
At Least Something: The UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, 1957–1958

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Abstract

In late 1956, the United Nations (UN) faced a remarkable test, as the Soviet Union invaded and crushed a burgeoning rebellion in Hungary, then a Soviet satellite. After the Soviet Union disregarded repeated UN calls to withdraw, the UN General Assembly established, in January 1957, a Commission of Inquiry (COI) to investigate the crisis. This article explores the forgotten story of the Special Committee on Hungary as a case study for the effects of COIs. This commission is of special interest for several reasons. Namely, it was one of the first mandated by a UN body to investigate a specific conflict, not least a Cold War struggle, in which a superpower was directly involved. Furthermore, it was clear from the beginning that the Committee was not likely to compel, in itself, the Soviet Union to change its behaviour. Moreover, 1956 was a time of global political transformation, as the non-aligned movement emerged as a key player in UN politics and, accordingly, became a target in the Cold War battle for influence. Under such circumstances, the effects of COIs are complex and difficult to gauge. While the Committee did not lead to the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Hungary, it had many unforeseen and conflicting effects. These are grouped into two categories – effects relating mainly to times of ideological conflict and political transformation and effects that relate to parallel multilateral efforts and institutional dynamics. Among other effects, the article demonstrates how, under such political circumstances, COIs can create new points of contention and cause backlash precisely from those that they seek to influence. Having cascading and conflicting effects, the central conclusion is that COIs do not lend themselves easily to clean and linear theories. Recognition of the field's inherent complexity is therefore needed in any attempt to study this international phenomenon.

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1 Introduction

The United Nations (UN), at the end of its first decade, faced a remarkable test. In October–November 1956, two major international crises unfolded: the British, French and Israeli attack on Sinai sparked the Suez Crisis,¹ while, in Europe, the Soviet Union crushed a burgeoning rebellion in Hungary, which was then a Soviet satellite. The Suez Crisis led to the establishment of the first UN peacekeeping force (UNEF), which was hailed at the time as a great success and major precedent.² Yet, generally, peacekeeping requires the consent of all parties concerned.³ In Hungary, achieving such consent was politically impossible, and sending a UN force absent consent could start a world war. Therefore, despite some calls to pursue in Hungary a course similar to Suez, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) decided, in January 1957, to establish a commission of inquiry (COI).

Like other articles in this symposium, this article is concerned with the ‘differences’ that COIs actually make.⁴ In this context, this article uses the UN’s Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary (Hungary Committee) – an event largely overlooked in the literature – as a case study that may shed light on the effects of COIs in especially contentious political climates.⁵ It serves as a valuable case study for several reasons. First, it was one of the first commissions mandated by a UN body to investigate a specific conflict⁶ and, to this day, remains one of the only ones established to investigate a superpower, not least against its will. Second, it was a rare instance in which a commission was appointed by the UNGA in a plenary session after lengthy deliberations, which gives us substantial insight on the dynamics that led to its establishment. Third, the Hungary COI was established in the context of the Cold War, an especially acute instance of global political divide. Fourth, there was no real hope that the Hungary Committee would achieve direct, tangible, behaviour-changing results. From the get-go, it was clear that the committee was not likely – by way of understatement

¹ For a concise history, see E. Luard, *A History of the United Nations* (1989), vol. 2, at 18–58.

² See *ibid.*, at 40–58; G. Fiti Sinclair, *To Reform the World: International Organizations and the Making of Modern States* (2017), at 141–147; P. Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (2006), at 81–83.

³ See Fiti Sinclair, *supra* note 2, at 146; A.J. Bellamy, P.D. Williams and S. Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping* (2nd edn, 2010) at 17, 49.

⁴ Notably, this symposium is not concerned with the ‘effectiveness’ of commissions of inquiry (COIs) but, rather, with effects or ‘differences’ they make – intended or unintended, positive or negative. For theoretical context about COIs in general and for the broader situation of this article within the literature, the reader is advised to read the symposium’s introduction. Becker and Nouwen, ‘International Commissions of Inquiry: What Difference Do They Make? Taking an Empirical Approach’, in this issue, 819.

⁵ ‘Effects’, or ‘differences’, for the sake of this article, should not be understood in the *condition sine qua non* sense. Rather, effects here should be understood in the softer, contributory sense, often operating within a larger process. Moreover, this article does not presume to identify all the effects of the Hungary Committee but only those proximate enough and observable – through process-tracing methodology – in the archival material reasonably available. For a discussion of methodology and related challenges, see *ibid.*, at 827–831.

⁶ For an earlier example, see Special Committee on the Balkans from 1947, GA Res. 109 (II), 21 October 1947.

– to compel, in itself, the Soviet Union to change its behaviour. Moreover, there was no practicable possibility that the COI would trigger further, operational legal mechanisms such as international tribunals or resolutions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Under such circumstances, the effects, or ‘differences’ made by COIs, are both intriguing and difficult to gauge.

Indeed, it is fair to ask, what differences – intended or unintended – can a COI make, as a legal and political instrument, when its mandate involves investigating the actions of an intransigent permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), concerning an issue at the core of an intractable ideological divide. Perhaps, it is wise to start with the differences that the Hungary Committee did not make. It did not cause the Soviet Union to withdraw nor to cease intervening in Hungary’s affairs. Furthermore, it did not stop the execution of the leaders of the revolution, nor did it curtail the human rights violations in post-1956 Hungary. It did not deter the Soviet Union from pursuing a similar intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. To some historians of the UN, thus, the Committee was tantamount to inaction, a symbolic move that had no tangible influence.⁷

Yet, this in no way implies that the Hungary Committee and its report (Hungary report) were meaningless. The differences made by a COI can be unintended and unforeseen. They can be measurable or intangible. They can be positive or negative – depending on one’s outlook – or both at the same time.⁸ Absent enforcement mechanisms, COI reports can become part of an open-ended discussion and may become themselves new points of contention in an ongoing conflict. In periods of significant political transformation, such unintended effects can be amplified. In the UN, the mid-1950s saw the waning days of the early American dominance of the UNGA.⁹ Decolonization and the admission of new states ushered a gradual shift of power, as the 1955 Bandung Conference galvanized the emerging non-aligned bloc into growing assertiveness.¹⁰ This prompted some Cold War powers to attempt to appropriate the ‘Third World’ to their causes.¹¹ In the background, disarmament negotiations shaped much of the 1950s’ diplomatic landscape. All of these processes intertwined with, and generated, intense bloc propaganda, which – as we shall see – shaped and re-shaped the reception of the Hungary Committee, sometimes consuming it altogether.

This article begins by offering a brief sketch of Hungary in 1956 and the road to the Hungary Committee, its objectives and its immediate aftermath. Thereafter, it identifies and groups the effects of the Hungary Committee under two general headings, while attempting to (roughly) maintain the chronological order of events. Accordingly, Part 3 examines the intertwining, yet distinct, effects of the Hungary Committee in light

⁷ Luard, *supra* note 1, at 71–75.

⁸ Beckers *et al.*, *supra* note 4.

⁹ M. Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to Present* (2012), at 254–258.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, at 259–263; see also ‘Text of Nehru’s Address to UN Unit’, *New York Times* (6 November 1956).

¹¹ Mazower, *supra* note 9, at 260–261; R. Allison, *The Soviet Union and the Strategy of Non-alignment in the Third World* (1988), at 29–30; Cheng Guan, ‘The Bandung Conference and the Cold War International History of Southeast Asia’, in S.S. Tan and A. Acharya (eds), *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (2008) 19, at 27, 29–31.

of the prevailing historical circumstances of global ideological conflict and political transformation. Most of the differences discussed in this part relate to the utilization of the COI and its report by various interested actors. In this context, the Cold War and decolonization provide an ideal example of a global rift, in which such utilization can produce a myriad of conflicting and backlashing effects. One key finding of Part 3 is that, in the contentious political environment of the Cold War, the report quickly emerged as a new point of contention, which, in turn, hardened pre-existing narratives on the conflict. Relatedly, this hardening, along with Western attempts to use the Hungary Committee and its members to press for a shift in the policy of non-aligned states, contributed to a certain backlash in non-aligned policy. In other words, the Western attempt backfired. More generally, it should be borne in mind that the historical moment explored here is but an extreme instance of global rifts that may exist (in differing intensities) today. Therefore, the effects of COIs in these settings may also shed light on contemporary dynamics.¹²

Part 4 highlights the differences relating more to the way in which COIs may affect parallel multilateral efforts and to the dynamics they might bring about within establishing institutions. Concerning the former, this part highlights the idea that COIs might complicate parallel negotiation efforts on the conflict as well as ongoing discussions on other underlying issues between involved parties (in this case, disarmament). In relation to the latter, this part suggests that the perceived effectiveness of a COI can be shaped by policy choices in parallel conflicts. Here, the decision to deploy peacekeeping forces in the contemporaneous crisis in Suez – which was hailed at the time as a great success and a dramatic precedent – presented the Hungary Committee in an unflattering light. These dynamics, in turn, can affect the institutional motivation to pursue COIs in subsequent conflicts. Furthermore, this part shows that COIs create physical artefacts – such as lists of witnesses – that might possess ‘lives of their own’. These artefacts might become contentious themselves, requiring the establishing institution to make hard choices.

Admittedly, some overlap between the categories suggested here is unavoidable. For instance, the manner in which the Hungary Committee complicated further negotiations, as discussed in Part 4, cannot be categorically separated from its utilization in public discourse, explored generally in Part 3. Similarly, the effects of this utilization on the perceived impartiality of the UN, addressed in Part 3, must also inform our reading of the UN’s handling of the evidence produced by the Committee, as reflected in the bizarre episode known as the Bang Jensen affair, which is uncovered in Part 4. Therefore, the categorization here should be understood more as a matter of degree than of clear-cut dichotomy. But, first, let us sketch the stories of the Hungary crisis of 1956 and the Hungary Committee.

¹² Risking over-simplification, it is arguable that the global circumstances today – chiefly, the renewed tensions between Russia and Western states and the persisting North/South divide – are reminiscent somewhat of those prevailing in the Cold War era. Furthermore, the harsh and sweeping political discourse witnessed today in a myriad of contexts is also comparable to the popular and diplomatic discourse during the Cold War. The effects of the Hungary COI, therefore, might teach us, *mutatis mutandis*, about possible dynamics of COIs today.

2 A Sketch of Hungary in 1956

On the afternoon of 23 October 1956, Budapest students marched in solidarity with Polish protesters, calling for political reforms in Hungary, which was a Soviet satellite state at that time. When they approached the local radio station to voice their demands, gunshots erupted.¹³ By that evening, demonstrations and armed violence had spread throughout the city.¹⁴ Already in the early hours of 24 October, Soviet units entered the city, claiming that they were invited to ensure order.¹⁵ Imre Nagy, a moderate communist, was appointed as prime minister to appease the demonstrators.¹⁶ In the following days, as resistance spread, Nagy became convinced that a genuine popular uprising was at hand rather than a foreign-fomented counter-revolution. He accepted some of the rebels' political demands,¹⁷ denied having invited the Soviets and demanded their immediate withdrawal.¹⁸

The events that followed have been aptly described as a 'Dantean spectacle'.¹⁹ On 30 October, the Soviet Union declared its intention to withdraw from Budapest and to open negotiations for complete withdrawal from Hungary.²⁰ Yet, by 31 October, Nikita Khrushchev already had changed his mind.²¹ As people in Budapest celebrated the Soviet withdrawal from the city, new Soviet troops entered the country on 1 November, with the intention of putting a definite end to the uprising.²² Nagy, in response, reached out to the UN to demand that the Soviet Union halt its incursion. He renounced the Warsaw Pact, declared neutrality and appealed to the UN and the 'four great powers' to defend Hungary's newfound neutrality.²³ By that time, Soviet forces had surrounded Budapest,²⁴ and any prospects of further negotiations were quashed decisively on 3 November, when the Hungarian delegation was arrested by KGB agents while in the negotiation room, just outside Budapest.²⁵ In the early morning of 4 November, Nagy made his final radio statement, notifying 'the entire world' about the Soviet actions, before seeking shelter in the Yugoslav embassy.²⁶ On the same day, Janos Kadar – previously Nagy's ally – announced the formation of a

¹³ C. Békés, M. Byrne and M.J. Rainer (eds), *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents* (2002), at xxxvii.

¹⁴ C. Gati, *Failed Illusion: Moscow, Washington, Budapest and 1956 Hungarian Revolt* (2006), at 147.

¹⁵ Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at xxxvii–xxxviii.

¹⁶ Gati, *supra* note 14, at 149.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, at 172–176; Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at 284–285, 290–291.

