristics of the average American? Do the books reflect a genuine attempt to draw an accurate image of America, or is it mostly a projection of communist ideology? Could these texts indeed serve as effective preparation for the work of the intelligence officers, or were they mostly instruments of ideological education and indoctrination?

6.2 American Society: Class System, Race and Racism, Religion

The fact that the topic is discussed extensively in the materials suggest that during the preparation, there was a special emphasis on teaching the intelligence officers about American society. As the focus and general purpose are to a certain extent different in each textbook, not

³⁸² Shulsky and Schmitt, *Silent Warfare*, 19.

³⁸³ *Report*, 22-29

all social issues are present in all of them, and they concentrate on different aspects of the topic. This subchapter provides an overview of how certain social characteristics of the United States are discussed in the books where they do appear. These include social differences and social class, race relations and racism, immigrant groups (including Hungarian-Americans in the materials where they are discussed), and finally, religion.

The author of *General Description* (1965) refers to the United States as “the country of sharp class differences.” In a classic Marxist-Leninist fashion, he presents an overtly simplified image of American society as made up of two opposing classes, 83% of the population being employees, and the rest, “entrepreneurs, farmers, small businessmen, industrialists, intellectuals, clergymen.”³⁸⁴ Later in the book, the differences between “the wasteful conduct of the wealthy layers of the population and the deprivation of the workers” are detailed in order to emphasize the social gap, and John F. Kennedy is quoted from the 1960 presidential election campaign, when he sensationally claimed that 17 million Americans go to bed hungry every night.³⁸⁵

The description of the racial and ethnic composition of the United States is similarly simplistic. The “primary core” of American society is described as having been formed by the English, the Irish, and the Scottish. These people are contrasted with those who “suffer from racial discrimination,” primarily the descendants of African slaves, who have no political and economic rights, along with the “Indians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos.”³⁸⁶ The author puts the Irish into the same category as the English and the Scottish ignoring the long history of discrimination against the Irish in America, and also neglects to mention that the majority of white people in the United States are not of British origin. The intent is to paint a picture of America as a society divided sharply by race as well as by class. Later, the author does mention that many Europeans escaped to the U.S. from religious persecution or economic deprivation. Immigrants tend to maintain their traditions for some time, but eventually they get assimilated into American society. The text cites 19th and early 20th century Russian authors as authorities on immigrants to the U.S., such as Lenin about the oppression of the Irish by the English, and Lermontov and Belinsky about the ingenuity of the Germans.³⁸⁷ *General Description* discusses American racism along with the disdain that

³⁸⁴ *General Description*, 141-142

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 153. For the original text of the speech, see John F. Kennedy, “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy at Phoenix, Arizona, April 9,” John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, accessed August 22, 2021, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/phoenix-az-19600409>.

³⁸⁶ *General Description*, 142.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

Americans feel towards citizens of other countries. The underlying reasons for their feelings of racial superiority are “the cult of the dollar,” “the remnants of the system of slavery, and the influence of bourgeois propaganda.”³⁸⁸ Several anecdotes are used to illustrate racism in America, along with a quote from Theodore Dreiser: “From a moral and intellectual standpoint, the American believes himself to be a being of the highest order, incomparably more perfect than other representatives of the human race.”³⁸⁹

General Description touches upon the role of religion in American society, claiming that the church and the state are formally separated, but “the government keeps priests in Congress, chaplains in the Army and the Navy, and the estates of the church are tax-free.”³⁹⁰ The text alleges that freedom of thought is not guaranteed for atheists in the United States; for example, in court, people have to swear an oath “before god [sic],”³⁹¹ religious affiliation is important for political reliability, and many public schools have daily prayers. The textbook provides seemingly arbitrary statistics about the number of “denominations, sects and religious beliefs” and the number of American “believers.”³⁹² It lists the reasons why Americans go to church: because of family traditions and parental pressure, because they believe that it is the appropriate thing to do, they hope that it is going to improve their character, or they expect that they can establish business contacts and gather information. The author apparently seems to be confused by the possibility that some people might indeed believe in the religion that they follow. He notes that “among religious people, many believe in god and in religious morality,” which the intelligence agencies have to take into consideration. The section clearly reflects the communist attitude towards religion as something useless, superficial, and hypocritical, the opium of the masses.

Agency-Operative Situation (1967) considers the decline in American morals to be the reason behind many of the social ills in the United States. As part of the discussion of the operative situation, *Agency-Operative Situation* refers to high crime rates, drug use, the prevalence of rape and “perversion” as “a sign of the rotting of the American society.”³⁹³ The author provides a number of statistics for the growth of crime, and claims that its causes are

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 155.

³⁸⁹ Misspelled as “Theodor Dreiser.” Unfortunately, I did not find the original quote, this is the translation from Hungarian.

³⁹⁰ *General Description*, 158. The Hungarian text uses the term “egyházi birtok,” which historically used to refer to feudal lands owned by the Catholic Church in Hungary, whereas the original text probably referred to church property in general.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 158. As an affront, in texts published during the communist period, the word “God” was not capitalized, even when it was used to refer to the Judeo-Christian monotheistic God. The same is true for many other expressions related to religion, and the texts, naturally, also follow this tradition.

³⁹² Ibid., 159.

³⁹³ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 23.

social, but in addition, “it is founded on the rotting morals of the bourgeois society, which preaches the cult of violence and misanthropy.”³⁹⁴ This moral decline is epitomized by the generally accepted belief in the moral nature of force and violence, which is also reinforced by the media.

Similarly to *General Description*, social inequality is discussed in *Agency-Operative Situation*. The author acknowledges that America has the largest national income per capita in the world but claims that it is distributed unequally. He postulates that social differences are “the largest in the world” in the United States, emphasizing the contrast between the “100-150 thousand millionaires” and the “more than 30 million residents whose income is below the official poverty line.”³⁹⁵ He identifies the poorest demographic groups and geographical regions in the country, and claims that the economic conditions force the poor to engage in “economic struggle.” He predicts that the “strike struggle,” is going to escalate, but due to the “reactionary nature of the union leadership and the low rate of class consciousness of the American working class,”³⁹⁶ it is going to remain focused on economic issues. The lines are intentionally blurred between the poorest Americans and the relatively well-to-do, skilled, unionized workers (printers, airplane mechanics, steelworkers), whose strikes are pointed out as examples for the “economic struggle.” The goal is to paint a misleading image of a unified working class and underline the communist narrative about the class struggle.

Agency-Operative Situation begins the description of the situation of African Americans with a reference to the race riots that took place in more than a hundred American cities during the summer of 1967.³⁹⁷ The author points out that open racism was not the only cause for the riot, economic differences between whites and blacks when it comes to income as well as the rate of unemployment also played a part. The “economic exploitation” of black people, along with their “increasing consciousness,” leads to the emergence of mass movements. The author claims that the then recent armed uprisings show that “the moderate Negro leaders (the M. L. King-types), who put the emphasis on singing prayers and songs about freedom[?],³⁹⁸ have lost their popularity among the Negro masses,”³⁹⁹ who demand equal civil rights as well as economic equality with the whites immediately. He also notes the potential operative

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 24.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 55-56.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 56-57.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 16.

³⁹⁸ The author uses the expression *szabadságinduló*, which is an expression that does not exist in Hungarian, but it could be translated literally as “freedom march.”

³⁹⁹ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 16.

significance of the Civil Rights movements and discusses their politics (see Chapter 5 of this dissertation).

With regards to immigrants, the text establishes that the United States is the ethnically most diverse country in the world with more than 42 million immigrants having arrived since 1607,⁴⁰⁰ and provides a list of some of the most populous European immigrant groups in the U.S. It is worthy of note that Hungary is not included (but Czechoslovakia is), an indication that this book was originally not written with Hungarian intelligence officers in mind. The author remarks that many immigrants keep the traditions and language of their homeland and remain emotionally attached to it. The Germans are presented in detail, which could be due to the large number of German-Americans, as well as because the author emphasizes that “a good number of them hold anti-fascist, anti-militarist views,”⁴⁰¹ which means that they could be open to recruitment (probably by the intelligence of the GDR). Ethnic origin is pointed out as a potential basis for recruitment, including people whose ancestry can be tied to the Soviet Union, but the text warns that American counter-intelligence organizations are aware of this possibility, and pay special attention to people who originally come from socialist countries.⁴⁰²

National Characteristics (1971) states that while Americans outwardly put an emphasis on racial equality, in reality, “chauvinism is very strong in the United States.”⁴⁰³ Similarly to *General Description*, it notes that Americans look down on people from other countries. They believe in the superiority of American democracy and the American way of life and consider people from foreign countries inferior to a certain extent, which attitude serves as the foundation of American imperialism. Americans claim that there is equality of opportunity for everyone in the U.S., and as evidence, they bring up that they are a nation of immigrants from all over the world. They attribute the success of their country to the assumption that the most clever and energetic people went to America and ignore the historical and geographical advantages that have substantially contributed to the rapid development of the country. Many have a sentimental attachment to their ancestral homeland, especially the non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants: Jews, Poles, Italians, Greeks, and Chinese. This can also be used for operative purposes.⁴⁰⁴ Most Americans believe that the “poor national minorities (Negroes, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Indians)”⁴⁰⁵ deserve their fate as they fail to take advantage of the opportunities available to

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 69

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 70-71.

⁴⁰³ *National Characteristics*, 5.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 7.

them and ignore the fact that these people have a lot fewer opportunities in life, and often get stuck in a circle of poverty that they cannot break out of.

National Characteristics discusses religion in the U.S. and lists the largest denominations and affirming that church and state are separated. It is mentioned that people still get married largely within their religious tradition, and notes that the external signs of religiosity should be separated from belief: “In America, every good citizen has to believe in god and has to go to church regularly.”⁴⁰⁶ The social and political significance of religion is acknowledged, including charity. The text also contains advice on how to talk to Americans about religion, as militant anti-religious rhetoric could discourage them from further conversation. The intelligence officers should respect the Americans’ emotions, calmly let them know about the approach of Soviet citizens to religion and explain that contrary to what they might have been told, religious people are not persecuted in the Soviet Union [which was obviously a lie]. The author also notes that the Americans who visit the Soviet Union are greatly impressed by “the culture of domes and churches,” and the living standards of “church employees.”⁴⁰⁷

Useful Knowledge (1974) contains a lot of information about various aspects of American society. When it comes to social differences, in the chapter “Population, Nationalities, Social Situation, Religion,”⁴⁰⁸ Pozsonyi uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Commerce to illustrate social differences in the United States.⁴⁰⁹ He concludes that “even according to the official American data, which is obviously doctored,”⁴¹⁰ about 16-20% of the population, and 44% of the black population live in poverty. Pozsonyi provides further statistical data about the contemporary state of the U.S. economy and attempts to interpret it to confirm his preconceptions about an economy in decline and a deeply divided society. He also refers to the social divisions in American society in other chapters of the book, such as during the description of the housing situation, where he contrasts the “high society,” who live in mansions, with the homeless.⁴¹¹ He often connects social differences to race, which is a topic that he discusses extensively.

Pozsonyi uses data from the U. S. Census Bureau to present the racial composition of the country. He notes that most black people do not live in the South anymore, and “3/4 of the

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁰⁸ *Useful Knowledge*, 6-11.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 34.

[American] Indians vegetate on reservations, under very primitive circumstances.”⁴¹² Later in the book, he dedicates a whole chapter to race relations in the United States. Here one has to take into consideration that Hungary has had a very different experience with race than the United States, and at the time when the book was written most Hungarians could live their entire life without ever even seeing a person of color. While Hungary certainly has her own issues with racism, the type of discrimination African Americans were facing in the United States at the end of the Jim Crow era was unknown in Hungary, and shocking for a Hungarian. Pozsonyi states that even after the Civil Rights Act, racism against blacks was “more radical, cruel, humiliating” than people in Hungary could imagine.⁴¹³ He also refers to racism in his *Report* and notes that while theoretically everyone agrees with granting equal rights to black people, in reality, there is a lot of animosity between blacks and whites, which is also rooted in class differences.⁴¹⁴

In *Useful Knowledge*, Pozsonyi presents a short and unflattering summary of the history of the treatment of African Americans and Native Americans at the hands of American whites. About the Natives he writes that white Americans have “exterminated as many of them as possible”⁴¹⁵ then forced the rest into crowded reservations, and as they could not compel the Native Americans to work on their plantations, they abducted people from Africa to be used as slaves. He also mentions the plight of the Puerto Ricans (with a reference to the musical *West Side Story*), the Chinese, and the Japanese in America, but emphasizes that the African Americans have been the worst hit victims of discrimination. Pozsonyi claims that in spite of being in the majority, white Americans are afraid of blacks (and notes that from this respect, there are considerable differences between the various social classes). He lists a number of fears and stereotypes about African Americans: the fear of mixed marriages, the higher black birth rate, and association with crime.

Based on his experiences with people in the South, he claims that the root of their racism is often ignorance rather than malevolence, and cleverly points out the contradictions in certain racist arguments. For example, he recalls someone claiming that the “Negroes” were ignorant – while at the same time, this person was also against them attending integrated schools with white children. On another occasion, a motel clerk told him that black people naturally smelt bad, and their company was intolerable for white people. As a reaction, Pozsonyi asked him

⁴¹² Ibid., 3.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 72.

⁴¹⁴ *Report*, 23.

