

“THE LOVE OF AMERICA IS ON MOVE:” VICTIMIZATION,
COLD WAR CONSENSUS, AND THE HUNGARIAN
REVOLUTION, 1956-1957

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ABSTRACT

On November 4, 1956, Soviet forces brutally suppressed the Hungarian Revolution in Budapest. Although Nikita Khrushchev had attempted to “repair” the Soviet Union’s image by denouncing Stalin’s crimes, the Soviet invasion of Hungary damaged the Soviet Union’s legitimacy in the international community. This thesis examines the popular and religious press’ coverage of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. By publishing anticommunist editorials and letters to the editor, the popular press furthered the phenomenon known as Cold War Consensus. Historians have looked at Cold War Consensus as a conscious political project created by a number of individuals and institutions. This thesis emphasizes the role of the popular and religious press as agents in the solidification of the Cold War Consensus. Most notable was the popular and religious press’ use of the victimization narrative. By portraying the Hungarian freedom fighters as victims of the Soviet system, the popular and religious press condemned the Soviet Union’s actions while extolling “American values” such as democracy, freedom, and charity. The popular and religious press’ treatment of Soviet brutality also built a sensationalized image of Hungarian refugees. The emphasis on Soviet savagery and narrative centered on incoming Hungarian refugees as heroes strengthened anticommunist rhetoric that was typical during the 1950s.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

On the morning of November 5, 1956, the *New York Times* published an editorial entitled, “We Accuse.” The editorial was responding to the vicious actions of the Soviet Union and its brutal suppression of the Hungarian Revolution a day earlier. The editorial began, “We accuse the Soviet government of murder. We accuse it of the foulest treachery and basest deceit known to man. We accuse it of having committed so monstrous a crime against the Hungarian people yesterday that its infamy can never be forgiven or forgotten.”¹ The editorial continued, “Hatred and pity, mourning and admiration, these are our emotions today: hatred for the men and the system which did not hesitate to shed new rivers of innocent Hungarian blood to reimpose slavery; pity for the Soviet soldiers, duped into thinking they were fighting ‘Fascists’ when they killed defenseless or nearly defenseless men, women and children; mourning and admiration for the heroic Hungarian people who feared not even death to strike for freedom.”² These types of scathing remarks were not atypical. Editorials expressing outrage were unsurprising given the overall anticommunist sentiment that existed in the United States. The Soviet intervention in Hungary simply confirmed the fears many Americans had about the Soviet Union and its violent expansionist tendencies. The popular press’ outrage over the Soviet intervention in Hungary revealed the deep-seated mood of

¹ “We Accuse,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 1956, 30.

² Ibid.

anticommunism that prevailed in the United States despite some signs of a thaw in the Soviet Union earlier in the year.

At the end of World War II, the United States and Soviet Union found themselves at odds over how the balance of European power should be handled. While the United States had hoped to install pro-American governments, Stalin and the Soviet Union quickly installed pro-Soviet regimes in countries such as Poland and Hungary. The Soviet Union's expansionist tendencies immediately became a concern for the United States government. Compounded by the general fear of communist intervention and rhetoric being spread in the United States, America's wartime ally was becoming worrisome to the American public. As historian William H. Chafe notes, anticommunist rhetoric has acted like a seasonal allergy throughout the twentieth century.³ At the end of World War II, this seasonal allergy appeared in a very extreme form. While there was anticommunist rhetoric spread in the United States, anti-Stalinism began taking place in the Soviet Union. Following the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev was appointed as first Secretary of the Communist Party. In February, 1956, Khrushchev devised a plan to separate the Soviet system from Stalin's crimes by delivering a scathing speech against Stalin and his cult of personality. Khrushchev noted that Stalin's reign and purge of Soviet officials severely damaged the legitimacy of both the Soviet Union and the ideas of the revolution.⁴

³ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). 97.

⁴ James P. Cannon, "The Khrushchev Report on Crimes of Stalin," *The Militant*. July 2, 1956, 2.

Reports of this speech and its contents spread all over the world. When the *New York Times* published excerpts of this speech, both communists and non-communists seemed to breathe a small sigh of relief. While a number of non-communists probably continued to view the Soviet Union as an adversary, many communists began attributing the crimes of the 1930s Soviet Union to Stalin rather than the Soviet system.⁵ This undoubtedly created a much more comfortable position for communists since they could now attribute criticism of the Soviet Union to Stalin and not the Soviet system itself. However, communists and Soviet apologists did not have long before the Hungarian Revolution threatened the legitimacy of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization plan.

The Hungarian Revolution escalated very quickly. On October 25, 1956, individuals all over Hungary began a massive protest against the Soviet backed Hungarian regime. Men, women, and children alike took to the streets, denounced Soviet influence and fought for autonomy. While the protests took place all over Hungary, the world press was primarily focused on the Hungarian capital of Budapest. The protests in Budapest brought worldwide attention to the Hungarian people. On the morning of November 4, 1956, the Soviet army brutally put down the uprising in Budapest. Hundreds of soldiers flooded the streets of Budapest, slaughtered Hungarians and effectively ended any chance for Hungarian autonomy.

There have been extensive works written on the Soviet intervention of Hungary. A number of works have been concerned with the Soviet intervention in Hungary in terms of diplomatic relations. Scholars have written on the diplomatic ramifications of

⁵ Ibid.

this event and how it affected United States/Soviet Union diplomatic relations in the shadow of other events such as the Suez Crisis, the Korean War, and the Poznań protests.⁶ This approach is warranted as a number of scholars have questioned what role the United States played during this crisis. In recent years, scholars have analyzed how the Soviet intervention in Hungary affected U.S. public perception of the Soviet Union.⁷ Renewed scholarly interest in the notion of Cold War Consensus has brought on a number of influential works. During the 1950s, American policy makers and a number of citizens became obsessed with upholding a certain type of American culture in the face of communist infiltration. This level of solidarity against communism and Soviet policy permeated American society. Although there were undoubtedly Americans who did not subscribe to consensus politics, much of the nation was united against communism while fiercely defending their American way of life. This idea of Cold War Consensus has been written on by a number of scholars. As Wendy Wall argues, the consensus was not a natural development, but a political project put together by a number of different groups such as business advertising executives, religious leaders, government officials, and

⁶ See Charles Gati, *Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006,) Johanna C. Granville, *The First Domino: International Decision Making during the Hungarian Crisis of 1956* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2004,) Paul Lendvai, *One Day That Shook the Communist World: The 1956 Hungarian Uprising and its Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008,) Bill Lomax, *Hungary 1956* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976,) Victor Sebestyen, *Twelve Days: The Story of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.)

⁷ See Duncan Bell and Joel Isaac eds., *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012,) William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986,) Matthew S. Hirshberg, *Perpetuating Patriotic Perceptions: The Cognitive Function of the Cold War* (Westport: Praeger, 1993,) Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996,) Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way:" The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008,) Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991)

cultural elites.⁸ While these groups were important in forming perceptions of the Soviet Union and communism, I contend that the popular press must be seen as an active agent in shaping perceptions. The popular press had the ability to shape perceptions based on the editorial voice. While reports offered readers facts about events, the editorial voice reflected the anticommunist tone typical of this period. Because the editorial voice sought to influence its readership, I argue that the content of editorials contributed to the solidification of the Cold War Consensus.

Other historians have analyzed the impact of the press with regard to the Soviet intervention in Hungary. Tibor Glant has examined the impact of editorials and letters to the editor in the *New York Times*. However, Glant focuses on the subject of memory, evaluating editorials published more than ten years after the event.⁹ Glant's work offers an overview of how the Hungarian Revolution has been remembered by Americans. His work is primarily interested in the press, memoirs, literature, art, and textbooks, but Glant's source base was shaped by subsequent events. Both Glant's work and this thesis' sources were shaped by perceptions. While his study is concerned with later views, my argument returns to contemporary accounts of the Hungarian Revolution. By examining the immediate reactions to the Hungarian Revolution, I contend that these reactions provided a robust view of how the Revolution contributed to the Cold War Consensus.

⁸ Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). 5.

⁹ Tibor Glant, *Remember Hungary 1956: Essays on the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence in American Memory* (Wayne: Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications, Inc., 2007)

The lack of focus on how certain voices in the popular press portrayed the Soviet intervention in Hungary has left open a rich field of inquiry.¹⁰ Publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Saturday Review*, *The New Yorker* and others were influential and widely read by many Americans. The popular press had the ability to shape perceptions of its readership, which in turn strengthened consensus policies. Because the Hungarians taking part in the uprising were put down brutally, the popular press could portray these Hungarians as martyrs or victims. The American popular press contributed to the solidification of the Cold War Consensus by emphasizing the victimization of Hungarian freedom fighters.

This thesis analyzes the popular and religious press' role in shaping ideas about the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the charitable response, and the reception of immigrants as a window into Cold War rhetoric. The first section addresses the popular press and its immediate reaction to the Soviet invasion of Hungary. While reporting and news stories were important, this chapter focuses on the content of editorials and letters to the editor. I contend that editorials provide insight into how influential writers and scholars sought to shape popular opinion among the American public. The second section provides an analysis of the religious press and the coverage of relief efforts. Hungarians were predominantly Roman Catholic and the Roman Catholic newspapers frequently published editorials and religiously motivated cartoons that condemned Soviet aggression. Compared to the larger publications, the religious press did not always focus on politics.