¹⁸ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary (Hungary report), UN Doc. A/3592 (1957), at 69, 242–243, 330.

¹⁹ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 633rd Plenary Meeting (UNGA 633rd Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.633, 9 January 1957, at 133 (Argentina).

²⁰ Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at 300.

²¹ See Gati, *supra* note 14, at 186–191.

²² *Ibid.*, at 191, 194–195; Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at xl–xli.

²³ See UNGA, Hungary: Request for the Inclusion of an Additional Item in the Agenda of the General Assembly, UN Doc. A/3251, 1 November 1956; see also Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at 334.

²⁴ Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at xli.

²⁵ Gati, *supra* note 14, at 197.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, at 198; see also Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at 383.

new pro-Soviet government. He blamed Nagy for colluding with counter-revolutionist forces and requested further Soviet assistance.²⁷ Having been promised safe conduct by Kadar's government, Nagy and his associates left the embassy on 22 November; however, they were quickly apprehended and transferred to Romania.²⁸ Nagy and his colleagues were returned to Budapest in April 1957, tried secretly and hung in June 1958.²⁹

3 The Hungary Committee

A The Road to the Committee

The Hungary crisis received immense diplomatic and public attention from the outset. It was first brought to the UNSC on 27 October,³⁰ and, thereafter, each one of its twists and turns was debated and analysed by member states in real time. All along, the parties' narratives – both concerning law and facts – were irreconcilable.³¹ The Soviet Union and its allies consistently argued that the issue was beyond the UN's competence since it was an internal Hungarian problem. To the Eastern bloc, a legitimate socialist government requested assistance in order to quash a pro-fascist, reactionary counter-revolution premeditated and fomented by external elements.³² To the West, at hand was a brutal crushing of a people's struggle for independence, in violation of fundamental human rights and the principle of non-intervention.³³ Although a definitive majority in the UNSC condemned the Soviet Union in the harshest terms, a Soviet veto curtailed a US-proposed draft resolution.³⁴ Admitting its failure, the UNSC immediately referred the situation to an emergency Uniting for Peace session of the UNGA.³⁵

A string of UNGA resolutions calling for Soviet withdrawal went unheeded.³⁶ The secretary general was requested to investigate the situation,³⁷ but his observers were not allowed to enter Hungary. Because of this, on 30 November, a frustrated Dag

²⁷ Hungary report, *supra* note 18, at 77, 268, 296.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, at 80–82; Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at xlvi.

²⁹ See generally A. Dornbach, *The Secret Trial of Imre Nagy* (1994).

³⁰ On that day, France, the United Kingdom and the USA requested a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting to discuss the situation in Hungary. See UNSC, Letter Dated 27 October 1956 from the Representatives of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America Addressed to President of the Security Council, UN Doc. S/3690, 27 October 1956.

³¹ For a detailed legal analysis, see Lieblich, 'The Soviet Intervention in Hungary – 1956', in T. Ruys, O. Corten and A. Hofer (eds), *International Law on the Use of Force: A Case-Based Approach* (2018).

³² See UNSC, 746th Meeting, UN Doc. S/PV.746, 28 October 1956, at 151, 153–156, 168 (Soviet Union).

³³ *Ibid.*, at 58 (USA), 71–76 (UK), 89 (France), 109 (Cuba), 80 (Peru).

³⁴ UNSC, 754th Meeting, UN Doc. S/PV.754, 4 November 1956, at 68.

³⁵ SC Res. 120 (1956).

³⁶ UNGA, Second Emergency Special Session: 564th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.564, 4 November 1956, at 253; for a summary, see United Nations (UN), *Year Book of the United Nations 1956 (1956 Yearbook)* (1957), at 73–83.

³⁷ GA Res. 1004 (ES-II), 4 November 1956.

Hammar skjöld informed the UNGA that he could not report on the implementation of previous resolutions.³⁸ Huffing and puffing, the UNGA adopted another resolution on 12 December; beyond condemning the Soviet Union unequivocally, it effectively threw up its hands and requested the secretary general to ‘take any initiative that he deems helpful’.³⁹

What would Hammar skjöld do? His observers notified him that, without access to Hungary, they could do little more than add to what was already publicly known.⁴⁰ Notwithstanding calls by prominent Hungarian exiles,⁴¹ a peacekeeping force, such as established in Suez two months before, was not realistic; the Soviet Union and Hungary, denying that there was an international issue to begin with, would never agree to such a force. Without their consent, sending such a force could trigger a world war.⁴² Hammar skjöld then suggested that, perhaps, new and direct information could be obtained from Hungarian refugees.⁴³ Such hearings, however – in order to yield ‘results of value’ – would need to be ‘extensive and organized in a juridically satisfactory form’. For this purpose, he suggested, the UNGA might consider establishing a special committee.⁴⁴ This alone was sufficient to expose him to Soviet attacks; merely by suggesting such a committee he was not acting as an ‘international official’ but, rather, was ‘taking sides’ in an ongoing dispute.⁴⁵ The USA, however, seized the opportunity. Protecting the prestige of the UN was an American interest in the 1950s,⁴⁶ and the Hungary crisis was endangering it.⁴⁷ Politically, it had to show that at least something was being done.⁴⁸

The road to the Hungary Committee was paved on 10 January 1957 with the adoption, by a vast majority, of UNGA Resolution 1132. The resolution established a committee, comprising representatives of Australia, Ceylon, Denmark, Tunisia and Uruguay, for the purpose of providing the ‘fullest and best information’ concerning the already confirmed forcible ‘intervention’ of the Soviet Union in the internal affairs of Hungary.⁴⁹ Specifically, it was mandated to ‘investigate, and to establish and maintain direct observation in Hungary and elsewhere, taking testimony, collecting evidence and receiving information ... in order to report its findings to the General Assembly’.⁵⁰ At the outset, it should be noted that, as opposed to contemporary practice, the

³⁸ 1956 Yearbook, *supra* note 36, at 76.

³⁹ GA Res. 1131 (X), 12 December 1956; see also 1956 Yearbook, *supra* note 36, at 80.

⁴⁰ UNGA, Report of the Secretary General (UNGA Secretariat report), UN Doc. A/3485, 5 January 1957.

⁴¹ ‘Miss Kethly in Plea: She Urges Sending UN Police Force to Hungary’, *New York Times* (17 December 1956).

⁴² ‘Incoming Code Cable from Pelt to Secretary-General’, UNGVA no. 104, 16 January 1957 (on file with author); see also A. Feinberg, ‘Lodge says UN Will Spur Soviet on Hungary Exit’, *New York Times* (9 September 1957).

⁴³ Following the crisis, tens of thousands of Hungarians fled the country, and many were deported.

⁴⁴ UNGA Secretariat report, *supra* note 40.

⁴⁵ UNGA 633rd Meeting, *supra* note 19, at 74–75.

⁴⁶ Mazower, *supra* note 9, at 266–267.

⁴⁷ ‘Text of Democrats’ Mideast Statement’, *New York Times* (6 January 1957).

⁴⁸ An American diplomat embarked on a long defence of the UN in the *New York Times*, in which he identified ‘omens of a peaceful world’, among them the UN’s mobilization of world opinion on Hungary. G. Hoffman, ‘Three Omens of a Peaceful World’, *New York Times* (13 January 1957).

⁴⁹ GA Res. 1132 (XI), 10 January 1957.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 1.

Hungary Committee consisted of state representatives rather than independent experts. As would be exemplified later on, this resulted in significant political pressures on some of the members, who were trapped between their individual role and their states' diplomatic interests.

It is important to point out that when the Hungary Committee was proposed, some non-aligned states that abstained in earlier votes on Hungary – such as Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia and Nepal – now became cautious supporters of UN action.⁵¹ This shift could be explained, perhaps, on account of Ceylon and Tunisia's participation in the Committee, which gave it credence among non-aligned states. Some non-aligned states, at least publically, also thought that, for technical and structural reasons, a COI could bring to light objective information that UN debates could not.⁵² This support was hailed in real time as a significant political achievement for the West.⁵³ Yet time will tell whether this endured.

B The Committee's Objectives: Between Moral Condemnation and Objectivity

What did the supporting states seek to achieve with the Hungary Committee? Previous resolutions have already determined that the Soviet Union was the culprit in the Hungarian crisis, with no effect. Some states had expressed cautious hope that a report would lead to further steps in the UN, without specifying their exact nature.⁵⁴ More common was the expectation that the Committee would exert moral pressure on the Soviet Union⁵⁵ and that, by shaping international public opinion, the Hungary report would usher change in the long run.⁵⁶ For instance, the representative of the Netherlands admitted that having exhausted the power of UNGA resolutions, 'the mobilization of the public opinion' was 'the strongest method' available to apply pressure on the Soviet Union.⁵⁷ This pressure, Panama argued, might even eventually persuade it to correct its ways.⁵⁸ As Australia claimed, success will be achieved 'in the long run' through consistent support of public opinion, and, therefore, the Committee should be established even if it would not bring immediate results.⁵⁹

⁵¹ See records in 1956 Yearbook, *supra* note 36, at 84–89; UN, *Year Book of the United Nations 1957 (1957 Yearbook)* (1958).

⁵² UNGA 633rd Meeting, *supra* note 19, at 99 (Ceylon); UNGA, Eleventh Session: 634th Plenary Meeting (UNGA 634th Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.634, 9 January 1957, at 115–117 (Japan); UNGA, Eleventh Session: 636th Plenary Meeting (UNGA 636th Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.636, 10 January 1957, at 64 (Dominican Republic), 96 (Pakistan), 107–108 (Indonesia).

⁵³ W. Jordan, 'Moscow Talks Held', *New York Times* (12 January 1957).

⁵⁴ UNGA 633rd Meeting, *supra* note 19, at 91 (Italy); UNGA, Eleventh Session: 635th Plenary Meeting (UNGA 635th Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.635, 10 January 1957, at 11 (Philippines), 26, 30 (United Kingdom).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, at 87 (Netherlands); UNGA 636th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 8 (New Zealand); UNGA 634th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 54, 59 (Peru).

⁵⁶ UNGA 634th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 6–7, 15 (Australia).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, at 54, 59 (Peru); UNGA 635th Meeting, *supra* note 54, at 87 (Netherlands); UNGA 636th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 8 (New Zealand).

⁵⁸ UNGA 636th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 90 (Panama).

⁵⁹ UNGA 634th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 6–7, 15 (Australia).

Some states went further. To them, the issue was wider than Hungary; rather, the Hungary Committee was meant to promote the grand narrative of the West in its battle against communism. These states adopted sweeping ideological and moral rhetoric, going far beyond any legal discourse. The USA stressed that the Committee would entrench collective memories that 'will be remembered so long as men prize human liberty'.⁶⁰ Ireland argued that truth was 'the eternal enemy' of tyranny and communism, and its exposure will therefore prove a 'terrible indictment of the USSR'.⁶¹ This, in turn, would undermine the support of communist sympathisers around the world. To Ireland, thus, 'the major reason' behind the Committee was to show them the true nature of the Soviet system.⁶² Accordingly, it hoped that, ultimately, world opinion would speed the collapse of the Soviet order in its entirety.⁶³

Yet, more than any such hopes, states sought to show that something additional, residual, was being done after previous resolutions were ignored. It was needed to demonstrate that the interest of the international community remained engaged.⁶⁴ Perhaps, the words of the Peruvian representative best summarize this approach: 'Let me repeat my quotation from Chekhov's commentary, on Pascal: "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world: we must not sleep during that time." I say that so long as Hungary is in agony this Assembly cannot rest'.⁶⁵ The tension between moral condemnation, objectivity and public opinion needs to be further explored. To some extent, establishing a COI for condemnation purposes, and as an appeal to public opinion, complicates the notion of objectivity. Indeed, even some of the states that argued for moral condemnation simultaneously highlighted the need for objectivity in the Hungary Committee's work.⁶⁶ Perhaps, to some, the Committee's 'objectivity' was meant to legitimate facts and moral judgments, most of which were already viewed as being generally established.⁶⁷ The Committee, thus, would restate powerfully what is already known and could not be doubted. As stated by Peru, '[t]here is no room for doubt regarding the original event and the fact that we may set up a committee of investigation does not mean that we have any such doubt'.⁶⁸

Public opinion goals and objectivity are in tension also because one person's appeal to 'public opinion' is another's propaganda,⁶⁹ but, alternatively, cold objectivity

⁶⁰ UNGA 633rd Meeting, *supra* note 19, at 19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, at 2, 5 (Ireland), 119–124, 130 (Belgium); UNGA 634th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 54, 59 (Peru).