⁴¹⁵ *Useful Knowledge*, 72.

that if that was the case, why would whites hire them as maids and nannies? The clerk explained that these were exceptions, and the proximity of white people had a beneficial effect on these black people. Pozsonyi writes that the American did not even entertain the thought that the reason for the bad smell might be the lack of access to basic hygiene.⁴¹⁶

Throughout the book, Pozsonyi makes references to the difficulties black people face in all walks of life. This even includes foreign diplomats when they are looking for accommodation.⁴¹⁷ He notes that only 1.7% of African-American schoolchildren were studying in integrated schools in the South in 1965.⁴¹⁸ In the chapter about New York, he refers to Black Harlem as “the shame of America” that sociologists and even poets use to illustrate extreme poverty,⁴¹⁹ and in his *Report*, he claims that white people, including Hungarian intelligence officers, should avoid these areas.⁴²⁰ He acknowledges that there have been some improvements to the situation of African Americans, but not due to the accomplishments of white Americans, rather these are the results of the struggle of African Americans. “The Negro question has not been resolved and cannot be solved in capitalist America, but their struggle can bring significant results.”⁴²¹ The most significant issues that undermine the black movement according to him are internal division, the activity of certain radical elements in the movement, and that the most influential trends are religious. It is interesting to point out that religion was also presented as one of the weaknesses of the Civil Rights Movement in *Agency-Operative Situation*, but in contrast with the earlier book, Pozsonyi already sees radicalism as detrimental to the promotion of civil rights.

In the chapter “Population, Nationalities, Social Situation, Religion,” Pozsonyi enumerates the countries that have been the major sources of immigration – but unlike *Agency-Operative Situation*, this list includes Austria-Hungary – what is more, he the name of the country is even underlined in the text. Pozsonyi claims that the number of Hungarian-Americans could be as high as 1,500,000, at least according to certain experts.⁴²² This is a generous estimate, even if we take into consideration that it is difficult to tell the exact number of Hungarian-Americans, which is something that Pozsonyi also acknowledges. He notes that about half of these people do not even speak Hungarian, many of them are second and third generation immigrants who only know about the mother country from their families, but they

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 35-36.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 110-111.

⁴²⁰ *Report*, 23.

⁴²¹ *Useful Knowledge*, 75.

⁴²² Ibid., 4.

are often proud of their heritage and wish to visit Hungary one day. This was one of the priorities during the Kádár era, as the regime wanted to encourage tourism to Hungary among those who were not hostile to the communist government. Pozsonyi also lists the cities that have larger Hungarian populations, and later, in the chapter where he presents New York City, he also describes the Hungarian quarter.

Pozsonyi was evidently fascinated by the ethnic diversity of New York City: “Based on ancient history and the bible [sic], humanity accepted Babel as the symbol of cosmopolitanism. But what is the cacophony of sounds, languages, or ethnicities of Babel compared to what we can experience in New York today?”⁴²³ He was also intrigued by the Hungarian quarter in New York, which he describes as a time travel to interwar Hungary. Here one can find “Horthyist generals and officers from the Ludovika⁴²⁴ who have been giving themselves promotions over the years, and are sitting by a glass of peach palinka imported from Budapest, explaining that if things had turned out just a little bit differently, now they would be ruling in Budapest, or even Russia.”⁴²⁵ At the same time, he notes that the majority of Hungarian-Americans are not members of the “fascist emigration,” they are “loyal,” if for no other reason, then because they want to be able to visit Hungary, and there also are many Hungarians who are members of the CPUSA. He describes the Hungarian quarter in detail, especially when it comes to the shopping opportunities if one wants to buy Hungarian specialties and recommends it for grocery shopping for housewives. When describing some of the antiquated oddities available here, he characterizes the atmosphere as if “one was in the Hungary of the 1930s.”⁴²⁶ His tone is not overtly hostile, as evidenced by the earlier quote, not even towards those who were obviously ideologically opposed to communism. The fact that this could be published in a textbook for intelligence officers is telling about the Kádár regime’s approach to the Hungarian emigration. They differentiated between various groups based on their approach to the regime, and they already saw certain elements within the Hungarian-American community as assets, hence the references to potential tourist visits to Hungary by the “loyal emigration.”

In the “Population, Nationalities, Social Situation, Religion” chapter, Pozsonyi provides statistical data about the main religions in the USA, listing Protestants as the largest group, then Catholics, Jews, and Greek Orthodox. He mentions that there are several smaller denominations that cannot be categorized under the four main religions, and notes that about one third of the

⁴²³ Ibid., 96.

⁴²⁴ Ludovika was the name of the military academy of the Kingdom of Hungary prior to 1945.

⁴²⁵ *Useful Knowledge*, 97.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 104.

population do not belong to any denomination. There are also atheist organizations, and a large part of the lower classes have become disillusioned with religion. At the same time, “the struggle of the Communist Party of the USA against religion is the only one that is ideologically well-founded.”⁴²⁷ Due to the high rate of religiosity among African Americans, especially women, at that moment, Pozsonyi does not consider the struggle against religion to be a primary concern for communists in America, but as a positive development he mentions that a large number of young people are not at all religious.

Szecsődi begins the presentation of American society in *Agency-Operative Situation* (1985) with a reference to the ethnic diversity of America and its roots in immigration from the colonial times to the 20th century, when “every historical ‘catastrophe’ has resulted in a new wave of immigrants.”⁴²⁸ As a sign of the shifting demographic patterns in the U.S., whereas the previous books were focusing on the contrasts between two racial groups, blacks and whites, Szecsődi includes a third group in his description of American society. He writes about “white-skinned, black, and other (Asian, mixed).”⁴²⁹ But then when during the actual discussion of the census data, of these three, only whites and blacks are mentioned – the third category is Native Indians.⁴³⁰ Szecsődi also takes note of some of the most significant “ethnic colonies:” Spanish-speakers in Florida, New Mexico, Louisiana, and New York (but does not mention Texas or California), Italians, and Chinese in major cities. He notes that the other ethnic enclaves, including the Hungarians, are not as significant as they were before, many of them have already been largely assimilated into American society.

With regards to their occupational background, Szecsődi divides American employees not by class but by the sectors of the economy where they are employed: industry and production, services, commerce, and “other.” He comments on three things about the American class system. First, that industrial workers constitute a relatively small part of the population, “this is why we can refer to the USA as the country of the middle class, where the administrator, the employee working in the service sector is the average citizen.”⁴³¹ As it has been discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, he also points out that due to the high rate of social mobility, the American worker has no “class consciousness.” Second, there is no “peasantry” in the European sense, relatively few people work in the agriculture, and their status is in many ways

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁴²⁸ *Operative Situation*, 123.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 123.

⁴³⁰ The previous books used the term “indíán,” meaning Indian, but Szecsődi uses the term “öslakos,” Native.

⁴³¹ *Operative Situation*, 125.

closer to that of the industrial workers. Third, that intellectuals do not constitute a separate category, there is little that would divide them from the other people who work in services.

Szecsődi mentions that two thirds of Americans belong to some denomination but notes that many of them are not overtly religious in their personal life. Usually, this means accepting religious morality, but even this is applied selectively. For most people, religion is a personal matter, it serves a spiritual function, and it is an aspect of respect for tradition. He notes that religion played an important part in American history in the colonial times and even later, as it served a replacement for national identity, and created a sense of community in an individualistic society – here he could be referring to the concept of civil religion.⁴³² Szecsődi reveals considerable confusion and lack of knowledge about Christian denominations when he first proclaims that Catholicism has become the largest religion in the United States, then lists Presbyterians as a distinct category rather than a form of Protestantism. In American statistics, the various evangelical and mainstream Protestant denominations are always counted together.⁴³³

6.3 National Characteristics, the Average American

Beside the description of American society, the textbooks also discuss the national characteristics and the personality of the American people. The materials which served as preparation for operative work (e.g., *Agency-Operative Situation* and *Operative Situation*) generally focus on the description of those characteristics of the Americans that are directly relevant for operative purposes. In the materials where the emphasis is on presenting knowledge about everyday life in America and familiarizing the officers with the country, there is a more general overview of the average American. In these textbooks, a wider range of topics is addressed, such as personality traits, cultural level, social norms, families, or sexuality.

General Description (1965) begins the overview of national characteristics by examining the definition of a nation. The text claims that nationalists are mistaken when they refer to the nation as something eternal, mystical, dependent upon the innate characteristics of the people. At the same time, the author also asserts that American “bourgeois sociologists”⁴³⁴

⁴³² Ibid., 128. The concept was coined and explored by Robert N. Bellah, most extensively in his influential article, “Civil Religion in America.” Here he described how certain religious concepts, beliefs, and rituals are applied to various aspects of American history and institutions, parallel to, but independent of any existing religion. See: Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96, no. 1 (1967): 1-21, accessed March 28, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027022>.

⁴³³ Ibid., 129.

⁴³⁴ *General Description*, 142.

are wrong when they claim that the psychological characteristics of a nation are completely fictional, this way “they deny national traditions, national independence, and national culture.”⁴³⁵ The program of the CPSU is cited to support the claim that American imperialists use these cosmopolitan theories to weaken the resolve of other nations. In line with the Marxian argument that existence determines consciousness, the text claims that the psychological traits of the people cannot be separated from their material conditions, and the characteristics of the nation are defined by the historically determined modes of production.⁴³⁶ At the same time, the extent to which these national characteristics are manifested varies between the social classes. Quoting Lenin, the author claims that in a bourgeois society, the class struggle, the true nature of exploitation is hidden behind “good manners.”⁴³⁷ For intelligence officers, familiarity with national characteristics is important during the adjustment to the new environment after arrival, it is necessary to understand the relations among Americans, it helps with the selection of people of interest, and it provides material for conversations. The handler has to be familiar with the personality of the source, which has also been influenced by national characteristics.

According to the author, the American national character has been influenced by historical circumstances: the fact that the nation was created as a mixture of various nationalities, by the struggle with nature on the frontier, the endless wars, and the extermination of the native population. Social conditions such as the abolition of feudal privileges after independence and the end of slavery after the Civil War also played a role, and they enabled the emergence of capitalism. “At its final stage of development, the American national character was created by capitalism.”⁴³⁸ The author argues that all the brutality in Americans comes from capital, and everything good comes from labor. For example, Americans are egocentric, withdrawn, but they are welcoming to guests. They are not afraid that their car is going to break down because they can assume that others will help, and they are not going to stand idly if a house is on fire. They are greedy, but not stingy.

The description of the American character continues with the enumeration of positive and negative characteristics. On the positive side, they are entrepreneurial, practical, and persistent in achieving their goals. In order to show how the entrepreneurial spirit is encouraged from a young age, a scene from *The Financier* by Theodore Dreiser is quoted, when a teenage

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 142-143.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 143.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 146.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 149.

boy makes his mother proud by making a good business deal.⁴³⁹ Persistence is related to ensuring individual success. The author uses a story told by a Soviet professor working for an American company to illustrate the practical nature of the Americans. The professor recounted his surprise when a secretary and a typist were hired so that he would not waste his time with trivial tasks. Being practical can also lead to insensitivity, for example the author notes that in galleries, the date of birth of the painter is indicated even if he is still alive, and there is an empty space for the date of death.⁴⁴⁰ The darker side of American nature is that they are extremely materialistic, profit oriented, and they believe that money can accomplish anything. “Nowhere else in the capitalist world is the power of money as cynically explicit as in the USA.”⁴⁴¹ It does not matter how a person gets rich, only that they do. The greed of the Americans is illustrated with quotes from various literary authors, such as Steinbeck and Mayakovski,⁴⁴² as well as further anecdotes. Widespread racism, religiosity, along with the large social differences, are also listed as negative characteristics of the Americans.

After discussing the national character, certain features of everyday American life are presented in *General Description*. Statistics are provided about American families, notes that they are not particularly large, and that the number of divorces is on the rise.⁴⁴³ The importance of the mother is stressed, claiming that she often has more authority in front of the children than the father. The American family is a friendly community, but it often breaks up after the children grow up and start to live their own life. The author describes the homes of rich American families and contrasts them with the living conditions of the poor. He also notes that Americans dress more modestly than the English, the French, or the Germans, and they tend to like vibrant colors and comfortable clothes.⁴⁴⁴ The text continues with the discussion of food and meals – this section is not very accurate. This could be due to the fact that intelligence officers from communist countries, most of whom were working under diplomatic cover at this time, had little experience with the daily life of average Americans. For example, the translator seems to have been confused by the difference between meals in the U.S. and Hungary, where the main hot meal of the day is usually eaten at noon. In the text, lunch, which is much lighter

⁴³⁹ The spelling mistakes in the names make it obvious that the translator did not read the work, just translated the text from Russian.

⁴⁴⁰ *General Description*, 152.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁴² Vladimir Mayakovski (1893-1930) was a leading poet of the Russian Revolution and the early Soviet period.

⁴⁴³ *General Description*, 159.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

in the U.S. than in Central or Eastern Europe, is referred to as the “second breakfast,” and dinner as “ebéd,” which is the word Hungarians use for the midday meal.⁴⁴⁵

The behavior of Americans abroad is discussed in the textbook, as they are considered to be more approachable in third countries where they are more likely to make contacts with strangers.⁴⁴⁶ The author lists various reasons why Americans would live or travel abroad, and notes that “as soon as they cross the border, their behavior changes.”⁴⁴⁷ They separate from other nationalities, tend to spend a lot of money, and they like to be loud and boastful. Many Americans, even including some diplomats, intend to use their time abroad to make money, and get involved in illegal or semi-illegal trading and smuggling. *General Description* also alludes to the special status that American soldiers enjoy in countries with American military presence. Abroad, Americans can be approached without a formal introduction and engaged in simple, informal conversation – they are often on a first name basis with their partner after two or three meetings. Initially, debates about the foreign and domestic policy of the Soviet Union should be avoided. The same is true with regards to information about the operation of the American government or the military, as because of the prosecution against “progressive elements” in their country, Americans tend to be careful when discussing political issues.⁴⁴⁸ Americans often criticize their own government and they are curious about the Soviet Union, but this should not necessarily be taken as a sign that they are “progressive.”⁴⁴⁹

Finally, the text provides details about those aspects of the behavior of Americans in foreign countries that could be used to develop and strengthen a relationship. For example, they like being social, receiving guests or eating out with friends. They are thrifty, they always track their expenses, and they do not like to be in debt; consequently, they should not be invited to expensive restaurants, because they would feel that they have to return the favor. They like sports and gambling, as well as travelling and photography. They often carry a photo of their family, which can be a good conversation starter, and can also be used to find out about their financial situation. Americans like to collect items such as old coins, stamps, or other memorabilia. The purpose of *General Description* when providing this information about the customs, hobbies, and preferences of Americans is to help establishing contact with Americans, find a common topic, and eventually, recruitment.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 162.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 168.

