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# Research and Reference Service

WEST EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION BAROMETER

THE CURRENT STATE OF SOVIET PRESTIGE IN WESTERN EUROPE  
With Some Evaluations of Western Policy on Hungary

Report #42

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## FORWORD

America's current prestige in Western Europe has been described in the preceding report. The present paper concerns itself with the state of Soviet prestige following the epoch-making events in Hungary and developments in the Suez crisis.

The findings reported are based upon coordinated surveys in Great Britain, France, West Germany and Italy - the usual Barometer countries - and for additional perspective, Belgium and Austria. Interviewing was carried out in the latter half of November and in early December - or in the political calendar, at a time when Soviet actions in Hungary had become plain for all to see.

Sampling for each country was conducted on the basis of probability principles to insure an accurate cross-section of the population 21 years of age and over. To permit more refined analyses when desirable the sample size in the big four countries has been increased with the present Barometer series, and now embraces the order of 1200 cases. Samples for minor countries remain unchanged at the order of 800 cases.

As regular readers of the Barometer series have probably been adequately reminded, results obtained from statistical samples are not of absolute precision, but are subject to a range of chance fluctuation varying with the size of sample. Viewed conservatively, percentages based upon 1200 cases can be thought of as accurate to plus or minus four per cent; on 800 cases to plus or minus five per cent.

With the enlargement of the big four sample the time was deemed propitious to initiate the use of the "split-ballot" technique in Barometer surveys. This is a valuable method of checking on the effects of differences in question formulations by giving each of two versions to random halves of the sample, and observing whether or not the returns significantly differ. The split-ballot also makes it possible to increase the question load a survey can carry at the cost of only a moderate loss in precision since findings based upon half samples of 600 cases can be taken as accurate to plus or minus six per cent.

Frequently throughout this and other Barometer reports readers will observe that time trend comparisons, and comparisons between countries, are not made in terms of the percentage favorable to the U.S. on a given issue, but in terms of a net favorable figure (favorable answers minus unfavorable answers). Such a net index provides a more realistic basis of comparison since it takes into account the extent to which favorable returns are offset by unfavorable responses. The index is positive when favorable reactions predominate, negative when unfavorable reactions predominate.

In the interest of speed in reporting, general population returns are alone presented in the present paper. Comparative returns for population sub-groups will be available upon request, and if workloads permit will later be reported upon in Barometer form.

A few Austrian returns are missing from the present report as they were not available in time for inclusion.