⁶² *Ibid.*, at 7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, at 9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, at 6–7, 15 (Australia), 34, 54 (Peru), 62 (Nepal), 121–123 (Greece); UNGA 635th Meeting, *supra* note 54, at 27 (UK), 85–88; UNGA 636th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 8 (New Zealand), 58–59 (France), 60 (Dominican Republic), 88 (Panama).

⁶⁵ UNGA 634th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 34 (Peru).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, at 6 (Ireland), 116, 119 (Belgium); see also UNGA 636th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 62–65 (Dominican Republic).

⁶⁷ UNGA 634th Meeting, *supra* note 52, at 12 (Australia).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, at 53 (Peru).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, at 128–132 (Poland); see also UNGA 635th Meeting, *supra* note 54, at 63–66 (Ukraine), 97 (Bulgaria).

might receive a tepid public response. Indeed, the Hungary Committee itself debated the proper balance between condemnation and objectivity. As internal documents reveal, one option was to produce a ‘formal document’, avoiding any contentious materials, aiming only to reduce political tensions. Another was to draft the report with ‘sting and venom’ in order to highlight ‘the miseries of autocracy’. The third option was to write in a manner that would expose ‘the fallacy ... of Marx and of his dialectic’ and to ‘drag it [communism] down from its ridiculous pedestal’.⁷⁰ For similar reasons, the role of law was also debated. The Tunisian representative Mongi Slim called for a legalistic approach, while Ceylon’s Senerat Gunewardene thought that international law was too indeterminate and that, anyway, the Committee’s role was to establish fact, not morality or legality.⁷¹ Ultimately, as suggested by the Committee’s dominant rapporteur, Australian diplomat Keith Shann,⁷² a tone of ‘calm objectivity’ was opted for, since polemics would only diminish the facts,⁷³ and legal conundrums should be left to legal experts.⁷⁴ Yet, in the contentious international atmosphere, whether calm objectivity would prevail was beyond Shann’s – or for that matter anyone’s – control.

C Immediate Aftermath

The Hungary Committee released its report on 20 June 1957. Before moving on, a few words on the Committee’s work are needed. Since the Committee had no access to Hungary – and received no cooperation from Hungary or the Soviet Union – it could only base its findings on testimonies by exiles, reports by third parties and official statements. Accordingly, it interviewed 111 witnesses in hearings conducted in the spring of 1957 in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna and London.⁷⁵ Few testimonies, mainly those given by well-known Hungarian opposition figures, were heard publicly, while the vast majority of others were heard in closed hearings, owing to fear of retaliation.⁷⁶ In general, the witnesses were referred to the Committee by Hungarian opposition leaders as well as by Western states in which Hungarian exiles had found refuge.⁷⁷ The Committee solicited information and received ‘voluminous’ material from Western states⁷⁸ as well as memoranda and documentary material from several non-governmental organizations (NGOs).⁷⁹ Additionally, the Committee monitored

⁷⁰ ‘Considerations Regarding the Objectives of the Report on the Hungarian Question’, 3 April 1957, Records of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary: UN Documents (UNSC Records), HU OSA 398-0-1-57, Open Society Archives, Central European University, Budapest (CEU Archives), available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:9d6f2f2c-f0cb-4b14-a9bb-d23c0ece3de7>.

⁷¹ ‘Verbatim Record of the Fifty-Eighth Meeting (Closed)’, 8 April 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-6601, at 40, 51, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:953c45f5-c2ef-4a89-92e6-a0ce8d643f49>.

⁷² See Edwards, ‘Shann, Sir Keith Charles Owen (“Mick”) (1917–1988)’, in M. Nolan (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (2012), vol. 18, 330.

⁷³ ‘Verbatim Record of the Fifty-Eighth Meeting’, *supra* note 71, at 11.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, at 52.

⁷⁵ Hungary report, *supra* note 18, paras 5–6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 24.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, paras 27–28.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 29.

Hungarian broadcasts and official statements in order to ascertain the Kadar government's point of view.⁸⁰ As we shall see, the reliance of the Committee on testimonies of pro-opposition Hungarian exiles and on information received from Western states was a major point of critique for those that sought to discredit the Committee.⁸¹

At the end of the day, the Hungary report unequivocally rejected the entire spectrum of Soviet arguments. Its most central finding was that the Hungary unrest was a spontaneous and authentic national uprising. It was not fomented by the West nor planned in advance. The Soviet Union planned for the intervention even before it was supposedly invited. The demonstrations were peaceful until the Hungarian regime acted violently and Russian forces arrived in Budapest. Nagy did not invite the Soviet Union to intervene and, in any case, eventually supported the uprising. Kadar's government, conversely, did not enjoy any support and engaged in strong repression of fundamental rights.⁸²

The question, among those wishing to give effect to the findings of the Hungary report, was what to do next. On the one hand, nobody thought that the Soviet Union would now quietly withdraw from Hungary. On the other hand, the UN's credibility in confronting superpowers was on the line. Leaving it at that was therefore not a possibility. The immediate effect of the report was at least to assist those – namely, the West – who sought to keep the Hungarian question 'alive' in the UN. However, as we shall see, this too was fraught with complications. On 8 March 1957, the UNGA's 11th session adjourned temporarily, subject to recall if events in Hungary or the Middle East necessitated reconvention.⁸³ The report created an opportunity to reconvene the session and, thus, to keep the Hungarian question on the UN's agenda.⁸⁴ Hungarian exile groups as well as some states pushed for an immediate debate.⁸⁵ Canada, for instance, thought that 'no time should be lost' between the report and the debate in the UNGA. Yet, other states had different agendas. To some, more time was needed to 'digest' the report; still others argued that a common position should be reached before the debate.⁸⁶ The USA argued for tactical stalling until September. The stated reason was that, in the weeks prior to the beginning of the 12th session in late September, many foreign ministers would be in New York, and, therefore, the public effect of the

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 30. This 'monitoring' material was archived and served the basis for much of this research.

⁸¹ These dynamics, in which states refuse to cooperate with COIs and thereafter criticize their reports as biased, are also evident today. See Hala Khoury-Bisharat's contribution to this symposium.

⁸² Hungary report, *supra* note 18, at 89. Interestingly, on 27 January 1989, a committee established by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party – Kadar's own party – published a retrospective report on the 1956 events. For the first time it concluded, based on its own investigation, that 1956 was a 'people's uprising' – precisely as the Hungary report had established. See Békés and Kalmar, 'The Political Transition in Hungary, 1989–90', 12–13 *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* (2001) 73, available at www.coldwar.hu/html/en/publications/pol_trans.pdf. This retrospective reaffirmation pierces through the veil of 1950s propaganda and lends new credence to the findings of the Hungary COI's report.

⁸³ GA Res. 1119 (XI), 8 March 1957.

⁸⁴ K. Teltsch, 'Hungarian Session Is Ordered by UN', *New York Times* (20 August 1957) (quoting Lodge).

⁸⁵ 'Wadsworth in Warning: Sees Danger in "Premature" UN Session on Hungary', *New York Times* (29 June 1957).

⁸⁶ L. Parrott, 'UN Assembly Action on Hungary in Doubt', *New York Times* (24 August 1957).

debate would be amplified.⁸⁷ However, as detailed later, it seems that there were two other considerations that explained the postponement better: the contemporaneous disarmament negotiations and the need to consolidate non-aligned support for the Hungary report. Eventually, the USA pushed for 10 September – a week before the opening of the 12th session – and in mid-August the date was set.⁸⁸

This three-month lull between the Hungary report and the UNGA debate had a significant double effect. As demonstrated shortly, the vacuum in institutional debate was quickly filled with a barrage of propaganda, which, at the end of the day, further polemicalized the already toxic environment concerning the Hungary Committee, ultimately pushing even some of the Committee's participating states to distance themselves from its work. This toxic environment in itself harmed the disarmament negotiations and alienated some non-aligned states – precisely the two considerations that led to the postponement of the debate.

The second effect of the delay was the diminishment, to an extent, of the Hungary report's punch and, with that, the belief, at least as reflected in mainstream American media, in the UN's ability to confront aggressive superpowers.⁸⁹ Indeed, as time passed, much enthusiasm was lost. Initially triumphant about the Hungary report, the *New York Times* noted that the September meeting 'should have been held weeks earlier' but that it was at least 'something'.⁹⁰ A 8 September cartoon portrayed an old, spiderwebbed man, clutching onto the report in front of the UN's closed door.⁹¹ By 15 September, a pastor was reading from the report in front of Hungary's coffin, to the astonishment of a globe in a suit that was representing 'the free world'.⁹² Although, in mid-September, when the report was endorsed by the UNGA, the *New York Times* celebrated 'Hungary's Day',⁹³ by the beginning of October the Hungarian issue was already 'history'.⁹⁴ Apologetics followed, eventually souring into dismay. A late October editorial defended the UN but conceded that Hungary proved that it was sometimes impotent.⁹⁵ In December 1957, the UN's treatment of Hungary was no less than a 'pathetic spectacle'; the false hopes that the UN would help Hungary crashed against the 'sadness' of reality.⁹⁶ So what took place in these three months, turning triumphalism into bitterness? As we move to examine the Hungary Committee's effects in detail, a complex, sometimes contradictory picture is revealed (see [Figures 1](#) and [2](#)).

⁸⁷ 'Wadsworth in Warning', *supra* note 85.

⁸⁸ Parrott, *supra* note 86; Teltsch, *supra* note 84.

⁸⁹ Research shows that at the time, the *New York Times* reflected mainstream political thought and had significant influence on elites. See Carragee, 'Evaluating Polysemy: An Analysis of the New York Times' Coverage of the End of the Cold War', 20 *Political Communication* (2010) 287, at 289–292.

⁹⁰ 'Hungary and the UN', *New York Times* (20 August 1957).

⁹¹ Cartoon accompanying L. Parrott, 'UN Assembly Makeup Now Vastly Different', *New York Times* (8 September 1957) (see [Figure 1](#)).

⁹² Editorial cartoon (no title), *New York Times* (15 September 1957) (see [Figure 2](#)).

⁹³ 'Hungary's Day', *New York Times* (10 September 1957).

⁹⁴ T. Hamilton, 'Basic UN Decisions Unlikely This Session', *New York Times* (6 October 1957).

⁹⁵ 'UN Day Marked by Peace Theme', *New York Times* (25 October 1957).

⁹⁶ 'The Bell Tolls for Hungary', *New York Times* (12 December 1957).

4 Differences Relating to Global Ideological Conflict and Political Transformation

The Hungary Committee operated within the ideological rift of the Cold War and in a specific moment of political transformation; globally, decolonization ushered a power shift within the UN, as non-aligned states emerged as significant political players. In the West, pro-Soviet communism was on the decline among the left in favour of competing approaches. This part analyses the effects of the Committee in light of these prevailing circumstances, while highlighting mostly the differences relating to the utilization of the COI and its report by various interested actors.

A Delegitimizing Institutions: Capturing the UN Voice

Upon its release, the Hungary report enjoyed public attention unprecedented for a UN document. At least temporarily, the report became a central issue in the international discourse on Hungary. This, in itself, was a significant feat, but perhaps not a cause for celebration since the attention given to the report, and to the Committee members, in turn led to allegations that the UN was now speaking through the voice of interested parties. This reflected not only on the report's objectivity but also on the neutral position of the UN. For three months, the report was treated as an event of the utmost international importance. On the one hand, it became a bestseller of sorts.⁹⁷ As the UN publications office noted, the pre-publication demand for the report was record breaking, and it was therefore circulated widely.⁹⁸ This demand was itself celebrated by the American media and also by Committee members as a great success.⁹⁹ However, this celebration only prompted opposite reactions from the Eastern Bloc. As detailed later, everything was up for grabs; the Hungary Committee's members, their motivations and methodology, even the mere fact that the report was disseminated widely, were used against it to undermine its legitimacy and, importantly, also that of the UN Secretariat itself.

It should be noted that the Secretariat could not control the dissemination of the Hungary report since nothing prevented Western states from 'marketing' the report independently. For instance, in July 1957, British members of parliament urged the government to actively distribute an inexpensive version of the report in order to take advantage of 'an extraordinarily valuable opportunity to remind public opinion in this country, as well as elsewhere, of the true nature of the Russian power'. The government quickly conceded.¹⁰⁰ West Germany prepared its own translation, the

⁹⁷ Békés, Byrne and Rainer, *supra* note 13, at xlix.

⁹⁸ 'Letter from Ahmed S. Bokhary, Under-Secretary, Department of Public Information and Victor Hoo, Under-Secretary, Department of Conference Services, UN to the UN Secretary-General', *Publication and Distribution of the Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary*, 12 September 1957, S-0846-3-2 DAG 1/5.1.3, UN Archives, New York (on file with author).