Agency-Operative Situation (1967) puts the emphasis on examining what could convince an American to cooperate with the intelligence services of a communist country. The author lists a number of potential bases for recruitment “in the order of importance, financial, ideological, political, moral-psychological (primarily by using compromising material or manipulating emotions related to national origin, that is, using the emigration),”⁴⁵⁰ and analyzes them. He begins with an overview of the financial situation of American families. Due to rising living costs, interest rates, and the growing popularity of shopping on credit, the American middle class is increasingly becoming burdened by debt. He provides estimates about the various expenses of American families whose yearly income is between 12-19 thousand dollars, “as these are the people that our residence is most frequently in contact with.”⁴⁵¹ He mentions that rising inflation, high taxes, and social security costs are a serious burden on people who earn between 7.5-11 thousand dollars. For the average American, an unexpected emergency could result in financial collapse. As a reaction, Americans try to increase their income by any means available, including “gambling on the stock market, real estate speculation, selling company secrets (industrial espionage),” lying to the utility companies, tax fraud, corruption, and ordinary theft.⁴⁵² He also mentions corruption among politicians (see Chapter 4), and concludes that in America, where one’s social standing is exclusively determined by how much money they have, recruitment on a financial basis is the most likely method to lead to success.

Next, the book examines groups that could potentially collaborate with the Eastern European agencies for ideological reasons. The author notes that in spite of the imperialist propaganda, there is no unifying ideology, political teaching in American society. “Americans are constantly confronted with a life ruled by the wild laws of the jungle, characterized by pragmatism, egoism, [illegible] thinking and bare desolation. Lacking faith in the future and a clear perspective, failure often leads to depression, suicide.”⁴⁵³ Suicide rates are high, especially among students. Because of this aimlessness, many Americans, especially “university students, professors, and intellectuals,”⁴⁵⁴ turn away from “imperialism” and could be open to the ideas of socialism and communism. *Agency-Operative Situation* mentions the influence of the movement against the Vietnam War. Many intellectuals criticize the government from a liberal standpoint, and “while they remain on the basis of bourgeois ideology, some intellectuals can potentially stand up in a consistent way for progressive views on certain political, social, and

⁴⁵⁰ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 55.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 61-63.

economic issues.”⁴⁵⁵ This is especially relevant as intellectuals are increasingly becoming involved in political decision-making. Many of them believe that intellectuals all over the world should unite as a progressive global force against reactionary governments.

At the same time, the author warns that the criticism of certain aspects of American politics should not be seen as a clear basis for recruitment. He states that other than the members of the CPUSA, few Americans “stand upon the foundation of communist ideology, are consistently progressive, or friendly to the Soviets.”⁴⁵⁶ The main goal is to “promote progressive views” and foster sympathy towards the Soviet Union among “our liberal American contacts,” and make this the basis for their recruitment, along with other factors. He also notes that in spite of the “obviously reactionary activities” of the churches, certain preachers deserve special attention due to their opposition to the Vietnam War and their support for the black Civil Rights Movement.

The third potential basis for recruitment is the moral-psychological, most commonly realized by using compromising material. “The rotting American imperialistic system influences the moral views of the Americans. Corruption is widespread, crime rates are high, alcoholism, drug use, sexual crimes are all characteristic traits of American life today.”⁴⁵⁷ The author claims that there are five million alcoholics and many drug users in the USA, mentioning opium, marijuana, and LSD.⁴⁵⁸ Drugs are especially widespread among university students, who also use unconventional substances such as modeling glue. Young people who use drugs to escape from the difficulties of life are called hippies. They usually have some college education, do not work regularly, they are not interested in politics, or any activity. The text also discusses “sexual crime and perversion” that are widespread in the U.S.: “homosexuality, lesbian love, masochism, sadism, and polygamy.”⁴⁵⁹ Imperialist sociologists intentionally direct young people towards sexuality as a diversion from political and social issues and provide them with pornography under the guise of “scientific research.”⁴⁶⁰ Pornographic books that have been banned all over the world are published in the United States, and total sexual freedom is propagated on TV and in the movies. The author claims that homosexuality is especially widespread among intellectuals and government officials, and as it is a crime, they often become targets of blackmail. The text mentions a crime ring in New York that was blackmailing

⁴⁵⁵ *General Description*, 161.

⁴⁵⁶ *Agency-Operative Situation*, 63.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

influential homosexuals.⁴⁶¹ As a related issue, the author notes that lawyers can often be a useful source of compromising information.

The author asserts that while recruitment based on compromising material can be very effective, it requires caution. In America, there is a law on voluntary confessions, and many Americans who had been recruited received no punishment when they revealed their relationship with Soviet citizens to American counterintelligence.⁴⁶² Moral norms are also different in the United States, thus “a number of materials (such as relationship with women) do not qualify as basis for recruitment.” “Based on confidential information,” the author provides a list of wrongdoings and the punishment that they carry for members of the American intelligence agencies. The infractions include (excessive) alcoholism, embezzlement of operative funds, intimate relationship with a Soviet female agent, revealing information about agents, homosexuality, and drug use.⁴⁶³ The sanctions are more severe for junior and more lenient for senior officers, who are only reprimanded in most cases, except for homosexuality or drug use; apparently, homosexuality carried more serious punishment than for example embezzlement. Evidence of homosexuality or a combination of various other violations are recommended in order to be used to coerce the target. It is noted that the American services are aware that the Soviets often use compromising materials to recruit sources and prepare their citizens, especially when they are travelling to the Soviet Union.

In addition to compromising material, *Agency-Operative Situation* also mentions the feelings of the immigrants towards their homeland as a potential psychological basis for recruitment.⁴⁶⁴ The author recommends using a false flag in the case of immigrants from capitalist countries and notes that American authorities often violate the rights of immigrants, which is something that can also be taken advantage of. American counter-intelligence organizations often keep under surveillance people who have relatives or own property in communist countries. At the same time, being from a communist country does not necessarily exclude someone from access to secret material; “there are many people with Slavic names in government offices, including the White House.”⁴⁶⁵

After discussing the potential bases for recruitment, *Agency-Operative Situation* continues with some of the relevant personal characteristics of Americans. The recruitment of Americans is often more complicated than people from other capitalist nations; first of all, they

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 65.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 66.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 67-68.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 71.

treat the citizens of most other countries as “second class people,”⁴⁶⁶ making it difficult to recruit them under a false flag. Also, due to their high standard of living and materialistic attitude, Americans demand a large amount of money to cooperate with the intelligence agency of a foreign country. They also are familiar with the recruitment methods of foreign agencies, and they are confident that their country is going to represent their interests if there is an incident.⁴⁶⁷ The book describes the most typical traits of Americans according to psychologists: pride, weighing all circumstances before they make decisions, listening to reason and not emotion, duty over friendship, content over form, being active, the ability to change, perseverance, being consistent in their activity, respect for success, practicality, and flexibility.⁴⁶⁸ Some other positive characteristics mentioned include that Americans are usually good in their profession, they respect all kinds of work, they make friends easily, they have a good sense of humor, and they are always well-groomed and neatly dressed.

The negative personal characteristics of Americans listed are that they are materialistic, calculating, sentimental and attracted to vulgarity, egoism, they are emotionally withdrawn, fake optimism, ignorance about issues outside of their close professional interests, low cultural level, they are attracted to casual sexual relationships, cynicism, hypocrisy, panic in unexpected situations, love of comfort. The textbook provides a number of examples for these negative characteristics. A portion of the criticism is rooted in prudery, such as at the description of “Playboy clubs,” or class difference, which is especially interesting coming from Soviet intelligence officers. For example, the author mockingly describes that Americans often ask the restaurant to bag uneaten food “for the dogs.”⁴⁶⁹ Some of the observations about Americans are quite accurate, such as noting that when asked how they are, the answer is always that they are “great.” The author observes that Americans never share their personal problems at the workplace and describes their extensive use of medications. The text also gives advice on how to use the information about the American personality during recruitment and warns that ignoring their character traits can make the process more difficult or lead to failure.

National Characteristics (1973) was written based on the experience of the KGB.⁴⁷⁰ Its presentation of the political views of the Americans, the national question, and religion have already been analyzed in the other chapters. In addition to these topics, it also discusses the business mentality, cultural level, women in government administration, behavioral norms, and

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 74.

⁴⁷⁰ *National Characteristics*, 1.

the American family. With regards to Americans in business, similarly to *Agency-Operative Situation*, this text also notes that Americans are usually good at their profession, use modern technology confidently, and that they value all kinds of work, even physical. They are usually hardworking, resourceful (especially when it comes to business) and to a certain extent, aggressive – “but government employees lack these traits. These workers appreciate a peaceful, calm, non-stressful work environment, a well-regulated work and life.”⁴⁷¹ Americans use social science studies to predict the future course of events and look down upon “philosophizing” and “sentimentalism.” They appreciate when someone is disciplined, capable, and trustworthy. Similarly to *Agency-Operative Situation*, *National Characteristics* also warns officers make sure that they their promises.

The author of *National Characteristics* considers the cultural level of the average American to be low.⁴⁷² He argues that this is because the American nation is too young to have a cultural heritage that could be compared to Europe, and in addition, to a certain extent, Americans hold high culture in contempt, they are more interested in material wealth. The author claims that television, films, and literature are the most important forms of cultural education, and less frequently, theater or museums. On television, the most popular shows are crime series and Westerns, movies, and sports broadcasts. The author contemptuously notes that “literary works in America are advertised like any other material good.” Americans rarely read, and even when they do, they usually read bestsellers and know little about the classics of world literature - exposing his underlying cultural nationalism, he highlights that this is true even when it comes to Russian writers. Americans are usually familiar with the writers whose works were adapted to film, so “they acknowledge the genius of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky, even if they did not read their works.”⁴⁷³ The best-known Soviet writer in America is Solzhenitsyn, “who has been glorified by Western propaganda.”⁴⁷⁴ Americans rarely go to theaters or classical music concerts, and if they do, it is to “be seen,” which is also because this type of entertainment is expensive.

National Characteristics considers women to be “especially important during the infiltration of institutions,”⁴⁷⁵ thus, their characterization is particularly relevant for operative purposes. The text begins with an overview of the background of secretaries to institutions “such as the Pentagon and the State Department,” and the process of their recruitment. They

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 8.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 10.

claim that young women apply to work for the State Department because they want to travel, study languages, earn more money, or find a husband. Abroad, they often make friends with foreigners, but they tend to avoid Soviet citizens. The book stresses that these young women drink a lot, get into intimate relationships easily, they behave in a frivolous way, but neither they, nor their colleagues find this compromising.⁴⁷⁶ Hoping to ensure their future wellbeing, they pay special attention to unmarried men, which indicates that they value their own person over their career. The author finds it important to remark that they also get into “closer contact” with people who they would avoid at home, being afraid of a scandal, such as “Arabs, Indians, Negroes.”⁴⁷⁷ The intelligence officer who attempts to recruit them does not have to be an American, but he has to be attractive, well-mannered, and experienced with women. It can also help to approach them under a false flag.

Describing their behavior, the book notes that Americans are strong, ambitious, direct, and friendly, which is encouraged from a young age. At receptions, they initiate conversations easily, and if they see perspective in the friendship, they invite the person for lunch. The text notes that sometimes Soviets mistake the friendliness of Americans for an attempt at being approached by the American intelligence agencies. Americans tend to pay attention to the way they dress, make sure to be well-shaved – they want to look successful in appearance as well as in the way they behave.⁴⁷⁸ They are polite to an extent, but not overtly. Their sexual morals are loose: Americans often cheat on their spouses, at times with their knowledge, they treat affairs between unmarried men and women as a private matter, and affairs with the secretary are almost natural.⁴⁷⁹ Women often “create the necessary atmosphere”⁴⁸⁰ at the first meeting, and if the man does not appear to be interested, they break off the relationship, which makes studying unmarried women for purposes of potential recruitment difficult. Americans see success as the most important thing in life and believe that with a little effort and taking the available opportunities, anyone could become successful, which is why government workers take advantage of their positions. They consider paying taxes as their only social responsibility and see “mutual help and solidarity as empty talk.”

Consistent with how materialism is presented as one of the core American traits, *National Characteristics* claims that family relations are important for Americans to a certain extent also because financial reasons play a key role in marriage. They get married late, but

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

children move out when they grow up and do not receive help from their parents, nor do they support their parents in any way. Raising children often puts a considerable financial burden on the family. Parents support the entrepreneurial spirit in their children, encourage them to work during holidays. Women have a great deal of independence in the family, men usually discuss their work with them and listen to their advice. Abroad, they actively participate in the life of the community. The book also alludes to the role the wives of politicians play in supporting the political career of their husbands.