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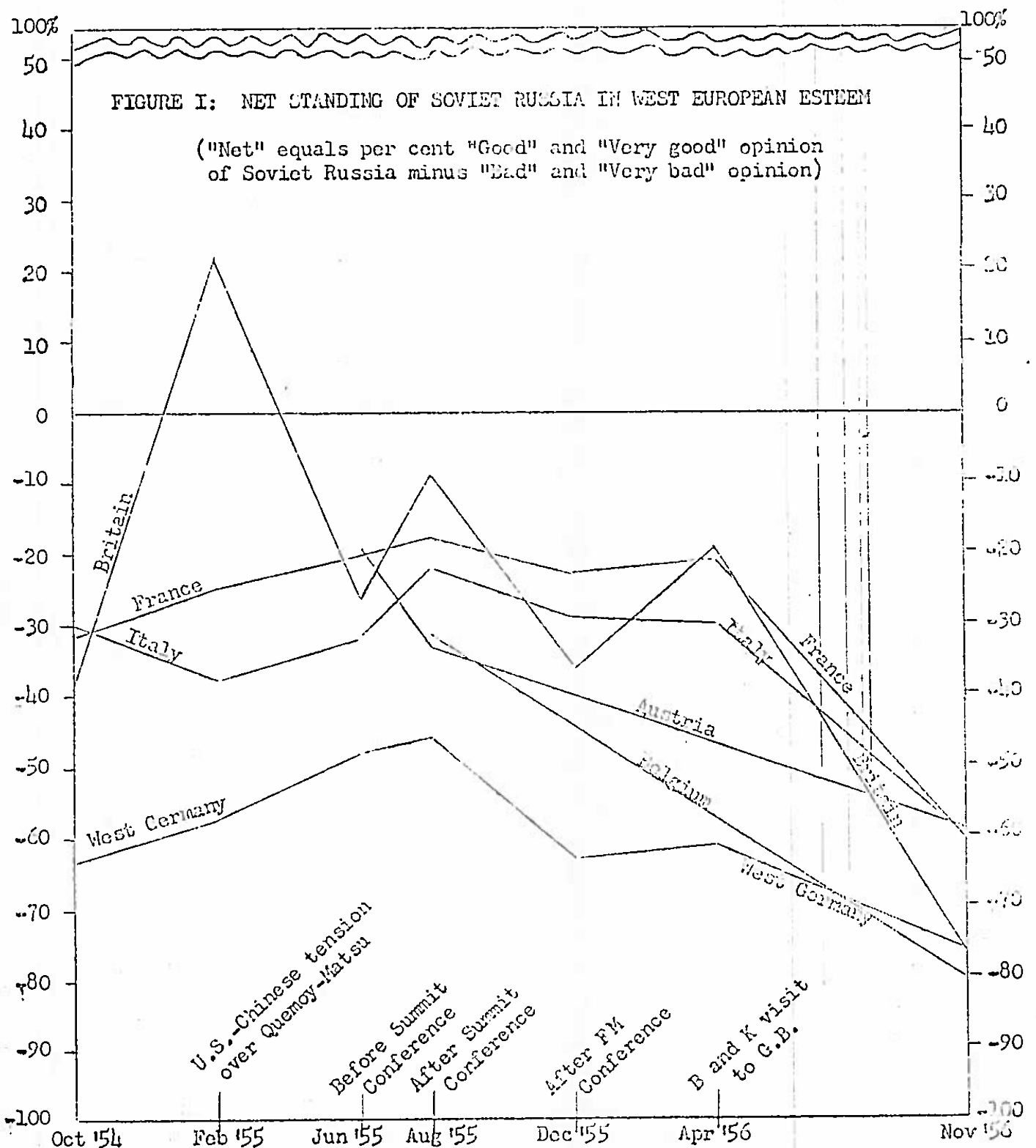
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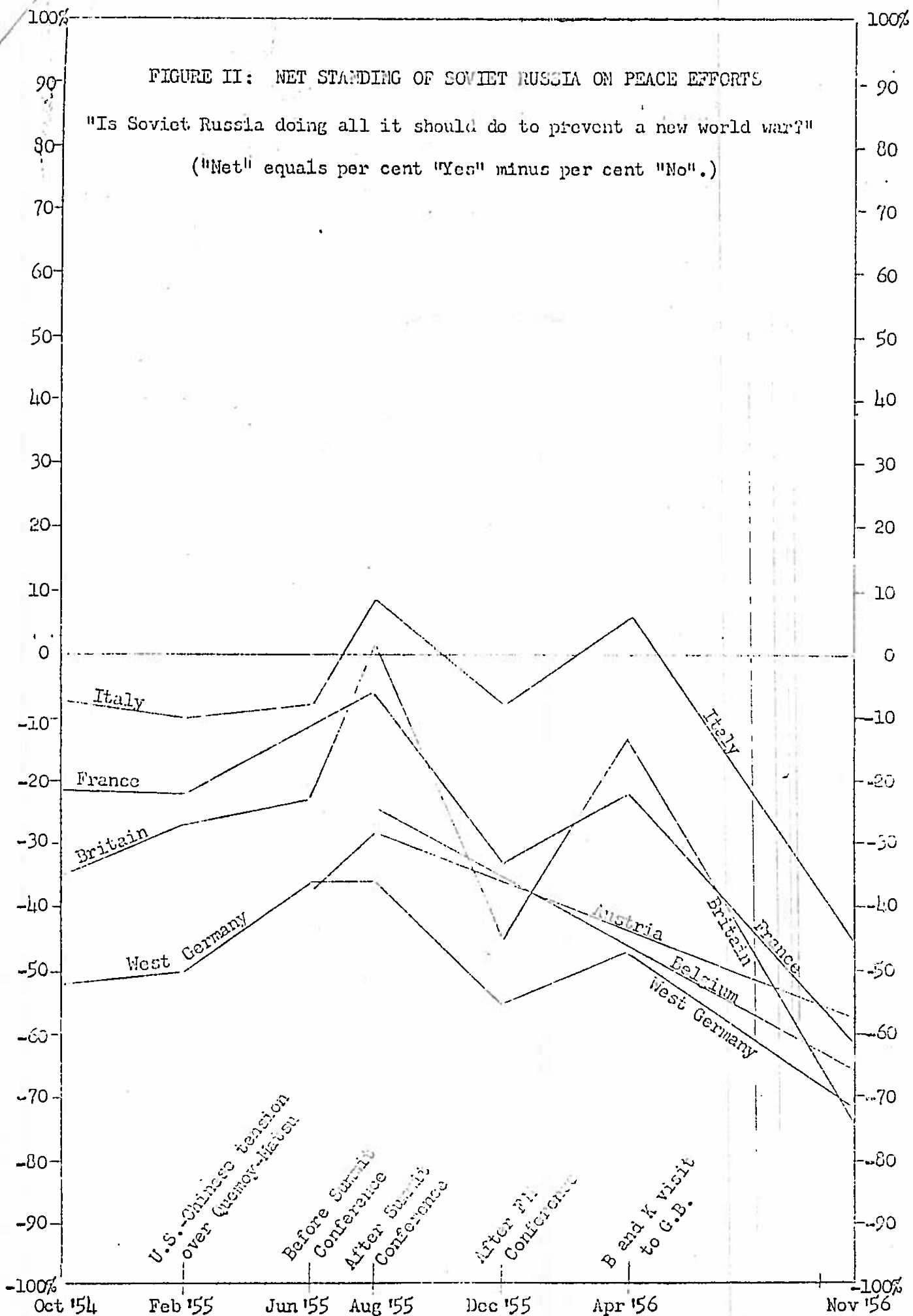
SOVIET PRESTIGE TUMBLES TO NEW LOWS ...