¹⁰ The term "popular press" will be defined as a publication frequently read by the American public. These include, *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Life*, *Reader's Digest*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* to name a few.

Instead, the religious press' editorials targeted readers that were interested in the Soviet Union's transgressions against religion which provided a viewpoint unseen in the national publications. The religious press' editorials focused on charity, relief, and the implications the Hungarian Revolution had on Catholicism. This is significant because the popular press did not always address the fight between religiosity and atheistic communism. This opens up more avenues to explore with regard to the victimization narrative. Furthermore, analyzing the process of how relief efforts were conceptualized fills a gap. The popular press and religious press often reported on the relief efforts surrounding the Soviet invasion of Hungary. I assert that the press' reports on relief efforts highlighted the gap between the American views of charity contrasted with Soviet aggression. The thesis concludes with an analysis of Hungarian immigrants and their often subconscious role against communism. While not all Hungarian immigrants who settled in the United States were freedom fighters or vigilant against communism, the popular press often highlighted and sensationalized Hungarian immigrants. I argue that such efforts emphasized the general feeling of anticommunism which was typical of the Cold War Consensus politics during the 1950s.

CHAPTER 2 RESPONSE OF THE AMERICAN POPULAR PRESS AND EDITORIALS

During the 1950s, a political consensus dominated the American political sphere.¹¹ Fueled by McCarthyism, Americans were extremely hostile towards communism and the Soviet Union.¹² Despite a number of personal differences, individuals “had a strong interest in cementing national cohesion, and all promoted the notion of ‘consensus,’ even as they differed on the specific values and attributes that their fellow citizens shared.”¹³ But how was this consensus conceptualized by the government? As Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick argue, “Building domestic support for their foreign policy initiatives has been a primary concern of American policymakers throughout the post-World War II era.”¹⁴ To gather support, Truman found it helpful to “scare the hell out of the American people.”¹⁵ While Truman warned of a foreign threat, McCarthy compounded this issue by warning of an internal communist threat. This created a culture of fear for the American public and shaped how the public interpreted the Soviet Union’s intentions.

Following the Second World War, U.S. policymakers realized that in order to ensure domestic support for American interests, a stark contrast “between democratic

¹¹ Matthew S. Hirshberg, *Perpetuating Patriotic Perceptions: The Cognitive Function of the Cold War* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 70.

¹² *Ibid.* 63.

¹³ Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the “American Way:” The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.

¹⁴ Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick “The Cold War Consensus: Did It Exist?” *Polity* Vol. 22. No. 4. (Summer, 1990): 628.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

freedom and communist totalitarianism had to be made.”¹⁶ By “scaring the hell out of the American people,” Truman’s administration helped create a consensus built upon a binary system of democracy versus tyranny.¹⁷ As David Ryan argues, “The implications of such a binary construct meant that there was little political room for dissent.”¹⁸ This lack of political dissent only strengthened the Cold War Consensus. By restricting the possibility for moderate views on foreign policy, U.S. citizens were forced to choose between support for the United States or risk being labeled as a communist sympathizer. Being labeled as a communist sympathizer almost certainly led to distrust and suspicion by a large percentage of the population.

During the 1950s, many Americans consistently displayed animosity towards the Soviet Union. During the 1950s, Gallup Polls revealed that favorable ratings for the Soviet Union never rose over 10%.¹⁹ In one Gallup Poll taken in July, 1953, 79% of respondents believed that the Soviet Union was building up to control the world.²⁰ Furthermore, a February, 1950 poll reveals that 80% of respondents who knew of the hydrogen bomb believed that the Soviet Union would use one on the United States.²¹ While the Soviet Union was viewed as an aggressive imperialist power, American respondents simultaneously believed that their country was strictly defensive.²²

Animosity towards communists was not limited to those within the Soviet Union as

¹⁶ David Ryan, “Mapping Containment: The Cultural Construction of the Cold War” *American Cold War Culture* ed. Douglas Field (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 59.

¹⁷ Ibid. 58.

¹⁸ Ibid. 59.

¹⁹ Matthew S. Hirshberg, *Perpetuating Patriotic Perceptions: The Cognitive Function of the Cold War*. (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 67.

²⁰ Ibid. 65.

²¹ Ibid. 68.

²² Ibid. 65.

Americans tended to distrust both foreign and domestic communists. A 1954 survey by Souffer reveals that 90% of American respondents believed admitted communists who held jobs in universities or defense establishments should be fired.²³ Such responses provide a backdrop for the general response toward the Soviet Union during the 1950s. Even though the United States and Soviet Union had been allies during World War II, that relationship had all but eroded in the postwar world. Now, the Soviet Union was seen as an active belligerent determined to disrupt the world for its own aims.

Cold War rhetoric was furthered by a number of outlets. One of the most important was print media and the press. As Joanne P. Sharp notes, *Reader's Digest* and their "representations of the communist threat to America produced a particular image of Americanness for its readers, and how readers were drawn into the story to become complicit subjects of this political identity."²⁴ *Reader's Digest* regularly published articles that were aggressive towards communism and the Soviet Union's expansionist tendencies.²⁵ By repeatedly publishing articles that were hostile toward the Soviet Union and communism in general, readers were likely to become influenced by what they saw as a dangerous "other."²⁶ This conception of the "other" was simply a continuation of the consensus solidified during the 1950s.²⁷ Public opinion polls recognized that "Americans overwhelmingly supported their government's anticommunist and anti-Soviet goals and

²³ Ibid. 64.

²⁴ Joanne P. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xv.

²⁵ Ibid. 91.

²⁶ Ibid. 85.

²⁷ Matthew S. Hirshberg, *Perpetuating Patriotic Perceptions: The Cognitive Function of the Cold War* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 70.

policies.”²⁸ *Reader’s Digest* editorials about the Soviet Union were not aberrant of the general 1950s consensus. Public opinion polls such as Gallup and *Reader’s Digest* help provide a broad view of how the public and larger media outlets analyzed the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Nikita Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” marked a turning point in how the American public viewed the Soviet Union. The speech, which denounced Stalin’s “cult of personality” and its effects on the Soviet Union, was the pivotal moment in Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign. Although delivered in a closed session, reports of this speech were leaked and published in the American press. Initial reports of the speech were disclosed to media outlets such as *The Saturday Review* in March, 1956. Once the contents of the speech were exposed, an editorial questioned how the speech would affect worldwide perceptions of communism.²⁹ Furthermore, the editorial questioned what, if anything, would become of the fundamental ideological differences between the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁰ By early June, 1956, the entire speech was revealed to *The New York Times*, and subsequently, the entire United States press. On June 5, 1956, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published excerpts of Khrushchev’s speech. One excerpt included a statement by Khrushchev that suggested Stalin planned to perform another purge of high Soviet officials before his death in 1953.³¹ Another excerpt stated that “Stalin was a very distrustful man, sickly suspicious...Everywhere he saw ‘enemies,’ ‘two-facers’ and

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “The Political Burial of Joseph Stalin,” *The Saturday Review*, March 31, 1956, 24.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Stalin Hinted Liquidated By Reds Facing Purge; Tito Spurns His Tomb,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 5, 1956, 1.

spies. Possessing unlimited power, he indulged in great willfulness and choked a person morally and physically.”³² These reports reinforced the American public to Stalin’s dictatorship of terror and the implications it had for worldwide communism.

On the following day, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published an editorial entitled, “From Stalin’s Russia to Khrushchev’s.” This editorial categorized the release of Khrushchev’s speech as being heroic and positive for the Soviet Union’s image in world politics. Quotes such as “In the shifting pattern, however, we can see that we have a vastly different Russia to deal with today than we had before Stalin died...” demonstrate that there were individuals within the popular press who felt that the speech was pivotal in shaping a new identity for the Soviet Union. In addition, the editorial stated how the speech would affect the Soviet Union’s relations with other communist states under Soviet control, such as Hungary. It continued, “The more the people in those nations know about the late dictator, the harder it will be for Khrushchev to return to Stalin’s ways even if he wants to.”³³ However, Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization plan did not automatically convince every voice in the popular press toward the Soviet Union. The editorial ended with the statement, “But our first duty is to remember that nothing that has happened thus far justifies a relaxation of either our vigilance or our strength.”³⁴ Despite Khrushchev’s willingness to tear down Stalin’s cult of personality, a number of voices in the popular press refused to believe the Soviet Union’s ideology had changed. Another editorial scoffed at the idea that Soviet crimes could only be attributed to Stalin

³² “Khrushchev Speech on Stalin’s ‘Mania for Greatness,’” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 5, 1956, 2.

³³ “From Stalin’s Russia to Khrushchev’s,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 6, 1956, 24.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

by stating, “The essence of the matter is that the real defendant before the bar of history is not Stalin or the Stalinist group. The real defendant, the real culprit is the Communist ideology itself, the belief that a better world can be brought into being by traveling a road littered with the corpses of those who have different ideas.”³⁵ These statements were not divergent as indicated by writers such as Roscoe Drummond. Drummond, a nationally syndicated columnist who routinely wrote on international affairs, argued that the atrocities that were perpetrated under Stalin’s Soviet Union were not the result of Stalin’s rule, but of the system he controlled.³⁶

Although these editorials and articles were primarily geared towards how Khrushchev’s speech would impact diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Communist Party-run newspaper the *Daily Worker* was stigmatized when it accepted Khrushchev’s speech as dogma since the *Daily Worker* had previously agreed with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Stalin’s rule.³⁷ Even though American communists found an opportunity to criticize Stalinist rule, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* pointed out their previous affiliation with Stalin’s Communist Party. The popular press’ condemnation of American communists highlights how distrusted they were as a group regardless of their non-affiliation with the Stalinist system.