The aim of *Useful Knowledge* (1974) is to prepare the intelligence officers for life in the United States, and Pozsonyi discusses many everyday issues that could be relevant, including education, press, media, science, arts, culture, housing, transportation, some of the most important services, and crime. Compared to the other textbooks, Pozsonyi presents these issues in greater detail, taking into consideration how they are related to the daily life of an intelligence officer working under diplomatic cover, as well as what could be important for his family. Sometimes he also includes information that could have operative significance. For example, he describes the American education system, including its structure, the subjects that are taught, the grading system, as well as the best universities. Then he notes that if someone wanted to send their child to an American university when working in the U.S., they had better take the tuition costs into consideration, and “give up their illusions.”⁴⁸¹ Meanwhile, he also notes that a lot of Hungarian intellectuals have found employment at the universities. This information is relevant for operative purposes: Pozsonyi’s *Report* shows that a number of his sources were among these intellectuals (but he does not provide any names).⁴⁸²

Pozsonyi discusses various aspects of American culture extensively in *Useful Knowledge*. His attitude is dualistic, especially when it comes to popular culture: his basic approach is dismissive, he considers American popular culture to be lowly, unsophisticated, shallow, and vulgar – at the same time, he is also fascinated by it. He criticizes the programs on American television – but describes many of the shows in detail.⁴⁸³ Similarly to *National Characteristics*, he also notes that in America, culture and art are commodities, the way everything else is.⁴⁸⁴ The American government spends a lot less on arts than even Western European governments, “and we should not even attempt to compare it to the socialist

⁴⁸¹ *Useful Knowledge*, 12.

⁴⁸² *Report*, 17., 19.

⁴⁸³ *Useful Knowledge*, 22-25.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

countries.”⁴⁸⁵ Pozsonyi argues that film is the quintessential American art form.⁴⁸⁶ He acknowledges the existence of real American artists but claims that they have been alienated from and have become disillusioned with their homeland.⁴⁸⁷ He provides a list of eight important literary works that one should be familiar with, as this knowledge can be useful during social interactions with Americans.⁴⁸⁸ Pozsonyi briefly presents musical life in America, with an emphasis on recent visits by Hungarian musicians.⁴⁸⁹ He also describes the situation of theater and visual arts, and is very dismissive of modern art (which he criticizes extensively) and pop music (which he almost completely ignores). He attributes the high attendance of American museums to the fact that they are relatively cheap, and that after a visit, Americans can brag in front of their friends and neighbors about how cultured and sophisticated they are.⁴⁹⁰ At the same time, they eat pumpkin seeds in the museum⁴⁹¹ and leave Coca-Cola bottles and beer cans in the movie theater.⁴⁹² Similarly to the Soviet books, we can see the effect of class differences on the way a diplomat perceives the behavior of middle or working class Americans.

Pozsonyi describes some of the characteristics of the average American.⁴⁹³ Similarly to the previous books, he also establishes that Americans are confident and self-reliant. They are proud and look down on other people, they are individualistic and egotistic – “Maybe it is not by accident that in English, the pronoun “I” is always capitalized.”⁴⁹⁴ They like loud, colorful events and parades, they often organize parties, even university professors wear costumes on certain occasions. They are direct, casual, they often ignore formalities, which can sometimes lead to bad manners and disregard for those around them.⁴⁹⁵ They are lazy and love comfort, always drive everywhere and take the elevator, which is something that he also observes in his *Report* when he describes the behavior of the agents that were following him.⁴⁹⁶ They are good and practical organizers. Pozsonyi also emphasizes the materialism of the Americans: “Their

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 53. The works listed are *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, *An American Tragedy* by Theodore Dreiser, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway, *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis, and *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. This is a rather meagre list. Pozsonyi leaves out many significant American authors, including several contemporary writers such as Kurt Vonnegut (whose works were already translated into Hungarian) or Walt Whitman, in spite of the fact that he is widely recognized as one of the foremost American poets, and there are many tributes to him all around Washington and New York.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁹² *Report*, 24.

⁴⁹³ *Useful Knowledge*, 56.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁹⁶ *Report*, 7.

real president is not in the White House but on their checking account, bank account. But maybe the dollar is not their president but their god.”⁴⁹⁷ He notes that “you look like a million dollars” is a big compliment for Americans. He lists the most important American holidays, where he includes Chanukah, but he gives a fixed date for the “moving holidays.”⁴⁹⁸ He also gives some advice about parties: one should always respond to invitations, bring gifts, be well-informed, polite, but firm when it comes to ideological questions.

In *Operative Situation* (1985), Szecsődi begins the presentation of the national psychology of Americans by acknowledging the problems with describing the average citizen, especially in such a big and diverse country as the U.S. He points out the materialistic nature of Americans, and notes that consumerism, which sees the accumulation material possessions as the most important goal in life, along with the cult of privacy, atomizes society and leads to the rejection of politics.⁴⁹⁹ The respect for the self-made man has its origin in the early settlers, but has led to the mentality of “business above all.” In business situations, conventional morality disappears, people become unscrupulous, especially in hierarchical relationships when there is a conflict of interests. But “presumably due to bad conscience,”⁵⁰⁰ in relationships between equals, Americans tend to be patient, respectful, and fair, and this duality is characteristic of the USA in general. Americans are proud of their ancestors and their history, which is also being promoted artificially. The result is “attachment to the country and its traditions, the belief, conviction that the USA is an ‘example’ for every other country to follow.”⁵⁰¹ While the earlier books claimed that Americans look down on citizens of other countries, Szecsődi claims that they have no firm opinion on foreign nations, they tend to focus on domestic or local issues, and that attachment to the locality, local patriotism is an important aspect of American patriotism.

Culturally, he claims that generally speaking, when it comes to classical arts Americans have not managed to catch up with Europe, especially in visual arts. In other art forms, especially in performing arts, they have created their own genres, such as jazz, soul, and country. He acknowledges the significance of American film, theater, and literature, but claims that these are characterized by commercial “overproduction.”⁵⁰² The business mentality forces

⁴⁹⁷ *Useful Knowledge*, 58.

⁴⁹⁸ And mistakenly claims Christmas to be on December 23. This is probably a typo, as he obviously should know when Christmas is, and in his *Report*, where he also includes the same list, he does not make this mistake. At the same time, it is telling that nobody recognized this obvious mistake.

⁴⁹⁹ *Operative Situation*, 125.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 128.

the industry to create a large number of works, some of which are indeed valuable, but most of them are of low quality, and their success is measured exclusively by their popularity. He sees this business mentality as an obstacle for truly valuable artistic achievement, and it also serves as a tool of manipulation. Artistic life in the United States is characterized by the dominance of popular art, and the most important medium is television.

Finally, Szecsődi describes certain characteristics of the American family. He claims that because of the previously mentioned focus on the personal and the individual, the family plays an important role in American everyday life – because of bourgeois traditions, rather than for emotional reasons. American families are usually one generational, grandparents and other relatives live in separate households, but he notes that this also depends on the national origin, multi-generational households are more common among “Negroes and people of Spanish descent.”⁵⁰³ Holidays are celebrated with the extended family, who often only meet on these occasions. As the level of mobility is great among Americans, in many cases, family members live far away from each other. Szecsődi points out that interracial marriages are still uncommon, and without citing any sources, claims that most American families have three or four children – which was obviously not true. While more women are employed outside of the household than before, many still see their primary role as homemakers. He notes that this perception has changed a lot in the preceding decade, and there have been positive developments for women’s equality “in practice as well as in public consciousness.”⁵⁰⁴ But he argues that the presence of the issue of women’s equality in the local and national political discourse indicates that it still has not been resolved.

6.4 Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, let us revisit the questions that were posed in the introduction. First of all, when we compare the textbooks what are some of the features that remain consistent, and can we see some changes over time? What was the purpose of these books, did they genuinely aim to present the American character, the life of everyday Americans? Did the authors attempt to portray the American people in an objective way, or was it more of a projection of the ideology? Could these textbooks potentially be used as practical

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 130.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 130.

preparation for real intelligence work, or were they part of the ideological education of the intelligence officers?

As we could see, communist ideology heavily influenced the image of American society and the Americans presented in the textbooks. The authors of the earlier as well as the later books emphasize that they are discussing the characteristics of a capitalist society, which is deeply divided between those at the top and those on the bottom. This division is present when it comes to class, between the rich and the poor, as well as race. Literary examples, as well as descriptions are used to illustrate the gap between the two extremes of American society. In the Soviet books, the class divisions are presented as more definite, while in the Hungarian books this aspect of American society is more nuanced, and the writers acknowledge that the lack of working class “class consciousness” in the U.S. is largely attributable to the traditionally high social mobility.

Racism is seen as another sign of the deep divisions in American society, introduced as the result of capitalism in the earlier books. The African-American Civil Rights Movement is mentioned, and while the textbooks do not consider it to be an ally to the communists, they definitely view it as something that can be taken advantage of. It is very telling that the later books do not acknowledge the results of the Civil Rights Movements, this would not fit into their image of American society. There are also some differences between how Soviet and Hungarian writers approach racism. For the Soviets, it is just one of the many problems in American society, one of the results of the oppressive nature of capitalism. But the Hungarians, especially Pozsonyi, seem to be genuinely surprised and shocked by the actual reality of racism in the United States.

Beside social and racial division, the state of morality in the United States is also used by the authors to underline the superiority of the communist system. The present America as a society in moral decline, without a guiding principle or a unifying ideology. American society, according to the books, is characterized by the absence of purpose, greed, hedonism, excessive alcohol consumption and drug use, loose sexual morals, rising crime, etc. To a certain extent, this has operative relevance, as various transgressions could also be used to coerce the sources into cooperation. Unsurprisingly, the communist intelligence officers approach religion in a disdainful way, and they have a difficulty understanding its role in American society. The large number of misconceptions and factual errors during the discussion of religious topics in the textbooks clearly indicate that they did not know much about the topic and underestimated its importance in American life.

Similarly to the rest of the topics discussed in the textbooks, the content of the sections about American society and people is also influenced by the experience of the officers who wrote them, the ideology, and the sources that they had access to. As far as personal experience is concerned, the writers of the textbooks were intelligence officers working under diplomatic cover either in New York or in Washington; thus they had exposure to a very select group of people and had minimal contact with average Americans. While the textbooks provide a description of government bureaucrats, intellectuals, and other people that these diplomats could reasonably get into contact with during operative work, the sections about the average Americans are often deficient and contain a lot of inaccurate information. The situation of the writers of the Soviet books written earlier and the Hungarians that were written later was not the same. One of the major differences was that the travel restrictions on diplomats from the Eastern bloc were lifted in the early 1970s, and Pozsonyi and Szecsődi could travel outside of these two cities, as evidenced by the experiences of Pozsonyi with racism in the South, for example.

Due to the nature of the materials, the personal character traits of the Americans that are discussed the most are related to potential recruitment. There are many examples of projection in the textbook, such as the attempt to present the working class as a unified whole in *Agency-Operative Situation*. The self-image of the Americans also appears to have influenced the books: for example, they are presented as hardworking and practical, which is how Americans usually see themselves. When it comes to culture, the perspective of the writers is condescending, that of the “sophisticated” European, looking down on the “vulgar” Americans, who lack high culture, and whose lowly entertainment mostly consists of crude representations of sex and violence. Sexuality in general is treated with the prudery that was characteristic of communist regimes, its presence is often interpreted as a sign of the decadence of American society. The writers ignore the heterogeneity of cultural life the United States – for example, pop music is barely even mentioned, in spite of the fact that these books were written in the 1960s, 1970s. This is the consequence of the *a priori* thinking of the communist intelligence agencies. If, as it is according to the Marxist principles, economic conditions serve as the foundation for the culture, this culture is bound to be lowly, determined by the lowest common denominator, and it is hardly worthy of note. The common references to the supposedly negative influence of capitalism and the profit motive on arts are a symptom of this train of thought.

Once again, it must be noted that there are serious issues with language, especially in the case of the Soviet books, due to translation from Russian to Hungarian (for example,

Carnegie is spelled as “Karneg”), but there are some spelling mistakes in the Hungarian books as well. Another difference between the books is the sources that they used. The literature listed in the Soviet books consists of the works of Marx and Lenin, the minutes of CPSU congresses, various Soviet writers as well as Russian and some American literary figures. The lack of American-written sources and the almost exclusive reliance on Soviet materials already indicates and determines the ideological bias. As it has been mentioned earlier, *National Characteristics* uses data collected by the KGB, which is the reason why it contains some of the most accurate and useful information among the Soviet books.

The Hungarian books already use some American sources, but it is quite telling that they do not even mention or use any of the results of American Studies in Hungary. All of this in spite of the fact that László Országh’s influential American Studies university textbook⁵⁰⁵ was published in 1972, two years earlier than *Useful Knowledge* (1974), and well before Szecsódi’s book (1985). This means that the preparation of these officers was also deficient, and they completely ignored the scholarship about the culture of the United States, even though it would have been openly available even in Hungarian.

The presentation of American society and the characteristics of the average American in the preparatory textbooks is to a certain extent different from the topics discussed in the earlier chapters of the dissertation. The subject matter of those chapters – history, the political system, foreign and domestic politics, and the economy – are part of the background knowledge about the United States, the general description of the country. In contrast, the characteristics of the average American and American society are more directly relevant for operative work. These sections in the textbooks contain more practical information that could be applied by the intelligence officers in the field, either in order to help them fit into American society, or during operative work, the recruitment and keeping contact with their sources. At the same time, the authors often ignore or misrepresent certain characteristics of American society and the American people. The textbooks are heavily influenced by the limited information that the writers had access to (or were willing to use), as well as their ideological bias. While Pozsonyi did express some interest and at times even appreciation for certain aspects American culture and society, even *Useful Knowledge* is still by no means a comprehensive representation of the topic. The most valuable parts of the booklets for the researcher are those that are more closely related to operative work, it is apparent that this is where the writers had actual experience that they wanted to convey during the preparation.

⁵⁰⁵ Országh, *Bevezetés az amerikanisztikába*.

Chapter 7

The Preparatory Materials and Actual Intelligence Work

7.1 Methodological Issues – How to Measure the Impact of the Preparation?

Measuring the effectiveness and relevance of any educational material is a challenging task. Given the secretive and clandestine nature of intelligence activity, this is exceedingly difficult in the case of the preparatory textbooks that are presented and analyzed in this dissertation. In order to be able to evaluate the significance of these books, we need to examine how and to what extent they influenced the work of the intelligence officers during whose training they were used. In this chapter, operative reports written by the Hungarian state security in the later stage of the Cold War are analyzed in relation to the contents of the preparatory textbooks in order to examine the relationship between preparation and actual intelligence work.