The latest West European public opinion Barometer reveals that without exception among the countries studied Soviet prestige has tumbled to what may be unprecedented lows - certainly to low points unrecorded in Barometer surveys to date. Figure I below records the drops in general esteem for Soviet Russia; Figure II on the page following, the drops in Soviet standing specifically on the score of peace efforts.

The losses in Soviet prestige, it will be noted, tend to be greatest in the countries formerly having the higher opinion of Soviet Russia. The result, in consequence, is a closer agreement between West European countries in their opinion about USSR than has generally been the case heretofore.

The largest drop in Soviet esteem has apparently occurred in Great Britain, and a glance at the British trend curve over the past two years suggests that the British are more prone than other West European countries to vacillation in their judgments about Soviet Russia.





REACTIONS ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION UNFAVORABLE TO RECENT SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY ...

Hungary, of course, looms up like the Rock of Gibraltar among the factors which have engendered adverse recent impressions of the USSR. Reactions are almost without exception unfavorable, in each of the countries studied, to recent Soviet handling of foreign affairs.

"Have you a favorable or unfavorable impression of what Soviet Russia has been doing in foreign affairs recently? Very or only somewhat?"

No. of cases	Great Britain	France	West Germany	Italy	Belgium	Austria
	(1210)	(1227)	(1159)	(1209)	(853)	(1172)
Very favorable	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Somewhat favorable	1	3	2	4	3	3
Somewhat unfavorable	9	23	9	6	19	7
Very unfavorable	76	53	75	64	73	64
No opinion	13	19	14	23	4	25
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net Pro-USSR	-84	-71	-82	-63	-88	-67

Recent Unfavorable Impressions of Soviet Handling of Foreign Affairs

"Have you a favorable or unfavorable impression of what Soviet Russia has been doing in foreign affairs recently?"

If Unfavorable: "What in particular has given you this impression of Russia's actions?"

If Favorable: "Has anything given you an unfavorable impression?"