In essence, the reaction from several American popular press outlets categorized Khrushchev’s attempt to de-Stalinize the Soviet Union as an admirable undertaking, but one that should not allow the United States government to become relaxed toward the

³⁵ “Khrushchev on Stalin,” *The New York Times*, June 5, 1956, 34.

³⁶ Roscoe Drummond, “What Stalin Did at His Worst Could Happen All Over Again,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 6, 1956, 24.

³⁷ “‘Me Too,’ From Local Reds,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 8, 1956, 26.

Soviet regime. Such responses would become especially prophetic in less than a year in Budapest. An important factor in the solidification of Cold War Consensus was the biased approach from the editorial voice. Far from being objective, these journalists must be seen as historical actors who sought to influence public opinion with their writing. Their writing and opinions would prove to be influential when the Hungarian Revolution broke out only months later.

The Hungarian Revolution began as a popular protest against the Kremlin-backed government in Budapest on October 23, 1956. Hungarian students inspired by both the Poznań protests and the resignation of General Secretary Mátyás Rákosi began discussing Hungary's place in the international community. While it began as a popular protest, Hungarian students began demanding agrarian and industrial reform, the end of communist rule, free speech, and the appointment of Imre Nagy as Hungarian Prime Minister.³⁸ For over ten days, the world watched in apprehension as students, workers, and other members of society looked past whatever differences they may have had prior to the event and joined in solidarity against the Soviet-backed Hungarian government. These Hungarians, armed with little more than rifles and petrol bombs fought against waves of Soviet troops and tanks for days.³⁹ Although it may have looked promising to the world, the events in Budapest suddenly turned from triumph to tragedy. On November 1, 1956, Nagy announced his intention to withdraw Hungary from the Warsaw Pact. On the same day, Nagy's close ally, János Kádár left

³⁸ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 315.

³⁹ Victor Sebestyen, *Twelve Days: The Story of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 127.

Nagy's revolutionary government. Only days later on November 4, 1956, Soviet tanks entered Budapest and squelched the anti-Soviet demonstration with overwhelming force. The Soviet attack resulted in thousands of Hungarians slaughtered and displaced at the hands of the Soviet Union. Through reports in the press, the world received a view of this carnage. The events in Hungary had repercussions felt not only in the Eastern Bloc, but in the United States as well. While reporting was important for the American public, editorials utilized these reports to address the victimization of the Hungarians taking part in the uprising. By doing so, the editorials highlighted the anti-communist rhetoric that was typical of 1950s Cold War Consensus politics.

The response and reaction of the American popular press can be split up into two distinct categories based on the timeframe of the event. From October 24, 1956 until November 4, 1956, the response can be categorized as supportive and optimistic about the Hungarian Revolution. The popular press sensationalized these Hungarians, calling them brave, and worthy of American praise.⁴⁰ Following the November 4 invasion, the tone switched to emphasize the victimization of the Hungarians. Even though the tone virtually switched from optimistic to pessimistic overnight, the popular press almost always utilized the Hungarians as historical agents to accentuate the divide between western ideas and Soviet totalitarianism. This was performed by highlighting Hungarians fighting for democratic ideas against a system unwilling to make concessions to their cause. Early editorials saw the protesting Hungarians as

⁴⁰ "To Honor The Martyrs," *The New York Times*, October 30, 1956, 36.

being overwhelmingly heroic against a seemingly unbeatable foe.⁴¹ This was designed to build a narrative that characterized the Hungarians as being so vehemently anticommunist, they would willingly take up arms against the Soviet army. Another early editorial categorized the protesting Hungarians as individuals who “have ripped the fake peace masks from the faces of the Soviet bosses in the Kremlin.”⁴² The editorial continued to categorize the Soviet Union as nothing more than a common imperialist entity which became increasingly anxious at the thought of losing a satellite nation.⁴³ Although this initial report did not seem particularly confident at the thought of Hungarian victory, it did recognize that the repercussions of this popular uprising would have serious implications for the crystallization of Cold War rhetoric. It stated, “But whatever follows, the brave Hungarians who fought for freedom in the face of Kremlin tanks and jet planes have told the world the truth about Soviet imperialism in terms which no nation—however neutralist—can honestly ignore.”⁴⁴ A similar editorial echoed the same sentiment stating, “The brave Hungarian people have accomplished much in an incredibly short time. The political victory is already clearly theirs and it can be snatched away only by massive Soviet military intervention.”⁴⁵

The American popular press remained fixated on the Hungarian situation in its editorials. In an editorial entitled, “Freedom’s Unconquerable Spirit,” the *Philadelphia Inquirer* portrayed the actions of the Hungarian in Budapest in a light that mirrored

⁴¹ “Hungary at the Crossroads,” *The New York Times*, October 31, 1956, 32.

⁴² “Freedom’s Flames Sweep Hungary,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 25, 1956, 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ “Hungary at the Crossroads,” *The New York Times*, October 31, 1956, 32.

American Cold War rhetoric. The editorial stated, “When the history of this era is written, the week of October 21, 1956 may go down as one of the decisive periods in the rise and fall of the Soviet Russian empire.”⁴⁶ An opening such as this categorized the Soviet Union as a cruel imperialist nation which may have committed one of its bigger mistakes in the fight against Hungarian rebels. The editorial went on to critique the Soviet Union for its crimes against humanity and free speech but saw the Hungarian Revolution as a watershed moment in fighting against this ideology.⁴⁷ The editorial concluded by stating, “. . .that neither guns, nor tanks, nor jails, nor Communist propaganda can crush the indomitable spirit of freedom.”⁴⁸ It is evident that while the popular press did not necessarily see the Hungarian Revolution as one that could be won on the streets of Budapest, the actions of the Hungarian freedom fighters could win the hearts and support of an international community eager to see the end of totalitarianism. Certain outlets from the popular press also saw this as an opportunity to attack the “new look” of the Soviet Union by exposing hypocritical behavior.⁴⁹

The popular press published editorials attacking the official ideology of the Soviet Union by portraying the Soviet Union as a brutal colonial power. In an editorial entitled, “Red Empire on the Defensive,” the *Philadelphia Inquirer* stated, “The Russians and their apologists no longer can point to the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites as a bloc of nations wedded by their common devotion to

⁴⁶ “Freedom’s Unconquerable Spirit,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 26, 1956, 38.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ “Russia’s War on Hungary,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 27, 1956, 8.

Communism.”⁵⁰ Although this statement merely echoed the attack on how communist ideology had reached a point of fragmentation among its inhabitants, the editorial did not stop at that point. It continued by stating, “The Communists can no longer claim to represent the ‘working classes’ in the satellites, since it was Communists—Russian and ‘independent’—who show down the Hungarian workers demanding freedom.”(sic)⁵¹ By attacking the notion of the Soviet Union as a bastion for the working classes of the world, the article used the Hungarian Revolution in two distinct ways. First, it attacked the idea that the Soviet Union is united by a sense of solidarity that has the ability to move past nations and other sources of contention. If the Soviet Union and its eastern satellites were united under the banner of Marxist-Leninist ideology, how could the revolt in Budapest even be explained? Simply labeling the provocateurs as “counter-revolutionaries” would be problematic since this was taking place in a post-Stalinist Soviet regime. Soviet officials were obviously working very hard to distance themselves from the crimes of Stalin, therefore labeling the uprising as “counter-revolutionary” would only remind the public of the show trials and purges which defined Stalin’s rule in the 1930s Soviet Union. Second, the editorial attacked the Soviet Union as a bastion of hope for the working classes of the world. The Soviet Union had previously attracted radicals from all over the world, including the United States. Individuals such as John Reed came to the Soviet Union because they believed in the power of working class solidarity rather than capitalist exploitation. By opening

⁵⁰ “Red Empire on the Defensive,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 29, 1956, 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

fire on the working class, the Soviet Union prompted editorials to destroy this perception in the popular press. In an editorial entitled, “Days That Shake the World,” the popular press used the title of John Reed’s memoir against the Soviet Union’s actions against the Hungarians. The editorial attacked the idea of the Soviet Union as a bastion for the working class, calling it a lie “built wantonly on the great and beautiful hopes of millions.”⁵² Although the popular press had already capitalized on this type of rhetoric, the editorial ended by stating, “This is no day for easy optimism. We must not be childishly optimistic when the blood of those who fought for freedom is still fresh in the streets. But freedom lives. Freedom is immortal. Freedom is in the spirit of man. This much we know today.”⁵³ The editorial became a calculated method to highlight the victimization of the Hungarians by the Soviet Union by accentuating man’s inherent desire for freedom while simultaneously invoking John Reed’s idealism and Soviet brutality. Consequently, the notion of victimized Hungarians helped strengthen anticommunist sentiment in the United States.