One possible way to get information about the preparation of intelligence officers and how the textbooks were used during their training would have been an interview with an officer who worked in the United States in the period. This could have greatly promoted our understanding of the place and significance of these textbooks, but in eight years of research I have not been able to conduct such an interview. Another possible approach, which I had to choose by default in this chapter, is to analyze the content of reports that were written by officers who were presumably prepared using these textbooks.

Working with archival records in general, and with the operative reports of the Hungarian state security in particular, raises a number of issues. As Gábor Gyáni puts it, archives carry only “one potential meaning, or rather interpretation of past reality.”⁵⁰⁶ All archives have their own internal (organizational) logic, which the researcher needs to understand in order to be able to place a given document within the material, to put it into context. This is increasingly relevant when it comes to documents related to intelligence, such as the ÁBTL, which Gyáni also recognizes and points out when he states that state security files are “on the frontier of public/secret knowledge, and there is no force which could move them from there.”⁵⁰⁷ When we use these documents as primary sources, there are a number of things that need to be taken into consideration. First of all, the ÁBTL holds only a portion of the files

⁵⁰⁶ Gábor Gyáni, “Levéltári kánon és történetírói tapasztalat” [Archival canon and historiographic experience], *Elveszített múlt – A tapasztalat mint emlékezet és történelem* [Losable past – Experience as memory and history] (Budapest: Nyitott Könyvműhely, 2010), 36.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 34.

that were created by Hungarian state security. Certain documents were never archived, others were accidentally or intentionally destroyed or removed for various reasons, and it is practically impossible to estimate what is missing. In addition, because of their potentially sensitive nature, some of the documents are still only partially or not at all available for research (for example, the materials of MNVK-2). At the same time, given that these are the sources that are available at the moment, they have to serve as the basis for any conclusions about the preparatory materials.

Officers of Hungarian state security wrote tens of thousands of pages of operative reports about the United States during the period in question. Today these make up more than a hundred boxes of archival material in the ÁBTL.⁵⁰⁸ While a thorough analysis of all these sources could be grounds for potential future research from the perspective of the preparation of the intelligence officers or otherwise, such an undertaking would go far beyond the scope of this dissertation. Consequently, this chapter is not a comprehensive overview of these sources, but a preliminary evaluation of how the work of the officers of Office Group III/I of the Ministry of the Interior against the United States relates to the contents of the preparatory textbooks, using a select number of these documents as reference. The next subchapter (7.2) is an overview of the operative files in the ÁBTL and it narrows the focus to those that contain information about the United States. Subchapter 7.3 examines the topics discussed in the documents, and subchapter 7.4 presents the sources of the information in the intelligence reports. O-8-839/4 “Periszkóp” includes a list of the official, non-official, and operative contacts of the members of the residency in Washington, which is analyzed in subchapter 7.5. Finally in the conclusion of this chapter (7.6), the findings are presented in the context of the preparatory materials.

7.2 A Quantitative Analysis of the Operative Files about the United States

Today, the operative files of Office Group III/I of the Ministry of the Interior can be found in the ÁBTL. The operative files are reports related to a specific topic, such as an organization that was of interest to the agency, a specific location, a group of people or an institution, and they originate from a residency. The materials stored and made available in this archive are divided into five sections with “Section 3 – Network, operative, and investigation files”

⁵⁰⁸ For the list of operative materials, see the archival catalogue: FOND- ÉS ÁLLAGJEGYZÉK, RAKTÁRI JEGYZÉKEK,” ÁBTL, accessed September 3, 2021, https://www.abtl.hu/sites/default/files/raktari_jegyzek/3_2_5.pdf.

containing the majority of the documents.⁵⁰⁹ This section is further divided into the files that used to belong to the central operative archives (3.1), and the documents of Office Group III/I (3.2).⁵¹⁰ The materials of Office Group III/I are organized into ten groups, one of them being “3.2.5 – Operative files (O-8-Files),”⁵¹¹ and the finding aid for this is freely available on the website of the ÁBTL.⁵¹² It contains the description of 911 files stored in 512 boxes. Around 5-700 pages fit into a box (a box is 5 inches wide), and most boxes listed in the finding aid contain one single file. There are longer files that take up several boxes, and some boxes contain more than one short file. The largest file, “Szabadságharcosok” [Freedom Fighters], is about the 1956 emigration, and it is somewhat of an anomaly, as its attachments are given their own filing numbers.⁵¹³ Almost one third of the 911 folders in the finding aid of Section 3.2.5 are the 284 attachments of “Szabadságharcosok,” and they take up 38 out of the 512 boxes and the attachments.

Given that the operative files about the United States contain thousands of pages of documents, the limitations of this dissertation make it well-nigh impossible to offer a detailed and thorough study of the source materials. At the same time, the finding aid itself reveals a lot about the operation of the Hungarian state security. Beside the filing number, it provides the opening and closing date of each file, the name and date of its topic, and the country or countries of interest. There is great variation when it comes to the length of the individual files, but the boxes contain roughly the same number of pages. Consequently, when examining how much material was created by Hungarian state security on a particular topic, the number of boxes that contain the relevant documents currently available provides more information than the actual number of files.

The United States of America is featured in the finding aid as a country of interest for files in 137 out of the 512 boxes. The titles of the files in the finding aid are often, but not always, indicative of their contents, thus they can be helpful in determining the relevance of the material for the purposes of this dissertation. These titles suggest that the majority of the files address the activities of émigrés (61 out of the 137). They are either about the Hungarian-Americans and their organizations, Hungarian organizations in the West that had members in

⁵⁰⁹ “GENERAL INFORMATION,” *ÁBTL*, accessed September 3, 2021, <https://www.abtl.hu/english-information>.

⁵¹⁰ On the English version of the website of the ÁBTL, “csoporthőnökség” is translated as “Main Division,” but for the sake of consistency, the terminology that was established earlier in this dissertation is used.

⁵¹¹ FOND- ÉS ÁLLAGJEGYZÉK, RAKTÁRI JEGYZÉKEK,” *ÁBTL*, accessed October 2, 2021, https://www.abtl.hu/iratok/segedletek/fond_allagjegyzek.

⁵¹² “3.2.5. O-8 dossziék,” [3.2.5 O-8 Files] *ÁBTL*, accessed October 2, 2021, https://www.abtl.hu/sites/default/files/raktari_jegyzek/3_2_5.pdf.

⁵¹³ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-2001 “Szabadságharcosok” [Freedom Fighters].

the United States, or Hungarians in third countries who were in contact with the United States.⁵¹⁴ In the case of another 48 boxes, the United States is not the sole country that is listed as a country of interest in the finding aid. In many cases, the titles of the files in these boxes do not reveal much about their contents.⁵¹⁵ When they do, they suggest that these documents are about American activity in third countries (Austria,⁵¹⁶ West Germany,⁵¹⁷ Vietnam,⁵¹⁸ and others), international organizations where the United States was a member,⁵¹⁹ or they are related to specific industries.⁵²⁰ This indicates that in these cases, the US was either not the only, or not the main target of the intelligence work. The majority of the American-related material held in Section 3.2.5 of the ÁBTL (109 out of the 137 boxes) is either about Hungarians in America, or not primarily about the United States. Thus, it is the remaining 28 boxes (less than one fifth of the total material currently available for research) that carry information, and possibly offer insights, about actual intelligence work that would have required professional training about the United States in Hungary. This supports our preliminary conclusion that Hungarian state security tended to focus on Hungarians in exile and played but a limited part in Soviet-bloc spying (military, industrial) on the leader of the Free World.

It follows from the above that if the United States itself was not a primary target of Hungarian intelligence, Hungarian operatives did not have to obtain deep knowledge her political, social, cultural environment. In order to gather information about the Hungarian-American communities, Hungarian operatives primarily had to be familiar with their life and work and needed relatively little background information about the United States itself. This, in turn, explains why their preparation about the country was shallow and superficial. At the same time, we know that there was serious operative work done by Hungarians in the US and at least one of their agents was actually caught red-handed.⁵²¹ One possible, but unlikely explanation for this apparent contradiction is that Operative Group III/I was active in the U.S., but the documents are completely missing from the archives. What is more likely is that due to the division of labor between the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc and in Hungary, part

⁵¹⁴ For example, ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-301 “Magyar cionisták ügye” [The case of Hungarian Zionists].

⁵¹⁵ For example, ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-060 “Zsoldosok” [Mercenaries].

⁵¹⁶ ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-180 “USA bécsi nagykövetsége és konzulátusa” [The embassy and consulate of the USA in Vienna].

⁵¹⁷ ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-205 “USA katonai hírszerzés, MIS, CIC, müncheni központja” [The Munich center of USA military intelligence, MIS, CIC].

⁵¹⁸ ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-219 “Foreign – Nemzetközi Ellenőrző Bizottság Vietnámban” [Foreign – International Commission of Control in Vietnam].

⁵¹⁹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-079 “Az ENSZ különböző bizottságai” [Various committees of the UNO].

⁵²⁰ ÁBTL-3.2.5. 0-8-294 “Temistel – Műszeripar és számítógépek” [Temistel – Mechanical industry and computers].

⁵²¹ For more on the Gilbert-case, see: ÁBTL-1.11.4. II. sorozat A-V/1/82 “Amerikai-magyar kapcsolatok” [Hungarian-American relations], 22.

of the information that the Hungarian leadership (in fact, Moscow) needed came from the fellow organizations of other Eastern bloc countries or from military intelligence. When it comes to Hungarian activity in the U.S., this supports Zsuzsanna Borvendég's findings about the significance of MNVK-2 and the "impexes," import-export agencies, in the operations of Hungarian intelligence in the West.⁵²²

The operational material in the ÁBTL about the United States that is not related to Hungarians in America, international organizations, or other countries (that is, the previously mentioned remaining 28 boxes) contain reports about the activity of Hungarian intelligence where the United States of America was in focus. Five longer files take up twenty-one out of these boxes: O-8-055 – "Atlanta" about the intelligence and counterintelligence organizations of the U.S. (3 boxes),⁵²³ O-8-087 about the documents of the embassy in Washington, D.C. until the 1980s (6 boxes),⁵²⁴ O-8-088 "Generál" about miscellaneous issues related to the U.S. (3 boxes),⁵²⁵ O-8-389 – "Periszkóp" [Periscope] that contains documents that originate from the counterintelligence of the embassy in Washington, D.C. from the 1980s (6 boxes),⁵²⁶ and O-8-414 – "Atlantik" [Atlantic] about the operation of the CIA (in Europe) from the 1980s onwards (3 boxes).⁵²⁷ The remaining seven files are relatively short, none takes up more than a box, and are about the State Department,⁵²⁸ economists,⁵²⁹ politicians,⁵³⁰ the President and Congress,⁵³¹ a think tank,⁵³² and an overview of the operative⁵³³ and scientific⁵³⁴ situation in the U.S. from 1989, just before the end of the Cold War. The rest of this chapter focuses on "Periszkóp" and "Atlantik," given that these two files are specifically about the United States, namely reports from the residency at the embassy and about American counterintelligence. The

⁵²² Borvendég, *Az impexek kora*.

⁵²³ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-055 "Atlanta – USA hírszerző és elhárító szervek" [Atlanta – USA intelligence and counterintelligence organizations].

⁵²⁴ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-087 "Washingtoni magyar követség" [The Hungarian Embassy in Washington].

⁵²⁵ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-088 "Generál – USA vegyes anyagok" [General – Miscellaneous USA material].

⁵²⁶ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-389 "Periszkóp – Washingtoni követség elhárítása" [Periscope – Counterintelligence of the embassy in Washington].

⁵²⁷ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414 "Atlantik" [Atlantic].

⁵²⁸ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-029 "Volga – Amerikai Egyesült Államok Külügyminisztériuma [Volga- State Department of the United States of America].

⁵²⁹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-033 "Közgazdászok" [Economists].

⁵³⁰ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-034 "Politikusok" [Politicians].

⁵³¹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-041 "AEÁ Elnöki hivatal (Kongresszus), Képviselőház" [USA Presidential office (Congress), House of Representatives].

⁵³² ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-470 "START Kelet-nyugati biztonsági tanulmányok intézete" [START Institute of East-West security studies].

⁵³³ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-557 "New York-i ügynökhelyzet" [Operative situation in New York].

⁵³⁴ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-837 "Niagara – USA általános tudományos helyzete" [Niagara – General scientific situation of the USA].

purview of the analysis is the reports from the 1980s, the time when *Operative Situation* was written.

7.3 Topics Covered in the Reports

An overview of the issues that are discussed in the reports of Hungarian state security about the United States provides an insight into their objectives and priorities. As mentioned earlier, monitoring the activity of the Hungarian emigrant community was the most important task of the foreign intelligence of the People's Republic of Hungary in the United States. This is also reflected by the quantity of materials about this topic that can be found in the ÁBTL. The folder "Szabadságharcosok" [Freedom Fighters]⁵³⁵ about the 1956 emigration takes up 38 out of the 512 boxes of operative files of Office Group III/I by itself. This is of course not the only resource about the Hungarian-American community, a large portion of the rest of the material about the United States also contains information about them and their various organizations (e.g. "Colorado"⁵³⁶ about the "fascist Hungarian emigration" in the United States, stored in three boxes).

The political presence of the Hungarian-American communities and their organizations is frequently featured in "Atlantik" and "Periszkóp" as well. Examples include the plans about the celebration of the national holiday on March 15 in 1983,⁵³⁷ or demonstrations related to the destruction of Hungarian villages in Romania and the Transylvanian question.⁵³⁸ Another recurring topic is the activity of prominent Hungarian-Americans, including academics, such as the courses taught by former ambassador János Radványi,⁵³⁹ or a conference organized by István Deák at Columbia University about Hungary.⁵⁴⁰ A considerable portion of the reports filed by the intelligence officers are related to immigration and emigration: Hungarians travelling to the United States⁵⁴¹ or wanting to return,⁵⁴² as well as Americans who were interested in visiting Hungary.⁵⁴³ These documents are usually about people who the Hungarian state security did not trust for some reason: for example Hungarians who they suspected might

⁵³⁵ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-2001 "Szabadságharcosok" [Freedom Fighters].