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Italy	Belgium	Austria
Hungary; aggression, massacres	50%	51%	63%	53%	61%	50%
Russian imperialism, enslavement, domination, Poland	13	19	21	12	13	15
Stirring up trouble in Middle East	8	15	6	4	7	5
Deceit and hypocrisy	7	3	6	4	4	5
Threats against Britain and France, danger of World War	1	6	3	2	-	2
Obstruction of German reunification	-	-	4	-	-	-
Treatment of German war prisoners	-	-	1	-	-	-
Other answers	22	3	4	1	21	3
No comments (including those who expressed no opinion on original question)	22	25	16	36	7	28
	124% <sup>1</sup>	122% <sup>1</sup>	124% <sup>1</sup>	112% <sup>1</sup>	110% <sup>1</sup>	111% <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Adds to more than 100 per cent because some respondents gave more than one answer.

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The very few favorable comments on recent Soviet actions were along the lines indicated below.

Recent Favorable Impressions of Soviet Handling of Foreign Affairs

"Have you a favorable or unfavorable impression of what Soviet Russia has been doing in foreign affairs recently?"

If Favorable: "What in particular has given you this impression of Russia's actions?"

If Unfavorable: "Has anything given you a favorable impression?"

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Italy	Belgium	Austria
Freer communication, cultural exchanges	3%	-%	*/%	*/%	1%	
Moves toward peace, disarmament	1	2	2	3	1	2
Had been allowing more freedom to satellites	1	*	3	1	-	1
They stopped the attack on Egypt	1	2	2	2	2	1
Reaction in Hungary was understandable	*	1	*	4	-	1
Released German war prisoners	-	-	2	-	-	
Other answers	7	2	4	2	14	4
No comments (including those who expressed no opinion on original question)	$\frac{87}{100\%}$	$\frac{94}{101\%}^1$	$\frac{83}{101\%}^1$	$\frac{89}{101\%}^1$	$\frac{82}{100\%}$	$\frac{92}{101\%}^1$

<sup>1</sup> Adds to more than 100 per cent because some respondents gave more than one answer.

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ONLY ORDER OF ONE IN TEN SEE ANY JUSTIFICATION WHATSOEVER FOR SOVIET USE OF FORCE IN HUNGARY ...

Are unfavorable impressions of Soviet actions in Hungary accompanied by any considerable feeling of extenuating circumstances? The answer appears to be "no" in the light of the indications below that only a range of from 6 to 14 per cent in the countries surveyed felt that Russia had any justification for using force in Hungary.

"As you probably know, Russia used military force to put down the uprising in Hungary. Do you think Russia had some justification for using force in Hungary or don't you think so?"

No. of cases	Great Britain	France	West Germany	Italy	Belgium	Austria
	(1210)	(1227)	(1159)	(1209)	(853)	(1172)
Yes, some	6%	13%	6%	11%	10%	10%
No, none	81	65	86	67	84	79
No opinion	13	22	8	19	6	11
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<u>Net Pro-USSR</u>	-75	-52	-80	-53	-74	-69

FEW ANTICIPATE ANY EASING OF SOVIET CONTROL OF SATELLITES IN NEXT YEAR OR SO ...

As to the probable future course of Soviet treatment of the satellites, most with opinions judge that the amount of independence will be less than now, or about the same as now, rather than an easing up of Soviet control.

"In the light of recent events, do you think Russia is likely to allow the Eastern European countries more independence in the next year or so, less independence, or about as much as they have now?"

	Great Britain	France	West Germany	Italy	Belgium	Austria
	More independence	14%	10%	13%	11%	13%
Less independence	44	31	32	30	34	not asked
Same as now	20	24	33	29	37	
No opinion	22	35	22	30	11	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

MOST SEE STIRRING UP TROUBLE AS RUSSIAN AID IN MIDDLE EAST ...

Though Hungary preoccupied the attention of most on the open inquiry as to recent impressions of Soviet foreign policy, the specific closed question following establishes quite clearly that the large majority of West Europeans in the countries sampled react negatively to Russia's actions in the Middle East.

"Do you think Russia wants peace in the Middle East or is Russia interested in stirring up trouble there?"

	Great Britain	France	West Germany	Italy <sup>1</sup>	Belgium	Austria
	Wants peace	6%	9%	9%		6%
Wants trouble	82	66	74		73	62
No opinion	12	25	17		21	26
	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%
<u>Net Pro-USSR</u>	-76	-58	-65		-67	-52

<sup>1</sup> This question was inadvertently omitted from the Italian survey.