⁹⁹ 'Best-Selling UN Author; Keith C.O. Shann Story Pieced Together a New York Yankee Fan', *New York Times* (21 June 1957).

¹⁰⁰ United Kingdom, *House of Commons Debates*, 3 July 1957, vol. 572, cols 1086–71086; United Kingdom, *House of Commons Debates*, 10 July 1957, vol. 573, cols 355–7355; see also 'Letter to W.M. Jordan Relating to the Report', 16 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1234, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:4db8d5a0-1ac3-4cc0-a967-d72dca14c3f6>.



Figure 1: 'Long, Long Wait', 8 September, 1957

Australian government distributed tens of thousands of copies of certain chapters¹⁰¹ and the Netherlands followed suit.¹⁰² Some NGOs, in conjunction with national UN associations, joined this effort. The Hungarian Relief Society of Japan published thousands of copies that were sold in bookstores; this edition was then translated by a local newspaper and featured for five consecutive days.¹⁰³ In Denmark, the anti-communist

¹⁰¹ 'Reprints of the Report', 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1426, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:f29add74-b7f7-48d8-adf5-75a59080373d>.

¹⁰² 'Cable Sent by Mr. Baumgarten Informing that the Dutch Government Showed Interest in the Publication of the Report', 17 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1235, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:31cde7e-4282-4088-9b73-297bb0800c7f>.

¹⁰³ See 'Correspondence on the Report of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary', 28 October 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1217, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:a0deb251-2dc6-490c-9f1d-b76df714e3a9>.



Figure 2: 'Post-Mortem or Funeral Oration', 15 September, 1957

Society for Freedom and Culture produced a local version of its own.¹⁰⁴ Private parties in the Netherlands also participated in printing and distributing translations.¹⁰⁵

The American media contributed to this reception. A day after the release of the Hungary report, the *New York Times* read like a marketing scheme. A double-sheet story was devoted to excerpts.¹⁰⁶ The report was framed in cathartic terms as an 'extraordinarily moving' document, an 'indictment of the Soviet Union for its rape of Hungary'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the demand for the report was utilized itself to amplify its importance. One separate story highlighted that it 'may well establish a record for

¹⁰⁴ 'The Report of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary Published in Danish', 15 November 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-9221, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:e9db7f7a-b7d5-4d9d-a05b-718849217759>.

¹⁰⁵ 'Reprints of the Report', 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1426, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:f29add74-b7f7-48d8-adf5-75a59080373d>.

¹⁰⁶ 'Excerpts from the UN Special Committee's Report on the Hungarian Uprising, *New York Times* (21 June 1957). Enthusiastic reporting could be found, for instance, in the Dutch and Japanese press. See 'Correspondence on the Report of the UN Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary', 28 October 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1217, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:a0deb251-2dc6-490c-9f1d-b76df714e3a9>. Also in the British media. See 'Reactions to the Report in London', 1 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1412, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:00d608ee-47a6-4f52-a0ae-ef837f1b7cd9>.

¹⁰⁷ 'The Rape of Hungary', *New York Times* (21 June 1957).

the circulation of a United Nations document’ as ‘it will easily surpass by at least ten times, the previous sales of any single report or survey’.¹⁰⁸

Individual committee members were idealized and appropriated for the cause by media outlets. Rapporteur Shann received the full celebrity treatment. An admiring piece referred to him as a likeable, forthright, ‘Best-Selling UN Author’.¹⁰⁹ Shann, for his part, was not averse to this framing. He was pleased with the Hungary report’s popular appeal and hoped that the sales revenues would recoup the cost of the entire inquiry. After all, the report was written ‘to be read by everyone’.¹¹⁰ More than that, the piece went out of its way to construct Shann’s person in a manner relatable to 1950s Americans. His major concern now was to return home to his wife and children. Better yet, he was a fan of the New York Yankees and was the ‘unchallenged authority’ – read, the most American – on baseball within UN circles.¹¹¹ His story, thus, was ‘our’ story, representative of ‘our values’.

Yet, such active dissemination, appropriation and idealization can backfire. First, the *ad hominem* appropriation of the Hungary Committee members mainly preached to the choir, as each side constructed its own heroes and villains. Just as Shann was the ‘most American’ and his Hungary report was therefore more trustworthy, the Committee’s head, Alsing Andersen, was considered by the Soviet Union and its supporters to be the most anti-communist and his report naturally baseless. Budapest Radio, echoing other media outlets, alleged that Andersen, who served as Denmark’s defence minister before World War II, was no less than a Nazi collaborator, who was now ‘trying to convince the world’ that 1956 was an authentic uprising.¹¹² As we shall see later on, the fate of Ceylonese Committee member Gunewerdane was worse.¹¹³ The Committee members themselves, therefore, became new points of contention in the bloc struggle.

More significant was the backlash to the Hungary report’s wide circulation and dissemination. While it was viewed as a success in the West, this dissemination, in itself, proved to the Hungarian media the ‘committee’s true objectives, namely, to spread anti-Communist Propaganda’.¹¹⁴ The governmental circulation of the report was

¹⁰⁸ ‘Record Sale Indicated on Report on Hungary’, *New York Times* (21 June 1957). It should be added that while many news outlets across the world echoed this sentiment, some were critical – namely, in Scandinavia. One Scandinavian newspaper decried the fact that the UN’s response to Hungary was ‘to issue a total of 150,000 words seven months too late’. ‘Reactions to the Report in the Scandinavian Countries’, June 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1423, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:ad8bcc5c-e107-4f52-b6f5-d527a4be9faa>.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Best-Selling UN Author’, *supra* note 99.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² ‘Who Has Offended the UN Organization?’, 28 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1499, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:4fc00860-df87-464e-8397-21563c1be5af>. See also ‘Fascist Andersen Forged Hungary Report’, 25 June 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-865, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:dd092a6f-88e4-474a-a0b9-ff88c8e211d5>; ‘Open Letter to Dag Hammarskjöld’, 25 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1541, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:1027df98-8f92-4e50-b5bd-249ed3b16626>.

¹¹³ See discussion later in this article.

¹¹⁴ ‘Condemnation of the UN Committee Report’, 24 June 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-864, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:1582439c-e9a8-434d-98d8-d08d3a400884>.

nothing but an ‘immense propaganda machine thrown into gear’ by American imperialists.¹¹⁵ That much is perhaps expected; however, this line of attack was quickly turned to the Secretariat itself. The report’s public ‘success’ was used to drag the Secretariat into Cold War mud-slinging. In one debate, Bulgaria urged the Secretariat to ‘point to another example in which a report by a UN committee ... has been put out in so many editions – first in a mimeographed form, then in a luxurious edition, then again in a luxurious summary and so on. ... Large sums of money have been spent, our money, the money of UN Members, to serve the propaganda of warmongering circles’.¹¹⁶ This attitude placed the Secretariat in an inconvenient position. The UN under Hammarskjöld prided itself on the idea of the neutral ‘international civil servant’.¹¹⁷ The Secretariat scrambled for answers, and UN publication officials had to reassure Hammarskjöld that regular procedures had been followed.¹¹⁸ He then went on record in the UNGA to respond to these allegations.¹¹⁹

Indeed, the combination of the authentic appeal of the Hungary report, multiplied by major dissemination efforts by Western powers, contributed to spreading the report’s message, while, at the same time, undercutting the report’s perceived objectivity and also that of the Secretariat. In a sense, this dissemination can reflect an attempt to capture the voice of the UN, so to speak, by Western powers. Ultimately, however, such capture reflected on the Secretariat’s ability to be seen as a neutral body and, in turn, on the ability to defend the objectivity of the report.

B Mobilizing Constituencies: Dissenters in Hungary and NGOs

Indeed, the Hungary report contributed to the consolidation of an already sympathetic Western public opinion. Yet, as a ‘difference’, this would be quite limited. A much stronger achievement would be to impact within the ‘perpetrator’ state or its allies. In this context, a 26 June 1957 central intelligence agency (CIA) memo reveals that in the few days following the report’s release, Eastern Bloc media tried to ignore it, mentioning it only briefly, if at all.¹²⁰ In Hungary, the Kadar regime initially made no comment. It took 10 days for the Soviet Pravda to mention the report in a passing reference.¹²¹ Yet this changed drastically in the subsequent weeks, as the regimes realized that the public had become aware of the report. In Hungary, the public learned about the report through Western news and propaganda outlets such as the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe (RFE) and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

¹¹⁵ ‘The Voice of Gunewardene and the Voice of Asia’, 12 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1223, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:67283dc8-061e-449a-9a20-b2518aa9435a>.

¹¹⁶ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 672nd Plenary Meeting (UNGA 672nd Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.672, 11 September 1957, at 45.

¹¹⁷ See Hammarskjöld, ‘The International Civil Servant in Law and in Fact’, Lecture delivered to congregation at Oxford University, 20 May 1961; Fiti Sinclair, *supra* note 2, at 161, 168.

¹¹⁸ ‘Letter from Ahmed S. Bokhary’, *supra* note 98.

¹¹⁹ UNGA 672nd Meeting, *supra* note 116, at 47.

¹²⁰ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), NSC Briefing, UN Report on Hungary: Soviet-Satellite Reaction, 26 June 1957, available at www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79R00890A000800080014-6.pdf.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

These outlets broadcasted the report into Hungary, arousing, according to the CIA, ‘much public curiosity’.¹²² Since an overwhelming majority of Hungarians consumed these broadcasts, it is perfectly reasonable that most Hungarians learned about the report’s findings.¹²³ Whether this actually affected their opinion, in itself, should be approached with caution. At the time, even sympathizers of the uprising distrusted the RFE’s propaganda, which they saw as a ‘travesty of Hungarian intelligence’.¹²⁴ All news, as the RFE itself noted in internal research, was perceived in Hungary as either a ‘communist lie’ or a ‘Free Europe lie’.¹²⁵ Yet, even if it is doubtful whether, in such an environment, a report channelled through partisan outlets could significantly change perceptions, it could at least stratify and galvanize existing ones.

Indeed it seems that, at least for a while, the Hungary Committee and, thereafter, its Hungary report stirred hope among dissidents and mounted some pressure on the Kadar regime. Already in January 1957, persons claiming to have been selected by Hungarian rebels to ‘establish contact with the outside world’ asked to testify in front of the Committee.¹²⁶ Later on, Paul Igotus, one of the leaders of the revolutionary writers’ council during the uprising, wrote from his London exile that the report gave voices to many anonymous Hungarians.¹²⁷ ‘If the UN had not done anything else but to publish this Report’, he added, ‘it was worthwhile ... to have created this organization’.¹²⁸ Anna Kethly, a social democrat and the only Cabinet member of the Nagy government who managed to escape Hungary, declared that the report sparked much hope.¹²⁹ Granted, prominent Hungarian dissidents possibly made such statements for their own political reasons. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that the report did in fact affect public discourse – as muted as it was – inside Hungary.

In this context, very telling is a 12 July 1957 editorial published by *Nepszabadsag* – at the time, a mouthpiece of the Hungarian communist party – entitled ‘Answer to a Hesitant [sic]’. A certain Janos Kovats, who ‘states that he is a worker, but he does not give his address nor does he say where he works’, wrote a letter to the board that merited a polemical response.¹³⁰ As paraphrased by the editors, Kovats was very interested in the Hungary report and wanted to see it published in Hungary. He also criticized the paper for publishing unsigned attacks on the report implying that the

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Audience Analysis Section, Radio Free Europe, The Hungarian Listeners of Western Broadcasts, October 1957, at 3–26.

¹²⁴ Audience Analysis Section, Radio Free Europe, Some Aspects of Hungarian Audience Reaction to RFE News, Information, and Commentaries, Report no. 5, January 1957.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ ‘List of Communications Received by the Secretariat in Relation to the Work of the Committee’, 28 January 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-78, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:9c78818e-a74f-4578-8a3b-26bb786bbb0f>.

¹²⁷ ‘Paul Igotus, A Writer, Opposed Nazis in Hungary’, *New York Times* (2 April 1978).

¹²⁸ ‘Irodalmi Újság on the Importance of the UN Report’, 1 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-2018, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:111ffd25-7de0-4163-a71a-a14f20d383c6>.

¹²⁹ L. Parrott, ‘Hungarian Stand Amended by U.S.’, *New York Times* (7 September 1957).