⁵³⁶ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-018 "Colorado."

⁵³⁷ ÁBTL-O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 491.

⁵³⁸ See, for example, ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 210, ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/4 "Atlantik," 461.

⁵³⁹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/4 "Atlantik," 627. About the defection Radványi, see Chapter 1.2.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 649-672. István Deák is a prominent Hungarian-American historian who left Hungary in 1948, moved to the U.S. in 1956, and he was the Director of Columbia University's Institute on East Central Europe between 1968 and 1979.

⁵⁴¹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 498.

⁵⁴² Ibid. 499.

⁵⁴³ Ibid. 500.

want to defect to the United States or Americans who used to work in the military or law enforcement, or in some cases, intelligence.⁵⁴⁴

Another portion of the documents is about the operative situation and security questions of the Embassy of the People's Republic of Hungary in Washington, D. C., the diplomatic mission to United Nations in New York, and the people who worked there. There were a number of reports about increased surveillance and even harassment by the American counterintelligence organizations and other authorities in the early 1980s, especially from New York. This is not surprising, given that beside the embassy, there was another state security residency in New York, focusing on the United Nations. The Hungarian embassy even contacted Mark Palmer and called his attention to the harassment by the American authorities.⁵⁴⁵ At the time, Palmer was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the State Department, and later became U.S. ambassador to Hungary in the crucial period between 1986 and 1990. Meanwhile in Washington, the security report of the embassy from 1983/84 acknowledges that in spite of deteriorating East-West relations, but thanks to the American policy of (positive) differentiation towards Hungary, the members of the community and Hungarian citizens in the United States "compared to the other socialist countries and the previous years, have experienced less provocation."⁵⁴⁶ At the same time, during the reconstruction of the Embassy, it was discovered that the Americans were also able to access the security camera system of the building.⁵⁴⁷ Apparently, beside the more obvious and direct methods, the American organizations were also using more subtle means to keep the Hungarians under surveillance. In addition, this incident reveals the shocking incompetence of the Hungarian officers: allowing access to the camera system of the Embassy was a major security flaw that should have been detected long before.

The hostile activity and surveillance of the Hungarian diplomatic posts referenced above was not the only aspect of American intelligence that drew the interest of Hungarian state security. Various American intelligence and counter-intelligence organizations, especially the FBI and the CIA, come up in the documents in the ÁBTL as they were among the main targets of the Hungarian agencies. This included American intelligence operations in third countries, as evidenced for example by the operative document ÁBTL-3.2.5 O-8-185., which is about the

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid. 502.

⁵⁴⁵ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 399, 414.

⁵⁴⁶ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-389/4 "Periszkóp," [Periscope] 86.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 86.

cover organizations of the American intelligence agencies in Austria (four boxes).⁵⁴⁸ The reports also contain information about American intelligence beside their activity against the Hungarian diplomats. The reports are mostly about the CIA and to a lesser extent the FBI, and they cover a wide range of issues, including information in the press, such as a public job advertisement,⁵⁴⁹ the medical service of the CIA and how modern medicine is used for intelligence purposes,⁵⁵⁰ the presence of CIA officers in Budapest,⁵⁵¹ as well as the training of FBI officers. Knowing the methods and activity of their American counterparts was especially important during the operative work of the Hungarian intelligence, and the reports clearly reflect this.

The folders in the ÁBTL also contain reports about American politics, including contemporary developments. As one would expect, a lot of attention was given to information related to Hungary and Hungarian-American relations, such as the visit by Mátyás Szűrös,⁵⁵² a group of IMF experts who visited Hungary,⁵⁵³ or the issue of Radio Free Europe.⁵⁵⁴ Some of the documents addressed political changes and events that could be relevant for the operative situation⁵⁵⁵ or could affect East-West relations.⁵⁵⁶ We know that economic and technological intelligence was a priority for the Eastern bloc – the communist countries were even warned against this activity by the State Department. Surprisingly, Mark Palmer claimed in 1985 that he had no knowledge of this type of activity from the Hungarians, only other Eastern bloc

⁵⁴⁸ ÁBTL-3.2.5 O-8-185 “Amerikai hírszerző szervek fedőszervei Ausztriában” [Cover organizations of the American intelligence organizations in Austria]

⁵⁴⁹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 “Atlantik,” 409.

⁵⁵⁰ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/ 5 “Atlantik,” 127-132.

⁵⁵¹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-389/4 “Periszkóp,” 418.

⁵⁵² ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/ 5 “Atlantik,” 263.

At the time of the visit (1987), Mátyás Szűrös was a member of the MSZMP, and head of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Hungarian Parliament. He visited the United States in the spring of 1987. Later, on October 23, 1989, he was the one who officially proclaimed the end of the People’s Republic of Hungary and the establishment of the Republic of Hungary, and became the provisional president until May 1990.

⁵⁵³ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 “Atlantik,” 636-637. A group of IMF experts visited Hungary in early 1984 (probably in preparation of the IMF loan that Hungary would take later that year), and the state security suspected that some of the experts had connections to American intelligence organizations. Hungary eventually took a loan of 297,500,000 USD – “Hungary: Transactions with the Fund from May 01, 1984 to September 30, 2021,” *IMF*, accessed October 23, 2021,

<https://www.imf.org/external/np/fin/tad/extrans1.aspx?memberKey1=415&endDate=2099-12-31>.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 59. The 1983 report contains speculations about possible changes to the programming of Radio Free Europe due to changes in its leadership, in order to make it more compatible with the harsher rhetoric of the Reagan administration.

⁵⁵⁵ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/5 “Atlantik,” 388-391. This is a report from April 1987 about the impact of deteriorating Soviet-American relationship on the operative situation.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, “Atlantik,” 199-200. This is a report about a study by the Congressional Research Service from 1986 that speculates about the future social and political situation in the Eastern European socialist countries after 1990, and how it could impact the East-West relationship. While it did prognosticate conflicts between the Soviets and their allies in the near future, the report did not predict the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern bloc.

countries.⁵⁵⁷ There are some reports that could be regarded as economic or technological, for example about the military applications of an IBM computer.⁵⁵⁸ But this does not reflect what we know about the relevance of the economy and technology for the Hungarian state security from the research of Zsuzsanna Borvendég. This either means that these reports are in different (not yet available) files or that this aspect of intelligence work was handled by other organizations, such as MNVK-2.

7.4 The Sources of the Reports

In addition to the topics discussed in the reports, the sources of the information also reveal a lot about the activity of Hungarian state security in the United States, especially about the means of collecting information. Generally speaking, the methods employed by the agencies to gather intelligence can be sorted into three main groups: (1) human intelligence, (2) technical means, and (3) non-covert collection, using openly available sources.⁵⁵⁹ In the documents of the Hungarian state security about the United States examined in this chapter, the origins of the information were most frequently a wide variety of legally available, open-source materials, and to a lesser extent, human intelligence.

The archival material suggests that the Hungarian state security relied heavily on the American press for information. Reviewing the media of the given country, clipping relevant newspaper articles, is not necessarily an intelligence-related activity, it is also part of the normal, day-to-day activity of a diplomatic mission. Yet these articles occasionally contain information that can have significance for intelligence agencies. The reports of the Hungarian state security include articles from a wide variety of sources, such as the most influential American newspapers *The New York Times*,⁵⁶⁰ *The Washington Post*,⁵⁶¹ but even some publications and journals that are not as widely read, such as the *Foreign Policy Review*.⁵⁶² The fact that Hungarian intelligence filed a report when *The New York Times* had a new Eastern European correspondent indicates that a large degree of significance was attributed to the press.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁷ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 392.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., 547.

⁵⁵⁹ Shulsky and Schmidt, *Silent Warfare*, 11.

⁵⁶⁰ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 572.

⁵⁶¹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-389/4 "Periszkóp," 229-230.

⁵⁶² ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 "Atlantik," 320.

⁵⁶³ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/5 "Atlantik," 166.

A variety of publicly available documents were also used to prepare the reports. Sometimes these included entire documents in English, for example the text of a Congressional bill about the CIA.⁵⁶⁴ But more frequently, intelligence officers wrote summaries about various issues using Congressional records or other public sources, including the reports on a debate about putting travel restrictions on the representatives of certain socialist countries in the UN in 1985⁵⁶⁵ and a corruption scandal involving the military contractor General Dynamics.⁵⁶⁶ Intelligence officers monitored the press about Hungary and academic activity related to the country, such as the previously mentioned conference organized at Columbia University by István Deák, or research on the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence, also conducted at Columbia by Deák.⁵⁶⁷ The academic results of intelligence-related disciplines were considered to be of relevance; for example the files include a summary of a paper on theoretical issues in connection with the coordination estimates by intelligence agencies [Hírszerző becslések koordinációjának elméleti problémái].⁵⁶⁸

When it comes to human intelligence, Hungarian state security relied heavily on Hungarian-Americans and Hungarian citizens, which is not surprising, given the centrality of the Hungarian-American community for their activity. But occasionally, Hungarians provided information that could have wider significance. A good example is Gabor Olah de Garab [Oláh Gábor], former director of the Watergate Hotel.⁵⁶⁹ Olah had been employed by the founder and part-time owner of the Watergate complex, Nicholas M. Salgo, who became the U.S. ambassador to Hungary between 1983 and 1986. The two men had been friends for decades, but their relationship deteriorated by the 1970s, and Olah was forced to retire as director of the Watergate Hotel in late 1983. Apparently, shortly after his retirement, Olah decided to share some of what he knew about his former employee with Hungarian intelligence. This included a less than flattering characterization of Salgo, as well as information about his private life, political connections, and allegedly shady business dealings – all this right before his appointment as Ambassador to Hungary. While this intelligence could prove to be valuable outside of the scope of the Hungarian-American community, it was the exception, rather than the rule.

⁵⁶⁴ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-389/4 “Periszkóp,” 260-82.

⁵⁶⁵ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/5 “Atlantik,” 86-91.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 375-382.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 104. According to the 1986 report, the Institute of East-Central European History at Columbia was recording the recollections of the participants of the 1956 “counterrevolution” (the official designation of 1956 in communist parlance) in preparation of the 30th anniversary.

⁵⁶⁸ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 “Atlantik,” 162-174.

⁵⁶⁹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 “Atlantik,” 644-646.

The files of Office Group III/I show that they cooperated closely with the “friendly agencies.” Sometimes this could include the translation of complete documents from Russian,⁵⁷⁰ but more commonly, it was indicated in the reports that the information came from a “counterpart organization” [társszerv].⁵⁷¹ Hungarian state security had the closest working relationship with the Soviets. A certain “comrade V.A. Urzhumov” [Urzsumov] regularly received copies of reports written by Hungarian intelligence, which were sometimes directly addressed to him.⁵⁷² While there is no concrete information in the materials about who exactly Urzhumov was, the fact that János Bogye, Head of Office Group III/I, sent his reports to Moscow through him, suggests that Urzhumov was the person responsible for contact with the Hungarian sister organization inside the KGB. Urzhumov also sent materials to the officers, such as a report about new, stronger data security regulations in the Pentagon.⁵⁷³ Ágnes Hankiss presents another example for the KGB sending information to the Hungarians through Urzhumov, this time about the recruitment methods of the CIA.⁵⁷⁴ These materials indicate how serious and effective Soviet intelligence was. The Soviets often included knowledge that was presumably secret and could only be obtained by illegal means, which was rare in the Hungarian reports. Hungarian foreign intelligence also received information from its military counterpart in Hungary, MNVK-2. The materials sent by MNVK-2 suggest that this agency was more involved in clandestine activity than Office Group III/I, and they were more successful in getting access to classified information. For example, they managed to obtain the contents of a briefing for the employees of the US military about the espionage threat posed by the Eastern bloc.⁵⁷⁵

7.5 The List of Contacts

“Periszkóp,” the intelligence file of the embassy in Washington, D.C., contains a list of the contacts of the members of the residency from the year 1984. This document reveals a lot about the activity of the Hungarian state security in Washington, about who they were in contact with, who could be the source of their information in the United States, and potentially members of

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 353-382.

⁵⁷¹ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/5 “Atlantik,” 59-62.

⁵⁷² Ibid., 459-460.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 118-122.

⁵⁷⁴ Ágnes Hankiss, *Harcban a főellenséggel – Szovjet–magyar állambiztonsági kapcsolatok* [Fighting the Main Enemy – Soviet-Hungarian State Security Relations], (Budapest: Hamvas Intézet, mEP Group of the European People's Party, 2014), accessed October 23, 2021, https://www.hamvasintezet.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/hakiss_harcban.pdf.

⁵⁷⁵ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-414/2 “Atlantik,” 210-219.

their network. In the document, some of the members of the residency are referred to by their codenames, and addressed as secret operatives [titkos munkatárs],⁵⁷⁶ “Sitbon,”⁵⁷⁷ “Hantos,”⁵⁷⁸ “Baradlai,”⁵⁷⁹ “Dalmas,”⁵⁸⁰ and “Kardi,”⁵⁸¹ At the same time, others are just referred to as, “comrades,” which could possibly mean that they were diplomats: Tabi,⁵⁸² Gáti,⁵⁸³ Olt,⁵⁸⁴ and Szekeres.⁵⁸⁵ The records show that the database of “the contact list of the intelligence officers and colleagues of the residency”⁵⁸⁶ was compiled at the request of Budapest, and submitted on May 10, 1984.