DISSENTING OPINION

SOME PREDOMINANCE OF OPINION THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE DONE ABOUT WHAT THEY SHOULD IN THE HUNGARIAN SITUATION ...

That the Western countries have done about what they should in the Hungarian situation is the predominant belief in Great Britain, West Germany and Belgium. In France, Italy and Austria opinion rather evenly divides on this issue.

"Do you think the Western countries have done about what they should in the Hungarian situation, or is there anything else they should have done?"

No. of cases	Great Britain (1210)	France (1127)	West Germany (1159)	Italy (1209)	Belgium (853)	Austria (1172)
All they should	49%	31%	52%	33%	50%	38%
Something else	25	30	28	29	33	39
No opinion	25	32	20	38	17	23
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<u>Net Favorable</u>	23	1	24	4	17	-1

DISSENTERS FEEL THAT WESTERN POLICY SHOULD HAVE BEEN FIRMER - THOUGH FEW EXPLICITLY ESPOUSE MILITARY ACTION ...

Comments from the approximately three in ten in each country who felt that something more should have been done follow below.<sup>1</sup> In general they seem to indicate a wish that Western policies had been firmer - with, however, only relatively small proportions going so far as to explicitly recommend military action on the part of individual countries or the U.N.

If Something else: "What else should they have done?"

British Comments

A. ANSWERS NOT SPECIFYING ACTION WITHIN THE UN

<u>Western powers should take/have taken military action on Hungary's side</u>	20
"Should have sent troops against Russia"	
"We could have helped more by sending a token force to Hungary"	
<u>Western powers should send/should have sent arms to Hungary</u>	1
"Should have supplied Hungary with arms"	
"West should send arms to Hungarians or volunteers, like Russia sent to Europe"	
<u>Western powers should break relations with Russia, cease trading with Russia</u>	2
"Take economic action against Russia"	
"There should have been an economic boycott of Russia"	
<u>Western powers should have given (more) financial or economic aid to Hungary</u>	1
"Should have given more economic aid"	
"More aid in the way of money"	
<u>Western powers should give more help to refugees; accept more refugees</u>	*
"We should ask more refugees here; I believe we have only asked a paltry few"	
<u>Other Western action; vague answers about Western action</u>	10
"Could have given Russia a hint to stop and then talked matters over"	
"They should have threatened the Russians, using the language they used towards Britain and France"	

<sup>1</sup> The returns are listed serially by countries, rather than in one consolidated table because on this question there was no opportunity to priorly establish a wholly comparable classification of answer types.

4-2-50 (REV. 11-19-50)

B. ANSWERS SPECIFYING ACTION WITHIN THE UN

<u>UN should send/have sent UN police force</u>	3%
"Should have appealed to UN for police force for Hungary"	
"UN forces should have moved in and taken control in Hungary"	
<u>UN should have taken military action against Russia</u>	1
"Ultimatum should have been sent from the United Nations to Russia and enforced if necessary"	
"The United Nations should have stepped in, the same as they did in Korea"	
<u>UN should send/have sent observers</u>	1
"UN should have sent observers, but I suppose they were not allowed"	
<u>Other UN action; vague answers about UN action</u>	4
"UN should have stepped in"	
<u>No opinion</u>	$\frac{2}{27\%}$ <sup>1</sup>

French Comments

<u>More firmness</u>	11%
"Despite the risk of war, something was to be done"	
"Be firm"	
"Stop the invasion"	
<u>Action through UNO</u>	5
"Send UN observers"	
"UN should send armed forces as in Egypt"	
<u>Intervention with armed forces or materials</u>	4
"Send arms to the Hungarians"	
"Send paratroops"	
<u>Other answers</u>	2
"Economic blockade against Russia"	
"Ask for free election in Hungary"	
<u>No opinion</u>	$\frac{5}{30\%}$

German Comments

A. MILITARY MEASURES

<u>They should have furnished Hungary with troops and arms</u>	3%
"Their troops should have marched into Hungary. They should have matched force with force"	
"The West should immediately have sent volunteers to help the Hungarians"	
<u>They should have employed UN troops</u>	2
"One should have dispatched a UN police force to Hungary, regardless of the consequences"	

<sup>1</sup> Some respondents gave more than one answer.