A number of editorials published in the popular press continued using Hungarian victimization as a way to propagate American Cold War rhetoric. Although the editorials from October 25 to November 3 were supportive, outlets within the press did not believe the Hungarians could achieve victory. A November 2 editorial entitled “Riot or Revolution” closed by stating, “It is too much to hope that this display of courage and devotion will lead to anything more significant than the latest and

⁵² “Days That Shake the World,” *The New York Times*, October 28, 1956, 190.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

bloodiest sacrifice on the altar of freedom.”⁵⁴ It would seem that the press was already comfortable with painting the Hungarian activities in Budapest as an act of martyrdom against the Soviet Union. The editorial continued, “But it should not be forgotten that the great explosions of history have started from tiny sparks.”⁵⁵ For the majority of its coverage, the popular press was interested in portraying the Hungarian Revolution as a small uprising that highlighted anti-Soviet actions in the Eastern Bloc. Instead of seeing the uprising as a hopeless event from a military standpoint, the popular press was overwhelmingly positive and supportive in the editorials published prior to November 4. After this date, the tone and response of the press changed from triumphant to tragic. Although the editorials to this point highlighted Hungarian “heroism,” the popular press shifted its tone to the victimization of the Hungarian freedom fighters.

On November 4, 1956, the Soviet Union sent tanks into Budapest with the intention of crushing whatever Hungarian resistance was left. Dubbed “Operation Whirlwind,” the Soviet forces quickly overwhelmed the city. It is here that Premier Imre Nagy released his famous words to the world:

This is Imre Nagy, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Hungarian People’s Republic, speaking. In the early hours of this morning, the Soviet troops launched an attack against our capital city with the obvious intention of overthrowing the lawful, democratic, Hungarian Government. Our troops are fighting. The Government is in its place. I inform the people of the country and world public opinion of this.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ “Riot or Revolution,” *Kensington Bulletin*, November 2, 1956, 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ “Radio Statement by Imre Nagy Announcing an Attack by Soviet Forces on the Hungarian Government, November 4, 1956,” *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents* eds. Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, János M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), 383.

Listeners all over the United States tuned in as these events took place.⁵⁷ The popular press saw the events of November 4 as a way to completely overhaul how they would portray the Soviet Union's actions in Budapest. In an editorial entitled "Soviet Brutality at Its Worst," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* opened with the line "In seven days civilization has gone back fifty years. That is the dark, crowning tragedy of a week which has rocked the world."⁵⁸ Considering Europe was only eleven years removed from devastation of World War II, this was a powerful statement. Because Khrushchev was struggling to remake the image of the Soviet Union as distinct from the crimes of Stalin, the attack on Budapest stood out as nothing more than a return to the era of Stalinist rule. A November 11 editorial summed up this failure of legitimacy: "Millions everywhere had been fooled by the Kremlin's 'new look.' They were ready to trust Russia."⁵⁹ The editorial does note several of the Soviet Union's crimes following World War II, but it sees the Hungarian Revolution as the worst offense yet. The editorial stated, "Now comes the most brutal, ruthless and barbaric aggression of all: the Soviet conquest of Hungary. Stalin need not turn in his grave over that. Some of his statues may be gone, but in Moscow his spirit marches on."⁶⁰ The Soviet Union's actions incited the press to ridicule the "new look" even more. Even before the Soviet Union had defeated the Hungarian uprising, editorials likened the "new look" to a "smiling visage" that hid the true nature of the Soviet Union.⁶¹ The same editorial

⁵⁷ "Phila. Listeners Hear Report Of Red Attack on Hungary," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 4, 1956, 6.

⁵⁸ "Soviet Brutality as Its Worst," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5, 1956, 14.

⁵⁹ "Kremlin Cement for Free World," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 11, 1956, 36.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "Hungary's Revolution," *The New York Times*, October 27, 1956, 20.

emphasized Hungarian victimization by the Soviets, noting that Hungarian rebels had been thrown out of four story windows and hanged from lamp-posts without trial.⁶² By highlighting atrocities and behavior typical of the Stalinist regime, the editorial argued that regardless of Stalin's death and condemnation, vicious tactics were still the norm for the Soviet Union. Because the Soviet Union was attempting to create a new type of grand narrative for itself, a return to the era of Stalin was likely the worst comparison to be made. However, the popular press dismissed the idea of a new narrative. An editorial in *Life* explained in reference to the Hungarian freedom fighters, "In your five days of freedom you shook the world of Communism to its foundation. Nor did you lose. In setting off the monster's fury you made him show his true face in a way that all the world could see. And all the world now turns in revulsion from the evil of this visage. It is a wound whose scar will mark him, like Cain, forever."⁶³ Another editorial disseminated these views by stating, "...long after the fires have died out, the reflections from the flames of Hungary will keep on lighting up the truth behind the Kremlin's lies. And that light will shine round the earth."⁶⁴ The editorial concluded with, "It will be not only a light of truth, but a light of warning: that the Kremlin would do this to any people—if it dared, and the free world were weak."⁶⁵ The Soviet Union's "new look" narrative was damaged beyond repair. However, the Soviet Union's acts against the Hungarian freedom fighters did more than influence the content of American editorials.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ "To The Heroes of Hungary," *Life*, November, 19, 1956, 55.

⁶⁴ "Hungary's Flames Warn the World," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 12, 1956, 16.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

The popular press' coverage of the Hungarian Revolution had the ability to influence people and their political views. While the content of editorials was concerned with how the Hungarian Revolution would affect the foreign policy of the United States, the Hungarian Revolution also affected events on the domestic front. Members of the press were concerned about the Hungarian Revolution's effect on the election of 1956. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was eager to demonstrate how Adlai Stevenson's election would be detrimental to the prospect of world peace. Citing Stevenson's unwillingness to establish a type of inspection used to detect a violation in nuclear bomb testing, the *Inquirer* saw this as being particularly lax aspect of Stevenson's plan for foreign policy. By alluding to Hungarian suffering and victimization, voices within the popular press attempted to persuade voters towards Eisenhower rather than Stevenson. Certain members of press clearly saw the Hungarian Revolution as a prime example of why the Soviets could not be trusted simply on their word, echoing the Soviet crisis of legitimacy.⁶⁶

Following the events of November 4, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* once again lent its support to Eisenhower by stating, "With a calm, determined, resourceful President—Dwight D. Eisenhower—leading the world's forces for peace and justice, our own resolve is unshaken, our faith undimmed. The answer to a setback—is a forward march!"⁶⁷ Other editorials praised Eisenhower's sympathy toward the Hungarians, while emphasizing his disdain for the Soviet Union's actions.⁶⁸ However, it must not be

⁶⁶ "A Time for Strength, Not Weakness," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 28, 1956, 20.

⁶⁷ "Soviet Brutality as Its Worst," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5, 1956, 14.

⁶⁸ "Human Rights Today," *The New York Times*, December 10, 1956, 28.

assumed that the Hungarian Revolution automatically caused the press to exclusively publish pro-Eisenhower editorials. In a “Letters to the Editor” published on November 5, a man named David Franklin expressed his support for Adlai Stevenson by accusing Bulganin and the Soviet Union of falsely placing a “Communist label on him.”⁶⁹ Franklin would continue by accusing the Communists of being “afraid of our leadership in the cold war of ideas and they want America’s leadership weak.”⁷⁰ Because the Cold War Consensus was strengthened by political cohesion, it is unsurprising that the larger papers such as the *New York Times* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* were ardent supporters of Eisenhower. Compared to smaller publications such as the *Philadelphia Daily News*, larger newspapers were reluctant to publish editorials or letters that deviated from the general consensus. From these two views, it is evident that the Hungarian Revolution had somewhat of an effect on how Americans residents would vote in the upcoming presidential race. Eisenhower was commonly seen as more of a “cold warrior” compared to Stevenson. By highlighting the plight of Hungary, outlets in the popular press could influence the electorate to vote for Eisenhower based on his hard stance on the Soviet Union.

The race for the White House was not the only election potentially affected by the Hungarian Revolution. On November 2, a Hungarian-American woman named Gloria E. Szecskay wrote to the editor of the *Inquirer* stating, “Magyars are fighting for liberation from the enslavement which was forced upon them by the bungling policies of Roosevelt

⁶⁹ David Franklin, “The Answer,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 5, 1956, 23.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

and Truman at Yalta, Teheran, and Potsdam.”⁷¹ She continued, “Now Joseph Clark, Pennsylvania’s senatorial candidate says, ‘I favor continuation of the basic foreign policy laid down by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman.’”⁷² Szecskey’s letter ends with her expressing support against this policy by stating “I had planned to vote for Mr. Clark; but inasmuch as he sanctions the policies which set the world afire and delivered millions of Hungarians, Poles, and other peoples into the hands of ruthless tyrants, I’ll vote against him in protest of a policy which could serve no other purpose than to make more of a mess of the world in which we live.”⁷³ While this letter is surely not indicative of how all Hungarian-Americans felt about the upcoming election, it is notable to see how the Hungarian Revolution had the ability to affect how one would vote during the 1956 elections. The content of these editorials and letters to the editor recognized how the popular press was utilized to reach a broad audience that was concerned with how the Hungarian Revolution affected issues such as world politics, the 1956 election, and American Cold War rhetoric. These editorials continuously stressed the violence against Hungarians and how their victimization represented the binary between the east and west. In contrast, the response of America’s religious and ethnic organizations recognized that even though readers of religious newspapers were likely concerned with these affairs, the content published in religious newspapers was designed to reach a distinct audience who may have been concerned with issues beyond foreign policy and politics.