The length of the list and the amount of the information provided about each contact varies. Some of them are longer and include as many as 50-60 names (e.g. in the case of “Sitbon”), while others are shorter, with just 15-20 names (e.g. Hantos). When it comes to information about the contacts, Tabi only provides their names and positions, whereas “Dalmas” characterizes each of them in a short paragraph, or at least in one or two sentences. Some of the state security operatives provide a list that includes of more or less everyone they knew in the United States while others only focus on their operative contacts, but describe them in more detail, especially when it comes to the nature of information these contacts could have access to.

A large portion of the people mentioned in the reports are official contacts, who the operatives would meet as part of their cover. These vary based on the cover position of the officer and include people who work at the offices of Congressmen,⁵⁸⁷ contemporary and former government officials from various departments,⁵⁸⁸ or other branches of the American

⁵⁷⁶ As opposed to secret agents, secret operatives were not coerced into working with the state security, they willingly cooperated, were full members of the agency, and could fulfill any position, including the resident. In the case of secret operatives, there were no documents of recruitment, and at the moment, there is no way to legally identify them.

⁵⁷⁷ ÁBTL-3.2.5. O-8-389/4 “Periszkóp,” 342-351.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 357-360.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 389-367.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 370-373.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., 388.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 368-369.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 374-377.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 378-379.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 380-387.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 390.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., 368. “comrade Tabi” lists Thomas Lantos, representative from California, Tom Rutherford, senator in the New Mexico Senate, and Stephen Kennedy, representative in the New Mexico Congress. He also mentions people who work in the administration, e.g. Paula Dobriansky and Tyrus Cobb, who work for the National Security Council and are responsible for Eastern and Western Europe, various officials from the State Department responsible for Eastern European affairs, or Philip Hughes, Assistant National Security Adviser to vice president Bush.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 349. For example, “Sitbon” lists two officials from the Department of Agriculture, David Shoonover, who was responsible for international agricultural affairs, and Douglass Freeman, the secretary of the Hungarian-American agricultural workgroup.

government,⁵⁸⁹ as well as diplomats from other countries that the Hungarians working at the embassy were in contact with.⁵⁹⁰ The operatives were also in correspondence with a several journalists, many of whom were also used as sources of information.⁵⁹¹ Some of the intelligence officers knew industrialists, businessmen, many of whom were Hungarian-Americans – including George Soros, who is characterized as a “multimillionaire” and president of the Soros Fund Management in the document.⁵⁹² The list also contains the names of artists, musicians, academics, often of Hungarian origin,⁵⁹³ and other prominent members of the Hungarian-American community.⁵⁹⁴ “Sitbon” provides the contact details for some of the people that were involved in the day-to day life of the embassy, such as the owners of the apartments that they rented,⁵⁹⁵ people who were responsible for the maintenance of the building,⁵⁹⁶ or the American Life Insurance Company, identified as the American partner of the Hungarian State Insurance Company (Állami Biztosító), responsible for the health insurance of Hungarian citizens.⁵⁹⁷ The officers also listed their own personal contacts, which were very limited, and usually only included the doctor (László Csátáry, the doctor of the embassy), a dentist, a car mechanic, sometimes a language teacher,⁵⁹⁸ or the classmates of their children.⁵⁹⁹

The lists in “Periszkóp” demonstrate that the contacts of the operatives of Hungarian state security in Washington were largely what one would expect based on their cover position at the embassy. The somewhat more detailed descriptions submitted by “Hantos”⁶⁰⁰ and “Dalmas,”⁶⁰¹ and to a lesser extent, “Sitbon,”⁶⁰² as well as the operative contacts of Szekeres⁶⁰³ provide some insight into the operation of the Washington residency of Operative Group III/I. Apparently, the operatives were using their official, “legal” sources to gain access to pieces information that could be relevant for intelligence purposes. For “Hantos,” this meant

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 368.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 369.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 357-358. “Hantos” lists George Gedda and Harry Rosenthal from AP, Jim Anderson from UPI, Marvin Kalb from NBC, Barrie Dunamore from AP, John Wallach from “a big nationwide newspaper network,” Robert C. Tóth from *The Los Angeles Times*, and József Takács from *Voice of America*. “Dalmas” lists some of the same people, and in addition, John Maclear from *The Chicago Tribune*, Tim Whuter from *The Daily World* (the paper of the American Communist Party), and a number of foreign journalists.

⁵⁹² Ibid., 365.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 366-367.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 363-364.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 342.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., 343.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 347.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 379.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 348.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 357-360.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 370-373.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 342-351.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 386-387.

journalists, for “Dalmas,” also journalists and people working in the administration, for “Sitbon,” researchers and businessmen involved in agriculture, and for Szekeres, people working in research and development.

7.6 Evaluation

Based on the documents available at the ÁBTL, we can draw an outline of the work of the residency in Washington. The objectives of Hungarian state security in the United States were fairly limited; in accordance with the division of labor between the agencies of the Eastern bloc, they were primarily focusing on the Hungarian community. In addition they also reported about the security situation of the Hungarian diplomats and the embassy, the activity of the American intelligence agencies, and the political situation in the country, especially if it was relevant to Hungarian-American relations.

A large portion of the information gathered by the Hungarian state security in the U.S. came from the Hungarian-American community, often from prominent members, e.g., academics. In addition, the Hungarian intelligence officers often engaged in open source intelligence, using for example, the press, or other relatively freely and legally available sources. The clandestine information that the reports contained usually originated from another organization, such as the Soviet intelligence through comrade Urzhumov, who was apparently responsible for coordinating with the Hungarian sister organization at the KGB, or the Hungarian military intelligence, MNVK-2.

The overview of the network of the Hungarian secret operatives in “Periszkóp” is in accordance with what we know about the work of Hungarian intelligence in the U.S. The contacts of the secret operatives were either members of the Hungarian-American community, people that they could have met during their embassy work (such as journalists, U.S. government officials, other diplomats), or in their personal life. As can be expected based on the reports, the secret operatives of the Washington residency did not have clandestine contacts, or an extended network of regularly reporting agents. This is very close to what one would expect from a regular diplomat. But even under usual circumstances, there is a very thin line between intelligence gathering and diplomacy. In *Silent Warfare*, Shulsky and Schmitt describe how information collected by diplomats can also be regarded as a form of intelligence.⁶⁰⁴ Even in normal cases, diplomats and attachés report to their home countries about the host country,

⁶⁰⁴ Shulsky and Schmidt, *Silent Warfare*, 39.

and due to their unique perspective and access, they can provide valuable insight. To a large extent, this is what we can see in the case of the Hungarian state security in the period: the diplomatic cover provided access for the operatives, who tried to gather information from the sources that they had access to as diplomats, which meant mostly human intelligence and open source intelligence. They used the information available to them due to their position, filtered it through the lens of state security, and reported the relevant intelligence to Budapest.

Given what we can see from the reports about the work of the Hungarian operatives, it is understandable that their preparation did not contain more than inaccurate surface level knowledge about the United States. The Hungarian state security did not conduct serious espionage in the country, thus the officers did not need to know more than this about the U.S. – the real purpose of the material about the United States was ideological education. At the same time, we know that there were Hungarian intelligence officers actively involved in espionage against the U.S. This suggests that they must have been working for military intelligence, which also underlines the results of Zsuzsanna Borvendég's research in *Az impexek kora*. To a certain extent, the reports of Office Group III/I also support this assumption: as we could see in subchapter 7.3, some of the information that MNVK-2 shared with them indicates a higher level of involvement in clandestine activity on part of the Hungarian military intelligence than we can see from the operatives of Office Group III/I.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to analyze the Hungarian state security's image of the United States based on textbooks that were used during the preparation of intelligence officers from the second half of the 1960s to the 1980s. But to what extent can we consider these textbooks to be representative of how the Hungarian state security actually saw America? How certain can we be about the actual importance of these sources? Our knowledge about the operation of Hungarian intelligence during the Cold War is fairly limited. These questions are especially relevant in light of the considerations with regards to the materials available in ÁBTL voiced in the previous chapter.

We know from Zsuzsanna Borvendég that in the 1970s and 1980s, a significant part of the work of Hungarian foreign intelligence was actually conducted by military intelligence, the MNVK-2 division. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, the materials of MNVK-2 are still classified, not available for researchers, which means that any attempt to describe the foreign intelligence of the People's Republic of Hungary is going to be incomplete. I chose to keep the focus on the State Security, as we do not know anything about the preparation of the MNVK-2 officers. Based on the quality of the materials used by the Ministry of the Interior analyzed in this book, it is reasonable to assume that the military intelligence officers, who were more professional and effective, were prepared using different materials, or possibly, by the Soviets.

Another major issue is that we know precious little about how the textbooks were actually used during preparation. The reason why this is especially important is illustrated by the work of the Hungarian-American historian Károly Nagy, himself a 1956 *émigré*. Nagy examined the history textbooks that were published in the People's Republic of Hungary to see what was taught about the 1956 Revolution under communism.⁶⁰⁵ But as he was not allowed to travel to the country, he was unaware of the fact that most secondary school history teachers did not teach events that took place later than the Second World War, and the majority of Hungarian students learned what they knew about 1956 from the personal experiences of their families. This was, obviously, quite different, often the opposite of the official interpretation. When it comes to state security textbooks about the United States, we know very little about how they were actually used during the preparation of the intelligence officers, how integral

⁶⁰⁵ Károly Nagy, "Teaching a Fraudulent History of the 1956 Revolution During the Kádár Dictatorship," *Hungarian Studies Review*, Vol. XXXV, no. 1-2 (2008): 25-33.

they were to this process. As mentioned in Chapter 7, in the future, an interview with a former intelligence officer or a more thorough analysis of the vast quantity of intelligence reports available would be helpful in estimating the importance of the textbooks.

Every text is influenced by who the intended audience is, and these textbooks are no exception. We know that in this case, the audience was limited, namely intelligence officers who were going to work in the U.S., and the books were published and distributed in small numbers, as it is sometimes indicated on the covers. The fact that these officers would be working under diplomatic cover also affected the subject material of these books. The social status of diplomats has always been high, they interact with the elites of the host society, mostly with high-ranking members of the government, which is why the description of these social groups is often more accurate in the books than that of the average Americans. Even though the diplomats of the Eastern bloc were representing communist countries, where supposedly the working class was in power, as diplomats, they themselves belonged to the highest social circles, they were members of the “communist aristocracy.” Besides the traditional European sense of cultural superiority, this is another reason for the frequent disparaging comments about the “boorish” behavior of the average Americans or American culture and some of the personal characteristics of the American people. The isolation from ordinary Americans was further exacerbated by the fact that, until as late as 1970, the movement of Eastern bloc diplomats was almost exclusively limited to just two East Coast metropolitan cities, New York and Washington.

We also know that in the period, intelligence officers (and most diplomats) were exclusively men, especially when it came to the agencies of the communist countries, preferably married, and they were travelling with their families. This is apparent in *Useful Knowledge* (1974), where some sections contain advice for the “housewives,” the wives of the diplomats, and about schooling their children. With regards to the questions of sexuality and gender, the textbooks reflect the prudery that was a common characteristic of the communist regimes. While theoretically, communists are supposed to reject traditional Christian and “bourgeois” values and morality, in a way, they resurrected it under the guise of “socialist morality.” The textbooks denounce as signs of the decadence of American society any transgression from the traditional norms of sexuality or traditional gender roles. Examples presented in the previous chapter include sex before or outside of marriage, homosexuality, the fact that women also drank alcohol, or the representation of sexuality in popular culture and the academia.

Concerning the treatment of race, there are some differences between the Soviet and the Hungarian books. Given the demographic characteristics of Hungary, the officers who were to travel to the United States were in all likelihood without exception white Europeans, and it can be assumed that they had little or no previous contact with people of color. This is different from the Soviet Union, where while the majority of the population were Eastern Slavs, it was still a multi-ethnic empire, with millions of people of Turkic descent, East Asians in the Far East, Caucasians (in this case, referring to people actually from the Caucasus region, not people of white European descent), and various other ethnic groups. The Soviet books do discuss racial tensions and the oppression of African Americans in the United States, but they frame it either from an operative perspective, or use it to illustrate the corrupt nature of the country. The Hungarian authors, especially Pozsonyi, seem to have been genuinely fascinated and impressed by the ethnic diversity of the United States and were shocked by the racism that characterized American society and everyday life. Of course, the presentation of American racism served an ideological purpose in these textbooks as well, but it is quite conceivable that the Hungarian writers were genuinely surprised by the treatment of Black people in post-Jim Crow America. The authors largely ignore the changing status of African-Americans in American society, which is also indicated by the fact that, for example the shift in American vocabulary away from “Negro” is not even mentioned – in fact, the books consistently use the Hungarian equivalent, “néger,” to refer to Black people.

The language of the Soviet books is belligerent, combative, and ideologically charged. In these books, the United States is often presented as an existential threat. The Hungarian books, which were written later, during a more advanced stage of *détente*, contain vocabulary that is considerably less hostile. But as it was shown in the previous chapters, the basic assumptions of the textbooks and their evaluation of American society, economy, politics, as well as the characterization of the average American are often not that much different between the Hungarian books and their predecessors. They all stand on the basis of communist ideology, and even if the presentation is somewhat more nuanced in the later books, the underlying assumptions, and the conclusions that they draw are essentially the same. Another influence beside the communist stereotypes about the U.S. are the European stereotypes about America and the Americans. In addition, the image that the Americans have about themselves also has an effect, especially in the later books.

The textbooks can be divided into two groups also based on the topics that they cover. Of the four longer textbooks, two contain general information, basic knowledge about the United States: they present the politics, economy, and society of the country, *General*

Description (1965) and *Useful Knowledge* (1974). The other two books, *Agency-Operative Situation* (1967) and *Operative Situation* (1985) look at America from an operative perspective and focus on aspects and characteristics of the country that are more directly related to the work of intelligence officers. This suggests that the preparation about the United States had two distinct purposes: on the one hand, to provide a general overview of the country and, on the other hand, more specific preparation for the operative work in America by presenting the operative situation.

