

# Letters To The Editor

Communications must carry the writer's name and address, though pen names are permitted at the editor's discretion. Letters should be held to not more than 200 words. They are subject to condensation.

## OWI Propaganda In Hungary

1944  
March  
29

In an editorial on Sunday The Post stated that "propaganda in Hungary has been monopolized by Goebels" and that the people of Hungary "haven't known much about the American position." On the contrary, Hungary was the only country in southeastern Europe which permitted many of its newspapers to publish news from neutral and Allied sources. Until the Nazis performed their latest act of cannibalism and swallowed up their satellites the other day, Hungary was the only country in southeastern Europe whose press had never been "coordinated" to serve the will of Adolf Hitler.

Some Hungarian newspapers in recent months published at least as many items coming from neutral, British or American sources as from German sources, and often Allied news received better play than enemy items. I have seen Budapest newspapers in this office with the full texts of speeches of President Roosevelt, Vice President Wallace and Wendell Willkie, and with excerpts from the speeches of other prominent Americans. This, if you please, in a satellite country which, according to your editorial, had been "monopolized by Goebels."

Without going into the methods employed by the OWI to get news into Hungary, I should like to remind your readers that such results are not achieved spontaneously, not even in a country where editors were ready to take risks for the Allied cause.

In their cultural and literary columns the pro-Allied papers in Hungary entirely ignored Germany and discussed only Hungarian, French, British and American writers, plays and music. Hungarian publishers were permitted to publish translations of current Amer-

ican books, which were sold openly in Budapest book stores.

As for the radio, our own short-waved "Voice of America" program was broadcast three times a day in Hungarian, and also relayed from London three times a week by BBC, and was heard with great regularity by a large part of the educated Hungarian public. Listening to enemy broadcasts was no offense in pre-occupied Hungary. We have evidence that Hungarians were able to acquire good new radio receivers even in the last few weeks preceding the Nazi onslaught. Our broadcasts have given Hungarians an objective picture of the news, and have often brought them commentaries, special messages and appeals designed to make them familiar with the American attitude.

It is not, of course, the function of propaganda agencies to make foreign policy. Our job at the OWI is to implement it. I think, however, that we can be proud of the fact that the Office of War Information did its best to facilitate the infiltration of American news and the American viewpoint into that part of the Hungarian press which was willing to print it, and into those Hungarian minds that could be reached by radio. Indeed, it is possible that Hitler found it necessary to occupy Hungary by force, violence and fraud instead of by consent simply because the Hungarians knew so much about the coming Allied victory in this war and because they saw so clearly that Hitlerism was doomed.

ELMER DAVIS,

Director, Office of War Information.

Washington, March 27.

Editorial note—There was no intention to belittle OWI activity, but merely to emphasize that no policy "line" had been propagandized, and this, as Mr. Davis writes, is not OWI responsibility.

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