⁷¹ “For Hungary’s Sake,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 2, 1956, 32.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

RESPONSE OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC ORGANIZATIONS AND THE IMPACT OF RELIEF DURING THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

From its inception, the Soviet Union opposed many religious organizations and worship, seeing them as counter-revolutionary. Due to this marginalization, religious organizations became outlets for anticommunist activity and rhetoric. In turn, they were valuable assets in the strengthening of the Cold War Consensus. Religious associations were quick to condemn the actions of the Soviet aggression in Hungary not only because of its intense brutality, but because there was a connection based on religious affiliation. Religious structures had looked upon the Soviet Union and communism in general as an alien threat against their values. It represented “the never-ending battle between materialism and spirituality” and the desire to “exclude God from human life.”⁷⁴ Because certain religious entities in the Soviet Union were largely marginalized, the Hungarian Revolution sparked an outbreak of domestic support for those affected overseas. Religion strengthened the Cold War Consensus in various ways. Andrew Preston argues that religion influenced policymaking, noting how Radio Free Europe portrayed Catholic Cardinal József Mindszenty as the leader of the Hungarian Revolution.⁷⁵ The emphasis on a Catholic leader as an opponent of communist controlled Hungary rallied many Catholics to the Hungarian cause. Because many Hungarians were Catholic, and the Catholic press reported with clarity

⁷⁴ Lisle A. Rose, *The Cold War Comes to Main Street: America in 1950* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1999), 320.

⁷⁵ Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 449.

and detail, this chapter will primarily examine the Catholic response. The Catholic response reflected the religious press' role in the strengthening of the Cold War Consensus. By emphasizing Hungarian victimization, the religious press highlighted the binary between the Soviet Union and the West. Unlike the binary in the previous chapter, these sources emphasized charity versus brutality. These comparison points were important tools to strengthen the Cold War Consensus.

Pope Pius XII and many Catholics were adamant in their support for the Hungarian Revolution. Pius XII was no stranger to anticommunist views. In the interwar years, Pius XII had tolerated the fascist governments because they did not actively speak against religion.⁷⁶ For Pius XII, atheistic communism was the Catholic Church's greatest transgressor.⁷⁷ Following World War II, Pius XII became concerned with the Italian Communist Party becoming the largest in Western Europe.⁷⁸ Even though this event would not seriously hurt the Vatican's power, it would be an embarrassment for the Holy See. Furthermore, Pius XII was worried that atheistic communism would damage religious worship in the predominantly Catholic countries of Poland and Hungary.⁷⁹ To demonstrate the Vatican's opposition, the Pope decided that all potential ties with communist organizations must be broken. In 1949, Pius XII issued a decree that recommended excommunication for individuals who had

⁷⁶ Michael Phayer, *Pius XII, the Holocaust, and the Cold War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 139.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 135.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

collaborated with communists in any form.⁸⁰ In 1953, Pius XII sent a pastoral letter to three of the imprisoned archbishops based in Eastern Europe. These imprisoned archbishops included Josef Beran of Prague, Aloysius Stepinac of Zagreb, and József Mindszenty of Budapest. Pius XII encouraged these archbishops and their followers to remain steadfast and that they would eventually prevail against communism.⁸¹ Pius XII was especially supportive of Mindszenty. Mindszenty was not only fiercely opposed to communism but because of his monarchical views, Mindszenty detested the post-war Hungarian government and longed for the return of the Hapsburg monarchy.⁸² Pius XII admired Mindszenty's vigilance against communism and the post-war Hungarian government.⁸³ Even though Mindszenty was regarded as a "cold warrior" and a fierce defender of the Catholic Church, few Catholics could have predicted how important he would become.

Mindszenty was a symbol of the church in an area that was becoming increasingly hostile towards religious belief and practice. American Catholics had viewed Mindszenty as "the living embodiment of the 'Captive Church.'"⁸⁴ On October 30, 1956, Mindszenty was released by communist authorities into the hands of the U.S. Embassy. Surprisingly, Mindszenty did not use malicious language towards his captors. One report stated that after his secret police officer was captured by his liberators, he asked them to release him,

⁸⁰ Frank J. Coppa, "Pope Pius XII and the Cold War: The Post-war Confrontation between Catholicism and Communism" *Religion and the Cold War* ed. Dianne Kirby (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 59.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 60.

⁸² Peter C. Kent, "The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII" *Religion and the Cold War* ed. Dianne Kirby (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 73.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Patrick Allitt, "American Catholics and the New Conservatism of the 1950s," *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol 7. No. 1. Transitions in Catholic Culture: The Fifties (Winter, 1988): 22.

reportedly stating, “Let him go, I want no vengeance.”⁸⁵ Because Mindszenty and Pius XII were staunch opponents of communism, one would assume that he would have used his experience in captivity to demonstrate cruelty within communist governments. Mindszenty’s steadfast nature toward his beliefs and his unwillingness to seek revenge was surprising considering the ordeal he had endured. Mindszenty’s role in the Hungarian Revolution was a microcosm of how the Catholic Church interpreted the purpose and struggle of Catholicism under communist rule. He was an important individual for American Catholics to follow during the Hungarian Revolution because of what he represented as a symbol of the antithesis of Soviet communism.⁸⁶

Catholic Hungarian-Americans often looked towards the church for support in times of peril. As Steven Bela Vardy argues, “Next to the associations, and in particular the sick-benefit societies, the most significant social and psychological props of Hungarian-American life during the age of the great economic immigration were the immigrants’ religious organizations.”⁸⁷ Hungarian-American Catholics were especially interested in the Hungarian events for a number of reasons. The main reason was the detainment of Mindszenty in Budapest by Soviet sympathizers. Mindszenty’s imprisonment was very important to the Catholic Church. Mindszenty was by no means quiet about his political beliefs toward Hungary. A staunch opponent of Nazism during

⁸⁵ “Cardinal Asks ‘No Vengeance,’” *Catholic Standard and Times*, December 7, 1956, 1.

⁸⁶ Coincidentally, two members of the Hungarian army which freed Cardinal Mindszenty actually settled in the Philadelphia region. Ray Berens, “Two Who Freed Cardinal Find Own Freedom Here.” *Catholic Standard & Times*, January 18, 1957.

⁸⁷ Steven Bela Vardy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 50.

World War II, Mindszenty later took up the cause against communism, the result being his imprisonment at their hands starting in 1949.⁸⁸

The Catholic response is also notable due to Catholicism's largely conservative political views. As George Nash argues, "the new conservatism was, in part, an intellectual cutting edge of the postwar 'coming of age' of America's Catholic minority."⁸⁹ This "coming of age" minority was led by intellectuals such as William F. Buckley Jr., who helped legitimize the Catholic intellectuals as an anticommunist force.⁹⁰ During the 1950s, conservative Catholics had viewed American liberals as being weak and unreliable against the Soviet threat.⁹¹ As Patrick Allitt argues, one of the biggest disappointments for Catholics was the Soviet invasion of Hungary.⁹² A number of Catholics had been proponents of "rollback" over "containment," arguing that the United States should actively attempt to defeat communism first in the satellite countries and then the Soviet Union itself.⁹³ When the Eisenhower administration did not intervene in Hungary with military force, this disappointed a number of Catholics.⁹⁴ The Philadelphia-area Catholic response is notable due to the Catholic hierarchy's fierce history of anticommunist involvement. The Catholic Church's influence on American Catholics only strengthened the Cold War Consensus.

⁸⁸ "Mindszenty Has Conquered," *Catholic Standard and Times*, November 2, 1956, 6.

⁸⁹ George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: 1945-75* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 80.

⁹⁰ Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 470.

⁹¹ Patrick Allitt, "American Catholics and the New Conservatism of the 1950s," *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol 7, No. 1. Transitions in Catholic Culture: The Fifties (Winter, 1988): 18.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The most influential Catholic-published newspaper was undoubtedly the *Catholic Standard and Times*, which acted as the official mouthpiece of the Catholic Church. A number of articles and editorials were published in response to the Hungarian Revolution. Of course, editorials published in the *Catholic Standard and Times* cannot be seen as the definitive voice of all Catholics during this event. However, their response echoed popular sentiment among American Catholics. While most of the editorials praised the actions of the Hungarian freedom fighters,” there was also apprehension within these responses. One editorial warned that “If no help is given Hungary now, then all satellite nations will know that they can expect little assistance from the West.”⁹⁵ It is not evident whether the help referenced in this editorial is concerned with military aid, relief aid or both. Whatever the case, support for the Hungarian cause was essential if the west desired to inspire hope against communism within the Eastern Bloc. The religious press utilized harsh imagery to emphasize the divide between the Soviet Union’s actions and American actions of charity. Although they hoped to organize support by publishing grim editorials, they also emphasized the relief efforts of the United States. This accentuated the binary of kindness and charity over repressive brutality.