After the reorganization of Hungarian foreign intelligence in the 1960s, the preparation of the intelligence officers for work in the United States was started with the use of textbooks that were translated from Russian, and which were originally written by the Soviet sister organizations. A likely explanation for this is that they needed to use these books as there were no experienced Hungarian intelligence officers who would have been able to write such materials. This assumption is also supported by the poor quality of the translation, the frequent spelling and factual errors that can most likely be attributed to the incompetence of the translator. The translators were obviously unfamiliar with the situation in the United States or with American culture, there was no one who could review the translated materials, and they ended up being given to the intelligence officers riddled with all kinds of spelling mistakes and faulty information. Later, when the Hungarian intelligence organization already had officers with enough experience of working in the United States under cover, they could prepare materials that were more specifically tailored to the needs of the Hungarians. The use of the Soviet materials was also possible because the Hungarian People's Republic was closely following the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, so the objectives of the agencies were initially the same. Also, in the international division of labor between the intelligence organizations of the Eastern bloc, Hungary did not play an important role in spying on the United States. One significant exception was the Hungarian-American community, who were the most important target (and information source) of Hungarian intelligence. At the same time, they are barely mentioned, even in the Hungarian textbooks. Evidently, something else was used to prepare the intelligence officers for working with the Hungarian-American community. Possibly, this preparation was conducted more personally, on a case-by-case basis.

With regards to the sources that were used, we can see a lot of communist literature in the Soviet books: Marx, Lenin, minutes of the Congresses of the CPSU, and quotes from a number of Soviet or Russian writers. In order to characterize America and the Americans, they often quote passages from literary works by Russian writers, as well as American authors who were critical of their homeland (e.g., Theodore Dreiser). Excerpts from American politicians or

intellectuals are often used to illustrate a point (such as the quote about the military-industrial complex by Eisenhower or about child poverty by Kennedy), but they are usually taken out of context. These quotes are used to lend credibility to the Soviet claims, demonstrating that even the Americans acknowledge their points to a certain extent. It is not by accident that among the Russian books, *National Characteristics* (1973) contains the most accurate observations, as this was written based on the actual experience of the KGB, and it focuses on the operative implications of a specific topic. The Hungarian textbooks already use a number of English language sources, but they do so on a basic level. Also, while it is not explicitly stated, it is apparent from the text that Szecsődi and Pozsonyi must have been following the daily events in the American media. These books do not go beyond the level of a relatively well-informed newspaper reader either, they do not make use of the scholarly literature about the United States, which was already available in Hungary at the time that they were written.⁶⁰⁶

Considering what is missing from the preparatory materials also contributes to our understanding of the preparation of the intelligence officers and the image of the United States. As mentioned before, the textbooks contain little information about the Hungarian-American community, which as Chapter 7 illustrated, was the main focus of the Hungarian intelligence in the U.S. The books also ignore many of the transformative changes that took place in American society in the period. The Black Civil Rights Movement is mentioned multiple times, and there is a reference to Johnson's Great Society, but the 1960s and 1970s brought about a major shift in gender roles, race relations, and many other features of American society, none of which are discussed in detail. The books also neglect or trivialize the various aspects of popular culture, in spite of its significance in the period. The writers of the textbooks do not seem to realize or understand the diverse nature of American culture, and often treat it as a monolith, which is a result of their perspective being based on communist ideology, especially the homogenizing narrative of the "socialist man."

The economic and technological transformation that took place over the same period in America is mentioned in the textbooks, but it is not discussed in detail either. This might appear surprising, since gathering information about technology and the economy were among the main objectives of the intelligence agencies of the Eastern bloc during the Cold War. But this is consistent with Zsuzsanna Borvendég's findings about the operation of Hungarian foreign intelligence. In *Az impexek kora*, Borvendég shows how in the People's Republic of Hungary, Office Group III/I of the Ministry of the Interior did not play a major role in economic

⁶⁰⁶ See, for example, Miklós Almási, *Rezgésszámok – Beszélgetések a mai Amerikáról* (Budapest: Magvető, 1974).

operations and technological intelligence, which was primarily conducted under the cover of import-export companies by the military intelligence agency, MNVK-2. Similarly, MNVK-2 was responsible for diversion through the “Press residency,” which consisted of people working undercover as journalists. This was not specific to Hungary, journalism was widely used as a cover for intelligence activities by the agencies of the Eastern bloc throughout the Cold War. This is also demonstrated by Zsuzsanna Borvendég’s research,⁶⁰⁷ as well as the recollections of the Soviet defector Yuri Bezmenov, who previously worked for the KGB under cover in the Soviet *Novosti* press agency.⁶⁰⁸

The preparatory textbooks of the intelligence officers of Office Group III/I reflect that these people were not expected to be involved in diversion or economic and technological intelligence, which was the domain of the MNVK-2. As the overview of the materials in Chapter 7 shows, their responsibility in the United States was primarily monitoring the activity of the Hungarian-American community, and to establish contact with intellectuals, and possibly with government bureaucrats. They were mostly involved in collecting publicly available information, open-source intelligence (OSINT). In addition, they also reported if they came across any information that had relevance for intelligence purposes during their work as diplomats. István Pál arrives at a similar conclusion when it comes to Pozsonyi, but notes that the officer could have had some access to somewhat useful material by managing, controlling people who were in the United States on scientific scholarships.⁶⁰⁹ At the same time, these operative manuals do not contain a deep, detailed analysis of American society, political life, or the economy, because these officers did not need this type of information for their work. The aim was to provide cursory background knowledge about the United States that would enable the officers to get established in their new position quickly, and blend in, if needed. Another aim of the textbooks was ideological education. Even though the tone of the later Hungarian books is less belligerent and hostile, with minor differences (e.g., the acknowledgement of the American role in *détente*), they still convey the same ideological message.

This dissertation does not cover all aspects of the preparation of Hungarian intelligence officers. First of all, there were also preparatory textbooks for diplomats, and for the wives of the operatives. In addition, not every topic in the textbooks is discussed in this dissertation, only

⁶⁰⁷ Zsuzsa Borvendég, *A kádári Magyarország titkos élete* [The secret life of Hungary under the Kádár regime] (Köröstárkány-Balatonfőkajár: Kárpátia, 2020), 138-149.

⁶⁰⁸ For Bezmenov’s recollections on how the *Novosti* press agency served the interests of Soviet state security, see Tomas Schuman (Yuri Bezmenov), *No NOVOSTI is Good News* (Almanac: Los Angeles, 1985), accessed May 3, 2021, <https://archive.org/details/BezmenovNoNovostiIsGoodNews/mode/2up>

⁶⁰⁹ István Pál, “Egy magyar hírszerző Amerikában,” 103.

those that are relevant for the topic, the image of the United States. The textbooks also contain information more closely related to operative work, for example, instructions on tradecraft, that is, practical advice that could be used by the officers on the field, the description of certain industries and research institutes in *General Description*, or the American intelligence agencies in *Operative Situation*. Pozsonyi in *Useful Knowledge* presents many different aspects of life in America, from shopping to getting a driver's license, the further analysis of which could also tell us more about the everyday experience of a Hungarian diplomat/intelligence officer in the United States.

As has been mentioned, we know little about how these books were actually applied in practice during the preparation of intelligence officers. Other than further analysis of the books themselves, it would be useful to put them into context. First of all, an interview with a former intelligence officer who studied from some of these textbooks would help with our understanding of how these materials were used. A more thorough analysis of the intelligence reports would also be able to provide nuance. Another potential course of further research is comparison with other preparatory materials, such as the original Soviet ones, or other textbooks prepared by the KGB. Why were these textbooks translated into Hungarian, and not others? How was the preparation of the Hungarians similar to or different from the officers of the KGB, or of other Eastern bloc countries? Finally, there is the issue of the documents of the MNVK-2. No research on the activity of Hungarian intelligence during the Cold War period can be considered truly complete until the materials of this secretive organization are available for researchers, and this is true for this dissertation as well. Any description of the activity of Hungarian intelligence in the United States is fragmentary until we also have information about the military intelligence.

In his article, "Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary," Tibor Glant identifies various parallel discourses about the United States in Hungary during the communist period. The official narrative, mostly in the form of travel literature, presented America in a negative way. In contrast, the general public's perception, based on personal accounts, memories, American cultural diplomacy, and common sense, was overwhelmingly positive. Both of these images were distorted: "Communist propaganda denigrated the United States, while word of mouth folklore glorified it."⁶¹⁰ While scholarly research about the United States existed in Hungary at the time, it was relegated into the background, its results were mostly ignored. When Glant wrote his article, he was not aware of the state security's materials

⁶¹⁰ Tibor Glant, "Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary," *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, 16.1-2, 2010, 181.

about the United States. In order to properly understand the image of America during the Kádár regime, to draw a complete picture, beside the previously mentioned narratives, we also have to take into account this hidden discourse, the state security's perception – along with the materials of the military intelligence once they become available for researchers.

Appendix

Seminar outline

For the topic 'The USA – the Leading Country of Capitalism, the Main Object of Soviet Intelligence

Duration – 6 hours

Main Questions

- 1) American imperialism – the main force of war and aggression. Monopolistic capital and its effect on the policies government of the country.
- 2) Main characteristics of the domestic political and the agency-operative situation of the USA
- 3) The main tendencies and forms of the political, military, economic, and ideological expansion of American capitalism.
- 4) The intelligence and counter-intelligence organizations of the USA and their subversive activities against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries from the territory of third countries.
- 5) The significance of third countries in intelligence activity against the United States. The characteristics of the behavior of Americans abroad.⁶¹¹

⁶¹¹ *General Description*, 178.

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2.8.1. – Az állambiztonsági szervek nyílt állományú alkalmazottainak iratai [Personnel documents of the open employees of the state security organizations]

3.2.5. – Operatív dossziék (0-8-dossziék)

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Abstract (English)

The United States of America through the Eyes of Hungarian State Security, 1956-1989

Máté Gergely Balogh

This dissertation is an overview of the image of the United States in the operative textbooks that were used during the preparation of the intelligence officers of the state security of the People's Republic of Hungary for work in the United States from the second half of the 1960s to the 1980s. The main primary sources used of the dissertation are four longer and two shorter textbooks that can be found in the Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára [Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, ÁBTL] in Budapest. Half of these books were originally written by Soviet authors, and the other half by Hungarian intelligence officers.

After a short overview of what we know about foreign intelligence in communist Hungary and the preparation of the intelligence officers and the presentation of the textbooks, the dissertation continues with a topical analysis of the operative manuals. There are four main topics that are discussed extensively in the textbooks and reveal a lot about the Hungarian state security's perception of the United States. These are American history and the political system, contemporary American politics, the American economy, and American society and the American national character. Finally, in order to evaluate their relevance, the preparatory materials are compared to the contents of the actual reports written by Hungarian intelligence officers.

What the analysis reveals is that these materials do not contain a deep, detailed presentation of American society, political life, or the economy, because these officers did not need this type of information for their work. The aim was to provide cursory background knowledge about the United States that would enable the officers to get established in their new position quickly, and blend in, if needed. Another aim of the textbooks was ideological education. Even though the tone of the later Hungarian books is less belligerent and hostile than that of the Soviet ones, with minor differences, they still convey the same ideological message.

Keywords: US-Hungarian relations, Foreign relations of the US, state security, espionage, foreign intelligence

Abstract (Hungarian)

Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok a magyar állambiztonság szemén keresztül, 1956-1989

Balogh Máté Gergely

Ez a disszertáció az Amerikai Egyesült Államokról alkotott képet vizsgálja meg azon operatív tankönyvekben, amelyek alapján Magyar Népköztársaság állambiztonsági hírszerzőtisztjeit készítették fel az Egyesült Államokban végzett munkára az 1960-as évek második felétől az 1980-as évek végéig terjedő időszakban. A disszertáció legfontosabb elsődleges forrása négy hosszabb és két rövidebb tankönyv, amelyek ma Budapesten, az Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltárában találhatók meg. A könyvek felét szovjet szerzők írták, másik felét pedig magyar hírszerzőtiszték.

A kommunista Magyarország hírszerzésének történeti rövid áttekintése, a hírszerzőtiszték felkészítéséről tudottak ismertetése, valamint maguknak a tankönyveknek a bemutatása után a disszertáció az operatív kézikönyvek témák szerinti elemzésével folytatódik. A tankönyvek négy olyan fő témakört taglalnak, ami sokat árul el arról, hogyan látta a magyar állambiztonság az Egyesült Államokat. Ezek az amerikai történelem és az amerikai politikai rendszer, a korabeli amerikai politika, az amerikai gazdaság, és az amerikai társadalom és nemzeti karakter. Annak érdekében, hogy felmérjük valódi jelentőségüket, ezt követi a felkészítő anyagok és a magyar hírszerzők által írt jelentések tartalmának összehasonlítása.

Az elemzés eredménye azt mutatja, hogy ezek az anyagok nem tartalmazzák az amerikai társadalom, politikai élet, vagy gazdaság részletes bemutatását, mert a hírszerzőtiszteknek nem volt szükségük ilyesfajta információra munkájuk elvégzéséhez. A cél az volt, hogy olyan vázlatos háttérismereteket adjanak az Egyesült Államokról, ami lehetővé teszi hogy a hírszerzők gyorsan beilleszkedjenek új állomáshelyükre, és szükséges esetben be tudjanak olvadni. A tankönyvek másik célja az ideológiai nevelés volt. Bár a későbbi, magyar könyvek hangvétele kevésbé ellenséges és rosszindulatú, az ideológiai üzenet apróbb változtatásokat leszámítva ugyanaz.

Kulcsszavak: magyar-amerikai kapcsolatok, az USA külpolitikája, állambiztonság, hírszerzés, kémkedés