¹³⁰ ‘Answer to a Hesitant’, 12 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1225, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:c834ead5-1863-4dbd-a98a-c2146b2e5b09>.

writers were uncomfortable with their positions. Not one for understatement, the paper responded curtly that the report was an unpublishable ‘rag’ that would only aid the enemy. Moreover, its articles were unsigned simply because they were editorials.¹³¹ Why would the party newspaper give publicity to such a letter, considering its previous attempts to downplay the report? The response implies that Kovats’ claims were widespread enough to require containment. If he was a misled outlier, why would the paper bother engaging with his doubts? Between the lines, the paper admits just that: it had to respond since the letter reflected a ‘new kind of trouble-making’ – ever developing – that now involved demands to publish the report. A public answer was needed to ‘draw attention to the necessity for intervention against such occurrences’.¹³²

This official response also implies that, perhaps, Kadar himself was feeling the heat. At least according to some sources, the Hungary report contributed to a (temporary) setback in his political fate. When the Committee was established, Kadar was immediately summoned to Moscow;¹³³ perhaps, he was called to make the case that he should stay in power.¹³⁴ According to the Vienna-based Hungarian Revolutionary National Committee in Exile, the Soviets decided to replace Kadar in mid-August 1957, once it became clear that the report would be taken to the UNGA. By this account, Kadar was to resign to allow the Soviet Union to distance itself from his regime and so to ‘defend themselves against the charges made by the Committee of Five’.¹³⁵ Ultimately, however, Moscow opted for a tactical delay in order not to signal ‘weakness’ before the debate and, therefore, postponed Kadar’s removal. Nonetheless, the fate of his premiership was already sealed; by November 1957, the Soviets demanded Kadar to ‘gain popularity’ or resign.¹³⁶ Kadar resigned from the premiership on 27 January 1958.¹³⁷

The effects detailed above should not be overstated. The Hungarian public was cynical about international action – and the UN specifically – after the Soviet intervention.¹³⁸ It is unlikely that a report alone could have changed this opinion. Indeed, already in September–October 1957, a general air of political apathy settled in Hungary.¹³⁹ Kadar, too, was ultimately not affected; he was still the leader of the Communist Party and would return to the premiership in 1961. He remained a key figure in Hungary’s leadership until 1988.¹⁴⁰

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ ‘Kadar In Moscow’, *New York Times* (12 January 1967).

¹³⁴ ‘Moscow Talks Held’, *New York Times* (12 January 1957).

¹³⁵ ‘Hungarian Situation VI’, 5 February 1958, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-3211, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:26a31d35-3911-4904-9d56-9f083c0a5cd9>.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Kadar would be central in Hungary’s leadership until his death in 1989. See H.M. Lentz (ed.), *Heads of States and Governments since 1945* (1996), at 369.

¹³⁸ J. MacCormac, ‘Budapest Jokes Wryly about Soviet Puppets’, *New York Times* (13 January 1957).

¹³⁹ ‘Dr. Victor Maier Reports on Life in Budapest’, 6 October 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-9156, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:d01d0b0c-b66a-4bea-bee0-b3ad0bb7d4a4>.

¹⁴⁰ Lentz, *supra* note 137, at 368–370.

In terms of mobilization of constituencies, the Hungary report had interesting effects outside of Hungary. Importantly, it galvanized the work of NGOs, and, in particular, it provides an early example of the now common interaction between NGOs and COIs under the UN framework. The activities of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) are a prime example. Granted, the covert CIA funding of the ICJ, at the time, is well documented. Yet this was unbeknownst even to its senior members.¹⁴¹ Once the Hungary Committee was established, it became a reference point for the ICJ. On 2 March 1957, it convened a group of experts to consider the legal implications of the Soviet intervention. It then delivered its conclusions to the Committee.¹⁴² After the report's release, the ICJ both capitalized on the report's prestige, by highlighting that many of its legal conclusions were accepted, and used it as a springboard for subsequent reporting on Hungary.¹⁴³ The report also served as a backbone for activism by exile organizations. The Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN) – an umbrella organization for Eastern bloc exiles – issued several reports that aimed to fill gaps in the report's findings.¹⁴⁴

More generally, the Hungary report was part of the increasing publicization, after the Hungary crisis, of human rights violations in the Soviet bloc.¹⁴⁵ This ties into our next part, which explores the report's role within the general political discourse at the time, leading to the gradual weakening of communist movements in the West.

C Marginalizing Groups: Western Communist Movements

The Hungary crisis was a watershed moment in the emergence of the 'New Left' in the West, which grew out of the general disillusionment with the Soviet Union among Western leftist circles. This process would later intensify and give rise to the social movements of the 1960s.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, one commentator even described 1956 as the 'the breakup of the political Ice-Age'.¹⁴⁷ Of course, the Hungary report could not be the main reason for this major shift; yet, perhaps, it was one more ice pick.

The public reaction to the events in Hungary led to a crisis in Western communism. In France, for instance, the Communist Party approved of the Soviet intervention, but

¹⁴¹ For a detailed study, see H.B. Tolley, Jr., *The International Commission of Jurists: Global Advocates for Human Rights* (1994), at 98.

¹⁴² International Commission of Jurists, *The Continuing Challenge of the Hungarian Situation to the Rule of Law: Supplement to the Report of International Commission of Jurists Published in April 1957*, June 1957, at 3.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ A.A. Berle, Jr. et al. (eds), *Hungary under Soviet Rule: A Survey of Developments since the Report of the UN Special Committee* (1957); A.A. Berle, L. Cherne and C. Boothe Luce (eds), *Hungary under Soviet Rule II: A Survey of Developments from September 1957 to August 1958* (1958); see also 'Assembly of Captive European Nations to the United Nations', 29 September 1958, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-7552, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:d1b8b257-4a17-43cc-abb1-d2494937d096>.

¹⁴⁵ S. Hazareesingh, *Intellectuals and the French Communist Party: Disillusion and Decline* (1991), at 172.

¹⁴⁶ See, e.g., Davis, 'The Origins of the British New Left', in M. Klimke and J. Scharloth (eds), *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (2008) 45; see also Cold War History Research Center Budapest, *The Revolution in an International Perspective*, available at www.coldwar.hu/html/en/publications/bcs5d.html.

¹⁴⁷ Cited in Davis, *supra* note 146, at 45.

this caused uproar and contributed to the loss of voters.¹⁴⁸ In Britain, the communists suffered heavily after the Hungary affair, including the loss of prominent intellectuals. A 'softer' party emerged.¹⁴⁹ Other countries saw similar effects.¹⁵⁰ Granted, a comprehensive February 1957 CIA memo reveals that these effects preceded the Hungary Committee and its report.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, a common expectation in real time was that the report would intensify this process,¹⁵² and, considering the use of the report in relevant settings, it at least served as an effective argumentative instrument.

One such use was to capitalize on the Hungary report in various fora in order to bolster the moderate left and differentiate it from pro-Soviet Union movements. For instance, in July 1957, Anna Kéthly addressed the assembly of the Socialist International in Vienna and called for 'moral pressure' on the Soviet Union concerning the Hungary events. In response, the British delegate urged giving publicity to the report as a way to pressure the Kremlin. A resolution condemning the Kadar regime was adopted thereafter.¹⁵³

The Hungary report was also used to strengthen the non-communist left within international trade unions and labour organizations. In Western trade unions, a rift was emerging on Hungary: was the uprising a counter-revolution or, rather, a genuine working-class movement?¹⁵⁴ The report could be used to widen this rift, considering its findings that workers took part in the uprising.¹⁵⁵ Anti-communist labour organizations, which participated in wider international labour forums, did just that. For instance, in a striking non-coincidence, Philip Delaney, a staunchly anti-Communist representative of the American Federation of Labour and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) – the umbrella organization of American trade unions – was set to give a speech at the International Labour Organization (ILO) conference in Geneva at midday on 20 June 1957 – precisely the time scheduled for the report's release.¹⁵⁶ 'Apparently for dramatic effect', as put by a National Security Council memo, Delaney decided to do away with his planned speech and spoke at length about the report instead. Reportedly, his speech was a great success; the ILO conference rejected

¹⁴⁸ R. Doty, 'French Reds Beaten in Election in Which Hungary Was Issue', *New York Times* (14 January 1957). For more on the distancing between French Socialists and Communists on the backdrop of Suez, Algiers and Hungary, see M. Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: The Domestic Consequences of International Relations* (1984), at 201–204.

¹⁴⁹ J. Eaden and D. Renton, *The Communist Party of Great Britain since 1920* (2002), at 120–121, 145.

¹⁵⁰ CIA, The Crisis of International Communism: Impact of Hungarian Events on the Movement outside the Bloc, 11 February 1957, available at www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-00915R000600090009-7.pdf.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² 'Reactions to the Report in London', *supra* note 106.

¹⁵³ 'Mrs. Anna Kéthly's Report to the Assembly of the Socialist International in Vienna', 8 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1121, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:15caadb8-4b38-4d58-a093-2ef5be89fb0f>.

¹⁵⁴ T. Ronan, 'British Unionists Boo Red Speaker', *New York Times* (5 September 1957).

¹⁵⁵ See, e.g., Hungary report, *supra* note 18, at 350.

¹⁵⁶ CIA, Operations Coordinating Board, ILO Reaction to UN Report on Hungary, 1 July 1957, available at www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80B01676R002700040026-3.pdf.

the Hungarian delegation's credentials.¹⁵⁷ It should be added that, at the time, the AFL-CIO had connections with the CIA.¹⁵⁸

Comparable events took place at the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the international umbrella for non-communist trade unions. In general, the ICFTU attempted to avoid Cold War politicization.¹⁵⁹ In its July 1957 world congress in Tunisia, however, it adopted a resolution endorsing the Hungary report.¹⁶⁰ In fact, the ICFTU issued its own summary of the report.¹⁶¹ The ICFTU had a clear interest in exposing Soviet practices since it was in direct competition with the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), which housed, among others, Soviet trade unions.¹⁶² The WFTU supported the invasion of Hungary¹⁶³ and, thus, was under pressure from its non-Soviet members;¹⁶⁴ for the ICFTU to endorse the report was an opportunity to take a stand and send a direct message to non-Soviet WFTU members.¹⁶⁵

In sum, the Hungary report served as an important vehicle through which pre-existing notions were crystallized into a coherent narrative; it was then employed as an argumentative tool in the attempt to delegitimize communist and pro-Soviet political elements in the West. As such, it was one of many factors contributing to a grand shift in Western politics.

D Hardening Competing Narratives: The Report as a New Point of Contention within the Cold War

In light of all of the above, it is unsurprising that, after the initial lull in the Eastern bloc's responses to the Hungary report, July–September 1957 saw a flurry of counter-propaganda, which intensified as it became clear that the West intended to take the report to the UNGA.¹⁶⁶ Beyond personal attacks on Committee members and the painting of the report as an American public relations scheme,¹⁶⁷ the Hungarian

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ G.K. Busch, *The Political Role of International Trades Unions* (1983), at 69–70.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, at 70.

¹⁶⁰ 'The Report of the UN Special Committee on Hungary – the Fifth Congress of the ICFTU in Tunis', 3 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1216, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:e41e1084-4830-4e88-8df9-ea0cadfab94b>.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*; see also UN, Report on Hungary: The ICFTU Summary of the UN Special Committee's Report on the Problem of Hungary (1957).

¹⁶² Busch, *supra* note 158, at 69.

¹⁶³ T.M. Leonard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Developing World* (2006), vol. 3, at 1732.

¹⁶⁴ G. Myconos, *The Globalization of Organized Labour: 1945–2005* (2005), at 40.

¹⁶⁵ In a sense, using the Hungary report to drive a wedge between moderate and communist left was a mirror image of a key Soviet strategy in the 1950s, which relied on emphasizing the 'contradictions' or inner tensions within imperialism. See 'Minutes of the Meeting of the CPSU CC Plenum on the State of Soviet Foreign Police', 24 June 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, available at <http://digitalarchive.wilson-center.org/document/110459>.

¹⁶⁶ After a June 1957 Congress Resolution to that effect, it became clear that the USA intended to take the Hungary report to the UNGA. See, e.g., 'Moscow's Reaction to the Report', 10 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1883, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:baa4aa63-260f-4e0a-81cb-035132e2eeb1>.

¹⁶⁷ 'Tweedledum and Tweedledee', 12 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1098, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:965021a7-54de-4b20-9363-3f3896667420>.

media, for instance, embarked on detailed and lawyerly attacks on the report's findings, methodology and reasoning.¹⁶⁸ At one point, in late August, *Nepszabadsag* ran a detailed, chapter-by-chapter rebuttal of the report for five consecutive days.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, the report became a point of contention of its own.