A number of Catholics responded to the Hungarian Revolution by providing relief and aid to the cause. Members of the Catholic Philopatrian Literary Institute in Philadelphia provided Philadelphia Archbishop John O’Hara with a check for \$2,646 which was intended for Hungarian relief efforts.⁹⁶ In addition, individuals within the city

⁹⁵ “Editorials Praise ‘Freedom Fighters,’” *Catholic Standard and Times*, November 2, 1956, 4.

⁹⁶ “Philopatrians Give Archbishop \$2,646 For Hungarian Relief,” *Catholic Standard and Times*, January 25, 1957, 5.

collaborated with the Catholic Church to provide relief efforts in the form of clothing drives. One man coordinated a campaign along with Sacred Heart Church to gather clothes in any form. He would then send them for any repairs and alterations before sending them to the American-Hungarian Federation in Philadelphia where they would be sent to the needy in Hungary.⁹⁷ Although clothing drives did little for political struggles, individuals who donated clothing likely felt as if they were supporting a cause by utilizing their own surplus of wealth. They could feel associated with the Hungarian rebels at a minimal cost to their own possessions. While material relief was accepted by those in Budapest, Philadelphia area Catholics also provided a sense of spiritual relief. On November 11, 1956, 55,000 Catholics from the Philadelphia and New Jersey region rallied for the Hungarian cause at the Garden State race track near Camden, New Jersey. While there was reportedly no material or financial aid accepted at this event, attendees rallied to listen to sermons from high ranking Catholic officials such as Bishop Bartholomew J. Eustace of Camden and Joseph M. Yuen from China.⁹⁸ The sheer number of attendees at this event demonstrated the level of solidarity that was felt among American Catholics toward the Hungarian freedom fighters abroad.

Religious attention spread far beyond the Philadelphia metropolitan area. On November 4, 1956, a congregation of 2,500 worshippers attended St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City for a mass dedicated to Mindszenty and the Hungarian freedom fighters. The mass, organized by the Hungarian Catholic League of America, extolled the

⁹⁷ "For Hungarian Relief," *Catholic Standard and Times*, December 28, 1956, 11.

⁹⁸ "55,000 Crowd Camden Rally For Hungarians," *Catholic Standard and Times*, November 16, 1956, 1.

actions of Cardinal Mindszenty while mourning the lives lost abroad.⁹⁹ Later that month, the *New York Times* editorial voice again spoke out against the Russian actions. Although it was not affiliated with the Catholic Church, an editorial blasted the “Russian imperialism” as “pestilence,” adding that sick countries need assistance from the outside.¹⁰⁰ These tropes gave prominence to the divide between charity and brutality. The editorial concluded, “Let us say, in this form: we hate tyranny, we will make no truce with murder, but we count as brothers the innocent victims of tyranny and blood lust, and we will help them all we can. This, too, will be America speaking.”¹⁰¹ While the editorial voice was clearly in opposition to Soviet actions, it would not be the only outlet to express outrage. Individuals in religious universities and colleges promoted the idea of charity over brutality.

Academic entities were factors in the strengthening of the Cold War Consensus. Both students and faculty were willing subjects in this solidification as Catholic universities mobilized to assist the Hungarian cause. One of the largest, La Salle University, was adamant in its response to the Hungarian Revolution. Following the Soviet attack on November 4, the Student Council declared that November 15, 1956 would be designated as “a Day of Prayer for ‘those killed in the uprising for freedom.’”¹⁰² Far from being restricted to the campus of La Salle, the Day of Prayer offered masses at all Philadelphia area Catholic campuses.¹⁰³ Offering one of the

⁹⁹ “Hungarians Join St. Patrick’s Plea,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 1956, 39.

¹⁰⁰ “For the People of Hungary,” *The New York Times*, November 19, 1956, 30.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “Student Council Schedules Nov. 15 as Day of Prayer and Sympathy,” *La Salle Collegian*, November 14, 1956, 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

masses was Father Nicholas Darnoi, O.P. who was Hungarian by birth and had fled his native country following the communist takeover.¹⁰⁴ Darnoi was not the only Hungarian-American to offer some sort of “religious relief” to the Philadelphia area. Historian John Lukacs, a prominent member of the conservative Catholic movement and native Hungarian, weighed in on the situation in Budapest.¹⁰⁵ A devout Catholic, Lukacs delivered a rousing address in front of over 1,000 undergraduates on La Salle’s campus.¹⁰⁶ Lukacs’ speech criticized the Soviet decision to invade and massacre his fellow countrymen, arguing that, “Western principles all over the world prevail. Communist principles do not prevail.”¹⁰⁷ Lukacs’ speech emphasized Hungarian victimization and the American vs Soviet binary typical of the Cold War Consensus. Lukacs, who was also an early contributor to *National Review*, represents not only a Catholic response, but a conservative response as well.¹⁰⁸ Lukacs’ view of the Hungarian Revolution saw two completely different systems which could not live in harmony. This view was typical of the “rollback” ideology championed by so many conservative Catholics.¹⁰⁹ In the years following the Hungarian Revolution, Lukacs returned to his view of how ideology was affected by stating, “By the end of the Fifties, many of the New York ex-Trotskyists had become neo-conservatives, even though they had not yet begun to apply that adjective to themselves.”¹¹⁰ Even though

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Patrick Allitt, “American Catholics and the New Conservatism of the 1950s,” *U.S. Catholic Historian*. Vol 7. No. 1. Transitions in Catholic Culture: The Fifties (Winter, 1988): 20.

¹⁰⁶ “Students Protest Hungarian Invasion,” *Midtown Crier*, November 15, 1956, 1.

¹⁰⁷ “1000 at La Salle Rally for Hungary,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 7, 1956, 37.

¹⁰⁸ Patrick Allitt, “American Catholics and the New Conservatism of the 1950s,” *U.S. Catholic Historian*. Vol 7. No. 1. Transitions in Catholic Culture: The Fifties (Winter, 1988): 20

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 22.

¹¹⁰ John Lukacs, *Confessions of an Original Sinner* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1990), 183.

the Hungarians had been defeated in Budapest, there was almost a sense that they had become martyrs in the solidification of Cold War rhetoric that was vehemently opposed to the Soviet Union's policies.

Although the Catholic community at La Salle University offered a quick response to the Hungarian Revolution, its concern for the Hungarian cause stretched over a year after the event. In January 1957, La Salle organized "Operation Humanity," an event which was designed to collect donations for those affected by the Hungarian Revolution.¹¹¹ Although "Operation Humanity" did not have particularly promising results, there was still a level of solidarity between the Philadelphia Catholic community and the Hungarian freedom fighter. One man affiliated with the drive commented, "For never let it be said that a La Salle man has let down his fellow man."¹¹² In addition to "Operation Humanity," La Salle University organized "H-Day." On what was traditionally the feast of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, La Salle and other Catholic organizations held a mass to commemorate the lives lost during the Hungarian Revolution.¹¹³ Because there was this notion of the Catholic Church being the "Captive Church," a number of Philadelphia area Catholics were not only invested in the Hungarian Revolution because of their largely conservative political views, but because of their religious views as well.

¹¹¹ "Campus 'Operation Humanity' Started for Hungarian Relief, Extended After Brief Delay," *La Salle Collegian*, January 9, 1957, 1.

¹¹² "Operation Humanity Results Disappointing in First Week," *La Salle Collegian*, Jan 16, 1957, 1.

¹¹³ "Catholic Colleges to Honor Hungary Martyrs Tuesday," *La Salle Collegian*, November 13, 1957, 1.



Figure 1. Dr. John Lukacs of La Salle University condemns the actions of the Soviet Union during a speech in Philadelphia.¹¹⁴

Although Catholic communities voiced the loudest response to the Hungarian Revolution, they were not the only religious group to offer their support. Jewish communities within Philadelphia offered community prayers for those affected in Budapest. B'nai Jeshurun in North Philadelphia offered a sermon entitled, "Peace and Not Armistice."¹¹⁵ In the Pennsylvania capital of Harrisburg, over 400,000 church youth in the state were called upon to donate any materials which would assist the Hungarian cause.¹¹⁶ By this point, individuals had mostly donated clothing items and raised relatively small amounts of money for Hungarian relief. These items and amounts of money were likely to make little impact for those affected in Europe.

¹¹⁴ *La Salle Collegian*, November 14, 1956, 1.

¹¹⁵ "B'nai Jeshurun To Pray For Peace," *North Penn News*, November 8, 1956, 1.

¹¹⁶ "Church Youth Asked To Aid Hungarians," *Philadelphia Tribune*, November 17, 1956, 10.

However, the actions of individuals who chose to give something revealed a desire to assist in some form.