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

Other military measures

"They should have taken up positions at the Austro-Hungarian borders in order to safeguard them"

## B. POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC MEASURES

They should have threatened the Russians and subjected them to pressure  
 "They should have uttered as massive threats as the Russians did"

They should have severed diplomatic and trade relations with Russia  
 "They should have recalled their ambassadors immediately"  
 "It might have helped to boycott all trade with Russia and to sever all existing connections"

They should have prodded the UN into action  
 "They should have insisted on the UN sending observers to Hungary immediately"

Other political and diplomatic measures  
 "In the foreign affairs sector they could have exerted greater influence on Russia, asking Yugoslavia and India to act as mediators"  
 "They should have negotiated"

## C. MATERIAL AID

They should have supplied larger quantities of foods, drugs and other necessities of life to the Hungarians  
 "They didn't send enough food and drugs to the Hungarians"

## D. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

They should have intervened sooner and more forcefully  
 "They should have tried to hold the Russians back at all events"

They should have given stronger support to the Hungarians in every respect  
 "The relief actions could have been done on a larger scale"

Other general answers

"They should have mobilized all forces against the Russians"  
 "They should have called strikes and should have censured and condemned them"

## E. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

They should not have attacked Egypt  
 "They should have left the Suez Canal alone. Only after they furnished the Russians with a pretext and justification did they proceed in the same manner in Hungary"

They should not have encouraged the Hungarians only to let them down afterwards

"The freedom radio station beaming programs to Hungary should not have stirred up the people if help wasn't forthcoming later on"

No opinion

1 Some respondents gave more than one answer.

JOHN BENTLEY

Italian Comments

Firmer, more decided attitude

- "A non-military but firmer intervention"
- "A more energetic protest"

8%

Prevent Russian intervention, stop Russia

- "Isolate Russia by discontinuing all diplomatic relations"
- "Impose on Russia the immediate withdrawal of her forces"

5

Help Hungarian patriots

- "Send by air arms and food to the rebels and to the whole of the Hungarian people"

5

Military intervention, they should have gone to war

- "Use force if Russia did not give in"
- "They should have presented Russia with an ultimatum and, if necessary, they should have gone to the ultimate consequences"

4

Action through UN

- "The Hungarian issue should have been given precedence at the U.N. assembly"
- "They should have made themselves heard more forcibly through the U.N."
- "Persuade Russia to accept the presence of U.N. observers in Hungary"
- "Send a U.N. police force as in Egypt"

4

Other answers

- "They should have sided with Russia and helped her to put a stop to the Hungarian rebellion"

2

No opinion

2

30%

Belgian Comments

Chase Russia out of Hungary by armed force, armed intervention, war against Russia, help them with soldiers

5%

Joint action of all countries, action against Russia, active aid, no words, more intervention

4

Stronger protest, demand immediate withdrawal of Russians, armament up to the teeth, bang the table

1

Give food, more material aid for victims, more aid for the population

1

Break off relations with Russia: diplomatic relations, trade relations cultural relations

2

U.N. troops ought to have driven the Russians out of Hungary, the same as was done in Korea

2

Aid partisans, rebels, with arms

1

U.N. must treat alike the Egyptian and Hungarian question

1

America could have helped, ought to have helped

1

Economic measures, sanctions

1

Other answers

8

No opinion

2

34%

APPENDIX A: Data for Figure I

"Please use this card to tell me your feelings about various countries - very good opinion, good opinion, fair opinion, bad opinion."

## OPINION ABOUT RUSSIA

In Great Britain

	Oct 1954 (832)	Feb 1955 (805)	Jun 1955 (800)	Aug 1955 (800)	Dec 1955 (770)	Apr 1956 (808)	Nov 1956 (805)
Number of cases:							
Very good opinion	1%	5%	3%	2%	1%	2%	-
Good opinion	5	25	7	12	7	12	3
Fair opinion	24	38	32	44	29	32	10
Bad opinion	21	6	22	16	25	20	24
Very bad opinion	23	3	14	7	19	13	55
No opinion	26	22	22	19	19	21	8
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-38	22	-26	-9	-36	-19	-76