From the Soviet–Hungarian perspective, most troubling was the finding by the Hungary report concerning the grassroots nature of the revolt. As the debate in the UNGA approached, the regime staged its own mass protest movement against the report to counter this finding. In August and September, a letter war erupted. In total, 17 pro-Western organizations, including actors as diverse as the ICJ and the Sisters of Social Service in Buffalo, USA, wrote to the UN in support of the report. In response, 24 Hungarian organizations, ranging from the workers of the University Press to '[t]he Clothing Stores of Greater Budapest', demanded its removal from the agenda.¹⁷⁰ The Free Hungarian Trade Union Federation, representing two million workers, sent its protest to Hammarskjöld.¹⁷¹ A barrage of public denunciations of the report followed, mirroring – tit for tat – Western support for the uprising. If the West celebrated the distancing between literary circles and communism,¹⁷² then a group of Hungarian writers attacked the report¹⁷³ (the regime praised this move as a healthy 'cleansing process in literary life').¹⁷⁴ If US universities observed a moment of silence in honour of Hungarian students,¹⁷⁵ academics in Hungary condemned the report.¹⁷⁶ If the

¹⁶⁸ 'A Bunch of Lies – The UN Report on Hungary', 16 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1485, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:e7b712fc-9ac6-41ae-a264-0f3b7b6f4258>; see also 'Article in Esti Hírlap on the UN Report', 11 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1529, available <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:faafa055-f64b-4372-88a5-b799bc20a03a>; 'UN Report: And Other Aspects of the Counter-Revolution', 22 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1229, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:0763205f-9ded-4e43-952b-1e5369c62a9f>; 'Dialogue', 13 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1878, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:42bede5f-e411-4640-8b9d-9bc7868dd0dd>; 'Comments on the Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary Entitled "The Methods of Falsification" as Published in Népszabadság', 13 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-8804, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:dd302ecb-2cae-4d3e-b0da-ef57081be210>.

¹⁶⁹ See 'What Is the Report of the "Committee of Five" of UN Saying about the "Hungarian Problem"?', 10 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-7124, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:0e1b453d-620b-4eb2-beec-fdf18c304ff5>.

¹⁷⁰ 'Communication Received in Favor of UN Action on Hungary', 11 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-5961, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:d59a8733-2975-4cba-b1db-19a7b5a5b54d>.

¹⁷¹ 'Protest against the UN Committee's Report', 17 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1532, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:6a548c42-d699-41f3-b6ae-84ab7481236d>.

¹⁷² 'Writers and Communism', *New York Times* (19 November 1957).

¹⁷³ See 'The Writers and the UN Report: No Coercion', 16 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1962, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:0c6c8eef-odd7-40b1-a7e9-1b39c24e2254>.

¹⁷⁴ 'No Pressure to Sign Protest against UN Reports', 17 October 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-2176, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:095fb868-e7c3-423d-8f17-5780425788df>.

¹⁷⁵ 'Universities Get Plea; U.S. Institutions Urged to Pay Tribute to Hungarians', *New York Times* (29 October 1956).

¹⁷⁶ 'The Protest Campaign against the UN Report on Hungary', 17 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1944, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:fc7cc0d8-a90f-4f29-a137-07e039b0b24f>.

Pope lamented the ‘inequities perpetrated against the beloved people of Hungary’,¹⁷⁷ the Bench of Hungarian Catholic Bishops was ‘concerned ... by the debate on the one-sided Report’.¹⁷⁸ Just as the uprising sparked demonstrations in the West, a mass rally was staged in a Budapest sports hall, a day before the debate, to express the people’s ‘ever increasing resolve against the report of the UN Committee of five’.¹⁷⁹ Hungarian regime media narrated this protest as a manifestation of the public’s ‘red-hot anger and indignation’.¹⁸⁰ It should be unsurprising, by now, that soon thereafter a new battle began concerning the authenticity of the Hungarian protests. One exile organization warned the UN that Hungarian letters were ‘sent under duress’.¹⁸¹ Western diplomats claimed that signatories called to admit that they were coerced.¹⁸² The cycle of propaganda and counter-propaganda, it seems, could proceed *ad infinitum*.

In a sense, the Hungary report was used to personify the Western conspiracy against socialism and to display the grassroots support for Kadar. In this context, the report gave different parties new language through which to phrase – indeed, harden – their narratives. This hardening of narratives could, in turn, distance from the report those who wished to maintain an independent stance concerning the conflict. Indeed, as we see in the next section, co-optation of the report into the Western narrative could alienate those who were seen as the biggest political prize in the eyes of the West – the non-aligned countries.

E Backlash: Non-Aligned Reaction

Post-Bandung, the Great Powers were competing to influence the positions taken by the emerging non-aligned movement. When the Hungary crisis erupted, there was a strong expectation that the neutral countries would reassess their neutrality. This is why, for instance, Western media eagerly followed and dissected every utterance by India’s Jawaharlal Nehru.¹⁸³ A diplomatic scoreboard of sorts was kept, treating each non-aligned vote on Hungary as points won and any vote against or abstention as a disappointment.¹⁸⁴

In fact, using the Hungary report to turn the non-aligned movement against the Soviet Union was a key goal for the West, as expressed, for instance, in major London newspapers. Upon the report’s release, the *Daily Mail* thought that Nehru would

¹⁷⁷ ‘Text of Pope’s Broadcast Appealing for Restoration of Peace’, *New York Times* (11 November 1956).

¹⁷⁸ ‘Report of the UN Committee – Catholic Bishops’ Concern’, 30 August 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1516, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:f7b110bd-f747-43a8-b3b3-2b72bd4f2036>.

¹⁷⁹ ‘Protest from Official Hungarian Personalities and Bodies against the Report’, 9 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1958, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:63b1c811-d9ab-4a94-90b7-55630deceec3>.

¹⁸⁰ ‘The Protest Campaign against the UN Report on Hungary’, 17 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1944, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:fc7cc0d8-a90f-4f29-a137-07e039b0b24f>.

¹⁸¹ See ‘Communication Received’, *supra* note 170.

¹⁸² ‘Neue Zürcher Zeitung Reports on Hungary’, 17 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1636, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:62d3fa0d-4a5a-4f34-9b3d-02aa398d5c30>.

¹⁸³ ‘Nehru Now Accuses Soviet of “Aggression”’, *New York Times* (7 January 1957).

¹⁸⁴ See, e.g., T. Hamilton, ‘UN Speaks Out Again on Soviet Aggression’, *New York Times* (15 September 1957).

now play a leading part in condemning Russia; *The Times* hoped that the ‘neutralists’ would ‘heed’. *The Economist* was positive that the report would receive ‘wide publicity in the neutral countries of Asia and Africa’.¹⁸⁵ Some Asian media gave credence to this expectation. *The Times* of Indonesia, for instance, noted that the participation of non-aligned states ensured that the report was credible and that now Nehru should lead the Afro-Asian nations to condemn Soviet aggression.¹⁸⁶ Many Indian newspapers praised the report, commending its impartiality, thoroughness and style, while others emphasized that the Soviet Union could not be justified in its wild attacks against the Hungary Committee and its members.¹⁸⁷

Indeed, much of this hope hinged on the participation of non-Western members – Tunisia’s Mongi Slim and Ceylon’s Gunewardene – in the Hungary Committee. This point was driven home repeatedly by states and Committee members in the UNGA and in public discourse.¹⁸⁸ The appropriation of non-aligned committee members fuelled the West’s propaganda tactics; a secret RFE document noted that emphasizing non-aligned participation, in relation to the UN debate, was meant to achieve ‘maximum exploitation’ of the Hungary report and, specifically, to ‘place the weight of the world opinion, particularly Asian opinion, behind the Committee’s Report’.¹⁸⁹ However, this tactic backfired, as best exemplified in the case of Ceylon. Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), a former British colony, joined the UN in 1955. The Hungary events exposed tensions in Ceylon’s non-alignment policy. On the one hand, the Soviet Union’s intervention was reminiscent of the classic imperialism that the Ceylonese knew all too well, but on the other hand, siding with former colonial masters was controversial.¹⁹⁰ In this context, the specific story of Gunewardene reflects both the attempts to co-opt the Third World’s voice and its effects.

Gunewardene served simultaneously as Ceylon’s ambassador to Washington and to the UN.¹⁹¹ A veteran politician, he was acutely aware of his delicate position in the Committee. On 8 April 1957, the Hungary Committee met to discuss the Hungary report’s tone. Rapporteur Shann advised refraining from invoking ‘spectacular blood and thunder’ and adopting a ‘tone of a calm objectivity’.¹⁹² Gunewardene was openly relieved. He ‘dreaded the thought’ of having to otherwise write a dissenting opinion since blood and thunder would only cause a ‘storm of controversy’.¹⁹³ Yet, ultimately,

¹⁸⁵ ‘Reactions to the Report in London’, *supra* note 106.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Reactions to the Report in Indonesia’, 1 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1414, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:09a3c155-b15d-4292-a69b-4d6ca2437c01>.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Reactions to the Report in India’, 1 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1413, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:8d57080e-14ba-4fc4-b92a-87633d9e88d3>.

¹⁸⁸ See, e.g., ‘Reactions to the Report in Pakistan’, June 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1421, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:e9888346-1da5-4a0f-becb-c211fe1ae176>; see, e.g., UNGA, Eleventh Session: 669th Plenary Meeting (UNGA 669th Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.669, 10 September 1957, at 6 (Shann), 35, 90 (USA).

¹⁸⁹ ‘Policy Guidance for Radio Free Europe on UN Special Session on Hungary’, 1 September 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, available at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115017>.

¹⁹⁰ W. Howard Wriggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (1960), at 452–453.

¹⁹¹ ‘Members of the United Nations Fact-Finding Committee on Hungary’, *New York Times* (21 June 1957).

¹⁹² ‘Verbatim Record of the Fifty-Eighth Meeting’, *supra* note 71, at 11.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, at 42.

Gunewardene found himself in the position he feared. In Ceylon, he personified the attempt to bring the country again under Western dominance. The storm began when, perhaps hastily, he publicly defended the Committee against accusations by Pravda.¹⁹⁴ This sparked harsh personal attacks from various political parties for his approval of the Hungary report as well as calls to replace him at the UN. Throughout July 1957, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was on the defensive. He announced the appointment of a new UN ambassador, effective in several months. Furthermore, the government banned American media from interviewing Gunewardene concerning the report.¹⁹⁵ An internal Committee document explained that public opinion in Ceylon was ‘intensely sensitive’ on pro-Western policies, and, therefore, Ceylon could not risk its non-alignment by adopting a clear anti-Soviet position.¹⁹⁶

The Soviet bloc seized on this opportunity. First, it amplified the attacks on Gunewardene.¹⁹⁷ Then, just as the West sought to use Ceylon (and its representative) in order to turn Asia westward, pro-Soviet propaganda used Gunewardene’s critics in the exact same manner. ‘The Voice of Gunewardene’, in this narrative, stood alone against the entire ‘Voice of Asia’, which spoke in unison against him.¹⁹⁸ *Nepszabadsag* celebrated Gunewardene’s misfortune. ‘How often,’ it gloated, ‘did we read in the American Press that the representative of Ceylon, which is otherwise an advocate of the Bandung principles, is the best proof that the Committee is conducting its business impartially. And now ... even in his own country, Mr. Gunewardene is treated with contempt’.¹⁹⁹ Gunewardene, personally, remained undeterred. On 25 July, he still argued that the Committee should immediately resume its investigations concerning new reports of deportations.²⁰⁰ Yet, he ultimately lost and so did the Western strategy. Although Ceylon originally voted to establish the Committee – and despite its own ambassador being a member – the country abstained when the UNGA voted on the Hungary report. An awkward scenario took place when Gunewardene, now in his role as permanent representative, was called to explain the abstention, and he had to admit that the report ‘may not be complete’ due to a lack of access to Hungary.²⁰¹ Gunewardene, now, was a ‘pathetic figure’ to the same Western media that previously had hailed him.²⁰² At home, he was shortly replaced as permanent representative.²⁰³

Gunewardene’s predicament reflected a wider process. By September 1957, the African-Asian bloc emerged as the largest group in the UNGA. A key issue was

¹⁹⁴ ‘Ceylonese Attacks on UN Aide Mount’, *New York Times* (12 July 1957).

¹⁹⁵ ‘Reactions in Ceylon to the Special Committee Report on Hungary’, 23 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1095, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:d4931da1-be4d-4e52-b932-64226602299b>.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, at 4–5.

¹⁹⁷ See ‘A Comment on Mr. Gunewardene’, 9 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1094, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:43d91e7b-975d-4613-bf9f-7a062f7730b1>.

¹⁹⁸ ‘Voice of Gunewardene’, *supra* note 115.

¹⁹⁹ ‘Tweedledum and Tweedledee’, *supra* note 167.