Following the events of November 4, Americans mobilized to provide relief to those affected in Budapest. Politicians in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania found an opportunity to assist the Hungarians. First, Pennsylvania Governor George M. Leader designated November 14, as “Help-Free-Hungary Day,” asking that individuals donate supplies and direct religious prayers towards the Hungarian People.¹¹⁷ Echoing this response was Philadelphia mayor Richardson Dilworth, who designated November 24, as “Hungarian Relief Day” in Philadelphia.¹¹⁸ “Hungarian Relief Day” was planned as large event which included a speech at Independence Hall by Philadelphia city treasurer George D’Lauro.¹¹⁹ In addition, the Hungarian Catholic League of America, who sponsored the event, placed a commemorative wreath at the Liberty Bell. The symbolism of this act is particularly striking. The Liberty Bell was a symbol of respect and admiration not only for Americans, but for the freedom fighters who recently fought in Hungary.¹²⁰ The response of these high ranking politicians recognized an interest in assisting the people of Hungary, but it also recognized how the city of Philadelphia likened its own history to that of the Hungarian struggle by incorporating the Liberty Bell. In a sense, because almost every Philadelphia resident and arguably most U.S. citizens recognized what the Liberty Bell stood for, politicians sought to demonstrate how the Hungarian Revolution was a struggle similar to the American

¹¹⁷ Relief Program Seeks Help For Hungarians,” *Philadelphia Jewish Times*, November 23, 1956, 1

¹¹⁸ “Mayor Designates ‘Hungarian Relief Day,’” *North Penn Chat*, November 20, 1956, 2.

¹¹⁹ “Hungarian Rally at Independence Hall,” *Catholic Standard and Times*, November 23, 1957, 7.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

Revolution. Philadelphia was not the only major city to establish a day for Hungary. On December 3, 1956, Mayor Robert Wagner established “Freedom for Hungary Day” in New York City. It would be marked as a day of prayer for those affected by the Soviet actions.¹²¹ Major cities may have established these days to simply support the local Hungarian population, but regardless of their intentions, the actions of these individuals highlighted the contrast between democracy and communism. Even more so, it represents an act which was antithetical to the Soviet actions in Budapest. If Soviet forces found it legitimate to slaughter Hungarian protesters, the American public countered by offering humanitarian relief and recognition to those affected by Soviet brutality.

Relief did not end with high politics. Leaders from Hungarian-American organizations based in Washington D.C. organized Philadelphia area individuals interested in providing relief to the Hungarian cause.¹²² While the usual response of clothing drives was expected, students from St. Joseph’s College and also participated in organizing “freedom scholarships,” which were designed to assist incoming Hungarian refugees with learning English and becoming self-sufficient in Philadelphia.¹²³

Regardless of how relief and aid towards the Hungarian Revolution was conceptualized, Americans and those within the press had some level of interest in assisting the Hungarian cause. The U.S. did not offer any military aid to the Hungarian

¹²¹ “Service Aids Hungary,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 1956, 34.

¹²² “City Leaders Speed Aid To Patriots in Hungary,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 12, 1956, 2.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Revolution, but there was humanitarian relief offered.¹²⁴ With regard toward the relief efforts and relief organizations, one article stated, “These organizations kindly request the people of the community to come to the help of the freedom-loving and suffering people of Hungary through either one of these organizations. The love of America is on move! Join and help!”¹²⁵ Although relief efforts and aid offered the opportunity for individuals in the United States to support those affected by the Hungarian Revolution, it does not reveal the entire story. The sudden influx of Hungarian refugees entering the United States region prompted individuals and organizations to react to the incoming refugees. Hungarian immigrants were seen as heroes and symbolic of the fight against communism. But how did their appearance affect Cold War Consensus once the Hungarian Revolution had ended? The final section will provide an analysis of the role these individuals played in the anticommunist narrative within the United States.

¹²⁴ Johanna C. Granville, *The First Domino: International Decision Making during the Hungarian Crisis of 1956* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 196.

¹²⁵ “Relief Work for the People of Brave Hungary,” *Midtown Crier*, November 20, 1956, 1.

CHAPTER 4

EPILOGUE: SENSATIONALISM AND THE EFFECT ON HUNGARIAN REFUGEES

The Hungarian Revolution's effects were felt long after the Soviet crackdown. Although the popular press and the religious press set the tone with their editorial coverage, the arrival of Hungarian refugees prompted the press to continue using the Hungarian freedom fighters as actors in the anticommunist narrative. The anticommunist narrative proved to be an important aspect of Cold War Consensus. By sensationalizing the persona of the Hungarian freedom fighter, the popular press helped shape public opinion to be sympathetic towards the Hungarian refugees. The popular press portrayed the incoming Hungarian refugees as "heroes" even though there was no way to prove whether they had fought. The fanfare and sensationalism was built on the victimization narrative which was established during the Soviet invasion. The victimization narrative was designed to garner sympathy toward the Hungarian cause. Subsequently, the victimization narrative denounced Soviet actions, strengthening the Cold War Consensus.

Following the Hungarian Revolution, a number of Hungarian immigrants settled in the United States. The majority of these immigrants were strikingly different compared to previous Hungarian immigrants. Postwar immigrants could be categorized in two groups, the 45ers and the 47ers, which denoted the year in which they immigrated to the United States.¹²⁶ As Steven Bela Vardy notes, the perception of

¹²⁶ Steven Bela Vardy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 115.

45ers versus 47ers was particularly striking. The 45ers were looked upon with some level of contempt by the American public as they were frequently associated with fascism.¹²⁷ By contrast, the 47ers were seen as more trustworthy and categorized by their support for “various shades of liberalism and socialism.”¹²⁸ In addition, the 47ers were regarded as opponents of the pre-1945 Hungarian politics, communism, and the Soviet Union’s influence on their current regime.¹²⁹ In contrast to the 45ers, the 47ers were favored based on their ideology coinciding with pro-American sentiment and foreign policy.¹³⁰

Following the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, a new group of immigrants, the 56ers made their way to the United States. The 56ers were strikingly different from the 45ers and 47ers as they were primarily young, single, and likely to be entering the beginning stages of their careers.¹³¹ The 56ers were regarded as being “the products of the powerful social transformation that had taken place in Hungary before the revolution.”¹³² What is notable about the 56ers was their striking opposition to fascism, further distancing themselves from the ideology some of the 45ers may have subscribed to in the past.¹³³ Even though only a small number of Hungarians who immigrated to the United States actually participated in the fighting against the Soviet Union, a number of the 56ers were actually apathetic towards the uprising and utilized

¹²⁷ Ibid, 117.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid, 118.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “Under the Cover of Hungary’s Freedom” (sic) UA Nationalities Center. ACC 625. Box 58. Temple University Urban Archives. Philadelphia, PA.

the opening of the borders as an opportune time to leave Hungary.¹³⁴ Many of these 56ers assimilated into American society, married non-Hungarians, and essentially separated themselves from their traditional background. In spite of this, propaganda and sensationalism gave the 56ers a different type of identity.

American propaganda proved to be very important to the Cold War Consensus because even if a number of the immigrants were apolitical, propaganda still portrayed them as “ideological allies” to the United States.¹³⁵ Regardless of their political affiliations, the Hungarian Revolution was a pivotal event for these immigrants because it allowed a large number of Hungarians to establish a new life in the United States. Although there were likely to be Americans who distrusted the Hungarian immigrants due to possible Soviet affiliation, they were for the most part well received by the United States.¹³⁶ Once these refugees entered the United States, they were sent to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey for processing. Once processed, these refugees attempted to assimilate into American society. However, their role was not finished. Even if many of these Hungarian refugees were apolitical, the outlets within the popular press had plans to utilize their status to further the Cold War Consensus.

The Cold War Consensus was largely built on the concept of a narrative. The narrative emphasized that the United States was inherently “good” while the Soviet Union stifled freedom and committed acts of aggression against those it claimed to represent. In this sense, the Hungarian refugees largely became a symbolic piece of

¹³⁴ Steven Bela Vardy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 118.

¹³⁵ Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide: 100 Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States*. translated by Zora Ludwig (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 286.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 276.

this narrative. The Hungarian refugees entering the United States sometimes unwillingly became part of a fierce political and ideological struggle between democracy and communism.

The popular press published editorials which emphasized an obligation to the Hungarian refugees. A month after the Soviet crackdown, an editorial entitled, “The Search for Refuge” listed reasons why the United States had a moral obligation to the refugees. The editorial called the United States a “nation of pioneers,” a land where those who are oppressed may find refuge.¹³⁷ Perhaps the most striking aspect of this editorial is how it compared the United States to ancient places of refuge in the Roman Empire and middle Ages.¹³⁸ This point conceptualized the ideological framework for how individuals should view the United States. Other editorials pushed this idea further. One stated, “We are a nation of more than 165,000,000 people enjoying a period of prosperity and nearly full employment. Surely we have a moral obligation to these refugees. We also have the economic capability to adopt a policy of maximum generosity and hospitality toward them.”¹³⁹ The popular press emphasized its economic and moral muscle to show the difference between the Soviet Union and the west. Outlets within the popular press continued to use this conception of the United States to further Cold War Consensus. Two weeks after the crackdown, an editorial published, “In a profound sense we may already say that the Hungarian revolution has won. The Hungarian people have forced Moscow to show its true face, to reveal the

¹³⁷ “The Search for Refuge,” *The New York Times*, December 23, 1956, 82.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ “Revolt’s Aftermath,” *The New York Times*, May 12, 1957, E10.

reality behind the honeyed words of ‘peaceful coexistence’ and ‘many roads to socialism.’” This statement is similar to those analyzed in the first section, but it continues, “But the Hungarian people have paid and are paying a heavy price for this moral victory. We of the free world are their debtors. We must acknowledge that debt by pressing in every forum of world opinion for Hungary’s freedom, by using every political and economic weapon at our command against the Soviet oppressor, by providing relief and safe havens for the tens of thousands of refugees who have escaped.” The editorial concluded by stating, “In all of this we of the United States have a special obligation as the richest and strongest part of the free world.”¹⁴⁰ All of these statements recognize how certain editorials believed in the concept of American obligation. However, the idea of obligation stretched further than economic obligation. The idea of the United States as the ultimate refuge is the background setting for the anticommunist narrative. Once the dichotomy between the United States and Soviet Union had been reinforced, outlets within the popular press could now utilize the Hungarian refugees as political actors in the ideological battle against communism.