In France

	(851)	(900)	(800)	(800)	(805)	(800)	(651)
Very good opinion	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	1%	1%
Good opinion	6	10	9	10	10	8	1
Fair opinion	14	17	24	31	27	27	13
Bad opinion	26	24	21	23	23	22	27
Very bad opinion	15	14	10	9	13	11	30
No opinion	36	32	34	23	24	23	27
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-32	-25	-20	-18	-23	-21	-40

1 This "Net favorable" index is calculated on the basis of total good opinion, minus total bad opinion. It provides a convenient unitary figure for charting trends, but like all indices loses some of the reality. Firstly "Good" and "Very good" opinions have been lumped together as have "Bad" and "Very bad." Secondly, "Fair" opinion has been split evenly between good and bad. Through the use of split ballot comparisons experiments are now being conducted with a view toward improving the opinion scale by replacing the possibly ambiguous "Fair opinion" category with the more precise "Neither good nor bad opinion."

OPINION ABOUT RUSSIA

In West Germany

	Oct. 154 (836)	Feb 155 (820)	Jun 155 (857)	Aug 155 (865)	Dec 155 (813)	Apr 156 (883)	Nov 156 (859)
Very good opinion	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Good opinion	5	6	6	7	2	3	2
Fair opinion	13	17	24	18	16	18	7
Bad opinion	28	34	31	29	33	30	25
Very bad opinion	40	39	24	25	32	34	53
No opinion	11	11	11	20	17	15	13
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-63	-57	-48	-46	-63	-61	-76

In Italy

	(808)	(814)	(820)	(802)	(803)	(911)	(605)
Very good opinion	6%	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%	3%
Good opinion	12	7	10	12	13	11	7
Fair opinion	12	11	17	19	16	16	9
Bad opinion	21	23	24	21	27	22	25
Very bad opinion	27	29	24	20	23	27	45
No opinion	22	23	19	21	13	16	11
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-30	-33	-32	-22	-29	-30	-60

In Belgium

In Austria

	Aug 155 (806)	Nov 156 (853)	Jun 155 (792)	Aug 155 (752)	Nov 156 (595)
Very good opinion	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Good opinion	10	3	14	10	3
Fair opinion	28	8	34	25	20
Bad opinion	30	27	21	22	18
Very bad opinion	13	57	16	23	43
No opinion	17	4	11	18	21
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-31	-80	-19	-35	-59

A. FERLIN B: Data for Figure II

"Is Soviet Russia doing all it should do to prevent a new world war?"

Great Britain

	Oct 154 (832)	Feb 155 (805)	Jun 155 (800)	Aug 155 (800)	Dec 155 (770)	Apr 156 (806)	Nov 156 (605)
No. of cases							
Yes, Russia is	13%	17%	22%	35%	18%	32%	7%
No, Russia is not	48	44	45	33	63	45	60
No opinion	39	39	33	32	19	23	13
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u> ( <u>"Is" minus "is not"</u> )	-35	-27	-23	2	-45	-13	-73

France

	(851)	(900)	(800)	(800)	(805)	(800)	(651)
Yes, Russia is	16%	16%	20%	26%	16%	21%	9%
No, Russia is not	37	30	31	32	49	43	70
No opinion	47	46	49	42	35	36	21
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-21	-22	-11	-6	-33	-22	-61

West Germany

	(836)	(820)	(857)	(865)	(813)	(863)	(509)
Yes, Russia is	13%	9%	18%	20%	11%	15%	8%
No, Russia is not	65	59	54	56	68	62	79
No opinion	22	32	28	24	21	23	13
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-52	-50	-36	-36	-57	-47	-71

Italy

	(808)	(614)	(826)	(802)	(803)	(911)	(805)
Yes, Russia is	21%	16%	25%	31%	20%	33%	13%
No, Russia is not	28	26	33	22	30	27	58
No opinion	51	58	42	47	36	40	29
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-7	-10	-8	7	-8	6	-45

Belgium

	Aug 155 (806)	Nov 156 (853)	Jun 155 (792)	Austria Aug 155 (752)	Nov 156 (595)
Yes, Russia is	24%	12%	22%	24%	11
No, Russia is not	48	77	59	52	68
No opinion	28	11	19	24	21
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Net Favorable</u>	-24	-65	-37	-28	-57