²⁰⁰ ‘Exclusive Gunewardene’, 25 July 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-1249, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:f8ff7aec-d573-43c9-a45f-dd8c0a22757e>.

²⁰¹ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 677th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.677, 13 September 1957, at 79.

²⁰² ‘Guilty as Charged’, *New York Times* (15 September 1957).

²⁰³ ‘Ceylon Shifts UN Aide’, *New York Times* (24 August 1957).

whether the West would maintain the majority it had enjoyed when establishing the Hungary Committee, also when voting on the report itself.²⁰⁴ As time passed, and the controversy intensified, it was feared that Ceylon, and possibly Tunisia, would quit the Committee altogether.²⁰⁵ The USA thus looked for a 'common approach' for all non-communist countries, which involved endorsing the Hungary report, while nodding to non-aligned calls for dialogue by nominating another envoy to Hungary, ostensibly for the purpose of negotiations.²⁰⁶

The UNGA debated the Hungary report between 10 and 13 September 1957.²⁰⁷ In accordance with its strategy, the USA, along with 36 other states, put forward a resolution at once endorsing the report²⁰⁸ and appointing a new special representative to Hungary.²⁰⁹ Prince Wan Waithayakon of Thailand, president of the UNGA, was selected for the job.²¹⁰ Some non-aligned states, such as Laos, cited the Ceylonese participation in the report as grounds for its continuing endorsement.²¹¹ The support of Tunisia and a few new Asian-African members was viewed by the West as 'sheer gain'.²¹² India, however, would not budge; a day before the debate, Nehru argued that condemning the Soviet Union would only make things worse²¹³ and that with the concurrent crisis in disarmament talks – which is discussed below – a more constructive approach was needed. The report, to India, remained an unfruitful choice of action.²¹⁴ More importantly, however, some states that initially supported the Committee were now reluctant. Burma was becoming more and more uncomfortable. Its representative (and soon to be secretary general) U Thant argued that the debate turned the Hungarian question into 'an instrument of the cold war'. Burma ultimately supported the proposed resolution but was clearly unenthusiastic; it wanted to terminate the Committee and to keep only the special representative, but its amendment was rejected.²¹⁵ Indonesia went further. It too had supported establishing the Committee but now objected to the 'language of condemnation' that would only intensify the Cold War, and thus abstained.²¹⁶ As aforementioned, Ceylon followed the same route.²¹⁷

²⁰⁴ Parrott, *supra* note 91.

²⁰⁵ L. Parrott, 'U.S. Is Seeking Non-Red Unity in UN on Hungarian Problem', *New York Times* (31 August 1957).

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ For a summary, see *1957 Yearbook*, *supra* note 51, at 62–65. For a representative statement, see UNGA 669th Meeting, *supra* note 188, at 30–104 (USA).

²⁰⁸ See the US explanation of the resolution at the UNGA 669th Meeting, *supra* note 188, at 86–101.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, at 99.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, at 100; GA Res. 1133(XI), 14 September 1957.

²¹¹ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 676th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.676, 13 September 1957, at 115.

²¹² Hamilton, *supra* note 184.

²¹³ 'Nehru Won't Condemn Soviet', *New York Times* (10 September 1957).

²¹⁴ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 675th Plenary Meeting (UNGA 675th Meeting), UN Doc. A/PV.675, 13 September 1957, at 69–73.

²¹⁵ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 674th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.674, 12 September 1957, at 97–105.

²¹⁶ UNGA, Eleventh Session: 677th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.677, 13 September 1957, at 36–41.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, at 300.

There are manifold reasons why the Hungary crisis, in the end, did not affect the neutrality of the non-aligned movement. Yet the expectation that the decolonized world could be wooed over by the participation of non-Western Committee members was proven simplistic. At the end of the day, if the Hungary report – or, more precisely, its utilization – was expected to push the non-aligned position westwards, it failed, if not damaged, this goal.

5 Differences Relating to Parallel Multilateral Efforts and Institutional Dynamics

The previous part addressed the differences relating mainly to the Hungary Committee's utilization in the broader struggle between the blocs. While some overlap is unavoidable, this part discusses effects tied to the Committee's interaction with other multilateral efforts – both relating to the Hungary crisis itself and to diplomatic process on other issues – namely, disarmament. Moreover, this part addresses differences that relate to institutional dynamics within the establishing body (the UN). It demonstrates how the perception of COIs might fare in light of policy choices in contemporaneous conflicts (Suez) and also how the physical artefacts produced by COIs might themselves present significant dilemmas to the institution (the Bang Jensen Affair).

A Complication of Further Negotiations Concerning the Specific Conflict: Hammarskjöld's Visit and Prince Wan's Mission

A condemning report can affect the ability to negotiate and compromise. This is because, like any quasi-judicial mechanism, the relations between fact-finding and negotiations are uneasy. On the one hand, a report can reveal the precariousness of one party's position and, therefore, encourage it to 'bargain in the shadow of the law'.²¹⁸ On the other hand, once condemnatory findings are made, the other party's ability and motivation to compromise may diminish. This process began with the establishment of the Hungary Committee. Recall that during the uprising, and shortly thereafter, Hungary refused to admit Hammarskjöld or his observers.²¹⁹ Yet, in April 1957 – after the Committee was established – Hungary changed course. Then, it repeatedly invited Hammarskjöld. The official explanation was that, by then, the counter-revolutionaries had been sufficiently weakened.²²⁰ Indeed, some Western commentators saw the invitation as a sign of Kadar's increasing confidence.²²¹ However, Hungarian newspapers revealed that a visit would provide an opportunity to counter the 'falsehoods' of the

²¹⁸ Mnookin and Kornhauser, 'Bargaining in the Shadow of the Law: The Case of Divorce', 88 *Yale Law Journal* (1979) 950.

²¹⁹ M. James, 'Hammarskjöld Asks to Go to Hungary to Direct Aid', *New York Times* (14 November 1956); K. Teltsch, 'Hungary Rejects Observers Anew; Welcomes Visit by UN Chief "at a Later Date"', *New York Times* (4 December 1956).

²²⁰ 'Answer to a Hesitant', *supra* note 130.

²²¹ J. MacCormac, 'Satellites Seeing Carrot and Stick', *New York Times* (28 April 1957).

Hungary report.²²² The invitation, therefore, can be interpreted in two opposing ways. Either the Committee contributed to Kadar's willingness to engage or his regime was confident enough not to fear such engagement, the ongoing inquiry notwithstanding. In any case, to the chagrin of the Kadar regime, in late April, Hammarskjöld declared that he would not visit while the Committee was working.²²³

A similar tension was evident during the run-up to the September debate. Three main options were on the West's table: to endorse the Hungary report laconically, without using condemnatory language; to endorse it with a new condemnation of the Soviet Union; or to send someone to Budapest,²²⁴ hopefully in a better bargaining position than before the report had been released. The idea of sending another envoy to Budapest, following the release of the report, sparked outrage. A day before the debate, 2,000 demonstrators, organized by the ACEN and other exile organizations, marched to the UN and called for tangible actions, not further engagement. American permanent representative Henry Cabot Lodge responded to these calls, explaining that since armed force was not an option a 'world figure' – Prince Wan, as was later decided – should be sent to seek an end to the intervention.²²⁵ In essence, Lodge urged bargaining in the shadow of the facts established by the Committee; the protesters, however, thought that once facts were established there was nothing to bargain about.

Prince Wan's mission had completely failed by December 1957 as neither the Soviet Union nor Hungary cooperated.²²⁶ Endorsing the Hungary report while simultaneously sending another envoy, one will recall, was a concession to the non-aligned states; yet these two steps undercut each other. As the *New York Times* noted, the basic question was 'whether condemnation or negotiation is the better means of inducing a Communist dictatorship to forsake the path of aggression'. Precisely because of this tension, some delegations feared that coupling Wan's mission with the endorsement of the report actually ensured his failure.²²⁷

B Complication of Multilateral Diplomacy in Other Arenas: Disarmament

Multilateral disarmament negotiations, conducted mainly within the framework of the UN's Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission (SCDC), were a major focal point of the 1950s diplomacy.²²⁸ Unsurprisingly, the Hungary crisis trickled into

²²² 'A Few Reflections on the Report of the Committee of Five by Tibor Barbas (published first in *Literaturnaja Gazeta* (28 August 1957.) (Excerpts)', 7 September 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-8801, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:01b9b168-f151-48ae-a6c3-473a591a8e25>.

²²³ 'UN Chief Invited to Visit Budapest', *New York Times* (12 April 1957); 'Hungary Reiterates Hammarskjöld Bid', *New York Times* (26 April 1957); 'Hammarskjöld Will Not Come', 30 April 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-653, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:a3d07908-05f4-4157-b821-e1a45f61aa42>; 'UN Chief Cautious on Bid by Hungary', *New York Times* (28 April 1957).

²²⁴ Parrott, *supra* note 86.

²²⁵ Feinberg, *supra* note 42.

²²⁶ UNGA, Report of the General Assembly's Special Representative on the Hungarian Problem, UN Doc. A/3774, 9 December 1957; see also 1957 *Yearbook*, *supra* note 51, at 65–66.

²²⁷ Hamilton, *supra* note 184.

²²⁸ See 1956 *Yearbook*, *supra* note 36, at 96; See, e.g., W.C. Clemens and F. Griffiths, *The Soviet Position on Arms Control and Disarmament – Negotiation and Propaganda, 1954–1964*, an Annex to Report on Soviet Interests in Arms Control and Disarmament (1965).

this arena from the outset. In November 1956, the talks were already overshadowed by a Soviet declaration against the ‘counterrevolutionary military plot’ against Hungary.²²⁹ Thereafter, the SCDC held intensive talks in London between March and September 1957.²³⁰ This period coincided precisely with the Committee’s work, with the Hungary report’s release and with the propaganda battle in the run-up to the UNGA’s debate. On 18 March 1957, in the first SCDC meeting after the Hungary crisis, Moscow surprised everyone with a comprehensive disarmament package, including the renunciation of nuclear weapons.²³¹ Some explained this as a propaganda move, meant to counter Soviet embarrassment over Hungary.²³² However, in the following months, the Soviet Union became increasingly frustrated with the SCDC for various reasons.²³³ It wanted to end it, and it could very well be that the Hungary report, and the ongoing propaganda flurry, assisted in creating just the right atmosphere to do so.

All along, the Soviet Union had argued that the real purpose of the Hungary report was to obstruct disarmament negotiations.²³⁴ On 24 June 1957, Soviet media alleged that the ‘hullabaloo’ around the report was ‘particularly dangerous’ while the SCDC was in session and that ‘[t]hose who do not want any agreement on disarmament are trying to justify their reluctance by references to the events in Hungary.’ In the following weeks, diplomats reported of Soviet threats that if the USA will bring the Hungary report to the UNGA, there will be no disarmament agreement.²³⁵ This explains why most delegations were reluctant to convene the UNGA while the SCDC was in session.²³⁶ On 27 August 1957 – merely a week after it was decided to reconvene the UNGA – the Soviet delegate to the SCDC embarked, out of the blue, on a vehement 90-minute attack against the West and the talks altogether. Disarmament negotiations were nothing but a double game by the ‘ruling circles’ meant to cover up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s aggressive preparations. The Soviet Union saw no point to continue in this format, and it quit the SCDS altogether.²³⁷ The SCDS was effectively ended, causing a major setback in UN disarmament talks.²³⁸

The Soviet Union clearly had grand strategic reasons for this move.²³⁹ Yet an interesting pattern emerges. Arguably, after the intervention, the Soviet Union felt a need to offset its reputational loss on Hungary by advancing a far-reaching disarmament offer. Yet, after the Hungary report was released, it was confident enough to use it

²²⁹ See Clemens and Griffiths, *supra* note 228, at 14.

²³⁰ 1957 Yearbook, *supra* note 51, at 3.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² Clemens and Griffiths, *supra* note 228, at 27.

²³³ *Ibid.*, at 27.

²³⁴ ‘Foreign Press on the Hungarian Report, Continued’, 26 June 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-869, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:c8be678d-4736-4435-a331-2dd92b86b3b7>.

²³⁵ ‘Resolution on Hungary’, *New York Times* (5 September 1957).

²³⁶ ‘Discussion of the Report by the Special Committee’, 29 May 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-655, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:bdc0d97a-afc4-4cd0-98df-37c691b143bb>.

²³⁷ Clemens and Griffiths, *supra* note 228, at 27.

²³⁸ No meetings in 1957 and 1958. UN, *Year Book of the United Nations 1958* (1959), at 3.