The Hungarian refugees who entered the United States after the Soviet crackdown were not always portrayed accurately. The popular press often sensationalized the identities of these incoming refugees. Regardless of their political affiliation, incoming refugees could simply latch onto the sensationalized identity given to them by the popular press. From the press’ standpoint, portraying the refugees in an exaggerated manner simultaneously benefitted American Cold War ideology

¹⁴⁰ “Hungary’s Heroic Month,” *The New York Times*. November 23, 1956, 26.

while breeding sympathy for the Hungarian cause. High ranking politicians saw sensationalism as a positive phenomenon. While touring Camp Kilmer, Richard Nixon was asked if the fanfare obscured facts about the refugees. Nixon responded, “If the fanfare and publicity help at all to increase Americans’ understanding of the refugees, then it’s served a useful purpose.”¹⁴¹ While it is unclear if sensationalism and fanfare drove Americans to understand the Hungarian refugee, one purpose of the fanfare was to induce sympathy for the Hungarian cause. As noted in the previous chapter, relief provided Americans the chance to donate materials and money to the Hungarian freedom fighters. Certain editorials portrayed the Hungarian refugees as a gift to the United States, asserting, “By this move we add to the American stock heroes and heroines and their sons and daughters. We should thank them because they were willing to give up home and possessions and risk life itself for an ideal which has been widely challenged in this generation.” The editorial concluded, “We in this country have talked about this ideal, but they have lived by it, and some of their friends have died for it. We welcome them warmly, and not without humility in their presence.”¹⁴² These types of statements disregarded the fact that not every Hungarian refugee fought against the Soviet Union. In a sense, however, part of the editorial was true. In the construction of an anticommunist narrative, the sensationalized identities given to some Hungarian refugees proved to be beneficial in establishing even more support for the United States. While their victimization had already been extensively covered by

¹⁴¹ “Refugees: Toward a New Understanding,” *Time*, January 7, 1956.

¹⁴² “A Welcome to the Brave,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 1956, E10.

the popular press, “heroification” became much more pronounced.¹⁴³ Outlets within the popular press urged Americans to do everything possible to help these individuals.¹⁴⁴ The popular press reminded readers that the Hungarian refugees, “in addition to being heroes are also skilled workers, farmers, intellectuals, students.”¹⁴⁵ It is unknown if these remarks helped certain Hungarian refugees find jobs and housing, but the decision to label them as heroes before anything demonstrated how important their sensationalized identities were to the anticommunist narrative.

The portrayal of Hungarian refugees as heroes and individuals worthy of praise did not last long. While there was an initial wave of excitement and support, many Americans tended to lose interest in the Hungarian refugees.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps this was an effect of host countries such as the United States realizing that a number of these Hungarian refugees were not freedom fighters, but ordinary people seeking opportunity outside of Hungary.¹⁴⁷ Members of Congress also made remarks which were critical of this freedom fighter persona.¹⁴⁸ Even though a number of Americans eventually realized that every Hungarian refugee was not an active opponent of the Soviet Union, previous attempts at “heroification” undoubtedly helped ease Hungarian refugees into American society while utilizing them as actors to fuel the Cold War Consensus.

¹⁴³ “Airlift to Freedom,” *The New York Times*, December 6, 1956, 36.

¹⁴⁴ “Hungary’s Refugees,” *The New York Times*, November 11, 1957, 28.

¹⁴⁵ “Airlift to Freedom,” *The New York Times*, December 6, 1956, 36.

¹⁴⁶ Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide: 100 Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States* translated by Zora Ludwig (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 286.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 286.

In essence, the Hungarian refugees who found themselves in the United States were very interested in assimilating into American life.¹⁴⁹ While it must be remembered that not every Hungarian refugee who came to the United States after 1956 was a freedom fighter, the Hungarian Revolution was nevertheless a pivotal event for these refugees. Certain refugees utilized their sensationalized status as freedom fighters to educate Americans about Hungary and the Hungarian Revolution, organizing speaking tours and preparing newsletters.¹⁵⁰ Hungarian refugees also found it useful to join transnational networks, allowing them to remain politically significant and fuel the Cold War Consensus.¹⁵¹ Others took part in this phenomenon for a short while, but slowly blended into American society.¹⁵² Perhaps one of these reasons was the advent of détente, which limited the influence of Hungarian-American groups such as the “Hungarian Freedom Fighters’ Association.” Eventually, Hungarian-Americans became notably less politicized, but still held onto their Hungarian roots.¹⁵³ Many American outlets had portrayed the Hungarians as heroic regardless of their participation against the Soviet Union and the Hungarian refugees. For the Hungarian refugees who actually fought, this was likely a source of pride for them considering their portrayal in the media. For the Hungarian refugees who did not rise up against the

¹⁴⁹ Tamas Tamas, “Evolution of a Global Community: New Jersey Hungarians in a Trans-National Ethnic Network,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*. (Vol 10, No 4. Summer, 1997): 619.

¹⁵⁰ Béla Lipták, *A Testament of Revolution* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001), 168.

¹⁵¹ Tamas Tamas, “Evolution of a Global Community: New Jersey Hungarians in a Trans-National Ethnic Network,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*. (Vol 10, No 4. Summer, 1997): 621.

¹⁵² Kati Marton, *Enemies of the People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 219.

¹⁵³ Tamas Tamas, “Evolution of a Global Community: New Jersey Hungarians in a Trans-National Ethnic Network,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*. (Vol 10, No 4. Summer, 1997): 630.

Soviet Union, the support they received from social agencies and sponsors proved to be pivotal for their assimilation into American life.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The Hungarian Revolution proved to be an event which solidified previous perceptions about the Soviet Union's quest to retain its territories. The popular press' response demonstrated that individuals and agencies within the country were concerned with how this event would affect both domestic issues as well as international issues. Most importantly, an analysis of the popular press' response reveals much about the Cold War Consensus that was felt between World War II and the Vietnam War. Arguably, because of Truman's policies along with Joseph McCarthy's hunt for communists, the 1950s can be seen as the high water mark for anticommunist sentiment during the Cold War. While editorials may have been optimistic toward the Hungarian Revolution prior to November 4, the Soviet invasion simply proved to be another event to fuel the 1950s Cold War Consensus. As a result, perceptions about Soviet aggression and imperialistic tendencies were utilized by individuals in the popular press and other agencies to further anticommunist rhetoric. The most common way to further this rhetoric was by emphasizing the victimization of Hungarian freedom fighters. Because the Hungarian freedom fighters were fighting against a Soviet-backed regime, the American press utilized these fighters as ideological allies. The religious press also saw the Hungarian freedom fighters as ideological allies but for different reasons. For the religious press, Hungary's fight was about defending Catholicism against atheistic communism. These notions also loomed large with the arrival of Hungarian refugees after the Hungarian Revolution. Americans often found ideological similarities between themselves and the politicized Hungarian refugees, as evidenced by allowing Hungarian refugees to make

speeches condemning Soviet aggression at American landmarks such as Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.¹⁵⁴ Americans who donated money and goods to Hungary likely made little impact, but their assistance in assimilating the incoming Hungarian refugees proved to be beneficial as a number of those who immigrated after 1956 blended into American society.¹⁵⁵

While this thesis does not claim to be indicative of how every major press outlet responded to the Hungarian Revolution, the press' overwhelming condemnation of Soviet aggression and support for the Hungarian freedom fighters suggests that the Cold War Consensus binary in the 1950s would not be easily deterred. Outlets within the popular press utilized the victimization of the Hungarian freedom fighters to further Cold War rhetoric. By portraying the Soviet Union's actions against the people of Hungary as a transgression that could not be easily remedied, outlets within the popular press used the Hungarian Revolution as another reminder on why the Soviet Union was antithetical to "American values" of charity and democracy.

Demonstrating the binary between the Soviet Union and the United States was a pivotal task for a number of individuals during the 1950s. If historians are to assume that the Cold War Consensus was already built in 1956, the condemnation of Soviet actions and victimization of Hungarian freedom fighters only helped strengthen the anticommunist narrative.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ "Hungarian Rally at Independence Hall," *Catholic Standard and Times*, November 23, 1957, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Kati Marton, *Enemies of the People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 219.

¹⁵⁶ Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.

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¹⁵⁷ Figure 2. "Man of the Year Cover," *Time*, January 7, 1957.

http://img.timeinc.net/time/magazine/archive/covers/1957/1101570107_400.jpg

Despite being defeated by the Soviet forces, the magazine chose to portray the Hungarian Freedom Fighter as a steadfast individual. These types of images sensationalized the Hungarian Freedom Fighter persona



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¹⁵⁸ Figure 3. "Peaceful Coexistence," *Catholic Standard and Times*, November 11, 1956, 6. These types of images emphasized the abuse Hungary's Catholics felt at the hands of the Soviet forces.