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READ AND DESTROY

ITEM NO. 6069/56

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Political Advisor
Audience Analysis

PRIORITY
BS
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BULGARIA

MORALE AND GENERAL MOOD /2000/
Political Situation /2004/

PROPAGANDA /2600/
Radio /2605/

LISTENING TO WESTERN BROADCASTS IN BULGARIAN.

SOURCE TRIESTE: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: April 1956.

EVAL. COMMENT: None.

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"I have often listened to Western broadcasts, and particularly those of the "Voice of America," but I have to admit that I did not listen out ^{of} my free will. In the house where I live with my daughter, there are also two workers' families with whom we have always got on very well. Until a few years ago we used to gather almost every night in our kitchen to listen to "The Voice of America" and "Radio Free Europe." One of the two tenants is highly interested in politics and normally, listening to those stations took place at his own initiative. Since 1952, however, such meetings became rarer, and I do not remember any such meeting in 1955. There are two main reasons for

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this fact: the first is scarcity of exciting news from the West, and the second is because a Communist came to live in our house. He was working with the GABROVO town council.

In the last few months, my kitchen has been full of guests who wanted to hear news from the West. They were anxious for it as our press and radio actually hide or give delayed information on the most important events which took place at the XXth Soviet Communist Congress. I want to point out that the latest meeting in my kitchen took place on the initiative of the new Communist tenant and his wife, who is an active propaganda agent for the Patriotic Front. The increased interest our tenants show for foreign news may also be proved by the fact that although our kitchen is always full of smoke, our guests keep staying until late at night. This interest, in my opinion, is due to the temporary confusion now existing in Communist ranks. The Bulgarian people know that when the Communists are confused and worried, there are events under way which are not favorable to them.

There is a wired radio net in GABROVO, and practically all families own a radio set /radio tochka/. This wired radio net is exclusively used for propaganda purposes by the Communist Party's provincial committee.

The national Radio Station HRISTO BOTEV inserts its programs in this net, but this happens very seldom. The GABROVO Radio net broadcasts start at 0700 hours and continue until 2300 hours. During this time, the station broadcasts the pledges of shockworkers in the town industrial and trade enterprises, communiqués on economic plans completed before scheduled time, speeches and lectures by illiterate Communists, often on "What Happens in the Soviet Union?" and, finally, various communiqués on fines imposed on citizens who have infringed town regulations, and even notices to housewives informing them that at such an hour of the day the garbage truck will be at their gate to remove what has been filling their garbage cans for days and days. I want to point out that the broadcasts of the wired radio net get more listeners than those intercepted with normal radio sets. In my kitchen the loudspeaker is always at high volume. As you know, women — and especially women of my age — like this kind of thing, especially

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because I have no time to dedicate to gossip, and even if I had, I couldn't, because all women are working.

Jamming of the free world broadcasts is now worse than a few years ago, but in spite of that, we are always able to catch something of the broadcasts. From the people meeting in my house, I heard that at GORNA OREHOVITZA there is a station purposely set up to jam Western radio stations. This may be one of the reasons why the population's interest in Western broadcasts has lessened.

GABROVO is an anti-Communist town. Those inhabitants who were Communists before September 9 1944, have now become managers and employees in nationalized plants. Workers are discontented, their hopes have been deluded and they feel cheated by the new Regime. The Communists too, are discontented, especially those who were given poor jobs at low salaries, with which they cannot make ends meet. Wages suddenly decreased when the piecework method was applied. People are morally dejected, and everybody is worried fearing unemployment, as dismissals are under way. I know many GABROVO families who are fighting for their daily bread, going through a lot of hardships. The population is quiet and law-abiding, but knowing what strong feelings of revenge are nurtured by those people, I can't imagine how tragic the end could be of the "Glorious Communist Government." I think they will exterminate each other before finally falling. From Bulgarian emigres I came to know something about the conferences of /fnu/ STANKULOV, an emigree who redefected last year /1955/ from South America. In a broadcast lecture, he narrated the story of his journey from Turkey to Uruguay and return. At any rate, I am of the opinion that he exaggerated and that the Communists have briefed him on what he was to say in order to support their point that the "traitors puddle" of Bulgarian emigration has been a failure."

End

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