²³⁹ Clemens and Griffiths, *supra* note 228, at 27–28.

within its justification discourse for dismantling the SCDS. It is a matter of speculation why. One answer could be that, by August 1957, its leaders understood that the Hungary crisis, ultimately, did not shift the non-aligned states decisively towards the West and were therefore less concerned about further reputational losses. Yet, for our purposes, this episode demonstrates that, since great powers play simultaneously in many international arenas, a condemning report in one arena can be exploited in another. As international dynamics and institutions become more robust and complex, this effect might be greater.

C Exposing the Limitations of COIs in Comparison to Other Courses of Action: The Shadow of Suez

Recall that Ireland vociferously supported the establishment of the Hungary Committee as a means to condemn tyranny everywhere.²⁴⁰ By September, however, Ireland's tone was radically different. Then, suddenly, endorsing the Hungary report alone was unhelpful. Rather, the best way forward was a reciprocal withdrawal of Soviet and American forces in Europe, facilitated by a UN monitoring contingent.²⁴¹ India, too, pushed for this solution.²⁴² Arguably, the looming shadow of the parallel crisis in Suez contributed to this shift of opinion. Indeed, internal UN Secretariat correspondence reveals that, at least in the West, there was 'increasing tendency to criticize UN [sic] for having reacted towards ... Egypt much more effectively than towards Russian intervention in Hungary'.²⁴³ Similarly, in a petition to Hammarskjöld, Hungarian exiles alluded to the UN reaction in Suez, arguing that it was 'not only immoral but ... highly dangerous to take different positions and steps against aggressors depending on the size of their population, their military strength and the economic considerations involved'.²⁴⁴ It is unsurprising, therefore, that in its new suggestion Ireland referred explicitly to the deployment of the UNEF in the Sinai Peninsula as a model.²⁴⁵ Granted, there are many good reasons why peacekeeping was possible in Suez but not in Hungary, not least the involvement of a major superpower in Hungary. Nonetheless, while the Hungary Committee brought few immediate results, the UNEF was considered an overwhelming and precedential success. This comparison, perhaps, did not bode well for COIs in general.

On 29 September 1957, two weeks after the UNGA's endorsement of the Hungary report, Hammarskjöld was elected unanimously for another term as secretary general. The successful resolve of Suez played a key part in his re-election. That, along with the growing non-aligned group and the dwindling power of the USA in the organization, led to an 'increasing sentiment for compromise and negotiations' on

²⁴⁰ See part 2.B in this article.

²⁴¹ UNGA 669th Meeting, *supra* note 188, at 114–125 (Ireland).

²⁴² UNGA 675th Meeting, *supra* note 214, at 75–76.

²⁴³ Compare 'Incoming Code Cable', *supra* note 42.

²⁴⁴ 'Petition to the UN to Continue Discussions of the Hungarian Situation', 9 May 1957, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-656, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:ecda3a03-bae1-4e4c-a68b-4d935024345a>.

²⁴⁵ UNGA 669th Meeting, *supra* note 188, at 121.

Cold War issues.²⁴⁶ The experiment of the Hungary report must have contributed to Hammarskjöld's increasing emphasis on peacekeeping as his legacy.²⁴⁷ The Suez precedent not only highlighted where the UN was going, but it also might partly explain why it largely abandoned COIs for several decades, not least when Cold War interests and superpowers were involved. Still, this choice, perhaps, was not only a product of Suez's success but also of a peculiar and ominous event of Cold War intrigue – one that could taint Hammarskjöld's entire legacy.

D Creating Contentious Artefacts: The Strange Case of Bang-Jensen

COIs produce reports. Yet they also create new physical artefacts: internal records, correspondence and information concerning witnesses. These can make a difference themselves. Povl Bang-Jensen, a Danish lawyer and a UN official, was appointed deputy-secretary of the Hungary Committee under Secretary William Jordan.²⁴⁸ In particular, his role was to arrange the appearance of witnesses and to conduct preliminary interviews.²⁴⁹ In May–June 1957, Bang-Jensen suddenly claimed that the Committee was making 'grave errors'. It was sabotaged, he argued, and Andersen and Shann were deceived. He wrote to Hammarskjöld and threatened to make the matter public. Shann thought that Bang-Jensen was becoming unstable. He was not 'quite himself', and, in late August, Bang-Jensen was removed from the Committee.²⁵⁰ But this was only the beginning of a strange string of events.

In October 1957, a Hungarian national, fearing deportation from the USA, asked for a certificate to prove that he was a Hungary Committee witness. Since his testimony was anonymous, the Committee had to search its records. Shockingly, it discovered that Bang-Jensen had kept the list of witnesses and concealed it in undisclosed private locations. Hammarskjöld requested – then, increasingly irritated, demanded – that Bang-Jensen deliver the documents to the Secretariat.²⁵¹ Bang-Jensen refused; the Secretariat was compromised by Soviet spies, he said.²⁵² The standoff persisted throughout December and January.²⁵³ The Bang-Jensen affair generated much bad press in the weeks after the Hungary report was endorsed, discrediting the Committee, Hammarskjöld and the UN at large. The ACEN took Bang-Jensen's side, fearing that the list would be exposed to a Soviet under-secretary general.²⁵⁴ A group of witnesses appealed to Hammarskjöld in support of Bang-Jensen, warning that exposing the list 'even in the circles of the UN Secretary General' would risk their families.²⁵⁵ Obviously frustrated, Hammarskjöld, at a tense December press conference, lashed out at a

²⁴⁶ T. Hamilton, 'Hammarskjöld Policy Sets Role for the UN', *New York Times* (29 September 1957).

²⁴⁷ See Fiti Sinclair, *supra* note 2, at 146–147.

²⁴⁸ Administrative Tribunal of the UN, Case no. 80, *Bang-Jensen against the Secretary General of The United Nations* (Case no. 80), Judgement no. 74, 5 December 1958, at 15, 16.

²⁴⁹ P.B. Heller, *The United Nations under Dag Hammarskjöld, 1953–1961* (2001), vol. 2, at 85.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, at 85; Case no. 80, *supra* note 248, at 18.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, at 18; Heller, *supra* note 249, at 86.

²⁵² Heller, *supra* note 249, at 85.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, at 87; Case no. 80, *supra* note 248, at 18–19.

²⁵⁴ D. Anderson, 'UN Pushes Case of Hungary Files', *New York Times* (11 December 1957).

²⁵⁵ 'Hungarians Bid UN Destroy Name List', *New York Times* (5 January 1958).

Swedish journalist for raising the issue, exclaiming that it seemed like Bang-Jensen had formulated the questions himself.²⁵⁶ Criticism of the UN mounted.²⁵⁷

Eventually, Bang-Jensen and Hammarskjöld agreed to burn the list.²⁵⁸ On 24 January 1958, '[a] strange little ceremony' took place on the roof of the UN building, as Bang-Jensen tossed the list into the fire in the presence of several witnesses.²⁵⁹ Of course, Eastern bloc media rejoiced; all of this was evidence of the Hungary Committee's gross incompetence.²⁶⁰ Although Bang-Jensen was finally fired on July 1958 – public criticism notwithstanding – the debacle continued.²⁶¹ On 26 November 1959, he was found dead in a park in Queens, shot in the head. While the official cause of death was suicide, conspiracy theories mushroomed, even within the US Congress; perhaps the Soviets staged his suicide, Hammarskjöld's Secretariat being a pawn in their hands.²⁶² This sad affair dominated and overshadowed the memory of the Hungary Committee in the years to come.²⁶³ In fact, when William Jordan died in 1966, two paragraphs of his *New York Times* eulogy were devoted to the Committee. One sentence claimed that the Hungary report was 'one of the most significant documents published by the United Nations'. A full paragraph then recalled the Bang-Jensen affair.²⁶⁴

6 Conclusion

After the Hungary report's endorsement in September 1957, the Hungary question slowly faded. Support for keeping it on the agenda dwindled, and interest in the Hungary Committee and the report was the first victim. Already in December 1957, the UNGA debate barely mentioned the report.²⁶⁵ In 1958, the interest in Hungary arose again after the execution of Nagy and his associates, to which the Hungary Committee devoted its second (and last) report.²⁶⁶ In December 1958, Sir Leslie Munro was appointed to report on 'significant developments' in Hungary. The Committee was ended and thanked for discharging its tasks.²⁶⁷ In subsequent years, resolutions on Hungary refrained from mentioning the Hungary report and were generally met with more abstentions from non-aligned countries than before, including Ceylon and

²⁵⁶ T. Hamilton, 'UN Chief Weighs List Safeguards', *New York Times* (17 December 1957).

²⁵⁷ 'UN's Hungarian Witnesses', *New York Times* (17 January 1958); 'Melodrama at the UN', *New York Times* (26 January 1958).

²⁵⁸ 'Committee Erred, Bang-Jensen Says', *New York Times* (18 January 1958); 'UN Chief Approves Burning of Papers', *New York Times* (19 January 1958).

²⁵⁹ 'Melodrama at the UN', *supra* note 257; Heller, *supra* note 249, at 87.

²⁶⁰ 'Mr. Andersen's Tales and Bang-Jensen's List', 8 February 1958, UNSC Records, HU OSA 398-0-1-8933, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:d5c37b4a-b7f0-49bb-bf51-166d9a8441ac>.

²⁶¹ 'UN Dismissal Scored; Morris Sees Rights Flouted in Bang-Jensen Case', *New York Times* (6 July 1958).

²⁶² Heller, *supra* note 249, at 87.

²⁶³ See, e.g., C. Manly, 'Bang-Jensen's Ghost Haunting UN', *Chicago Daily Tribune* (5 March 1960).

²⁶⁴ 'William Jordan, UN Official, Dies', *New York Times* (11 January 1966).

²⁶⁵ UNGA, Twelfth Session: 731st Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.731, 14 December 1957, at 160 (USA).

²⁶⁶ UNGA, Special Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, UN Doc. A/3849, 14 July 1958.

²⁶⁷ GA Res. 1312 (XIII), 13 December 1957.

Tunisia.²⁶⁸ In 1962, the USA requested, for the last time, to place the Hungary question on the UNGA's agenda, with no mention of the report at all.²⁶⁹ By now, many non-aligned members saw the 'question of Hungary' as nothing more than Cold War bickering and urged the UN to focus on questions such as disarmament, decolonization and development.²⁷⁰ So much so that Hungarian exiles themselves adopted the discourse of decolonization in their subsequent efforts – now arguing that Hungary was under 'colonial oppression' – while eschewing the liberal discourse of the Hungary report.²⁷¹ On 25 September 1962, the UNGA discontinued the position of the UN representative on Hungary.²⁷² This effectively ended the consideration of the Hungary question in the UN.

What difference did the Hungary Committee make? As demonstrated, its effects were contradictory. It was an important precedent; it was prominent in public discourse, at least for a while; it perhaps contributed to the distancing between the Western left and Soviet communism. However, it embarrassed the UN Secretariat, both because of its dissemination and the peculiar Bang-Jensen affair. Its inability to influence the Soviet Union also discredited the UN, and, perhaps, COIs in general, especially in light of the success in Suez, which emphasized the ineffectiveness of the UN on Hungary. Its use for propaganda, and the appropriation of participating non-aligned states and members, might have pushed non-aligned states away from Western positions. It perhaps complicated negotiation efforts in Hungary and was also utilized to undermine multi-lateral talks on disarmament. On the other hand, the twists and turns of the Hungary Committee demonstrate that, although political powers may attempt to utilize a COI, their ability to orchestrate and control its effects is quite limited. Precisely because of this, COIs, by having 'lives of their own', remain an important venue of international action. Perhaps the central conclusion we can draw is that COIs do not lend themselves easily to grand, clean and linear theories as to their effects. Indeed, it might be that the best way to study them begins with the recognition of the field's inherent complexity.

²⁶⁸ E.g., UN, *Year Book of the United Nations 1959* (1960), at 51; UN, *Year Book of the United Nations 1961* (1962), at 146; GA Res. 1741 (XVI), 21 December 1961.

²⁶⁹ UNGA, Letter Dated 17 August 1962 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Addressed to the Acting Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/51164, 17 August 1962.

²⁷⁰ See, e.g., UNGA, Seventeenth Session: 1129th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.1129, 24 September 1962, at 314 (Indonesia); UNGA, Seventeenth Session: 1130th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.1130, 25 September 1962, at 4 (Guinea), 7–47 (Senegal); UNGA, Seventeenth Session: 1200th Plenary Meeting, UN Doc. A/PV.1200, 19 December 1962, at 77–80 (Mali).

²⁷¹ Letter from Anna Kethly, MP, Minister of State, *et al.* to the UN (undated, c 1960) (on file with author).

²⁷² GA Res. 1857 (XVII), 20 December 1962; UN, *Year Book of the United Nations 1962* (1963), at 131–133.